



The Role of Women in the Work of Salvation Through the Figures of Mary and Elisabeth According to Luke Chapters 1-2

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Abstract

In this day and age, the discussion about women is never-ending and is still a polemic for some people. The position of women who sit lower than men is still a matter in society. There are even some parts of society that restrict women from carrying out their roles only in the domestic sphere, namely only carrying out their roles as a wife and mother in the household. Not only in the community but also in the church environment where women are still weak and do not have a position in the church so that women do not have the same rights and obligations as men. Therefore, women do not have the space to appear in public and are very basic and even not allowed at all. The author conducted this research intending to take the text about women in the Gospel of Luke chapters 1 - 2 through the figures of Mary and Elizabeth. The author uses the narrative critical method by focusing his attention on the characters, plot, setting, and point of view. By using this method, it is hoped that we will get an understanding – both theory and implication in practical living that women also have a very important role in the work of mankind's salvation. God can use women to take part in the declaration of his plan in the world, the effort to save mankind. Therefore, women do not need to think of themselves as inferior to men.

Keywords: Woman, Mary and Elizabeth, Luke 1-2

Introduction

The discussion of the role of women in today's postmod modern era is piling up in abundance. The role of women has always been a debate among the public, be it in the family, in work, or in a group. In today's rapid development of technology and information, one thing that cannot be denied is that there are still many societies in certain environments that put women in a lower position than men and even restrict women from doing everything that is common in the zone of masculinity.¹

Women are still not valued in society, abuse women's freedom always happen, unfair treatment and make women as second-class human beings who are confined to

¹ Gylida Nampasnea, "Teologi Feminisme Sebuah Rujukan Bagi Gerakan Emansipasi Wanita Masa Kini," *Kompasiana*.

the control of men and live in humiliation, still found today. Women are also considered to be retarded and excluded from the dynamics of life without a real role in society. Society still despises women. Do not glorify him, think of him as a human being alone is not. Women are only a means of pleasure, can be sold even women do not have inheritance and are not entitled to own property.²

Durkheim explains that women are in two narrow contexts. First in the positive context of marriage and family. Women fulfill traditional roles that are functional to the family. Second, in the negative context of suicide and divorce. In the family, women lose authority over men, in the sense that men hold authority because families need a "leader". These authorities include control over economic resources and the division of sexual labor in families that lowers the degree of women to inferiority, men, and social roles based on inherent differences in social ability and morality.³

Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection (PPPA), I Gusti Ayu Bintang Darmawati Puspayoga said that women are a "vulnerable" group, but that vulnerability is not because she is weak. That vulnerability is because the social construction that developed in Indonesia is very thick with patriarchal culture. Patriarchal culture causes various habits, patterns of behavior, and viewpoints to be unfair or gender biases that harm women. Gender bias brings women to a variety of issues, such as stigmatization, stereotypes, and even violence against women.⁴

Despite in the community, when come to the church environment, the role of women is seen as one-sided. The church fathers also gave the teaching that the position of women is lower than that of men so as to corner women. For example, women are not given the right to speak in congregational meetings because they are considered disrespectful. Women should not be priests and leaders of ceremonies or worship. Although now the church is beginning to give women the opportunity to lead the worship. However, the church hierarchy is still dominated by men and has not included women in making decisions, unless only involved in the ministry.⁵

² Abu Khalid Resa Gunarsa, "Islam Menjaga Dan Memuliakan Wanita," *Muslim.or.id*.

³ Jane C. Ollenburger and Helen A. Moore, *Sosiologi Wanita*, 1st ed. (Jakarta: PT. Rineka Cipta, 1996), 7.

⁴ Dewanto Samodro, "Menteri PPPA: Laki - Perempuan Memiliki Hak Yang Sama Untuk Bekerja," *Antara News*.

⁵ A. Nunuk P. Murniati, *Getar Gender; Perempuan Indonesia Dalam Perspektif Agama, Budaya Dan Keluarga (Buku Kedua)* (Magelang: Yayasan Indonesia Tera Anggota IKAPI, 2004); comp. Bobby Kurnia Putrawan, "Perempuan dan Kepemimpinan Gereja: Suatu Dialog Perspektif Hermeneutika Feminis."

In Christianity history, women have often not gotten where they should be. They're always numbered two. Their roles are not taken into account. Even the parties that deserve to do the service are only men. Women can only do their job as housewives preparing food where they replace the home kitchen with a church kitchen. They remain in the domestic sphere while those who hold authority as permanent church officials are mostly men.⁶

In creation story, God does not distinguish between male and female. Man was created perfectly like and in the image of God. Therefore, man is God's most precious creation. Men and women are well created and perfect so that there is nothing lower or higher. Before Him are all the same, both male and female.⁷

In the Old Testament, especially in Genesis, seeing women as an integral part of men. Men are also an integral part of women. Women are equal partners, who are truly comrades who complement the man (Gen. 2:18). The woman called Eve was part of the male bone ("this is the bone of my bones and the flesh of my flesh", Genesis 2:23). This text puts women in line with men.⁸

According to Retnowati, women were created as helpers, face to face with men. This is not to be a man's maid and not to give himself to do whatever a man wants. On the contrary women also cannot treat men according to their own will or arbitrariness. In this case both are called to respect each other, respect each other and support each other so that men and women are able to work and work well together. Cooperation is not in the interest of oneself and it is not permissible to undermine God's plan and will. Both were created to make this whole creation better. They were created not to damage, hurt and blame each other, but to build each other for better mutual survival.⁹

When comes to emancipation topics, sometimes the understanding of quite a lot of people is not the same. Some argue that emancipation means that everything a man does should also be able to be done by women. In essence, emancipation is the struggle to respect human dignity in terms of its rights in a human right and its rights before the

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<https://doi.org/10.30995/kur.v6i1.130>.

