

# Mary's *Magnificat*

## Her Hymn of Praise

### Christmas 2018

#### Introduction:

The event that led to Mary's *Magnificat* is the angel Gabriel's annunciation of Jesus' birth in Luke 1:26–38. The pertinent details are found in:

**Luke 1:31** “Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus [ Ἰησοῦς (*Iēsoús*): **Savior** ].

**v. 32** “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;

**v. 33** and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.”

**v. 34** Mary said to the angel, “How can it be, since I am a virgin?”

**v. 35** The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.” (NASB)

After Gabriel departed, Mary went to the home of Elizabeth and reported Gabriel's annunciation to her. What followed is Mary's recitation of her *Magnificat*.

Biblical scholars almost universally agree these verses comprise a poem composed by Mary. It is divided into four stanzas<sup>1</sup> and some conclude that she sang it as a hymn. Such is the view of *The NET Bible* whose subparagraph heading for the passage reads, “Mary's Hymn of Praise.”

<sup>1</sup> “Stanza: A division of a poem, usually made according to a pattern. However, a poem is sometimes divided into stanzas according to thought, as well as form, in which case a stanza is a unit similar to a paragraph in prose. Strophe is another term used for stanza” (Coles Editorial Board, *Dictionary of Literary Terms* [Toronto: Coles Publishing Co., 1980], 192).



**Stanza 1: Luke 1:46–48**

1. Verse 46 introduces the hymn, “And Mary said,” but *The NET Bible* provides this “study note”:

The following passage has been typeset as poetry because many scholars regard this passage as poetic or hymnic. There are two broad criteria for determining if a passage is poetic or hymnic: “(a) *Stylistic*: a certain rhythmical lilt when the passages are read aloud, the arrangement into couplets, the semblance of some metre, and the presence of rhetorical devices, such as alliteration; and (b) *linguistic*: an unusual vocabulary, particularly the presence of theological terms, which is different from the surrounding context. Classifying a passage as hymnic or poetic is important because understanding this genre can provide keys to interpretation.<sup>2</sup>

**Luke 1:46** And Mary said, “My soul exalts  
[ present active indicative of the verb μεγαλύνω  
(*megalúnō*): to magnify ] the Lord, (NASB)

2. The word, “exults,” translates the Latin, *Magnificat*, which is the first word in the Latin Vulgate’s translation of Mary’s hymn and in context incorporates the attitude of praise and tribute to God:

The first word in the Vulgate of the hymn of Mary in response to the Annunciation [Gabriel’s announcement to Mary of the virgin birth, 1:30–35]. She sings ‘My soul does magnify the Lord’ (*Magnificat anima mea Dominum*).<sup>3</sup>

3. Other words that could be used are: reveres, venerates, praises, extols, esteems, or lionizes. The aoristic present tense sets forth an event as now occurring. Mary is focused on the grace of God that has chosen her to provide gestation for the true humanity of Messiah.
4. In this verse she emphasizes doctrines that circulate in the stream of consciousness of her soul where she possessed a high inventory of biblical ideas. The opening sentence continues in verse 47 where Mary refers to her human spirit:

**Luke 1:47** and my spirit has rejoiced in God my  
Savior. “ (NASB)

5. Here she refers to her human spirit. When the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit, these two spirits work in conjunction with each other to access divine guidance contained in the believer’s inventory of ideas. (See Ephesians 3:16–19)

<sup>2</sup> *The NET Bible* (Dallas: Biblical Studies Press, 1996–2005), 1916sn23.

<sup>3</sup> James Morwood, *A Dictionary of Latin Words and Phrases* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 110.



