

# Magnificat

**Luke 1:39** In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,  
<sup>40</sup> and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.  
<sup>41</sup> And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,  
<sup>42</sup> and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!  
<sup>43</sup> And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?  
<sup>44</sup> For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.  
<sup>45</sup> And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.  
<sup>46</sup> And Mary said, "*My soul magnifies the Lord,*  
<sup>47</sup> *and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,*  
<sup>48</sup> *for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;*  
<sup>49</sup> *for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.*  
<sup>50</sup> *And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation.*  
<sup>51</sup> *He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;*  
<sup>52</sup> *he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;*  
<sup>53</sup> *he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.*  
<sup>54</sup> *He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,*  
<sup>55</sup> *as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever."*  
<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

(Luke 1:46-56)

# The Magnificat: Overture

**Overtures, arias, and muses.** Each has a unique place in the history of symphony, theater (later movie), opera, and poetry. **An overture** appears in a musical or a symphony as **the opening piece of music that begins the play or opus** and introduces the audience to key themes that run throughout.<sup>1</sup> Among the more famous are the *William Tell Overture* (1829) by Rossini made famous as the theme music for the old *Lone Ranger* radio and television shows (Hi Yo, Silver! Away!), the *1812 Overture* (1880) by **Tchaikovsky**, made popular here as one of the staples of fireworks displays on July 4<sup>th</sup> (even though it was originally written to commemorate Russia's defense against the invading Napoleon, and I can't help but let you know it is also basically the melody to Dan Fogelberg's top ten hit "Same Old Lang Syne"), and the *Phantom of the Opera* overture by Andrew Lloyd Webber? OK, how about a fourth? Rush's 2112 "Overture!"

An **aria** is a **self-contained piece** for a single voice usually found in operas. Perhaps the most famous aria is Giacomo

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<sup>1</sup> This is the opening thought in **Jordan M. Covarelli**, "The Magnificat as the Overture of Luke's Gospel: Luke's Emphasis on Women, the Oppressed, and the Marginalized in God's Plan of Salvation," (2020), [https://www.academia.edu/44506363/The\\_Magnificat\\_as\\_the\\_Overture\\_of\\_Lukes\\_Gospel\\_Lukes\\_Emphasis\\_on\\_Women\\_the\\_Oppressed\\_and\\_the\\_Marginalized\\_in\\_Gods\\_Plan\\_of\\_Salvation](https://www.academia.edu/44506363/The_Magnificat_as_the_Overture_of_Lukes_Gospel_Lukes_Emphasis_on_Women_the_Oppressed_and_the_Marginalized_in_Gods_Plan_of_Salvation).

Puccini's "Nessun Dorma," sung in the final act of his opera *Turandot*. The aria is sung by Prince Calaf who swears he will do what no other man could, by melting the heart of Turandot, the gorgeous but ice-cold Princess, who refuses to marry anyone who cannot answer her three Sphinx-like riddles. Made popular by Luciano Pavarotti after his performance for the 1990 FIFA World Cup, it has become a staple in Hollywood movies such as *The Sum of All Fears* (2002), where in the penultimate scene, as the Presidents of the United and Russia are signing an agreement to reduce nuclear weapons, all the bad guys in the movie who attempted to start WWII are assassinated, one by one, to the operatic aria.

**Muses** (from the Proto-Indo-European *men-*, meaning "put in mind") were the inspirational goddesses of literature, science, and the arts who were thought to be the sources of knowledge embodied in the poetry, lyrical songs, and myths of ancient Greece. There are twelve of them in the stories. **One of my favorite bands** named themselves Muse after they heard the word being used in conjunction with someone saying that everyone in their small town was joining bands because a muse was hovering over their town. When you listen to their music, it often does seem like it comes from another world.

Muses were frequently invoked at the beginning of the epic poems, such as Virgil's *Aeneid* (29-19 BC). As with an overture, in such openings, part of the purpose was to foreshadow to the reader the coming themes, but in such a way as it shows their otherworldly origin by invoking the muse. The *Aeneid* opens, "Of arms and the man [Aeneid] I sing, who first made way ... from the Trojan shore to Italy .. and much in war he suffered, seeking at the last to found the city ... when arose the Latin race ... and imperial Rome. O Muse, the causes tell!" (Virgil, *Aeneid*, 1-11). Of course, such poems are themselves songs. The epics were all sung in days long ago, and as such they evoked emotion and reverence if not a kind of worship, especially as their stories concerned the founding myths of the nations and their gods.

Into this context, we know from Colossians that Luke was a highly educated doctor (Col 4:14). This same letter opens with the famous "Christ Hymn" (1:15-20), a song that evokes deep and powerful emotions rooted in OT theology. The hymn serves not just as a prelude, but as a "premise ... reason and resource for the rest of the letter."<sup>2</sup> One could say it is the Christian equivalent of evoking the muse.

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<sup>2</sup> Glenn Packiam, "Singing Toward Virtue: The Christ Hymn and Moral Formation in Colossians," Trinity Theology Conference, Trinity College Queensland (August 1, 2019), 3:18-3:35. Cited in Covarelli, 4.

That Luke was with Paul and sent his greetings to the Colossians in this verse shows that Luke almost certainly knew about this letter and its content when it was written.

Tradition also tells us that **Luke was an artist**. Though the earliest reliable text to make such a claim comes from the eighth century (**Andrew of Crete**, 660-740),<sup>3</sup> and the traditions of him painting nativity scenes are probably fabrication, it is without question that Luke was **a literary genius**, as his massive project Luke-Acts demonstrates. Today, we want to look at just one aspect of this genius through the so-called *Magnificat* in the **Canticles of Luke's Infancy Narrative**, which serves as a kind of literary equivalent of **overtures, arias**, and evoking the **muses** in other forms of art. And that means, you really need to pay attention to what they are saying.

