

A Magnificent Song

Luke 1:46-55

~~Dec 3 - An Unbelievable Message (Luke 1:26-38)~~

Dec 10 - A Magnificent Song (Luke 1:39-56)

Dec 17 - An Extraordinary Birth (Luke 2:1-7)

Dec 24 - An Unexpected Welcome (Luke 2:8-21)

What is the deal with people starting their Christmas music in September? It's just not right!

I love music! It helps me in so many ways. Did you know that music is a gift from God to implant truth in our hearts? It is a glorious vehicle that will take the truth and carry it through a penetrating melody so that we may find solace and mercy when we navigate through the challenges of this life. It is a beautiful gift from our Father in heaven.

James Hodges - Our God is a God of music. He does not sit in his high and noble tower, eternally contemplating his own existence, as some philosophers have hypothesized. He is, rather, always engaged in the drama of his own glory, bursting into the human world with shards of joy that inspire souls to sing out in praise and joy. Many Christians have benefited from these inspired hymns down through the ages, and one of the most famous is the Magnificat, the song that came from the lips of the Virgin Mary to her cousin. <https://anglicancompass.com/my-spirit-rejoices-a-commentary-on-the-magnificat/>

Unfortunately, much music is empty and trite. Even Christmas music has resorted to carols about Santa or Rudolf instead of the Savior of the World. We all too often settle for intellectual junk food instead of the substantial, powerful BREAD of LIFE!

But today, we get to look at a Magnificent song...

Today, we look at and appreciate this beautiful song that Mary seems to have composed in an impromptu fashion. Whether that was the case or not, I do not know. But I do know that this passage of Scriptures helps swell one's soul to the point of praise.

But first, I think it is important for us to understand the context for this song. Let's cover the verses that lead up to this beautiful song to set the stage, as it were.

Remember from last week, this is just after Mary's encounter with the Angel Gabriel. And if you pay attention to the text, you'll notice there is something in what the Angel says that compels her to go to her cousin.

Luke 1:39-45 (ESV)

³⁹ *In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,*

Mary goes immediately to her relative's side. She had been told of Elizabeth's condition (1:36) and now travels to see God's sign. Her journey is made with haste (μετὰ σπουδῆς, meta spoudēs) into the Judean hill country, to a city south of Jerusalem. The journey, covering 80–100 miles, would take three or four days¹

Luke 1:36 (ESV)

³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

God led her to go (vs. 36) and so she went.

⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.

Zechariah, a priest of the Lord (Luke 1:8-9). Mary is a cousin to Elizabeth on her mother's side.

⁴¹ And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,

There is definitely something supernatural going on here. By the very voice of Mary, John, the baby inside Elizabeth did a flip in her womb! Being six months along, this was noticeable to Elizabeth. Just a note here. The language is interesting regarding the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Luke says that Elizabeth was "filled with" the Holy Spirit. This is a change from the Old Testament understanding. In the Old Testament we see the Holy Spirit "coming upon" people for special tasks, but now we see the Spirit filling people for spiritual empowerment. As New Testament believers we are to be consistently filled with the Holy Spirit.

⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"

And being full of the Holy Spirit, she exclaimed these words. And then she asks a penetrating question...

⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

We can conclude something powerful here. Elizabeth had a personal relationship with God. The emphasis is on the phrase, "my Lord." This, coupled with the fact that she was filled with the Spirit, is clear evidence that Elizabeth was a born-again believer.

¹ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke: 1:1–9:50*, vol. 1, Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 1994), 133–134.

⁴⁵ *And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."*

And Elizabeth commends Mary's faith – that she believed what the Angel Gabriel said regarding her role in the incarnational birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Transition to the Magnificat –

What is so interesting to me is Mary's response to her cousin's words of praise. Do you know what her response is? Words of praise or what has become known as the Magnificat...

*ESVSB - Mary's song of praise in these verses traditionally has been called the "Magnificat," a title derived from the opening word (magnificat, **magnifies**) in the Latin Vulgate translation. The Magnificat is the first of three hymns in Luke 1–2, the other two being the "Benedictus" (1:68–79) and the "Nunc Dimittis" (2:29–32).²*

So, what can we learn from this beautiful, theologically rich song from such a young girl?

Main Idea - Mary's Magnificent Song Honors God Above All Else!

I must say that I am impressed with the mature faith of this 14-16-year-old girl. This young lady has significant spiritual understanding.

