Commentary on Luke Chapter One
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I've often remarked to people that I believe more time should be spent studying the life and times of Yeshua the Messiah. I don't think Bible believers spend enough time studying the Torah and the OT as a whole. I also think Bible believers spend enough time really digging into all 4 accounts of Yeshua's life. Just like I find that people often believe in a mighty one they have in their own mind rather than THE Mighty One of Scripture, people also believe in a Christ they have in their own mind, but have never taken the time to gain a real knowledge of who he really is. This book helps us do that.

Luke is 1 of 4 books in the NT called gospels. The word gospel literally means "good news" and these books are termed this because they each give an account about the good news of the Messiah that had arrived on the scene. Luke is placed in the category of the "synoptic gospels." The word synoptic carries the meaning of "with one eye" and is a title placed upon Matthew, Mark, and Luke because each of these authors write of many of the same accounts in their work. You can read Matthew, Mark, and Luke horizontally, reading one account in Matthew, and then the same account in Mark, and likewise with Luke. John is still considered a gospel, but is unique in that John does not follow along as nicely as these other three do. John tends to speak of things sometimes that no other gospel writer does.

Who is Luke? Luke is only mentioned 3 times in the entire NT. Colossians 4:14 - "Luke, the dearly loved physician, and Demas greet you." 2 Timothy 4:9-11 - "Make every effort to come to me soon, for Demas has deserted me, because he loved this present world, and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Bring Mark with you, for he is useful to me in the ministry." Philemon 1:24 - "Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my coworkers." As you see, in these occasions Paul is the author and Paul spoke highly of Luke mentioned him as dearly loved in one case and as remaining by his side in the ministry and a co-worker in the other cases.

Do we know that Luke is the author of this gospel? Well, in the gospel itself we are not told specifically who the author is, so we might answer no to begin with. Remember though, that if this was the case it would not mean the book should be trashed or considered non-canonical. Many OT books (like Ruth, 1&2 Samuel, etc.) do not state who the author is. Knowing who the author is of a particular book is obviously not what made Yahweh's people consider the book to be inspired by (the) Mighty One. I think we can know that Luke wrote this gospel. Consider first Luke 1:3 where we are told that this book is specifically written to man name Theophilus. Then consider Acts 1:1 where we read - "I wrote the first narrative, Theophilus, about all that Yeshua began to do and teach." My point here is that "this gospel" and the book of Acts were written by the same author. You have the first narrative, and then the second narrative. So, do we know who wrote the book of Acts? Well, here again we are not told at the beginning, but I think I can narrow it down for you.
It is an absolute that a companion of Paul wrote the book of Acts. Notice Acts 16:1-10 - "Then he went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek. 2 The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him. 3 Paul wanted Timothy to go with him, so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, since they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem for them to observe. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily. Evangelization of Europe 6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia and were prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in Asia. 7 When they came to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Yeshua did not allow them. 8 So, bypassing Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9 During the night a vision appeared to Paul: A Macedonian man was standing and pleading with him, “Cross over to Macedonia and help us!” 10 After he had seen the vision, we immediately made efforts to set out for Macedonia, concluding that (the) Mighty One had called us to evangelize them." Notice how all of a sudden in verse 10 the pronouns switch from "he" and "they" to "we" and "us" showing that the author joined Paul at this point in his missionary journey.

You then have texts like Acts 20:5-6 through the remainder of Acts. "These men went on ahead and waited for us in Troas, 6 but we sailed away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread. In five days we reached them at Troas, where we spent seven days.” So the author of Acts remained with Paul in his journeys. After Acts 16:10 we have the author mentioning names of people who were with Paul in his journeys: Barnabus, Mark, Silas, Timotheus, Priscilla and Aquila, Erastus, Gaius, Aristarchus, Sopater, Secundus, Tychicus, and Trophimus. The author never mentions Luke which goes in favor of the author being Luke.

We also have extremely early tradition that this gospel was written by the acquaintance of Paul named Luke. Men living between the 2nd to 4th centuries A.D. (Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Origin, Eusebius, and Jerome) all testify that Luke is the author. Even a document known as the Muratorian Canon or Fragment dating to 170 A.D. (the earliest known document for the Canon of the NT Scriptures) places Luke as the name of the author of this gospel.

1-2. Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us.

Luke begins here by stating that he is aware that "many" have taken it upon themselves to write about events fulfilled among us. The "events fulfilled" are obviously events surrounding and including the life of Yeshua the Messiah. Luke goes on to mention the original eyewitnesses and the servants of the word. See, Luke was not an apostle, he was not an "original eyewitness" but he knew of the writings of these eyewitnesses. These were writings that he knew of, heard about, knew the accounts within them, and may have saw with his own eyes.
3-4. It also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed.

Luke tells us here that he has taken the time to not just think about these events but to "carefully investigate" everything. You'll notice as we go through these beginning chapters in Luke that he is extremely detailed in his accounts, as well as very orderly as he mentions here in verse 3. Luke writes here that he is specifically writing to a man he calls "most honorable Theophilus" and no one knows for certain who this Theophilus is, but it is quite likely that he was some sort of high ranking official. In the book of Acts, Luke uses the same title of Felix who was a governor according to that account. Luke writes his work so that Theophilus would know the certainty of the things he was being told. You'll also see in this that Luke doesn't try to embellish his account of things. He doesn't try to say things that people who often lie say like "I'm telling the (the) Mighty One's honest truth!" or "I'm really serious, I would never lie." He doesn't use anything close to this. He just gives a detailed, orderly account.

5. In the days of King Herod of Judea, there was a priest of Abijah’s division named Zechariah. His wife was from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

Luke begins by telling us that what he is about to write took place in the days of King Herod of Judea. This is the same Herod that we read about in Matthew 2 that the wise men from the east came to, speaking about the birth of a King. Of course we know that Herod ordered the slaughter of all male children 2 years old and younger in that area. This should tell you what kind of man Herod was. Herod was a great designer of architecture. The temple of Yahweh that stood in the days of Yeshua was known as "Herod's temple" seeing that it was built under his authority, but in spite of this he never fared completely well with the Judahites of that time because Herod was what is sometimes called an Idumean, or an Edomite. Herod was a descendant of Esau and not of Jacob/Israel.

We then read of a priest of the division of Abijah named Zechariah. Obviously a priest in Biblical terms was a descendant of Aaron. Zechariah was a Levite come through the priestly lineage of Aaron the first high priest in Israel.

What does this mean "the division of Abijah?" Well, during the time of David (according to 1 Chronicles 24:1-19) the temple priesthood was arranged or organized into 24 divisions, with each division serving 2 weeks in the entire year. Josephus (Ant. 7.14.7) mentions David numbering the Levites at some 38,000 from 30 to 50 years old. Josephus says, "He divided them also into courses: and when he had separated the priests from them, he found of these priests 24 courses, 16 of the house of Eleazar, and 8 of that of Ithamar; and he ordained that once course should ministers to (the) Mighty One eight days, from sabbath to sabbath... and this partition has remained to this day." The 8th course was the course of Abijah, and this is the division that Zechariah was assigned to.
Now, Luke 1:5 also tells us that Zechariah's wife was from the daughters of Aaron. This was not a requirement for the Levites. A Levite priest could marry any woman from with the lineage of the Israelites, but this woman wasn't just from any tribe, she was woman descendant from the lineage of Aaron. Even her name - Elizabeth - was a prestigious name in the priestly line. Why? Elizabeth was the name of Aaron's wife! See Exodus 6:23.

**6. Both were righteous in (the) Mighty One's sight, living without blame according to all the commands and requirements of the Lord.**

Now here we have a very telling statement about Zechariah and Elizabeth in that they were righteous in (the) Mighty One's sight. Luke is very specific to tell us in "(the) Mighty One's sight" which is different than in "man's sight." We know that during this day (1st century A.D.) there were many people righteous in man's eyes. Luke later on in his gospel (Luke 18:9-14) gives us an account of two men who entered the temple to pray. The one was a Pharisee (separatist) and the other... a tax collector. Now in man's eyes you'd take one look at the Pharisee and you'd think, "Well, he's definitely a follower the Most High." But you don't tell who's following Yahweh by how pious they look. Now I'm sure Zechariah looked pretty similar to this Pharisee, but the key with Zechariah is that his outward appearance was genuinely flowing from the heart. You can appear holy outwardly with or without a flow from the heart. With a flow is the only proper way.

Luke records Yeshua as teaching this parable by saying that the Pharisee prayed like this: "(the) Mighty One, I thank You that I'm not like other people—greedy, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give a tenth of everything I get." The Pharisee in his prayer focused on his works, and just continuously gave praise to himself. Luke also records Yeshua teaching how the tax collector prayed: "But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even raise his eyes to heaven but kept striking his chest and saying, ' (the) Mighty One, turn Your wrath from me—a sinner." Yeshua went on to say that the tax collector left and went home justified (declared righteous before (the) Mighty One) rather than the Pharisee, and the reason is because Yeshua ends by saying those who exalt their self will be humbled, but those who humble their self will be exalted.

I believe Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in (the) Mighty One's sight first and foremost because they were like this tax collector. They knew the law. They read the law and realized that in reading the law they had violated it. They lived lives of repentance. When they prayed it was probably similar to this Pharisee, but the key with Zechariah is that his outward appearance was genuinely flowing from the heart. You can appear holy outwardly with or without a flow from the heart. With a flow is the only proper way.

