

We shall now consider the account of the mother of our Lord's visitation with Elizabeth and Mary's song in response as we also consider the seven utterances of her Firstborn from the cross.

I. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

In those days [after being visited by Gabriel and conceiving the Christ in her womb] Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the Fruit of your womb!

Blessed is SHE among women? Blessed is the Fruit of HER womb – now nailed in all His shameful nakedness upon the cross? Hail Mary full of grief and sadness? Oh that poor blessed mother on that first Good Friday, the loud cries that at first filled her ears were the loud cries of the mockers who taunted and jeered the treasured Fruit of her womb. Still in that Judean hill country, SHE considered herself blessed?

But there was another loud cry that came from that grizzly scene echoing from those hills to even our day, far from taunting, it was comforting and strengthening. It was sounded from a heart filled with an eternal love: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Even Mary heard that prayer for her with all her sins of doubt and hateful anger.

Blessed is the Fruit of Mary's womb for you too my fellow sinners. A body was prepared there for you, who would come for your

rescue. It was knitted together in that secret chamber within the virgin undisturbed by the will of any man, but by the eternal will of the heavenly Father who desired to rescue you from your sin, shame and guilt and to provide for you a clear and certain path to heaven with Him forever. All too often you even know what you are doing in defiance of God's holy Law, but that blood forgives those sins too. It forgives them all. From that holy body formed in Mary would pour forth the blood that would wash you clean from all your sins forevermore.

II. "Truly I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

And [Elizabeth went on to ask] why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

The fruit of another woman's womb would leap for joy, but not while in the womb, rather much later while affixed to **his** instrument of execution. It was an execution well deserved as a thief. Shortly before he would leap with joy from within, he would be filled with sour unbelieving bitterness as he joined in with the other thief and their corrupt spiritual leaders of the day as they mocked the Fruit of Mary's womb. Far beyond deserving to be executed in this life, he deserved to be cut off forever from the face of God.

It was not the greeting of this now grief-stricken mother that caused the leaping with joy that day, but the greeting of the One next to him. In response to his vile and others' words of mockery, he was greeted with "Father, forgive them!" Those lips, tongue and voice conceived by the Spirit in the Virgin gave expression to the soul liberating declaration, which only the gracious Lord could utter at a time like this. But that voice was not silenced. After turning to Jesus and asking if He would remember him, this undeserving sinner, when He came to His kingdom, Jesus responded by saying: "Today you will be with me in Paradise!"

Oh how that heart was leaping now with joy, even with death so imminent. This holy One conceived by the Holy Ghost also had a heart that leapt with joy in speaking this personal absolution to one who now trusted in Him. Paradise awaits you too, my fellow redeemed. You trust in this holy One born of Mary who has miraculously appeared in that cradle of a Virgin's womb and then in the end would burst forth from that Jerusalem tomb for you.

III. "Woman, behold, your son." "Behold, your mother!"

And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

Again the fruit of another woman's womb would play a role in this the greatest grief of the mother of our Lord. He would be an instrument in her Son's gracious consideration of her in her great sorrow. John had his own natural mother, who in her sinful desires sought positions of prestige for him and his brother, James, in the kingdom of God.

Truly Jesus looked upon the humble estate of His beloved mother with a heart full of grace and gave her a substitute son. He was doing this from His humble estate as the holy One crucified for the sins of all mankind. Jesus was the Substitute for all sinners, by becoming the accursed **SIN** Himself. He was substituting Himself even for His mother who also desperately needed a Savior and she knew it well.

John would not need a substitute mother. He already had one. But Mary would need an earthly substitute son, since the Son who had served her in that vocation for 33 years would now be taken from her in death and removed from her sight in the ascension to the right hand of the Father. From that position of power and authority

He would rule all things on earth for His Church, which included the welfare of His earthly mother.

This truly was a great thing done for her by her Lord whose hands and feet were now affixed to the cross. So again He used His lips, tongue and voice to speak her care into existence. This same gracious Lord, who no longer is bound by our enemies, but rules as the King of Glory, directs all things in your lives too my fellow believers. If He would act compassionately with great power when on the cross, so will He not all the more act with that same powerful compassion for you today? Just as His mother believed in Him as her advocate, so you are called upon to trust in Him for the same.

IV. *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”*

And [*Mary continued:*] His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

Mercy is not giving you what you truly deserve. You deserve the eternal rejection by your Creator God for even one sin, not to mention your countless sins of thought, word and deed. You deserve hell, but you will never cry out the eternal cry of the damned, never! You see, your eternal Lord Jesus cried it out for you upon the cross. He suffered the hell for all sinners from generation to generation of all those conceived and born of sinful parents. The heavenly Father let His holy Son be damned for you.

Jesus, the blessed Fruit of Mary's womb could do this for us all because His conception was holy through the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit. His arm of strength was not exercised in the normal way by acts of offense, which defeat the adversary by striking out with fatal blows. Rather His arm of strength was to receive all the blows and stripes intended for us sinners. The heavenly Father turned His face from His Son allowing hell to throw all the eternity's worth of punishment we deserve at Him, so that we would be spared.