Some would argue that Mary is a sinless co-redeemer with Christ. There is NO evidence in the bible for such a claim. In fact, her song, which we will review this morning, demonstrates just the opposite. In other words, her "**magnificent song**" shows her need for a redeemer and savior. The same need you and I have.

I want you to see how this Song or Magnificat exalts not Mary but her God and Savior.

Mary's Magnificent Song...

1. Magnifies God as Savior
2. Celebrates God as Unique
3. Remembers God as Promise Keeper

1. Mary's Magnificent Song Magnifies God as Savior (vs. 46-48)

Mary's God is her personal Lord and Savior

Luke 1:46–47 ESV

⁴⁶ *And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,*

² Crossway Bibles, *The ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2008), 1945.

Isn't it interesting that Mary needed a savior? She was not sinless. She was not perfect! She needed redemption and salvation from her sin condition. She admits this in the text by calling God, not her co-redeemer, but her Savior.

By the way, if Mary needed a savior and redeemer, so do you! Is her Son your personal Lord and Savior?

Mary's God exalts the humble

Luke 1:48 ESV

⁴⁸ for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

Mary understood her position before God. She had a healthy view of herself. The NLT says "*lowly servant girl.*" And this girl would be blessed throughout all generations because as Mark Lowry said so well as he was introducing his song, "Mary Did You Know" to a crowded concert hall, "*Mary was the first one to carry the Gospel.*" Notice she says she will be blessed, not venerated. Mary was humble.

Every Christian would be wise to follow the example of her spirit and, as Paul says in Philippians 2, "*not to think more highly of themselves than they ought.*"

Matthew 23:12 ESV

¹² Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

James 4:6 ESV

⁶ But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

James 4:10 ESV

¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Mary carried within her womb, her personal Lord and Savior. She, the mother of the God/man recognized she needed a savior.

Do you?

Review - Mary's Song Honors God Above All Else!

- Mary's Song Magnifies God as Savior...

2. Mary's Magnificent Song Celebrates God as Unique (vs. 49-53)

Mary clearly articulates five ways in which her God is unique...

Mary's God is Mighty in her life (vs. 49a)

Luke 1:49 ESV

⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me...

It is good to remember that our God is mighty. How does He show His might?

1. **Creation of the World (Genesis 1-2):** The account of creation in Genesis is perhaps the most fundamental demonstration of God's might. It describes how God spoke the universe into existence, creating light, the earth, the sea, the sky, plants, animals, and humans over six days. This act showcases His omnipotence and sovereignty over all things.
2. **The Exodus and Parting of the Red Sea (Exodus 14):** This is a pivotal moment in the Old Testament. The Israelites, led by Moses, are fleeing from Egypt where they were enslaved. When they reach the Red Sea, God parts the waters, allowing them to cross on dry ground. This miraculous event not only demonstrates God's power over nature but also His commitment to deliverance and covenant with His people.
3. **Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20):** In the New Testament, the resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to the Christian faith and is a profound demonstration of God's power. It not only validates Jesus' divinity but also embodies the victory over sin and death, offering believers the hope of eternal life.

What has your mighty God done for you?

Mary's God is Holy in His name (vs. 49b)

Luke 1:49 ESV

⁴⁹ *...and holy is his name.*

God's holiness is a profound reality that all believers need to understand. His holiness means He is set apart and unique from His creation because He is sinless, righteous, and perfect!

Psalm 99:3 ESV

³ *Let them praise your great and awesome name! Holy is he!*

This is a distinguishing factor with our God. There is no guile or corruption found in his mouth. Sin, which is the opposite of holiness, makes God want to wretch.

Consider making cookies and one of the eggs you use is so rotten that is green and black from decay. But you use it anyway. I mean, there are all kinds of other ingredients, so it should be fine, right? Wrong! Those cookies would be nasty! That rotten egg would corrupt the whole batch of ingredients to the point where all of the ingredients would be rotten as well.

Friends, this is you and me. Sin has infiltrated us, and now we are corrupt to the core. We are not holy, and there is nothing we can do about it. God on the other hand is holy, pure and righteous. And because of this, He cannot have a relationship with us. Unless He solves the problem. And this is why Mary is carrying Jesus – so that he would save us.

Matthew 1:21 (ESV)

²¹ *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."*

Do you, like Mary, recognize that God is holy? More importantly, does your life reflect the holiness of God?

Mary's God is Merciful to all that fear him (vs. 50)

Luke 1:50 ESV

⁵⁰ And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.

There are two ways to understand Mercy. One is withholding of just punishment. The next is the relief of suffering. Look at what Jesus says to the religious elite!