And then they lived lives of obedience. Not perfection. Not without sin. But obedience. See, Luke 1:6, right after mentioning Zechariah and Elizabeth being righteous by faith or trust in Yahweh then mentions that they were living without blame according to all the commands and requirements of the Lord.
You can never divorce justification from sanctification. You just can't. Every single person that is justified - declared righteous or innocent - will be to some degree sanctified in their life. Why? Because Yahweh has given those he justified the ability to live holy lives. Being humble, and recognizing you are a sinner, and living by faith, does not mean that you do not obey the requirements of Yahweh. And it's no different today than in was in Luke 1:6. The law has not been void from then till now. You could have never sat down and talked Zechariah into the belief that the law has been done away with. He and his wife knew better than that. What often happens is people read about the hypocrisy of many Pharisees in Yeshua's day, and they associate that with keeping the law. The reality is that the Pharisees DID NOT KEEP THE LAW. Sure, they obeyed the externals to some degree but even that was manipulated. Remember how Yeshua said in Matthew 23 that the enlarge their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. The loved the chief seats at the banquets and they loved to be called Rabbi. They did all their works to be seen of who? Men, and not (the) Mighty One. Yeshua even rebuked them for omitting the weighty matters of the Torah. Yeshua said that they were so meticulous about tithing even the smallest garden plants like mint and dill, but they forgot things like justice, mercy, and faith. But, how is this usually taught? Most of the time people will look at these rebukes of the Pharisees and teach other people not to worry about the small, meticulous things, but that's how Yeshua taught it. He said that they should do all of it. These things you ought to do, without leaving the others undone. See Zechariah was meticulous in the Torah too, it's just that he wasn't just putting on a show. Zechariah's obedience was both inward and outward. I talked to a sister the other day about calculating the feast days. I explained to her that if we strive to study about when the feast days are and then keep them to best of our ability, the best we know how at the present time, even if we get things wrong, Yahweh sees the effort that we put forth and he considers our sin a sin of ignorance. Now it's different if you're just a sluggard and do not put forth an effort to study and know, Yahweh sees that too. But my point is that Yahweh judges the intent of the heart.

So, Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous before Yahweh. This verse should so us that this is a possible thing. They had faith in Yahweh, they believed everything he had revealed (Isaiah 53, etc.), they knew they fell short, but they humbly accepted His grace and Yahweh gave them the internal ability to be obedient to His law.

7. But they had no children because Elizabeth could not conceive, and both of them were well along in years.

However, they didn't have any children, and this was quite a dishonorable thing for an Israelite couple. Women were not able to have children suffered severely because they wanted to give birth to their own flesh and blood. Now, sometimes being barren is a curse from Yahweh (read Deuteronomy 28), but sometimes it is not. I don't think Elizabeth was barren because she was cursed. We just read where she was righteous in (the) Mighty One's sight. I believe in Yahweh's plan she was barren so that the glory of Yahweh might one day be revealed more fully in her life and the life of the child that would be born to her in this account. Not only was Elizabeth barren, and her and Zechariah had never had
children, by this time they were really too old for anyone to consider it possible that they
would have any children in life.

8-9. When his division was on duty and he was serving as priest before (the) Mighty One,
it happened that he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to enter
the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense.

Here we're told that Zechariah's priestly division went on duty in the temple, and of
course he was an active Aaronic priest, but we have to understand that just because you
were an Aaronic priest did not mean that you ever even had the opportunity to serve in
the temple.

From what I've read and studied concerning this, at this time there were anywhere from
18 to 20,000 eligible priests at this time. When your weekly division came up twice a
year, you had to be chosen by the casting of lots. All eligible priests in your division were
up for the job, but in this case the lot fell upon Zechariah. He was going to get the go into
the sanctuary and burn the incense. Exodus 30:1-9 speaks of the altar of incense. It was
burned every morning when the lamps were trimmed, and every evening or late afternoon
when the lamps were lit. So Zechariah was chosen by lot and this is something that
probably never happened from many priests and only happened once for many priests in
their lifetime. But... it was no coincidence. Yahweh was in control. Yahweh wanted
Zechariah to be the one chosen to burn the incense this time.

10-12. At the hour of incense the whole assembly of the people was praying outside. An
angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. When
Zechariah saw him, he was startled and overcome with fear

Now there were two hours of incense as we just saw in Exodus 30, and seeing that this
hour mentioned in Luke 1:10 has an assembly of people praying outside it was most
likely the late afternoon hour of incense, but it could have been in the morning for we're
not told specifically.

When Zechariah went in an angel of Yahweh appeared to him, standing at the right side
of the altar of incense. You've got to realize here, this is HUGE. There really hasn't been
much supernatural activity going on for 500 to 800 years. We know there was a lengthy
span of time between Malachi's writing to this time (400 years) and angels were not just
popping up every where all the time. When Zechariah saw this angel standing on the right
side of the altar of incense it was a big deal.

13. But the angel said to him: Do not be afraid, Zechariah, because your prayer
has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will name him John.

The Angel - Now here we have the angel telling him not to be afraid. You have to realize
that Zechariah knew the Tanak, he knew about the existence of supernatural messengers
from Yahweh. No doubt, there are human messengers, human angels, but there are also
heavenly, spirit beings, some of which are called seraphim and cherubim that come directly from the third heaven. This was one of the these angels.

**No Judgment** - Zechariah knew that many times when angels would show up it was for the purpose of judgment. Something was amiss and thus Yahweh sent an angel to set things straight. This angel though tells Zechariah not to worry, thus this was not a message of judgment.

**Have a Son** - The reason this angel had come is because of what we read in verse 13. Zechariah's prayer had been heard. Prayer? What prayer? Well, reading the remaining portion of verse 13 we learn that this prayer must have been a prayer Zechariah prayed to Yahweh asking Yahweh for a son. Notice verse 13 says your wife Elizabeth will have a son. Remember, Elizabeth was barren, so Zechariah had most likely been praying for a long time. Likewise, at this point in their life, they were old as we will see; past the age of child bearing. Thus Zechariah was praying for a double portion, a double blessing.

**Name him John** - Then we have the angel tell Zechariah what to name his son. He said to name him John, or more correctly Yochanan, the Hebrew name. From the name Yochanan we have the shortened form Yohn and then the anglicized John. But Zechariah's sons name, the name his mother and father called him, would have been Yochanan. This name stems from the sacred name Yahweh, as well as the Hebrew word chana, meaning grace or favor. The name together means that Yahweh has been gracious, or the favor of Yahweh. What better name to give to the child that would be born to a woman who had been barren her whole life and was now well past the age of child bearing.

*14. There will be joy and delight for you, and many will rejoice at his birth.*

And yes there would be joy and delight for Zechariah. He'd been wanting a child and probably a son (to carry on the Aaronic line) ever since he first married Elizabeth. Not only though would he have joy, but the text says MANY would rejoice at his birth. I believe the reason for this is because many would recognize that John's birth was the fulfillment of a grand prophecy in the book of Malachi. More on this in a bit.

*15. For he will be great in the sight of the Lord (Yahweh) and will never drink wine or beer. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit while still in his mother’s womb.*

**Greatness** - The angel tells Zechariah that this child would be great in the sight of Yahweh. Take note here that John's greatness would not necessarily be in the sight of man. We often define greatness by how well people get along or progress in man's eyes. We get excited if our children excel in the eyes of man, but in reality we should constantly be concerned with them excelling in the sight of Yahweh. Greatness is not defined by the clothes you wear or how much money you make, or if you're in the best selling movie. Greatness is defined by how Yahweh looks upon you; how He sees you. That's what makes you great.
**Wine or Beer** - The angel tells Zechariah that this son will be dedicated to Yahweh in a specific way. He will never drink wine or beer. Now, that should remind you of something. The most likely way to interpret this verse is to understand that John was to be a lifelong Nazarite, like Samson was. Samson's parents were also told to not allow Samson to drink wine or beer (Judges 13:3-7). The vow of the Nazarite is found in Numbers 6 and right at the beginning of the chapter you see that one of the requirements (although there were others) was that a man who took the vow of a Nazarite was not to drink wine or beer. It is possible that John was not a Nazarite, and that he was just to abstain from wine and beer because Yahweh appointed that out for John.

**Filled with Holy Spirit** - Then in verse 15 we have something very unique. This child would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. This is amazing. When we think of people being filled with the Holy Spirit and operating in the gifts of the Spirit we think of people who walk around, people we can see. We generally think of people who are of age as well, old enough to communicate intelligently with other adults. This case was exceptional though. Here we would have a child inside of his mother, still in the womb, filled with the Holy Spirit. I'd say this was a special child, wouldn't you?

16-17. *He will turn many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their (the) Mighty One. And he will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the disobedient to the understanding of the righteous, to make ready for the Lord a prepared people.*

**Sons of Israel to Yahweh their (the) Mighty One** - One of the purposes, the specific, special purposes of this child would be to turn many Israelites, and we're talking about physical Israelites here, to Yahweh. The word "turn" here is used throughout the Scriptures to speak of a spiritual turning, a repentance from sin. One example is Acts 3:19 where the word is translated "converted." Same Greek word - epistrepho - different English translation.

**He will go before Him as Elijah** - Here we read that John would be before Yahweh as Elijah. This doesn't mean John was literally the prophet Elijah, reincarnated, although I've heard some teach reincarnation from this verse. What we have here is a fulfillment of Malachi 4:4-6 which reads - "Remember the instruction of Moses My servant, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him at Horeb for all Israel. 5 Look, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome Day of Yahweh comes. 6 And he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse." Now isn't this exactly what we just read in Luke 1:16-17? John would be the Elijah like character. The way Yahweh sent Elijah was by sending John, a prophet who would come in the spirit and power of Elijah.

**Fathers to Children** - One aspect of John's ministry was to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children. What does this mean? Well, it means more than just having a child and thus becoming a Dad. It means that your heart is with your children, and you desire to instruct them in the way of righteousness. This is how it begins in a child's life. The
father instructs his children in the path they should take. The father diligently teaches his children the commandments (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). His heart is turned towards his children.

