

28.02 Annunciation of Jesus' Birth (Luke 1:27–38)

28.03 Mary's Visit to Elisabeth (Luke 1:39-56)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:

- *Messiah*: The One promised in the Old Testament to be the King of the world, the Saviour of all nations; the *Christ*
- *virgin*: an unmarried person who has never been intimate with someone of the opposite sex
- *to be betrothed*: engaged to be married; in Bible times betrothal was legally binding
- *forerunner*: from *before* and *runner*; someone who goes, not necessarily running all the time, to tell people that someone important is coming, so they'd better get ready

Scripture: (ESV)

26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

34 And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

35 And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God.” 38 And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

46 And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; 49 for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. 50 And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; 52 he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; 53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. 54 He has helped his

servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, 55 as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.” 56 And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

Introduction/Review:

In our last story, the angel Gabriel made an announcement to whom? [Zacharias.] Where was Zacharias? [In the Temple.] What was he doing? [Offering incense.] What did the angel say? [“You will have a son. His name will be John. He will go before the Lord like Elijah to prepare a people for the Lord.”] What did Zacharias say when he heard Gabriel’s message? [He doubted the angel Gabriel because he and Elisabeth were old.] What happened to Zacharias because he didn’t believe Gabriel’s message? [He was unable to talk.]

How long is a baby in a mothers’ tummy? It takes nine months for the baby to develop in the mother before it is born. Let’s count nine months from January. [January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September.] Now let’s count five months from January. [January, February, March, April, May.] If Elisabeth knew she was expecting a baby in January, she didn’t tell anybody about it for that long—five months—✓perhaps because she was modest. After all, great glory was to come upon her: she was to have a child in her old age and that child would be a great man, preparing the way for the Messiah.

Story:

In the sixth month—June if she knew she was expecting in January (we don’t know which exact month it was)—while Elisabeth was in a little town in Judea, her young cousin was living up here in Nazareth [locate on map]. The cousin’s name was Mary, a virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph. (Some Bible commentators say Jewish fourteen- or fifteen-year-old girls were of marriageable age, but we are not sure of Mary’s age.)

Gabriel’s appearance to Mary

Gabriel gave an announcement to Zacharias. In today’s story the same angel Gabriel had an announcement (we sometimes call it an annunciation) for Mary. He appeared to her saying, “Greetings, O favored one; the Lord is with you!”

As Zacharias (and all other Bible characters who encountered an angel) had been fearful, so was Mary, not just because she was in the presence of an angel but also because of what he said. “This is puzzling,” she might have said. “What kind of a greeting is this?”

But again Gabriel asked her not to be fearful, saying, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Listen to this, Mary: you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.”

Gabriel’s message

Gabriel said more, but we’ll save it for a little later so that we can digest these first two sentences. What exactly did the angel say? It is this: she would have a son named Jesus; He would be *great*, even called the Son of the Most High. Who is the Most High? God, of course. No one else has this title. Son of the Most High is the Messiah we’ve heard about throughout the Old Testament. Let’s hear the rest of Gabriel’s annunciation.

“The Lord God will give to Jesus the throne of his ancestor David.” Oh, is Jesus going to be a king then? Continue. “And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” A King, all right—one who is King “forever” in an unending kingdom. What kind of king could personally rule forever? Why, only God, who is eternal! What an annunciation to a young lady!

Mary’s question

But Mary had an innocent question: [Teacher, show by your facial expression that Mary was innocently puzzled.] “How will this be, since I am a virgin? I haven’t been married yet.”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be the Son of God.”

Who would be the Father of Jesus? [God.] There it is. Mary’s Son would be God Himself.

The next thing Gabriel announced was more wonderful news. He said, “Your cousin Elisabeth, the one who has been called barren, is in her sixth month of pregnancy. For with God nothing is impossible.”

What a statement: “With God nothing is impossible.” What are some impossible things in this story already? [Old Elisabeth have a baby; Mary having a baby without a human father.]

Mary’s response

Mary responded by saying [Teacher, bow your head], “I am the servant of the Lord; may it be as you have said.” Here is the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humbly accepting the will of God. Never do we read of her boasting or exalting herself because of the great honor God gave to her. The angel left then.

Let’s stop here a minute and consider what Gabriel said. The Old Testament had prophesied in several places, most notably in Isaiah and Daniel, that the Messiah would come. Gabriel was telling Mary that she would be the mother of the Messiah—God the Son—who was coming to live on the earth!

