

# SIMPLE OUTSIDE GEMS INSIDE

*The Team that Preceded Jesus*



GRACE AKALONU

## Simple Outside:Gems Inside

It's possible to be one

*If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. 2 Timothy 2:21*

All I can say is, Wow! It is priceless when we are taught about the lives of those in the scriptures in such a way as presented here. It allows us to step out of the scriptures and see it from the context in which it was written and how it applies to our lives today. To be consecrated no matter our plight, may we embrace it as Mary did. It encouraged my spirit. It is a read for anyone who has lost hope or has allowed what they see physically to change what they once believed about our Elohim. It is uplifting and will cause anyone to rise and begin again when received.

Dr Katherine Jone

We thank the Lord for the revelation released in this book. The story of Elizabeth and Zacharias is one of my best in the series. Upright and blameless before the Lord, diligently occupying their little space in the Lord's house despite their issues. Very relevant and salient points noted and needed in our generation.

Pastor Oluwakemi Oduniyi

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Grace Akalonu

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the King James Version of the Holy Bible

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To Elohim, who teaches and reveals His mind to His people, be glorified forever and ever. Amen.

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## Introduction

In one of the Global School of Ministry classes, I mentioned that many popular teachings on those that preceded our Lord Jesus Christ do not bring out the whole story as written in the Scriptures. A good example is who Mary was, which she told herself. An Elderly Pastor in the class said, “ I am keen to hear what this new teaching you have because all I know about Mary is about the nativity story.

He was not alone. Many in the class were in the same boat as him. Out of curiosity, I asked the class if anyone shared the same opinion as him. Some could say some points on Elizabeth and Zachariah, two lines on Joseph and John the Baptist. Everyone had the same view of Mary.

We have heard the stories from the cradle as Christians. Anyone would wonder what new thing to put on the table that had not been taught. I felt that way when I was about to embark on this teaching. An opposing voice whispered that I should not waste my time; everything about them has been taught, and nothing will be new. Then, I knew that Satan deliberately discourages people from reading through the Scripture’s tenets to find truths in the lines.

We hear a preacher on an angle of the Scriptures and run with it without looking to see areas not touched in the same Scriptures. It is made worse if a famous preacher expounded on it. Everybody builds on what they have said for years and generations. Satan

has dealt with the church in discouraging them from reading the Bible, and those who read go for buzz phrases. I thank God a few people are still reading to dig out the whole truth in the Scriptures. God opens the ears, eyes and hearts of sincere seekers to reveal mysteries to them.

The leading question was, “Why were these people chosen of all the people on earth? What made them stand out?”

Some years ago, I got a gift of packs of bacon. I was told it was special because the company produces bacon for the Royal family. I was keen to know what made it different from the one in my local store. Alas, there was a massive difference. It had more meat than the flappy ones we buy from our stores. It was so clean, as if hand-picked, with no discolouration on the fat rind.

Whenever the word outstanding is mentioned about a person, what goes to mind is better than others: excellent, special, unique, extraordinary, phenomenal, and the list continues. This commendation also raises a quest to know what distinguished this person from others. These amazing people were Elizabeth, Zachariah, Mary, Joseph, Anna, Simeon, John the Baptist, the Shepherds and Wise men from the East. They were not mere men but people of unique attributes. A critical look at their lives reveals the qualities and qualifications Elohim God is looking for in choosing people for special duties in the king’s court. Their hidden gold and riches will not be seen from the surface.

Choosing these remarkable people could be likened to a couple about to wed. They do not just get anybody on their train; they choose them. The best man and chief bridesmaid are usually best friends or best relatives. The rest are friends. Also, the president prefers his best in his cabinets in political offices. He will not get the opposition into his cabinet; it will fail. They would have been at the party with him or worked hard for the party during the

campaign, and they could deliver their manifesto.

In the corporate world, the best candidates are headhunted or put through a rigorous, selective process to get the best. The security chief of staff must be a general with experience in military capabilities to be in the office. Although some people, for political reasons, choose anyone irrespective of their experiences, they fail at some point.

If we have criteria for choosing our inner circle, God is greater and does not just choose anyone. The essence of studying their lives is to remind us that God has standards and ponder how we can meet them. There were remarkable things about the prophets God used in the Bible. Enoch walked with God, and God took him because he was a righteous man. Abraham was a friend of God. In our eyes, people may be weak or uneducated, but God knows who they are. Gideon thought he was not bold Judges 6:15-27. Moses thought he stammered and could not speak. Exodus 4:10- 13, but Elohim knew he could confront Pharoah.

They were chosen for the mission because they can deliver. One phrase to describe them is “Solid men” who stood out of the crowd. There are so many lessons to learn from them. May the Lord find us faithful.

## Elizabeth and Zachariah

**E**lizabeth and Zachariah were marked out from the Priests of their generation. We stand a better chance of doing well above them.

### **He was a Priest, and his wife was of Priestly heritage**

*There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain Priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. Luke 1:5*

This criterion has not changed. God still uses those of Priestly heritage. *1 Peter 2:9*; we are the royal Priesthood, the chosen generation. The difference is that we are not of Levitical Priesthood, which has been abolished, but of the Priesthood after the order of Melchizedek.

*Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec. Hebrews 6:20*

### **They were both righteous before God**

The message of righteousness is vastly relegated by most people today. In some settings, you will be branded as “stricter and holier than thou, archaic and Old Testament folk” if you talk about morality. You are seen as one who does not want liberty, and people will start withdrawing from the church until you are left alone. Fellow ministers may also keep their distance.

*And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Luke 1:6*

Elizabeth and Zachariah walked in righteousness! Do not despise character for any reason. Jesus loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore, God anointed Him with the oil of gladness above His fellows. *Psalms 45:7, Hebrews 1:9*

The qualifying statement is “they were both righteous” because anybody can claim to be a Priest. We have fake Priests, mediocre ones, compromising ones, backslidden ones, and righteous Priests. Remember, what counts with God is righteousness. Do not compromise. The place of holiness cannot be over-emphasised in our walk with Elohim.

Any preacher despising holiness, righteousness, making fun or mockery of it is not of God. Some have unholy boldness, blaspheming godly dressing and living. While it is not about the physical look, the inward beauty of holiness is what radiates outward. You cannot be holy inwards and are not holy outwards. Either way, wearing a turtleneck with long sleeves but rotten inside, full of dead men’s bones, would not get you anywhere. Both extremes of far right and far left are wrong. It is about total holiness. It flows out from our bellies when we speak and shows in all we do. Our eyes cannot be holy, and our mouths filthy. It does not rhyme. We cannot serve the Lord and serve Mammon *Matthew 6:24*

Zachariah was a Priest with a difference. Notably, other Priests, such as Ananias, condemned Jesus then. Some went after Yeshua, setting up traps to see if He could fall. So, it is not about having a title or being a Priest, but the quality of life that counts. We know people by their fruits. *Matthew 7:16, 20*. We will not judge them by what they say but by their lives and character. Wearing colourful robes, peacock hats and men kissing your rings will not get you

selected unless you live a righteous life. Those carnal dressings are carnal, fleshy, and earthly. They represent the old covenant, which was fulfilled and taken away for the new covenant. Righteousness qualified Elizabeth and Zachariah.

If you preach righteousness, you may not be popular with many, but be encouraged. The Scribes and Pharisees, the lawyers, the Sanhedrin, the Sadducees, and the council of the elders did not like Jesus because He preached against their hypocrisies and lies. They hated Him.

*Romans 12:1 pleaded with us to present our bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service. That is the only way the Lord can accept us.*

*Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; Ephesians 6:14*

*God's grace teaches us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world. Titus 2:12*

*But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. 1 Timothy 6:11*

### **They walked in all commandments blameless.**

Elizabeth and Zachariah walked before God, blameless. The Lord wants us to be unreprouvable in His sight. Do not think the teaching on innocence is archaic or someone trying to put you in a cave.

*And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Luke 1:6*

True Christianity is liberating, but compromise chains. Ignorance and self-life drive will make a believer take some truths and leave others. They keep people in prison and captivity of sin and backsliding. Total freedom is found when we desire the milk of life with sincerity and thirst after righteousness.

*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled Matthew 5:6*

As we continue in Him, our everyday prayers should be: Lord, let not iniquity be found in me, just as David prayed:

*Search me oh Lord and know my heart, I pray, see if there be any wicked way in me, and purge me Psalms 139:23-24*

Before sleep, we should take stock of how our day went. In frankness, if we discover any faults, we ask God to forgive any thought, anger, offence, and unforgiveness.

Let us encourage one another to be blameless, friends to friends, husband and wife, parents and children, siblings to siblings, at church and even in the offices. God's Grace is sufficient for us.

*That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world. Philippians 2:5*

*In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight. Colossians 1:22*

### **The challenge of barrenness**

Elizabeth and Zachariah were before the Lord, blameless and righteous, yet without a child. Children mean a lot in Hebraic culture. Women in those days had up to 12 children; you can imagine Elizabeth with none. It would have been understandable if they were ordinary brothers and sisters at church. They were

priests ministering and praying for others to be blessed, yet they were not. Does it mean that Elohim did not love Elizabeth and Zachariah?

*And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years, Luke 1:7*

Today, many people will want to throw away their Bibles because they do not have children. In desperation, they become prey to false prophets who will extort them to sow a seed of money to get a child.

This deception happens because wrong pictures have been painted, suggesting God blesses only those He loves. If you don't get what you asked for, there is a problem with you. Preachings like this have made some people at church feel out of place. Other messages suggest that whatever difficulty comes from Satan. Some preachers say God only rewards those who serve Him and gives them the desires of their hearts. It is not always so. God allows the rain and sun both on the righteous and unrighteous.

Another error peddled is that you have to do something significant to be blessed by God. It also has got people into doing all sorts of things to appease God. Scriptures are cherry-picked out of context to justify these notions. These errors should be debunked as they make room for people to accuse God of not loving them. The weak among us have left their faith or are prone to the deception of false prophets who tell them to give all they have to be blessed. These false prophets are leading men to hell; they are accusing our Elohim and giving Satan leeway to enter and control the lives of believers.

Satan also tricks people by telling them they are barren because God doesn't love them enough. The same Satan who accuses God and leads people to sin will turn around to blame them before



the Lord. Satan makes a switch-blade attack and cuts both ways. Preachers who flaunt what they have, their wealth, aeroplanes, and other material goods as evidence of being “blessed” put the poor in the church in a moral crisis. Those who testify how their quivers are full of a dozen children and boast about it are telling the likes of Elizabeth that they are not wanted in the church.

A lady told my sister she was tired of being asked to sow a seed to get a child. She has sown all she has and now wants to sow her life to the Lord, but preachers are not talking about how we sow one’s life to God.

She asked if she could have Jesus since she couldn’t have a child. We thank God for children, but the question is how parents are helping their children to fulfil their destinies. People are in the church very thirsty. They are yearning for the true gospel, and preachers are focussed on what we can get: the “give me, give me, give me gospel”.

Adoption is a way of having your own children. One may not have a physical child, but a mother of many spiritually and socially. Children are in Motherless homes looking for love, care, and people they can call parents. Give them hope and share your life with them. You will be fulfilled.

Older sisters are being weighed down because they don’t have husbands, and some brothers because they do not have a house or car. Some messages come across as if they are in sin or their woes surpass others. The result is people hide their sicknesses and problems so it will not look like they are not spiritual. Marriage is good, but not a passport to Heaven. Children are good but not a requirement for eternal life.

*If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. 1 Corinthians 15:19*

Elizabeth and Zachariah were not the only couples who remained faithful to God despite their challenges. As Priests, they may have read about Abraham and got encouraged.

Abraham was a righteous man, *Genesis 15:6* and a friend of God, *James 2:23*, yet without a child. Though the child had not come, Abraham remained faithful. While he waited for 25 years for the promise of Isaac to go through, he continued in an intimate relationship with the Lord. The Lord asked him in *Genesis 17:1* to walk before him and be perfect. God testified of him: "I know Abraham he will tell his children" *Genesis 18:19*. Eternal life is more important than what we get in this transient life.

Sometimes, we worry about what we have and have not, hindering us from growing in grace. The parents of Samson remained faithful and righteous. The Lord told them in *Judges 13* of the child to come after they had waited so long. I have heard people comment that they will throw away their Bible if what they asked for does not come through. My reaction is that they don't have a Bible in the first place and will throw away nothing. Please carry on with the Lord; do not just give up! It is normal when a child is born one or two years after a wedding. Still, rejoicing is extraordinary when the child comes 10-15 Years after wedlock. People see it as a miracle and praise the Lord.

May the Lord show His glory in our lives. Most of the time, we want our blessings now, though the Lord want to use us as proof of what He can do. All things are possible with Him *Luke 1:37*, but we want to see it with our eyes! Faith is not what we see with our eyes, but evidence of things that we are not seeing, the substance of things hoped for *Hebrews 11:1*, so if you want it now, you will be ordinary. But when that thing has lingered and manifests finally, you become exceptional.

Each time my family is in lack, I know that God was about to amaze us with abundance. There is a window of heaven opening to shower blessings upon us. There may be a natural barrier to you. It may be age, and you thought no one would marry you. When marriage happens, there may be the thought that you have passed the age of conception. Perhaps acid was poured on your face, which looks disfigured; one hand may have been withered. I do not know what natural limitation is posing like a Goliath before you! God will give you a pleasant surprise.

When you are blameless, walking in God's commandment, any delay is a sign of an abundance of rain, a miracle that will turn the world upside down is coming your way. Believe this report! The Shunammite woman was barren for years. She was not about any child when she saw the prophet. She ran to her husband and said: I perceive this man walking by our house, passing daily, as a prophet. Can we bring him in? Her concern was to make room for Elisha to stay in her house. She was after what she would do for the Lord.

*And he said, What then is to be done for her? And Gehazi answered, Verily she hath no child, and her husband is old 2 Kings 4:14*

Also, when the child came to Hannah, she promised to dedicate Him back to the Lord, and she did. The child yet to come may be Isaac, Samuel, John the Baptist, or Samson. Do you know if the child will be a miracle and a wonder to the glory of Elohim? That promise, job, husband/wife you thought is delayed. Whatever they are, do you know the plan of the Lord? Delay may not mean denial. We count age; we measure time, but remember what the Bible says:

*But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day 2 Peter 3:8*

So, time does not matter. You and I count the sun and the moon. Remember, man made the Gregorian calendar. They keep changing it and confusing everyone. Time and age are with the Lord. He is a miracle-working God. Science may claim that you are past age for a particular blessing or that your contours have dried up. Remember, God has all the power to recreate and make the dry bones live again. The question is, “*Son of man, can the bones live again*”? *Ezekiel 37:1-14*. Our bit is to believe it and say, “Yes, Lord, thou knowest”. Then you will see miracles, bone to bone, sinew to sinew, and flesh to flesh. It is all possible.

Even if you are dead like Lazarus *John 11*, four days in the grave smelling, remember that all things are possible with God. Dry bones shall rise again. If Jesus rose from the dead in three days, He who quickened and raised Him shall also freely give us everything pertaining to life and godliness. Shall God not freely give us wives, husbands, children, jobs, houses, success, protection and keep us? *Romans 8:32*. God is faithful. Please, do not give Satan room to make you feel our Elohim is not there. He is watching and looking. Can we trust Him? Understanding God is the key and was the reason Paul wanted to know Him and the power of His resurrection, which is what makes our faith strong. *Philippians 3:10-11*.

If you believe all things are possible with Him, rise from that bed of affliction in your room. As you walk down the street or in the office, cast down the thoughts that try to put you down and sing out loud:

*Dry bones shall rise again. Dry bones shall rise again (x 2),  
Call Jehovah who is able to do all things, is able, able;  
Dry bones shall rise again:  
Whether the devil likes it or not,  
Dry bones shall rise again.*

*Call Jehovah, who is able to do all things, is able, able;  
Dry bones shall rise again.*

Sing, dance, and pace around your room. Hum as you go, on the street, on a bus, on a train, or while driving. Make Satan mad, and he will flee, leaving you alone! He will know that you know your God. He is Elohim, YAHWEH. Satan will know where you are coming from! He will not try to confuse you or waste his time on you.

