

## Answering Difficulties with the Ark of the Covenant Parallels

It's always a dangerous thing to step in and comment on a dispute over a paper since it is so easy to misinterpret the paper and/or the objector's points. But since dispute largely focuses on Luke's depiction of Mary as the Ark of the Covenant, I'm going to throw caution to the wind and take a stab at responding to some of the objections raised in the dispute and hopefully shed some light on the issue.

Since I don't know the person who wrote up the critique of Steve Ray's Mary, *the Ark of the New Covenant article*, I will refer to him as the objector. The objector's critique begins with a list of problems.

Problem #1 - "Ray basis a lot of this on the idea that the Ark of the Covenant was 'the dwelling place of God.'"

The objector's basic point is that it was the tabernacle (and later the Temple) that housed God's presence, not the Ark. This is true. In terms of typology, however, which Ray discusses at the beginning of his paper, we see that the Ark can also be a type of Mary in that it contained the Law, the manna, and Aaron's rod. Since Christ is God's Word and torah, the new Manna, and our high priest, the Ark typologically contained Christ to which Mary is the Ark's antitype.

The objector then argues that since the Ark contained the *mercy seat*, which was a place for propitiation, and since the same word is used for Christ's sacrifice in Romans 9:5, the Ark is "more appropriately and realistically" seen as foreshadowing Christ, implying that it is therefore a less likely foreshadowing Mary.

The problem with this objection is that it proposes a false dichotomy; it assumes that the Ark either has to be a type of Christ *or* a type of Mary. There is no reason why it can't be both when regarded from two different perspectives. In terms of sacrifice, the Ark could be a type of Christ. In terms of Luke's perspective at the visitation, it's a type of Mary. There is no reason to set one against the other or to make the likelihood of one detract from the likelihood of the other.

The bottom line is whether Luke intended to describe Mary's visit to Elizabeth in terms related to the Ark of the Covenant or not. If the inspired writer made this connection then we are not in the position to deny it. If he didn't make this connection then the question is open to dispute. The objector believes that Luke didn't make this connection and accuses Steve Ray's article as being nothing more than "*eisegesis*" (i.e., reading something *into* a text). I believe the evidence indicates otherwise.

### PROBLEMS WITH PARALLELS

The reason why Christians have seen Luke's Ark of the Covenant connection is because they recognized a cluster of allusions and parallels in Luke 1:35-56 to the Ark, and more specifically the journey of the Ark to Jerusalem in 2 Samuel 6. Like an accumulative argument, where each strand of the argument may not be strong in itself, but together it becomes a formidable argument. Likewise, each parallel may have differing degrees of strength or likelihood, but as a group a solid case for intentionality.

As we shall see, the objector's critique attempts to defeat this observation by pulling out single strands from this cluster and disputing each one's existence, while ignoring the presence of the others. But the argument for Mary as Ark of the New Covenant stands or falls on its accumulative weight. By ignoring the argument *as a whole*, the objector never refutes Ray's contention.

### **Problem Parallel #1 - Luke 1:43 / 2 Samuel 6:9**

The first problem parallel concerns the connection between Luke 1:43, "And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me?" and 2 Samuel 6:9, "David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, 'How can the ark of the LORD come to me?'" He gives three objections:

- (1) the contexts are different - Elizabeth's question was out of awe and humility where David's question was out of fear.
- (2) Just because the two questions are similar doesn't mean they are parallel.
- (3) One could find similar "parallels" in Scripture (e.g., 2 Samuel 24:21) that are not connected with the Ark.

I would answer these objections as follows:

Response to Point 1: The fact that such parallel questions are found in both texts, regardless of the dispositions in which they were asked, still constitute a connection between the Ark and Mary. Therefore, even if the objector's point is granted it doesn't affect the point that there is a parallel.

However, I would dispute whether the objector's point is really a point. Awe and fear are, scripturally speaking, two sides of the same coin. Likewise, David and Elizabeth were humbled by the display of God's might albeit it was displayed in different ways. The objector's point, it seems to me, is really a distinction without a difference.