✓Mary must have been very excited but yet scared at the same time. The Bible doesn’t tell us if Mary told her parents or anyone else about Gabriel’s visit. Who could she tell about this wondrous visitor, the angel Gabriel? Who could she talk to about his wondrous message—that the long-awaited Messiah would be born to *her*? Did she even want to tell anyone? Who would believe her?

Mary’s visit

Ahh! Elisabeth! She would understand! She was part of a miracle herself! “I will go visit Elisabeth,” Mary decided. Immediately she prepared to go and then traveled south from Nazareth to the hill country of Judea [locate on map—in the environs of Jerusalem or Hebron]. It also doesn’t say how or with whom Mary traveled the 90 to 120 miles from Nazareth to Judea (<http://www.blessitt.com/miles-jesus-and-mary-walked/>). But the Bible does say she went with haste—in a hurry. Five or six days’ travel brought her to the town of Zacharias and Elisabeth. Almost there. Here was the house.

✓Entering the house, Mary called, “Elisabeth! Are you here? It’s Mary, your cousin.”

Elisabeth’s response

[Teacher, pretend to be Elisabeth, holding her stomach and looking surprised or amazed.] “Mary!” Elisabeth said with a loud cry. “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb (your baby). Why is it that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For as soon as your voice called me, my baby leaped in my womb for joy!”

Students, did Elisabeth know before that Mary was going to birth the Messiah? No. How could she say, then, that she knew Mary was the mother of her Lord? The reason is because she was filled with the Holy Spirit, who apparently informed her.] What happened to the baby when Mary called out to Elisabeth? [Her baby jumped for joy inside Elisabeth.] I’m sure Elisabeth had experienced several nudges and jumps of the baby John, but she knew this jump was different. Even before the babies were born, John was excited that Jesus was near. How could that be? God caused it to happen. Nothing is impossible with God.

Mary’s Magnificat

After Elisabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, had made this wonderful speech, Mary herself began to glorify God. We call her speech, which was really like a song, The Magnificat because it begins with eh words, “My soul magnifies the Lord.”

[Teacher, depending on the age of your students, you may choose to read or to have students read Luke

1:46-55, printed here and in a handout below for students. The words in italics are a short section that could be read to younger students.] *“And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever.’”*

For three months Mary stayed with Elisabeth. Oh, the conversations and prayer sessions and praise times these two women must have had together! God was going to send the Messiah through Mary; He was going to send the Messiah’s forerunner through Elisabeth! How blessed they were!

✓I like to think that Mary waited until John was born before returning to Nazareth, but the Bible doesn’t say. It states only that she “stayed about three months,” which would have completed Elisabeth’s nine months before John would have been born. Mary went back home either shortly before John was born or shortly afterward. But when she got home, trouble would begin. We will learn about that soon.

Lessons from this lesson:

- Jesus is God: Gabriel’s description of this baby—named Jesus, which means “Saviour”; being great and called the Son of the Most High; being given the throne of his father David, reigning over the house of Jacob forever; having no end to his kingdom”—cannot refer to a mere human.
- Mary said, “I am your servant.” We should say the same to God.
- Elisabeth said the mother [Mary] of her Lord was there. This is an indication that Jesus is God. We should say the same to God.
- The baby in the womb, John, recognized the baby in the womb Jesus. Both were people, not just tissue.

Activities:

- Play dough: angel
- Sing the first stanza of “Zacharias and John” found on the Songs page at teachingthebibletochildren.org.
- Make students “Take-Home Bible Stories” from Carson-Dellosa CD-0499 available at <https://www.carsondellosa.com/products/0499--New-Testament-Take-Home-Bible-Stories-Resource-Book-0499#/?book%20media%20type=f389e45b92884d48844baaf09d49e3c5>. (The book, no ebook, is less expensive at <https://www.christianbook.com/testament-reproducible-children-preschool-grade-2/thomas-ewald/97808887248726/pd/48722>.)
- Read “An Angel Comes to Mary and Joseph,” by Accent Publications, K2A teacher’s book, Lesson 1, page 5.
- Make felt letters of students’ names. Place in separate envelopes. Students spell their names on the flannel board.
- Have students retell the story with puppets or with pictures.
- Review questions: (Game: Print the angels found below. Pin to felt and cut out about ten. Students place an angel on the flannel board for each question they answer correctly.)
 1. How many months had Elisabeth been pregnant when the angel appeared to Mary? [Six.]
 2. What was the name of the angel? [Gabriel.]
 3. What was Gabriel’s message to Elisabeth? [She was highly favored; she would conceive and bear a son named Jesus; He would be called the Son of the Most High; He would reign on the throne of his

father David; He would reign forever.]