⁶ Eduardus Sepryanto Nadur and Ady Bintoro, "Keterlibatan Kaum Perempuan Dalam Hidup Menggereja Di Paroki Katedral Kristus Raja Sorong," *Jurnal Masalah Pastoral* 8, no. 2 (2020): 62-63.

⁷ Retnowati, *Perempuan-Perempuan Dalam Alkitab: Peran, Partisipasi Dan Perjuangannya*, 4th ed. (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2013).

⁸ Maksimilianus Jemali, "Upaya Pastoral Untuk Meningkatkan Peran Kaum Perempuan Dalam Kehidupan Menggereja," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Missio* 10, no. 2 (2018): 205.

⁹ Retnowati, *Perempuan-Perempuan Dalam Alkitab: Peran, Partisipasi Dan Perjuangannya*.

law. So the question of emancipation is not only a matter of role, but a matter of the same dignity of life as men before God.¹⁰

Influenced by the modern women's movement, the 19th-century commentator Alfred Plummer referred to the Gospel of Luke as the "Gospel of the Women". Luke wrote this gospel to the Gentiles in order to provide a complete and careful record. Luke records a number of significant passages involving women unique in his gospel, both in the whole and in the development of their focus on women. Luke gave detailed information to convey the truth to everyone, especially to the women. For example, the story of Jesus' birth is unique and written in full in the details of the attention and words, emotions and actions of Mary and Elisabeth. Their very important role and their unusual role performed by other women at the time prompted Luke to write their story in great detail. Luke wanted to show unique attention and knowledge of perspectives, experiences, responses, characteristics, engagements and even examples of female roles.¹¹

Methods

The method used in the study that followed the title "Building Female Emancipation Based on the Role of Women in the Work of Salvation Through The Figures of Mary and Elisabeth According to Luke Chapter 1 – 2" is a method of narrative criticism. Narrative critiques are a branch of so-called literary criticism and are similar to what classical literary readers have worked on for centuries. Efforts to research the Bible as literature are always carried out in Public Schools and in Universities.¹²

Narrative criticism is the analysis of books in the Bible or parts of them as a complete literature by focusing on the character, plot, settings and point of view. With such focus, it is appropriate to say that narrative criticism pays attention to what the text says and how to address it to elicit a certain response from the reader.¹³

¹⁰ Robertus Hardiyanta, "Emansipasi Bukan Hanya Masalah Peran," *Media Paroki Sragen; Lentera*.

¹¹ Layton Talbert, "Perempuan Dalam Kitab Injil Lukas," *SABDA*.

¹² A.A.Sitompul Ulrich Beyer, *Metode Penafsiran Alkitab* (Jakarta: PT BPK Gunung Mulia, 1999).

¹³ Hengki Wijaya, *Analisis Data Kualitatif Ilmu Pendidikan Teologi* (Makassar: Sekolah Tinggi Theologia Jaffray, 2018), 100.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the author will be discussing in the context of the interpretation of the narrative criticism of how the author Luke put the two important women, Mary and Elizabeth of their role in the work of salvation.

Narrator and His Point of View

The narrator in narrative analysis plays a very important role as the holder of control over the narrative. Readers will be brought in on stories and events that will depend heavily on how a narrator narrates the text. The narrator is a person who is only seen through the narrative, but who is distinguished from the implied author. In this description, there will be no distinction between the implied author and the narrator, because this difference for the Gospel is not so important. In Luke 1: 1 – 4 it is implied that Luke does not speak directly, but the character plays a role because he presents the story to the reader.¹⁴

Palying as narrator, Luke knows everything from the place and time of the incident, the mental atmosphere, the surroundings and the hidden things. Although the narrator knows everything, in the narrative he tells, it is impossible to tell everything at once because he will sort out the important things based on the purpose of the narrative to be conveyed. Narrators can also be present in different places and locations to provide readers with real information and information about what's going on. As the narrator, Luke gathers a wide variety of information from various sources so that he knows everything about the world of the story and conveys it to the reader.

In the text of Luke's Gospel chapters 1 and 2, the narrator is in a position where he tells the story and holds his duties and responsibilities as an explainer and storyteller. He is not directly present in the story and does not tell his own story but he attempts to explain the situation or events that occur in the narrative. He also knows the various atmospheres that occur in an event in a narrative he tells.

From the point of synoptics view, the Gospel of Luke is an overly careful and thorough work. The Greek is good. The first four verses are almost flawless Greek in the

¹⁴ B. F. Drewes, *Satu Injil Tiga Pekabar: Terjadinya Dan Amanat Injil-Injil Matius, Markus Dan Lukas* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1998), 355.