**Disobedient to Understanding** - This goes right along with what we read earlier about many of the children of Israel turning to Yahweh. John's ministry would cause disobedient people to change to people who understood righteousness. This is because John would preach righteousness. He would make ready for Yahweh a prepared people. Prepared means ready to inherit the kingdom. Their life is in order, and they are concerned with matters of justice.

18. How can I know this?" Zechariah asked the angel. “For I am an old man, and my wife is well along in years.

**How can I know this** - What kind of a question is that? You're just a certain priest, whose been chosen to burn the incense, and a supernatural spirit being shows up inside the temple and talks to you, tells you secret things, and your going to ask him, how can I know this?

**For I am old** - Zechariah's was basing his question upon human reasoning. Instead of trusting that the angel was speaking the truth directly from Yahweh, and thus a miracle would take place Zechariah looks at his age and the age of his wife and says, uh-uh - that's not happening. We are too old to have children. This is the same response Sarah and even Abraham gave in Genesis 17 and 18. Sarah even laughed at such a thing. She thought she was too old and shriveled up. You would think that Zechariah would remember this account in Genesis and think to himself, "Yes... this really can happen."

19. The angel answered him, “I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of (the) Mighty One, and I was sent to speak to you and tell you this good news."

**I am Gabriel** - I love how the angel answers this question. It's like he tells Zechariah, "Are you serious? Do you know who I am? I'm Gabriel for cryin' out loud! That's how you can know I'm telling the truth!" But you know what, sometimes we do the same thing as Zechariah. 2 Peter 1:16-21 tells us that the words of Scripture are a more sure word of prophecy, and we would do well to take heed to them. But sometimes we read the Scriptures, there as plain as the nose on our face, but we say, "How can this be? Surely Yahweh is not teaching us this?" We doubt just like Zechariah.

**Good News** - We often associate the phrase "good news" with the gospel of Yeshua the Messiah, but the phrase just literally means any news that is good. In this case the good news is that Zechariah's prayer would be heard, and his wife Elizabeth would get what she had been wanting for quite some time. A child of her own to take care of and train.

20. Now listen! You will become silent and unable to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.
Become Silent - Because Zechariah doubted the words of the angel Yahweh would take away his ability to speak. This did not mean that Zechariah lost his salvation or that Yahweh was going to send him to gehenna or something like that, this was simply Yahweh punishing the one he loved. He was teaching Zechariah a lesson. "You don't believe me, I'll show you my power, your speech will be taken away.

These Things Take Place - The "these things" here refers to when John was born, and we know this not just from this context but also from later on in Luke 1:57-66. Zechariah would not be able to speak, and what a punishment. You know he would want to tell everyone what had happened to him in the temple, but this ability was removed from him.

21-22. Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah, amazed that he stayed so long in the sanctuary. When he did come out, he could not speak to them. Then they realized that he had seen a vision in the sanctuary. He kept making signs to them and remained speechless.

So Long in the Sanctuary - All of the people who had been outside praying (vs. 10) were wondering what in the world was taking Zechariah so long. I mean, even as we've been studying this text, we've been inside of the temple since verse 9 and here we are now at verse 21. Generally the priests would come on out after they did their duty inside the temple with the incense, but no so here.

He kept Making Signs - Now we know he couldn't speak to the people when he came out, but the text says he kept making signs, and I'm not sure what kind of sign he made here, but I do know that he wasn't fluent in sign language if there was a thing in Hebrew, because he been able to talk all of his life and was just a few moments before this struck with being unable to speak.

23-25. When the days of his ministry were completed, he went back home. After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived and kept herself in seclusion for five months. She said, "The Lord has done this for me. He has looked with favor in these days to take away my disgrace among the people."

He went back home - Luke is very careful here to tell us that after Zechariah completed his weekly, priestly duty he went back home, and then only AFTER these days his wife Elizabeth conceived. There was no other man involved here, there was nothing sinful happening here. Luke makes it clear that Zechariah came home and was intimate with his wife. Wouldn't it be nice if we had their conversation in between verses 23 and 24? I mean picture Elizabeth when her husband comes into the door of the home. "How you doing honey? You could at least say something to me!" She didn't know he'd been struck dumb!

Seclusion for 5 months - Why did Elizabeth seclude herself for five months? We're not specifically told, but it may have been to simply rest her body, to make sure her baby got
the proper nourishment, or maybe she didn't want to show herself until her pregnancy was visible to others, which at 5 months she would be visibly pregnant.

The Lord has done this for me - We have all this supernatural taking place, and Elizabeth recognizes within this that Yahweh has been gracious to her. Remember her child's name "Yahweh is gracious" Yochanan. She stated that Yahweh looked on her with favor and took away her disgrace among people. Remember, she wasn't disgraced in the sight of Yahweh; verse 6 tells us she was a righteous law-keeper in Yahweh's sight. But because she was childless she was looked upon with disgrace in the sight of men, but now - now she would be looked upon as blessed. People would say about her, "Yahweh has had favor on Elizabeth." And Yahweh had, He gave her Yochanan.

26. In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by (the) Mighty One to a town in Galilee called Nazareth...

Sixth Month - Is this the 6th month of the year? We must be careful here to be good students of Scripture and not just make assumptions when it comes to the numbering of a month here. Surely we know that 6th month could be used to denote the 6th month of a yearly cycle, but the context here demands that another understanding is in order. Reading Luke 1:24-25 and coupling that with Luke 1:36 we find that this is a reference to the 6th month of Elizabeth's pregnancy.

Angel Gabriel - Gabriel had already showed up to Zechariah probably no later than 1 year prior to this visitation. Gabriel's name is made up of two Hebrew words (1) geber, and (2) el. Placing them together means strength of (the) Mighty One or man of (the) Mighty One. This is most likely the same angel that spoke to Daniel (8:16; 9:21), and possibly (but we can't be for sure) the angel of the Lord that spoke to Joseph in his dream (Matthew 1:18-25).

Sent by (the) Mighty One - This is translated in other English Bibles as "sent FROM (the) Mighty One" and it could probably go either way. The phrase as it stands does not in itself carry the idea of coming directly from the presence of (the) Mighty One in the 3rd heaven for John the Baptist is said to be sent by or from (the) Mighty One (John 1:6). In the case of Gabriel though we do know that his origin was one in which he stood in the very presence of the Almighty (Luke 1:19).

Town in Galilee called Nazareth - Nazareth is basically a "nothing" town. This is one of the those places that we sometimes jokingly mention by calling it a "one light town" or saying "if you blink you'll miss it." It's location is probably 60 to 70 miles north of the temple in Jerusalem, and it was of such small significance that when Philip told Nathaniel that he had found the one who the law and prophets wrote about - Yeshua of Nazareth - Nathaniel responded, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:45-46) The name of Yeshua (i.e. Jesus) is associated in the NT with the city of Nazareth approximately 81 times. Often times he is called "Yeshua of Nazareth" (Matthew 21:11; Mark 1:24) even calling himself with this title at times (Acts 22:8). This title was most likely attached to his name frequently because of the popularity of the name Yeshua in
the 1st century. There were other "Yeshua's" in existence at the time and the title "of Nazareth" was applied to the Messiah in order to distinguish him from the others.

27. To a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

**Virgin** - Twice in this verse Mary (Hebrew = Miriam) is called a virgin, or more correctly from the Greek a parthenos. The word parthenos is a word which almost if not always carries with it the meaning of a woman who has never had sex with a man. Revelation 14:4 does use it once to refer to young virgin men (men who have never laid with women). It is interesting to note that while the Hebrew text of Isaiah 7:14 uses the word almah (a word hotly discussed amongst Bible students) the LXX translates this into Greek as parthenos. Almah most certainly is a term that can denote a woman who has never had sex. We even see the word almah being used interchangeably with the word betulah in one case (Genesis 24:16, 43), betulah being the more common Hebrew word for a sexually pure virgin. Even if both words almah and parthenos can at times refer to young women with no connotations of sexual purity, they are undoubtedly used the majority of the time to refer to sexually pure virgins. See my word titled "The Virgin Birth: Fact or Fiction?" for a detailed look at both words.

**Engaged to a man named Joseph** - We read the English word engagement and generally associate modern day engagement practices with this word. We must be careful not to read 21st century concepts into 1st century practices. Hebrew "engagements" were much more legally binding and taken serious than people do so today. To distinguish between the cultures the word would probably be better translated as "betrothed." The word betrothed carries with it the meaning of "to be pledged to" and here refers to the fact that the girls father has authorized the giving of his daughter's hand in marriage to a particular man. The man has paid the girls father the virgins dowry, and according to the Aramaic text of the NT this should read "to a virgin acquired for a price." (see Lamsa) What would take place in betrothal though was not equivalent to marriage for we read of the two as separate in the OT texts of Deuteronomy 20:7 and 22:23. After betrothal the future husband would make sure he made the necessary arrangements to provide sufficiently for his wife (usually around the neighborhood of 1 year according to scholars) and then come back and take his virgin bride's hand in marriage. Take note that betrothal's according to historical sources generally took place between the ages of 12 to 14 years old at that time. We see here that Miriam was betrothed to a man named Joseph, Joseph's name meaning "let him be fruitful."

**House of David** - Here we learn most definitely that Joseph was of the house of David, that is, David was reckoned to be in Joseph's lineage or ancestry. The house of David was of the tribe of Yehudah or Judah (2 Samuel 2:4-11; Zechariah 12:7). We cannot be certain that this verse places Miriam's lineage from the house of David for it seems to mention her separate at the end by mentioning here as a virgin again at the end of this verse.

28. And the angel came to her and said "Rejoice, favored woman! The Lord is with you."
Angel came to her - Gabriel comes and speaks with the woman, and we need to realize just how special this is. There are so many, many Hebrew women that (the) Mighty One could have chosen to perform this miracle through, yet the angel was sent to one, just one.

