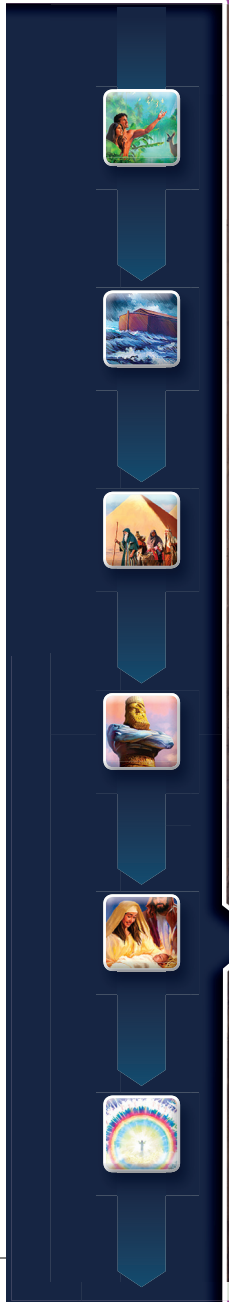
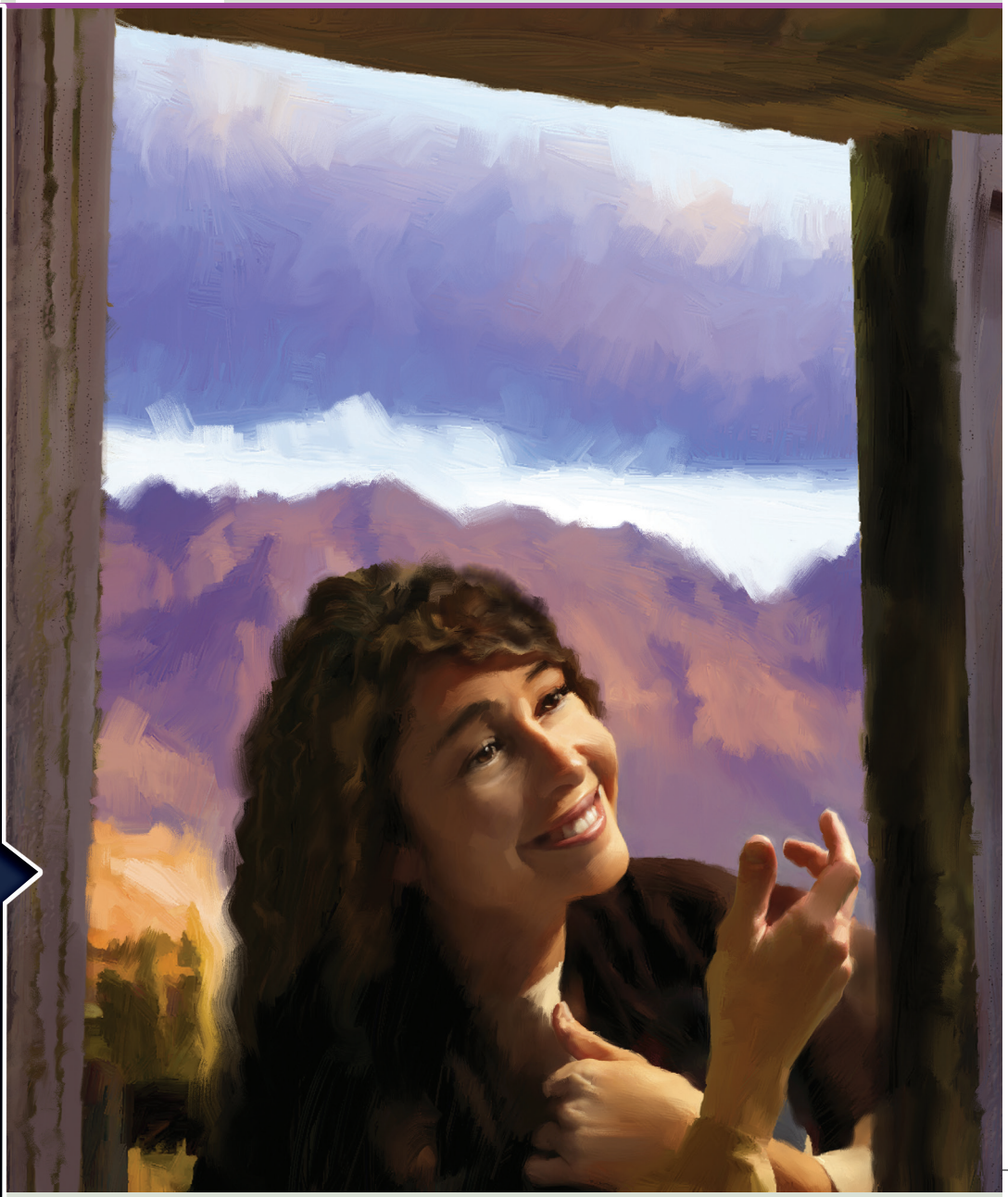
12