## Four Canticles of Luke's Infancy Gospel and *The Magnificat*

After introducing us to the major actors at the beginning of Jesus' story, and the annunciations of John the Baptist and

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<sup>3</sup> **Rebecca Raynor**, "The Shaping of an Icon: St Luke, the Artist," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 39.2 (2015), 161. But see **Heidi J. Hornik** and Mikeal C. Parsons, *Illuminating Luke: The Infancy Narrative in Italian Renaissance Painting* (New York: Trinity Press International, 2003), 14-23.

Jesus by the angel Gabriel, Luke presents us with the first of **four canticles** in the first two chapters of his Gospel. **A canticle is a hymn, psalm, or other Christian song of praise with lyrics taken from biblical and sacred texts.** So, four songs in the first two chapters. This is highly unusual. What is he doing?

Luke's four canticles are fascinating responses of four individuals or groups to the good news of Jesus. They are *Mary's Song* (**Luke 1:46-55**), *Zechariah's song* (**67-79**), *the Angel's Song* (**2:13-14**), and *Simeon's song* (**29-32**). They were written by the very people Luke tells us sang them or heard them.<sup>4</sup>

These four songs have had an almost unbroken liturgical importance going back far into church history. Each has been given a name based on the first word of each song in the Latin translation. Mary's song is called the *Magnificat*, which means "magnify" or "exalt" ("**My soul magnifies the Lord;**" **1:46**). Zechariah's song is called the *Benedictus*, which means

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<sup>4</sup> "The absence, then, of Christian ideas in the Magnificat and Benedictus, the absence of reference to concrete facts in the life of Jesus, points to a time when the Messianic hope was still couched in the terms of Old Testament prophecy. On the other hand, the hymns are not simply Jewish hymns, composed in some unknown situation. If they were, they could not have found a place in Lk 1-2. They must, therefore, really have been produced by the persons to whom they are attributed in the narrative—and produced at a time when Old Testament prophecy had not yet been explained by its fulfilment. The fulfilment is at the door—it is no longer a thing of the dim future—but the fashion of it is still unknown. The promised King has arrived at last; but the manner of His reign must still be conjectured from the dim indications of prophecy. The Messiah is there; but He is still unknown. The hymns belong just where the Evangelist has placed them." **J. Gresham Machen**, "The Hymns of the First Chapter of Luke," *The Princeton Theological Review* X.1-4 (1912): 36.

“blessed” (“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel;” 1:68) The angel’s song is called the *Gloria*, which means “glory” (“Glory to God in the Highest;” 2:14). Simeon’s song is called the *Nunc Dimittis*, meaning “departure” or “release” (“Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace;” 2:29). Together, they form the outlines of a liturgy, with an opening praise, contemplation, and benediction.<sup>5</sup> As any reading or singing of the churches’ long cherished music of the birth of the Savior demonstrates, Luke is opening his Gospel with profound worship of the Savior who has come in human flesh.

All four to one degree or another serve the same common functions, but in slightly different ways, like for example, the four independent but progressing movements of Beethoven’s Fifth which powerfully begin the symphony on those universally known four notes (G G G e<sup>b</sup>), and then create, develop, wander, and meander through reoccurring themes, only to make their way to a climactic almost cinematic ending that blows you away.

The Magnificat, which is the first and which we are looking at today, is especially like an overture, introducing us to key themes that will run throughout the rest of the story. All

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<sup>5</sup> Since at least the fourth century, the Magnificat is sung at Vespers (evening service), Lauds (early morning), Compline (night). Of course, all four have had their place during the Christmas season.

four are self-contained like an aria where, “artistic conventions of opera allow the composer to stop the action at any point so that, through a poetic and musical development exceeding the possibilities of ordinary life, a deeper awareness of what is happening may be achieved.”<sup>6</sup> In reading each song, Luke causes us to pause and wonder at what has happened. All four, especially the Magnificat, are like the Christian counterpart to evoking the muse found at the beginning of the epic, except that rather than their source being in a goddess, it is in the Holy Spirit who draws our minds to the worship of God in Christ.<sup>7</sup> In this, they stir in us deep emotions of worship to God.

There are actually many songs like these four canticles found throughout the Scripture. Their authors include Moses, Hannah, Isaiah, Jonah, Habakkuk, Daniel, and the four

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<sup>6</sup> R. C. Tannehill, “The Magnificat as Poem,” *JBL* 93.2 (1974): 265.

<sup>7</sup> “[The efficient cause of biblical] is supreme when it is expressed as The Spirit of the Lord ...[it] is most humble in this which says: Upon me, that is upon Blessed Luke ... Reference is made to the intermediate efficient cause when it is said: Because the Lord has anointed me. For anointing by grace disposes the soul to receive the teachings of truth from the Supreme Teacher ... For the Holy Spirit taught the Evangelist through grace, and, having been instructed, he taught the Church by writing the evangelical doctrine. - And thus in this work the cause is threefold: supreme, which is indeed the person of the Holy Spirit; most humble is the Evangelist himself; intermediate is the grace of the Holy Spirit. And all three causes are to be presupposed when we refer to Blessed Luke as the author.” Bonaventure (1221-1274), *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke* (cited in Kozitza, 6.).



characters in Luke's Gospel.<sup>8</sup> This is of some importance, because Luke's four **draw heavily from several of these other OT canticles or odes**, though also from **the Psalms**. It shouldn't surprise you that they bear great similarities to the Hebrew psalms of old, much more than they do anything from the Greek world.

Mary's song may be **outlined in three stanzas** or movements.