New Testament. In the verses, he states that his work is the result of careful investigation.¹⁵

From the female (feminist) point of view, the Gospel of Luke gives the most special position to women. The story of the birth is told from the point of view of Mary and Elisabeth. Luke was a Macedonian resident where female emancipation was higher than in other regions. And this fact has something to do with Luke's views on women.¹⁶

Therefore, in Luke chapters 1 and 2 we found several narratives of the role of women in which Luke tells the story of Mary and Elisabeth first as female figures who have an important role in the work of salvation. Through the emergence of Mary and Elisabeth, the Gospel of Luke wants to make it clear that women have a special position and a very important role as an effort in the work of salvation of mankind.

Literary Analysis

In general, a literary analysis aims is to pay close attention and look carefully at the scope of the text in a context that will be discussed. In order to understand and understand the meaning of the text of the Gospel of Luke chapters 1 – 2, it is necessary to pay attention to all the elements contained in the text and various indications in the literer context. According to Jacob Van Bruggen, scope is the literary unity of a book or letter explicitly indicated and the direction of the text in the smallest unity directly related to the text.¹⁷

Genre

Common Genres

The author of Luke Gospel actually used a literary language, somewhat comparable to classical Greek. The author wrote the Gospel of Luke like a Greek and Roman historian or biographer at the time. Luke's Gospel uses many parables and tells the story of Jesus very impressively. The language and art of Jesus' story in Luke's Gospel are not only beautiful but also excite the reader because they always make room for those who have been cut off by the world, be it because of his sin, his destitution, his illness or his alienation. The author is very good at describing things using words. The

¹⁵ William Barclay, *Pemahaman Alkitab Setiap Hari Injil Yohanes* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2012).

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Jacob Van Bruggen, *Membaca Alkitab: Sebuah Pengantar* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2013), 112.

stories presented are very systematic and neatly arranged making it easier for readers to understand and understand the content of the text.

Special Genres

Luke chapters 1 – 2 covers narration that tells the story of the life of Jesus and John the Baptist. The angel proclaimed the birth of John and Jesus. Elisabeth the mother of John the Baptist and Mary the mother of Jesus conceived miraculously. The author's attention is specifically focused on women who seem weak, so the author wants to elevate the degrees of women and align their degrees with men. This is evidenced by the author of the Gospel of Luke by beginning the gospel through the story of two women who have an important role in the life of mankind even in the work of salvation namely Mary and Elisabeth.

a. Structure

According to my thinking, the structure of division in the narrative text of Luke chapters 1 – 2 is divided into two events, including:

a. First Even

A. Announcement the birth of John the babtis (Luke 1: 5 – 25)

B. An angel news to Zacharia (verse 13)

C. Zacharia's respond to the news (verse 18 - 22)

A'. Announcement the birth of Jesus (Luke 1: 26 – 38)

B'. Angel's good news to Maria (verse 30 - 31)

C'. Maria respons to the news (verse 38)

b. Second Event

A. The birth of john the babttis (Luke 1: 57 – 66)

B. Neighbour and families visiting (verse 58)

C. Circumsision and name given (verse 59)

A'. The birth of Jesus (Luke 2: 1 – 7)

B'. Shepherd visitations (verse 8 – 20)

C'. Circumsision and name given (verse 21)

From the gpspel narrated of Luke chapter 1-2, here are some explanations:

From the narrative structure of Luke's Gospel chapters 1 and 2 above, it can be explained that: The notification of the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah was delivered by the angel of the Lord (A) in the first event. Similarly, the notification of Jesus' birth to Mary was also delivered through the angel (A') in the first event. But the response given by Zacharias and Mary to the notice was very different. Zechariah did not believe the words of the angel of the Lord because he and Elisabeth were of old age making it impossible to bear a child. As a result Zacharias became mute and unable to speak until the birth of John the Baptist because of his disbelief. While Mary believed and received the angel's notice of the Lord to her with humility even though she was surprised to hear the notice because she was not married.

In the second event, at the birth of John the Baptist, many neighbors and relatives came to visit. At the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary were visited by shepherds because at that time, Mary and Joseph were on their way to Judea to register for the government. Shepherds get notice from angels that the Savior has been born to the world.

So the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus through Mary and Elisabeth is a sign that the Gospel of Luke wants to put forward a very important role of woman. Because through the role of women, Maria and Elisabeth have been born someone who will bring the work of salvation to the world. It began with the birth of John the Baptist through Elisabeth where John the Baptist would pave the way for Jesus to work out his salvation in the world. Jesus through Mary will save all mankind so that man receives salvation and does not perish.

Setting of Luke Chapter 1-2

The setting of the gospel of Luke chapters 1 and 2 is divided into two scenes or events to make it easier for the reader to understand this narrative.

First Scene

In this first scene is the process of the birth of John the Baptist from the notification of the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah to the birth of John the Baptist. The beginning of the story opens with the origin of Zacharias and his wife Elisabeth where they are righteous before God and live in fear of God by keeping all the commandments and statutes of God without being faultless (Luke 1:6). In a solemn and solemn atmosphere, the notification of the birth of John the Baptist was delivered by the

angel of the Lord to Zechariah (Luke 1: 10 – 11). At that time Zacharias was appointed to have a turn to burn incense in the Temple. When Zacharias burned the incense, Zacharias was shocked and frightened (Luke 1:12) because the angel of the Lord came to her to tell her that Elisabeth was going to bear a son and had to name her John (Luke 1:13).