God in the Center

Key References: Luke 1:39-55; *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 10, p. 98; *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 7, pp. 18-22; Our Beliefs nos. 3, 4, 22





powertext

"Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long" (Psalm 25:4, 5).

Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 89.

powerpoint

I humbly accept Jesus as the center of my life.

Have you ever wanted to be important or to be the best at something?

Mary gave a sigh as she turned the corner of the dusty road and saw Elizabeth's house at the end. It had been a long trip, and she was tired. Normally, walking through the hill country of Judea didn't wear her out so much. She reminded herself that she was pregnant, and even though it wasn't showing yet, she knew that was the cause of her extra fatigue.

But now the house was in sight. It would be so good to see Elizabeth, whom the angel had said was also expecting a son. Elizabeth and Zechariah had long since given up on having children. The child Elizabeth was carrying had to be a miracle baby too. Mary couldn't wait to hear the whole story. All the angel had told her was that Elizabeth was in her sixth month of pregnancy and that nothing was impossible with God. Mary smiled at the thought. She knew that firsthand.

She was at the doorstep now, sticking her head inside the simple home. "Elizabeth?" she called. "Are you home?"

Elizabeth turned, startled. She stopped quickly as her hand reached instinctively for her rounded belly. A second later she had recovered and was on her feet. "Mary!" She quickly ran to hug her younger relative. "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy" (Luke 1:42-44).

Mary smiled shyly at Elizabeth's words. So she already knew.

Elizabeth went on. "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" (verse 45).

12

Sunday

READ Read Luke 1:39-45 and this week's story, "God in the Center."

REVIEW Review the power text, Psalm 25:4, 5.

PRAY Pray for a new insight into God's will for your life.

Monday

READ Read Luke 1:46-55.

THINK These verses are often called the song of Mary. What are the main things for which Mary praises God?

WRITE In your Bible study journal, summarize in your own words the key points of Mary's song.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to show you His ways and guide you in His paths.