6. Gabriel's annunciation to Mary has caused her to recall doctrines from the Tanakh that refer to the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Daniel 9:26–26 cp. John 1:41; 4:25–26).
7. She refers to her "spirit," the noun **πνεῦμα (pneúma)**, that "has rejoiced," the aorist active indicative of the verb, **ἀγαλλιάω (agalliáō)**: "unalloyed happiness." Peter expresses this same form of happiness in:

**1 Peter 1:8** And though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not seem Him now, you believe in Him, you greatly rejoice [ **ἀγαλλιάω (agalliáō)**: "unalloyed happiness ] with joy inexpressible and full of glory. (NASB)

8. The aorist tense is a pure ingressive; the stress is on the beginning of an action that the context usually makes clear is *not* a momentary action. The annunciation from Gabriel was only the starting point for her "unalloyed happiness."
9. She then refers to Messiah as her "Savior" with the noun **Σωτήρ (Sōtēr)**.

**Luke 1:47** and my human spirit has begun to have continuous unalloyed happiness in God my Messiah/Savior." (EXT)

### Principles:

1. Mary's emphasis is on God's provision of a Savior and is honored to be the singular source of His true humanity.
2. God is the recipient of her introductory remarks regarding his plan to provide salvation for the entire human race.
3. Mary is revealed as a serious student of the Tanakh. She is well aware of Hannah's prophetic prayer, sometimes described as "The Song of Hannah," recorded in:

**1 Samuel 2:1** Then Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the Lord; my horn [ human strength ] is exalted in the Lord, my mouth speaks boldly against my enemies, because I rejoice in Your salvation. (NASB)

It may well be that Hannah's song is the seedplot for Mary's Magnificat (Luke 1:46–55). The two hymns begin similarly, and certain themes in the Song of Hannah recur in the Song of Mary (cf. 1 Samuel 2:4, 7–8 with Luke 1:52; 1 Samuel 2:5 with Luke 1:53).



Both Hannah and Mary became pregnant miraculously (though admittedly in quite different ways), in due course each presented her firstborn son to the Lord at the central sanctuary (1 Samuel 1:22; Luke 2:22), and both sang a hymn of thanksgiving and praise (Hannah after the birth of Samuel [1 Samuel 2:1–10], Mary before the birth of Jesus [Luke 1:46–55]).<sup>4</sup>

10. We do not have time to examine all six of the similarities in the two hymns except to provide a cross reference to each. Cyrus Scofield inserts a chart in his *Scofield Study Bibles* that fulfills this objective.<sup>5</sup> See associated visual: “The Magnificats of the Bible-Scofield.”

**Luke 1:48** “For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; for behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.” (NASB)

11. This verse begins with the causal conjunction **ὅτι (hóti)** introducing the reason for Mary’s exaltations. This is followed by the aorist active indicative of **ἐπιβλέπω (epiblépō)**: “with reference to kindness and favor.”<sup>6</sup>
12. The constative aorist contemplates the action in its entirety meaning that God keeps on favoring Mary. Mary characterizes herself as a person of low estate and inferior position in society with the noun, **ταπείνωσις (tapeínōsis)**: humble estate.
13. She shows deference to the Lord by avoiding a personal pronoun, therefore in the custom of the day she addresses Him with her station in society with the noun, **δούλη (doúlē)**: “handmaid.”
14. After humbly recognizing her earthly status she then expresses her newly appointed station in world history introduced by the ablative of time separation, **ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν (apó tou nún)**: “from this time on.”
15. How long is “from this time on?” The next phrase, “all generations” means that over the course of human history “will count me blessed” the future active indicative of the verb **μακαρίζω (makarízō)**.<sup>7</sup> The Attic future takes on the idea of felicitation, therefore “to consider fortunate.”

<sup>4</sup> Ronald F. Youngblood, “1, 2 Samuel,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1992), 3:579.

<sup>5</sup> See: C. I. Scofield, ed., “The Magnificats of the Bible,” in *The Scofield Study Bible: NASB* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 389n2:1.

<sup>6</sup> Spiros Zodhiates, ed., “ἐπιβλέπω,” in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: New Testament*, rev. ed. (Chattanooga: AMG Publishers, 1993), 623.

<sup>7</sup> “So-called Attic future of an old verb, to felicitate. This is a very different thing from the worship of Mary (Mariolatry) by Roman Catholics” (Archibald Thomas Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament: The Gospel According to Luke* [Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1930], 2:16–17).