The atmosphere became very tense and frightening when the angel delivered a message to Zacharias that he would have a child and the child would be great before God and through his son many Israelites would turn to God because his son would walk before God to prepare the way for God. Hearing the message from the angel of the Lord, Zacharias did not believe the word of the angel of The Lord because it was impossible for him and Elisabeth to have children because Elisabeth was barren and old.

Consequences of Zacharias' distrust of the angel's message to him, he became mute and speechless as he exited the Temple and the crowd waiting for Zacharias to come out of the Temple was astonished and in the end they understood that Zacharias saw a vision while burning incense in the Temple.

An atmosphere of joy came when John the Baptist was born. Relatives and neighbors of Zacharias and Elisabeth (Luke 1: 58). They came rejoicing on the eighth day to trouble John because the Lord had shown them so great mercy. Some time in the midst of the joy that came, everyone who came to visit John was astonished because the child was named John for he was not his friend and none of their relatives were named as such. Until finally they asked Zacharias the name of the child and Zacharias answered with the same answer that is John. And when Zachariah's mouth was opened, and his tongue exposed, he could speak and praise God. Everyone around him became very afraid of what had happened.

After the birth of John the Baptist, an atmosphere of joy enveloped Zacharias and Elisabeth's family until Zacharias became full of the Holy Spirit and prophesied by singing praises to God.

The first scene emphasizing that God is able to use His people to be the instrument of His kingdom. God used Elisabeth to bear a child whom the child would be an instrument for the deity of God's name. Although Elisabeth was a barren and elderly woman to conceive and bear children, God was able to use Elisabeth to be a tool for Him to bear a child who would help and prepare the way for Jesus.

Second Scene

The second scene is the story of Jesus' birth narrative that coming from the notification of Jesus' birth to Mary through the angel of the Lord to Jesus in childhood at the age of 12. This plot begins with a meeting between the angel of God and Mary where the angel of The Lord conveys a message to Mary that Mary will conceive and bear a son and name the child Jesus. Mary was surprised to hear a greeting from the angel before the angel delivered her message (Luke 1: 29).

When she heard the message from the angel of the Lord, Mary asked the angel of the Lord how she could conceive and bear a son when she was not married. Then the angel of the Lord explained to Mary that the child conceived by Mary was the son of the Holy Spirit and the child to be born was a holy child because he was the Son of God. After hearing the explanation from the angel of the Lord, Mary received the angelic message of the Lord with humility (Luke 1: 38).

When Mary visited Elisabeth, an atmosphere of joy and happiness was depicted in this event. When Mary visited Elisabeth and greeted Elisabeth, the child conceived by Elisabeth also soared in excitement because of the coming of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1: 41, 44). And at the same time, Elisabeth became full of the Holy Spirit (Luke 1: 41). Mary also rejoiced so much when she met Elisabeth that she glorified the name of the Lord with her hymns.

And it was time for Mary to give birth, a sad and moving atmosphere came during the event. When Joseph and Mary went to Judea to register for the census, in the middle of the journey Mary was about to give birth. But not a single inn can accommodate them for the maternity process. There was only a cage and placed the newborn child in a manger wrapped in a lampin (Luke 2: 7). Situations and conditions that did not allow for childbirth had to be experienced by Mary where she had to give birth in an improper place and time. But for God it was the right time for the birth of Jesus the Savior.

In the midst of such conditions, the shepherds who were herding their sheep in the field got a message from the angel of the Lord that a Savior had been born so that the shepherds went to the place where Jesus was born. Shepherds feel joy and joy while praising and glorifying God that what angels say is true.

When Jesus was eight days old, his parents took him to the Temple to be circumcised and to be worshipped by God. An atmosphere of joy also enveloped the

Temple when a man named Simeon saw the baby Jesus. Simeon welcomed Jesus and laid him before God while praising God (Luke 2:28). Not only did Simeon feel joy, but a female prophet named Hana also felt joy by giving thanks to God (Luke 2: 38).

An atmosphere of fear, panic and tension was experienced by Joseph and Mary when Jesus was twelve years old. At that time, Joseph and Mary invited Jesus to go to Jerusalem on the Passover as they used to do every year. After they had a feast in Jerusalem, they walked home but did not find Jesus with them (Luke 2: 44 – 45). They searched for Jesus and did not find Jesus in their traveling company. Finally, they decided to go back to Jerusalem and look for Jesus. After three days they found Jesus in the Temple sitting in the middle of the cleric to ask questions (Luke 2: 46 – 47). Anxiety enveloped Joseph and Mary when Jesus was not among them on the way home (Luke 2:48). It's only natural that parents worry about their children where their children aren't with them and are missing. They looked for where Jesus was when Jesus was not with them.

From this second scene tells the story of the birth of Jesus through a woman named Mary where Mary was entrusted by God to conceive and give birth to a holy child even though Mary was an unmarried woman. God uses Mary to be used as His instrument in carrying out her role as a woman for the work of salvation of all mankind.