Rejoice, Favored Woman - The term translated "rejoice" could merely be an introductory greeting (hail, hello) but could also be taken as translated here, as a greeting of excitement. Favored carries with it the idea of special grace. The Lord is with this woman in a special way. She has been shown unique favor, and notice that there is nothing in the text to even insinuate that this favor was shown to her because of something within her or because of something she did. We just learn that she was favored by the Lord, and this is from His divine right to choose.

29. But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be.

Deeply Troubled - As mentioned earlier in the case of Zechariah (Luke 1:12) when a spirit-being angelic creature showed up in front of you to talk you were in a sense of awe, fear, and even terror at times. Miriam was just a young girl whose time probably was spent doing house work, drawing water, cooking, etc. She was wondering something like, "Why is an angel speaking to me? Why am I being shown favor in the sight of the Lord? What is happening here?" Recognize that Miriam does not know about Elizabeth's pregnancy at this time (see Luke 1:36-37)

30. Then the angel told her: Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with (the) Mighty One.

Do not be afraid - Miriam is assured that this angel has not come to announce to her any type of destruction. He has not come to give her a word of warning. His message is one which is good and special. Miriam has found favor (grace) with (the) Mighty One. The Almighty is about to do something wonderful with Miriam.

31. Now listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call His name Yeshua.

Conceive and Give Birth - The angel tells Miriam that she will conceive and then birth a male child. Remember, Miriam has been called a virgin (parthenos) twice already and it has further been said the she has been betrothed to Joseph. Miriam knows that she has not consummated the marriage yet with her betrothed Joseph. Miriam had never had sex, yet the angel tells her she will conceive and give birth. Now, naturally a betrothed woman who was told this by an angel may think, "Okay, this is great. I will get married to by betrothed and we will come together and pro-create a son." However, as we will see, this is not what went through Miriam's mind, and there must be a reason for this.

Call His Name Yeshua - I have retained the proper Hebrew name of the Messiah here out of honor and respect for him, who he is, and what he stands for. Our English Bibles render this name as "Jesus" but we can be assured that Jesus is not the name given by the
angel to this "Hebrewess" Miriam. The name of Jesus comes from the Hebrew name Yehoshua or Yeshua being transliterated from Hebrew to Greek, then from Greek to Latin, then from Latin to English, and then lastly adding the letter "J" to the beginning later on down the line. When you look up the English names Jesus and Joshua you will find that they are written identically in Greek (see Acts 7:45 and Hebrews 4:8 KJV), so why the difference? Well, Jesus takes into account the process of going through the Greek and Latin alphabet's while the name Joshua jumps directly from Hebrew to English. If we were really going to call our Messiah by his English name it would certainly be more proper to render it as Joshua or Jeshua instead of Jesus. To many Christian people this seems strange because the name of Jesus is so close to their heart and they wouldn't dream of naming their son Jesus. The fact is though that the name given to the Messiah was a common Hebrew name for the sons of Hebrew parents in 1st century Palestine and the surrounding areas. The reason (the) Mighty One (through the angel) gives this name for the child is because of what will be done through the child. Matthew 1:21 defines his name for us. The child is name Yeshua because "he will save" his people from their sins. The name Yeshua means just that - "he will save." The name Yochanan (Johann or John) was given for the child born to Zechariah and Elizabeth (meaning Yahweh had been gracious to them), but this child would be more special than Yochanan seeing that through this child (Yeshua) Yahweh would bring salvation.

32. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord (the) Mighty One will give him the throne of his father David.

He will be Great - I am surprised at how I have seen this appellation towards Yeshua interpreted by some scholars. I was listening the other day to a sermon on this text and heard a teacher say that because John the Baptist is called "great in the sight of the Lord" (Luke 1:15) and Yeshua is just called "great" this must mean that Yeshua is Yahweh or one in essence or substance with the Father (Trinitarianism). I believe what has been done here as well as in other texts of Scripture is reading one's already committed theology into a text of Scripture, rather than letting the text speak for itself. Based upon exegeting the text by itself we can only conclude that the child born to Miriam will be "great," i.e. he will not be just any ordinary child. He will be a special child, and extraordinary child. To read into this adjective the idea of Yeshua really being the Almighty is completely foreign to the text. (Note: The LXX gives the bare title "great" [Greek = megas] to both Moses [Exodus 11:3] and Mordechai [Esther 10:3].)

Son of the Most High - Here again we have many scholars reading something into the text that it just does not say nor even imply. What we have is another appellation to Yeshua; he is the "Son of the Most High." Now reading this text literally tells us that there is a being known as the "Most High," and Yeshua is this "Most High's" Son. Obviously then Yeshua would not be the "Most High" but would still be astonishingly great as the "Son Of The Most High." The title Most High is used of (the) Mighty One in the OT, particularly frequently in the book of Daniel. The title "Son of the Most High" is used in the plural (sons) in Psalm 82:6 of the judges of Israel and also out of the mouth of Yeshua himself from the "pen" of the same author (Luke 6:35). This second title is not one promoting deity or divinity, but one showing a person to be in a unique or special
relationship with the Most High. It speaks nothing about a person's essence or substance (as Trinitarian Christology often insinuates), but rather of a person's status as well as their relationship with the Most High Yahweh. It is very likely that this title is a precursor to a similar title used of John shortly hereafter. We do know that the births of these children were closely related; both were announced by Gabriel and both were miraculous births. John was also to be the prophet to introduce Yeshua's ministry. In Luke 1:76 we see that John is called by Zechariah his father a "prophet of the Most High." Just as prophet OF the Most High means the Most High's prophet, "Son OF the Most High" means the Most High's Son.

The Lord (the) Mighty One Will Give Him - Right after mentioning (the) Mighty One with the title Most High, Luke now references (the) Mighty One as the "Lord (the) Mighty One" frequently used as Yahweh Elohim in the OT. Here we have the Lord (the) Mighty One giving something to "him," but who is the "him" in this phrase? It is undoubtedly the child that will be born to Miriam, the child that was just said to be the Son of the Most High. Recognize that the Lord (the) Mighty One is giving something to him. This means the Lord (the) Mighty One is the giver and the child is the receiver. Points like these (which unambiguously separate (the) Mighty One and Christ) are found time and time again on the pages of the NT. Yeshua is not Yahweh, Yeshua is rather the Son of Yahweh.

The Throne of His Father David - What is it that the Lord (the) Mighty One will give to this child? It is none other than the throne of David, or as David is called here, the father of the child. Why is David called the father of Yeshua? Matthew 1:1 references both David and Abraham as the father of Yeshua and of course we know that both of these men had long ago fallen asleep and were buried with their fathers. The term father is often used in Scripture to denote ancestry; someone who was your great-great-great-grandfather could be termed your father because you stemmed from their lineage. Seeing that Messiah stemmed from the lineage of David, David could rightfully be called his father. Likewise the same can be said of father Abraham. But how was Yeshua a descendant of David if Joseph (who was from the house of David [Luke 1:27]) was not the biological father of Yeshua. Here are a few points to consider:

- It is quite possible that Miriam's biological father was of Judah, and thus Yeshua received genetics from the line of David through his grandfather on his Mothers side.

- Joseph was the legal father of Yeshua by adoption. We do know from the text of Deuteronomy 25:5-10 that if a husband dies childless, the husbands brother is to go into his deceased brothers wife and perform the duty of a husband to her (have sex with her) in order to raise up seed to his dead brother. The child will carry on the name of this dead brother even though he is not directly descended from the seed of his mother's first husband, but rather from the brother of his mother's first husband. As the legal father Joseph took care of, raised, trained, and studied with him. Thus Yeshua can be said to stem from the royal line of David even though he was not produced by a sexual act between Joseph and Miriam.
We are not told exactly how the virgin conception of Miriam took place. We do know that many of the false, pagan religions of antiquity had stories of "virgin conceptions," but these stories all included some sort of sexual act between one of their (the) Mighty Ones and a virgin woman, producing some sort of demi-(the) Mighty One upon the earth (half man / half (the) Mighty One). Satan tries his best to mimic the truth, seeing that he was once a beautiful angelic creature before the Almighty in heaven (see my sermon titled "Where Did Satan Come From?"). A great difference though between the pagan religions and what happened with Miriam is that in the accounts of the virgin conception in Matthew and Luke, there is nothing ever said about any sexual activity between Yahweh and Miriam. The child produced in Miriam would not be half (the) Mighty One and half man, but 100% man. Miriam's conception would be miraculous. There are other miraculous births recorded in Scripture as well (consider Sarah conceiving Isaac at 90 years old [Genesis 17-18]). When (the) Mighty One steps in to miraculously make conception happen he is not tampering with the woman in any way. He is performing a miracle for the woman. In Miriam's case it is quite possible that Yahweh placed within her a seed of Joseph from the House of David, thus Yeshua would be directly from the line of David. It is interesting that in Matthew's account (Matthew 1:1-25), Matthew makes great pains to give a detailed genealogy that begins with Abraham, includes Judah, and stems right down to Joseph.

Anyway we explain it or look at it the fact is (1) Miriam was a sexually pure virgin when she conceived Yeshua, (2) Yahweh did not violate Miriam's sexual virginity because Yahweh did not have sex in any way with Miriam as Joseph eventually would [after Yeshua's birth and days of purification, Leviticus 12], and (3) Yeshua was descended from the royal Davidic line. These are the facts, and we can speculate about how they work out, but even if we don't know for certain we still know that this is what Scripture teaches us to be true.

