

# The Affirmation of the Promise

Luke 1:39-56  
SS Lesson for 12/11/2016

**Devotional Scripture:** 1 Sam 2:1-10

## OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW AND KEY VERSE OF THE LESSON

*Key Verse: Luke 1:46-47*

*Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

*Commentary from The Bible Expositor and Illuminator*

LESSON INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

AFFIRMATION FROM ELIZABETH (LUKE 1:39-45)

*Affirm being in the presence of God (41)*

Because we cannot go anywhere outside the presence of God (Ps 139:3-7)

Because being in God's presence means we have been made righteous by Jesus (Ps 15:1-3)

Because we will be filled with joy (Ps 16:11)

Because we will be safe (Ps 31:20)

Because we are blessed to be in God's presence (Ps 89:15)

Because it fulfills our hope (1 Thess 2:19)

*Affirm being filled with the Holy Spirit (41)*

Because the Holy Spirit expresses the love of God (Eph 3:19)

Because through the Holy Spirit we can be in fellowship with others (Eph 5:18-20)

Because we are filled with the fruit of righteousness (Phil 1:11)

Because we are filled with inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:8)

Because being filled with the Holy Spirit is what the kingdom of God is all about (Rom 14:17)

Because we are filled with joy and peace (Rom 15:13)

Because we have fellowship with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14)

Because the Holy Spirit seals us (Eph 1:13)

Because the Holy Spirit renews us and makes us a new creation (Titus 3:5)

Because the Holy Spirit builds us up in faith (Jude 20)

*Affirm those who bring Jesus and His Word (42)*

Because God sends those who bring His word (Rom 10:14-15)

Because God proclaims good news, peace and good tidings through those who bring His word (Isa 52:7)

Because God's word dispels fear (Luke 2:10)

Because God's knowledge is more valuable than precious jewels (Prov 20:15)

Because God works through many people to bring about His perfect plan (1 Cor 3:7)

*Affirmation from a humbled spirit (43)*

Because God guides the humble (Ps 25:9)

Because the humble will enjoy peace (Ps 37:11)

Because the great God looks after the humble (Ps 138:6)

Because God sustains the humble (Ps 147:6)

Because God delights in the humble (Ps 149:4)

Because God gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5)

*Affirmation of a steadfast faith (45)*

Because the steadfast will be protected forever (Ps 37:28)

Because the steadfast will be saved (Matt 10:22)

Because Jesus intercedes for the steadfast (Luke 22:32)

Because the steadfast are true disciples (John 8:31)

Because the steadfast will bear good fruit (John 15:4)

Because the steadfast will receive eternal life (Rom 2:7)

Because the steadfast do not work in vain (1 Cor 15:58)

Because the steadfast are anointed by God (2 Cor 1:21)

AFFIRMATION FROM MARY (LUKE 1:46-56)

*Affirmation of God's love and attentiveness (48-49)*

Because God's eyes are on the righteous (Ps 34:15)

Because God is over all and therefore hears and sees all (Isa 37:16-17)  
Because God's love is beyond all knowledge and understanding (Eph 3:17-19)  
Because God loved us so much He sacrificed His only Son (1 John 4:9-10)  
Because God promises to listen to us if we fear Him (Mal 3:16)  
Because God shows Himself to us because of our love for Him (John 14:21)  
Because God demonstrated His love in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8)  
Because if God is for us who can be against us (Rom 8:31)  
Because nothing can separate us from God's love (Rom 8:39)  
Because we cannot conceive of what God has in store for us (1 Cor 2:9)  
Because as one of God's people, we are dearly loved (Col 3:12)

*Affirmation of God's mercy (50)*

Because even as we grow old, God never forsakes the righteous (Ps 37:25)  
Because God's mercy lasts a lifetime (Ps 30:5)  
Because God is a forgiving God (Ps 86:5)  
Because God is a compassionate God (Ps 86:15)  
Because God is good and His mercy endures forever (Ps 106:1)  
Because God has mercy on whom he wants (Rom 9:18)  
Because God grants us mercy so we can be merciful to others (2 Cor 1:3-4)  
Because God is rich in mercy (Eph 2:4)