Stand strong. Elizabeth and Zachariah had no child and were called barren. Barren is the sorest word that can be used, yet they were blameless and righteous. Nowadays, if you call anyone barren, they will be angry and feel insulted, saying it is a curse. But look at the Bible; it is used in black and white.

Can we serve the Lord in righteousness and holiness, although what we want is not there? Can we continue and not compare ourselves with others? You know the Bible says that those who compare themselves with others are not wise *2 Corinthians 10:12*. Are you not comparing yourself with what others have that you don't have? The shoes, houses, and large congregation? Yours is not different. Give the Lord a chance; remain in holiness and righteousness. You are for a sign and wonder! Others may go like green bay trees boasting of what they have. The Lord will show you He is the Father of heaven and earth, and there is no shadow of turning with Him. Nothing is too hard for Him, *Jeremiah 31:17*.

Let us stand firm. There are many lessons to learn in the life of Zachariah and Elizabeth. Some people may not want to continue in ministry because they pray for others to be healed, and they are not healed. They prayed for others to have children, but they didn't. Your testimony shall change in the name of Yeshua Jesus. Ask for forgiveness for all the complaining, murmuring, moaning,

sleepless nights, crying, and prayer requests scattered abroad. We may have been going to places seeking miracles when what is required is to be holy and blameless. God is able and will do what He knows to do best.

### **Age was not on their side**

Another restraining factor was age. Elizabeth had gone past the age of childbearing, just like Sarah. Sarah laughed as she considered her womb dead and wondered how to carry a baby. Sarah was human, and humanity has limits to understanding. It takes the eyes of faith to see beyond human imagination. So, barrenness and age were a factor. Throughout the Bible were similar stories. The sons of the prophets cried to Elisha that the only axe head had fallen into the depths of the water. It was the only one they had. *2 King 6:5*

Not sure what your case is, and you think your life is finished, you've missed your flight of life. Missing the flight does not mean that you will not travel again. The only thing is that you missed that plane. There are others. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek you, shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. We should live in the scriptures. Even if you were told you don't have a womb because it was taken out, God is interested in your type of case.

We cry when we see the River Jordans of life on our way. God is saying come closer, the tip of your feet will part the waters, but we don't want to go near. We stand afar and cry. We are busy looking at the rage of the river, the depth, the deep blue colour and our inability to swim. Until we get to the Red Sea, it will not part.

When Satan tries to tell you that your Lazarus has been in the grave for three days and stinking, remind him that Christ was in the tomb for three days and rose again. When the laboratory result

suggests otherwise, when the predicated grade goes Ds and Es, wait until examination and see what Elohim can do for you.

### **They were faithful**

Zachariah was happy to go before the Lord to do his official course unlike some people who dwindle in unfaithfulness and selfishness. You will not be faithful when you own yourself and do what you like.

*And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. Luke 1:8-10*

His lot was to burn incense only, not to make the sacrifice. Some push and shove into positions in the church. Zachariah was content with what was assigned to him. Stay in your lane. He had one of the least responsibilities. People go for the positions that will be seen and recognised. The ones like intercession are neglected because they are done secretly, and no one sees it. They do not know that the intercessor's team is the engine house. They are the powerhouse built outside. Anyone coming close should be careful of electrocution. Covered in soot and smoke, the light in the house goes out without them. A church struggles without intercessors. The Lord will elevate those who serve sincerely, in obscurity, on the last day.

Whatever the Lord had called you to do, men may not recognise or applaud you, but Jesus has seen you. Look away from the noise makers who loom large at church but are not faithful. Your Father, Who sees in the secret, will reward you. Some dance what can be

called the ‘£100 dance’ to the altar only to drop £5 in the offering box, while some are quiet, giving a huge amount of money to the Lord regularly on direct debit. Please don’t be among the company that sticks out to be noticed. Don’t get confused, and the Lord knows those who are His. Do all as unto the Lord. Don’t copy anyone, be encouraged.

## **The Message**

*And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. Luke 1:11-13*

### **• Fear Not**

Zachariah was troubled when he saw the Angel. Fear came on him, as would anyone. I am so grateful we are in the dispensation where God lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit. We recognise His voice and know when he speaks. Those who lived in the Old Testament would wish they lived in the New like us. We have all the privileges they don’t have, yet we have not matched up to them. May they not stand against us on the last day.

The Lord said to him, fear not. Fear not of that long-term condition, barrenness, diagnosis, poverty, or sickness, for our God is the Supreme Lord. Fear not; you will not fail, and you will not be left alone. You’ve done your best, which seems not good enough. The Lord is saying, “Fear Not”.

*Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Isaiah 41:10*



*But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. Isaiah 43:1*

You might be 70 of age and not married; fear not. The Lord wants to do something with you. The Lord is waiting for those whom He will use to be a praise unto Himself. Those who will endure and let God's miracle happen through them will experience His visitation. When they see our physical disability and yet we are serving, it will challenge them. Let's not be in a hurry so that people will come to the Lord through us. Elizabeth and Zachariah did not have it all, yet they served the Lord. Don't be afraid. The Lord will visit you.

• **Thou shalt have joy and gladness.**

*And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. Luke 1:14-17*

God said to Zechariah, fear not, thou shall have joy and gladness, and so shall it be to you. Please tell yourself: "I shall have joy and gladness". All the years the locust and cankerworms have eaten shall be restored. You shall have joy and gladness.

Many shall rejoice at your miracle when that impossibility is made possible. Be calm; a John the Baptist is coming your way, and an Isaac or a Samuel is coming your way. There is a latter rain coming in abundance. Jesus is alive. All power belongs to Him. Every preacher and Christian should get comfort. The prophecy

was that a unique child like John the Baptist would turn many to the Lord. Just as they believed and received, you do likewise.

## **He Questioned the promise**

The Angel told Zachariah that a child would come with the power of Elijah. This was good news to anyone who had waited for a child. The cake did not come bare but with beautiful icing and decoration. The prophecy was stunning. But Zachariah was not moved. Sometimes, accepting good news after being in obscurity for a long time is tough.

*And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. Luke 1:18*

The angel told him what was to come. He questioned it because he was used to being in the desert of childlessness. Some of us have served faithfully and withstood Satan in the face of adversity, giving our time, intellect, and all that the Lord gave us. We should be watchful so we don't find ourselves in Zachariah's boat. Have you written that blessing off because it was delayed? It could be anybody, especially if you have poured all your life into the kingdom.

Sometimes, we get so used to difficult situations that we don't accept it when the Lord visits us. When my parents said I could not have a child because of the operation I had in childhood, I bought it. When I got married, we were not expecting any child. I did not recognise the signs of pregnancy because I was locked up in what I was told. I went as far as binding and casting out the pain disturbing my exams. It is easy to blame Zachariah, but in practical terms, we will do the same. It takes the grace of God.

When Destiny, our last child, came. This time, it was our age. We prayed, bound, and commanded, wishing it not to be

pregnancy, but Destiny, our bundle of joy, stayed. On the day of your visitation, may the Lord open your eyes, in Jesus' name, Amen. Do not accept barrenness, terminal diseases, or near-success syndrome. We are a chosen generation; all things have become new. We are in a new covenant. What killed your fathers will not kill you, in Jesus' name, Amen. Don't be in doubt. Behold, nothing is too hard for the Lord to do. That trouble at home, case in the court, and raging billows, the Lord can settle them. That dead bone will rise again. Don't rule out anything or shut the door. The Lord is mighty to save. Only believe, for without faith, it is impossible to please God.

Select few who dedicated themselves to the Lord despite all life's issues may find it hard to accept God's blessings. This is because they are not serving the Lord for what He will give them but serving Him with gratitude for what He has done for them. He saved us, redeemed us from the Kingdom of darkness and translated us into His glorious liberty. To live is Christ, and to die is gain. Our life here is nothing, but we live, move, and have our being in Him. When this is your attitude, we may think it is spiritual to reject God's visitation to show that we love and serve him for who He is.

The place of Elizabeth and Zachariah could be tricky for the likes of them. Check out: givers at church find it hard to receive gifts because they are used to giving. Those who follow up on people refuse visits when sick because they are used to doing it for others. It is common to find unbelief or doubt in such people, which is not intentional; they are satisfied in the Lord. Zechariah said, how shall I know this? I am an old man, and my wife is stricken in years. He was walking by sight.

Sometimes, Satan will try to use sentiments to justify putting us down. The enemy might suggest that we let the pain, failure, and

challenging situation to linger to prove our love for God. Please do not give him that chance. Rise and possess your possession.

It doesn't matter what limiting factors or what nature has put on you. Believe the Lord! The angel reassured Zechariah to believe him by saying he stood in the presence of the Lord. Can someone believe the Lord? It may not look well in the natural course of life, but the Lord wants us to believe. We may ask you to walk around the walls of your Jericho once every day and for six days and shout. It may not sound right, but can we believe the Lord? You might ask how your problems will crumble by just walking around them. The Lord is not a man, and His ways are past searching. We need to believe in Him completely. Without faith, it is impossible to please Elohim. God is the rewarder of those who diligently search for Him. He is no Prime Minister, President, human King, Queen, or wealthy man. He is not any nation or individual but the creator of heaven and earth. All power belongs to Him. He can change and recreate. If we see Him the way He is, we will obey every aspect of the Scripture. When He says ask, seek, and knock, we should believe him and do so. God is the God of all flesh.

Look beyond our age, capacity, and capability. Just walk around that wall of Jericho every day. He doesn't need our power, for we can do nothing without Him. How much muscle can we flex? How much of us can we put in when limited in most things? When the Lord asked Elijah to go to the widow for food, Elijah may have wondered if it should be otherwise. He should feed the widow and not her feeding him. He might wonder what food the widow had to feed him. *1 King 17*

The widow had only one plate of food for herself and her son but had the faith to give it to Elijah. Can we do the same in faith, believing in God? Believe the Lord that the little you have will not run out in famine. It is nothing with the Lord to fight with many

or few. If he asks you to reduce the army from 32,000 to 300, as he told Gideon, please do it. This is mind-blowing, and nobody can comprehend that, but that's the place where the Lord wants us to be.

The Lord may require you to make some preparations for what you are yet to see, but the challenge will be accepting it. The wife of the sons of Prophets was asked to do something incredible when she complained to Elisha about her debt.

*And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. 2 Kings 4:2-6*

Elisha told her to borrow vessels, not a few, and pour the oil into her borrowed containers. That sounded weird, but she did it. It was not her business to bother what it would be. She just obeyed and did as she was told.

Suppose the Lord asks you to go to the River Jordan and dip yourself seven times to be clean. Don't doubt like Naaman or compare Jordan with the rivers in your city. *2 Kings 5:1-15*. It takes a bold step to obey the Lord. Ezekiel was asked if the dry bones in the valley could live again, and he responded, "Thou knoweth Lord". *Ezekiel 37: 1-14*. As the dry bones became flesh

to fulfil the promise of God to His people that they will be restored, so shall you be restored in Jesus's Name. Amen.

You might still be feeling the pain and the wound bleeding, be sure it will dry out in the name of Jesus. Be the company of those who trust God. Please do not be in doubt like Thomas. Let joy flow in your heart, for we serve the Alpha and Omega. Our Heavenly Father is the beginning and the end, the all-knowing Father with whom all things are possible. The Creator of heaven and earth, He is The Almighty, Yahweh, our Elohim. Amen.

Arise and confess that your mountains will crumble. You shall cross the Red Sea, and the headache will be gone. Sleepless nights are gone, and though you have been told your season is gone, you shall live again. Have you lost your axe head in the rivers of life? It will come up to the top again. May the Holy Spirit quicken all who loved him out of a pure heart.

## **Dangers of unbelief**

Zachariah was made dumb because of unbelief. We cannot be spiritually dumb. Zachariah ministered and burnt incense in the tabernacle. People waited to hear what message he had from God, but he came out dumb. When a Pastor is dumb spiritually, the congregation will be in darkness. They will be spiritually blind and will not see. Everything said will be mere babble because the Pastor is spiritually dumb out of unbelief in their personal life. He did not speak until the day the prophecy was fulfilled.

*And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season. Luke 1:19-20*

Mind what you say in unbelief. It matters a lot. Go in the power of God's might, knowing His promises shall be. If you believe the Lord for others but don't believe Him for yourself, the work of the Lord will stall and put on hold for a time until you're out of that bondage. May the Lord open our eyes to the fact that we are not living for ourselves.

Miriam was struck with leprosy when she said what she shouldn't about Moses. *Numbers 12:1-15*. It delayed the journey because the children of Israel had to wait until she was healed. Some people can delay the journey of a church, ministry, families, or their children because of their mistakes. No matter what comes your way, brace yourself and fall forward towards the Lord. Don't fall backwards to Satan because he will keep you down. If you fall forward, the Lord will pick you up. He will help you rise again.

Zachariah could not speak. Meanwhile, people were outside waiting for him to speak. There are people the Lord has committed into our hands, either at church, fellowship, or house fellowship levels who will remain ignorant if we get dumb. Those who see us as an example or get encouraged through the Word we preach will stay temporarily blind if we get dumb.

*And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. Luke 1:21-22*

People waited for Zachariah and marvelled that He tarried in the temple. Please don't get yourself to where you'll be temporarily dumb, and virtue stops flowing. They thought he saw a vision in the temple. They didn't know that the man of God was not where he was supposed to be. He had fallen. He was beckoned on, but he remained speechless. The Lord showed the Children of

Isreal goodness, delivered them from the hands of Pharaoh, and servitude in Egypt for 430 years. He gave them manna, a pillar of cloud by the day, a pillar of fire by the night. He also divided the Red Sea for them to Cross over. They ate the manna in the wilderness, crossed the Jordan on dry ground and saw the walls of Jericho crumble, yet they doubted. Thousands perished in the wilderness due to murmuring.

We can ask the Lord to forgive us for unbelief. The Lord has done a lot in our lives to be grateful for. Count the goodness of God, and you will be surprised at what He has done. We see new mercies every day. We have seen the rain, the sun, the moon, the snow, the winds, weather in their season, and none has ceased to come. God can do all things. Believe Him who made the mighty oceans; scientists cannot discover the depth. He made the mountains and hot larvae of volcanos. Imagine the thunders in the sky and the raging storms. Our God stopped the waters from overflowing the earth. Is anything too hard for Him to do? We cannot afford to go dumb like Zachariah now that we have read about him. May God help us.

### **Elizabeth hid herself**

One would have thought Elizabeth would show off grandly, but put yourself in her shoes. I don't blame her. A 36-year-old sitting at GSCE with the 16-year-old in his school uniform and shoes looks out of place. The children will laugh!

*And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying: Luke 1:23-24*



Elizabeth hid herself because of people's opinions and what they would say. Culture and perception of society was her biggest barrier to celebrating God's miracle. It is still common today. Older women hide their later pregnancies, and those children are popularly called "Mistakes" in some cultures. Fortunately, all the "Mistakes" I know became the "Josephs and Davids" of their families.

Once a stage is missed in life, it is difficult to get it back without some social and psychological trauma. It ought not to be so. We should celebrate the recovery of what was lost. It shows that God can do anything. Satan may try to steal the joy of recovery by suggesting what people will say. Please shun him and shout out for Joy. The Lord has wiped away your tears.

### **Elizabeth's confession**

There is a time for visitation. The reproach will not last forever. Elohim is in heaven. God has heard your cry and reproach.

*And said thus has the Lord dealt with me and looked on me and took away my reproach among men," Luke 1:25*

The Lord has seen your obscurity and the desert place you hid yourself. Cry no more. Wipe the secret tears, the anguish, the yearning, anxiety, worry and miseries. Your reproach, whatever it is, has been taken away as our God is greater than them. Every reproach laid on you by men and nature shall be taken and rolled away in Jesus' name. Amen

Reproaches of sin, drugs, alcohol, prostitution, murder, suicide, greed, fraud, wickedness, lust, sickness, poverty, and besetting sin are taken away in Jesus' name. Amen. The reproach of barrenness, near-success syndrome, delays, limitations, closed doors, death, divorce and loneliness shall be taken away in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, Lord, for rolling away any stone that has kept anyone in the grave. We will not act in unbelief, for God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Shout out, rejoice, glorify, and testify of God's goodness. For in His name, every knee shall surely bow. Don't hide. We need to rejoice in His goodness and speak our faith.