Getting back to our text (Luke 1:32) what does it mean that the Lord (the) Mighty One will give him THE THRONE of his father David? I believe this is a reference to Yeshua physically ruling from the Davidic throne in Jerusalem. People tend to neglect this aspect of OT prophecy or either spiritualize it away making literal texts from the OT prophets merely symbolic and coming up with a wide range of spiritualizations that can hardly be proven true. All through the OT we find that the prophets speak of a time with Israel and Judah will be gathered together in the land Yahweh gave to their fathers (see Ezekiel 36-37; Jeremiah 31:31-40; Isaiah 2:1-4; Jeremiah 23:5-6). In short (without going into much detail) Yeshua will return to this earth and produce restoration for the heavens and earth prior to the complete renewal of the heavens and earth (Revelation 21). This restoration will be the first stage in the kingdom of Yahweh and last for 1,000 years (Revelation 20:1-7). During this time period the headquarters of this millennium kingdom will be established in Jerusalem, Israel and Yeshua will be the chief with David also resurrected to be King under Yeshua (Ezekiel 36:24). Yeshua will have then be given the throne of his father David because Yeshua will be ruling in a governmental style just as the Kings of old.
33. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.

He Will Reign Forever - This goes back to what we just covered at the end of verse 32. The forever part may appear as a stumbling block at first because this is said to only be for a 1,000 year period of time (Revelation 20:1-7), but we must recognize this is only the first part or stage of the kingdom. After this (Revelation 21) the New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven and the final stage of the kingdom occurs with Yeshua still reigning over the house of Jacob/Israel. The forever part is echoed at the end of this verse where we read that His kingdom will have no end.

House of Jacob - This is undoubtedly referring to the physical tribes of Israel, Yahweh chosen peoples out of all the nations on the face of the earth. Remember that Israel's name before it was changed was Jacob. Many people believe that under the New Covenant (the) Mighty One does not have a plan with physical Israel, nor is He planning a physical kingdom here upon this earth. There are just so many, many Scriptural texts to disprove this notion. The New Covenant was made with the houses of Israel and Judah (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:8-12; Romans 9:4-5) and if (the) Mighty One were to forsake His chosen people many prophecies would be left unfulfilled (Jeremiah 31:38-40; Ezekiel 36-37). Without a doubt, just as the virgin conception of Yeshua was spoken of by this angel and it took place, the reigning over the house of Jacob in a kingdom by Yeshua will also take place.

34. Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?"

Let's think this through for a moment. If the angel came to Miriam as a parthenos/virgin and told her she would conceive a son, it would be quite logical for Miriam to think, "Well, I am a virgin now, but I am betrothed to Joseph so I'll be getting married soon, Joseph and I will be intimate and we will have a special child." I do have here in my office one article that attacks the virgin conception by going through this account of Luke and saying that everything the angel told Miriam was to take place in the future. Luke 1:31 is emphasized in this article as saying, "You SHALL conceive a son" meaning that it would happen later after Joseph and Miriam came together. I personally think that the article is completely ridiculous and that's being nice. I agree that the word "shall" or "will" in some translations carries with it a future tense, but the fact is that one second after that is spoken is still future tense. As I sit here typing at my computer, the future is 1 minute away and 100 years away; both are in the future. We know that the word "shall" can have immediate afterward effect because of the account of Zechariah in the temple earlier in this chapter. Remember, after Zechariah questioned the angels words the angel told him "you SHALL become silent" (Luke 1:18-20). When did Zechariah lose his ability to speak? It was immediately after the angel told him this because Zechariah came out of the temple and couldn't talk to all of the people standing outside (Luke 1:21-22).

So, why does Miriam respond to the angel with wonder and amazement if she was already betrothed and would soon be married and able to be intimate in sex with Joseph? The best way to understand this is that Miriam took Gabriel's words with immediacy. In other words, as Gabriel talked to her (Luke 1:30-33) Miriam realized that the word
Gabriel gave to her about conceiving a son would happened soon after he said it. This makes sense. It explains why she asked the question, "How is this possible seeing I've never had sex with a man?" Miriam realized that Gabriel was telling her she would conceive while only being betrothed to Joseph.

The literal rendering of Miriam's question at this point is "seeing I know not a man," but if we are familiar with Scripture we should realize that this is a common euphemism for sexual relations. We see it as early as Genesis 4:1 where Adam "knew" Eve and she conceived." Does this mean Adam "met" Eve in the English sense of the word "met?" Does it just mean that Adam knew who she was like I know who women in my family are? Of course not, it means that Adam had sex with Eve, i.e. he knew her intimately. So Miriam was saying "I've never had sex with a man before." Miriam knew even as a young teenager how children were produced. She realized that she had never lain with a man sexually. "I have never been intimate with man" is a translation that accurately portrays the meaning of the original sentence Miriam spoke.

Should we take Miriam's words here as doubt on her part? I do not believe so. We know that Zechariah's words (Luke 1:18) were words of doubt and unbelief because of the punishment that was placed upon him. In contrast, Miriam's words do not produce a punishment therefore her words must be in this sense: "Okay I believe you, but how is this going to take place? What are some of the details here? I'm interested in learning more."

35. The angel replied to her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the holy One to be born will be called the Son of (the) Mighty One."

**Holy Spirit Will Come Upon You** - After Miriam asks the angel "How is this going to happen?" Gabriel responds by explaining it (to some degree) to her. Notice Gabriel's response is right in line with Miriam understanding the immediacy of her pregnancy. Gabriel does not correct her and say, "No Miriam, you will marry Joseph and have a child after having sex with him." Gabriel tells her that a miracle will take place in her womb; the Spirit of the Holy One will come upon her. Gabriel continues by saying that the power of the Most High will overshadow her. What we have here is Gabriel saying the same thing in two different ways. The Holy Spirit coming upon Miriam, and the power of the Most High overshadowing Miriam are the same thing. Of course we know the Most High spoken of here is Yahweh, and so obviously the Holy Spirit is synonymous with Yahweh as well - it is His power and presence.

**Therefore** - Here is a word that is often neglected in Biblical exegesis. I heard a preacher say one time, "Anytime you see the word 'therefore' in the Bible you need to ask yourself what it's there for." Therefore basically means "On the basis of what I've just told you..." The NASB renders it nicely in saying "For that reason."

**Holy One to be Born/Son of (the) Mighty One** - So what Gabriel is saying is this, "There will be a miracle performed upon you Miriam. The Most High's power will
overshadow you and because of this the holy child born within you will be called (the) Mighty One's Son." Here we see that Yeshua being the Son of (the) Mighty One does not carry with it the idea of eternal sonship or as Trinitarian theology sometimes states it "eternally begotten" (which to me is very oxymoronic). Yeshua being (the) Mighty One's Son is based upon the miracle in the womb of His mother. Son of (the) Mighty One does not denote being (the) Mighty One or the second person of the Trinity, or of the same essence or substance as the Father. Son of (the) Mighty One carries with it the idea of having a special relationship with Yahweh seeing that Yahweh has caused your existence in a special way. Take for instance what Luke writes in Luke 3:38. After giving a long list of genealogy of sons and their fathers Luke speaks of Adam as being the "son of (the) Mighty One." Why is Adam termed the "son of (the) Mighty One?" I would say that it is safe to conclude that it is because Adam was directly created by (the) Mighty One without the aid of any human parents. Whereas Seth was the product of Adam and Eve's sexual relations, Adam was the direct creation of (the) Mighty One. Although we do not also read of Eve being the "daughter of (the) Mighty One" I believe it is a very safe assumption. Eve was created directly by (the) Mighty One out of the side of Adam having no origin from a sexual relationship between any parents like you and I. It should be noted here that Adam and Eve, in spite of their unusual origin, are still 100% human beings. They are not demi-(the) Mighty Ones or anything like that, Yahweh just performed a supernatural act of creation producing a human male and a human female. Likewise, Yeshua was supernaturally produced by Yahweh's power, but he actually was in the womb of a woman for the entire normal pregnancy period and then birthed through his mother's canal. Yeshua was still 100% human, like Adam and Eve, but he (like Adam) can be called "the son of (the) Mighty One" because his origin stemmed directly from Yahweh.

We should take special note here that Yeshua is termed as the "only begotten Son of (the) Mighty One" in passages like John 3:16 and 1 John 4:9-10. The term "only begotten" stems from the Greek compound word monogenes: mono meaning sole, only, one and genes having to do with kind or species. Yeshua was thus "one of a kind" or "unique." I believe that part of what makes him the monogenes Son of (the) Mighty One is His virgin conception and birth. This is not to leave out his sinless life, miraculous power, sacrificial death, victorious resurrection, or ascension into heaven, but it is to center in on the beginning of all of these unique traits.

Suffice to say the term "Son of (the) Mighty One" doesn't mean you are (the) Mighty One; it means you are (the) Mighty One's son in a unique way. When we speak of Yeshua we speak of Yahweh's most unique son. Notice even right here in Luke 1:35 Yeshua is said to be a holy child to be born. He would thus be holy beginning right in the womb. As I ponder upon this I can't help but see another parallel to Yochanan; Remember, John would be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. Yeshua would be greater than John in the fact that he is said to be already holy in the womb. Yahweh would have more invested in this man (Yeshua) than any other man to ever walk the face of the earth. This would be the only begotten Son of the heavenly Father, holy from the womb.
36. And consider your relative Elizabeth - even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the 6th month for her who was called barren.

Relative Elizabeth - The KJV translates this as "cousin" and while this is a possibility, the Greek here just means someone related to you, so Elizabeth could have been aunt to Miriam making Miriam her niece. Some have suggested that this means Miriam was not from Judah but rather from Levi, but this is not a necessity. We can see Miriam's lineage as stemming from both Judah (see earlier comments) and Levi. Miriam could have been related to Levi through her mother's side of the family and Judah through her father's side of the family. It is possible (though not certain) that Miriam's mother and Elizabeth were sisters. This would make Miriam, Elizabeth's niece (thus relative) while at the same time retaining her Judahite blood through her father. There was nothing wrong with men from one tribe of Israel marrying women from another tribe within Israel or for that matter they could even marry non-Israelite Adamite women who were not of a forbidden lineage or people group.

