

His Favor

Luke 1:46-50

Dr. Paul Cannings, Ph.D.

A. Experiencing God (vs. 46-47):

1. And Mary said – After Mary heard Elizabeth describe her as blessed, which confirmed what Mary had heard the angel Gabriel say, Mary expressed her interpretation of all that had happened to her. Before Mary spoke, she had only discussed her pregnancy with the angel Gabriel and Elizabeth.

a) Elizabeth's song (Luke 1:41–45) spoke of being "filled with the Holy Spirit." That concept occurred in the Old Testament (cf. Num. 11:24–30; Deut. 34:9; Mic. 3:8) as well as in Luke's writings in the New Testament (Luke 1:15, 41; Acts 2:4; 4:8, 31; 9:17; 13:9). The filling with the Spirit was closely associated with the act of speaking. It took the sense of prophetic utterance involving the sovereign work of the Spirit of God. For Elizabeth, this filling was for a particular task, to praise the work of God in Jesus the Messiah.[\[1\]](#)

b) MARY:

- Mary, the mother of Jesus (Lk 1-2). We know nothing of Mary's background except that she was a peasant and a resident of Nazareth, a city of Galilee. She must have been from the tribe of Judah and thus in the line of David (Lk 1:32), although the genealogies in Mt 1 and Lk 3 do not say so, because they traced Joseph's genealogy rather than Mary's. We do know that Mary's cousin, Elizabeth, was the mother of John the Baptist. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

- When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, Mary "wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger" (Lk 2:7). She witnessed the visits of the shepherds and the Wise Men and "pondered them in her heart" (Lk 2:19) and heard Simeon's prophecy of a sword that would pierce through her soul (Lk 2:35). Joseph and Mary fled to Egypt to escape Herod's murder of all males under two years old (Mt 2:13-18). Neither Mary nor Joseph appear again until Jesus is 12 years old, at which time He stayed behind in the Temple with the teachers (Lk 2:41-52). Both Mary and Joseph accepted Jesus' explanation, realizing that He was Israel's Promised One. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

- The Scriptures do not mention Mary again until she stands at the foot of the cross (Jn 19:25-27). No mention is made of Joseph; he had likely been dead for

some time. Jesus' brothers were not among His followers. Of His family, only His mother held fast to her belief in His messiahship—even though it appeared to be ending in tragedy. From the cross Jesus gave Mary over to the care of the beloved disciple, John. The last mention of Mary is in the upper room in Jerusalem, awaiting the coming of the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:14). We do not know how or when Mary died. The Tomb of the Virgin is in the Valley of Kidron in Jerusalem, southeast of the Temple area; but there is no historical basis for this site. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

d) BETHLEHEM:

- The birthplace of Jesus Christ (see Map 3, B4). Bethlehem was situated about eight kilometers (five miles) south of Jerusalem in the district known as Ephrathah (Mic 5:2), a region known for its fertile hills and valleys. (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)
- Bethlehem was the burial place of Rachel, the wife of Jacob (Ge 35:19). This was also the original home of Naomi and her family, as well as the setting for much of the Book of Ruth. Bethlehem was the ancestral home of David (1 Sa 17:12) and was rebuilt and fortified by King Rehoboam (2 Ch 11:6). (from Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary, Copyright © 1986, Thomas Nelson Publishers)

2. My soul exalts – From the deepest, innermost parts of Mary's life she cries out continuously, intentionally saying how great and mighty is the Lord God. She humbly worships with complete surrender respecting our mighty Lord. This is the focus of Mary's praise and worship.

a) 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).[\[2\]](#)

3. My soul exalts in the Lord – Mary's direct focus is in her praise and worship is to highlight the power, authority and might of the Lord God. In a time when God was silent, and had not spoken for 400 years, Mary announces that He is still in power and can therefore do all things... nothing is impossible for God (Luke 1:37). So, it is in Him that she moves and breaths (Acts 17:28).

a) The words of Mary's song (Luke 1:46–55) recognized that God's work through Jesus fulfilled the promise God made to Abraham (1:55). Mary praised God's acts of exalting the humble and bringing humiliation upon the proud and rich. In Jesus, God had reversed the means of attaining greatness in the world.[\[3\]](#)

4. And my spirit rejoices - First it is Mary's inner most being that worships the Lord; now she expresses that her desire is to reflect on how her faith in all that was told her leads her to, once and for all, leap exuberantly for joy like a lamb living care free because of the powerful work of its shepherd. It does not matter what obstacles Mary would encounter, the Lord is God and He can do the impossible.