One may respond that the differences *are* there. Uzzah's death caused David to fear. There is no parallel with Elizabeth. True. However, these are two separate narratives and there are going to be elements that set them apart. That is to be expected. What is important is how strangely similar both questions are. One could almost substitute "the Ark of the Lord" with "the mother of my Lord." But what makes this parallelism more firm is the fact that it is part of a cluster of allusions to the Ark.

Response to Point 2-3: I combine these two points because the objector's counter-example provides a good illustration why these questions are parallel, not just similar.

In terms of linguistic analysis, the objector's counter-example of 2 Samuel 24:21 ("*Why has my lord the king come to his servant?*") shows far less similarity to 2 Samuel 6:9 LXX and Luke 1:43, as can be seen when the three passages are compared below.

**2 Samuel 6:9 LXX,**      "How shall the ark of the Lord come in to me?" (Πῶς εἰσελεύσεται πρὸς με ἡ κιβωτὸς κυρίου)

**Luke 1:43,** "And how has it [happened] to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? (πόθεν μοι τοῦτο ἵνα ἔλθῃ ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου πρὸς ἐμέ)

**2 Samuel 24:21** "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" (LXX: Τί ὅτι ἦλθεν ὁ κύριός μου ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς τὸν δοῦλον αὐτοῦ).

All three questions are similar, but only two are parallel. Only 2 Samuel 6:9 LXX and Luke 1:43 ask the question "how" where 2 Samuel 24:21 asks "why." The question "how" expresses the recipient's unworthiness to receive the Ark or Mary (out of awe / fear). The question "why" simply inquires as to the reason for the visit. They are two very different kinds of questions. The first two are rhetorical questions. The third is a query that David answers in the next sentence.

An even more important difference is *what* the David and Elizabeth receive: 2 Samuel 6:9 LXX and Luke 1:43 receives *something of the Lord*, that is the Ark of the Lord (με ἡ κιβωτὸς κυρίου) or "the mother of my Lord" (ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου). This is absent in the counter-example. Araunah receives David "my Lord King." If it were to be parallel, it should have said, "How shall *the King of my Lord* come to his servant" or better "How shall *the King of my Lord* come to me." But neither the Hebrew or Greek supports this possibility.<sup>1</sup> For me, the "mother of my Lord" and the "Ark of my Lord" make these two similar questions parallel. But again, what makes these questions significant is their presence among other allusions.

**Problem Parallel #2 - David danced before of the Ark (2 Samuel 6:14), and John the Baptist leapt in his mother's womb at the sound of Mary's voice (Luke 1:41).**

The objector wrote: "Earlier, Ray went to lengths to show how the Greek word for overshadowed was the same Greek word used in the Septuagint to describe God's presence over the Ark. Here neither the words for leapt or danced are used in regards to John's activity in Elizabeth's womb."

Mr. Ray didn't point out a linguistic parallel because it is a literary parallel. Both texts describe dancing / leaping. Both David and John the Baptist made this leaping joyful movement before the Ark and Mary. If the objector insists that an identical word is necessary, I suppose we could point out that *Symmachus* uses the same word (*shirtao*) in 2 Samuel 6:16 thus making a linguistic parallel as well. But there is no need to go this far.

The objector continues, "This is a pretty thin parallel to hang your argument on. Lots of people did lots of things in front of the Ark (like die, mostly)."

Again, that's not the point. The point is that this is just one of a cluster of allusions that Luke uses from 2 Samuel 6 that link Mary with the Ark.

In regards to the other things that happened "in front of the Ark (like die, mostly), I appreciate the objector's stab at humor. But Uzzah didn't die because he was in front of the Ark, but because he

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<sup>1</sup> 2 Samuel 24:21 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱרֹנָה מִדָּוִד בָּא אֲדֹנָי־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֵלַי־עֲבָדוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְקִנְיֹת מַעֲמֵךְ אֶת־הַגֵּרֹן לְבָנֹת מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהוָה וְתַעֲצֹר הַמִּגְפָּה מֵעַל הָעַם:

treated it profanely by touching it and if you check the body count in 2 Samuel 6, I think you'll find that most of the things that happened before the Ark are shouts, cries, and dancing. You know, the things Elizabeth and John the Baptist did before Mary. Only Uzzah died.