*Affirmation of God's power (51-52)*

Because for God, all things are possible (Matt 19:26)  
Because only God can do the deeds He has done (Deut 3:24)  
Because God is great and awesome (Deut 7:21)  
Because God is exalted as head over all (1 Chron 29:11)  
Because God has the power to do what He has promised (Rom 4:21)  
Because God has incomparable power (Eph 1:19-21)  
Because God can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine (Eph 3:20)

*Affirmation of God's provisions (53-56)*

Because with God as our supplier, we will not want for anything (Ps 23:1)  
Because with God as our supplier, we lack nothing (Ps 34:9-10)  
Because with God as our supplier, He gives us our desires (Ps 37:4)  
Because with God as our supplier, we cannot begin to recount our blessings (Ps 40:5)  
Because God ordains the supplies (Ps 65:9)  
Because God provides provisions for everything (Ps 104:10-23)  
Because God is able to abound in all things at all times (2 Cor 9:8)  
Because with God as our supplier, all our needs are met (Phil 4:19)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

*Mary's Magnificat*

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

PRACTICAL POINTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR COMMENTARY

# Introduction

## Overview and Key Verse of the Lesson

The lesson examines God's miraculous workings to bring about **The Affirmation of the Promise**. The **study's aim** is to recognize that the details of our lives are very important in our walk with the Lord Jesus. The **study's application** is to develop a mind-set of looking for the hand of God at work in our daily experiences.

*(Adapted from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary)*

### Key Verse: Luke 1:46-47

*46 And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord 47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.*

### Commentary from The Bible Knowledge Commentary

**1:39-45.** After learning of the sign, **Mary... hurried** to see **Elizabeth**. Elizabeth and Zechariah lived in a **town in the hill country**, which probably referred to the hilly region surrounding Jerusalem. As Mary arrived, Elizabeth's baby **leaped in her womb** for joy, **and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit**. Zechariah also was later filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 67). Prior to the day of Pentecost, believers were filled with the Holy Spirit for specific tasks. Elizabeth's loudly spoken words, **Blessed** (*eulogēmenē*, lit., "well spoken of") **are you among women**, carry the idea that Mary is the most honored of all women. Elizabeth called her **the mother of my Lord**. In Luke the term "Lord" (*kyrios*) often describes Jesus. It has a double meaning. "Lord" would be more important for a Greek reader than would the term "Christ" (meaning "Messiah"), for the Gentiles had not been anxiously awaiting the Messiah. On the other hand the Septuagint often used the word "Lord" (*kyrios*) to translate Yahweh. Again (v. 45) Elizabeth said Mary was **blessed** (*makaria*, "happy") because she **believed** what God had told **her**. This suggests that Mary visited Elizabeth not with a skeptical attitude but rather joyously, to confirm what had been announced to her.

**1:46-55.** In response to the situation at hand **Mary** recited a song which praised God's favor on her and her people. "The Magnificat," as the song is called, consists almost entirely of Old Testament allusions and quotations. The same is true of the songs of Zechariah and Simeon (vv. 1:68-79; 2:29-32). Mary's song has similarities to Hannah's song (1 Sam. 2:1-10). First, Mary praised God for His special favor on her (Luke 1:46-50). Mary saw herself as part of the godly remnant that had served Yahweh. She called God **my Savior** (*sōtēri mou*) showing an intimate acquaintance with Him. She spoke of His faithfulness (v. 48), power (v. 49), holiness (v. 49), and mercy (v. 50). Second, Mary praised God for His special favor on Israel (vv. 51-55). 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.

**1:56.** **Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months**, apparently until John was born (cf. v. 36). **Mary then returned home**. The Greek has the words "her home," indicating that she was still a virgin and was not yet married to Joseph.

### Commentary from The Bible Expositor and Illuminator

Luke 1:46-47 begins what many have called Mary's "Magnificat." The term "Magnificat" comes from the Latin term for "magnify." It is Mary's most powerful response to the news that God's promise of the long-expected Redeemer would be fulfilled through her. This was an astonishing and awesome privilege. It elicited a beautiful hymn of praise. Our text focuses on two aspects of Mary's prayerful outburst. The first aspect is praise, as Mary anticipated the birth of the Saviour. To magnify the Lord as Mary did was to cite God's power, glory, mercy, and grace as He broke into history to fulfill His promise of salvation through His Son, the Redeemer. Mary's song is filled with allusions to Old Testament passages of praise. It is likely that Mary meditated on these passages as she traveled to meet with her relative Elisabeth. Like most pious Jews of that day, she knew the Old Testament messianic prophecies, and she grasped what the angel had said to her about her role in fulfilling them. She realized that God was sending a Redeemer and that she would be the mother of the Child. Her meditation on what God was doing and what had been promised in His Word led to this great song of praise to God. At its most basic level, the celebration of Christmas must be praise. The more we are steeped in the Scriptures, understanding all that God has done for the world and for us in Christ, the more we will give praise to Him. We, like Mary, should be ready to break forth in unbridled praise. The second aspect of the verse is Mary's joy. As she pondered God's promise and plan in sending His only Son to save sinners, including herself, her spirit soared to rapturous heights. She was