Even She Has Conceived a Son - Gabriel is telling Miriam what had taken place with Elizabeth. We've covered how that Elizabeth after becoming pregnant secluded herself for 5 months (Luke 1:24) and now it was the sixth month of her pregnancy according to this verse. We don't know where in the sixth month, so it could have been right at the end of Elizabeth's 5th month and the very beginning of her 6th month. Gabriel is telling her that Elizabeth was with child! No doubt Miriam knew of Elizabeth's barrenness and so Gabriel telling Miriam this would be a further word of encouragement for Miriam to hear.

In Her Old Age - I have read some non-virgin birth material that attempts to say that this verse proves Miriam was an old woman and therefore her birth was miraculous in this way rather than her having a virgin conception. Once again, I feel this is utterly ridiculous and is just another example of people not wanting to accept the testimony that Scripture gives us here. One must overlook the fact of (1) Miriam being emphasized as a parthenos in the text, (2) Miriam being betrothed which happened during the early teenage years from Hebrew women at that time, (3) Miriam's question in verse 34 of how is this going to take place seeing I've never had sex, and (4) Gabriel's response in verse 35 to Miriam's question. All Gabriel is saying here is that Elizabeth has also CONCEIVED a son like you Miriam. Gabriel then goes on to say that this happened in her old age and in spite of her lifetime barrenness.

37. For nothing will be impossible with (the) Mighty One.

Recognize that both verse 36 and 37 are a continuance of Gabriel's words that began in verse 35 after Miriam's question. Gabriel emphasizes here in verse 37 the miraculous power of (the) Mighty One, showing that both Elizabeth's pregnancy and Miriam's pregnancy were both miracles. This further substantiates the point I made previously about Gabriel giving encouragement to Miriam here. Gabriel is telling Miriam, "Not only is this happening to you, but your relative Elizabeth is having a miracle baby too, for these things are not impossible when it comes to the power of the Most High."
38. "I am the Lord's slave," said Mary. "May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.

The Lord's Slave - The word here in the Greek technically refers to a female slave and thus shows the humility in the young Miriam. Imagine being a young Hebrew woman, betrothed to a man, so excited about your soon to be marriage and husband. All of a sudden an angel shows up and gives you some news that no woman has ever heard or ever will hear again. Would your response be, "I am the female slave of the Lord" ??? What a humble response Miriam gives here.

Let it Be Done to Me - Here again we see Miriam's humility. She recognizes that she is a chosen vessel that has had grace and favor shown to her, and she humbly submits to the will of the Father. She is saying, "This is the Father's will so I will rest in His will knowing that He knows what is best and has everything worked out."

39. In those days Miriam set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah.
40. Where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.

Miriam Set Out - It is remarkable that a girl Miriam's age (13-16 years) would embark on a journey just after she was told that she would become pregnant. Miriam's purpose in all likelihood was twofold. First, she wanted to encourage Elizabeth and visit with her in the latter stages of Elizabeth's pregnancy. For Miriam to show up and explain to Elizabeth what had happened to her would no doubt confirm the miraculous to Elizabeth. Elizabeth did not yet know what had happened in Miriam's womb, it was only Miriam that had been told by the angel Gabriel about Elizabeth's pregnancy, and that it she was 6 months into her pregnancy (Luke 1:36-37). Secondly, Miriam wanted to go ahead and make the journey early on in her pregnancy because it would be less taxing on her body in this early stage.

Hill Country of Judah - Miriam's journey from Nazareth to Judah was probably about 70 to 100 miles southward. This would not have been an easy journey, and probably would have take her 3 to 4 days to get down there if she traveled by camel or donkey.

Greeted Elizabeth - Make sure not to interpret the word "greeted" with a 21st century American mindset as though Miriam just said "Hello!" This is not talking about a hello, but most likely a fairly lengthy address and explanation by Miriam to Elizabeth about what had taken place back at Nazareth. We know that Miriam told Elizabeth about her virgin conception because of what we read in the verses to follow.

41. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped inside her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

Heard Miriam's Greeting - We know that the greeting in verse 40 was more than just a "hello" because of this verse. The verse tells us that the greeting of Miriam caused the baby inside Elizabeth to leap. It only makes sense that the baby was leaping because of the news brought by Miriam that she had conceived the very Son of the Almighty.
Baby Leaped - I am the thankful father of five wonderful children, and I remember my wife being pregnant with each of them. Many times during the 2nd or 3rd trimester of my wife's pregnancy she would exclaim, "Matthew! Come here and feel the baby move!" I remember how excited my wife would get when we could feel and even sometimes see a foot or a knee "poke out" of her stomach. When I read this text about the baby leaping inside of Elizabeth, I actually believe it was more than what I have experience with my children and my wife. I believe Elizabeth actually knew that the baby had not only moved around or kicked, but she could feel that the baby had jumped inside of her.

I believe what is happening here is a fulfillment of what the angel had told Zechariah months earlier (Luke 1:15). The angel had already said that the child born to Zechariah's wife would be filled with the Spirit of Yahweh from his mother's womb, and I think it is best to understand that this is fulfilled in Luke 1:41 where the baby leaps and Elizabeth is in turn filled with the Holy Spirit.

Now, on another note, I refuse to listen to those people in the world today who insist upon thinking that a baby inside a mother's womb is different from a baby outside a mother's womb. Here we have a 6 month old child inside the womb of his mother and he is leaping as well as capable of being filled with the Holy Spirit. Biblically speaking (and that's really the only way to speak) life begins at conception and to take the life of the unborn child is nothing short of murder. It is not different than taking their life the first day after the child's birth.

Let me also add that to be filled with the Holy Spirit is something exciting. It is something that makes you want to leap like Yochanan here! A spirit-filled life is not one in which you walk around like you have been "baptized in vinegar." A person filled with the Holy Spirit will be excited, and leap, sing, and even dance before Yahweh. There is nothing wrong with serving Yahweh or praising Yahweh emotionally, so long as your emotions are never allowed to overrule anything in the written Scriptures. Emotions in serving Yahweh, when kept in check by the written word, are not only permissible but I believe inevitable. They certainly were with this little baby boy.

Elizabeth was Filled with the Holy Spirit - This verse by itself proves that the Holy Spirit was given to people prior to the death, burial, and resurrection of Yeshua. A lot of times people are of the persuasion that Acts the second chapter is the first time anyone was filled with the Holy Spirit, but this is obviously incorrect because of what we read here in Luke 1:41. Two people (John and Elizabeth) are filled with the Holy Spirit approximately 33 years before Acts chapter two ever takes place in history. I should also briefly point out that speaking in unknown languages is not the only sign of someone being filled with the Holy Spirit. Here we see that a leaping for joy is a sign in the life of the baby, and Elizabeth gives forth a prophetic utterance.

42. Then she exclaimed with a loud cry: “You are the most blessed of women, and your child will be blessed!”
Loud Cry - This follows on the foot heels of the text mentioning the baby leaped with excitement. Notice here that when Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit she doesn't just speak in a dry monotone voice. She instead exclaims with a loud cry! She gets excited, and it is okay if we get excited when we exclaim and tell the world about the wonderful things Yahweh has done for and through us.

Most Blessed of Women - I agree with Elizabeth here because she is pronouncing something based upon the work of the Holy Spirit, therefore, it must be accurate. How much more blessed could you be other than being the chosen vessel through which the promised Messiah would come?

43. How could this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

My Lord - The Hebrew word for Lord is the word adon and with the "my" attached to it we have adoni. So Elizabeth here is declaring Yeshua to be her Lord, and I believe she is recognizing that Yeshua is the Lord that Yahweh spoke to prophetically in Psalm 110:1. More on this in a bit.

44. For you see, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped for joy inside me!  
45. She who has believed is blessed because what was spoken to her by the Lord will be fulfilled!

She Who Has Believed - Recall that when Miriam received the news from the angel Gabriel that she never doubted Gabriel's words. She simply remarked at the end of Gabriel's speech "I am the Lord's slave. May it be done to me according to your word." We do well to take heed and follow Miriam's example here. We must always trust in the fullest faith the words of Yahweh through His chosen prophets and angels. We will receive a blessing for having such faith.

46. And Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

The Lord - Let me take some time to point out a technicality here that I believe is often overlooked. Do you notice how that the word Lord in this text is preceded by the article "the" verses the word Lord back in verse 43 being preceded with the article "my." You can check the Greek and the difference is there as well. This is further reason why I believe Elizabeth is referencing (bringing to mind) Psalm 110:1 where we have two Lords. In that Psalm David speaks by the spirit and says (in our English translations) "The Lord said to my Lord." Now, I am not suggesting that Yeshua can never be called "the" Lord. There are times in the New Testament where Yeshua is called "the" Lord, because the word Lord is the Greek word kurios which can be used of Yahweh, Yeshua, and even men that are held in high esteem. However, in the context of Luke 1 we have (just like in Psalm 110) two Lords being spoken about. One is called by Elizabeth "my Lord" while the other is called by Miriam "the Lord."

47. and my spirit has rejoiced in (the) Mighty One my Savior,
The Mighty One My Savior - This is of significance when in discussion with Roman Catholics, because they believe that Miriam really doesn't need to be saved from sin being sinless herself (in their minds). Catholicism teaches that Miriam was born without the stain of what they term "original sin," and in turn that Miriam never died (they believe in a doctrine they term "the bodily assumption of Mary.") They also believe that she is a "co-mediator" with the Messiah, and "co-redeemer" with the Messiah. This is why when Roman Catholics pray, part of their prayer is "Hail Mary, Mother of God, full of grace and truth."

What does this verse teach us though? Notice that Miriam says her spirit rejoices in (the) Mighty One "my" Savior. She recognizes Yahweh as "her" Savior here and not just the Savior of Elizabeth or everyone else in Israel. Miriam had to be saved by Yahweh too. Saved from what? Saved from her sins, her transgressions of the Torah of Yahweh.