God can use women to be instruments of His kingdom and elevate the ranks of women so that women marginalized. Through God using Mary and Elisabeth in His plan, it shows that women have the same rights and the same degree as men. God wants to show that women can be worn by God and have a very important role in human life, especially its role in the work of salvation.

Characters.

Charaters analysis become one of the most important thing in narrative critical analysis. So, in the narrative of Luke chapters 1 and 2 there are two main figures that will be discussed in this study, namely Elsabeth and Mary.

Elisabeth.

The narrator wants to show the characteristics of a woman who conceives and gives birth to a boy who will later become a forerunner and pave the way for Jesus' ministry.

1) Elisabeth was a woman who had a righteous life before God.

This is shown in Luke 1:6 which states that Elisabeth was a woman who lived righteously before God. In the Old Translation it is said that he was a devout man of God. In Bahasa Indonesia Everyday it is mentioned that he is a person who always pleases God. In Shelabear it is said that he was a righteous man. From some versions of the Bible above, it is true that Elisabeth was a woman who had a righteous life, obedient and righteous to God who always pleasing God.

- 2) Elisabeth Is A Woman Whose Life According To All The Commandments And Statutes Of God Is Unblemished.

This is shown in Luke 1:6 as a continuation of living righteously before God. Elisabeth had a righteous life before God and delighted God by always keeping all god's commandments and statutes. Therefore, the one who lives righteously before God will always please God by obeying all the commandments and decrees of God.

- 3) Elisabeth Was A Woman Who Kept Holiness.

In Luke 1: 24 – 25 it is explained that for five months Elisabeth did not appear before people because she wanted to keep her holiness. According to culture and tradition of ancient Israel, a woman who is barren or childless is a disgrace to her family. Elisabeth was a barren woman who could conceive and bear children because God answered Zacharias and Elisabeth's prayers. Elisabeth wanted to keep her holiness and honor so that she confined herself at home and did not appear before people because she also did not want to defile herself with things that were not pleasing before God so that the child she conceived became truly a nazir of God (Luke 1:15). Therefore, Elisabeth confined herself at home and did not appear before people because she wanted to keep her holiness and did not want to break the statutes commanded by God.

- 4) Elisabeth Woman of Holy Spirit.

This is shown in Luke 1:41 which indicates that the person who has a righteous and unblemished life by following god's decree, that person will be full of the Holy Spirit. This is the case with Elisabeth.

- 5) Elisabeth Was A Woman Who Always Rejoice.

In Luke 1: 41 it is also shown that Elisabeth was the one who always rejoiced, resulting in the child in her womb also soaring with joy. What a mother feels will usually be infected to the child she is carrying. The baby's unusual movements in the womb are a sign of the mother's extraordinary emotions.

6) Elisabeth Was A Woman Who Always Thought, Said And Acted Positively.

The argument above shown in Luke 1: 25, 42 – 45 where Elisabeth did not think negatively about what people would say to her if she conceived a child after being declared barren. He also did not think negatively about Mary's visit to him even Elisabeth blessed Mary and welcomed Mary warmly and joyfully. She always thinks positively about what's going on, she always says positively about what she says and she also always acts positive about what she's going to do.

7) Elisabeth Woman of Humble Heart.

This is shown in Luke 1:43 which explains that Elisabeth welcomed Mary with such great pleasure and even more so welcomed Mary's arrival with great honor that she considered it unworthy of Mary to visit. A person who is full of the Holy Spirit one of his characteristics is to have humility in his life.

8) Elisabeth Carry an Enormous Faith.

According to Luke 1: 42 – 45 it also explains that Elisabeth had great faith. This is evidenced by his words that say: "Blessed are you among all women and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Who am I until my God's mother comes to visit me? Surely, when your greeting comes to my ear, the child in my womb surges with joy. And blessed is he who believeth, for what is said unto him of the Lord shall be accomplished." But before that Elisabeth did not know that Mary would conceive the Messiah the Savior of the world. But she believed and had great faith that Mary would conceive and bear a holy child, the Messiah.

9) Elisabeth Had .The Courage To Defy The Opinions Of Others For God's Righteousness And Decrees

Luke 1:60 inform us who opposes people's opinion of naming his son. He boldly said that his son would be named John when the people around him would give a name according to the name of his father, Zacharias even they also thought that there was no one among their family named John.

Mary

Besides Elisabeth, there is a second character who will be discussed in this study, Namely Maria. Mary is shown with certain characteristics as a woman who will conceive and bear a child of the Holy One the Messiah who will save all mankind.

1) Mary Was A Calm And Unsty Woman In The Face Of All Things.

This is shown in some verses that indicate that Mary was a quiet woman. In Luke 1:29: Mary was surprised to hear the words, and asked in her heart what the greeting meant. In Luke 2:19: But Mary kept all these things and in her heart and pondered them. Luke 2:51: And his mother kept all these things in his heart. From the verses above, it shows that Mary was always calm in the face of all things without doing hasty actions. He always thinks long before he does anything.

2) Mary Was A Humble Man.