4. Who was to be the Father of this Child? [God Himself.]
5. What news did Gabriel give Mary concerning Elisabeth? [That she was six-months pregnant.]
6. Where did Mary go? [To Judea; to the house of Zacharias and Elisabeth.]
7. What happened to Elisabeth when Mary greeted her? [Her baby jumped for joy in her womb.]
8. From the two evidences that Jesus is God in this story, give one. [Gabriel's description of His being the Son of God and ruling forever; Elisabeth's comment that Mary was the mother of her lord.]
9. Fill in the blank. Mary's song is call the Magnificat because it begins with "My soul _____ the Lord." [Magnifies.]
10. How long did Mary stay with Elisabeth? [Three months.]

Memory Verse[s]:

Luke 1:37—For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Handwork:

- Make a yarn and tissue paper angel: With a permanent marker, trace the angel found below on pieces of plastic, one for each student. With white glue trace the outline of the angel. Place yarn on this outline. Put more glue on the yarn, and place tissue paper over the glue. Attach a loop of yarn to the top. Allow to dry completely—at least overnight. Trim the tissue paper close to the string.

Messiah

virgin

to be betrothed

forerunner

The Magnificat to be printed for students

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

"He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

The Magnificat printed for students

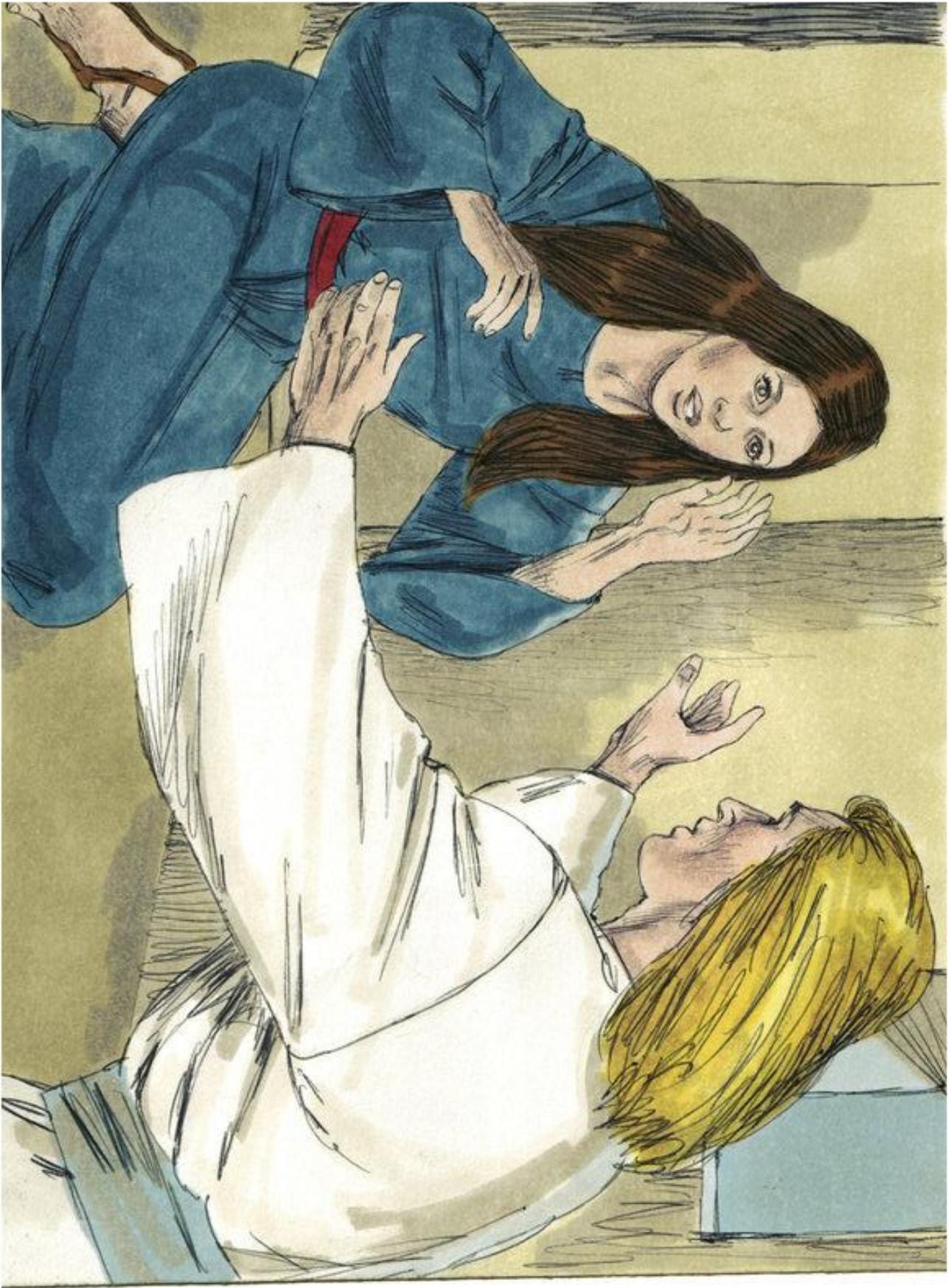
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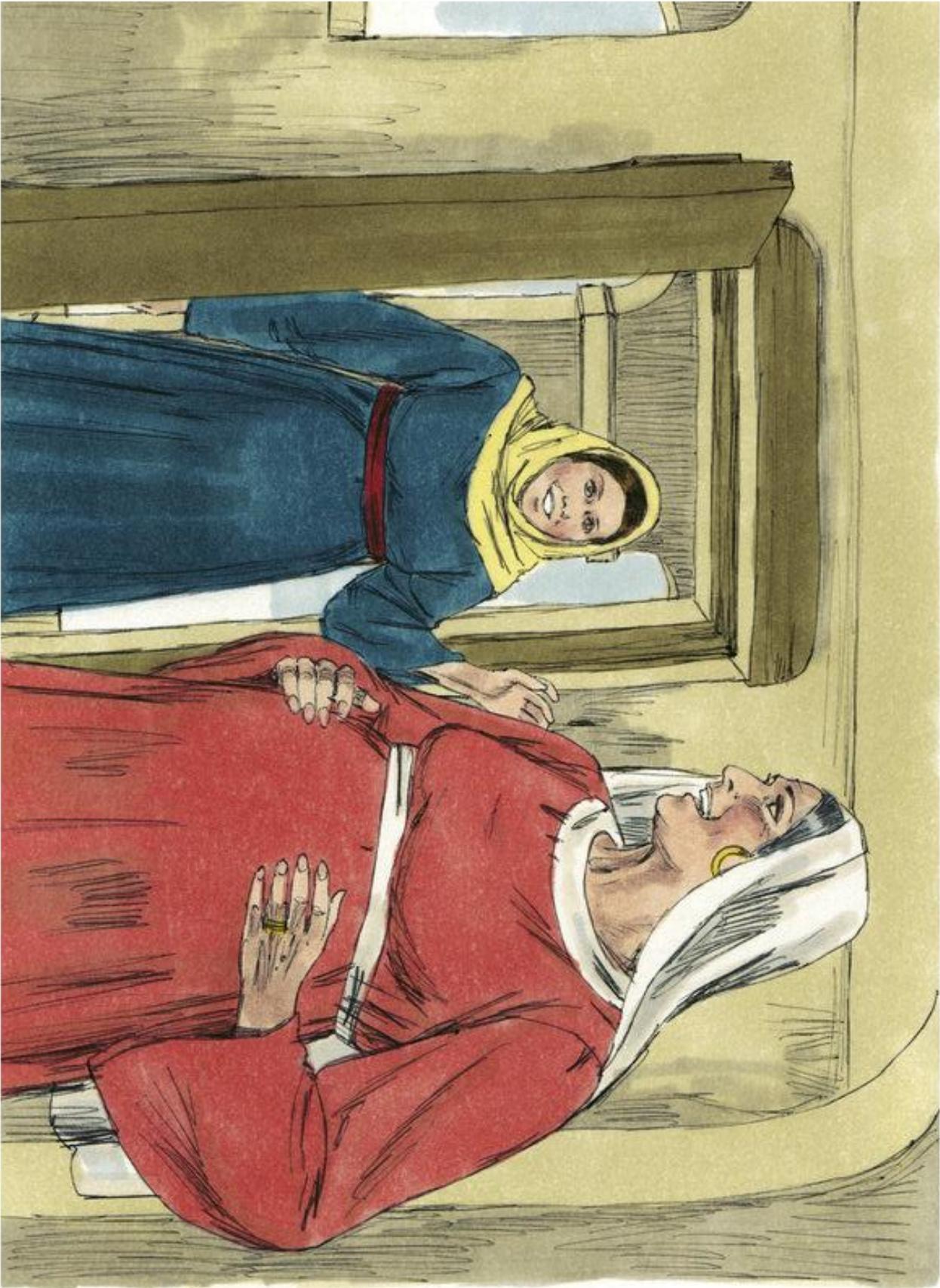
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