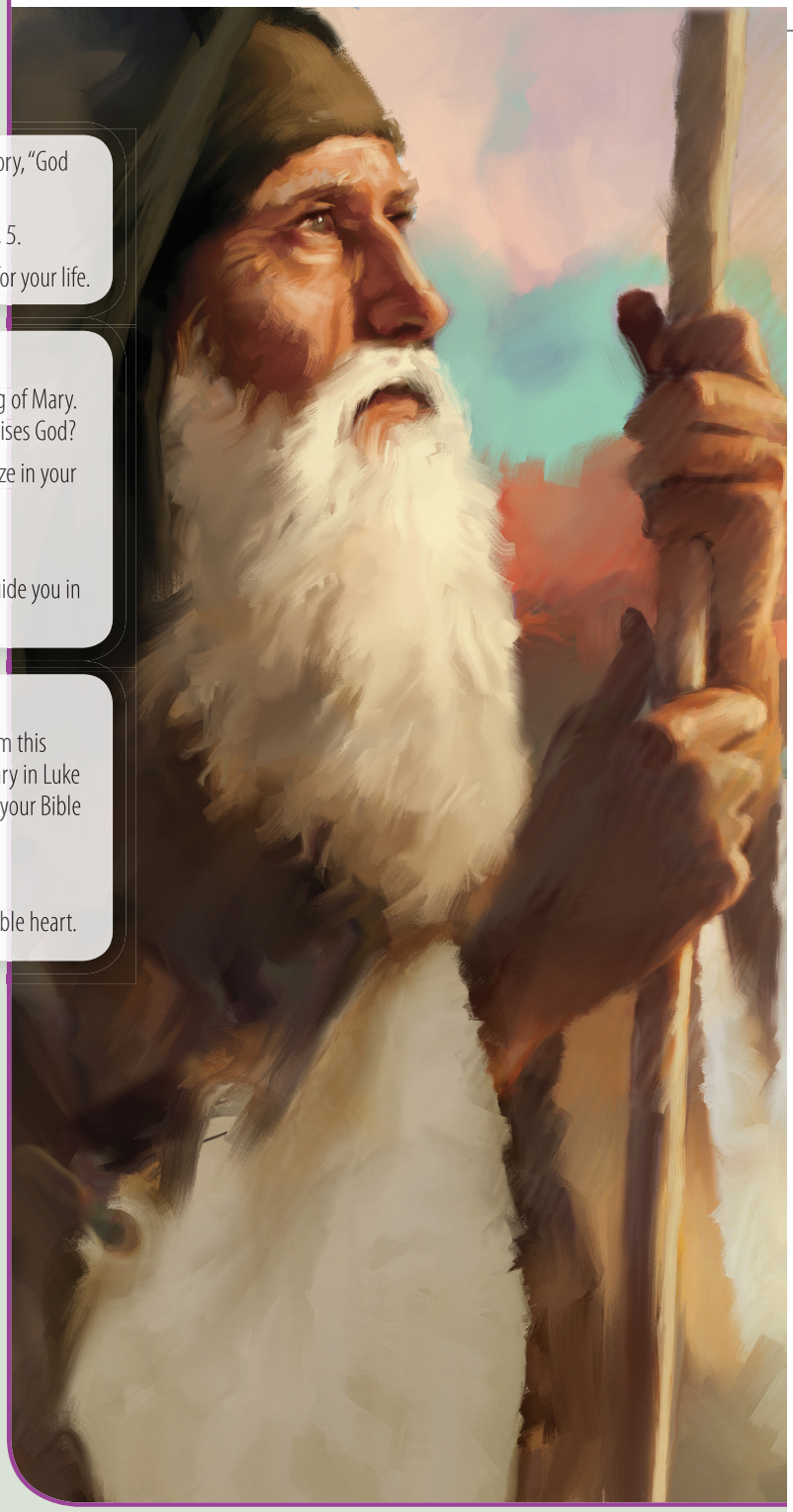
Tuesday

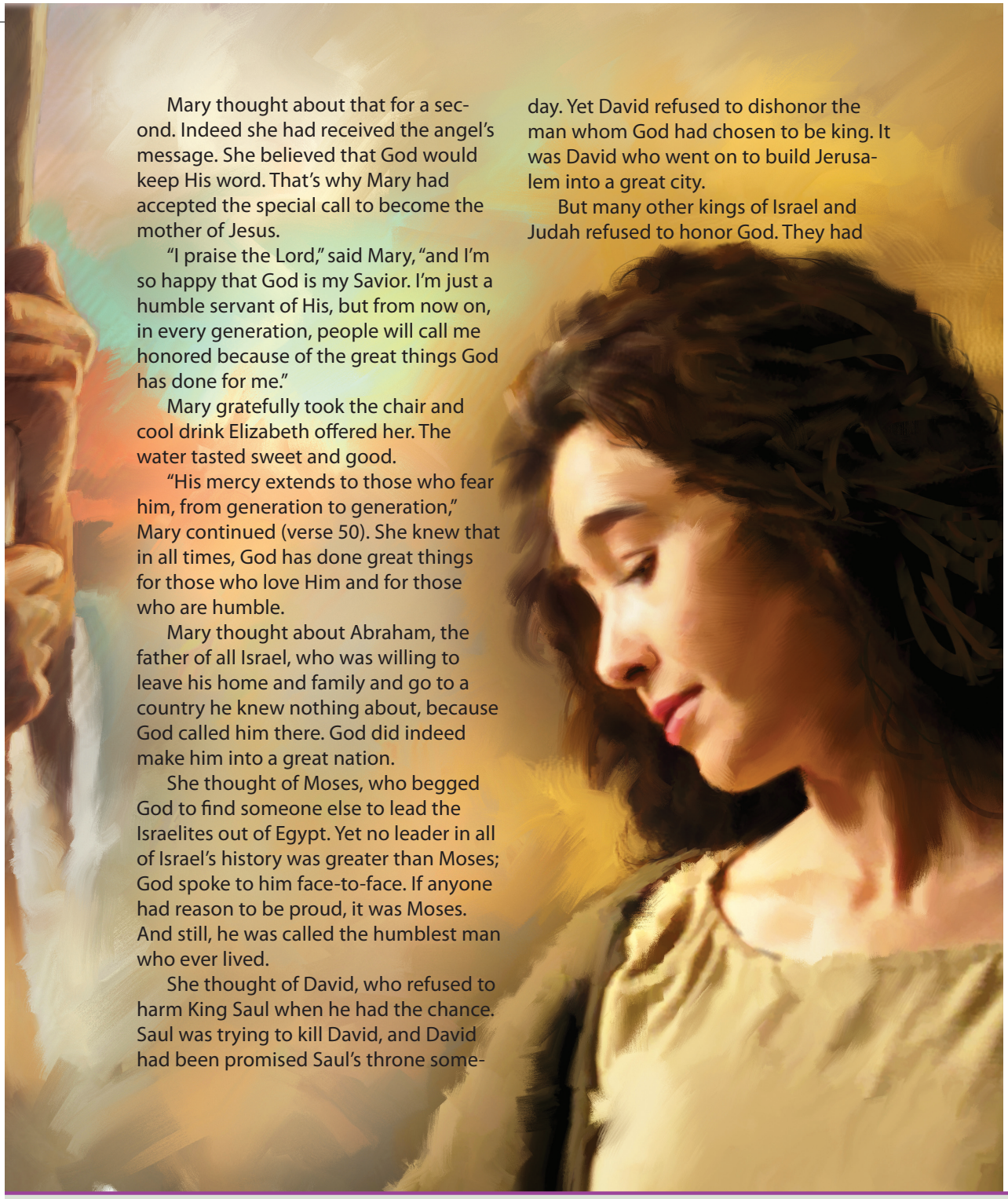
READ Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10.