This holy mighty Fruit of Mary's womb would suffer all this, die and would be buried, only to bring down the mighty from their thrones by rising to life again. We like Mary herself, are in our humble estate as repentant sinners, yet we shall all eventually be exalted to the highest heaven through the fruit of our Lord's wounds, receiving from Him the forgiveness of all our condemning sins, the breath of life in the midst of this corrupt world of death and a salvation from the just desserts of our many and awful sins.

V. "I thirst."

[Mary continued:] He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.

There was once a woman in the crowd after hearing Jesus' words of power and authority, who said to Him: "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and breasts at which You nursed!" Mary truly was blessed to be the virgin chosen for this holy task of bearing the Christ Child. But this Seed of the woman was also blessed in being nourished in His body by hers. His cries early on were not articulated with words, but His thirst and His hunger were satisfied by His attentive nurturing mother.

God through Isaiah makes this point: "Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these **MAY** forget, yet I [the Lord] will not forget you." But the Father did forget His Son in the eternal abandonment of hell, where a finger dipped in water would have cooled His tongue. But none would be given Him until the eternal suffering was complete.

The unbelieving rich man who found himself in hell was sent away empty, but the poor beggar Lazarus was filled with all good things, eating and drinking with the result that there is no hunger or thirst forevermore. So it is today. The fat and sassy arrogant fools who imagine there is no God among us today will be sent away

empty for all eternity. But if they can imagine there is a God to whom they are answerable, they consider themselves sufficient to satisfy all His demands. These unbelieving "*rich ones*" will cast off forever. But you and I by the grace of our benevolent God will feast at His sumptuous table forevermore.

VI. *“It is finished!”*

[Mary continued:] He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy

When Jesus came with His loud declaration that all things were now completed with the words: “It is finished!”, one wonders how those waiting for the end thought? The soldiers may have shot each other glances wondering what other strange twists and turns these few words portended. By all rights all that Jesus had been through His voice should have sounded weak physically and defeated emotionally. But instead His voice was strong and defiant as though a victory had just been achieved. The chief priests and the elders were no doubt frightened a bit, because instead of Jesus begging for mercy, it could have almost seemed like a taunt directed at them!

Those watching who loved Him were probably relieved that Jesus who always seemed to be in control of all things, but who now had allowed Himself to be so pitifully manhandled, seemed to be back in control and was announcing an end to this gruesome suffering. Mary was feeling the bitter fulfillment of Simeon’s words spoken when Jesus was 40 days old that a sword was now piercing her very soul. Perhaps she audibly gasped as

though the sword was now being withdrawn with those strong words of her firstborn announcing it was finished.

In addition to announcing the completion of making payment for the sins of the whole world, there was one other act that needed to be accomplished for all things to be completed. Our suffering Savior had to die. That is the greatest grief of all for a parent to live through. Having a child die before you, shakes and rattles a parent's faith in a loving God more than almost anything else ever could in this life. Mary, who had been present for Jesus' first breath in this world, was now present for the willful and sacrificial taking of His last breath as well!

VII. *“Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.”*

[Mary now concluded:] as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.”

That body born of the virgin came forth nine months after conception very likely into the hands of Jesus’ stepfather, Joseph. The heavenly Father entrusted the body of His only begotten Son into the hands of a stranger, as it were, for safekeeping to provide for His body and life. But so it is with all generations of fathers ever since Adam. Their children were born in their image, spiritually lost and separated from the heavenly Father. Therefore all earthly fathers are called upon to bring their children to the true Father to receive life everlasting.

Through the generation of Christ Jesus, new creation is established. Jesus is called “the everlasting father” by the prophet Isaiah. Except for bringing his children to the waters of regeneration, no earthly father could generate this new birth. For in Christ we are born again, breaking that downward spiral into the pit of everlasting destruction. Life, instead of death, now fills us through faith.

This was the promise that was to be spoken by every father to his family since the time of Adam. It was a promise of mercy, forgiveness, life and salvation. Each father was also to confess to his own sin and to take responsibility for passing on this sad state of

condemnation to the generation he produced. But there was hope in the seed of the woman, the holy One born of the Virgin, which was to be looked for and awaited with great joy. Abraham saw Christ Jesus in his day, when he laughed in great joy over the son of promise in his old age named literally Laughter - Isaac.

Mary and Joseph were brought up in homes where their fathers made such confessions about themselves as sinners and about the One who was to come. The waiting continued as the Fruit of the Virgin's womb would grow in her for nine months and would be born into a hurting, dysfunctional and corrupt world. The damages of our sin would all be paid for by Him on that accursed tree. Into the hands of the Father of heaven the payment would be placed. In three days, the answer of the Father's acceptance of the payment would be heard in the thunderous earthquake as the stone was rolled away revealing the empty tomb. And it has been heard throughout the world to this day – the payment for your sin and mine, the sin of the whole world was paid in full.

Truly, blessed is the Fruit of Mary's womb for us forevermore!