He also seemed to miss that even here there is a small cluster of minor parallels that also surround David's dance. For example, Elizabeth's cry (*krauge*) in Luke 1:42 parallels that of the people before the Ark in 2 Samuel 6:15. The Greek word for the sound (*phone*) of the people's voice in 2 Samuel 6:15 is also used in Luke 1:44. More importantly, the second word used for Elizabeth's cry (*anepphonesen*) is used exclusively in the Septuagint for liturgical acclamations. It is used 5 times in the Septuagint (1 Chronicles 15:27; 16:4, 5; 16:42, and 2 Chronicles 5:13) and all five of these instances are within the context of the celebration before the Ark of the covenant. Luke 1:42 is the only time the New Testament uses this word and he used it to describe Elizabeth's joy before Mary. Think about it: The Septuagint uses this word exclusively for celebrations before the Ark. The New Testament uses it exclusively for the celebration before Mary. The celebration before Mary is liken to the celebration before the Ark. I can't think of a more simple way to put it.

So yes, people did lots of different things before the Ark. But given this cluster of parallels, the fact that David and John the Baptist both leap / dance before the Ark / Mary, and Luke's use of a liturgical word exclusively associated with the Ark (*anepphonesen*) gives us sufficient reason to seriously consider this to be a Lukan parallel between the Ark and Mary.

**Problem Parallel #3: Mary stayed for three month at Elizabeth's house (Luke 1:56) and the Ark stayed at Obed-edom's house for three months (1 Samuel 6:11).**

The objector dismisses this parallel by pointing out that other things in Scripture happened for three months. For example, Moses was hidden for three months (Hebrews 11:23). Paul preaches in the synagogue for three months (Acts 17:8). Jehoahaz was king for three months (2 Kings 23:31). Rain was withheld for three months (Amos 4:7).

He asks, "Why aren't these 'three months' passages parallel to Mary's stay with Elizabeth?"

This reply reminds me of a person who walks up to the edge of a forest and reasons: "How can they say this is a forest? Here is an elm tree just like the ones in my neighborhood, but my neighborhood is not a forest. And here is a maple tree like maple trees in the schoolyard, but the schoolyard is not in a forest. All of these tree are like other similar trees found in non-forested areas. How can they call this a forest! Someone is reading the idea of a forest into these trees."

Of course, similar things can be found elsewhere in Scripture. That's not the point. It's the fact that all these allusions to the Ark are clustered together in this short narrative that causes us to conclude Luke purposely drew his imagery from the passages. To use my analogy, it's not the common types of trees that make it a forest but it is the fact that all these trees are grouped together in one location. Of course, parallels are not forest and analogies are dangerous things to use in argument because they can be push to absurdity. Nevertheless, my point is still valid. A consecutive group of parallels to one subject in a short passages suggests that it was purposefully done.

#### **Problem Parallel # 4 - Elizabeth's cry of joy before Mary**

The objector states: "This is supposed to be closely tied to Old Testament liturgical ceremonies around the ark. He doesn't bother to share what these are, unfortunately. An issue here though is again he mentions that the Greek Septuagint shares the same word, but since the Old Testament was written in Hebrew and translated into Greek this isn't a strong case for anything. The Greek word used just means to cry out in a loud voice. This is not remarkable."

We already discussed the Greek word "*anepphonesen*" and its use in the Septuagint. I understand his need for references. That's perfectly fine. I supplied the references earlier and will revisit them later. He could have found the references for himself by consulting any standard Greek New Testament Lexicon.

His suggestion that the Septuagintal background is irrelevant is quite frankly dismissive and a bit silly. Luke was a gentile. He wrote for the gentile audience, who would have accessed the Old Testament via the Septuagint. All scholars (Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, secular) have long recognized the New Testament's use of the Septuagint. Moreover, the inspired authors of the New Testament didn't show any scruples about using this Greek translation, even when it differed from the Hebrew Masoretic Text. Therefore, there is no reason to discount these Lukan parallels to the Ark on the basis of language.

#### **Problem Parallel #5 - The Ark returns to Jerusalem. Mary returns to Jerusalem.**

The objector states: "This is another odd thing to say. Mary never made her home in Jerusalem as far as we know in Scripture. They traveled there at least twice, once after Jesus was born and once when Jesus was about 12. She did not stay there like the Ark, and even the Ark did not find a permanent residence in Jerusalem."