- I. Praise for God's work for Mary (1:46-49)
- II. Praise for God's acts to all (1:50-53)
- III. Praise for God's acts for his people Israel (1:54-55).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> An appendix after the Psalms in Rahlfs's *Septuagint*, Orthodox Bibles have collected 14 Odes (different from the Odes of Solomon) as part of their canon:

Ode.	Title.	Source.
1.	Song of Moses 1.	Exodus 15.1-19.
2.	Song of Moses 2.	Deuteronomy 32.1-43.
3.	Prayer of Hannah.	LXX 1 Kingdoms 2.1-10.
4.	Prayer of Habakkuk.	Habakkuk 3.2-19.
5.	Prayer of Isaiah.	Isaiah 26.9-20.
6.	Prayer of Jonah.	Jonah 2.3-10.
7.	Prayer of Azariah.	LXX Daniel 3.26-45.
8.	Song of the three.	LXX Daniel 3.52-88.
9.	Prayers of Mary ( <i>magnificat</i> ) and Zacharias ( <i>benedictus</i> ).	Luke 1.46-55, 68-79.
10.	Song of Isaiah.	Isaiah 5.1-9.
11.	Prayer of Hezekiah.	Isaiah 38.10-20.
12.	Prayer of Manasseh.	refer to 2 Chronicles 33.10-
13.	Prayer of Simeon ( <i>nunc dimittis</i> )	Luke 2.29-32.
14.	Hymn of praise.	None.

<sup>9</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke Volume 1: 1:1-9:50* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 1994), 146.

Or, it can be read chiastically in **two parallel sections** which **each center** on God's exalting the lowly:<sup>10</sup>

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|-----|---|-----------------------|
| A.  | It magnifies my soul the Lord (46)  | PRAISE                |
| B.  | And it rejoices my spirit in God my Savior (47)   | SALVATION             |
|     | <b>C. Because he looked upon the low estate of his handmaiden (48a)</b>                                     | <b>LOWLY-EXALTED</b>  |
|     | <b>C'. For behold from now on all generations will bless me (48b)</b>                                       | <b>LOWLY-EXALTED</b>  |
| B'. | Because he made for me great things the Almighty (49a)  | SALVATION             |
| A'. | And holy is his name. (49b)   | PRAISE                |
| A.  | And his mercy is from generation to generation to those who fear him (50)                                   | MERCY TO THE FAITHFUL |
| B.  | He made mighty deeds with his arm (51a)<br>He scattered the arrogant in the thoughts of their hearts. (51b) | SALVATION             |
|     | <b>C. He put down the mighty from thrones (52a)<br/>and exalted those of low estate (52b)</b>               | <b>LOWLY-EXALTED</b>  |
|     | <b>C'. He filled the hungry with good things (53a)<br/>And the rich he sent away empty (53b)</b>            | <b>LOWLY-EXALTED</b>  |
| B'. | He aided Israel his servant (54a)   | SALVATION             |
| A'. | To remember mercy as he spoke to our fathers (53b-54a)<br>To Abraham and to his seed forever. (54b)         | MERCY TO THE FAITHFUL |

<sup>10</sup> **Kenneth E. Bailey**, "The Song of Mary: Vision of a New Exodus (Luke 1:46-55)," *Theological Review* 2.1 (1979): 29-35.  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59cf98867131a5ddda2bfca0/t/5ee12966e82f820d1aa393a5/1591814503221/The+Song+of+Mary+-+Vision+of+a+New+Exodus.pdf>. See also the different single structure, centering on vv. 49-50. "[5] **Mary's song of praise**: Luke 1:46-56," [http://www.bible.literarystructure.info/bible/42\\_Luke\\_pericope\\_e.html](http://www.bible.literarystructure.info/bible/42_Luke_pericope_e.html).

# *The Magnificat*

<i>Praise</i>	A. It magnifies my soul the Lord (46)	PRAISE
	A'. And holy is his name. (49b)	PRAISE

As we make our way into Mary's song, let us **remember how we got here**. Mary has just encountered the Angel Gabriel who came to her with a stunning message that she, a **virgin** of no high standing, would bear a son by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit. Her son would in fact become king, have an eternal kingdom, and reign forever. She was **given a sign of this**—the impossible pregnancy of her relative Elizabeth in her old age. Having not known about this miracle, yet eagerly seeking to see its fulfillment, Mary immediately scurries down to visit her relatives.

The moment she enters the house and greets Elizabeth, the **baby in her womb**—filled with the Holy Spirit, **leaped for joy!** The incredible sign of this impossible pregnancy is thus compounded by the babies **miraculous knowledge** that it was in the presence of the divine—not Mary of course, but the baby in her own womb. As if from partial contemplation of the meaning of this, Elizabeth, herself suddenly filled with the Holy Spirit, exclaimed in a loud cry those famous words, **“Blessed are you among woman, and blessed is the**

fruit of your womb ... blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.” She couldn’t help herself. The words just bubbled out of her. Elizabeth’s pronouncement stands as a third sign to Mary that indeed, God has visited her too, and thus the virgin is now with child. Can it truly be?

It is into this context that we read the opening words of her song which, like John in the womb, leap off the page, causing our hearts to soar, “And Mary said, ‘My soul magnifies the Lord,’” or as it famously says in the Latin Vulgate, *Magnificat anima mea Dominum* (Luke 1:46). Hence, *The Magnificat*. She continues, “And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (47). The former words loudly echo those of the Psalmist, “I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall be continually in my mouth” (Ps 34:1 LXX),<sup>11</sup> while the latter are nearly identical to the opening of Hannah’s Canticle, “And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior” (1Sam 2:1), and also remind us of Habakkuk’s, “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation” (Hab 3:18). The Venerable Bede (673-735) says of this, “Only that soul for whom the Lord in His love does great things can proclaim his greatness with fitting praise and encourage those

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<sup>11</sup> Curiously, the Latin begins, *Benedicam Dominum*... reminding us of the Benedictum.

who share her desire and purpose, saying: *Join with me in proclaiming the greatness of the Lord; let us extol His name together*" (Bede, *A Commentary on Luke*).

