

Calvary Hanford

The Three Wise... Women

A Christmas 2006 Series



*Elizabeth: It's Wise to **Wait** on the Lord*

*Mary: It's Wise to **Worship** the Lord*

*Anna: It's Wise to **Witness** the Lord*

Mary

Text

Luke 1:39-56

Topic

Mary breaks forth into a magnificent psalm of praise and worship

Title

Mary's Melody

Luke 1:39 Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah,

Luke 1:40 and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

Luke 1:41 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.

Luke 1:42 Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb!

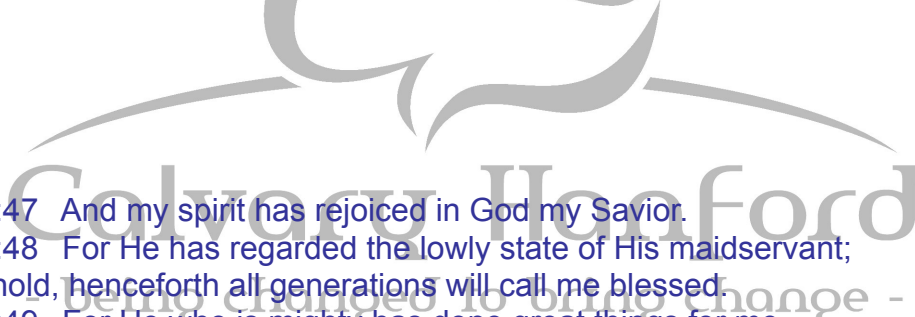
Luke 1:43 But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

Luke 1:44 For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

Luke 1:45 Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord."

Luke 1:46 And Mary said:

"My soul magnifies the Lord,



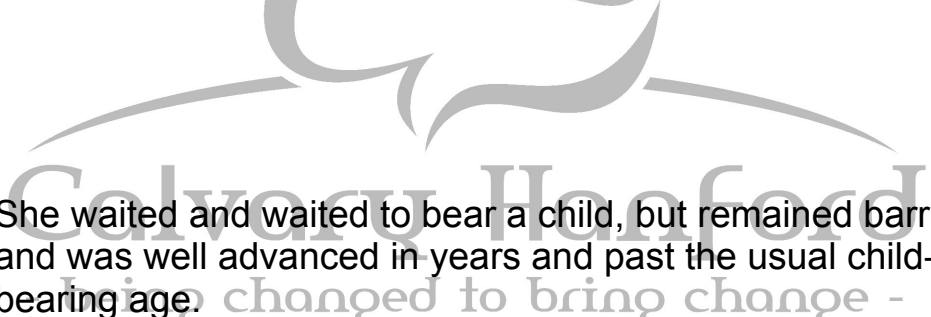
Luke 1:47 And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.
Luke 1:48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.
Luke 1:49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me,
And holy *is* His name.
Luke 1:50 And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.
Luke 1:51 He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts.
Luke 1:52 He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones,
And exalted *the* lowly.
Luke 1:53 He has filled *the* hungry with good things,
And *the* rich He has sent away empty.
Luke 1:54 He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of *His* mercy,
Luke 1:55 As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever.”
Luke 1:56 And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her
house.

Introduction

Three wise women had more to do with the first Christmas than the famous three wise men:

1. Elizabeth was the wife of Zacharias. Barren into her old age, God granted her a child. She would give birth to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. In the sixth month of her pregnancy, Mary the mother of Jesus visited Elizabeth and was greatly encouraged by her relative in her own virgin pregnancy.
2. Mary, of course, is the woman at the heart of the story. It would be more accurate to say she was the young girl – probably no more than fifteen or sixteen years of age.
3. The third woman is Anna. A widow who had dedicated herself to fasting and praying in the Temple at Jerusalem, she gave witness to the baby Jesus when He was presented for circumcision eight days after His birth.

These three wise women can teach us many things. We learned last week, from Elizabeth, about waiting:

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1. She waited and waited to bear a child, but remained barren, and was well advanced in years and past the usual child-bearing age.
 2. After she conceived, she waited another five months before showing herself pregnant with child.

In her long, sad, barrenness, Elizabeth had learned to wait with the Lord. In her pregnancy, she learned to wait for the Lord. **We** are called upon to do both in our own walks with Jesus.

As we come next to Mary, the mother of Jesus, we learn it is wise to **worship** the Lord.

Our text is a psalm of praise that was sung by Mary. It is known as '*The Magnificat*,' which is the Latin word translated **magnify** in verse forty-six, where Mary said, **My soul magnifies the Lord**.

That sounds like worship, doesn't it? Your **soul** magnifying the Lord; your **spirit** rejoicing in God as your Savior.