48. because He has looked with favor on the humble condition of His slave. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,

The Humble - We shall see as we finish out Miriam's praise that the theme of her exclamation is Yahweh giving honor and grace to the humble and bringing down the prideful to the ground.

49. because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and His name is holy.

The Mighty One - Generally when we read the word "God" (more properly "Mighty One") in our English Bibles (New Testament) the Greek text contains the word "theos" or a variations thereof, but not so here. The Greek word here is "dynatos" from where we get our English word "dynamite." It is a word that has to do with great power and strength, not unlike the Greek word "theos" or is Hebrew ancestors "el" and "elohim."

Has Done Great Things for Me - Why does Miriam say that she is blessed? Does she heap on praise after praise of herself? Does she talk about how virtuous of a person she is? No. She instead gives all of the praise and honor to the "dynatos" - Yahweh. The Mighty One had done great things for her. Any of us who are blessed, are blessed because of the Mighty One doing great things for us.

50. His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him.

His Mercy From Generation... - I believe this is a take on Exodus 20 and the second commandment where we are told that Yahweh shows mercy to those who love him in obedience, but he (on the flip side) punishes the children for the Father's sin to the third and fourth generation. A crystal clear theme throughout all of Scripture is that Yahweh rewards obedience, but punishes disobedience.

51. He has done a mighty deed with His arm; He has scattered the proud because of the thoughts of their hearts;
52. He has toppled the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly.
53. He has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

Scattered the Proud - We see here the very strong theme of humility that Miriam already has mentioned back in verse 49. Yahweh scatters the proud. Listen carefully, Yahweh will not use you for the good if you have a prideful heart. If you are all caught up in yourself and think that you are the reason you have or own what you own Yahweh will only use you for the bad. Notice how Miriam goes on to say that Yahweh has toppled the Mighty from their thrones, but has lifted up the humble. I believe Miriam is thinking about how that through the births of these two children Yahweh was working through the humble. Miriam and Elizabeth weren't queens or even princesses. They were just humble women of Israel. Yahweh though was going to work through the lowly, and use His work through the lowly to cause the great, prideful rulers to fall from their haughty thrones.

Satisfied the Hungry - There is obviously a natural to this verse, but there is also a spiritual to this verse. Do you think you know it all, do you think you have everything figured out? I have met people in my life of service to Yahweh that have told me they have been "going to church" for 30, 40, 50 years and yet they have no increase in knowledge since the time they began to "serve the Lord." Now, there is a time when you must be fed the "milk" of the word in the early stages of your Christian life, but there comes a time (which definitely should be after 30 years!) when you must be fed the solid food. Each year of your Christian walk should be a year in which you grow in your knowledge and wisdom of His word. I surely hope that 10 years from my writing this commentary on Luke 1 that I am still not at the same spiritual level in my life. Listen... He satisfies the hungry with good things. Stay hungry for the word of righteousness. Yeshua said in His sermon on the mount, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness for they will be filled." If you don't understand something in the Scriptures, you just keep on studying, and at the same time pray that Yahweh will give you an understanding, and in His time - he will satisfy your hungry soul with something good!

54. He has helped His servant Israel, mindful of His mercy,
55. just as He spoke to our ancestors, to Abraham and his descendants forever.

His Servant Israel - It is nothing short of nonsensical for anyone to say that Yahweh no longer has a plan for physical Israel under the New Covenant. I get very tired of hearing ministers just ignore verses like this. What was the understanding of Elizabeth and Miriam (and we will see soon Zechariah) concerning the coming Messiah? It was in their minds that the Messiah had come to help the people of Israel. The Messiah had come because Yahweh was showing mercy upon Israel.

Our Ancestors - Just in case someone wants to spiritualize Israel in verse 54, verse 55 will not allow it because Miriam mentions the ancestors of Israel. Are these ancestors spiritual or figurative ancestors? Of course not, we are talking about physical, flesh and blood ancestors, and thus physical flesh and blood Israelites. Miriam understood that the promise was unto Abraham and his descendants forever. I think you would have a hard time explaining to Miriam that forever here really meant that it would stop after the resurrection of Yeshua her son.
It's just a point blank Scriptural fact that Yahweh has a special people that He loves more than any other people on the face of the earth. I love my wife more than any other women on the face of the earth, and in Scripture, the Israelites as a nation are typified as Yahweh's wife whom He loves dearly. If we have a problem with this then we have a problem with the teaching of Scripture. Israel is most assuredly Yahweh's chosen people.

56. And Mary stayed with her about three months; then she returned to her home

Mary Stayed - Miriam was so excited about what happened in her womb, and Elizabeth's womb that she stayed with Elizabeth for a while. They must have talked and talked about spiritual things, sang together, quoted Scripture... I would have loved to have been a "fly on the wall" of Zechariah's home during those three months!

57. Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she had a son.
58. Then her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her His great mercy, and they rejoiced with her.

Great Mercy - I believe this great mercy is shown to Elizabeth in that Yahweh had removed the barren womb from her. Now a days the modern woman tends to go to great lengths to not have children, even to the point of taking into her body pills which cause a newly conceived child to be killed inside of the womb of his or her mother. In the days of Miriam and Elizabeth it was a disgrace if you did not have children. Elizabeth longed for a child, and probably prayed often for Yahweh to remove her barren womb. Yahweh had showed her great mercy in this regard. Obviously we should consider it a glorious occurrence for a woman to have a child. Bearing children is a portion of the blessings given by Yahweh to the Israelites for observing His law diligently (Deut. 28).

Neighbors and Relatives Rejoiced - This is a fulfillment of what the angel Gabriel had told Zechariah would happen at the birth of his son (Lk. 1:14). We should also note that the text says these people "heard" that Yahweh had shown her great mercy. Evidently there were many people that did not know of Elizabeth's pregnancy until the birth of her son.

59. When they came to circumcise the child on the eighth day, they were going to name him Zechariah, after his father.

Circumcise the Child - We know that circumcision (the cutting off of the flesh of the foreskin of the male child) was instituted in Genesis 17 (given to Abraham), and then reiterated through commandment form in Leviticus 12 (given through Moses).

The Eighth Day - In both texts (Gen. 17:12; Lev. 12:3) there exists an additional commandment within the commandment of circumcision - the commandment to perform the circumcision on the 8th day. Now, we might think that a circumcision is acceptable to be done on any day we choose. Maybe we think we will perform the rite on the 2nd day of the child's life, or at his 3rd birthday. Thoughts like these do nothing more than question, or second guess or Sovereign Creator who designed us in a wonderful way.
Granted, there are often commandments given by Yahweh that we as human beings do not really understand. What I mean is that we see no "reason" (at least in our minds) for the command. It can be tempting to dismiss commands as these, but we must resist the inclination. We have to always remember that Yahweh is our loving father, and he is watching out for our best interest whether we realize it or not. I often give commands to my 3 year old son David that he doesn't understand. He does well though if he simply obeys because I would never give him a command that would harm him. I'm always looking out for his good. You get the picture here.

I am not saying that I know precisely why Yahweh commanded circumcision to be done on the 8th day, but I do know that scientifically there is great significance to this particular day of a male child's life. Did you know that on days 5-7 in the life of a male child that there is vitamin K produced by bacteria within the intestinal tract that is present in a quantity that is beginning to be large enough to stop the child from bleeding to death? Vitamin K helps the blood during a surgery coagulate so as to prevent over bleeding. On the 8th day after birth, the vitamin K is elevated to above 100% of normal. This is the only day in the male child's life that this will be the case normally. What I mean is that circumcision is often done in hospitals prior to the 8th day, but the child must be given a shot of vitamin K before the surgery is accomplished. Why not just follow the directions of Yahweh and circumcise your son on the 8th day like He said? Thousands of years before this was discovered by modern science Yahweh, because He is the designer of the body, gave the commandment of circumcision, and He did this on the 8th day for a reason. I'm not saying this is the only reason for 8th day circumcision, but it sure seems like one of the reasons for the specifying of the particular day.

They were Going to Name Him - Reading this carefully we see that the "they" here is in reference to the neighbors and the relatives. We know this because in the next verse the child's mother objects. It seems odd to have neighbors and relatives name a child as a group, but there were other times that this was done. Consider Ruth 4:17 where the community came together and named Ruth's male child Boaz.

60. But his mother responded, "No! He will be called John.
61. Then they said to her, "None of your relatives has that name."
62. So they motioned to his father to find out what he wanted him to be called.

Mother Responded - We know from this that Elizabeth knew the proper name for the child. How did she know? Well, we are not told specifically. We know that her husband did not speak it to her because he has been unable to talk since the angel met with him inside of the temple. It is possible that Zechariah had written it down for her, or some scholars believe that she knew it by heavenly revelation. Either way we know that she knew from her response here in verse 60.

He will be Called John - More correctly this would be Yochanan. I say this because Zechariah and Elizabeth were Israelites who spoke Hebrew. This means they would name their child a Hebrew name, and when we trace the anglicized name "John" back to Hebrew we find that it stems from the name Yochanan, meaning "Yahweh is gracious."
This is a compound name consisting of the first three letters in the name of the heavenly Father (yod, hey, waw - y, h, w) and then the Hebrew word "chana" which means grace or gracious.

**None of Your Relatives** - The neighbors and relatives think that the name Yochanan is an odd name for the child because there is no one in the family with that name. Generally the naming of a child would follow suit with a name that was already present and/or prestigious in the family. The obvious name to the relatives was Zechariah, which we know was the name of the child's father, but Yahweh had other plans for the name of this child.