This is shown when an angel delivers a message to her that she will conceive and give birth to a son. He accepted and listened carefully to every angel's words spoken to him. In Luke 1:29: Mary was surprised to hear the words, and asked in her heart what the greeting meant. This is reaffirmed in Luke 1:38: Mary said, "I am indeed a servant of the Lord; be to me according to your words." From this verse it is asserted that Mary was a humble person, she did not become arrogant because she was trusted by God to conceive and bear a child of the Holy Spirit. He realized that he was a servant of God who could only obey God's words and was not entitled to do everything according to his own will.

3) Mary Was A Holy And Holy Woman.

This is evidenced by the narrator's statement in Luke 1:27 when God sent the angel Gabriel to deliver a message to a virgin who was betrothed to a man named Joseph from the house of David; The virgin's name is Mary. This is also confirmed by Mary's statement in Luke 1:34 which says that she is not married. This was also justified by the angel who came to her in Luke 1:35 who said that Mary would conceive and bear a holy child, the Son of God.

4) Mary Has Obedience.

Some verses that indicate that Mary was a woman of obedience are in Luke 1: 38: Mary said: "Verily I am a servant of the Lord; be to me according to your words." Mary only accepted and did what God said not according to the will of others or herself. In Luke 2: 21 – 24 it also shows that Mary was a devout person. When he named his son Jesus the name the angel mentioned to him and he also took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to be circumcised and given to God according to the law that was in place at that time. Not only that, in Luke 2:41 it is also said that Mary went to Jerusalem every year to celebrate the Passover as she used to do every year.

5) Maria Has A Good And Correct Response.

This was shown when she received a message from an angel that she would conceive and bear a son from the seed of the Holy Ghost. He had a positive response, a good and correct response so that he could understand what the angel was saying. With a good response makes her a woman who accepts all the commandments and decrees of God on her.

6) Mary Was A Good Listener.

This is shown when the angel delivers a message to him. He listened carefully to the angel's words so that he understood what the angel meant, although at first he was surprised at the coming and the words of the angel. In Luke 2: 17 19 also shows that Mary listened to the words of the shepherds as they recounted the events of the angel's notice to the shepherds. Mary did not issue a comment or respond to the shepherds' story but rather she heard and pondered it silently.

7) Mary Had Faith In God.

Mary's faith in God is unquestionable. This is evidenced by the words of the angel who said that Elisabeth was pregnant with a son when Elisabeth was a barren woman. He believed that what the angel had said to him even he gave the angel the correct response, even though he had not heard from Elisabeth and saw Elisabeth's own condition. In addition, her faith was also shown when she received a message from an angel that she would conceive and bear a son even though she was not married. He believed that what the angels were saying was bound to happen. He also believed that God's promise in his life and to the world would be fulfilled through his life until he sang praises to God (Luke 1: 46 – 55).

8) Maria Is A Friendly Woman.

This was shown when Mary visited Elisabeth. When Mary visited and entered Elisabeth's house, she immediately greeted and greeted Elisabeth so that the greeting was heard by Elisabeth and made Elisabeth feel great happiness until the child in her womb also jumped in excitement. Not only to Elisabeth she was friendly but to Simeon and Hana in the Temple in Jerusalem, where Mary did not hesitate to give Jesus to Simeon.

9) Mary Is a Woman Who Fears God.

This is demonstrated by the hymns of Mary found in Luke 1: 46 – 55. People who have fear of God will always praise God through hymns. This is also explained in the hymn of Mary in verse 50th which says that: And His mercy is hereditary over him

who fears Him. Mary had received mercy from God and felt God's miraculous act that she would conceive and bear a son.

10) Mary Is a Simple Woman.

In Luke 2: 7 shows that Mary was a simple woman. She doesn't care if she has to give birth in a proper place and put her baby in a manger wrapped only in a nappy. In Luke 2: 43 it also shows that Mary was a simple person. He goes to the Temple in Jerusalem every year on foot.

11) Mary is a Patient Woman.

In addition to point (10) above which mentions that Mary is a simple woman. In point (10) also shows that Mary is a patient woman. He never complained and was disappointed in the slightest bit about what happened and what he experienced. Although she experienced many events that may not make her comfortable, she chose to be patient and not complain one bit. In the hymns of Mary in Luke 1: 55 it also shows that Mary patiently waited for God's promise to her ancestors and in the end she gained God's grace and promise in her life. His patience was also shown when he faced Jesus where Mary searched for Jesus who was left in Jerusalem and found Jesus. His patience in speaking to Jesus has made him anxious and worried because Jesus did not come home with them but instead lived in the Temple in Jerusalem.

12) Mary is a Woman Who Dares and Willingly Sacrifices For Others.

According to Asnath Niwa Natar, Maria was a woman who sacrificed herself because she had to get pregnant out of wedlock. An act brave enough for that era because in Israel a woman who became pregnant out of wedlock would be stoned to death. Mary certainly knew the consequences she would face, but for God's plan to save mankind she dared to sacrifice for others, she felt with others.¹⁸

13) Mary Becomes a Tool in The Process of Reconciliation or Atonement.

Asnath Niwa Natar also said that Mary was included by God in the effort to create peace in the world as a means of coming to the Savior. Mary was involved in the reconciliation efforts between God and man (the world).¹⁹

¹⁸ Pusat Studi Teologi Feminis Fakultas Teologi UKDW, *Perempuan, Konflik Dan Rekonsiliasi: Perspektif Teologi Dan Praksis*, ed. Basilica Dyah Putranti and Asnath Niwa Natar (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2016), 120–121.