REWRITE Pick three phrases or thoughts from this passage that are also found in the song of Mary in Luke 1:46-55. Rewrite them in your own words in your Bible study journal.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to give you a humble, teachable heart.





Mary thought about that for a second. Indeed she had received the angel's message. She believed that God would keep His word. That's why Mary had accepted the special call to become the mother of Jesus.

"I praise the Lord," said Mary, "and I'm so happy that God is my Savior. I'm just a humble servant of His, but from now on, in every generation, people will call me honored because of the great things God has done for me."

Mary gratefully took the chair and cool drink Elizabeth offered her. The water tasted sweet and good.

"His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation," Mary continued (verse 50). She knew that in all times, God has done great things for those who love Him and for those who are humble.

Mary thought about Abraham, the father of all Israel, who was willing to leave his home and family and go to a country he knew nothing about, because God called him there. God did indeed make him into a great nation.

She thought of Moses, who begged God to find someone else to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Yet no leader in all of Israel's history was greater than Moses; God spoke to him face-to-face. If anyone had reason to be proud, it was Moses. And still, he was called the humblest man who ever lived.

She thought of David, who refused to harm King Saul when he had the chance. Saul was trying to kill David, and David had been promised Saul's throne someday. Yet David refused to dishonor the man whom God had chosen to be king. It was David who went on to build Jerusalem into a great city.

But many other kings of Israel and Judah refused to honor God. They had

Wednesday

READ Read Numbers 12:3.

THINK What do you know about Moses' life that would back up this statement?

RESEARCH Look up the word "humble" in the dictionary and write the definition in your Bible study journal. List five things a humble person would or wouldn't do.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you put Him in the center of your life.

Thursday

READ Read Proverbs 6:16, 17 and 16:18, 19.

FIND What does "haughty" mean? Look it up in the dictionary if you don't know.

TALK Ask an adult to tell you about someone they know or knew who was humble and someone whom they know or knew who was proud. With whom was it more pleasant to spend time?

PRACTICE Say your power text to someone else.

PRAY Ask God to keep you from being proud.

Friday

READ Read Matthew 5:14–16.

THINK What are the things that you are sometimes tempted to put in the center of your life instead of God?