Matthew 9:10–13 (ESV)

¹⁰ And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹² But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Mary demonstrated awe and reverence for her God. And God's promise was mercy.

Proverbs 1:7 ESV

⁷ The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

You can take a cue from this godly girl by asking yourself, "Do I have a proper fear and reverence of God. If you do, you will receive a special measure of His Mercy.

Mary's God is Strong Over All (vs.51-52)

Luke 1:51–52 ESV

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; ⁵² he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

The theological term for this is Omnipotent, all-powerful. Mary recognized that God is powerful to accomplish whatever He desires.

Psalms 89:10 ESV

¹⁰ You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with your mighty arm.

Mary was facing an unprecedented life of challenge. And yet her unwavering trust was in a God who was strong over all.

Remember Jesus' wise words?

Matthew 10:28 (ESV)

28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

Do you trust the all-powerful one even when life doesn't make sense? Mary did and so can you!

1. Mary's God is Mighty in her life (vs. 49a)
2. Mary's God is Holy in His name (vs. 49b)
3. Mary's God is Merciful to all that fear him (vs. 50)
4. Mary's God is Strong Over All (vs.51-52)

Mary's God is Provider of all things (vs. 53)

Luke 1:53 ESV

53 he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

Mary can trust her God and Savior because He has and will continue to provide all things for her!

Psalm 107:9 ESV

9 For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

The God of the Bible is unique. There is none quite like Him. And for this, I am eternally grateful. Because no one else has the capacity or capability to rescue us from our eternal condemnation other than this God. The MIGHT, HOLY, STRONG, PROVIDER GOD is Mary's UNIQUE God!

Is He your God as well? Do you know how to become part of God's family?

Review - Mary's Song Honors God Above All Else!

- Mary's Song Magnifies God as Savior...
- Mary's Song Celebrates God as Unique

3. Mary's Magnificent Song Remembers God as Promise Keeper (vs. 54-55)

Has someone ever broken a promise they made to you? It's painful and frustrating because you feel as if you can never trust that person again.

The truth is, I've broken promises I've made to people and promises I've made to God. So I've been on both sides of this one.

But do you know who never breaks a promise? God. And this is a beautiful and comforting truth for all of us who are authentic believers in Christ here this morning.

These verses give two ways in which God demonstrates that He is a promise-keeping God

Mary's God has cared for his people throughout history (vs. 54)

Luke 1:54 ESV

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

Remember, Mary was a committed Jew who loved God and was looking for Messiah. She understood how God had cared for her people through the ages. For example...

Micah 7:20 ESV

²⁰ You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

Psalms 98:3 ESV

³ He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness to the house of Israel. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

If you are in Christ, you are his people too! Both the Old Testament and New Testament make this promise. (Deut 31:8; Hebrews 13:5-6).

Deuteronomy 31:8 (ESV)

⁸ It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

Mary's God will care for his people forever! (vs. 55)

Luke 1:55 ESV

⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."

Do you understand Mary's point? As stiff-necked as God's people were, His promise to Abraham would stand. They would be His people forever!

Genesis 17:9 ESV

⁹ And God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations.

Galatians 3:16 ESV

¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary 1:46–55

Through the Child that she was to bear, God was being merciful to Abraham and his descendants. Mary was aware that the birth of her Child was a fulfillment of the covenant promises to Abraham and his people.

Mary's God keeps every promise He has ever made. The most amazing promise God made over and over throughout biblical history is that He will save His people from their sins. He made this promise to the Old Testament fathers as well as the authors of the New Testament as well.

Matthew 1:21 ESV

²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

Christmas is the beginning stage of fulfilling that promise...

Christmas time means a lot of different things to people these days. But, honestly, **Christmas can mean only one thing** - The celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior!

Review - Mary's Song Honors God Above All Else!

- Mary's Song Magnifies God as Savior...
- Mary's Song Celebrates God as Unique
- Mary's Song Remembers God as Promise Keeper

Conclusion

There are a lot of really wonderful Christmas songs that people have produced over the years, but I think my new favorite is this very old song written by the Mother of Jesus. I hope it's your new favorite as well!

Why? Because...

Mary's Magnificent Song Honors God Above All Else!

Connection Group Reflection Questions

1. In what ways can you proclaim God as savior?
2. How do you see God as unique? How could you use this in your evangelism? In your discipleship?
3. God keeps His promises. How does this comfort you when you are facing significant trials?
4. Who are you praying for daily?
5. Who are you engaging with weekly?
6. Who are you sharing the gospel with monthly?