rejoicing. The world was getting a Saviour. Mary saw God as her own Saviour. She was saved by divine mercy! What joy! This joy came to her despite the fact that she would be a young, unwed woman with a child on the way—without a very believable explanation to give for this condition. The people around her were highly religious and often narrow-minded. She would appear to them as a young woman in trouble. Yet her joy overpowered these circumstances. The salvation of souls—the salvation of the world—was more important to her than the difficulties of her circumstances. What a spirit to emulate! Are we caught up in the joy of what God has done and is doing for souls? Is our focus on the indispensable truth of salvation? Is this more important to us than seeking happiness in our lives? Are we in touch with what God has done in fulfilling His promise of salvation? We can see the mind-set of Mary as she pondered the great promise she had received from the visiting angel. She was filled with praise for a powerful and merciful God, and she was filled with joy over the reality of the coming One who would bring salvation to the world. She set an excellent example for us. Our response in this Christmas season should be the same. Let us praise and worship our God and rejoice in our Saviour.

## **Lesson Introduction and Background**

### **From the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

Nothing feels better than being chosen. The childhood joy of receiving an invitation to a party is unforgettable. Being asked on a date (or getting a yes when doing the asking) builds self-esteem. Being offered a job, especially after we've lost one, enhances self-confidence. The good feeling that results from such situations may stem from a sense of deserving or having earned the choosing. On the other hand, things that are unearned can be difficult to receive. We easily imagine Mary to have felt this way after being told that she was God's choice to bear his Son (Luke 1:26-38). All of us feel awed at times by the depth of God's grace. But to be chosen for no apparent reason to be the earthly mother of the Christ—how overwhelming, especially considering that Mary was likely still a teenager at the time! Today's lesson gives us a glimpse into Mary's joy at being chosen to fill this marvelous role.

Last week's lesson reviewed Gabriel's announcement that Mary was to give birth to the Messiah. Since that announcement forms the immediate background for the lesson at hand, that information need not be repeated here. But against the broader backdrop of salvation-history, the unexpected, miraculous pregnancies of Mary and Elizabeth meant that the two women stood at the very threshold of prophetic fulfillment. Neither one knew the details of how God would use their unborn sons to fulfill the promises in Luke 1:16, 17, 32, 33. Even so, it is almost certain that at least elderly Elizabeth, wife of a priest, was aware of past incidents of miraculous, old-age pregnancies like hers; such awareness would have undergirded her faith for the days ahead (Genesis 17:19; 25:21; Judges 13:3-5; 1 Samuel 1:5, 20). The much younger Mary, for her part, may have been aware that her unprecedented virginal conception was fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14. Further, her declarations in this week's lesson, traditionally referred to as "Mary's Song," reflect Old Testament passages that praise God for caring for the helpless. For example, scholars often observe that the imagery of Luke 1:46-55 is very similar to that of 1 Samuel 2:1-10, the prayer of Hannah. She, like Mary's relative Elizabeth, had been unable to conceive (1 Samuel 1:2, 5; Luke 1:7), but each was miraculously blessed to bear a son (1 Samuel 1:20; Luke 1:24). Mary and Elizabeth had good reason to celebrate God's faithfulness as the saints before them had.

## **Major Theme Analysis**

*(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)*

### **Affirmation from Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45)**

39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,  
40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.  
41 And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.  
42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!  
43 But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?  
44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.  
45 Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

## **Affirm being in the presence of God (41)**

*Because we cannot go anywhere outside the presence of God (Ps 139:3-7)*

3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you know it completely, O LORD. 5 You hem me in--behind and before; you have laid your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. 7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?

