

Mary's Song of Praise (Luke 1:39–56)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (12/26/2021)

Introduction

1. The birth of Christ is generally conceived as ushering in a time of peace and blessing—the kingdom of God on the earth. It would seem so by the angelic chorus's declaring, "*Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth*" (Luke 2:14). Zechariah's prophecy echoes this (Luke 2:78, 79). This announces the great hope that Jesus brings by His incarnation.
 - a. The promise of peace is certain, but the path to that peace is tribulation in a long and terrible war that includes the rejection and death of the incarnate Son of God (Luke 19:14). However, the resurrection of Christ foiled the attempt to thwart the son of the woman. This sent the serpent into a desperate rage (Revelation 12:17).
 - b. As we end 2021 and begin 2022, with all that we have faced and will continue to face, we need encouragement and patience for what is to come (Revelation 1:9; 11:17, 18). Although the final victory is assured, we are still in the war; therefore, the Lord exhorts, "*Here is a call for the endurance and faith of the saints*" (Revelation 13:10; 14:12).
 - c. This brings us to the song of Mary in which we find great encouragement (Luke 1:32, 33).
2. Mary's *Magnificat* is a song in the form of an OT psalm patterned on Hannah's praise recorded in 1 Samuel 2:1–10.
3. Mary was not sinless—was not born of an immaculate conception, as the Church of Rome would have us believe. There is no evidence for this false doctrine in Scripture. Indeed, the opposite is taught. Mary, in this psalm, calls God her Savior, which means that she saw herself as a sinner needing salvation. Note four things that Mary sees in the Lord's blessing of her for which she glories in Him.

I. His Condescension

God took notice of her (1:46–48).

1. This *notice* forms the reason for her praise.
 - a. Her soul (creature life) magnifies her sovereign Lord.
 - b. Her spirit (renewed life) rejoices in her God as Savior.
2. His notice of her permanently alters her station in life.
 - a. Some will know her as blessed.
 - b. Some will improperly judge her as sinful—an immoral woman with an illegitimate child.

II. His Ability

God did great things for her (vv. 49, 50) because of His great name (fame).

1. Her Lord is mighty (able) to do great things.
2. Her Lord is holy to do right things.
3. Her Lord is merciful to do gracious things.

III. His Sovereignty

God is going to reign supreme over all things because He is supreme (vv. 52, 53).

Her Lord is demonstrating strength (the right of His dominion), as seen in three acts:

1. He brought in the Kingdom of God with its associated judgments and blessings.
2. As a consequence of His sovereign reign, He scatters the proud in their thinking and destroys the wealth of the rich.
3. On the other hand, He lifts up the humble and hungry.

IV. His Faithfulness

God is faithful to keep every promise He has made to the fathers (v. 55).

1. That God does keep His promises clearly proves that nothing is outside of His knowledge or power.
2. These promises are given to a particular people whom God has singled out for Himself—Abraham and His descendants *forever*.

The implications of Mary's song:

1. Believers have enemies, but believers are also assured that we have a refuge in our God: *"There is none holy like the LORD: for there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God"* (1 Samuel 2:2). *"He has shown strength with his arm. ... he has brought down the mighty from their thrones"* (Luke 1:51, 52).
2. The salvation and kingdom coming through Mary's Child are God's means of defeating His enemies. He has come and we celebrate that event now. But we are also assured that the war will come to a glorious end because the victory is already won: *"He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail"* (1 Samuel 2:9).
3. Mary's song encourages and promotes God's war against unrighteousness. The divine weapon Heaven has engaged in this war is the *gospel*: *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come"* (Matthew 24:14). Believers are God's agents through the church to preach this gospel in the world: *"Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation"* (Mark 16:15). We are to both speak and live out the gospel before this lost and dying world that is hurtling to judgment and eternal condemnation.
4. Mary's submission to God's will does not make her special because that is mark of all true believers—willing submission to the will of God. Are you doing His will for you? Jesus makes it clear: *"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven"* (Matthew 7:21).