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it, the elders obtained a good report. Through faith, we understand the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which appear. Hebrews 11:1-3*

Elizabeth had given up hope, but that which tarried came to life. The good news is on its way. Yours shall come to life in Jesus' Name. Amen.

Zecharia was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied on his son. When people argue over the manifestation of the Holy Spirit as a Pentecoste experience only, I wonder if they have read the Bible thoroughly. God created us and has manifested Himself from the beginning. Parents should learn from Zachariah. He could prophesy because God lives in Him. He was there for his son, and how many of us will seek righteousness to benefit our children and lineage. Some parents avail themselves of occultism, alcoholism, idolatry, murder and many other vices, and you wonder what they leave behind for their children. I pray we leave godly assets for our children, not spiritual liabilities that will limit them.

## Mary

The extraordinary life of Mary challenged and motivated me, as a young lady, to aspire for the best. False religion puts her up for worship, which is not right, hiding the great attributes of her life, which should be a subject for learning for every young person. False religion tried to label her the ‘Queen of heaven’. She is not! The Queen of heaven in *Jeremiah 17* and *44* and *Revelation* is a spiritual harlot that will be revealed and shamed on the last day.

Mary’s profile was revealed by herself. There is a lot to learn about Mary and her life, which should be compulsory for all the young people in the church. Let’s explore Mary from the scriptures.

Mary, the mother of Jesus, was an innocent, God-fearing young lady who the Lord used to usher Himself into the world to redeem man. Mary deferred all obedience to our Lord Jesus when she told the disciples in *John 2:5* to obey whatever Jesus said. May the Lord open our eyes! Those who worship Mary are worshipping the created instead of the Creator.

### Mary’s encounter with Angel Gabriel

*And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin’s name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail,*

*thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God, nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. Luke 1:26- 45*

## Nazareth and it's baggage

Nazareth, during the time of our Lord Jesus, was a small city between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee.

*And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth. Luke 1:26*

It is a stopover place for merchants going from Egypt to Mesopotamia. Stop-over towns are known for trading, hotels, inns, drinks, strangers, and thieves who rob people of their goods. Visitors and strangers are taken advantage of, hence their notoriety. You can now understand why Nathaniel asked Philip if anything good could come out of Nazareth. *John 1:45-46*

Practically, some people may have a feeling of being born in the then Nazareth. Nothing good is said about them; they are deemed ugly, put down and profiled. Maybe you have been written off by siblings and parents as the black sheep of the family or written off in your workplace as one who will not get a promotion. Perhaps some have written you off in school as one who will not get good grades or written off in society as the poorest in the community, barely surviving rather than living.

For whatever reason, you think you are a Nazarene, or Nazareth is your middle name. I want to proclaim good news to you. The Lord has seen you in that obscure place where you feel trodden down and unknown. If the Lord left Jerusalem, Judea, the actual Galilee, Joppa of those days, and all the prominent cities of Israel to go into Nazareth, the tiny little town, to pick up Mary. I want to tell you: the Lord will pick you up in the Name of Yeshua!

I want you to say: "Yes, thank you, Lord!" The Lord sees both in the open and the secret, in that tiny village, anywhere you are. It doesn't matter which remote country or island you come from, with a population of less than four thousand people. You may wonder if you can make it. The answer is: Yes, you can make it!

Are you living in one of those tiny remote villages where civilization has not reached? There is no water, no electricity, and you are asking if you can make it. Yes, you will make it! Has Satan suggested that you are nothing? This good news is for you. So was Nazareth in those days, and a young lady stayed in the court of the Lord, consecrated herself and kept herself pure.

### **To a virgin**

Mary was a virgin in Nazareth. Mary kept herself chaste and pure and unspotted. Talks on purity and virginity these days look bizarre. Some children have been defiled as early as age 12. It is not trendy to have such discussions at schools. Some scorners will deem you a 4th-century B.C. caveman and tell you that the world has moved on.

It looks bizarre in modern times to keep chaste. It is alien to any school curriculum. Society has failed our children and exposed them to immoral systems. Children are not free in our communities. Most things are against them, the billboards, television commercials, internet adverts and posters on buses and trains. We are not giving them a chance to enjoy their young life but laden them with things they have no explanation for.

We have not done well for the future generation. It is hypocrisy to talk about paedophiles when things in our living room, bedroom, market, gym, stores, parks, and play areas are morally rotten! Let's stop the hypocrisy. It is neither here nor there. Children are taught what ought not to be taught in school. We were protected and allowed to grow into adulthood when we were young. It is not so nowadays. We are passing bills that force children into adulthood and things that will not naturally go to their minds. We need to keep praying for the nations of the world.

Out there are the boyfriend/girlfriend stories, and some parents accept that. Let us allow the children to be children and enjoy their childhood.

*Train up a child in the way he will go: that when he grows up, he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6*

We should guide our children into adulthood; the good Lord will guide them when it's time for marriage. It is not all about physical chastity but also spiritual.

*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things have passed away, all things are become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17*

When the old is given up on salvation, we should keep the new pure and chaste. The old dies with Christ and resurrects in newness of life, *Romans 6:4*. Keep your Christian life, do not defile it! There is virtue and strength in purity. It drives Satan away. Do not defile yourself! Some people are going through guilt and trauma because of their misspent past. Satan accuses them and steals their liberty. Do not go back to the things which you have rejected. They can only lure your soul into danger, nothing else! Do not set your tent toward Sodom. Otherwise, Sodom will extend to you, or you will move there when you see better houses. Abstain from all appearance of evil *1 Thessalonians 5:22*. They will take away your consecration and commitment. Borrowing from celebrities will take away God's favour. Cover your nakedness. Your body is the temple of God. The goal of every saint is to make it to heaven. Life here on earth is temporary.

*What shall it profit a man to gain this world and lose his soul? Matthew 16:26*

It was said of Moses that he did not want to enjoy the pleasures of Egypt for a while, but he chose to suffer the reproach of the kingdom *Hebrews 11:25*.

People who show off their cleavages after being born again are not sure what they repented of. The world will feast on you, flies will come to perch, bees will come, and many creepy and dirty things will come. There is no need for those. Going back to our vomit is not the best. It is not good to start in the spirit and end up in the flesh *Galatians 3:3*.

Stand firm and keep yourself unspotted! You have the best! The Lord will visit you. He will answer your prayers. You might be ridiculed for being undefiled and told you are out of sync; know that you are in the right place and state. Sometimes, people ask the singles who do not mess around whether something is wrong with them. There is still power in holiness.

### **Espoused to a man**

Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph. The message the Angel is about to give is not good for any girl about to get married, not with the tradition Mary was born into. She had kept herself. How could such shame come on her?

*Numbers 5* and *Deuteronomy 22* are strong laws concerning adultery and fornication. There was an oath of cursing that would rot the woman's thigh and swell her belly. In *Deuteronomy*, the man and woman shall be stoned to death if they are found guilty of defiling themselves before marriage. No lady wants to be in such a horrifying situation. She should be stoned, and the heap would stand as a memorial. It was an omen. So, the news that she will be with the child of the Holy Ghost would not have been a compliment. Who would believe her? That is how strict it was in those days. During the time of Jesus in *John 8:1-5*, the Pharisees who brought Mary Magdalene to Him asking to stone her referred to the above scriptures.



## The salutations

### Hail

There must have been a glory on this young lady that warranted the greeting. Humility and purity, which typify those who worship God in truth and Spirit, should be seen in the outlook of a believer. It looks out of place for somebody to preach on holiness while nothing outwardly displays righteousness. The mouth says something else, but the physical look puts one off! The vessel will scatter when a new wine is put in an old wine skin. Matthew 9:17. So is anyone preaching the gospel, but your looks put people off. You will be scattering people's brains. They hear sound messages of righteousness from the mouth, but everything from head to toe does not rhyme physically! It is a contradiction.

There should be a sobriety about us, whether male or female. There is a confusion of face going about. People are looking at Pastors and unsure if we are still in the era of Levitical Priesthood with all the regalia or in the dispensation of grace. All the pomp and pageantry do not hold water. If the Angels visits, can He say "Hail" to us? Our earnest prayer is to look presentable before God so that we can be given a standing ovation.

You might think you are unknown and live in the spiritual Nazareth of the 21st century, in obscurity, not heard of and in the smallest of cities, with no reputation. There is a greeting coming your way. May the Lord greet you; may the Lord say hello to you, and may the Lord lift you. When you keep yourself pure, the Lord will hallow, exalt and keep you.

There is power in purity. It is good to claim promises, but some conditions lead to these promises! I pray we concentrate on what will bring blessings rather than the blessing itself.

## Thou art highly favoured

The shout of “Amen” from any congregation or individual in response to “Thou art highly favoured” can pull down the roof of a church. So, what did Mary do to merit this commendation? We know that Abel brought the firstling of his flock and the fat. God respected it, *Genesis 4:4*. Noah also found grace because he was a righteous man, *Genesis 6:8*. Moses was a meek man and found grace. David was a man after God’s heart because he trusted and lived in obedience and revered God, *1 Samuel 13:14*. Abraham found favour with God, and God took him out of the heathen land of Ur, *Genesis 12*.

These men distinguished themselves, hence the grace they found from God. Mary must have set herself out as a shining star. Lilies grow in the mud, and Mary stood out in a city like Nazareth.

There is a popular song, “Favour is my name, O favour is my name”. That is fine. I admire your faith, but before you change your middle name to Favour, ask, “Am I like Mary?”. If the answer is yes, then go ahead and publish it in the newspaper.

Some people misinterpret *1 Peter 3:7* and see women as weak in character. The passage is not talking about spiritual weakness but physical strength. You might agree that if wealth is by physical force, men who are heavy load carriers would have been the wealthiest men on earth.

This cultural and religious baggage brings women down to little minds, backbiting, push and shove, petty jealousy, bitterness, anger, and envy, which destroy the fellowship. Some women have bought into these and are described as such in *1 Timothy 5:13*. They are idle, tattlers, busybodies, and speaking things they ought not to say. There is dignity, honour, respect, and virtue in womanhood. Please keep it and avoid engaging in things that make people look down on women! Mary did not buy into these

low levels of esteem as the daughters of Zion in *Isaiah 3:16*, who were on a catwalk show.

The world tries to put women down, marginalise, and exploit their vulnerability! Advertising a naked woman on a billboard is an abuse of womanhood! May the Lord have mercy on us. In summer, the men are covered in shorts and shirts, but the women almost wear a bikini on the street! It ought not to be so! Tell yourself: “No, I cannot be reduced”. Don’t live in the flesh. If Mary were like that, she would not have found favour.

Women are wise, problem solvers and endowed with great wisdom. Give no room to culture and the world to debase you. May we find favour with God and men in Jesus’ name. Amen.

### **The Lord is with you**

The Lord was with Mary. May the Lord be with you. He is always by our side in everything. Be assured, do not think you are by yourself. As a young person, the Lord is with you if you have kept yourself in purity and righteousness. Please don’t feel left out when others cheat in an examination, dress indecently, lie, or sell their bodies. You missed nothing. The Lord is with you whether you are poor or living in Nazareth as Mary was. Mary would probably not have thought so. Her mind would have gone to the pomp and pageantries in Jerusalem. The all-knowing father sees every corner you are tucked in.

### **Blessed art thou among women**

I was wondering why Mary was blessed among women. For God to proclaim you blessed, you must be somewhere special. We commonly say “God bless you” as our everyday greetings. This time there is a special clause to the proclamation. The state of one’s life brings blessing. The following scriptures describe those who are blessed among others.

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. Psalm 1:1*

Mary did not walk in the counsel of the ungodly; she kept herself pure, unspotted from the world! She separated herself and did not mingle; *2 Corinthians 6:14-18*. You will not be blessed if you are not separated from the ungodly! She did not sit in the seat of the scornful.

*Blessed is that man that maketh the Lord his trust, And respecteth not the proud, nor such as turn aside to lies. Psalm 40:4*

Mary trusted the Lord! Can we trust the Lord even when we do not see the promise? When it looks like a tornado is behind our backyard, and we can see the whirlwind coming to blow off the roof, will you still trust the Lord? Your boat is rocking in the midst of the deepest oceans. Can you believe the Lord that the ship will not break, you shall be safe and that the whales of the seas will not swallow you up? Can you trust that with Elohim, all things are possible? *Matthew 19:26*. May we trust God!

*Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive; and he shall be blessed upon the earth: and thou wilt not deliver him unto the will of his enemies. Psalm 41:1-2*

Mary may have considered people experiencing poverty. Don't keep a blind eye to the need of the poor. Giving is not a function of what you have but the heart. Reach out to people, and you shall be called blessed.

*Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted. Psalm 89:15-16*

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord! Mary walked in the joyful sound, rejoicing all day in the Lord. Her soul rejoiced in the Lord her God. No matter what comes her way, the Lord's righteousness is exalted in her life, which is the reason for the blessing. I will do so myself. I won't miss out on these blessings. You can join in on enjoying blessings galore all the way.

*Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord. Psalm 112:3*

Mary feared the Lord! If you fear the Lord, you will know He sees in secret and outside. There will be no need to do evil behind closed doors, travelling to another city for sin, thinking you will not be seen. God sees. He is in the sea, the air, the mountains, and the depths. David asked where he could run from God. If he ran to heaven, God is living there; to hell, He is there; on earth, it is His footstool. The Lord is everywhere, in every nook and cranny. Darkness hides from Him.

Please do not run off on holidays to commit sin and return to singing in the choir as if nothing happened. The Lord saw you. Do not be do-gooder at church but a different person at home and in the office, or indulge in wild parties and mess up at city centres where you presume no eye is watching. May you rejoice in God's righteousness all the time!

*Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters. Isaiah 32:20*

Mary might have sowed beside all waters. As David, you are dwelling in the house of the Lord all the days of your life. Do you sow beside waters in the Lord, in all things? Involved in prayers and other activities? You might be misunderstood, and people say things like you have no job, family, or child, which is why you have all the time. Do not worry about all of those. Serve the Lord!

*Blessed is he whosoever shall be not offended in me. Matthew 11:6*

Mary was not offended by the things of the Lord. She had the best. So many things may come to overwhelm you. Do not be offended. Though persecution may come, worldly fashion makes you feel less, and lack may be there to humiliate you. Be satisfied and contented in the Lord. Do not wrestle with the instructions in the word of God or be bored with your Christian life. Many people want the freedom to sin, so do not follow them. Sin is not enjoyment. Drinking alcohol and drugs will mess up your liver and brain and take out humanity from you.

*Blessed are ye when men shall hate you. Luke 6:22*

Mary would not have bothered if friends had put her aside for her faith. That was okay with her! As a young girl, she did not have to conform to what others did.

She was fine and sorted and settled in the Lord. No lure of the world could take her in there. Blessed are you when people exclude you because of righteousness. You lose your job because you refuse to compromise; you face trials and reproaches for the Lord's name, or your relationship broke up because of your faith. Don't worry about the unholy relationship; it will sting you.

*Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He shall come, shall find watching. Luke 12:37*

Mary might have been watching. Her encounter with the Angel was not stressful.

*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. James 1:12*

Mary might have had some temptations and endured them. May the Lord help and give us grace not to yield to temptations.

Remember the song that says: “And when you are tempted, my brother, God give you the grace to say no”. Mary received the crown because she endured temptations.

*Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book. Revelations 22:7*

Mary kept to the prophecies of the scriptures and stayed in the place of prayer. When you find the truth in the word like the woman in *Luke 15:8-9*, don't trade it. You have found salvation, joy, and liberty and Elohim. Keep the Word, stay in it, and read it; it is life and Grace to us. It doesn't matter what title anybody holds, don't follow their bad example. Look up to Jesus, for He is our perfect example. They might repent in the future, but you would have gone astray.

*Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. Psalms 32:2*

Those who are straight with truth will be blessed. The deceptive with guile in their heart will not. If you are a Christian with duplicity and are two-faced, there is no need to say bless you because there is nothing to bless. Exploring the conditions of blessings is inexhaustible. The crown of them all is:

*Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. Revelation 19:9*

This is being called to the privileged place of seeing, being and reigning with Christ forever. We shall see Mary one day in Glory. The hunger, poverty, and lack we experienced on this side of eternity do not count. We are waiting for the soon-coming King!

### **She heard the Word and kept it**

Mary knew the Messiah would come one day, and Israel was waiting for Him. The Roman rule was rigid on them. They paid

taxes to Governors who ruled them; they were captives in their land and cried for the consolation of Israel. Luke 2:25. They carried on with religious rituals, and people met at the temples, but nothing happened.

Mary found it needful to serve the Lord more in those days. No excuse was worth it for her. She helped and believed in the Lord. Though she was a lady, she equalled the men in consecration. The male Priestly caste did not bother her; she was a child of God. It was about her and what she does with her life. Mary made up her mind to:

- Consecrate her life to God.
- Love Him beyond all things.
- Yield herself solely to Him.
- Remain in the place of prayer.
- Look forward to the coming of the Messiah.

It is all about us as individuals, it has nothing to do with the populace, society, or religious group. Righteousness is personal! This young lady gave herself to the Lord and did not see the limitations. It was not about the physical but the spiritual and what was in her. Mary's life should be an example to every young person. She came against all odds in her time to keep herself chaste. She would have used the excuse that it was the dark days of Israel and there was no prophet to do her own thing, but she feared the Lord. Many young people give the excuse of the undue exposure to sin, social media and gender issues, which has negatively affected them. As a young person, you can be different. Make up your mind that Satan will not steal your persona. Keep your head above the waters and decide to stand tall in your generation.

### **She wondered what manner of salutation this should be**

Mary was troubled with the salutations. Why are hail, favour,



and the Lord is with you, said to her as a top-up? That is a bit too loud of a greeting. It is not a big deal for her to trust the Lord, consecrate herself to Him, love Him with all her heart, and separate herself from the world. To her, it is for her good, exaltation, protection, and to keep her away from Satan, demons and all the powers of darkness!

Mary could see nothing she did as special. They were done unto the Lord. Contrary to Mary's attitude, people get offended when you do not recognise them. They pick offence when not called up to high seats or publicly hailed for what they did. I pray we follow Mary, do things as unto the Lord, and ask for no credit. Some people boast of their extended fasting and prayers, others of the miracles they perform. It is not by our power, for without Christ, we can do nothing.

Mary didn't seek the title; it came to her. Allow God to confer His title on you instead of giving it to yourself.

### **The message**

#### **Fear not**

Do not be afraid; there is no need. You have been in the place of consecration; it is God's time to visit. Fear not; for the Lord is here! Do not look at the scary faces of intimidators, *Jeremiah 1:8, 17, Ezekiel 2:6*. Fear is tormenting *1 John 4:18*, for the Lord has not given us the spirit of fear but of power, love and a sound mind *2 Timothy 1:7*. Although there was a set rule to stone her if found with a child out of wedlock, do not fear. God wrote the rules and can annul them. Do not fear the storm and billows of life raging against you. God created them. You will not die but live to declare God's goodness. Don't fear the sickness. He created us and made all the spare parts before we were born. Poverty will not ravage

you; silver and gold belong to God, and He can supply them in abundance. Don't worry about the harvest; times and seasons are with Him. You will reap plenty in the harvest.

When you go through the waters, God will be with you. When you pass through the fires, He will be with you *Isaiah 43:2*. The Egyptians you see today shall be seen no more *Exodus 14:13*.

The battles you face are not yours but the Lord's *2 Chronicles 20:15*. All you need is to go around Jericho and make one shout, and all the walls shall crumble *Joshua 6:20*. Fear not, for God will divide the Red Sea for you. Do not let fear in.

Fear gripped Elijah when Jezebel threatened him, and he thought he was all alone. God told him there were others who had not bowed to Baal. You might have consecrated yourself, given all you have for the kingdom, but still feel lonely on this journey. Fear not! Remember, the disciples thought it was only them; they did not know that there was a Cornelius somewhere out there with his family: devoted, seeking the face of Elohim; *Acts 10*. There are thousands of genuine Christians all over the world. Do not be troubled in your mind. God is with you

## **The son Jesus**

*And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. Luke 1:31*

His name is JESUS: Yeshua Ha Mashiach! That is the name, including the one you call Him in your language. Shout out the glorious name! There is no other name whereby we are saved, *Acts 4:12*.

*He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom, there shall be no end. Luke 1:32-33*

Hallelujah, Amen! His name is powerful, excellent, precious, glorious, exalted, and above all names; *Philippians 2:9-11*. The name Angels bow to in heaven, and the earth adores. The name roars and calms the sea, mountains and sickness flee at the mention. The name raises the dead, subdues Satan, quenches fire and causes every knee to bow. That was the message given to Mary. Her consecration and humility brought glory to her. The Lord seeks the person He will use in these last days; He found Mary in her time. Can He find us?

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9:6-7*

*Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. Hebrews 1:4*

The name of Yeshua, Jesus, is the greatest weapon against Satan. He is the Solid Rock.

*And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King Of Kings, And Lord Of Lords. Revelation 19:16*

He is the King of kings, the Lord of lords. Therefore, every principality and power, both human and spiritual, is subject to Him. There is no need to fear. Walk in boldness. Have faith; trust Him in all things. That strange situation will not destroy you. May we enjoy the authority in that name, Amen.

*And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it John. 14:13-14*

My family caught this revelation and have enjoyed the glorious power of asking the Lord about everything we need. What is crippling you in life, emotionally, psychologically, physically, and financially? By the authority in the name of Jesus, ask them to go. You might face the challenges of your academics, difficulties in your business, and no promotion at work. Speak to those situations to align in faith. May the name of Yeshua give you soundness of mind, soundness of heart, and soundness of the brain!

*Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. Acts 3:6*

The name of Jesus saves. It breaks the bounds and the chains of drugs, alcoholism, murder, prostitution, envy, bitterness, and hatred. It breaks them asunder; they cannot stand! Demons flee at His name. Our only limitation is that we do not ask; sometimes, we ask amiss; *James 4:2-3*.

## **The Questions**

### **How shall this be?**

How can it be? It's a mystery. I know not a man. Will it fly? Mary is not alone in the asks of "How".

Noah wondered about the earth being destroyed with water. The world called into being is a mystery. How can it be that fire and brimstone will rain from heaven to consume the beautiful city called Sodom? How can it be that there has been a famine in the land for three years, and food will be sold for a penny the next day? How can that be? Mary, the sister of Lazarus, asked how he could be raised from the dead. He should stink, being dead for four days. Abraham, "it's time to visit you. Isaac is about to come through.

Sarah is 89, and you are 99”, but how can it happen? Gideon, you will fight the Midianites. You are a mighty man of valour. Oh no, why should I be gleaning at night for fear if I am one? Where is the bravery? Where is the strength? You would have called me “Coward Gideon”, and then I would have answered. I can’t see the courage. It does not correlate. And how can it be that a child will go into the mother’s womb and be born again? Nicodemus asked Jesus.

How many of us have asked questions concerning the miracles coming our way? How can it be that I have nothing, not even a dime, but tomorrow, I will be in Australia? How come, Lord, that all this debt will be written off? How can this smelly and sore disease dry up in a second? How will I be discharged from the court and paid some compensation? How can I have an A-Star on an exam I did not prepare for, of which the subject is complex?

The mysteries are with the Lord, and we are mere men. Let us bow and honour Him. Our knowledge is limited, and we can’t go beyond that. God is not a man and knows the true north because He created it. Without a compass, we cannot see where the wind is coming from or going.

Zechariah asked this same question, and he was made dumb, but explanations were given to Mary. What extraordinary favour! Zachariah was a Priest and should have known more. The Lord regarded the simple innocence of Mary’s heart and gave her an answer.

*I, the Lord, search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.*  
*Jeremiah 17:10*

One may have asked innocently, and the other asked in doubt (I am well-stricken in age). Your mouth may say something, but your heart is saying another thing. Zachariah did not outrightly

say, “I don’t believe”. God read his heart. The Lord looks at the heart. The Lord searches the reins of our hearts. The Lord knows what is going on.

Like Zachariah, you might think you have been with the Lord for many years, and nothing has happened. You wonder if your miracle will ever happen. You may have settled with not having any expectations because the faith required to birth the miracle is blurred. Older prophets sometimes doubt. The older you grow with experiences, there is a tendency to take certain things for granted. We have to be watchful. I pray we keep our faith alive in God at all times, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

### **Holy Spirit shall overshadow you**

The Lord said to Mary, the Holy Ghost will come upon you. The Holy Ghost will come upon your situation. All the problems you are afraid of will not limit you. You will speak the language of the brave. Call forth all the promises and prophecies proclaimed to you. We serve a Father who calls things which be not as though they were. Amen.

### **The secret was revealed to her**

*And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. Luke 1:36*

She also got the favour of being told a secret of Elizabeth’s pregnancy. God reveals mysteries to those He loves.

*He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel. Psalms 103:7*

Nowadays, people are looking for acts, shows, and miracles. The best is to know Him and the power of His resurrection and be found conformable to His ways.

*That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; Philippians 3:10*

We do not just want to see the acts but also to know Him and His mind more intimately.

### **With God, nothing shall be impossible**

Satan might suggest that you are written off, and that favour is against you. He may mock you with the promotion you didn't get. Satan whispers about many impossibilities. He will remind you that the pain is still there and won't go. "The problem is still looming large". "As long as this family is concerned, things can't change," Tell the voice, "For with God, nothing shall be impossible."

A letter was written, sealed, and signed with the King's signature, *Esther 2*. Haman was to take it across the province to destroy all Jews. By Persian tradition, no man could nullify a document with the King's signature. But Mordecai told Esther, 'Look, we have to do something.' We have a Father who will never fail us, forever. But who signed that letter? Is he not a man whose days are but few? Is he not created by Elohim? A man like a flower, blossoming in the morning and gone in the evening. And Esther said, "Pray with me, I will go see the king. If I perish, I perish". Did the Jews die? No! The Lord preserved them. Would you believe it? David said, "*I look up to the hills, whence cometh my help*" *Psalms 121:1*. Can someone believe? It does not matter what the situation is; face it and say, "Nothing is too hard for the Lord to do".

If only we could see our Heavenly Father for who He is, we would know nothing is impossible! He created the Earth, Sun, and Moon. Elohim is The Almighty One, the Holy One of Israel. His words will work out in your life.

## **She put her marriage on the line and submitted to the will of God**

A wedding is a colourful occasion and means a lot to every young lady. The preparation fever of trying out gowns, invitations, food, drinks, and halls can be intriguing. Some preparation takes as early as two years before the date. Every young person looks forward to it, but to Mary, “Wedding or no wedding, as long as it was the will of the Lord, so be it! Who am I that I should bear the Messiah?”

*And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. Luke 1:38*

Mary might have said, “Well, Joseph, something more than marriage is here, and if you want to go, that is fine. I live to do God’s will”. Mary would not confer with flesh and blood concerning the will of God. It was not negotiable for her. She would not consult anyone, not even Joseph.

Mary said, “Behold thy handmaiden”, I submit to you; I am nothing before you; use me”. This is total submission and the highest point anyone can attain in consecration. A whole life laid out to God. The confession of, “what things were gain to me I count but dung that I may win Christ”. A surrendered life is typified by a total yield to God. I can hear the following scriptures being recited in my mind:

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Philippians 1:21*

*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Philippians 3:7*

*Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. Luke 22:42*



*Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. Revelation 4:11*

*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Romans 12:1*

God owns us, and we live for His pleasure. We should always be in adoration, saying, “Not my will but thine, O’ Lord”. “What would you want me to do, Lord? Let it be so. Where you lead, I will follow. Where you send me, I will go. My life is all yours”. We don’t do this because we want to. It takes a deep commitment and an understanding of Elohim and His purpose in our lives to do it.

Mary counted all but dung that she might win the excellency of the approval of Jehovah, her creator!

### **She staked her reputation and that of the family**

In the Hebraic Law, if a girl is married and found not to be a virgin, she would be brought in front of her mother’s house and stoned to death. The heap will be left to speak against them for generations because she defiled the house of Israel. Families were so cautious about their young girls to avoid this terrible omen.

*If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel’s virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: And the damsel’s father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the*

*tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city.*

*And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. Deuteronomy 22:13-21*

Mary was prepared to face a big shame as the law was still active then. Even as a rape victim, she would be stoned with that man if she did not cry out! And if she cried out, nothing would happen. That was a very strong ordinance. In Mary's situation today, we would have said no to the Lord, "I can't be put to shame". We will call for urgent 21-day fasting and prayers to refute the will of God.

*Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it, Luke 17:33.* Have you staked anything for the kingdom?

Mary heard the Lord, and that was it for her. As far as she was concerned, she would not fear what man could do to her. Zechariah was so afraid and doubted because he was conscious of old age; how would people laugh at him and joke about the blessing? He did not believe it! But Mary said: be it unto me!

Has the Lord sent you on a mission to a hostile place you have never been to pastor a small congregation? Will give an excuse or go saying, "*Be it unto me according to Your word*"? Most people will love it in the city with thousands of people and will not go

to the thatched mud of village churches. They would not want to contend with the lions and snakes in the bushes. Some may consider their excellent qualification as a waste in the village.

As for Mary, she would go where the Lord leads because she was sold out to Him. The call of God is the highest thing to happen to anyone. She put her life on the line.

The sufferings of Christ are no longer being regarded. Instead, people want to eat their cakes and have them back. People want to gloat about things that are not of eternal value.

### **She had strong faith**

The message Mary responded to was a hard one, considering the culture and the laws of Moses. It was contrary to the norms and patterns of the society. In our times, Mary would have told someone what the Angel said because it is unnatural. Society may not approve of what you have received from the Lord. Mary focused on the greatness of He, who was to be born of her, not the fear of what would happen to her. Some people live by what people would say, the opinion of men. All the “Can” and “Cannot” sometimes arise when we follow that which we do not know the origin of, just that people have done it over the years, and it is now embedded into the culture.

Faith confounds tradition. It contradicts the worldly system because the material system is a set-up plan for an ordinary life. The programme we know today is you go to primary school, secondary school, college, and university, get a job, rent accommodation, get married, have children, buy a pet, work for thirty-five years, retire and die. That is the standard plan we are programmed to believe. The typical ways of church growth for many is this: raise money to hire a hall, buy a band, organise a choir, buy a uniform for the choir, and plan all the programs.

Faith bursts all norms to do something different! It does extraordinary things as the Lord leads. Faith will make you like John the Baptist, who understood his calling. He was of the Priestly lineage and was expected to dress in a robe with a staff and do the rituals on the altar. He was instead dressed in camel skin, out in the wilderness eating wild locusts and honey *Matthew 3:1-4*. He did not conform to the standard way, yet all of Israel went out to hear him. The Lord is looking for those who will walk outside the norm. Those who will say, “Be it unto me according to Your word”. Those who will go out on the streets to the homeless, not just the posh of society. Those who will sponsor the gospel and minister to the downtrodden part of their towns.

### **She did not hide herself**

Elizabeth hid herself, but Mary ran off to tell the story. She did not consult anyone to pray with her for confirmation and did not wrestle with the word.

*And after those days, his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Luke 1:24*

*And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda. Luke 1:39*

She knew God would not strive with anyone but raise another person if she did not want to go! God’s will gets delayed when there is undue consultation, looking for a way of escape and compromise.

*And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. Genesis 6:3*

Mary, like the Samaritan woman, went to spread the news. God might want to use your wealth to support a family. Would you

do it with joy or give an excuse for spending your sweat? Are you happy to loan your vessel to the Lord for use? The Lord may demand our profession, talent, or time to show His praise. May we give Him the joy of using us.

*But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. Philippians 3:7-9*

### **There shall be a performance. It is a done deal!**

The salutation said she is blessed among women. Elizabeth confirmed it as she spoke out. Whatever the Lord has said concerning you is a done deal. Do not bother about how it will come, happen, and be: believe the Lord and go into it!