*Because being in God's presence means we have been made righteous by Jesus (Ps 15:1-3)*

1 LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill? 2 He whose walk is blameless and who does what is righteous, who speaks the truth from his heart 3 and has no slander on his tongue, who does his neighbor no wrong and casts no slur on his fellowman,

*Because we will be filled with joy (Ps 16:11)*

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

*Because we will be safe (Ps 31:20)*

In the shelter of your presence you hide them from the intrigues of men; in your dwelling you keep them safe from accusing tongues.

*Because we are blessed to be in God's presence (Ps 89:15)*

Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, O LORD.

*Because it fulfills our hope (1 Thess 2:19)*

For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes?

## **Affirm being filled with the Holy Spirit (41)**

*Because the Holy Spirit expresses the love of God (Eph 3:19)*

and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

*Because through the Holy Spirit we can be in fellowship with others (Eph 5:18-20)*

18 Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. 19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, 20 always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Because we are filled with the fruit of righteousness (Phil 1:11)*

filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ--to the glory and praise of God.

*Because we are filled with inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:8)*

Though you have not seen him, you love him; and even though you do not see him now, you believe in him and are filled with an inexpressible and glorious joy,

*Because being filled with the Holy Spirit is what the kingdom of God is all about (Rom 14:17)*

For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

*Because we are filled with joy and peace (Rom 15:13)*

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

*Because we have fellowship with the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14)*

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

*Because the Holy Spirit seals us (Eph 1:13)*

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

*Because the Holy Spirit renews us and makes us a new creation (Titus 3:5)*

he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit,

*Because the Holy Spirit builds us up in faith (Jude 20)*

But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit.

### **Affirm those who bring Jesus and His Word (42)**

*Because God sends those who bring His word (Rom 10:14-15)*

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

*Because God proclaims good news, peace and good tidings through those who bring His word (Isa 52:7)*

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

*Because God's word dispels fear (Luke 2:10)*

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

*Because God's knowledge is more valuable than precious jewels (Prov 20:15)*

Gold there is, and rubies in abundance, but lips that speak knowledge are a rare jewel.

*Because God works through many people to bring about His perfect plan (1 Cor 3:7)*

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow.

### **Affirmation from a humbled spirit (43)**

*Because God guides the humble (Ps 25:9)*

He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

*Because the humble will enjoy peace (Ps 37:11)*

But the meek will inherit the land and enjoy great peace.

*Because the great God looks after the humble (Ps 138:6)*

Though the LORD is on high, he looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar.

*Because God sustains the humble (Ps 147:6)*

The LORD sustains the humble but casts the wicked to the ground.

*Because God delights in the humble (Ps 149:4)*

For the LORD takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with salvation.

*Because God gives grace to the humble (1 Peter 5:5)*

Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

#### **Affirmation of a steadfast faith (45)**

*Because the steadfast will be protected forever (Ps 37:28)*

For the LORD loves the just and will not forsake his faithful ones. They will be protected forever, but the offspring of the wicked will be cut off;

*Because the steadfast will be saved (Matt 10:22)*

All men will hate you because of me, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.

*Because Jesus intercedes for the steadfast (Luke 22:32)*

But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

*Because the steadfast are true disciples (John 8:31)*

To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.

*Because the steadfast will bear good fruit (John 15:4)*

Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

*Because the steadfast will receive eternal life (Rom 2:7)*

To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, he will give eternal life.

*Because the steadfast do not work in vain (1 Cor 15:58)*

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.

*Because the steadfast are anointed by God (2 Cor 1:21)*

Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us,

#### **Affirmation from Mary (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.

#### **Affirmation of God's love and attentiveness (48-49)**

*Because God's eyes are on the righteous (Ps 34:15)*

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their cry;

*Because God is over all and therefore hears and sees all (Isa 37:16-17)*

16 "O LORD Almighty, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 17 Give ear, O LORD, and hear; open your eyes, O LORD, and see

*Because God's love is beyond all knowledge and understanding (Eph 3:17-19)*

17 And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

*Because God loved us so much He sacrificed His only Son (1 John 4:9-10)*

9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

*Because God promises to listen to us if we fear Him (Mal 3:16)*

Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name.

*Because God shows Himself to us because of our love for Him (John 14:21)*

Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him."