This is **pure praise**, a most fitting way to begin such a song. Mary has plunged into the depths of worship for what she has now had confirmed in the signs. **Her faith** leads her to nothing more and nothing less than worshiping her God. As the song begins, so also its first half ends, with a concluding line of praise, "... and holy is his name" (49b). But this praise is much more amazing than you can possibly imagine.

It is easy to think that Mary is simply praising **God**, and of course she is. For example, "**Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name**" (Ps 30:4). Or, in a verse we will come back to later from Isaiah, "**For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: 'I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite'**" (Isa 57:15).<sup>12</sup> But she is doing it in an often **misunderstood** way.

The **God** she is praising has already been revealed to her as **Triune**: God the **Father** (the Most High and the Lord God;

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<sup>12</sup> Even here, listen to the parallel in the Targum on Deuteronomy. And again, in the Targum of

Luke 1:32), God the Son (the baby she is to conceive, 31), and God the Holy Spirit (who will overshadow her, 35). Now, she is praising the *holy name*. In many instances in the OT, the Name seems to itself have its own deified identity both separate and yet identical to the LORD. As we saw above in the psalm, often in the same verse, we are commanded to praise “*the LORD*” and then the “*name of the LORD*” (Ps 113:1; 135:1; etc.). Similarly, we give thanks “*to the LORD*,” and also to the “*name of the LORD*” (Ps 122:4). People are to fear “*the LORD*,” but also “*the name of the LORD*” (Isa 59:19). The LORD is great, but then the Name is great (Jer 10:6). The same goes for trusting (Isa 50:10), loving (Isa 56:6), and glorifying (Isa 24:15). Normally we praise, thank, fear, trust, and love *people*. Therefore, the Name of the LORD takes on a kind of identity all its (or rather, his) own in these verses.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> **Going Deeper.** The Targums very often insert the Memra (Word) and the Name of God together. For example, “Behold, the name of the LORD comes from afar, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of fury, and his tongue is like a devouring fire” (Isa 30:27), where the Name is already essentially an entity distinct from God become this, “Behold, the name of the LORD is revealed just as the prophets from of old prophesied concerning it; his indignation is strong and too hard to bear. Before him a curse goes forth upon the wicked, and his Memra is like a devouring fire.” Or consider the “high and holy place” seen in Isaiah 57:15 in light of the Targum on Deuteronomy, “The Word of the Lord sitteth upon His throne high and lifted up, and heareth our prayer what time we pray before Him and make our petitions” (Deut 4:7 PJE) or Isaiah 6:1, which is quoted by John as referring to Christ (John 12:48). “In the year that King Uzziah was struck with it, the prophet said, I saw the glory of the LORD resting upon a throne, high and lifted up in the heavens of the height; and the temple was filled by the brilliance of his glory” (see John 12:41). One dictionary sums this up saying, “God’s name has become virtually an independent entity, separate from God, i.e. a hypostasis.” H. B. Huffmon, “Name,” ed.

Think about **Isaiah 47:4**, “*Our Redeemer-- the LORD of hosts is his name-- is the Holy One of Israel.*” This verse has everything in it that Mary has just exclaimed. Curiously, “Redeemer” will be used of the Father in Zechariah’s song (**1:68**), and yet at the end of Luke and throughout the NT, the Redeemer is *Jesus* (**24:21; Acts 7:35; Gal 3:13**; etc.). Similarly, we have “the LORD of Hosts.” This is the name of the Angel of the LORD, the Captain of the Armies of Heaven (**Josh 5:15**). Christ in the OT. As Luther put it, “**Lord Sabaoth his Name.**”

Listen to how the Targum slightly changes (see the italics) one of the central texts of **the Angel of the LORD** in light of Mary’s praise. “**Behold, I send an angel of *mercy* before you to guard you in the land, to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Pay attention before him and listen to (his) voice, and do not rebel against *his words, for my holy name is invoked upon him, for he will not forgive or pardon your sins, for my holy name is invoked upon him.* But if you listen to the voice of *my Memra* and do all that it says, I will hate whoever hates you, and I will oppress whoever oppresses you. Because my angel will go before you...**” (**Targ Ex 23:20-23**).

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Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible* (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 611.

This, of course, is found in **Exodus** and stands as one of the great promises of Christ to the people of that **original exodus out of Egypt**. We are going to see a bit later that the first half of **Luke 1:49** is also filled with exodus language, and this will help us understand more of Mary’s song and of what will come in Luke’s Gospel. In the same way, as one commentator puts it, “References to the ‘holy’ (*hagion*) name of God also appear most often in the depiction of God’s work in the new-exodus event (cf. **Isa 47:4; 57:15; Ezek 36:22–25; Mal 1:11; Wis 10:20**).<sup>14</sup> In light of these things, I must ask, “**Mary Did You Know?**” Did she know she was praising the God who had incarnated in her very womb? My answer is, **she absolutely knew it**. The language she chooses to praise God with is deeply tied up in OT language for the Second Person of the Trinity. And all the Jews of her day understood it, even if some didn’t believe it.

*Mercy  
to the  
Faithful*

- A. And his mercy is from generation to generation    MERCY TO THE FAITHFUL  
to those who fear him (50)
- A'. To remember mercy as he spoke to our fathers    MERCY TO THE FAITHFUL  
(53b-54a)  
To Abraham and to his seed forever. (54b)

If the first of the two chiastic structures **begin and end with praise**, the second of the two **begin and end with mercy**.

<sup>14</sup> **David W. Pao** and Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Luke,” in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, UK: Baker Academic; Apollos, 2007), 261.



This is very fitting, given what we have just seen from the Targum's "*angel of mercy*." God is a God of great mercy. "*And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation*" (50). "... in remembrance of *his mercy*, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever." It is on this thought of mercy that Mary's song ends. Mercy to whom, Mary?