¹⁹ UKDW, *Perempuan, Konflik Dan Rekonsiliasi: Perspektif Teologi Dan Praksis*.

Plot

Plot in a story or narrative, also called a storyline. According to an expert named Dick Hartoko, plot as a storyline created by the reader in the form of a series of events chronologically, interrelated and causality in accordance with what the perpetrator experienced. There are several stages in the plot or storyline according to the classic view. Aristotle suggested that the plot stage should consist of the initial stage, the middle stage and the final stage.²⁰

The following is the plot or storyline contained in Luke chapters 1 and 2, namely:

First Stage.

In this early stage it is a stage where there is a notification of the birth of John the Baptist and the notification of the birth of Jesus through an angel. The notification of the birth of John the Baptist was notified by the angel of the Lord through Zechariah stating that he would have a barren son of Elisabeth. And the son is a special child where he shall grow up before the Lord, and he shall not drink wine or liquor, and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb of his mother; it will make many Israelites turn to God and he will walk before God in the spirit and power of Elijah to make the hearts of the fathers turn to their children and the hearts of the ungodly to the minds of the righteous and thus prepare for God a people worthy of Him (Luke 1: 15 – 17).

The event of the notification of the birth of John the Baptist as an early stage in the storyline also coincides with the event of the notification of the birth of Jesus by the angel to Mary. Mary will conceive and bear a son through the Holy Spirit who will descend on Mary and the child born to Mary is the holy child, the Son of God (Luke 1: 31 – 35).

At this early stage, the event that was happening was the notification of the birth of John and Jesus through angels. Mary and Elisabeth were women specifically chosen by God to conceive and bear a son to carry out God's plan for the salvation of mankind in the world. They are relatives and descendants who have a life of pleasure and fear of the Lord.

Middle Stage

²⁰Bitar, "Alur Plot," *Guru Pendidikan*.

At this central stage, it is told about the events of the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus. The birth of John the Baptist was witnessed by neighbors and relatives of Zacharias and Elisabeth. Neighbors and relatives came on the eighth day to circumcise John and give his name. Conflict broke out between them regarding the naming of the baby boy. Relatives wanted to give him a name like his father, Zacharias. However, Zacharias and Elisabeth wanted to name the baby boy John because it was in accordance with God's command to them (Lk. 1: 59 -61).

At the birth of Jesus, Mary gave birth on her way to Judea to submit to the government because of the census of the population. Mary gave birth in an inappropriate place because there was no lodging for her to give birth. And he put his baby boy in a manger (Luke 2:7). No relatives came but there were shepherds guarding the flock in the area to see the baby boy who was told by the angel that the baby was a Savior (Luke 2: 8 – 20). When it was eight days old, Joseph and Mary took Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem to be circumcised and delivered to God.

Final Stage

In this last stage is the end of the birth of John and Jesus. It is not told in detail about John's growth from childhood to adulthood. From the events of John the Baptist only concerning the hymns of Zechariah and the prophecy of Zechariah to John (Luke 1: 67 – 79). It is not told clearly and in detail how John grew up, but in verse 80 it is only revealed that John grew larger and stronger in the Spirit of the Lord. And he lived in the wilderness away from the people and the environment to prepare himself so that he was full of spirit and getting stronger until the day he appeared (Luke 1:80).

In the event that Jesus experienced, there is a narrative that is conveyed about the childhood of Jesus until Jesus was twelve years old. Every year on the Passover, his parents always went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. And Jesus went to Jerusalem with his parents (Luke 2: 41 – 42). At the age of twelve, Jesus remained in the Temple and asked questions with the scholars in the Temple while his parents only realized it after they had traveled home for a day. In adolescence Jesus was in the Temple to ask questions to the scholars so that everyone would be astonished at the intelligence Jesus had. Jesus grew more and more and more wisdom. Not only that, Jesus also became a loved one by God and man.

Implicit Explanation / Interpretation.

The meaning of implicit explanation is to concern rhetorical techniques in which the author tells his story or his style of language using irony, comedy, symbolic and so on, so that the author guides the reader through the drama of the story. This implicit explanation or commentary can be depretiative as a meaning contained in a narrative or story even if it is not clearly explained. In Luke chapters 1 and 2 there is also an implicit meaning contained in the text.

Women Who Have Feminist Traits And Characters Do Not Mean Weak But They Are Able And Successfully Perform Their Roles Well.

Based on Elisabeth and Maria's willingness to give themselves up even if there are many risks to bear. But they are still capable of carrying out divine duties. Like Elisabeth had to give birth at an old age, which must have been a risk to her life. Likewise Mary had to conceive before she married, which must also have been at risk of the death penalty that was in force at the time. This proves that these two women perform their roles well.

In public spaces, women also have responsibilities. Not only in the domestic room where women can only do their responsibility to take care of the house and family. In carrying out her work outside the home, a woman must also be able to perform her responsibilities, especially in the spiritual sphere. A woman has a responsibility in performing her duties and obligations given to her according to her ability.