*Because God demonstrated His love in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom 5:8)*

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

*Because if God is for us who can be against us (Rom 8:31)*

What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

*Because nothing can separate us from God's love (Rom 8:39)*

neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Because we cannot conceive of what God has in store for us (1 Cor 2:9)*

However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"-

*Because as one of God's people, we are dearly loved (Col 3:12)*

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

## **Affirmation of God's mercy (50)**

*Because even as we grow old, God never forsakes the righteous (Ps 37:25)*

I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.

*Because God's mercy lasts a lifetime (Ps 30:5)*

For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may remain for a night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

*Because God is a forgiving God (Ps 86:5)*

You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.

*Because God is a compassionate God (Ps 86:15)*

But you, O Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

*Because God is good and His mercy endures forever (Ps 106:1)*

Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

*Because God has mercy on whom he wants (Rom 9:18)*

Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

*Because God grants us mercy so we can be merciful to others (2 Cor 1:3-4)*

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God.

*Because God is rich in mercy (Eph 2:4)*

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

### **Affirmation of God's power (51-52)**

*Because for God, all things are possible (Matt 19:26)*

Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

*Because only God can do the deeds He has done (Deut 3:24)*

"O Sovereign LORD, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do?"

*Because God is great and awesome (Deut 7:21)*

Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God.

*Because God is exalted as head over all (1 Chron 29:11)*

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, O LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all.

*Because God has the power to do what He has promised (Rom 4:21)*

being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised.

*Because God has incomparable power (Eph 1:19-21)*

19 and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, 20 which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21 far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.

*Because God can do immeasurably more than we can ask or imagine (Eph 3:20)*

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

### **Affirmation of God's provisions (53-56)**

*Because with God as our supplier, we will not want for anything (Ps 23:1)*

The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.

*Because with God as our supplier, we lack nothing (Ps 34:9-10)*

9 Fear the LORD, you his saints, for those who fear him lack nothing. 10 The lions may grow weak and hungry, but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

*Because with God as our supplier, He gives us our desires (Ps 37:4)*

Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

*Because with God as our supplier, we cannot begin to recount our blessings (Ps 40:5)*

Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders you have done. The things you planned for us no one can recount to you; were I to speak and tell of them, they would be too many to declare.

*Because God ordains the supplies (Ps 65:9)*

You care for the land and water it; you enrich it abundantly. The streams of God are filled with water to provide the people with grain, for so you have ordained it.

*Because God provides provisions for everything (Ps 104:10-23)*

10 He makes springs pour water into the ravines; it flows between the mountains. 11 They give water to all the beasts of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. 12 The birds of the air nest by the waters; they sing among the branches. 13 He waters the mountains from his upper chambers; the earth is satisfied by the fruit of his work. 14 He makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate--bringing forth food from the earth: 15 wine that gladdens the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread that sustains his heart. 16 The trees of the LORD are well watered, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. 17 There the birds make their nests; the stork has its home in the pine trees. 18 The high mountains belong to the wild goats; the crags are a refuge for the coneys. 19 The moon marks off the seasons, and the sun knows when to go down. 20 You bring darkness, it becomes night, and all the beasts of the forest prowl. 21 The lions roar for their prey and seek their food from God. 22 The sun rises, and they steal away; they return and lie down in their dens. 23 Then man goes out to his work, to his labor until evening.

*Because God is able to abound in all things at all times (2 Cor 9:8)*

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

*Because with God as our supplier, all our needs are met (Phil 4:19)*

And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

## Conclusion and Other Thoughts

### *Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh*

#### **Mary's Magnificat**

Mary seems immediately to respond to the praise of Elizabeth by offering her own praise to God. While we are not specifically told that Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit when she spoke these words, we may surely assume so. Perhaps there is a hint here that the words of Mary's hymn are divinely inspired, but that the work is her composition, her work of praise and devotion, in response to the revelation of the angel. Elizabeth's words are not as reflective, but seem almost to explode from her lips unexpectedly. While Elizabeth spoke with "a loud voice" (1:42), Mary is perhaps more sedate. Regardless, these are some of the most beautiful words in all the word of God. Let us ponder them.