16. This is one of several biblical passages the Church of Rome erroneously applies to its heretical doctrine, Theotokos, “the mother of God,” accorded to her at the Council of Ephesus in 431.
17. Further heresy followed with the false doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, “the idea that she did not have original sin at her conception nor did she acquire elements of original sin in the development of her life.”<sup>8</sup>
18. There is no argument that Mary is regarded as an essential and ultimate necessity in the prophesied conclusion of the Jewish chart pedigree of Jesus.
19. God the Father chose her from among all the women of her day to fulfill the Messianic prophecies in the Tanakh. Consequently, she is considered blessed by God among the revered host of biblical heroes.
20. However, she makes things perfectly clear that she is not Immaculate with the second line of the Magnificat: “My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior” (Luke 1:47).
21. If truly sinless, she would have no need for the Savior!

**Luke 1:48** For God has had kindness and favor for the humble estate of His handmaid; from this time on all generations will continue to count me fortunate. (EXT)

### Stanza 2: Luke 1:49–50

**Luke 1:49** “For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name. (NASB)

1. Mary expresses both her personal humility and gratitude toward God in the first stanza. In the second, she comments on His divine attributes. She refers to the Father as “the Mighty One.”
2. This divine title is the masculine singular of **δυνατός (dunatos)**: “the All-Powerful One.” It is the subject of the aorist active indicative of the verb, **ποιέω (poiēō)**: to produce actions for the benefit of Mary.
3. The culminative aorist refers to the progressive actions of events which have reached their intended conclusion. Mary is the recipient of divine imputations that are now complete with an existing result.
4. These actions are described by her as “great things,” the plural adjective, **μέγας (mégas)**. The term refers to a virtue that represents what is truly significant and genuinely important.

<sup>8</sup> Terence J. German, “Immaculate Conception,” in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984), 550.



5. Mary then recognizes certain divine attributes of the Father with her accolade, "holy," the adjective, ἅγιος (*hágios*), which, when referring to the integrity of God, consists of His immutable righteousness, His virtuous justice, His cognitive omniscience, and His policy of grace.
6. Therefore, she recognizes the superiority of divine integrity over all creation. On this occasion, she has been selected by Him to participate in the fulfillment of the royal chart pedigree by delivering the true humanity of Messiah into human history.
7. Her humility again refutes the heresy of Mariolatry by recognizing God as the Holy One, Who, in three Persons, possesses divine integrity from the status of ultimate perfection.
8. Only God is "holy." God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit represent the only possessors of divine integrity and they are not of this world.
9. This is a fallen planet occupied by fallen Homo sapiens whose flawed nature consistently replicates its historical emotional swings from bondage to abundance and back to bondage:

#### THE CYCLE OF CIVILIZATION

Man begins his existence in *bondage*,  
 And rises from bondage through *spiritual faith*,  
 From spiritual faith to *courage*,  
 From courage to *liberty*,  
 From liberty to abundance,  
 From abundance to *selfishness*,  
 From selfishness to *complacency*,  
 From complacency to *apathy*,  
 From apathy to *dependency*,  
 From dependency back to *bondage*.<sup>9</sup>

10. The source for this vicious cycle is the angelic conflict. Lucifer rules this world. The only certified defense against his cosmic schemes is the Word of God in the souls of believers. Its divine power enables them to withstand, but never fully defeat, its machinations. That victory will be won by Jesus Christ at His second advent.
11. Mary does not claim any personal involvement in the miracle that was imputed to her womb but rather recognizes its divine origin. The blastocyst, embryo, fetus, and Homo sapiens of Jesus Christ is gestating in her but without any volitional involvement by her.

<sup>9</sup> The author of this verse is not firmly established. R. B. Thieme, Jr., cites in his transcript, *In Whom Do You Trust? The True Hope of a Nation*, Clarence Manion, dean of the Notre Dame law school, as a source, but who is not the author. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1993 [p. 12]).