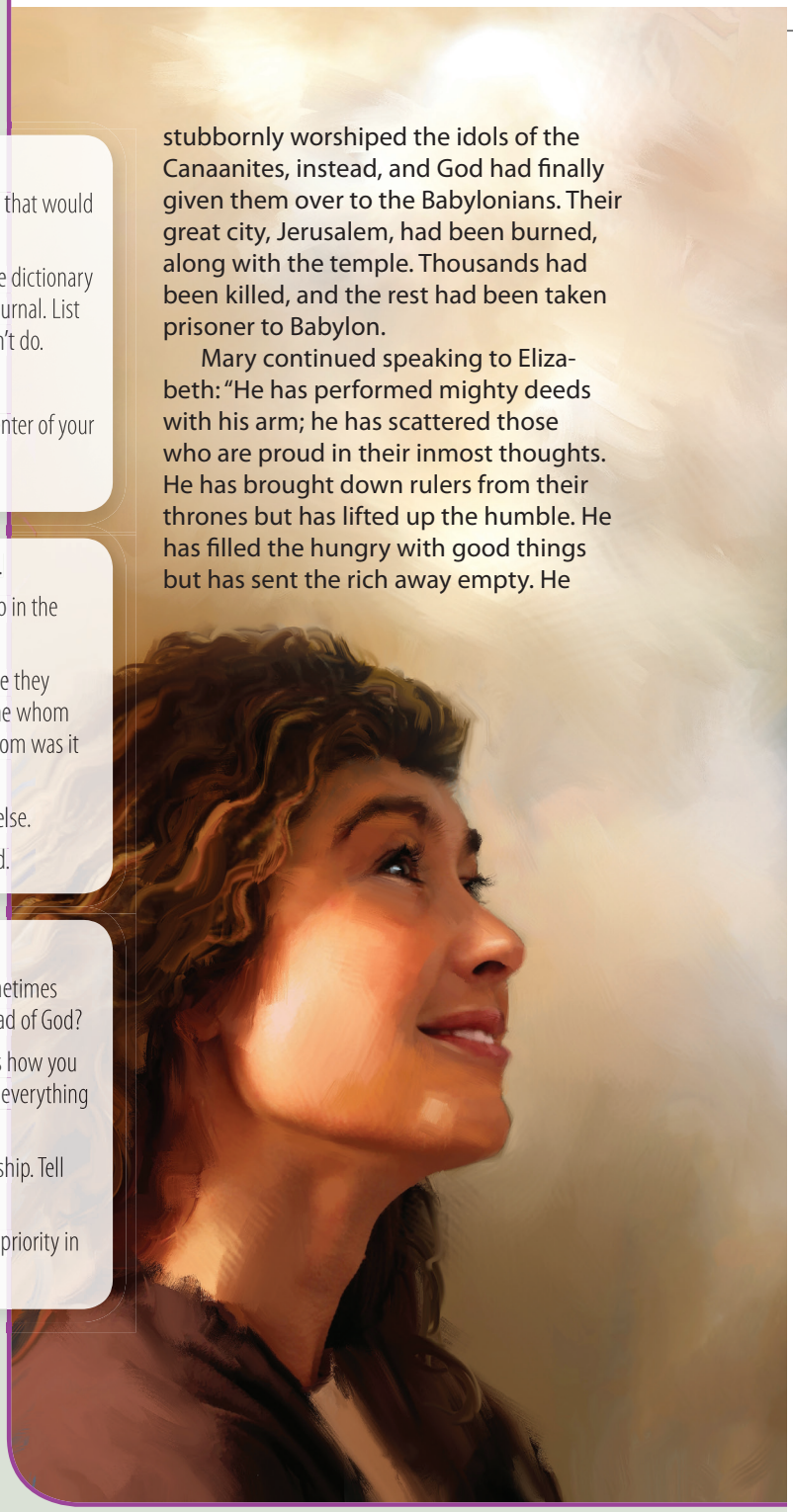
DISCUSS With your family members, discuss how you could keep God at the core of your life, above everything else that is important to you.

PRESENT Say your power text at family worship. Tell your family the Bible story for the week.

PRAY Ask God to help you keep Him as first priority in your life.

stubbornly worshiped the idols of the Canaanites, instead, and God had finally given them over to the Babylonians. Their great city, Jerusalem, had been burned, along with the temple. Thousands had been killed, and the rest had been taken prisoner to Babylon.

Mary continued speaking to Elizabeth: "He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He





has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors" (verses 51-55).

Yes, God always did great things through those who were humble; those who were willing to put Him at the center of their lives. Elizabeth poured herself a drink, and the two women sat in silence for a minute, bonded together by the special sons they carried. They both had big jobs ahead of them. Above all, they would need to keep humble hearts and God in the center of their lives.

PUZZLE 12

A HUMBLE SPIRIT

Instructions: The letters in each vertical column go into the squares directly below them, but not necessarily in the order they appear. A dark square indicates the end of a word. When you have placed all the letters in their correct squares, you will be able to read the Bible verse across the diagram from left to right.

L E H S P P	L O O I R R	W N O B R I A	S W D O I	T B R L E P	E Y 2 U	T (G R 9 B	P I S A R :	I R 2 I T O N	H N N N 3 O	S G) V E
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