Again, she is thinking of the OT. For vs. 50, she has in mind Psalm 103, "*The steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children*" (Ps 103:17). In the LXX, "*steadfast love*" becomes "*mercy*." His mercy is for those who fear him. For vs. 53 she has in mind Psalm 97. "*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*" (Ps 97:3). Again, in the LXX, "*steadfast love*" becomes "*mercy*."

The context of Psalm 97 is the victorious God of Israel revealing himself in fulfillment of his mercy to Israel and Jacob. *God will have mercy on whom he has mercy* (Ex 33:19; Rom 9:15). Parallel passages in Micah 7:20 and Isaiah 41:8-9 have the context of the eschatological hope of God's final delivery of Jacob and Israel. Mary could not have chosen a more

appropriate thing to say to end her song, for this is precisely what the Messiah is going to do. In this way, her song is beginning to expose some of the major ideas that the rest of the Gospel will teach us about this Jesus. Especially as it regards the new covenant people, her song is a kind of **new exodus song**, of a people no longer going defined by physical descent, but rather by **faith in Christ** (**Luke 3:8-9; 13:28; 16:19-30; 19:9-10; Acts 3:25**).

**One last point** here needs to be said here, though we will also return to this. As you just read straight through the song, you see that Mary sings about God **her Savior** (**Luke 1:47**). God has looked upon **her humble estate** (**48**). God has done **great things for her** (**49**). It is right after this that “**his mercy is for those who fear him**” (**50**). Do you think that **Mary excludes herself**? This is not a woman born without sin. Rather, this is a woman who is herself in need of salvation and mercy. **Mercy is only needed if one is sinful**. This mercy becomes righteousness imputed to her, just like it is to anyone else who believes. Michael Horton writes, “**Righteousness is counted or imputed to all who believe in Christ. They are justified at that moment by appealing to God’s mercy in Christ, just like the tax collector in Jesus’s parable (Luke 18:14), as one who has passed immediately**

from condemnation to justification (John 3:18).”<sup>15</sup> I would add a third to this group: **Mary**. It is actually **vital to the Gospel of Luke** that this be true, because this song is like *an overture*, showing what is to come. Unless God had actually shown *her* mercy because *she is a sinner*, it would make no sense for this overture to foreshadow that God will show *many others* mercy in Christ because *they* are sinners. As goes Mary, so goes the rest of the Gospel. That’s the whole point of this song being here.

<i>Salvation</i>	B.	And it rejoices my spirit in God my Savior (47)	SALVATION
	B’.	Because he made for me great things the Almighty (49a)	SALVATION
	B.	He made mighty deeds with his arm (51a) He scattered the arrogant in the thoughts of their hearts. (51b)	SALVATION
	B’.	He aided Israel his servant (54a)	SALVATION

We see more of these ideas in the more **interior parts of the song**. Let’s look at **the salvation parts** (the four “Bs” of the chiasm) first. Again, we just saw salvation highlighted for us in Psalm 97: *All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God*. So it doesn’t surprise us to hear what we just heard Mary sing, “**My spirit rejoices in God my Savior**” (**Luke 1:47**)

<sup>15</sup> **Michael Horton**, *Justification*, ed. Michael Allen and Scott R. Swain, vol. 2, New Studies in Dogmatics (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 330.

and again, “for he who is mighty has done great things *for me*” (49a). Again she sings, “He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts” (51), and again, “He has helped his servant Israel” (54a).

We’ve already seen how the first one is found on **the lips of Hannah**, who heard her cry for a son (Certainly, no one would say that Hannah was sinless; yet Mary’s words are identical and intentionally evoke Hannah’s, who also was given a miracle baby). Both women view their pregnancies **as a kind of salvation**, not because giving birth saves them, for they are saved by faith alone, but because through the births of their sons, God brought salvation and deliverance to his chosen people. **Bernard of Clairvaux**, one of Calvin’s favorite Fathers, says, “She doubted not that she was elected to so great a mystery, but believed that she would soon be the true Mother of God and man; for the grace of God so works in His elect, ‘that neither does humility make them feeble spirited, nor does exaltation of soul make them proud.’”<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> **Bernard of Clairvaux**, in **Cornelius à Lapide**, *The Great Commentary of Cornelius À Lapide: S. Luke’s Gospel*, trans. Thomas W. Mossman, Fourth Edition, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1908), 42.

The “mighty” God refers to God the Warrior. “The LORD your God is in your midst, *a mighty one who will save*; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing” (Zeph 3:17).<sup>17</sup> The “great things” that God has done for Mary echoes the mighty deeds of God during the exodus. “He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these *great and terrifying things* that your eyes have seen” (Deut 10:21).

The *strength of his arm* is found both throughout the exodus (Ex 6:1, 6; Dt 3:24; 7:19) and the predicted coming new exodus (Isa 51:5, 9; 53:1; cf. 30:30) that Messiah will bring. Referring to Pharaoh and the gods behind him, Psalm 89:10 says, “You crushed Rahab like a carcass; you scattered your enemies with *your mighty arm*.” That by itself shows the power of the Arm of God—the Lord of Hosts. However, the LXX is even closer to Mary’s song. “You brought down the proud as one that is slain, and *with the arm of your power* you scattered your enemies.” Given that this was interpreted by the Jews as a royal Messianic psalm,<sup>18</sup> this can’t be a coincidence.

God helping his servant is yet more salvation language. “But you, Israel, *my servant*, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the

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<sup>17</sup> See Douglas Jones, “The Background and Character of the Lukan Psalms,” *JTS* 19.1 (1968): 23.

<sup>18</sup> Pao, 261-62.

offspring of Abraham, my friend; you whom I took from the ends of the earth, and called from its farthest corners, saying to you, ‘You are my servant, I have chosen you and not cast you off’” (Isa 41:8-9).

In the OT, these come together in yet another of the OT Canticles, Moses’ **Song of the Sea**.