12. Of all the divine miracles supplied by God, this is the summum bonum. It results in the entry of Messiah into the cosmic conflict of Lucifer's domain. The Person that emerges is the long-awaited Messiah, the Hebrew masculine noun מָשִׁיחַ (*Mashiyach*) and the Greek Μεσσίας (*Messías*): "The Anointed One."
13. Mary then attributes to God the singular title, "holy," the adjective, ἅγιος (*hágios*). This word describes several subjects but most importantly the Members of the Trinity. In our context, it refers to God the Father and the term incorporates the integrity of God with emphasis on righteousness, justices, and omniscience.
14. Mary salutes the Father by recognizing His omnipotence with the title "the Mighty One" and citing His integrity with the phrase, "holy is His name."
15. Mary is quoting a verse from Psalm 99 which Scofield entitles, "Reverence for God's greatness and holiness":

**Psalm 99:3** Let them praise Your great and awesome name; Holy is He.

**v. 4** The strength of the King loves justice; You have established equity; You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. (NASB)

**Luke 1:49** "For the Omnipotent One has produced extremely significant things for me; and integrity is His name. (EXT)

**Luke 1:50** "And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him." (NASB)

1. The key word in this verse is mercy, the noun ἔλεος (*éleos*). As a function of the integrity of God, mercy is defined as:

The aspect of God's love that causes Him to help the miserable, just as grace is the aspect of His love that moves Him to forgive the guilty. Those who are miserable may be so either because of breaking God's laws or because of circumstances beyond their control.

God shows compassion toward those who have broken His law  
 1 Timothy 1:13 ["I was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor. Yet I was shown mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief"], although such mercy is selective, demonstrating that it is not deserved.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Dictionary. Gen. ed. Ronald F. Youngblood (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1986), 822.



- Mary indicates that this divine benevolence extends from generation to generation to a certain category of people, “toward those who fear Him.” Mary quotes this blessing from:

**Psalm 19:9a** The fear of the Lord is clean,  
enduring forever;<sup>11</sup> (NASB)

- The word “fear” is the present middle participle of φοβέομαι (*phobéomai*): “to have a profound measure of respect for, *have* reverence, with special reference to fear of offending God.”<sup>12</sup>
- We will incorporate this definition into our translation, “reverential respect” which is the requirement for the Lord to extend His mercy. The Psalms passage tells us that this respect is clean, the adjective, טָהוֹר (*tahor*): “genuine.”
- Mary uses the phrase “generation after generation” while the Psalmist reads “forever,” referring to eternity. From these observations, our expanded translation reads thusly:

**Luke 1:50** “And His mercy is extended forever  
toward those generations who have genuine reverential  
respect for Him.” (EXT)

### Stanza 3: Luke 1:51–53

**Luke 1:51** “He has done mighty deeds with His  
arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the  
thoughts of their heart. (NASB)

- In this stanza, Mary discusses God’s management of events that take place in the devil’s world. First of all, she comments retrospectively with the use of two culminative aorist active indicatives relating to events in the past and four gnomic aorist indicatives that indicate God always does something.
- Therefore, these three verses address the cultural decline of the people (v. 51) and their rulers (v. 52) followed by God’s mercy to the innocent and discipline to the guilty (v. 53).
- The verse opens with the culminative aorist active imperative of ποιέω (*poiéō*): “to cause.” This verb is caused by His κράτος (*krátos*): “power and dominion.”

<sup>11</sup> Dr. Scofield supplies this footnote: “The fear of the Lord” is an Old Testament expression meaning *reverential trust, including hatred of evil* (*The Scofield Study Bible: NASB*, ed. C. I. Scofield [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005], 759n19:9).

<sup>12</sup> Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature*, 3d ed., rev. and ed. Frederick William Danker (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1061.