This is not well-stated. He says Mary "never made her home in Jerusalem," but she *did* go there. As Ray notes: "Seventh, the Ark returns to its home and ends up in Jerusalem where God's presence and glory is revealed in the Temple (2 Sam 6:12; 1 Ki 8:9-11) and Mary returns home and eventually ends up in Jerusalem where she presents God enfleshed in the Temple (Lk 1:56; 2:21-22)."

The objector trips himself up by insisting that if this is a parallel then Mary should have made her home (apparently permanently) in Jerusalem and then in the next breath admits that even the Ark didn't stay permanently in Jerusalem. How then can a parallel exist? It's one of those "damned if you do, damned if you don't" scenarios. Had Mary took up permanent residence in Jerusalem, the objector would say, "It's not parallel because the Ark didn't permanently stay in Jerusalem." But if she stayed temporarily in Jerusalem, the objector would say, "It's not parallel because she didn't remain there like the Ark."

The objector then quotes Ray's paper and makes comments. I'll reproduce his quote and comment and add a few of my own observations.

The objector writes: "Quote: 'Knowing the depth of Scripture, the Jewish nature of the Bible, and the use of biblical typology it seems pretty clear that Luke has twice now revealed something of the person and place of Mary in the history of salvation – and he did it in a very clever manner. In the Ark of the Old Covenant, God came to his people with a spiritual presence, but in Mary the Ark of the New Covenant

God comes to dwell with his people not only spiritually, but physically in the womb of a specially chosen and prepared Jewish girl."

The objector then comments: "Earlier Ray suggested that Mary had to instruct Luke into the intricacies of the Old Testament, and now he has him weaving a complex parallel throughout his Gospel."

For the life of me, I couldn't figure out where the objector came up with these ideas until I read the paragraph before the quote:

Ray wrote: "Interestingly, at this moment, Mary bursts into inspired, poetic worship and says that all generations will call her blessed. Many Christians hesitate to do this, but Catholics have called her blessed through the centuries. Also it is interesting to notice that Mary's prayer, the *Magnificat* (Lk 1:46-55), is based upon the prayer of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1-10). The late Pope John Paul II said Hannah's prayer was the biblical model for Mary's song and was the *Magnificat of the Old Testament*. It seems Mary was very well-versed in the Jewish Scripture."

Ok, Luke 1:1-4 says Luke compiled his Gospel through eyewitness accounts. There are some things that are recorded in Luke that only Mary was an eyewitness. Therefore, Luke learned things from Mary. But this wasn't Ray's points. His point was that Mary's prayer modeled Hannah's prayer. Does this constitute "weaving a complex parallel throughout his Gospel?"

He also states: "If these were important parallels the New Testament authors wanted us to reach, they would have pointed them out clearly as they did with references to Christ as the fulfillment of Old Testament foreshadowing (first and last Adam, etc.)."

I'm not sure demanding that Scripture teach something in a certain way or else we won't believe it is the proper Christian attitude to take when approaching God's word. If it teaching something, we accept it regardless if it is taught in a manner that we would have not preferred.

The objector then concedes that there is something interesting going on typologically with the contents of the Ark, but not enough warrant seeing Mary as the Ark of the New Covenant. If that was all we had, I would agree with him. But the allusions in Luke to the Old Testament Ark are too numerous and varied to be written off as coincidence, especially against the backdrop of these typological connections.

#### **Problem Parallel #6 - The Ark in Revelation**

The objector takes a number of exceptions to Steve Ray's treatment of Revelation 12 and the Ark. First, he takes issue, but doesn't go into the specifics, about Revelation not being widely accepted by many before the fourth century. Revelation was disputed for centuries and it stands to reason that since only a fraction of the Christian populous accepted Revelation as Scripture that it would receive little attention. After the fourth century, Revelation did gain interest. I'm not sure where is the problem, except maybe the assertion that the Catholic Church decided the New Testament canon.

The objector also disagrees with Ray's statement that "Christians realized there was more revelation in the Bible about Mary as the Ark" because it assumes that Christians already knew about the Mary / Ark connection. Fair enough. I'll concede the point.