It will not come by power, wisdom, experience, or might but by the Spirit of God. *Zechariah 4:6*, God will do it, in Jesus' name. Amen. It might seem delayed, but do not worry. It shall surely come to pass! Believe the Lord. The vision is for an appointed time. Please wait for it, though it may tarry. It shall indeed arrive at the appointed time. *Habakkuk 2:3*. It will not delay or lie; it will certainly happen!

*And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. Luke 1:45*

Blessed is anyone who will believe what the Lord has said concerning you! Abraham believed Elohim, although he did not see, *Hebrews 11:8-13*. It is all about faith. How many of us will exercise that faith and say: Lord, I am standing, obstacles will not deter me? I will not be deterred by what people say, but I will

stand by what the Word says!

Blessed is the one who believes that there will be a performance. Faith sees clearly beyond the ordinary eye. Mary lived the basic lifestyle we should find ourselves in as Christians. These days, we commend ourselves for doing little in the church because few people respond to the needs of the church. It ought not to be so. May the blessing continue to follow as proclaimed to you.

## Mary's Profile

### She Magnified God

And Mary said, "My soul doth magnify the Lord": her soul rejoices, adores, and exalts the Lord. To Mary, it is about being in God's presence.

Her daily could have been; *Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases. Psalm 103*

No wonder the baby in Elizabeth's womb leapt when Mary walked in. Mary praised the Lord in all that she did. She exalted the name of the Lord. For her, it did not matter if it was raining acid or hailstones, snowing, sunny, dark, in the valley or at the mountaintop, by the ocean, anywhere; at all times, her soul doth magnify the Lord. She will praise Him at all times, in gratitude and praise. Like David, she would not want her soul to be disquieted *Psalms 42*. Mary was blessed because of this, and so shall we be if we follow her footsteps.

Natural and earthly circumstances can hit hard at us to take away our joy and peace. Like Mary, we should not be moved by such. Paul also affirmed in *Romans 8:35-39* that nothing he encountered

moved him.

Mary said, “My soul doth magnify the Lord”. Although she knew what *Deuteronomy 22* states, that she might be stoned because she was found with a child, or Joseph may decide to stop the marriage. For her, that was fine. She was happy to do the will of the Lord. Her parents may be disappointed, and society may shame her in all things, but she has learnt to give God praise!

Let’s magnify the God of our salvation, who redeemed us. May our spirit man rejoice in Him!

### **And my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Saviour**

Mary’s spirit rejoiced in God at all times. His joy was her strength, *Nehemiah 8:10*. She knew all things work together for good to them that love Elohim *Romans 8:28*.

“Whether I have food, I will rejoice in Him. Whether I will get married or hold the wedding, I have looked forward to or not. I am rejoicing in Him. Regardless of whether I will be stoned, I am rejoicing in Him.”

Whatever you are going through, always rejoice. *Philippians 4:4*. *In everything, give thanks, for this is the will of God concerning us. 1 Thessalonians 5:18*.

If you lost your car, job, house, or family member or are going through hard times, give thanks and praise Him! When David lost his child, contrary to expectations, he asked for food. He had been fasting, and they wondered what he would do now the child was dead. His attitude was different. He knew no situation changes who God is, so he got up and rejoiced. God blessed him with a successor *2 Samuel 12:20-21*. You, too, can clap and dance amid that fire. It does not matter what; praise the Lord anyway!

## She was humble

God regarded Mary's humility and meekness. In Mary was no pride, arrogance, or air of affluence. Elohim uses the humble and not the proud!

*For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden Luke 1:48*

These days, Gospel billboards are now covered with photoshopped faces of superheroes who can heal and solve every problem. They point people to themselves instead of Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith. That is idolatry. Elohim will exalt those who are humble. There is no need to boast. All we are comes from God. May we be humble before God.

*Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth Matthew 5:5.*

The Lord will always exalt those who humble themselves. He resists the proud and gives grace to the humble James 4:6. In the dunghill, a poor man is raised forever. *1 Samuel 2:8.*

Pride is the order of the day in our world. In the bid for recognition, many are not content with the gift the Lord has blessed them with. They want all the positions, accolades, and to sit on the throne of their altars to be bowed to. No man takes God's glory. *Isaiah 42:8.* I attended a conference, and one speaker came with four personal assistants. They came to clean her face, change the water on her side table, and pick up a handkerchief, distracting the church! She was invited to preach the gospel but had four personal assistants running around her. What a perfect example of pride and self-exaltation! That was an abuse of the household of faith. These things are strange fire on the altar of Elohim.

God visited Mary's contentment and humility. Whatever you



have, stay in your lane. You have got the best. Are you a Sunday school teacher? You are the best. Nobody will do it better than you are doing it! Are you a class teacher? You are the best; nobody else will raise the next generation! Are you a prayer warrior in the church? You are the best. Do not covet to be seen on the pulpit. Any day you are not there in the room praying, in the closet interceding, there will not be light because, without the generator, there will not be a manifestation of power in the house.

Are you cleaning the church? You are the best; prophesy on those chairs you are cleaning. Anyone who sits on them will not go back the same. You are the greatest prophet of the church. Be content with it. The Lord will visit you one day as He has seen you. David was content in the wilderness, looking after the sheep. Although he had the tact and boldness to kill Goliath, he allowed time and occasion to take him there 1 Samuel 17. On the day appointed, the Lord will visit you!

God will not use those in self-projection like Diotrephes, who loved preeminence. *3 John 9*. When you remain where the Lord has called you, all generations shall call you blessed!

### **She feared the Lord**

God's mercy is on them that fear Him. Do not let anyone or religion talk you out of fearing the Lord. Carelessness and familiarity with spiritual things can creep in, and we lose the fear of God.

*For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. Luke 1:49-50*

It can subtly happen, especially when we can speak the slogan

and quote the scriptures, so we must monitor that. May we fear the Lord in the secret and open, for the Lord sees.

### **She had a profound insight**

*He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. Luke 1:51*

One can argue that she must have been a secret prophetess. *Luke 1:51-54* are prophetic utterances. It takes deep knowledge of the Lord to make such inspirational statements. Indeed, the things of the Lord, to the eyes of men, are foolishness, and He has used the foolish things of this world to confound the wise. *1 Corinthians 1:27*. The proud will always be scattered in their imagination because they approach things incorrectly.

### **She was of no reputation**

*He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. Luke 1:52*

Israel might have been expecting a Messiah from a wealthy family, a warrior, or a high Priest with Priestly robes. No wonder the people asked, “Is this not the carpenter’s son?”. They were looking for strength in the physical; they were looking out for someone who would come to rescue them from the powers of the Roman rulers. A kind of David or Solomon in arrays of beauty. But Mary said it is not like that with the Lord. God has bypassed all of them to her of a low degree. The Lord scattered those who were proud, left those who thought they were something and chose one that is ordinary; may the Lord recognise you!

Do you think anybody is looking down on you? Have you been in ministry, preaching holiness and righteousness, only to ten members? The Lord has seen you; He will exalt you, and you shall be known. Those ten you are raising are the remnants. Many are

called, but few are chosen *Matthew 22:14*. I would instead take joy in raising ten to heaven than a thousand who have no place in the Kingdom.

Mary is pointing to humility as the key. Jesus humbled Himself. Although He is equal with Elohim as part of the three-in-one, He humbled Himself! Therefore, Elohim exalted Him above all, that at the mention of His name, every knee must surely bow *Philippians 2:10*, He humbled Himself to the death of the cross. Jesus lived with the twelve Disciples, ate with them, and went everywhere with them. Judas had to kiss Him out of eleven people to identify him, showing there was nothing extraordinary with Him *Matthew 26:48-49*. Some Ministers are high in their congregations, not associating with the people. A Pastor once visited a church and told the Pastor to keep the brethren at arm's length so they could fear and worship her. That is not Christianity.

Christ was meek and lowly, *Matthew 11:29*, so humble that the Scribes and the Pharisees could not take it. It blew their mind to imagine that a carpenter's son could be the Redeemer. Pride is seen when you rub down your title or position on those under you.

*He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy Luke 1:53-54.*

Mary physically may have been from a poor background, but the election of grace brought plenty. She is remembered forever. May the Lord get us to this point to know that in humility, the Lord will exalt, raise, and promote us in Him.

## Joseph

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Matthew 1:18-21*

### A just man

To be a just man means he is a faithful and kind man. He is a man with a pure heart and does things with equity. It gave him the privilege of having Jesus born in his home. It would have been difficult for Mary to have carried Yeshua if Joseph had not been a just man. God knows us too well and who He has made for us in marriage. That is why we pray for the will of God in marriage and should not make an independent decision. We might get it wrong .What you see on the outside may differ from the inside. God is the best matchmaker. The good brother may not be “Just” like Joseph when push comes to shove. Some people change their colours as they journey on.

## **Not willing to make her a public example**

What a man! He decided not to shame Mary but take her away quietly. God found him one that considers others, no wonder he got a large slice of the cake. The average person will be disappointed and seek revenge for being let down. He would have blown it out to the public for fear of being stoned with Mary.

Joseph was compassionate and considerate. He knew the implications of the situation but exercised self-control. May the Lord give us the Grace to get some level of restraint. It is a virtue; He covered her sins, as love covers a multitude of sins. 1 *Peter* 4:8 He put Galatians 6:1 into action to restore Mary in the spirit of meekness.

## **He heard from God**

Joseph was chosen because he had a relationship with God. God knew him as a son of David, indeed. He was undoubtedly a man after God's heart. Recognising the Angel in his dream means he must have been used to such encounters. It takes intimacy and consecration to get to this level. Many people do not hear from God and cannot recognise Him, which tells us that Joseph was no less than any of the prophets God used. God will use those who will tremble at His words.

## **He believed God**

Unlike most men who will tell the Angel they need time to pray over Mary, he obeyed. He did not complain to the Angel about the happenings he was unsure of. He was a man of Faith. He believed God would shield both of them from being stoned. He went ahead with God's instructions, without a doubt. He was not afraid to do what God told him to do. If Elohim of all universe told him not to fear, what can mere men do to him? God was in the matter, and

that sorted everything out for Joseph. Can we believe God that much today?

### **Joseph accepted the role God wanted him to play.**

If the Supreme had called Mary to the ministry of birthing Jesus, so be it! That was Joseph's attitude. Some men of our time will not accede to this, especially those saddled with cultural baggage. They will not give their wives a free hand to serve God. They exert undue authority and suppress the anointing. Joseph was not the kind of man who would stop women from exercising the gifts of the Lord in their lives. Joseph did not feel angry, depreciated, or insecure. He wasn't rubbing down *Ephesians 5:22-24* to her misery every morning. God does not use soulless men to do anything; they are cheap people! God found Joseph, a pure man in the spirit. A decent man indeed.

We should support our wives and the sisters in the church to fulfil God's call on their lives without pushing them to the corner. There should also be room and affirmation for women who are in Ministry. In most churches, the ratio of women to men is 7:3. It makes little sense to tie down most of the workforce to only domestic roles. We are happy to send them out on evangelism and use them for follow-ups, but we are not happy to call them Evangelists.

Joseph was okay. He was prepared to take the second stage. He prepared himself for whatever God wanted him to do. For him, marrying the lady who would bear Yeshua was a rare opportunity. He humbled himself. If God had not given it to him but to his wife, they were still one. For him, there was no competition, no show of who was right. Elohim be praised. May the Lord help us appreciate His gifts to us. He was by Mary's side and took care of her. Some wives are a blessing to their husbands. They

bring honour and impetus to the lives of their husbands, and one wonders what life would have been without them.

### **Humility did not diminish him**

Joseph's humility did not take away his headship of the family. When it was time to move the family, the Angel appeared to him and told him to take his family to Egypt for a while. He looked after the child and the mother. The child was called his son, and he did not argue over it. Let's lay down anything we have picked up in life: our attitude, temperaments, and contentiousness before the Lord and leave it there! May the Lord help every one of us to be like Joseph!

### **Self Control**

He kept away from Mary, as instructed by the Holy Spirit until the child was born. Few men will do that. He was righteous and lived in obedience.

## Simeon

**T**he Christian race is about us and not about anyone! The benefit is yours. Decide to serve the Lord with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul. Look not at others, be serious about your faith.

*And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, named Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, According to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel. And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him. And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother; Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. Luke 2:25-33*



## He was a just man

Simeon was just and devout, giving himself to prayers in righteousness, working out his salvation with fear and trembling. *Philippians 2:12*, as we should do. *Looking diligently, lest any of us fall short of the Grace of the Lord Hebrews 12:15*. It does not matter what comes our way; offences, trials and things to make us look back will come. Let's continue in faith as Simeon did.

## He was waiting for the consolation of Israel

Waiting is not easy at all. It is easy when the green light shows up immediately. It could be daunting when the light continues on red and does not change, and you are late. Considering the cost, the red light remains red, and your fuel is wasted at a standstill.

*And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him Luke 2:25*

Things could be moving fast on your path: bills to pay, new jobs to move into, new branches to open in business and enjoyment to pursue. It is only one life, so why wait? It will be impossible to wait without hope, long-suffering, perseverance, grace, peace, endurance, temperance, and meekness, especially in delayed marriages, as age kicks in. Time for childbearing would soon pass.

Waiting for twenty-five years to get an Isaac is not a small joke! Waiting for four hundred and thirty years to be delivered from the captivity and oppression of Egypt is not an easy wait! May the Lord give us grace to understand that a thousand years is like a day in the sight of the Lord and a day is like thousand years; *2 Peter 3:8*. When the Lord says wait, please wait!

*For without faith it is impossible to please God Hebrews 6:11.*

It takes faith to wait upon the Lord, hoping for what you have not seen. Still, your heart is expecting, you are not wavering, and you are not considering what you see! You may get discouraged looking at the mountains. Have faith, and wait. You will see the salvation of the Lord. *Hope maketh not ashamed Romans 5:5*, please wait for the Lord!

*But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation. 1 Thessalonians 5:8.* This enables waiting to stand because your faith is sharp, and you are looking unto Yeshua, the author and finisher of our faith *Hebrews 12:2*.

Simeon's life is an encouragement to those who are waiting. Please wait upon the Lord, for the vision is for an appointed time. It will not tarry. It will surely come to pass *Habakkuk 2:3*; wait for it, be patient, stand still, you will see the salvation of the Lord! Do not be deterred; do not lose hope! That is all about waiting.

Negative confessions can come up when things are delayed. Job confessed the grave was his homebound because he was wearied with his sufferings, *Job 17*. It does not matter what the situation is; even if it persists, still have faith that one day, it will end. The Lord will visit us. Let us learn the patience that comes through it and the lessons the Lord takes us through. If you do not have that waiting period, you may miss out on tremendous experiences the Lord wants you to see for the next stage.

*The LORD is good unto them that wait for him. To the soul that seeketh him. Lamentations 3:25.*

*But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you 1 Peter 5:10.*

Simeon was settled, and so shall we. He waited for so many years. The heroes of Faith waited, they had patience, and they stood with the Lord. As the Lord said to the disciples, wait for the promise, *Acts 1:4*. Those who stayed were baptised on the day of Pentecost. Those who did not wait ran off with limited knowledge. *1 Corinthians 15:6*.

Remember, *They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength, Isaiah 40:31*. You are waiting for good grades. Please wait for it, and keep the hope alive. It will surely come; do not go by your strength, especially if you did not write enough for a good grade. The job may be challenging to get, and the promise is delayed; wait for it.

*But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. Romans 8:25.*

### **He was filled with the Holy Ghost**

The Holy Ghost was upon him! People think the Holy Ghost is only at the Pentecost. Remember, He is part of the Three-in-one. He had existed. He is Yahweh; He is Elohim. We need him to direct, help, teach, and show us all things.

The Holy Spirit led Simeon to the temple to see the young child. Just as the Spirit led Philip to the Ethiopian Eunuch, Elijah to the widow, and led the wise men to worship Christ, the same Lord will lead us. He is still the same Father. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, *Psalms 37:23*. Do not worry how you will get there; God will take you there. As far as Simeon was concerned, his bit was to wait. The Lord will make it happen!