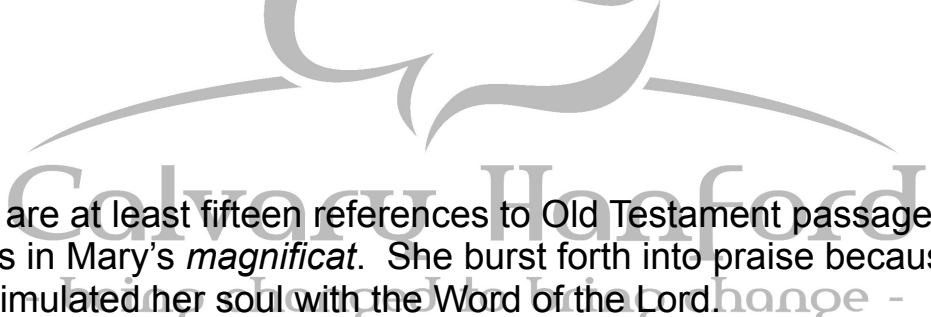
The question for us to ponder is, How did Mary come to this bursting forth into praise?

Of the many things we could cite, two are most prominent:

1. Mary stimulated her soul to worship with the Word of the Lord.
2. Mary stimulated her soul to worship with the coming of the Lord.

We can do the same. We'll organize our thoughts around two points: #1 Stimulate Your Soul To Magnify The Word Of The Lord And You'll Worship Him, and #2 Stimulate Your Soul To Magnify The Coming Of The Lord And You'll Worship Him.

- #1 Stimulate Your Soul To Magnify The Word Of The Lord
And You'll Worship Him
(v46-50)



There are at least fifteen references to Old Testament passages and psalms in Mary's *magnificat*. She burst forth into praise because she had stimulated her soul with the Word of the Lord.

I want to stress a few of the ways Mary magnified the Word of the Lord. We can begin by pointing out that she had memorized many passages.

You understand that she did not possess a copy of the Old Testament. She didn't have *God's Word for Virgins* in her purse. These fifteen-plus references came to her because she had memorized Scripture.

I'm the first to admit that I am horrible at memorization of anything! But I think we should add to our mission statement for 2007 a system of memorization. We cannot properly stimulate our souls to worship unless we are meditating on the Word that is stored in our hearts.

Looking at the song itself, Mary began by saying,

[Luke 1:46](#) ...

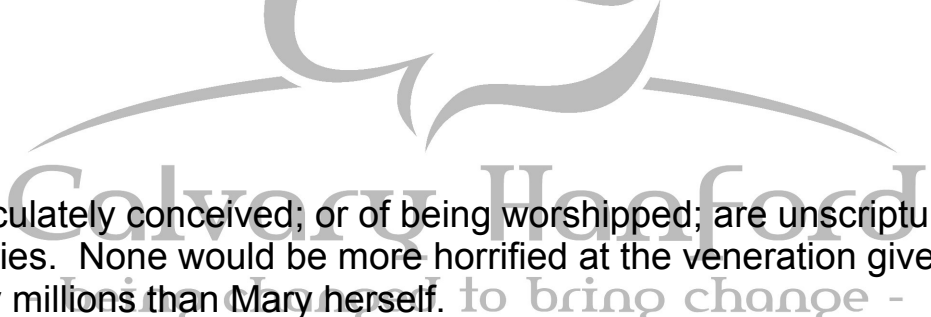
["My soul magnifies the Lord,](#)

[Luke 1:47](#) [And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.](#)

When Mary said, [my soul](#), she was borrowing a phrase from the psalms. Often a psalmist would describe meditating on God's Word as if he were speaking to his own soul – *speaking to himself*, as it were.

Do you talk to yourself? It's OK if you are speaking to yourself about God's Word! You discover truths about the Lord and about living in the Bible – then tell yourself to receive and apply them. It's a stimulant to your worship.

While we're here in verses forty-seven through fifty, I should say something about why we should not worship Mary. Look at Mary's declaration, [God my Savior](#). It reminds us that Mary was a sinner who needed to be saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. All of her words show she regarded herself a sinner saved by grace. Any thoughts of Mary being the mother of God; or of herself being



immaculately conceived; or of being worshipped; are unscriptural idolatries. None would be more horrified at the veneration given to her by millions than Mary herself.

Luke 1:48 For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant;
For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

Luke 1:49 For He who is mighty has done great things for me,
And holy *is* His name.

Luke 1:50 And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him
From generation to generation.

Mary needed to be saved; she offered herself as God's maidservant; she would serve God by His mighty power; her empowered service would impact future generations.

While Mary's service was unique, all of these same things could be said of you in your service to God:

1. You need to be saved.
2. You should offer yourself as God's servant.
3. You are to serve by His mighty power in that He will provide the spiritual resources necessary to your appointed task or tasks.
4. Your service does impact future generations of believers – whether in your personal family, or the greater Church family.

Getting back to our theme of stimulating our souls to worship... We've said that we need to be full of Scripture, then speak to ourselves using the Word. There's more.

Scholars notice that Mary's *magnificat* is rooted and grounded in a previous portion of Scripture. You find Hannah's psalm of worship in First Samuel chapter two. Hannah, you'll remember, was a barren woman who promised God she would dedicate her child to serve the Lord all the days of his life. God granted her request; she conceived and gave birth to Samuel; Hannah brought him to serve in the Temple where he established himself as Israel's first prophet.