4. The word “arm,” is the noun, **βραχίων (brachíōn)**, an anthropomorphic<sup>13</sup> illustration depicting the power of God to perform tasks requiring great power and ability.
5. “God has caused His power to be demonstrated with His omnipotence” opens the verse. She then comments on the fate of those who have bucked the divine system with the second culminative aorist active imperative: **διασκορπίζω (diaskorpízō)**: “scattered.”
6. Scattering of a population occurs when its people have degrees from the Satanic Academy of Cosmic Didactics. They are expert functionaries in the Cosmic Systems’ Arrogance and the Hatred Complexes.
7. The word “proud” is **ὑπερήφανος (hyperéphanos)**: arrogance in association with the rejection of God and His Word and is the direct object of the word “scattered.”
8. The source of their arrogance is stated next with the word “thoughts,” the noun **διάνοια (diánoia)**. Pride is a mental attitude sin that is cultivated by and nurtured in the heart, **καρδία (kardía)**, the stream of consciousness of the soul.
9. This verse refers to the scattering of a population due to loss of thought. It could be accomplished by the invasion of a predator nation, rebellion within, or catastrophic circumstances such as disease, natural disasters, or economic failure.
10. Such a demise is precipitated by the loss of thought among the population. God’s system is so designed that violations of His establishment system and rejection of doctrinal principles naturally result in divine discipline.
11. The underlying problem that leads to these tragic consequences is the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior and the rejection of divine viewpoint which is only acquired by serious study of the Word of God.

**Luke 1:51** God has caused his power to be demonstrated with His omnipotence; He has scattered those who had arrogant thoughts in their *kardías*. (EXT)

**Luke 1:52** He has brought down rulers from their thrones, and has exalted those who are humble. (NASB)

1. This verse contains two more gnomic aorist active indicative verbs which mean their actions are always true.

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<sup>13</sup> “Anthropomorphic: Attributing human form or qualities to gods or animals. Homer’s gods and goddesses in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are anthropomorphized deities” (*Dictionary of Literary Terms*), 14.



2. The first verb leads off the verse: **καθαιρέω (*kathairéō*)**: to dethrone potentates such as princes, kings, rulers of all sorts. The gnomic aorist indicates that it is always true that God takes care of these types throughout history.
3. The end result is that these types are removed from their thrones, their positions of power. Those who are in positions of high authority gain that position by election, succession, or overthrow. Each of these can occur legitimately or illegitimately.
4. It is the latter that is indicated here. By means of any of these three, the new person in power become a tyrant, a dictator, or an authoritarian. This situation also occurs under an oligarchy: a government in which a small group exercises control especially for corrupt and selfish purposes.
5. There are in essence two major oligarchies presently functional in the world, Russia and China. There is a developing oligarchy emerging in the United States. All three are run by tyrants who are candidates for the Lord's Operation *Kathairéō*.
6. The second gnomic aorist verb is "exalted": **ὑψόω (*hupsóō*)**: "to raise to a condition of prosperity, dignity, or honor; to cause enhancement in honor, fame, position, power, or fortune."
7. Those who qualify for the Lord's mercy are described as "those who were humble," the direct object of *hupsóō* are **ταπεινός (*tapeinós*)**: "low social status or relative inability to cope."
8. Those who are consistently orienting and adjusting to divine viewpoint and therefore advancing in the plan of God are out of sync with the rest of the world. When the potentates become authoritarians, the Lord's mercy to the oppressed begins to come into view.
9. As I understand it, there is a series available on the Internet named, The Game of Thrones." From what I've heard, it may be an excellent example of Luke 1:52a.

**Luke 1:52** The Lord has always brought down potentates from their thrones and exalted those who were genuinely humble. (EXT)

**Luke 1:53** "He has filled the hungry with good things; and sent away the rich emptyhanded. (NASB)

1. This verse opens with the gnomic aorist active indicative of **ἐμπίπλημι (*empíplēmi*)**: "to fill." This makes references to two concepts: **(1)** to be filled with physical nourishment and **(2)** by spiritual nourishment.