Next, the objector takes issue with Mary being the "Woman" of Revelation 12. He states: "The notion that Mary is a queen helps him [Steve Ray] see it to be more Mary-focused, but I obviously would take issue with the idea that Mary is the queen of heaven."

But if the Woman in Revelation 12 is crowned (and female crowned persons are usually called "queens") and she is seen in heaven (Revelation 12:1) why aren't we permitted to see her as a heavenly queen? Actually, I believe that Revelation 12 depicts the Woman, more specifically, as the Queen mother of the Messiah King and in my book, *Making Sense of Mary*, I argue that the Woman in Revelation 12 is exclusively Mary. But that's beside the point here.

"The only Scripture reference I know of to a "Queen of Heaven" is in Jeremiah 44. (God didn't like it)."

The funny thing is Steve Ray never calls Mary the "Queen of Heaven" in his article. He calls her the "Queen mother" and "Queen," but never the "Queen of Heaven." The title "Queen of Heaven" comes out of the blue and quite conveniently since it gives him an opportunity to bring up Jeremiah 44:17-25 (also Jeremiah 7:18). If you read these passages, you'll see that God doesn't object to the title, but to idolatry. Jeremiah condemns those who offer sacrifices and libations to this pagan goddess. Of course, none of this is at work in Revelation 12, Catholic theology, or Steve Ray's article. Why then bring it up?

Many Catholics might not know that the title "queen of heaven" is a hot-button issue for some Protestants. Jehovah's Witnesses' use a similar reasoning when they condemn Christmas trees because Jeremiah 10:2-4 speaks against the practice of cutting down trees and decorating them with gold and silver. Therefore, they conclude, Jehovah doesn't like Christmas trees. What they miss is that making an idol and worshiping it as a god is condemned, not decorating trees. The same line of reasoning is at work here in regards to Jeremiah 44:17-25 (and Jeremiah 7:18). Idolatrous worship of a pagan goddess is condemned, what the idol was called really isn't important.

The objector continues: "Also, even if the primary reference in this passage was to Mary and not the church, why would this make her the Ark?"

The answer is doesn't, but the transition from the appearance of the Ark in Revelation 11:19 and the appearance of the Queen mother pregnant with the Messiah (Revelation 12:1-2, 5) certainly suggests some connection between the two. Remember, there were no chapter divisions in the original text.

**"Additional Evidence: Some early church fathers referred to Mary in terms of the ark of the covenant."**

The objector states:

"There is a lot to be learned from early church fathers, but their words are not authoritative. If they say something that is foreign to Scripture, such as many of the titles given to Mary in Catholicism, it doesn't make it so."

The importance of the fathers is largely their witness to the ancient Faith. Ray cites the early fathers to show the continuity of thought from the Gospel of Luke to Revelation to the early Church. He was not arguing, "Since so-and-so said this, we should believe it on his authority."

He continues: "Also, we know that the church fathers have said some pretty wacky things. For example, the author of 2 Clement taught that the Phoenix was a real bird and used this as evidence for the reality of Christ's resurrection (2 Clement 25:1-5). There are other examples, but that might be the most fun. We shouldn't treat quotes from early Christian leaders as evidence for theological arguments, at least not as primary evidence."

I don't think Steve Ray treated patristic references a "primary evidence" since the bulk of the work focuses on Scripture. Although I understand the objector's fear about using the early fathers without care, I would dispute whether he is characterizing the early fathers correctly. His argument comes close to committing the fallacy of the Converse Accident, which takes exceptional cases and generalizes them into a rule. A few isolated examples doesn't mean that all fathers (or even the rest of Clement's letter to the Corinthians) is wrong (or as he put it "wacky"). I don't think he goes quite that far, but I've seen this kind of reasoning used to dismiss the fathers as a whole.

Of course, no one is arguing (and Steve Ray certainly didn't argue) that individual fathers are infallible. They may use the mistaken science, history, or philosophy of their day. An individual father may even be mistaken on biblical and theological points (i.e., certain passages in Origen, Tertullian, etc.). But when they witness to the belief of the Church, their testimony is valuable especially when this testimony is ancient, ubiquitous, and represents a consensus or near consensus of the fathers. I don't believe Mary as Ark of the covenant reaches that level, but it nevertheless shows that the early Church did see this relationship.