#### **(1) Mary's psalm of praise reveals a repeated use of the terminology and theology of the Old Testament.**

Virtually every commentator agrees that Mary's praise is dripping with Old Testament allusions and references. In contrast to the "psalm" of Jonah in Jonah chapter 2, which we have recently considered, the psalm of Mary is a magnificent masterpiece. It not only employs the terminology of the psalms, but the theology. Mary dwells on the character of God, particularly His grace, which is bestowed on the humble and the oppressed. There is also a distinct parallel with the praise of Hannah in 1 Samuel chapter 2. The marginal references in our Bibles indicate the many other allusions and parallels. Some may question how a simple peasant-girl may have such a grasp of the Old Testament. Geldenhuys responds,

In discussing this hymn of praise, some critics have asked whether Mary had her Old Testament open before her when she uttered the song. They forget that all pious Israelites from their childhood days knew by heart songs from the Old Testament and often sang them in the home circle and at celebrations. Mary was steeped in the poetical literature of her nation, and accordingly her hymn also bears the unmistakable signs of it.

**(2) Mary's praise begins with her grateful response to the grace God has shown to her, a humble servant of the Lord.** In verses 46-49, Mary praises God for His mercy as expressed toward her. She rejoices in God, who is her Savior (v. 47). While this may not refer only to the saving work which Messiah will come to accomplish, surely it includes it. God looked upon her humble estate with compassion; consequently she will be esteemed blessed by all future generations (v. 48). God's compassion on her has revealed both His power and His holiness ("Mighty One," "holy is His name," v. 49).

Mary does not in any way view herself as better or holier than anyone else. She views herself as a sinner who needs God's salvation, and as the Lord's servant, whose humble estate is the occasion for His mercy and grace. There is no hint that she thinks God has chosen her to be the mother of Messiah due to her blessedness, but rather that her blessedness is the result of God's sovereign and gracious choice to use her as His instrument. In verse 48 her blessedness is viewed as the result of God's grace.

**(3) In verse 50 Mary's praise broadens, viewing God's grace to her as a reflection of His gracious purposes for His chosen people, Israel.** God has not just singled Mary out for blessing, leaving others in their miserable estate. Mary saw her blessing as but an illustration, one instance of God's grace, which leads her to praise God for His grace to all those who fear Him, from one generation to generation. Mary thus presses from the specific to the general, from her personal benefits to the blessings which all of God's people (those who "fear Him") experience.

**(4) In verses 51-55, Mary's praise focuses on the faithfulness of God to His promises and His purposes, especially His covenant with Abraham and his descendants.** If verse 50 spells out the principle that God blesses His people, from generation to generation, verses 51-55 give some specific ways in which this has and will be done.

We can see that the verbs in these verses are past perfect. The question which this raises is what is meant by the use of the a past tense. My opinion is that deliverances which are described have already been demonstrated in Israel's history, to some degree, but that they will finally and fully be realized in the future, as a result of Messiah's coming. Much, perhaps most, of these things will be fulfilled in the second coming of Messiah, rather than in His first coming. In His first coming, Messiah came to reveal God to men, and to accomplish eternal redemption for all who would believe. In His second coming, Messiah will come to "set things straight," to bring justice to the earth and judgment to the wicked. The book of Revelation speaks much of these themes, and prophesies their fulfillment.

**(5) Mary's praise serves as an encouragement to Elizabeth, just as Elizabeth's praise was an encouragement to her.** Many have observed the similarities of this Magnificat of Mary to the hymn of praise of Hanna in 1 Samuel chapter 2. It is so strong that some are tempted to view Elizabeth as the composer of the Magnificat, and not Mary. I believe that the similarity of the Magnificat to Hanna's praise has the effect of encouraging Elizabeth, whose personal praise focuses on Mary, and not on her own joy in having a son in her old age. Thus there is a kind of criss-crossing effect in the praise of both women, for each expresses one's personal praise, but edifies the other.

**(6) Mary's praise does not focus on the child she will bear, but on Father who is sending His Messiah.** Geldenhuys has remarked,

It strikes us that Mary in this hymn does not utter a direct word in connection with the Son promised to her. Nevertheless she assumes throughout that He has indeed been promised her. Her whole hymn is inspired by this fact.

It seems to me that this is a very significant fact. We would expect Mary to be taken with the fact that she will have a baby, and that this baby will be the Son of God. While this is certainly true, Mary chose to focus on what the child would be and accomplish as an adult, and not what her child would be as a child. In other words, **Mary's praise does not focus on the immediate blessedness of her having this child, but on the ultimate outcome of the coming of Messiah.** She looks at the long range, not the short term. She views this event in terms of the distant past, in terms of the covenant promises of God, in terms of the history of Israel, where God's mercy was shown on generation after generation, and in terms of the distant future, when at His second coming Messiah will set things straight. At this time the social order will under a radical and violent reversal.