Things may seem too far, and one may wonder how to get there. Remember, distance is no barrier to God. He has the entire world in His hands. He created the galaxies that are bigger than the

Earth. Distance may be enormous in our eyes, but to our God, it is nothing. He is able to connect the East to the West in a second. Believe Him in all things, wait in all things. Please see things through the eyes of faith.

**It was revealed that he would not die before seeing the Lord**

*Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13.*

The promise to Simeon that he would not see death until he saw Jesus was accomplished. He stood on what was said to him, which is hope in action. If you wait on the Lord, you will not be disappointed. You will not see death until that which was promised comes. The cloud may turn grey, and it looks like your hope is finished. See the Tornado as what God is using to shake up and uproot the promise that is held and bound. See grace and blessing in the Tornado. The fish swallowed Jonah, only to deliver him to his destination. It can only take that wind that is coming like a hurricane to pull that blessing stuck in the sea. See the grace of Elohim in everything.

## Anna

*And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Luke 2:36-38*

### **Not just a widow**

Anna lived with a husband for seven years, then became widowed until she was 84. Marriage is usually 14-18 years of age for early starters. Add seven to the range; she lived up to 60 years alone as a widow. She would have been in her early twenties and should have remarried but remained single. She dedicated herself to the temple through fasting and prayers. She was young and should do with herself what she liked, but she kept herself consecrated to the Lord.

### **She was a Prophetess**

For those who quarrel over God's gift and calling on women, the same Bible called her a Prophetess. Also, for those who buy the lie that women cannot fulfil their ministry unless married, Anna's case burst it. It is all about consecration and Elohim, who

chooses whom He will to do His work. She was a widow indeed, not one who went from house to house, *1 Timothy 5:3-5*. She was a prophetess when the Priestly caste was about men. It was not just any man, but those with no deformity and from the Aaronic lineage. She took her place in the house of God. She was not intimidated. Please don't let anyone intimidate or talk you out of God's purpose because of gender or state of singlehood. The grace of God had appeared to all men, *Titus 2:11*. He gave gifts to all *Ephesians 4:8*. On the day of Pentecost, He did not separate the men from the women. He gave gifts to all. *Acts 1:13-14; 2:1-4*.

Being a woman, a widow, or the absence of a husband does not limit you or make you less. You are who the Lord has made you. There is power in you. There is grace in you, and there is authority in you. Recognise and use them. Don't feel bad when you see husband and wife holding hands. Stay where God has allowed. Anna accepted the grace of the Lord. She used her virtues. Widowhood or singleness did not make her less. The gifts and calling of Elohim are without repentance, *Romans 11:29*.

Operate in the anointing of the Lord, whether married, single parent, with children or none. Are you called into the Ministry? Walk in it, be bold! Look at Anna: nobody can take away that gift of prophecy, teaching, evangelising, Pastor or being an Apostle from you.

Society may try to put you in one corner; stand firm. Anna lost her husband early in marriage but remained in prayers for the rest of her life.

Widowhood is not a licence to hop from one man to another. That will desecrate the church, and it is not decent. Anna did not defile herself. She had a lot to do for the Lord. She knew that life did not consist of the abundance of things we have here on

earth, *Luke 12:15*. She recognised that her body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, *1 Corinthians 6:19* and kept it in honour and sanctification for the Master's use. It is about the glory of the Lord in her life. Remain in the Lord, dedicate yourself to the Lord, and you will be remembered.

### **She did not depart from the temple.**

Consecration and commitment were her watchwords. She was consistent and faithful. May we remain at our duty post. Men have some standards to exclude you; be steadfast. Anna served Elohim with fasting and prayers night and day. She was okay and served because she understood we are passing through this life. She knew that if only in this life we have hope, we are of men, most miserable *1 Corinthians 15:19*.

She was so decisive not to permit physical circumstances to limit her from operating in the gifts and calling of the Lord. Are you being called by the Lord, but situations in life seem to define you? Do not let it cage you, do not let it profile you, do not let it make you feel so bad that you are crying night and day of wishful thinking. Embrace what the Lord has given to you. To be a Prophetess in those days was a great privilege indeed. She honoured the gift and calling the Lord had given her, and she remained in it.

Anna should be an inspiration to every woman, especially singles and widows. I pray we keep ourselves in holiness, in righteousness, knowing that God is sufficient for us. It is not a matter of being a man or a woman in the physical, but accepting the Grace of Elohim in humility. She remained in her post, not to be seen, not to flaunt around, but in consecration. May the Lord help us.

## **She was Rewarded**

She saw the Messiah before she departed. What a reward! All generations are still reading about her. The religious spirit which likes to shut down women in ministry will not preach this message on our pulpits to encourage women to be faithful and chaste in their calling. Widows and singles need to know about Anna, and I am sure many would like to be like her if taught and encouraged.



## The Shepherds

*And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. Luke 2:8*

### **They kept watch**

They watched against lions by day and against the leopards by night. What time did they have to rest, you might ask? They were men with exceptional grace. Keeping watch takes faithfulness, patience, resilience, love, and brevity. Our Lord is our Shepherd and watches over us day and night.

*And, lo, the Angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. Luke 2:9*

God will reveal Himself to those who watch over His flocks with diligence. No wonder he asked Peter in *John 21:16* to feed His sheep. The visit was at night while the Shepherds were on duty. They accepted it as part of their profession, not comparing themselves to anyone sleeping in an air-conditioned room on a waterbed. You will hear the Angels in your place of service when you do it with all your heart. If they were sleeping, it would have seemed like a dream. They were awake and saw the glory. May we be awake and alert in God's service in Jesus' name.

## **Blessings are not bound by times and seasons**

God's visitation is not restricted by day and night. He created them, and your visitation shall not be bound to any time of day, in Jesus' name. Amen. Their good news was at night, and their joy was fulfilled at night. Do not accept that good things cannot happen to you because you dwell in the dark, and there is no remedy. Christ is the Light that shines in the darkness. The siege of darkness is broken by His word and presence. I am unaware of where you are now, perhaps being content in that lowly place, accepting the suffering of sickness, debt, poverty, depression, broken relationships, troubled family, failures, fear, loneliness and uncertainty. As the angels came to the Shepherds by night to give them good news, so will you get your good news. Joy and gladness shall well up from within you.

As the glory of God shone upon them, so shall the glory of God shine on you. They were afraid because it was nighttime. Naturally, you don't expect much to happen at night. The living walks during the day; anything walking at night would have been deemed a 'ghost' and not accepted. Sometimes, our perceptions and beliefs can hinder us from receiving a blessing at odd times. We have been told that a particular disease has no cure and leads to the grave. We take it in so much that we are afraid to accept healing.

## **The glad tidings**

*And the Angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Luke 2:10*

The Angel told them, "Fear Not. We are Angels with good news. Both night and day are the same with us, and we give good tidings at any time. Please receive this for yourself. There is Light at the

end of the tunnel. Even in the deep darkness, fear not.

*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Luke 2:11-12*

I love this phrase, “this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord”. It means there was an appointed time. Nothing will stop it; it has happened, and it is established. It reminds me of other definite words in the Scripture;

*For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, And in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2.*

*For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. Habakkuk 2:3*

God’s promises are Yea and Amen. It must surely come to pass. On the long-awaited day of salvation, the Messiah was born. The Lion of Judea, the King of kings, The mighty one, Elohim, The conqueror, The Mighty man in Battle, The breaker of chains of darkness. Sin and Satan are defeated forever. Captives will be set free, the weak will be made strong, men shall be healed, the broken will be bound, the blind will receive their sight, and the dead will rise again. The siege is Over! The saviour is born. Hallelujah!!!! No wonder the Angels and Heaven broke out in songs. Our blessings will not tarry longer than it should be. The long-awaited deliverance and rescue will surely come and will not linger an extra day. God is faithful.

*And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, good will toward men. Luke 2:13-14*

There is a new song coming your way. Sung by Angels and Host of Heaven. You will glorify God. Peace and goodwill are at your door. Your night shall turn to day. The peace that passes all understanding shall descend on you. It will be goodwill all the way. Every ill lingering around will be banished. You will hear the Angels singing the song of victory and glad tidings. Yes, it was sung to them in the darkness of the night. Glorify God in that dark situation. You and I will be visited by Elohim. I am breaking out, too, with this song:

*Glory, glory to God in the highest  
Peace be on Earth towards men  
Glory in the highest  
Peace on Earth, goodwill to men  
Glory in the highest  
Peace on Earth, good will to men.*

### **They made a move**

Nobody keeps quiet about any good news. This is not just a piece of news but a miracle. The Angels and Heaven sang to their hearing. They cannot remain in the dark. They have to leave. Why sit in darkness when Light has been shunned on you? Why stay in the old mindset when salvation has come? Some people remain in the same place as if nothing has happened.

*And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. Luke 2:15-17*

They did not doubt the encounter. They went in faith, believing to find the child. Have you acted in faith on what the scriptures say about your situation? Will you obey and pour the little oil into your borrowed barrels to fill them up? Will you step out in faith for that job you were told to apply for? Will you step out in faith to negotiate for that business? Will you go into that examination without fear? The shepherds made haste. Please make haste to the bank to cash the blank cheque. They have heard. They need to see. Faith without works is dead.

### **They spread the good news**

They announced that the Saviour, Christ our Lord, was born. God will appear to those who will publish the good news. Although they were shepherds, God knew they could do it if shown what to do and guided through.

*And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.*

*Luke 2:18*

They heard the message clearly. It was not a one-man story, making room for doubt. When we all align to the grace of God, we will experience miracles. A collective story will be believed by more than one person. The gospel brings great joy, liberty and salvation. It will be committed to those who will publish it. God is calling us to dedication and consecration to do His work effectively.

## The Wise men

*Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem. Matthew 2:1*

### **They came from the East**

The Wise men came from a country in the East to Jerusalem. How far east we do not know as their country was not mentioned in the scriptures. A guess will stretch it from Syria to China or Japan.

*Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him. Matthew 2:2*

They saw the star that far. This event announced a new era. Salvation is also for the Gentiles; the middle wall of the partition was about to rent in twain. God is still visiting us in every corner of the world. His glory is not limited by distance.

*And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Isaiah 60:3*

*A light to lighten the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel. Luke 2:32*

As the wise men saw the star of Jesus, so shall you see the star no matter how far you live or how far you are from deliverance.

There is hope. God has seen you in the secret place or where you are hidden away. Remember, the stars are in the sky way above any mountain, water, valley, hard times, tornadoes, tsunamis and hurricanes of life. Please look up!

I wondered why these men were called “Wise” and found some qualifying statements in the scriptures that depicted their wise actions.

### **They took a journey of faith**

These men must be extraordinary. They followed the star for direction and not SatNav. I am not sure how many of us will venture to such an expedition based on the leading of a star in the sky, even if it is a shooting one! It would not have been an easy journey in the ordinary context, but God, who knows the way, led them. They trusted His divine guidance.

*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Hebrew 11:1*

No journey is far when you are looking for life. The privilege of seeing the Saviour is worth the trip. Whether they came by foot, Carmel’s back or sailed did not matter to them. They made the journey. When people give excuses that the church they attend is far, I wonder if they are as wise as the Wise men. They came looking for the reality of Isaiah’s prophecy:

*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment*

*and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this. Isaiah 9:6-7*

The wise are still seeking Jesus!

### **They didn't fall for Herod's influence**

The issue of State Leaders influencing religious leaders did not start today. Herod called the papacies to tell him where Jesus was to be born. Politicians have hired many preachers to prophecy to them or influence their congregations to vote them into office.

*When Herod the King had heard these things, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. Matthew 2:3-4*

I have seen Preachers quarrelling, campaigning and making false claims on behalf of rogue and evil politicians just for money. Many give false prophecies to be recognised by the leader. They endorse wars and pray for soldiers to go and kill and be killed. Do not forget, the likes of Saul will only consult the Witch at Endor to bring up Samuel because God will not answer them. Please don't be the witch at Endor for these men who intend to deceive the people.

*Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and enquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at En-dor. 1 Samuel 28:7.*

In our days, anybody will feel privileged to have met the President, not to talk of having a private conversation.

*Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. Matthew 2:7*



I watched on the news how Presidents of poorer countries felt honoured that they met with Presidents of more affluent countries. They smiled the more and shook hands enthusiastically while the other just parted them at the shoulder, showing superiority. One country was showing off the handshakes of their President with the Presidents of the G7 as an achievement. The Wise Men were okay in themselves. They came with Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh. Their meeting with Herod did not make them lose who they were. They were not moved by cheap and petty business. Those who live in obedience will be wiser than their generation.

*And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. Matthew 2:8*

Herod asked them to search for the child diligently. He was trying to entice them and make them an evil accomplice. The Birth of Jesus was beyond him. The revelations of God are hidden from the wicked, so they rely on the righteous to tell them. The mistake of revealing secrets publicly and to Satan should not be done, but sadly, some of us do so to show off our ability to hear from God. Satan will cash on such opportunities to stop you before you finish talking. Many people have been stopped on the track because they were too quick to speak. Herod meant to destroy; his intent was evil, but these men departed from the wicked.

*A wise man feareth, and departeth from evil: But the fool rageth, and is confident. Proverbs 14:16.*

*Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, Neither desire thou his dainty meats. Proverbs 23:6*

*Incline not my heart to any evil thing, To practise wicked works with men that work iniquity: And let me not eat of their dainties. Psalm 141:4*

## **The star reappeared after they left Herod**

*When they had heard the King, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Matthew 2:9-10*

The star disappeared from them while they were with Herod. They had supernatural powers leading them. Why did they turn to the carnal? The star led them until they came to Judea and would have led them to the child if they had continued. They made enquiries from the wrong people. They were in the wrong place with the wrong people. The star disappeared. Many people have had their light quenched because of where they found themselves, the people they associate with and their reliance on man. Check what has taken away God's glory, favour, providence, vision, grace and presence. Who are you consulting? Their counsel may be that of Ahithophel. It will turn to foolishness. Please keep away!

*And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness. 2 Samuel 15:31*

As soon as they left him, the star reappeared. It may be as humans, they would have pointed to the star out of excitement, and Herod would have gone for the child. Some blessings are delayed because we may not know how to handle it. A person who will be too quick to reveal secrets may have the truth hidden from him because he will tell. We delay God's blessings unknowingly when doing the wrong thing.

The Wise men removed themselves from Herod, and the star came back. While we look down to man for help, the star may disappear, but when we look up to Jesus, The author and finisher

of our faith, we will see the star again. Stay away from ungodly people.

*Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. Psalm 1:1*

### **They worshipped the child**

They found Mary and the child in the house. Joseph was a carpenter, so this house would not have been a twin duplex. There was no room in the inn, and that was how they ended up in the manger.

*And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother; and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. Matthew 2:11*

The wise men fell down and worshipped Him. The surroundings did not matter to them, and though Jesus was newly born, they knew he is the King of Glory. It takes wisdom to know “who is who”, irrespective of outlook. Abraham recognised the Angels and ran in to make food for them. Balaam didn’t recognise the Angel until his ass spoke to him. The unwise take things for granted and miss out on deep things.

*Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. James 3:13*

These men came with Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, yet they refrained from telling what they came with until they saw the child. They did not reveal to Herod more than he should know. Some of us talk a lot. They reveal everything God told them in one go, no restrain.

*In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: But he that refraineth his lips is wise. Proverbs 10:19*

*The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: But the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness. Proverbs 15:2*

Their gifts were highly prophetic. It takes wisdom to understand the Holy Spirit's leading and obey him. Kings are crowned and adorned with gold. The sweet aroma of frankincense as a royal fragrance and the myrrh signifies the death, burial and rise of the King.

### **They were obedient**

They were instructed not to go back to Herod. They obeyed and departed another way. Herod was the King, and any bootlicking would earn the person recognition, money and power. Those who have dreamed of being Oligarchs will find this an opportunity not to be missed. They were not enticed by Herod and probably what he would offer.

*Give instruction to a wise man , and he will be yet wiser: Teach a just man , and he will increase in learning. Proverbs 9:9*

*Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. Matthew 7:24.*

## John the Baptist

**T**he profile of John the Baptist is so rejuvenating and pumps out a youthful zest. It is so reviving. May the Lord quicken the fire in us as we read.

*Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high Priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; Luke 3:1-3*

### The Wilderness

John is supposed to be a Priest in the temple, doing the rituals and traditions that have been known, but what was he doing in the wilderness?

We talk about wilderness with frowning, moaning, and complaining. It is seen as going through some difficult times. Some use the phrase: “I am going through my wilderness” It is accepted that wilderness is a place of obscurity, sickness, failure, trials, and ill situations. It is not always so. People are still living in the Sahara Desert and some arid regions.

The voice of the Lord came to him in the wilderness and not in the palace. It was not when the going was good, or everything was alright. We could ask why not in the castle, the five-star hotels and all the goodies we seek today in ministry? People are no longer after missions in rural areas but seek ministry in places of comfort, wealth and leisure.

The wilderness does something in man. In the wilderness, there are no distraction, party going, football games, pub or theatre to watch films. Nothing really happens in the wilderness. It is where people come terms with life's realities and seek help. The wilderness is desolate. You are watchful for danger, snakes, scorpions, and wild animals. You are ready for action at all times. There is no heater for your winter season and air conditioners for your summer. One is alone, fends for himself, and has no option but to trust God.

Sometimes, the Lord needs to take us out so that we can concentrate on Him! We turn it the other way round after listening to all the fake preachers telling us that if you are going through a problem, you are not a child of God! I do not know where they got that! Anyway, it is another way Satan is trying to accuse God. When one is fed with phrases like "Yeah, my God is not poor", that is true, but make sure they are not accusing God that He cannot help you, which is why you have remained in poverty. Many people have gone out of faith because of these fake things they taught them.

The Lord said, "birds have nests, foxes have holes, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head". *Matthew 8:20*. When it was time to pay tax, Jesus told Peter to go and fish. The first fish has the money for the tax in its mouth. *Matthew 17:27*.

We need to understand the Lord holistically; He is in heaven. He is watching us; He created the desert, created the wilderness, and also the palace! So anywhere you find yourself, the Lord is

with you! The Lord is with you in any position you find yourself on this earth. There is no friend to come and gossip to John in the wilderness or tell him fake or bad news. He was entirely away.

David would have been angry that he was left in the wilderness. He learned to fight the bear and the lion while there.

Being in the wilderness is not all about destroying us. It may be to get our attention. Sometimes, the Lord will bring us that way to draw our focus on Him. He takes us away from everything that will distract us. Wilderness does something in man. It brings us to the reality that we are mere mortals with limited strength and power. We seek help from God because of our vulnerable state.

I pray we see things positively in our lives. Moses saw the miracle of the burning bush in the wilderness where he was tending sheep, *Exodus 3:1-4*. As he approached, he heard the voice of the Lord calling him. We would like to hear the voice of God, so no crying and complaining about the pain. Hang on, see what the wilderness has for you. The wilderness might be the place where we can hear the Lord speak!

The book of Revelation was revealed to John, the beloved on the Island of Patmos. It was a place of punishment. He was left to die, but it turned out to be glorious for him. *Revelation 1:9-19*.

Daniel had the best time of his life with the lions. They became his friends and roommates and, for once, watched over him. *Daniel 6*. In the wilderness of fire, the three Hebrew children Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego saw the fourth man, *Daniel 3*. It was in the wilderness of the fish's belly that God heard the prayers of Jonah. *Jonah 2*. That experience brought him to his senses. Paul and Silas sang and prayed in the wilderness of prison, and the prison's doors broke into two. The fetters and chains broke. Everywhere shook with the earthquake. The Philippian jailer came to the Lord, *Acts 16:16-40*.

Please do not be discouraged. If you are going through the wilderness, I want to tell you: rejoice, for there is a spirit of John the Baptist coming upon you, in the name of Yeshua! There is deliverance coming. The Lord wants to speak to you. The Lord wants to do something extraordinary! We have done it our way, but it is time for God to have His way! He wants to show us great and mighty things which we do not know, *Jeremiah 33:3*.

There is a plan, purpose, and reason when the Lord is doing things in our lives! He knows what will distract us, what will bring us temptations, and what will take us out of His divine will and purpose. He deliberately put us where to stand and do what He has asked. These truths about the wilderness are not preached or heard on our pulpits as much as the message of wealth and getting all you can. It prepares us to face whatever Satan throws at us and not leave us as milk-drinking babes who get blown off by a wind of 5 mph. Our Lord Jesus went through some wilderness times when He was on earth and sometimes had nowhere to lay His head and was persecuted by the religious. He is now at the Father's right hand, making intercession for us, *Romans 8:34*.

Please be there if the Lord has asked you to remain in the village. There are souls to be saved. Even if it is one soul, it means a lot to God. God knows us and our frames. Some of us are weak at resisting temptation, and keeping us away from the world's enchantments is a way to preserve us. Like Lot's wife, you might be tempted to look back and become a pillar of salt. *Genesis 19:26*. Many people are walking salt, spiritually, because they looked back.

Despite where he was, John the Baptist knew why he was there. He came for a mission and a purpose. He had a destiny to fulfil, and anything to accomplish it had to be done, even if it meant being in the wilderness!



Some Christians wonder why they are going through some tough times. The reason is to show forth the glory of the Lord, *Isaiah 43:21*. We should not short-circuit the process but allow the glory of the Lord to manifest in our lives. Anywhere the Lord leads us is okay. He is the God of the ocean, earth, sky, and seas. He created the wilderness and knows it's the best for us.

When we came to the UK, people wondered why we were not living in the Southeast of London, in a particular community. Well, He settled us where He wanted us, and so be it. People came looking for us; some were coming to that part of London for the first time. There was a reason. My husband opened the Council year of the Borough in prayers. Within two years, we moved in, organised our Mayor's send-off event, and I ministered. Our Member of Parliament and Councillors visited the church and came in sometimes to fellowship with us. Stay where God wants you!

The Kings and Princes will be sent out from the capitals to meet you in the wilderness in the name of Yeshua! John had no microphone during that time. There was no social media, television, or satellite, yet people came from the city to meet him in the wilderness.

### **His Bespoke dressing**

He wore camel hair and a leather girdle about his loins. This is all you see in the wilderness, nothing else. Of course, your dress depicts where you live, so his dress showed it all! There is a uniform for every profession. The Engineers wear their helmet and boots for safety reasons. The nurses and Doctors wear aprons and uniforms to avoid infection. Those in nuclear plants put on their protective overall to prevent radiation. Farmers wear their hats and boots to protect themselves from the heat of the sun and safety.

There were no big shops. There were no designer dresses in the wilderness. So, his designer dress in the wilderness was camel's hair and a leather girdle. Your dress depicts who you are: a Prince, an Asian, African, American, or from the Western world. His dress showed no conformity to the surrounding distractions. He came for a serious business that had to be delivered, so he didn't need our silk dress.

If he were to be in the city, he would have been dressed in a suit with a matching tie, sleek, shining leather shoes, a gold watch, and a briefcase to match. He would have chosen the best house and car to match his personality.

The Lord has called us to preach the gospel and the good news to the world and to deliver men. It is an old, rugged gospel, and it is not one of convenience. Satan will not be happy with this and will suggest otherwise. He will get you to feel your world has gone down the drain. It is not always so.

John recognised and accepted the call of the Lord upon him. He acknowledged that being in the wilderness is the best place to do what he ought to do. Therefore, the joy of the Lord was in him and out of his belly showed forth the goodness and the praises of Him.

Our Christian life does not need distractions from worldly fashions, *1 Peter 3*. Our dress should show the life of holiness and righteousness in the day and the night! He understood his timing and didn't engage in time-wasting.

What matters is accepting what God has given as the best; a clean heart, righteousness, and the fruit of the Spirit are the best places to be. The Lord knows that if you go after the riches and want to look like the men and women of the world, temptations will arise, and the heart to desire worldly things will be there. The person will be choked up with those things, and the primary reason the Lord called will be lost. If you carry smelly things, flies will come after you.

The gospel has been compromised because people are operating outside the limits of the Kingdom. He said things that were not politically correct. The dressmakers or sellers may not want him in their shops, so he slammed it in their faces: “Carmel’s hair and leather belt”. The boldness of John the Baptist was because he did not entangle himself with the affairs of the world,<sup>2</sup> *Timothy 2:4*

## **The diet**

His gourmet food was locust and wild honey. He doesn’t need our wine and hot delis. He was there to declare the Word of the Lord in boldness. Ordering the best Mediterranean platters or equipping the best cuisine would have been a drag.

## **The voice of one crying**

John was asked if he was Christ. He said: “I am not. I am just a voice crying in the wilderness”. They wanted to know if he was an Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher, Bishop, or Doctor. To be accepted nowadays, one has to have a title; the more, the better with broad photoshopped faces on the billboards.

John has nothing to lose; he that is down needs to fear no fall! He might have thought, “I do not need to look like you. I am here to preach the gospel. I am eating what is available: locust and wild honey”, and I am satisfied with it! I came for a plan and a purpose”.

The crowd again asked him: “Are you Elijah?”

He said: “No, I am not Elijah”.

It is not about the title but the election and power. Tell me your works through your faith, and I will tell you my faith through my works, *James 2:18*.

These days, you see men on the pulpit with powders and necklaces and wonder what their problem is. The air of grandeur,

with the famous saying: “Dress the way you want to be addressed”. Decorations of some churches go beyond what they should normally be, with lighting that looks like movie houses. First, decorate your heart’s tabernacle before you can do it in the physical tabernacle. The Lord is after the godly dress of our hearts! If we can decorate our hearts with beautiful colours of the fruit of the Spirit, the power of Elohim and the Grace of Yahweh will flow in our lives. When you leave the spiritual, you will pursue the carnal. There is no way you will fulfil the purpose of the Lord when you entangle yourself with the world. It is not possible!

No wonder the Lord says to us: “*be ye separate*”! We can see the life of John the Baptist as a typical example of the one who is going to prepare the way for the return of the Lord. A life ably designed to draw many souls to righteousness.

Does this mean that we have to go naked or dress like him? No! But then, the simplicity of our hearts and lives should reflect the beauty of holiness. The gospel is straightforward. Let us leave it simple.

While the likes of Annas and Caiaphas were in the synagogue, busy looking for high seats, worshipping men, kissing their rings, carrying their Bibles, and sitting at the thrones of the altar of their churches, John was in the wilderness.

John made it clear he was not the one to come. He should not be given any title that is not for him. Please do not call me an Apostle when I am not, do not call me a Prophet when I am not, do not call me a Pastor when I am not, do not call me an Evangelist when I am not! I am happy leading the children’s church. I am training the young people and in charge of them. I want to make sure there is a next-generation after all of you! Do you know that children’s teachers are filled with many ministry gifts because they are raising giants? They prophesy, pastor and teach them.

No one takes up the title “voice of the Lord crying”, but John was okay with it. No wonder the Lord has retired all the big names. They are only gallivanting in their wealth, but the power is not there anymore, just a form of godliness.

We are called to stand and preach the Word. No wonder Paul told the Galatian Christians: look, all those who were somewhat in conference added nothing to me Galatians 2:6. All those with the titles and religious grey hair did little. John the Baptist might have said, keep your title; “I am none of them, only a voice”.

## The Message

John the Baptist’s message is not what you preach nowadays. It is rarely heard on modern-day pulpits. We need to bring back the old rugged cross messages. Our Lord Jesus had the same boldness, and so does Peter: We have heard a lot of stories in our pulpit. It is time to preach the true gospel, the redemptive story of salvation and liberty, so those in captivity will be loosened.

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, Make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, And every mountain and hill shall be brought low; And the crooked shall be made straight, And the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Luke 3:4-7*

Our message should help people to flee from the wrath to come and come to repentance. Salvation is for everyone. The heart of man is tough. It takes the true gospel to break it. Preaching weak messages cannot convict sinners but hardens them. Telling them to believe in themselves, it is well with them without Christ, makes no meaning.

*But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words. Acts 2:14*

There is a need for the true word, for the heart of man is desperately wicked, who can know it, *Jeremiah 17:9*. The heart is deceitful and can only take the Word that is sharper than a two-edged sword to pierce through and break them asunder, *Hebrews 4:12*. Pampering the people and telling them things that will gratify their hearts will not save them. Hell is by the corner. It takes the sharpness of Elohim's Word to break through.

John the Baptist delivered the message given to him. Some preachers change their messages when they see an intimidating crowd. Our message should help people to flee from the wrath to come. John's message was not mixed. It was the true gospel of salvation, illuminating people in the Word of the Lord. The wonderful music in our churches these days has masked the messages. They sleep at the end of the hot music and dance.

The Pharisees, Sadducees and religious people's hearts were already hardened. They were used to rituals, dogmas, and Methodism, religiously and ceremonially put in a position. These things need to be broken, and the only way to do it is the sincere milk of life, to break through what people have been used to. They knew the law but did not practice it. They had a form of godliness but denied the power thereof. People go to church and learn to say hallelujah, sing, and quote the scriptures, but with no life. John the Baptist knew this well and told them the hard truth.

### **He preached a message relevant to all in the crowd**

People have been in the world on drugs and alcoholism, and they are tired! They now want to hear the Word to help them overcome those habits. They miss their hope when Pastors preach politically

correct messages that thrill the ear. They will not leave the church because of truthful messages. They have suffered enough and need deliverance. They need the enabling word to give them grace and faith to withstand Satan. People who had lived in murder and fraud want to come out!

Let us return to our pulpits the godly salvation message that leads to repentance *2 Corinthians 7:8-1*. Do we get cries in our churches these days, or is it all about clapping and casting out demons? Sin is dangerous, and sin kills *Romans 6:23*.

We should declare the truth and warn those copying from worldly systems. Worldly diplomacies and all the gimmicks do not show the grace of Elohim. Be bold, as John the Baptist, and speak to those hypocritical elders at church. When you involve yourself, you will compromise your message. John the Baptist was not ashamed of the wilderness.

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, Romans 1:16.*

When the grace to evangelise is on you, the power shows forth. That is why Elohim sent John the Baptist. They needed the Word.

“The axe is laid”. The celebrity preachers are too posh to preach this message. The frankness of this truth is touching. Sadly, people preaching this message today are dubbed hard, insensitive preachers. You will not be seen as modern, but one thing is sure: Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the Word of Elohim shall never pass away, *Matthew 24:35*. Be part of those preaching the cross of Jesus Christ. Heaven is real, and the truth will remain the same. Let us preach it!

*John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly*

*purge his floor; and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. Luke 3:16-17.*

The message of hell is now offensive, but preach it anyway. The remnant will respond. Those who bear the mark of the living Elohim will come, and those who do not want to get it will go. Preaching the message of hell will not scare people but bring those the Lord has ordained for salvation into the Kingdom. If anyone leaves the church because you preach heaven and hell, do not worry about their going. Angels are fellowshiping with you in that church.

We have been through a situation where everyone left because they saw our messages as hard to take. My first daughter, then nine years old, did the opening prayers, my first son, then six, sang, I preached, the second daughter made the offering, and the then 3-year-old rounded us up in prayers. We are today with the same message to all corners of the earth. It is amazing. Keep the message as it is, and don't compromise it. When they asked him, he said: I am baptising you with water, but He that will come after me baptise you with Holy Ghost and with fire, *Matthew 3:11* Amen; let us tell the people this!

It should touch us that people are dying and going to hell every minute. Preached and they shall be saved! We should not keep back redemptive messages and watch friends, relatives, colleagues, and society walk into hell.

*Son of man if I tell a sinner, an unrighteous person that he will die and you did not tell them, I will require their blood from your hand. Ezekiel 3:18.*

The blood of all the congregants who were not told the truth would be required from the hands of their Pastors, Overseers, Priests, or the church leadership. Please, do not labour in vain. *1 Corinthians 15:58*



## **To the Pharisees and Sadducees and the religious:**

*Bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Matthew 3:8.*

Their heart is seared with a hot iron, *1 Timothy 4:2*. They were reprobates, *Romans 1:28*. The Scribes and Pharisees were blind guides of people who were blind. *Matthew 15:14*: they corrupted the gospel! They may have been born again for ten or twenty years but are gone. They have backslidden. Preach the message the Lord gave you, do not let anyone intimidate you to change it. Look not on their faces. You do not know what they are passing through: they may have backslidden and crying in their heart, asking the Lord to bring them back and restore their joy of salvation.