**Motioned to His Father** - This word motioned leads some people to believe that Zechariah was not only unable to speak, but also that he was deaf. I'm not certain that this is the case, but I can see the point. Why "motion" to Zechariah if he could hear? You could just call for him. Motioning to him implies that they had to wave their arms in order to "tell" Zechariah to come over to where they were at. If you go back to Luke 1:20 we see that Gabriel had told Zechariah he would lose his voice, but if you read Luke 1:22 we see that Zechariah is said to be "speechless" which is the Greek word "kophos" which is sometimes translated deaf in the New Testament. One example is Matthew 11:5 where the deaf become able to hear.

63. He asked for a writing tablet and wrote: HIS NAME IS JOHN. And they were all amazed.
64. Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising (the) Mighty One.

**Writing Tablet** - This tablet was most likely a small flat piece of wood that was over laid with wax. People would take a type of writing instrument (stylus) and scratch into the wood through the wax writing down the letters of words. In this case Zechariah would have written the name Yochanan in Hebrew.

**Tongue Set Free** - Remember that Gabriel told Zechariah that he would be able to speak again once "these things" take place. Well, right after the birth of the child we see Zechariah writing his name down upon the tablet (which is a confession of belief and faith in the messenger of Yahweh). Immediately after spelling the last letter of the child's name Zechariah's speech returns and he begins to praise Yahweh! I believe that Zechariah's praising the Mighty One is a reference to all of his words in Luke 1:68-79. You could only imagine how relieved Zechariah was to be able to express himself in words! He had about 9 to 10 months of "pent up praise" inside of him!

65. Fear came on all those who lived around them, and all these things were being talked about throughout the hill country of Judea.
66. All who heard about him took it to heart, saying, “What then will this child become?” For, indeed, the Lord’s hand was with him.
Fear Came - I believe the people knew that Yahweh's hand was at work here in this situation. You have to remember that until Yochanan the Baptizer there was no genuine prophet sent to the people of Israel since the time of the prophet Malachi some 400 years earlier. It is perfectly acceptable to have a holy fear of Almighty Yahweh. I do not just speak of an awe filled reverence, but an actual fear. I liken it to how a son, as a little boy, fears his earthly father in a good way because he knows his father will discipline him for doing wrong. We should tremble before the Mighty Hand of Yahweh.

The Lord's Hand - I have a few times in my life seen that the hand of the Most High was upon the life of an individual. It really is a marvelous thing to watch. You know for certain that the work is not a working of man, but a working of Yahweh. The people here knew that Yahweh was going to work marvelously through the life of this little boy.

67. Then his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

Filled with the Holy Spirit - Here we see further evidence that a person could be filled with the Holy Spirit before Acts the 2nd chapter. We now have all three in this family - father, mother, and child - all filled with the Holy Spirit.

Prophesied - Some people believe that the only evidence of the filling of the Holy Spirit is the gift of speaking in languages, but certainly this cannot be correct for we have seen three fillings of the Holy Spirit right here in Luke 1 and in not one of them did anyone speak in other languages. Twice we see that a person prophesied and once we see that a baby still inside of his mother's womb just leaped for joy. The gift of languages is not the only gift of the spirit. People filled with the Holy Spirit may indeed show forth other of the gifts which Yahweh gives His people.

68. Praise the Lord, (the) Mighty One of Israel, because He has visited and provided redemption for His people.

Praise the Lord - Notice that the first thing out of the mouth of Zechariah here is not about his son. Zechariah instead focuses upon who the praise goes to, and is Yahweh the Elohim of Israel.

He Has Visited - This word "visited" does not mean that Yahweh was standing among the people in human form, as if you or I go to visit somebody. Anytime Yahweh would do something to bless His people, or do something miraculous from heaven in the midst of His people, it was looked upon as Yahweh visiting His people. We see that Yahweh visited His people in Ruth 1:6 by blessing them with food, and in Luke 7:16 we see that the people there recognized Yeshua as a great prophet and proclaimed that Yahweh had visited His people by sending them a miracle working prophet.

His People - This can be no other people but the people of Israel (vs. 68). Yahweh is only called the Mighty One of Israel in Scripture. He is never called the Mighty One of the Philistines, Canaanites, Egyptians, etc. Yahweh has a special chosen people, and this people is the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob who was later name Israel. Out of
this people there exists a spiritual Israelite remnant. This remnant is not only physically
Israelites, but they are also spiritual children of Yahweh in that they have been born anew
to have a desire to walk in Yahweh's ways.

69. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David,
70. just as He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets in ancient times;
71. salvation from our enemies and from the clutches of those who hate us.

**Horn of Salvation** - This is understood a bit better by noticing a reference to the "horns
of a wild ox" back in Deuteronomy 33:17. Horns were sometimes upon the head of
mighty animals. These horns denoted strength, and thus Yahweh is said to have raised up
a horn of salvation or a strong savior for the people of Israel.

**House of His Servant David** - Zechariah mentions the House of David here in reference
to Miriam's future son Yeshua, seeing that he was to come through the Davidic line
(literally through Miriam, and by adoption through Joseph). Take notice here that
Zechariah at this point has yet to mention anything about His own son. He is focusing
upon the Heavenly Father and His only begotten Son Yeshua. Surely Zechariah learned
of Miriam's child Yeshua while Miriam stayed with Elizabeth for 3 months (Lk. 1:56).

**Salvation from our Enemies** - I tend to think that Zechariah's prophecy is much like
many of the prophecies of the Old Testament prophets that are given in singular form but
are not all fulfilled at one time period. Many times we read a prophecy in Isaiah or
Zechariah and we see that it has some fulfillment in the first coming of the Messiah and
more fulfillment in the second coming of Messiah. We even at times see that a singular
prophecy can have a dual fulfillment; one non-messianic and one messianic. There was
some salvation from the enemies of Yahweh in a spiritual sense at the first coming of the
Messiah, but the full salvation from the enemies will be recognized and experienced fully
at the second coming of Yeshua to this earth to establish justice and righteousness in the
land on a governmental level.

72. He has dealt mercifully with our fathers and remembered His holy covenant—
73. the oath that He swore to our father Abraham. He has given us the privilege,
74. since we have been rescued from our enemies’ clutches, to serve Him without fear
75. in holiness and righteousness in His presence all our days.

**Holy Covenant** - I believe this is explained in the very next verse to be the oath that
Yahweh swore to Abraham, going back to Genesis 12.

**Have Been Rescued** - We see here that the reference to being rescued from the clutches
of the enemy did have an immediate fulfillment, even if spiritual, in the days of
Zechariah.

**Holiness and Righteousness** - This is how we serve Yahweh. We live set-apart lives and
perform that which is right. This is not "legalism" as some people brand it. Can you even
imagine looking Zechariah in the face and telling him that if we try to live lives of
holiness to Yahweh that it's nothing more than legalism. I'm certain that Zechariah understood the concept of mercy and grace. He recognized that the people of Israel needed forgiveness for their sins (Lk. 1:77). At the same time Zechariah realized that this doesn't mean that the people of Yahweh can just go on and continue to commit the same sins that got them in the mess they are in, in the first place. If you are not serving Him in holiness and righteousness, you are not part of His covenant.

76. And child, you will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways,
77. to give His people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.

And Child - Now Zechariah begins to make a few statements about his son, but never forget that this only came AFTER Zechariah gave praise to Yahweh and was thankful for Yeshua as the Messiah from the Davidic line.

Prophet of the Most High - Yochanan would be a prophet, and this is not an office that you can find people to fill at a "dime a dozen." To be a prophet was to hold a very special office.

Go Before the Lord - The Greek word for Lord here is kurios, and I believe it is a reference to the Father and not to the Son here. It is a reiteration of Luke 1:17 (see notes there). One additional reason to point out here to prove that this Lord is speaking of Father Yahweh is that right after John is said to go before the Lord, Zechariah continues by saying "to give His people knowledge of salvation." Who is the "His" in "His people?" It can be none other than the "His" back in verse 68 - Yahweh the Mighty One of Israel.

78 Because of our Mighty One's merciful compassion, the Dawn from on high will visit us 79 to shine on those who live in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Dawn from On High - The word dawn in the Greek is anatello meaning sunrise. Sometimes it is used figuratively of the east, and we know that the sun always rises in the eastern sky. Zechariah says that this "dawn" will visit the people of Israel because of Yahweh's merciful compassion. What is Zechariah talking about? I believe he is talking about Yeshua the Messiah, typified as the rising sun that brings light to a dark place. I believe Zechariah knew of the prophecy in Malachi that speaks of the "sun of righteousness" (NOTE: the s-u-n, and not s-o-n in Malachi 4:2) rising with healing in its wings. It's interesting to note that the word wings in Malachi is the Hebrew word kanaph meaning border. This is the same word used for the borders of the garment which the tassels were to be tied to (Numbers 15:37-41). Did not the woman who touched the border/kanaph of Yeshua's garment receive healing (Mt. 9:20; Mk. 14:36)? This woman actually touched the tassel of Yeshua's garment.

To Shine... Guide our Feet - This is further verification of the understanding I've given for the Dawn from on high being Yeshua. This dawn is said to shine on us and to guide our feet. This brings to mind Psalm 119:105 (and Psalm 119:165 - great peace) which
says that Yahweh's word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Is not Yeshua Yahweh's word in the flesh? Is he not the Torah become flesh (John 1:1-14)? Did he not completely fulfill the law of his father (Mt. 5:17-18)? The answers are obvious. Yeshua came as the sunrise on a dark location. He shined the light of his life for all to see, showing us what it means to be pleasing to Yahweh.

80 The child grew up and became spiritually strong, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel

Let me point out that this verse is a parenthetical statement between verse 79 and Luke 2:1. When Luke 2:1 begins with "in those days" it is not talking about the days when John made his public appearance. It is instead going back to the days in which John's birth occurred. Luke 1:80 is just a parenthesis in which Luke tells us just a bit about how John grew up, grew spiritually, and dwelt in the wilderness prior to his coming out to preach the message of repentance just before Yeshua begins his ministry.