This shows us that, sometimes, a particular passage of God's Word can have a special, prophetic application to your life and circumstances. **Nothing stimulates the soul like knowing God**



has spoken directly to your circumstances through His living Word.

- being changed to bring change -

There's one more thing we can say about stimulating your soul with the Word. Mary was told that she, a virgin, would nevertheless conceive a child. As a sign to her that with God nothing was impossible, she was told that her relative, Elizabeth, had conceived in her old age and would bear a child.

Mary went to see Elizabeth – an eighty-mile, four-day journey through the hill country. We would say that she acted upon the Word that God had given her. It was along that journey that her psalm was being formed in her soul.

Some of you athletes- especially runners – describe reaching a point in your exertion in which endorphins are released. You describe it as a kind of euphoria - a runner's high.

Mary experienced something like that as she journeyed. Not because of the physical exercise; but because it was a spiritual exercise of putting the Word into practice.

If I have the Word of God in my heart; then regularly speak to myself using the Word of God; then discover passages that speak to special needs and circumstances; then put the Word into practice as a spiritual exercise... **I'm going to be stimulated to magnify the Lord and worship Him.**

#2 Stimulate Your Soul To Magnify The Coming Of The Lord
And You'll Worship Him
(v51-55)

The words of the *magnificat* turn their attention on the coming of the Lord. But not on His first coming, to be born to Mary in Bethlehem! They describe His Second Coming, to rule over, and reign upon, the earth.

The things Mary said about the Lord had not yet occurred; and they would not occur in His first coming. She spoke in what scholars call

the 'prophetic past-tense,' meaning it hasn't happened yet but most certainly will because God has prophesied it.

- being changed to bring change -

Luke 1:51 He has shown strength with His arm;
He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts.

Luke 1:52 He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones,
And exalted *the* lowly.

Luke 1:53 He has filled *the* hungry with good things,
And *the* rich He has sent away empty.

These verses describe a moral reversal on the earth. The **proud** are **scattered**. Instead of morality being determined by the **imagination of their [wicked] hearts**, the Lord establishes morality.

Did that occur when Jesus came the first time? Has it occurred yet?

Next these verses describe a social reversal on the earth. Those who are **mighty**, and in power, are replaced by the **lowly**.

Did that occur when Jesus came the first time? Has it occurred yet?

Next these verses describe a material reversal on the earth. The **rich** are **sent away empty**, while the **hungry** are satisfied.


None of these things occurred when Jesus came; none has yet occurred. They await His Second Coming. It is then that He will rule and reign over the earth from Jerusalem.

The Lord's Second Coming has a great deal to do with His chosen nation, Israel. Thus we read in the closing words of the *magnificat*,

Luke 1:54 He has helped His servant Israel,
In remembrance of *His* mercy,

Luke 1:55 As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and to his seed forever.”

God has made unconditional promises to the physical descendants of Abraham – the Jews. In His mercy He has promised to regather them to their land; He will miraculously preserve them; He will save them; He will return to them.



He's doing it right now! We live in the amazing Last Days prophesied in the Bible. After being scattered, hated, despised, and nearly exterminated as a race, the Jews miraculously returned to their land. Since they did, and declared themselves a nation on May 14 of 1948, the attention of the world has been focused on them and on Jerusalem.

The Lord is coming back to do the things Mary sang about. He will establish a kingdom on the earth. But before He returns in His Second Coming, He's promised you He will return to remove the Church from the earth. He's promised to Rapture you. This Rapture could occur at any moment.

We talk about the Lord's return frequently. It's appropriate. There are something like eight-times as many prophecies about the Second Coming of Jesus to earth than there are about His first coming to be born as our Savior.

The point I'd make from Mary's psalm is this. It's easy to set aside thinking about the return of Jesus:

1. Unbelievers scoff at the promise of His coming.
2. Believers get busy with the business of this world and the Lord's return is deemphasized.

Nothing stimulates worship like knowing you will see Jesus at any moment!

We cannot magnify His coming too much. Think about all the emphasis we put upon Christmas. (I love it, by the way). We start, as a society, before Halloween to emphasize Christmas. We emphasize it all through Thanksgiving. For about two and a half months out of the year, it's on our minds.

Mathematically, we ought to emphasize the Lord's return for the entire rest of the calendar year!

This Christmas make it your heart's desire to be able honestly to proclaim, **My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.**



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Let the Word of the Lord, and the Coming of the Lord, stimulate your soul to magnify Him.

Mary made mention of the Lord showing the **strength of His arm**. The strength of the Lord's arm is in His reaching out to you, reaching down to you, to save you.

Isaiah 59:1 Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear:

Isaiah 59:2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear.

God pictures Himself as reaching out from Heaven to earth to save you. You're in a pit and cannot rescue yourself; but God can lift you up and out of your sin.



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- being changed to bring change -