I will sing to the LORD, for he has *triumphed gloriously*; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. The LORD is my strength and *my song*, and he has become *my salvation*; this is my God, and *I will praise him*, my father's God, and I will *exalt* him. The LORD is *a man of war*; the LORD is his name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host he cast into the sea, and his chosen officers were sunk in the Red Sea ... *Your right hand, O LORD, glorious in power, your right hand, O LORD, shatters the enemy ... Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? You stretched out your right hand; the earth swallowed them. You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode ... You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O LORD, which you have made for your abode, the sanctuary, O Lord, which your hands have established. The LORD will reign forever and ever.*

(Ex 15:1-18)

In the NT, **they come together here**, in Mary's *Magnificat*, the great overture and aria of Luke's symphonic-opera masterpiece Gospel. But to truly appreciate what this salvation she sings of is about, and how it differs from that of Moses, we need to move to **the centers of her song** and how God has exalted the lowly.

*Exaltation  
of the Lowly*

- C. Because he looked upon the low estate of his handmaiden (48a) **LOWLY-EXALTED**
- C'. For behold from now on all generations will bless me (48b) **LOWLY-EXALTED**
- C. He put down the mighty from thrones (52a) **LOWLY-EXALTED**  
and exalted those of low estate (52b)
- C'. He filled the hungry with good things (53a) **LOWLY-EXALTED**  
And the rich he sent away empty (53b)

There are four lines of poetry that take up three verses in our Bibles that are **roughly parallel** in the two structures. All focus on the lowly being exalted by God, precisely what we saw that **Isaiah 57:15** predicted earlier in the song. (“**For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: ‘I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.’**”) First, “**For he has looked on the humble**

[*tapeinōsis*] estate of his servant” (48a). Who is this servant? Mary! She sings of *herself*. Thus, the parallel in the second line and same verse, “For behold, from now on all generations will called me blessed” (48b).

Then, as the song enters its second movement, she sings of this again. “He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted *those of humble estate*” (52). Mary is of “*humble estate*” and now others are of “humble estate.” They *parallel* one another. This in turn gets filled out in the fourth and final line, “He has filled the *hungry with good things*, and the rich he has sent away empty” (53). Let’s look at both of these in turn.

Let’s first consider Mary. We’ve seen that throughout her song, virtually every line has some OT counterpart. What about the humble estate of his servant? Some have gone to Deuteronomy 22 and as a fascinating potential passage. “If there is a *betrothed virgin*, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he [humiliated LXX, *tapeinoō*] his neighbor’s wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst” (Deut 22:23-24). Some dismiss



this as a possibility without any comment, save that the context is obviously different (see Pao). However, we have here a betrothed virgin who has been humiliated. These are **the very same ideas found in Mary's song.**<sup>19</sup>

Someone puts **the problem** straightforwardly. “**Her saying ‘Let it be to me according to your word,’ would have ripped her world apart. Even today, imagine telling your fiancé that an angel told you God had impregnated you ... and keeping a straight face! Not only was she offering her reputation to be ruined and exposing herself to public humiliation, but her engagement to Joseph would most certainly have been reneged. Ultimately, she knew the Torah stated that she could face stoning (Deut 22:23-24). Life as Mary knew it would never be the same.**”<sup>20</sup> I think she's probably right. Only deifying Mary as this perfect person would keep one from realizing the obvious predicament she now found herself in, even if she had faith, which she did.

However, this is not the only option (and they need not be mutually exclusive). Perhaps Mary is thinking about **Hannah** again. “**And she vowed a vow and said, ‘O LORD of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction [humiliation**

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<sup>19</sup> **Vernon K. Robbins**, *Sea Voyages and Beyond: Emerging Strategies in Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation* (Atlanta: SBL Press, 2018), 303-304.

<sup>20</sup> **Dodie Smith**, “Devotionals: Mother of Jesus: How Well Do We Really Know Mary?” *Oh Lord Help Us* (Dec 10, 2019), <https://www.ohlordhelp.us/devotional/mother-of-jesus/>.

LXX] of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a son, then I will give him to the LORD all the days of his life” (1Sam 1:11).

The humiliation of the individual (Hannah or the betrothed woman or Mary) easily turns into the humiliation of the people of God in other places. Remember, Israel was chosen by God because he was the *least among the nations*, not the greatest; not because he was free, but because he was a *slave* in Egypt (Deut 7:7-8). They were, as a nation, the definition of lowly, in need of mercy and salvation. So let’s now think about the other half of her song on God exalting the lowly.

“He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate” (Luke 1:52). This reminds us of the exodus again. “We cried to the Lord our God, and the Lord heard our voice, and saw our humiliation, and our labour, and our affliction” (Deut 26:7 LXX). “He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty” (Luke 1:53). This reminds us of Hannah’s song as she looks out beyond herself. “Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger. The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn ... The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts. He raises up the

poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor” (1Sam 2:5. 7-8).

In all of this, it is now important to look a little into the future of Luke’s Gospel, for it is here, at the center of Mary’s song, that the whole point of this serving as an overture must be grasped. In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus will go into the synagogue and being reading from Isaiah 61. “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Lk 4:18-19). This is precisely what Mary is singing about as she contemplates the Christ-child in her womb.

As the crowd shudders, Jesus doubles-down and recalls for them the stories of the widow Zarephath and the leper Gentile Naaman (26-27). Jesus is “highlighting women, the sick, poor, and marginalized ... foreigners.”<sup>21</sup> This is who the Gospel is for. Luke is going to tell us about lowly shepherds (2:6-20) as opposed to Matthew’s regal Magi (Matt 2:1-12). He will give parables about the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Lost Son

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<sup>21</sup> Covarelli, 7.