Along with many responsibilities that must be lived by a woman, then a woman has great power to perform all her roles well. With her femininity and feminist character, women can do all their duties and responsibilities to perform their role as a woman. Even for the sake of successfully carrying out her role as a woman, women must dare to take risks and consequences that occur.

Women Are Not Weak But Strong.

This is evidenced by Mary and Elisabeth where they had to endure all the insults and reproach of those around them because Elisabeth could conceive and bear a child when she was barren. While Mary can conceive and give birth to a child when she is not married. They must be strong and must accept the insults and reproach of all people

because of their condition which is considered a disgrace to them. They are physically weak, but behind that weakness lies the strength of a remarkable woman.

The strength of the woman described in Luke 1 and 2 is also evident from Mary's response compared to Zacharias when receiving a message from The Lord Zacharias who was the High Priest who used to serve in the Temple of God was told not to believe the message conveyed, and this disbelief resulted in him having to suffer silence until the message was fulfilled. Unlike Mary who is an ordinary person has a good response, trust the message delivered and willing to obey the task entrusted to her.

The Important Role of Women.

Through Elisabeth, the role shown was that she conceived and gave birth to a son who would later become a very important person in the life of mankind. John will be the opening of the way and prepare the way for the Messiah to come into the world to save mankind. Through Mary, the role shown was that she conceived and bore a child from the seed of the Holy Spirit because the child she was born with was a holy child called the Son of God. They must strive to keep and maintain the message God conveys to angels because their role is essential to the work of salvation of all mankind.

If often the role of women was ignored at that time, Luke's narrative shows that both Mary and Elisabeth had a better role than Zacharias in carrying out divine duties. This encourages readers to respect women and cannot ignore the role of women in great responsibilities. Based on the words of 1-2 women proved more reliable than men in carrying out the task of safety work for the world.

Conclusion

In the gospel narrative of Luke chapters 1 and 2 that has been explained, there are important points contained in the narrative. The exegesis of synthesis contained in the narratives are :

Women Have The Same Right To Take Part in God's Plan.

Through the adopted figures of Mary and Elisabeth, God included them in His plan. They are involved in God's plan, even though the situations and conditions are unsupportive and pleasant even they must willingly and courageously sacrifice to put aside their will and problems in order to participate in God's plan. This shows that God

wants to lift up the weak, especially women, that they can do their best and have the same rights as men.

Luke deliberately raised two female figures in the writing of his book to elevate the role of women who had been ignored by other gospel writers. As long as the work of salvation presented by the writers of the book is more dominated to the Adamites, and if there are women, but the topic is very minimal. Luke made a bold change against patriarchal habits by raising the story of two women who played an important role in following God's plan for the world. In her story Maria and Elisabeth succeeded in carrying out the task of carrying out the responsibility of the presence of salvation for the world.

Women Have a Great Responsibility in Carrying Out Their Role.

To carry a responsibility as a woman isn't an easy task, for it has to sacrifice many things and various aspects. A woman as a wife must perform her responsibilities as a wife, namely caring and being a helper for her husband (Genesis 2: 18). In addition, the wife must also submit to the husband (Ephesians 5: 22). As a mother, women must carry out their responsibilities of caring for, caring for and educating their children.

In public spaces, women also have responsibilities. Not only in the domestic room where women can only do their responsibility to take care of the house and family. In carrying out her work outside the home, a woman must also be able to perform her responsibilities, especially in the spiritual sphere. A woman has a responsibility in performing her duties and obligations given to her according to her ability.

With many responsibilities that must be lived by a woman, then a woman has great power to perform all her roles well. With her femininity and feminist character, women can do all their duties and responsibilities to perform their role as a woman. Even for the sake of successfully carrying out her role as a woman, women must dare to take risks and consequences that occur.

God's Motive to Use Women as a Means in Realizing His Plan.

God has a plan to create peace in the world by including Mary and Elisabeth. They are engaged in efforts to reconcile God with man. Women can bring about change

in the world into a better world, although many people do not believe and accept that women are able to bring about change.

To go through God's plan, a woman is required a lot of sacrifices. Because this is not easy to do but it must be lived and done for a better life for mankind base on statement we are all the same in god's eyes. There is no difference in the right and degree gap between men and women to realize God's plan in the world. But there must be cooperation between men and women and even women also have a very important role in helping to realize God's plan.

Luke's Motives as a Story Writer.

Luke wanted to reveal and explain that God could use women to perform his role as women in the work of salvation. Not only can men do the work of salvation, but women are also able to do so. Through Mary and Elisabeth, Luke wanted to show that an ordinary woman and who might be considered inferior by the family even in the surrounding environment could perform her role well. In fact, they are able to bring about a change for the world that is saving all mankind in the world.

In his writing in the Gospels, Luke wanted to put forward a female figure so that he began his story with Mary and Elisabeth. At the beginning of writing it appears that Luke put Elisabeth and Mary first. The two ordinary women who have lived righteously before God and have their own characteristics make God use them in realizing His plan on this earth.

In addition, Luke also wanted to explain that women who were often considered inferior and often considered weak at that time had a very important and large role. God wants to elevate women and eliminate the view that women are women. Luke wanted to show that women have the same rights as men, women have the same rights and dignity in society, women who are seen as weak actually have pent-up power that men don't actually have and women also have a very important role to play in bringing about world change.

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