2. These two verses demonstrate that those who arrogantly reject nourishment from the Word of God will soon run short of nourishment for the body.
3. On the other hand, those with the humility to place the Word as top priority will be provided the physical nourishment required to learn and then apply spiritual power in their lives.
4. These are described as “hungry,” the present active participle of **πεινάω** (*peináoō*), used as a metonymy to describe those who are without logistics.
5. Therefore, the verb *empíplēmi*, “to fill,” refers to filling the body and the soul with both physical and spiritual bread. The “good things”—**ἀγαθός** (*agathós*)—mentioned in verse 53, refer to both these concepts which are emphasized by the Lord in:

**Matthew 4:3** And the tempter [ Lucifer ] came and said to Him [ Jesus ], “If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread.”

**v. 4** But He said, “It is written [ Deuteronomy 8:3b ], ‘Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.’” (NASB)

6. Depending exclusively on the devil’s world for security is a poor source for maintaining confidence. Such types are described by another metonymy, “the rich”: **πλουτέω** (*ploutéō*).
7. Those who are rich in physical possessions are shown to be poor with regard to spiritual knowledge. Their riches will be removed due to historical downtrends, ill-advised investments, frivolous expenditures, and ultimate bankruptcy.
8. The end result is “emptyhandedness”: **κενός** (*kenós*): “being without anything material; devoid of intellectual, moral, or spiritual value, *empty*.”<sup>14</sup>
9. There is a spiritual hunger and thirst that emanates from the soul of the individual about which our Lord commented in His sermon on the mount:

**Matthew 5:6** “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. (NASB)

10. He also spoke along these lines to His disciples in:

**Luke 6:21a** “Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be satisfied. (NASB)

<sup>14</sup> Bauer, κενός, in *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 3d ed. (2000), 539.

11. Mary is again inspired by recalling a similar idea in Hannah's prayer by borrowing from her comments in:

**1 Samuel 2:5a** "Those who were full hire themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry cease to hunger." (NASB)

12. Mary's verse is quite similar:

**Luke 1:53** He has filled those who are hungry with the good things of physical and spiritual nourishment; those rich in material wealth He has sent away destitute. (EXT)

#### Stanza 4: Luke 1:54–55

**Luke 1:54** "He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, (NASB)

1. This verse begins with the culminative aorist middle indicative of the verb **ἀντιλαμβάνω** (*antilambánō*). The middle voice is deponent, therefore active in meaning. It means "to take someone's part by assisting, come to the aid of."<sup>15</sup>
2. In context this assistance and aid has been provided by God to **Ἰσραήλ** (*Israēl*). This proper noun applies to the nomen Israel whose praenomen was Jacob. Secondly, it applies to the nation Israel. Its use here refers to the latter.
3. Therefore, the word, **παῖς** (*país*): "servant," refers to the nation not the individual: "The servant of God, spoken of a minister or ambassador of God, called and beloved of God, and sent by Him to perform any service, e.g., of Israel (Luke 1:54)."<sup>16</sup>
4. God does that as a "remembrance," the aorist passive infinitive of **μνάομαι** (*mnáomai*): "to remember, to recall. The covenant with Abraham is in view here."<sup>17</sup>
5. What God is said to "remember" is His "mercy," **ἔλεος** (*éleos*):

**Mercy is a form of love determined by the state or condition of its objects. Mercy is at once the disposition of love respecting such, and the kindly ministry of love for their relief.**<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., "ἀντιλαμβάνω," 89.

<sup>16</sup> Zodhiates, "παῖς," in *The Complete Word Study Dictionary*, 1089.

<sup>17</sup> Cleon L. Rogers Jr. and Cleon L. Rogers III, "μνησθῆναι," in *The New Linguistic and Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 109–110.

<sup>18</sup> Merrill F. Unger, "Mercy," in *The New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, rev. ed., ed. R. K. Harrison (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1988), 835.