(ch. 15), which all revolve around the **poor and marginalized**. The Rich Man and Lazarus turns society on its head, as the **poor man** is in Abraham's bosom while the rich man suffers the fires of hell. Throughout this Gospel, all the way to the cross and the resurrection, our Doctor, who knows better than most **the suffering** that people can go through, wants us to know that **the Gospel is good news for the banished, the humble, the needy, the outcast, the poor, and the sinner**. It is good news for **women, for widows, for children, for tax-collectors, for shepherds, for midgets, for lepers, for unclean people**, for all those who suffer in this life and have no recourse to help themselves. This is who the **God of power** comes to rescue, the **God of war** comes to fight for, the **God of salvation** comes to save. Mary got a glimpse of it in her own condition, and she considered all that the Lord might do through her son and the promises of the OT that came to bear upon the Messiah.

### *Mary and the OT*

This takes us to the end of Mary's song and of singling her out in the Gospel. But there is a little more I want to say. Kenneth Bailey notes, "**Protestant piety traditionally ignores Mary almost entirely for known historical reasons.**"<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Bailey, 7.

I've gone to pains to show you that **Mary was in fact a sinner in need of a Savior.**<sup>23</sup> She received mercy from the Lord. There is no biblical reason to ever worship Mary. In fact, such is contrary to everything in God's law. Yet, the angel said, "**You have found favor with God**" (30). Elizabeth said, "**Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!**" (41). And Mary herself said, "**For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed**" (48).

Since this is the end of Mary's song, I thought it would be helpful to, as Bailey says, "**open new doors of awareness**" about Mary for some of us, but without **falling into the Ditch** of an immaculate conception or even, God forbid, unrealized goddess worship. Mary has **several significant "types"** that she fulfills from the OT, and they are worth contemplating, as through a kind of OT aria pausing the story and telling us about her and why she is in fact so important to our collective Faith. I will tell you, briefly, about three.<sup>24</sup> They are Mary as **the new Eve**, Mary as **the Daughter of Zion**, and Mary as **the Queen Mother**.

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<sup>23</sup> Besides all the texts that speak to all humans being without sin, save the God-man, other places that may support this specific to Mary include **Zeph 3:14-15** (see n. 26); **Mark 3:21, 31-35**; **John 2:4**. That Jesus did not accord her any kind of divine status is seen in places like **Luke 2:48**; **Matt 12:46-48**; **John 19:26-27**.

<sup>24</sup> A fourth I'm tempted to discuss, but won't, because Luke doesn't make this explicit (though I think John does, see Rev 11:19-12:1) is **Mary as the Ark of God**, she who carries the Word of

## *Mary as the New Eve*

The Church Fathers seemed nearly unanimous about the first of these types: Mary as the new and better Eve. As you think on Mary, you are to think on the reversal of sin that came through the baby in *her* womb. [Justin Martyr](#) said,

[The Son of God] became man through a Virgin, so that the disobedience caused by the serpent might be destroyed in the same way it had begun. For *Eve*, who was virgin and undefiled, gave birth to disobedience and death after listening to the serpent's words. But *the Virgin Mary* conceived faith and joy; for when the angel Gabriel brought her the glad tidings that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and that the power of the Most High would overshadow her, so that the Holy One born of her would be the Son of God, she answered, "Let it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). Thus was born of her the [Child] about whom so many Scriptures speak, as we have shown. Through him, God crushed the serpent, along with those angels and men who had become like the serpent.

([Justin](#), *Dialogue with Trypho* 100)

[Irenaeus](#) expanded on this this,

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God in her womb. See my sermon "The Woman and the Dragon: A Biblical-Theology of Genesis 3:15," *RBCNC* (5-30-2021), <https://uploads.documents.cimpress.io/v1/uploads/03ae07cf-e2c3-49dc-a361-fcf5eb0adc40~110/original?tenant=vbu-digital>.

The power of that seduction by which *the virgin Eve*, already betrothed to a man, had been wickedly seduced was broken when the angel in truth brought good tidings to *the Virgin Mary*, who already by her betrothal belonged to a man. For *as Eve was seduced by the word of an angel* to flee from God, having rebelled against his Word, *so Mary by the word of an angel received the glad tidings* that she would bear God by obeying his Word. The former was seduced to disobey God and so fell, but the latter was persuaded to obey God, so that the Virgin Mary might become the advocate of Eve. As the human race was subjected to death through the act of a virgin, so was it saved by a virgin was precisely balanced by the obedience of another. Then indeed the sin of the first formed man was amended by the chastisement of the First Begotten, the wisdom of the serpent was conquered by the simplicity of the dove, and the chains were broken by which we were in bondage to death.

(Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 5.19-20)

Even Luther says, “Her giving birth is blessed in that it was spared the curse upon all children of Eve who are conceived in sin [Ps 51:5] and born to deserve death and damnation. Only the fruit of her body is blessed, and through this birth we are all blessed.”<sup>25</sup> The hymnwriter at the church at Ni-

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<sup>25</sup> Martin Luther, *Luther's Works, Vol. 43: Devotional Writings II*, ed. Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, Hilton C. Oswald, and Helmut T. Lehmann, vol. 43 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1999), 40.

caea, **Theophanes** (775-845), summed it up this way, “**Rejoice, lady; rejoice, most pure virgin! Rejoice, God-containing vessel! Rejoice, candlestick of the light, the restoration of Adam and the deliverance of Eve! Rejoice, holy mountain, shining sanctuary!**” (**Theophanes**, *Canon of Annunciation*).

### *Mary as Daughter of Zion*

Theophanes’ “**holy mountain, shining sanctuary**” and Luther’s “**we are all**” takes me to **the second type**: Mary as a type of **the Daughter of Zion**. We’ve already seen how her own song moves from herself to her people. This is precisely what the type from the OT would suggest. Mary isn’t just Mary as we think about what she embodies. She is also one of God’s many chosen people. As you think on Mary, you are to think **on all God’s people**, for we are the Daughter’s of Zion.