The lofty will be put down and the humble will be exalted (vv. 51-52). The hungry will be fed and the well-fed will be hungry. The poor will be helped, but the rich will be sent away (v. 53).

**(7) Mary focused more on the results of Christ's second coming than she did the first.** When you ponder the specific results of Messiah's incarnation as outlined in Mary's "Magnificat" they have to do with what we know of as Christ's second coming, more than with His first coming. I doubt that Mary was aware of the fact that Christ would come to earth twice, to achieve two distinct purposes. To press the matter further, I doubt that Mary understood that the redemptive purpose of Christ's first coming would be accomplished by His death on a cross, death at the hands of wicked men. Even this is a manifestation of God's grace, for at this early point in time such knowledge would only have caused Mary unnecessary and premature pain. Simeon's words in chapter 2 (v. 35) allude to this pain, but do not explain what its cause will be. How gracious God is in what He does not tell us, as well in what He does.

**(8) Mary's theology, as reflected in her "Magnificat" is vastly superior to that of the scribes and Pharisees, who would become the arch enemies of our Lord.** As I have studied Mary's psalm of praise it occurred to me that her theology was like that of her Son, and likewise, that it was very different from that of the scribes and Pharisees. I will not pursue this in any detail here, but let me point out several areas of contrast between Mary's theology, her understanding of the Old Testament, and that of the scribes and Pharisees. Mary did not mention the Law of Moses, the Mosaic Covenant, but only God's promise to Abraham, the Abrahamic Covenant. Mary understood that Israel's hope was rooted in the Abrahamic Covenant, not in the Mosaic. The scribes and Pharisees seemed as though they could only think and talk in terms of the Law of Moses. Mary viewed all of God's dealings in the light of His grace; the religious leaders only thought in terms of human works.

Mary understood the great themes of the Old Testament, such as God's mercy and compassion, God's concern for the poor and the helpless. These were the themes of the Old Testament prophets. They were not, however, the themes of the scribes and Pharisees. In His rebuke of the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus constantly referred to these great themes, and to the fact that legalistic Judaism violated them (cf. Matthew 23). Mary also understood the purposes of God as a plan which He had been carrying out throughout Israel's history. She viewed history in the light of this plan. The scribes and Pharisees, however, seemed only to grasp a few of the particulars, but missed the plan. They "strained the gnats" but they swallowed the camels. Mary grasped the "camels" and the religious leaders only grasped at the "gnats."

*(Adapted from URL: <https://bible.org/seriespage/2-worship-two-women-luke-139-56>)*

### ***Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary***

In 1984, Helen Ashe of Knoxville, Tennessee, saw a local news story about a church that sponsored a soup kitchen for the needy. Her heart was stirred, and she and her twin sister, Ellen, sensed a call to start a food ministry to "help feed God's children." So on Valentine's Day 1986, the 58-year-old sisters launched The Love Kitchen at a small church, serving 22 people on that first day. The Love Kitchen today operates out of its own facilities as it serves more than 3,000 meals weekly. Remarkably, it is an all-volunteer organization, with no paid staff. God still calls ordinary people to do extraordinary things. At age 80, Moses was called from self-imposed exile to lead the Israelites from Egypt (Exodus 3:10; 7:7); elderly Elizabeth suffered the disgrace of infertility (Luke 1:7, 13-25); Mary and Joseph probably had no earthly status above that of any other working-class resident of Galilee. The church today is filled with people who should identify with Mary's statement that "he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant."

### ***Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator Commentary***

1. We should acknowledge both great and small things the Lord does for us (Luke 1:39-44)
2. God will act in response to a small measure of faith (Luke 1:45-47; cf. 2 Thess. 3:3)
3. God's power transforms us into world changers. His power shames the prideful (Luke 1:48-51; cf. John 1:12; 1 Cor. 1:20)
4. God's plans make the sinner stumble and elevate the true believer (Luke 1:51)
5. God puts down and raises up those of His choosing according to His sovereign will (Luke 1:52-56; cf. 1 Sam. 2:7)