In regards to Clement of Rome, the citation is found in 1 Clement 25:1-5, not 2 Clement. The reference to the Phoenix is part of a larger argument where Clement notes how God witnesses to the resurrection in nature. He uses the natural history of his day and recounts the myth of the Phoenix (which was also spoken of by the pagan historians Herodotus and Pliny) insisting that it, like the other examples, speaks to the resurrection. Clement was a child of his age when it comes to natural philosophy and if you're appealing to Clement (or any other ancient writer) as an authority on nature or science you're in for a lot of trouble. But Clement of Rome was a disciple of Sts. Peter and Paul. He was instructed by them and placed as bishop of Roman very early on. Therefore, as a witness to *Christian doctrine* is important. His use of the science of the day is not.

The objector's critique of the "Response to Objections" section is odd, to say the least. He takes umbrage that Steve Ray point that the New Testament never explicitly states that Jesus is the Ark of the New Covenant and that Mary being the Ark is never denied. The objector believes that Jesus as the Ark is "a pretty good argument" when it is based on only one point of contact namely the use of the word

propitiation, while Ray's 6 pages of parallels and other linguistic, typological, and literary points of contact are dismissed as "speculation."

He does make a point in that the omission of a denial doesn't prove that Mary is the Ark, but I think the point being made here is that there is nothing explicit that is contrary to this identification.

Steve Ray's comment that the Ark as a type of Christ is legitimate, however, there is more evidence in favor of Mary is met with a scoff: "This is a surprising statement. There is more evidence to see Mary as what the Ark and its contents point to than Jesus? I have a hard time seeing that."

This might help.

In the 21 verses between Luke 1:35 and Luke 1:56, there are 12 allusions to the Ark of the Covenant, 7 of which are specific to the Ark narrative in 2 Samuel 6. Here are the points of contact that I am aware of:

(1) Both the Ark (and tabernacle) and Mary are overshadowed by the presence of God.

Exodus 40:35 LXX, "And Moses was not able to enter into the tabernacle of testimony, because the cloud **overshadowed** it (**ἐπεσκιάζεν** ἐπὶ αὐτήν), and the tabernacle was filled with the glory of the Lord."

Luke 1:35, "And the angel said to her in reply, "The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will **overshadow** (**ἐπισκιάσει**) you.

Both passages use the same Greek word for overshadow (*episkiasei*).

(2-4) Both the Ark and Mary "arose" and "went" on the journey to the hill country in Judah.

2 Samuel 6:2 LXX, "And David and all the people with him **rose** (**ἀνέστη**) and went (**έπορεύθη**) from the rulers of Judah (MT, Baale-judah) in the ascent to bring up from there the Ark of God..."

Luke 1:39, "Now at this time Mary **arose** (**Ἀναστᾶσα**) and **went** (**έπορεύθη**) in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah."

Both passage use the same words for "rose" and "went" and both refer to Judah. All three contacts are found in these two verses.

(5) Both David and Elizabeth ask "How can the [Ark / mother of my Lord] come to me?"

2 Samuel 6:9 LXX, "So David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" (**καὶ ἐφοβήθη** Δαυιδ τὸν κύριον ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ λέγων **Πῶς εἰσελεύσεται πρὸς με ἢ κιβωτὸς κυρίου**).

Luke 1:43, "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? (**καὶ πόθεν μοι τοῦτο ἵνα ἔλθῃ ἡ μήτηρ τοῦ κυρίου μου πρὸς ἐμέ**).

Both David and Elizabeth ask how something (Ark / the mother) of the Lord could come to them.

(6) David, the people, and John the Baptist are joyful before the Ark / Mary.

2 Samuel 6:12 LXX, "David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David **with gladness** (εὐφροσύνη)."

Luke 1:44, " For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb **for joy** (ἀγαλλιάσει).

Different words are used, but they semantically overlap (See Louw-Nida, 25.131 and 25.132).

(7) Both David and John the Baptist dance / leap before the Ark and Mary.

2 Samuel 6:16 LXX, "Michal the daughter of Saul looked out through the window and saw King David **dancing** (LXX, ὀρχούμενον, *Symmachus*, ἐσκίρτησεν) and playing before the Lord and she despised him in her heart."