If you do not preach it and assume everybody in the church is okay, they will go to hell. If you think they have been in the church as elders, deacons, choir members, children's leaders, and Pastors, you will miss them.

Counting how old one is in the Lord without fruits of repentance is waffling through life. The expectation is to see the emergence of practical Christian living of goodness, peace, mercy, long-suffering, kindness, and humility.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22-23.*

He knew they covered strife, anger, malice, jealousy, greed, avarice, and cheating, lying with long robes. They boasted of having Abraham as their Father, yet they were empty.

Some of our city churches with thirty thousand members are unitedly heading to hell. Elohim does not respect anyone. There were the Pharisees and the scribes, Annas and Caiaphas, in the city, but God went to the wilderness to use John the Baptist to do what He wanted. He knew that John the Baptist would preach

the message. Usually, genuine salvation happens in remote areas, villages where pastors have no shoes, suits, and small congregations. Their church buildings are thatched and mud houses, but they are going to heaven.

*And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire, Luke 3:9.*

Ordinarily, one would think they would be offended, but they asked what to do. It was a direct message. We need to preach it so that men will hear again and run from the wrath to come. The anger of the Lord is coming, and hell is coming! The only way out is to preach it and warn men and women. They will run and will respond. The prostitutes out there are looking for hope. Let us give them that hope. The thief out there is looking for hope. Let us tell them stealing can only lead you to hell! And they will run because everybody wants to be saved. They want to hear it. The church should not deny people this great message. If anybody tries to change the scriptures or modify the Word, it will not work. No modified word will change the heart of a sinner. Only the sharp edge-cutting Word of the Lord will change, which can pierce through people's hearts. The word of the Lord is Water, *John 15:3*, Hammer, *Jeremiah 23:29*, Two-edged sword, *Hebrew 4:12*. It is the only thing that can cut through the hardness of sin in man's heart.

*Do not say you have Abraham as father. Matthew 3:9.*

Do not say I go to this church. I am an elder in this church. One can be a Christian for many years but still struggle with sin.

John's message raised a question; "What shall we do?" Does your message raise a question? After each preaching, people must yearn for righteousness, holiness, and purity to grow in grace.

They should not leave the church as they were. There should be a change.

### **To the publicans**

*He said, exact no more than you should. Luke 3:13.*

Those in business should not profiteer. Cheating and fraudulent business should be avoided. Don't bring in tithe from such profit. It pollutes the purse of the church. Make your profit as due. It will be greed if you profiteer.

### **He said to all:**

Share what you have with the general congregation. If you have two coats, share them with your brother or your sister who does not have them! Some people have big cars but cannot give those who do not have a ride. They walk home in the rain with their children while the rich drive private cars. The wealthy families invite each other to lunch and birthday parties, and the poorer ones are not invited. They don't belong to their class.

Give brethren a ride. Going to brethren's houses for a pickup to church is not hard. Doing some rounds to take them back to the station is not too hard. It is easy to visit homes and ask people how they are doing and how things are with you.

These things should be preached in our churches, not just what God will do for us, but what we can do for one another. These messages of what God will do for us make people selfish because they seek their own. He that has two coats give the other one!

### **To the soldiers**

*Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages. Luke 3:14.*

When you minister in the church, know that people are different, so preach the message that will reach and touch everyone, both

old and young. He told the soldiers, do no violence! He said to the publicans to stop exacting more than they should!

May the Lord help us lead men aright! We will be required to give an account of what we have done with the souls the Lord sent to us. Do you preach the right message or look at people's faces and preach what they want to hear to keep them? May the Lord give every pastor, evangelist, and church leaders the grace to give the people the sincere milk of life! Amen.

## His Death

John the Baptist lived up to the beginning of Christ's Ministry, and his head was cut off. It was a short time on earth; he knew it and went straight to what he was called to. There was no need to compromise or entangle himself with the affairs of this world. He separated himself. He was only here to declare and usher in Jesus. The purpose was clear, and he got on with the job without wasting time.

Today, anybody dying at 30, 31 or 32 is unfortunate. The person would have lived longer to enjoy, and I wonder what type of enjoyment in a crooked and perverse generation. He knew his time was short! Do you know why the Lord called you, and have you fulfilled it? Are you delaying it? Time is passing quickly! We have no clue when Jesus will return.

Herod beheaded him because he told him not to take Herodias, his brother's wife. *Matthew 14:1-11*. Well, Herodiah asked for his head, which was given to her on a platter. He died for the truth. Death does not sting because he knows it is not about how he died; to live is Christ, and to die is gain. *Philippians 1:21*. This mortal body will return to the sand, but our spirit-man will live eternally with Elohim. Death was no torment to him. He knew his destination. He delivered the message and prepared the way.

We have a more beautiful place to go. The Lord told us in *John 14:2* that many mansions exist in my Father's house. John knew that eating locust and wild honey, wearing camel hair and having nothing here was nothing compared to what was kept for him!

Yeshua bore his testimony that no one in heaven is greater than John the Baptist. *Luke 7:24-28*

But brethren, what do we learn from him?

- The boldness.
- The Word he declared.
- Preach the actual message.
- Stand stronger.
- Do not compromise.

All of Israel ran to Jordan to be baptised of him.

## Some Success Principles

Looking at the life of those Yeshua used to usher himself into the world reminds us we can do better, especially now we know about them as examples to follow. We are in the Kingdom for no other reason but to fulfil the purpose and plan of Yeshua in our lives. There would not have been a better time to be where we are. Those the Lord would use will:

### Be Resolute

*And Mordecai reminded Esther, "For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then shall their enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Esther 4:14*

Those who ran the race before us have done their bit. The Lord is relying on us to do ours. We have been taught that the harvest is ripe, and the return of the Lord is at hand, *Matthew 24:3*. This is the time we rise and quit ourselves like men. Mary, Joseph, Simon, and Anna knew why they were used. Although Zechariah and Elizabeth did not fully understand, they later realised too. John the Baptist also knew why he was brought into the Kingdom. We can do what they have done without fear, for Elohim has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, love, and a sound mind, *2 Timothy 1:7*. This is not the time to be afraid or slack back. If

you withhold, you will lose it, but they who seek to lose it for Christ's sake will gain it all. *Matthew 16:25.*

We can do all things through Christ that strengthens us, *Philippians 4:13.* We are filled with The Holy Spirit and can do the work of God.

*Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. James 5:7*

Elijah was a man of like passions. We should stand firm before the Ahabs and Jezebels of our generation. Be resolute in maintaining your consecration to the Lord. Paul did not confer with anyone when the Lord called him to duty.

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. Galatians 1:15-16*

The Lord has given us His salvation, washed us with His Blood that cleanses us from all unrighteousness and separates us from the world. We should remain separate, *2 Corinthians 6:17.*

Though we are in the world, we are not of the world as Jesus prayed for us, *John 17:15-16.* I pray every righteous one and saint should know that we are not of this world and should not return to the things we left behind. If we do not keep ourselves far away from the world, the things they desire, long and go for, and take pride and joy in doing, we will not fulfil the plan and purpose of Elohim. We will lack the power to declare His goodness.

Looking back will mean going back to the cheap and beggarly elements of the things of this world, *Galatians 4:9.* When we were in them, we were strangers to the things of God, *Ephesians 2:12.* We were in darkness and should not seek to go back to

them. We have dropped off sin at the feet of the cross *Galatians 3:1*. Resist them steadfastly if you see them coming or crawling back. That is the only way to run this race successfully. There are many influences in the world, and we are still here. The flesh will complain about food, clothing, wants, and needs. The fleshly things will continue to war after spiritual things, *Galatians 5:17*. Carry yourself in the demeanour God ordained for you. When you know who you are, everything will fall in line.

### **Set a standard**

People dress decently for royal weddings because these events have a standard, a dress code to which everyone has to adhere. If you set a standard in your Christian life, everything around you will comply. Without a standard, we will be like Ephraim, a broken system, *Hosea 5:11*. The Lord will not find us fit for purpose if we float because we can easily sway to the left or the right. The Kingdom has set principles on which it works. The world cannot see those principles. Please do not use gimmicks to bring people to church, it cannot work. They are worldly principles. We can only be led by the Spirit of Elohim.

### **Be Stable**

Those the Lord will use will be people who keep to their word. They will be bold and do exploits. *Daniel 11:32*. They won't give up. The unstable will be like the wave of the sea. *James 1:6*

### **No Doubt**

God's servants will not doubt what He can do because they understand and know Him. They will also go with the singleness of eyes, focus, and set their faces like a flint. The Lord will not use inconsistent people because they have no foundation. They will be



busy copying the world, trying to imbibe or bring worldly systems and tactics into the Kingdom.

### **No pleasure of Egypt**

Those who will do this work would rather look toward the riches of heaven, than enjoy ‘the pleasures of Egypt’ for a season, *Hebrews 11:25*. Our life here is for a while. Our grandparents are gone and have become history. A hundred years may seem too much, but it is nothing compared to eternity. Nothing should take away the grace and goodness of Elohim from us. If you consider the little pleasures and relaxations of this time, they will burden your life. Many have fallen into the trap of going to parties and ceremonies, which take away from the time they would have used to concentrate on eternal and weightier matters. What they have left is spare change and a lot of excuses.

There is no profit in gaining the entire world, the troubles, onerous taxes, hard life, work that gives mental breakdowns, and pressure, only to lose our souls in the end, *Matthew 16:26*. Riches of this life do not bring joy, salvation, peace, or draw us close to the Lord. They are temporal; if not, the wealthy of this world would have been the most joyful on earth. Everything is vanity, *Ecclesiastes 1:2*.

Pharoah’s daughter found the child Moses, who was born to die by the riverside. It would have been a life well made for Moses as the adopted child of Pharaoh’s daughter and Heir to the throne. However, instead of enjoying the pleasures of royalty, he chose to be with his brethren. He knew they were for a while, *Hebrews 11:23-26*. Life cannot be made without Jesus. These are the men the Lord will use. Please do not hold your profession, beauty, or talent as a higher priority than more making it to heaven. Let us be serious about our Christian race. Making a name is less important than getting people rooted and grounded in the Word. If

making money and having titles is more important to a particular person, then such a person will be ‘of all men most miserable’, *1 Corinthians 15:19*.

### **Will carry on with the work**

Those the Lord will use will continue to build the ark despite being mocked. The giants may be on the way, but like David, they will surely defeat Goliath. Discomfort does not discourage them; the work continues.

*But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. Acts 20:24*

Be not among those who settle for fancies, planning and pursuing the next stage without preparing for eternity. Also, do not let any false prophet give you false hope in an endless chase of ambitions. The people God will use will look for a better city whose maker and builder is Elohim, *Hebrews 11:10*. There are many beautiful mansions in that city, *John 14:1*. We will reign and stay with Him forever and ever.

### **They will confront Nebuchadnezzar.**

Those the Lord will use will confront every Nebuchadnezzar. *Daniel 3:16-18*. The idols of work, talent, wealth, children, self, race, and choices will not dominate them, and they will not bow. They will not fear the lion’s den or the threat of being thrown into it. *Daniel 6:16-23*, Daniel remained steadfast in prayers despite the Kings’ threat. A ‘lion’s den’ may be posed to you, suggesting that you should not consecrate or live in holiness and righteousness. The Lord will deliver you. Whether your life is at stake, or you are being encouraged to compromise, remember,

to live is Christ, to die is gain, *Philippians 1:21* Those things that were ‘gain’ to you, consider them but ‘dung’, *Philippians 3:8*

### **They will not be limited by disability**

Moses said, but I am a person who stammers. How can I ask Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go? *Exodus 4:10-12*. Jeremiah said he was a child.

*Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth, Jeremiah 1:6-10*

Whatever physical disability and shortcomings will be taken away, in Jesus’ name, Amen. Whatever shyness, timidity, illiteracy, lack of prowess, language barrier or whatever. Receive the grace of Elohim upon your life in Yeshua’s name. Amen!

*And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant, Jeremiah 1:9-10. Amen!*

When the power of the Lord comes upon you, you will move like John the Baptist, Abraham, Moses and Esther. You will not look back.

*And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God Ruth 1:16*

You will not withdraw, no matter how much others try to dissuade you. You will lay your hands on the plough and will not go back. *Luke 9:62*.

*And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the LORD (brethren, remember the Lord), which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses, Nehemiah 4:14*

Do not fear those who will destroy the flesh but fear He, who can destroy both the flesh and the spirit in hell, *Matthew 10:28*. This is the time to fight Satan, sin and declare the Word of Elohim. Many people are perishing. You may be deterred if you look at their faces. Extend the rope. They want to climb out of the pit and speak the Word.

### **They will not abandon the work for distraction.**

Nehemiah did not abandon the work for the likes of Tobiah and Sanballat, who wanted him to come down for discussion, and leave the task in his hands. *Nehemiah 4:7-8*. Please avoid distraction.

### **They will endure afflictions**

Like Job, no matter what comes their way. We know our redeemer lives, and His joy is our strength. *Job 19:25*.

### **They will have the zeal like Ezekiel**

*And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious. Ezekiel 2:6-7.*

They will see and accept the power of Elohim and will not be weary but continue in welldoing, *Galatians 6:9*. Persecutions,

trials, thorns and briers, and scorpions may be on your way, do not be afraid of them! For we shall tread upon serpents, they will not hurt us, *Luke 10:19*. We shall drink deadly poison, and it will not hurt us, *Mark 16:18*. Do not fear the fire or the storm. It will not overflow you. Our God delivers.

*Remember thy Elohim, our Elohim is strong and mighty Nehemiah 9:32*

### **They will not make haste**

*Isaiah 28:16*. They will know that our Yeshua is the vine, *John 15:1*, The Door *John 10:7*, The Husbandman *John 15:1*, The Beginning and the End, The Alpha and Omega *Revelation 1:8*. He can raise the dead, heal the disabled and give sight to the blind *Matthew 11:5*. He is strong and mighty. We know who we believeth and are persuaded that He is able to keep that which we have committed unto Him 2 *Timothy 1:12*

Time will fail us to talk about men and women who ran the race in our time and those who are still running. We are not alone. Keep at bay the false prophets who make Christianity look cheap. They criticise the sufferings of Christ and deny the true gospel.

God used these outstanding men and women to usher in Our Lord Jesus Christ. Now it is our time to usher Him back in again, into the earthly realm. The ball is now in our court. Who are we, Elizabeth and Zachariah, Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the Shepherds, Wise Men or John the Baptist? The world needs to hear the herald of His coming. Can we say, "Yes, Lord, use me"? We will not hide our talents in a napkin and bury them beneath the ground.

## Reference

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We have used the King James Version Thompson Chain Reference Bible for thirty-one years, which has been a blessing to us as a family. This Bible offers no commentary on any subject in the Word, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide and speak to you directly. The chain-reference system gets one into the lifestyle of comparing Scriptures to Scriptures, which makes one appreciate the power of the Word of God.



These individuals look ordinary on the outside. There was nothing to show who they were, but God, who sees beyond the ordinary eyes, knows they were rare Gems endowed to usher in the King. We often bother a lot about outward show and performance and take little care of the inside. Elizabeth and Zachariah, Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the Shepherds, Wise Men and John the Baptist invested on the inside, and their light glowed through to the outside. Their attributes are intriguing and will challenge anyone to strive for excellence. They introduced Jesus to the world. We will herald His second coming. Who amongst us will be headhunted for the job? The person's specifications are outlined in this book. The ball is now in our court!



Pastor Grace co-labours with her husband to lead International Ministers Fellowship, Global School of Ministry, the Global Advanced Mentorship Program and Arise Metropolitan Assembly. A nurse by background with a BSc in Health Education, a Post Graduate studies in Management and Project Management. She rose through the ranks to senior managerial positions in the healthcare system. Pastor Grace is married to Apostle George Akalonu and they are blessed with 5 children, Favour, Elect, Arise,



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