When the angel comes to Mary and says, “**Hail**” (*chairō*), based on OT usage, he is plausibly doing **more than saying, “Hello.”** He is **inviting her to rejoice as a daughter of Zion**. Just a couple of verses before **Zeph 3:17**, which we have already seen Mary seems to have in mind in her song, we read this. “**Rejoice (chairō), O daughter of Sion; cry aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem; rejoice and delight thyself with all thine**



heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. *The Lord has taken away your iniquities, he has ransomed you from the hand of your enemies: the Lord, the King of Israel, is in your midst: you shalt not see evil any more*” (**Zeph 3:14-15 LXX**). The context is **the coming of the King**, which is who Mary herself has been told has entered her own womb. Thus, someone boldly writes, “Mary is, in fact, being greeted with an extraordinary call to rejoice over the coming of the long-awaited king—reminiscent of the way the Old Testament figure of Daughter Zion, the personification of the faithful remnant of Israel, was called to rejoice over the advent of Israel’s king.”<sup>26</sup> This is why Mary thinks of her people, because she herself now personifies and represents them.

## *Mary as Queen Mother*

Finally, and perhaps most controversially, though I hope to show you that it really shouldn’t be, Mary is the fulfillment of the OT types of **the Queen Mother**. This is controversial

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<sup>26</sup> **Edward Sri**, “New Approaches to Marian Typology in Luke 1: Mary as Daughter Zion and Queen Mother,” *Letter & Spirit, Volume 8: Promise and Fulfillment*, ed. Scott W. Hahn (Steubenville, OH: St. Paul Center for Biblical Theology, 2013), 130. Sri is **a Roman Catholic**, though Augustinian, but his article makes some very compelling, more importantly biblical points. However, it is curious to me that even as he holds to this Mary/Daughter-of-Zion typology, it does not seem to dawn on him that this OT “daughter” which Mary embodies is said in the text to have her sins forgiven. This, of course, wouldn’t fit the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. And therefore, it is missed by someone whom I presume believes it to be true.

because Rome has taken this title and are fond of calling Mary *The Queen of Heaven*. This in turn is a title found in Jeremiah for *the goddess*. “The children gather wood, the fathers kindle fire, and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven. And they pour out drink offerings to other gods, to provoke me to anger” (Jer 7:18).<sup>27</sup> But we are not talking about Ishtar or Astarte or Asherah. Rather, we are thinking of someone more like *Bathsheba*, a sinful daughter of Adam.

When people today hear the title “*Queen Mother*,” they probably think of Elizabeth’s mother, *Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon*, wife of King George VI who died at the age of 101 in 2002. This Elizabeth was queen, but only in the sense of having been married to the King. Her title as “*Queen Mother*” was *mostly just honorary* and symbolic. But in biblical days, the *Queen Mother* was anything but a figurehead.

In the ANE, it was generally the *king’s mother who ruled as queen*, not the king’s wife. This is probably because these kings all had many wives, but only one mother. In the

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<sup>27</sup> In the Article “*Mary*” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, the scholar writes, “*Parallels between Mary and pre-Christian goddesses impose themselves but cannot be traced historically. Thus it is striking that several goddesses like Mary are called →‘queen of heaven.’*” *M. F. G. Parmentier*, “*Mary*,” in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, ed. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking, and Pieter W. van der Horst (Leiden; Boston; Köln; Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge: Brill; Eerdmans, 1999), 552.

books of the Kings, almost all Davidic kings are introduced, *along with their mother*. But the wife's name is not.

In Israel, queen mother was an official position in Judah. She wears a crown (Jer 13:18), sits on a throne (1Kg 2:19), and is listed first in the king's royal court, before the wives, ministers, dignitaries, and officers (2Kg 24:12-15). In other words, in the kingdom of Judah, queen mother was second only to the king himself. When David is still alive, Bathsheba is merely viewed as the king's wife. When she wants to enter the royal chamber, she bows before David (1Kg 1:16).

However, when David dies and Solomon, her son, becomes king, Bathsheba becomes queen mother. Now when she enters the royal chamber, she is treated quite differently. We see, in fact, that Bathsheba does not bow to Solomon, but King Solomon rises to and bows down to her (1Kg 2:19)! Solomon builds a throne for her ... at his right hand (19). Besides also serving as the kingdom's counselor (Prov 31 for good; 2Chr 22:3 for evil), she also advocated for the people of Israel, precisely what Mary is doing in her song.

The virgin birth prophecy of Isaiah 7 which both Luke and Matthew see being fulfilled in Mary, has strong Davidic overtones, as does the promise Gabriel gives to Mary about

her son and his kingdom. In the prophecy, it is without question that the woman who gives birth to the king of Israel would be understood as a queen mother.<sup>28</sup>

There is **nothing blasphemous about calling Mary the queen mother**, for that is precisely what she is. Seeing her in this light might help you understand both her and Elizabeth's proclamations that from now on, everyone would call her blessed. Along with her representing the daughters of Zion (that is, all God's people of faith), and her being the new and better Eve because of God's grace, there is **no reason here to worship Mary**, but **every reason to contemplate what God did for**, with, in, and to her. Jesus did not worship his mother, but he did honor her, greatly. And what a singular privilege. She bore God in her womb. Thinking on these things can and should, like the right aria or overture, stir in you great and profound emotions for how God shows grace and mercy to those in need, to those who are humble, and to those who believe. This, in turn, should lead you to join your voice with the great choir of the saints, both here and in heaven, who have seen that God has not forgotten his people, but has done inconceivably more than we could ever dream or imagine. For in Christ and through Mary, he has **reversed**

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<sup>28</sup> This whole discussion is in **Sri**.

the curse of Eve, ushered in a new exodus, and made the impossible possible. He has given mercy and favor to any and all who trust in Christ—Mary’s son and Mary’s King. That is truly *Magnificat*.

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