

The Joy of Christmas

Luke 1:46-56

46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. 48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. 49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. 50 And His mercy is on those who fear Him From generation to generation. 51 He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. 52 He has put down the mighty from their thrones, And exalted the lowly. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things, And the rich He has sent away empty. 54 He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy, 55 As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever." 56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house. NKJV

If you read the whole Christmas story like we will on Christmas Eve, you will find that Elisabeth is 6 month pregnant with her son John. Mary has received the message from Gabriel that she has been chosen to bear the Messiah. Mary has traveled from Nazareth to the hills of Judea to stay with Elisabeth until John will be born.

When Elisabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the babe in her womb leaped and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elisabeth give a pronouncement of blessing to Mary.

Mary responds with our text. This is often called the Magnificat from the Latin word for "magnify" found in v-46. The words of Elisabeth have substantiated the testimony of Gabriel. She is filled with joy and breaks forth with praise.

For Elisabeth the birth of John will be somewhat of a miracle for she and her husband are old. Therefore we can understand her joy.

But for Mary this is not just the birth of a son. It is the birth of the Savior of the world. It is the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, the Deliverer of Israel.

In this song of praise Mary give us the essence of Christmas. Let us look at it.

I. Mary's Praise

A. My soul magnifies the Lord

1. The idea is to say great things about.
2. To declare that the Lord is MEGA, great.

B. My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior

1. Mary understood how that the Lord delights in honoring those who would normally receive no honor.
2. She understands how far God had to reach down to save humanity.
3. She recognizes Jesus as her Savior.

- a. She is not a co-redeemer with Jesus, but a sinner who recognized her need for a savior.

II. His blessings on Mary

A. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;

1. There is a marked similarity between this and several Old Testament songs.

- a. There is the song of Hannah.

“My heart rejoices in the LORD;

^cMy ¹horn is exalted in the LORD.

²I smile at my enemies,

Because I ^drejoice in Your salvation.

² “No ^eone is holy like the LORD,
For *there is* ^fnone besides You,
Nor *is there* any ^grock like our God.

³ “Talk no more so very proudly;
^hLet no arrogance come from your mouth,
For the LORD *is* the God of ⁱknowledge;
And by Him actions are weighed.

⁴ “The ^jbows of the mighty men *are* broken,
And those who stumbled are girded with strength.

⁵ *Those who were* full have hired themselves out for bread,
And the hungry have ceased *to hunger*.
Even ^kthe barren has borne seven,
And ^lshe who has many children has become feeble.

⁶ “The ^mLORD kills and makes alive;
He brings down to the grave and brings up.

⁷ The LORD ⁿmakes poor and makes rich;
^oHe brings low and lifts up.

⁸ ^pHe raises the poor from the dust
And lifts the beggar from the ash heap,
^qTo set *them* among princes
And make them inherit the throne of glory.

^r“For the pillars of the earth *are* the LORD’s,
And He has set the world upon them.

⁹ ^sHe will guard the feet of His saints,
But the ^twicked shall be silent in darkness.

“For by strength no man shall prevail.

¹⁰ The adversaries of the LORD shall be ^ubroken in pieces;
^vFrom heaven He will thunder against them.
^wThe LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

^x“He will give ^ystrength to devout king,
And ^zexalt the ³horn of His anointed.” ⁴

- b. There is also the song of Moses & Miriam after the crossing of the Red Sea
- c. One commentator said that Mary must have had a copy of the Old Testament in her had when she uttered these things.
 - (1) It just gives us an idea of the grasp of the Scriptures that Mary had.
 - (2) She must have been a very devout woman.
- 2. Mary recognized that people might have expected the daughter of Caiaphas the High Priest to be the one.
- 3. Or at least the leader of one of the great synagogues.
- 4. Or maybe the daughter of a scribe or one of the Sanhedrin.
- 5. But she knew that that it was grace for she did not deserve such honor.
- B. For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.
 - 1. Just because other faith exalt Mary almost to the place of God and some even want her declared co-redeemer does not mean that we do not think she was blessed.
 - 2. She was highly favored, that is God had grace upon her, and grace is not deserved or else it is not grace.
 - 3. She was blessed, for the greatest joy of a young maiden would be that she would give birth to the Messiah.
 - 4. They longed for Him, to redeem His people Israel.
- C. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name.
 - 1. She picks out two of God’s great attributes.
 - a. Mighty.
 - (1) God is almighty, there is nothing that He cannot do.
 - (2) That is how He can work using the weak and lowly, because it is His power that overcomes their weaknesses.
 - b. He is holy.

- (1) This is God's primary attribute.
- (2) Throughout the Old & New Testament His holiness is seen.
- (3) Get a topical Bible and look up God's holiness and you will find pages and pages of references.
- (4) This is one of the things that troubles me about Christianity today, that is that we have minimized His holiness.
- (5) That affects how we see sin and the relationship of sin and God.

III. His blessings on His People

A. And His mercy is on those who fear Him

1. Mercy to those who fear Him.
 - a. It is not to be terrified by Him but to reverence Him
2. From generation to generation.

B. He has shown strength with His arm;

1. He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
2. He has put down the mighty from their thrones,
3. And exalted the lowly.
4. He has filled the hungry with good things,
5. And the rich He has sent away empty.
6. He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of His mercy,
 - a. As He spoke to our fathers,
 - b. To Abraham and to his seed forever."

^c Ps. 75:10; 89:17, 24; 92:10; 112:9

¹ Strength

² Lit. *My mouth is enlarged*

^d Ps. 9:14; 13:5; 35:9; Is. 12:2, 3

^e Ex. 15:11; Ps. 86:8; Rev. 15:4

^f Deut. 4:35

^g Deut. 32:4, 30, 31; 2 Sam. 22:32; Ps. 18:2

^h Ps. 94:4

ⁱ 1 Sam. 16:7

^j Ps. 37:15; 46:9

^k Ps. 113:9

^l Is. 54:1; Jer. 15:9

^m Deut. 32:39; 2 Kin. 5:7; Job 5:18; [Rev. 1:18]

ⁿ Deut. 8:17, 18; Job 1:21

^o Job 5:11; Ps. 75:7; James 4:10

^p Job 42:10–12; Ps. 75:7; 113:7; Luke 1:52

^q Job 36:7; Ps. 113:8

^r Job 38:4–6; Ps. 75:3; 104:5

^s Ps. 37:23, 24; 91:11, 12; 94:18; 121:3; Prov. 3:26; [1 Pet. 1:5]

^t [Rom. 3:19]

^u Ex. 15:6; Ps. 2:9

^v 1 Sam. 7:10; 2 Sam. 22:14, 15; Ps. 18:13, 14

^w Ps. 96:13; 98:9; [Matt. 25:31, 32]

^x [Matt. 28:18]

^y Ps. 21:1, 7

^z Ps. 89:24

³ Strength

⁴ The New King James Version. Nashville : Thomas Nelson, 1982, S. 1 Sa 2:1-10