6. Verse 54 is the first half of a sentence that is completed in verse 55. Here is a brief summary that serves as a transposition from one to the other:

Mary specifies the recipients of God's favor as "His servant Israel." Israel benefits due to the "remembrance of His mercy." This refers to God's promises to Abraham. In the past He had sent Moses to deliver His people. Now He would send the Deliverer par excellence, the Messiah.<sup>19</sup>

**Luke 1:54** "He has come to the aid and assistance of the nation Israel, His servant, in remembrance of His loving mercy, (EXT)

**Luke 1:55** as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his descendants forever. (NASB)

1. Mary reminds Israel that God spoke to "our fathers," which refer to the Jewish patriarchs and cites Abraham specifically followed by his descendants.
2. Abraham and his descendants introduce and contain the Jewish Chart Pedigree of Jesus, its royal line beginning with David, and has now concluded with Mary's pregnancy of the true humanity of Messiah.
3. The Jewish line was made possible to endure because Abraham took up the challenge offered to him by Theophanies of Jesus Christ beginning in Ur of the Chaldeans.
4. Over the course of over 45 years, Abraham systematically accumulated five working objects to which his faith could reference in order to establish the bloodline necessary to produce the Messiah.
5. What Abraham did on Mount Moriah certified to the Father that the line of Messiah would progress through Isaac which was prolonged by the birth of Jacob/Israel and then through his twelve sons, specifically through Judah.
6. Because of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and those who followed through the Jewish chart pedigree down to the virgin Mary, the Messiah of Israel is prepared to enter history in a place called Bethlehem.

**Luke 1:55** as God spoke to our patriarchs, to Abraham and his Jewish progeny for all eternity. (EXT)

7. Now pregnant, Mary is about nine months away from giving birth to the Messiah, an event that would establish the working object for every member of the human race to possess eternal life through faith in Him.

<sup>19</sup> Alberto S. Valdéz, "Luke," in the *Grace New Testament Commentary: Matthew–Acts*, ed. Robert N. Wilkin (Denton, Tex.: Grace Evangelical Society 2010), 1:229.



**Luke 2:1** Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth.

**v. 2** This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

**v. 3** And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.

**v. 4** Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David,

**v. 5** in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

**v. 6** While they were there the days were completed for her to give birth.

**v. 7** And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn.

**v. 8** In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

**v. 9** And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

**v. 10** But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;

**v. 11** for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

**v. 12** "This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

**v. 13** And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

**v. 14** "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."



**Luke 2:15** When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us."

**v. 16** So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.

**v. 17** When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child.

**v. 18** And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

**v. 19** But Mary treasured all these things, pondering in her heart.

**v. 20** The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

**v. 21** And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb. (NASB)

In 2011, I taught a series on Jesus that included a study of the above passage. It was decided to have Scott Carson develop a painting based on these verses. It presently hangs on the auditorium's wall to my left and the visual is on the overhead screen.

It was then decided to use it for the front of a Christmas card which has since been posted online each December.

I wrote a poem based on Luke 2:1–21. The painting and the poem are entitled, "The Sign." I conclude today's study by reciting the poem.



## The Sign

The Lord entered this world prepared  
On a cross of wood to die,  
While He, wrapped in burial cloths,  
In a feeding trough did lie.

From David's line He entered time—  
The Lion of Judah's roar—  
As Heir apparent to the crown  
That Herod in arrogance wore.

Where shepherds watched, attending flocks,  
An angel appeared o'erhead;  
His message did assuage their fear  
With good news that quickly spread.

He spoke to them of Bethlehem,  
Which Micah did prophesy,  
"The Savior, Christ the Lord, is born  
In David's city nearby."

And then he gave to them a sign  
By which to identify  
The One who would be sacrificed  
For man's sins and then to die.

Then on high, in rank and file,  
Heavenly armies did appear,  
Flying through to pass in review  
Before the symbolic bier.

Filing by, the angelic throng  
Saluted Him with this creed:  
"Glory to God in the highest;  
His peace to whom He's well-pleased."

The prototype system in place,  
God's perfect plan went in motion;  
Each person's volition must choose  
His redemption solution.

Oh, what must one do to avail  
This eternal salvation?  
Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ:  
Sin's only absolution.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Joe Griffin, "The Sign" (St. Charles: Joe Griffin Media Ministries, 2011). © 2011 by Joe Griffin Media Ministries. All rights reserved.

