

# *The Magnificat*

△ Luke 1:46-55

## Praising God

Have you had an praise worthy experience before?

Where you could not stop praising God

Something might have happened

and you just realised here was God at work

And as a result you felt you wanted to praise God

I do not often have this

But perhaps when walking and seeing a magnificent mountain view or sea view

I want to sing to God

I often sing: O Lord my God! When I in awesome wonder, consider all the works thy hand has made...

It just wells up

And here we see Mary do the same

Even though she may not have reason to

Mary

## The story of Mary and how Jesus was conceived is familiar

### An angel visited her

Told her she would become pregnant

Who would be the Son of the Most High!

### But Mary was already engaged!

And sex before marriage was a scandal

Especially when it would result in a pregnancy

### To hear God told Mary she would be pregnant

Not by Joseph her fiancé

But by God!

### When Joseph found out he would consider quietly divorcing her

But another angel told him the background and that he should not do that.

### But still the stigma that would have been on Mary and on Joseph

## Mary meets Elizabeth

### Is this the reason that she went to visit her cousin?

To get away from it all

And live in relative anonymity

### Or to be able to see what the angel said was true

and share experiences with another woman

woman

who also has a miraculous pregnancy

And Elizabeth and the foetus  
recognise that Mary is pregnant

And not only that

Also that Mary is pregnant with the Lord

The mother of my Lord

And through this all the Holy  
Spirit is at work

v35: The Holy Spirit will come  
upon you, and the power of the  
Most High will overshadow you:  
therefore the the child to be born  
will be holy; he will be called the  
Son of God

v41: .. And Elizabeth was filled  
with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed:

Blessed are you among women and  
blessed is the fruit of your womb....

The Holy Spirit is the director of all  
these events

And so Mary burst out in song

Also under the guidance of the Holy  
Spirit

Although it does not say that, we can  
imply that

Mary's Song

Mary's song starts about how she has been blessed by God

But then moves on quickly to how God has blessed the world and Israel

The song has similarities to Hannah's song but there is a difference in tone

Hannah's song is a shout of triumph in the face of her enemies

Mary's a humble contemplation of the mercies of God

Hannah looks at how God has redeemed her, now at last she is pregnant

Mary's looking forward to what her pregnancy means not only to her, but also the wider world

v46-48

46 And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

Mary rejoices and praises God

He has chosen her, not a prince or a prince

But just a girl from Nazareth in Galilee

perhaps the equivalent of Middlesbrough

Hardworking people

But not well off

She realises that she will become famous

And yes, still generations call her blessed as the mother of the Messiah

v49

for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name.

Despite the stigma of an extramarital pregnancy

Despite how the world views her

She holds on to her promise made to the angel Gabriel, and therefore to God

"Here I am, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word

How old was Mary?

How old would she have been? 14? 18?

She demonstrates a high maturity for one so young

But she does not grumble or accept her lot

She rejoices and she speaks of God's greatness

Holy is his name

And therefore God is holy!

Regardless of what will happen to me or the baby - it will be because of the Holiness of God

Would anyone of us ever be so accepting of what God asks us to do?

Or are we, like Moses: negotiators?

But Mary was the favoured one

Because she accepted God's charge?

With praise

From here on in Mary's song is about God

And it is unclear what tense it is

In Greek the verbs are in the form of an aorist

This form does not have a distinct time signature

NIV, NRSV have translated it as 'he has looked' in the past

But it can also be translated as 'he looks' or 'he will look'

It depends on the context

Now the following verses clearly speak about what God has done in the past

But here is also a promise and a prophecy for looking what will happen!

Perhaps as often in the Bible it is both

V50-52

50 His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
from generation to generation.

51 He has performed mighty deeds with his  
arm;  
he has scattered those who are proud in  
their inmost thoughts.

52 He has brought down rulers from their  
thrones  
but has lifted up the humble.

### **This is for all people - all who fear him!**

His mercy extends to all - all generations

That is you and me

### **He has / will perform might deeds**

The miracles of Jesus

His resurrection and ascension

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit

The spread of Christians faith across  
continents

The miracles Jesus through the HS even  
does today

### **He has / will upset those who are relying on themselves for success and salvation**

The tower of Babel

But also it is those who are poor, weak,  
humble in society who tend to more readily  
accept Jesus

He heals those who believe in him

He has brought / will bring rulers down  
and lift up the humble

What do we know about all the Herods  
(Jewish rulers), Roman emperors, vs Mary,  
vs the fishermen in Galilee who have  
become the main leaders of the early  
church?

Finally in v 54-55 Mary mentions  
her own nation: Israel

.

He has helped / will help his servant Israel,  
remembering to be merciful  
<sup>55</sup> to Abraham and his descendants forever,  
just as he promised our ancestors.”

With the coming of the Messiah, God  
remembers Israel and the promise he  
already gave to Abraham

Extending it even further to what Mary  
thought - all the nations of the world

Mary recognises that through her and  
her baby, God will fulfill the promise

Did she realise how?

A sword will pierce her soul to

^ Luke 2:35b

Simeon's blessing to Mary when she  
presented Jesus in the temple nearly a year  
later

Mary was favoured

She sang of this

What do we think that God  
favours someone, or even us?

"Many assume that those who God  
favours will enjoy the things we equate  
with a good life: social standing, wealth  
and good health

Yet Mary, God's favoured one, was  
blessed with having a child out of  
wedlock, who would later be executed  
as a criminal

Acceptability, prosperity, and comfort  
have never been the essence of God's  
blessing"

<sup>^</sup> Commentary on Luke by Alan Culpepper, New  
Interpreter's Bible Volume 9, (1995), page 52

And still Mary accepts this fate,  
life and blessings, by praising God

Can we do the same?

Amen