Luke 1:41, "When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant **leaped** (ἐσκίρτησεν) in her womb..."

Different words used for dance / leap, but they too semantically overlap (See Louw-Nide 15.243 and 15.244). The same word is used in Symmachus.

(8) Elizabeth "cries out" before Mary and the people "cry out" before the Ark.

2 Samuel 6:15, "as he and all the Israelites were bringing up the ark of the LORD with **shouts** (κραυγῆς) of joy.."

Luke 1:41-42, "Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, **cried out** (κραυγῆ).."

The Greek word *krauge* is fairly common. It's used 66 times in the Septuagint and 6 times in the New Testament. This contact is significant *only* in that it is used within this cluster of contacts.

(9) Both the trumpets before the Ark and Mary's greeting are described in terms of its sound (*phone*).

2 Samuel 6:15, "...and with the **sound** (φωνῆς) of the trumpet."

Luke 1:41-42, "For at the moment the **sound** (ἡ φωνή) of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy.

As you can imagine, "sound" is a very common word being used 633 times in the Septuagint and 139 times in the New Testament. ("sound" and "cry" are found together 17 times in the LXX). This contact is significant *only* because it is used within this cluster of contacts between the same subjects.

(10) Elizabeth's voice and the shouts before the Ark are both described by the word ἀνεφώνησεν.

Luke 1:42, "...cried out in a loud **voice** (ἀνεφώνησεν) and said, "Most blessed are you among women..."

1 Chronicles 15:28, "Thus all Israel brought back the ark of the covenant of the LORD with joyful shouting, to the sound of horns, trumpets, and cymbals, and the **music** (ἀναφωνοῦντες) of harps and lyres."

1 Chronicles 16:4, "He now appointed certain Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to celebrate(λειτουργοῦντας), **thank** (ἀναφωνοῦντας), and praise the LORD, the God of Israel. (notice that *anaphonesen* is associated with *leitourgeo*).

1 Chronicles 16:5, "Asaph was their chief, and second to him were Zechariah, Uzziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel. These were to play on harps and lyres, while Asaph was to **sound** (ἀναφωνῶν) the cymbals."

1 Chronicles 16:42, "with trumpets and cymbals for **accompaniment** (ἀναφωνεῖν), and instruments for the sacred chant. The sons of Jeduthun kept the gate."

2 Chronicles 5:13, "When the trumpeters and singers were heard as a single **voice** (ἀναφωνεῖν) praising and giving thanks to the LORD, and when they raised the sound of the trumpets, cymbals and other musical instruments to "give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever," the building of the LORD'S temple was filled with a cloud."

Luke describes Elizabeth's voice using a rare word used in the Septuagint exclusively for the liturgical celebration before the Ark. It is used only **five** times in the Septuagint and **once** in the New Testament. All five instances in the LXX are used to describe the song or music played before the Ark of the Covenant.

(11) The Ark and Mary remained at Obed-edom's / Elizabeth's house for three months.

2 Samuel 6:11, "The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite **for three months...**"

Luke 1:56, "Mary remained with her **about three months** and then returned to her home"

(12) The Ark returns to Jerusalem and Mary departs in the same direction and later Mary presents Jesus in the Temple.

To these twelve points of contact we can add all the other data and types that Steve Ray gave in his paper.

This cluster of allusions to the Ark of the Covenant and Mary's visitation (literary, linguistic, topological) in 21 verses of Luke's Gospel is too large and specific to be the product of mere chance. Clearly, the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to make these allusions. The typological symbolism of the Ark of the Covenant gives further weight to this association and endows this passage with a greater depth of meaning.

The only way to defeat this is to pull out one parallel or point of contact at a time, ignore the other parallels and points of contact, and point to other supposed parallels outside of the ark of the covenant narratives, and then dismiss the whole cluster as mere speculation or worse the product of "*eisegesis*." But for me, the significance of this argument is the cluster itself. One parallel may be a coincidence. Two or three parallels are a little harder to dismiss. But twelve contacts in only twenty-one verses is far more difficult to dismiss as the product of chance, much less reading meaning *into* these verses.