

Elizabeth

CHARACTERS: 1 F

PROPS: baby, cradle

COSTUMES: Biblical

SETTING: None specified

(Woman enters carrying a baby; she speaks softly and tenderly when talking to the baby, almost in awe) John, child of my old age. Sleep well tonight. *(places baby in cradle)*. Until you came I was barren. *(remembering with pain)* A curse and shame to any Israelite woman. I understood when Rachel cried out to her husband – give me children or I die. Like Hannah, I was loved by my husband, but that could not fill the empty, aching void within my heart.

(mood lightens) The day your father, Zachariah came home from serving at the temple he could not speak. Still he managed to tell me he had spoken with the angel Gabriel, that we would have a son, us in our old age. He said our son was to be dedicated to God even from my womb. *(looking at the baby)* You, John, would turn many of our people back to God. Our son would come in the spirit and power of Elijah.

I laughed – not like Sarah, in disbelief, but for joy and knowing that if God ordained it, he would make a way. I spent my months in seclusion, praying and meditating on how we should bring you up. Then Mary, my young relative came.

She should have been home, preparing to be married. She had just been betrothed to Joseph. When she walked through the door, you gave me such a kick. It was as though you spoke, "Mother, what good is it for you to bear Messiah's forerunner unless someone else bears Messiah?" *(joyfully)* The realization broke on me like a wave of the sea and washed over me, bringing chills of joy. Mary's baby was the Messiah!

We laughed and cried together. *(remembering with laughter)* I thought your father would burst from not being able to speak. I'm sure he wanted to compare notes with Mary about Gabriel's visits.

She returned home and in due course I had you. I am a doubly blessed woman – blessed with a son of my own and blessed to be alive when the Messiah will come. The Messiah – the hope and consolation of Israel. The counselor, Prince of Peace, Mighty God. How wondrous. *(picking up baby from cradle)* Mary's time is close. The Messiah could come at any time *(pause to cradle child closer)* Maybe even tonight.