5. God my Savior – God, who created all things is the One who delivers Mary from all her struggles she encounters, whether it is going to Egypt or placing her baby in a manger or dealing with Herod, God who is over all things is going to rescue and preserve her and her Son.

a) The phrase "God my Saviour" is familiar in the LXX, where it represents the Hebrew "God of my salvation" (Ps. 24:5 (23:5); 25:5 (24:5); Mi. 7:7; Hab. 3:18; Sir. 51:1; G. Fohrer, TDNT VII, 1012f.). The nearest OT parallels to the couplet as a whole are Hab. 3:18; Ps. 35:9 (34:9); 1 Sa. 2:1 (cf. Ps. Sol. 3:7; 17:3).[\[4\]](#)

b) Mary recognized she needed the Lord to be her Savior and received the Holy Spirit like everyone else that gathered together in Acts 1:14.

6. He has had regard for the humble bonds slave – God had purposefully taken special notice of Mary and provided to her His favor even though she was a person of low status who had nothing to boast about. No matter how low her status she was deeply committed to serve the Lord with the level of sacrifice He may require.

a) As is usual in this kind of hymn (H. Gunkel*, 47f.), the expression of praise is followed by a statement giving the grounds for it. God has looked graciously at the lowly state of His servant. ἐπιβλέπω is often used to express loving care (1 Sa. 1:11; 9:16; Lk. 9:38*; Jas. 2:3). (W. Grundmann, TDNT VIII, 21), and perhaps also her humble attitude towards God (Schürmann, I, 73f.).

b) Pride is refusing to accept God's gifts or taking credit for what God has done; humility is accepting the gifts and using them to praise and serve God. Don't deny, belittle, or ignore your gifts. Thank God for them and use them for His glory.[\[5\]](#)

7. Behold, generations will call her blessed – Because of all that the Lord is doing and will do, Mary requires special attention from all those who reflect on her being the mother of Jesus. All those who come after her will view her as fully sacrificed, fortunate and happy.

a) Compare Gen 30:13 for an example of synonymous parallelism in which Leah's blessedness was due not to her own piety but to God's goodness toward her in

granting her a child. For a parallel to the proclamation of Mary's blessedness for all generations, see Jdt 13:18; 14:7.[\[6\]](#)

B. Blessed! (vs. 49-50):

1. For the Mighty One - God is the supreme power who is expertly capable, all by Himself, fulfill all His promises.
2. He has done great things for me - God has created all things and because He is the Mighty One, everything He initiates is of an extensive magnitude and can be beyond human comprehension.
3. And holy is His name – God's perfect pure attributes are summed up in His power, authority, and His glory- the full displaying His glory.
 - a) Holy is His name. Compare Ps 111:9. This is simply another way of saying, "He [i.e., God] is holy." God's holiness here refers not simply to His moral perfection, but even more to His acts of righteousness and justice by which He fulfills His covenantal promises to the humble and lowly (Luke 1:48–50, 53–55) and brings judgment upon the unrighteous and haughty (1:51–52). In 11:2 the believer prayed that this holiness would soon be manifested, and in Matt 6:10 this is further clarified by the words "on earth as it is in heaven." Luke's statement probably is best taken with what follows rather than with what precedes.[\[7\]](#)
4. His Mercy upon generation to generation - God's kindness and pity, because of how sin devastated mankind, provided through Mary, to all generations, no matter the person's race, social or economic status (Mary was of low status), salvation was offered to all. This is God's primary objective.
5. Towards those who fear Him – His mercy is extended to all those who continuously reverence and respect His deity. The writer of Hebrews says; "Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire." (Heb 12:28-29; NASB)
 - a) Those who fear him – Those who revere God and live in harmony according to His will.
6. Towards those who fear Him – When we reflect on how God sustained the promises He made in the Old Testament that are now manifested through Mary, we should have a reverent respect for the kindness He extended to us. He did this in the right season (Gal. 4:4), on His own initiative, and in His own power for all people. Especially since, as Gentiles, we were doomed for hell, unable to save ourselves (Eph. 2:8-10, 11-19), we more than anyone else should reverence Him. When we do, God's kindness is extended to us generously.

7. Towards those who fear Him – Willingly living a life of reverence for God engages God's kindness and favor more readily. Mary's testimony is a great example.

-
- [1] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (p. 444). Tyndale House Publishers.
- [2] Martin, J. A. (1985). [Luke](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 206). Victor Books.
- [3] Hughes, R. B., & Laney, J. C. (2001). [Tyndale concise Bible commentary](#) (p. 444). Tyndale House Publishers.
- [4] Marshall, I. H. (1978). [The Gospel of Luke: a commentary on the Greek text](#) (p. 82). Paternoster Press.
- [5] [Life Application Bible Notes](#) (p. 1672). (2007). Tyndale.
- [6] Stein, R. H. (1992). [Luke](#) (Vol. 24, p. 92). Broadman & Holman Publishers.
- [7] Stein, R. H. (1992). [Luke](#) (Vol. 24, p. 92). Broadman & Holman Publishers.