

LUKE 1:39-80
MAGNIFICAT AND BENEDICTUS
-PART I

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³⁹ In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,
⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, ⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!

⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."

⁴⁶ And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, [**“My soul is enlarged as I reflect on your greatness!” Theological knowledge leads to an enlarging of our souls.**] ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, [**Hebrew parallelism: “My soul, that is my Spirit”- -my entire being is enlarged and full of joy because of the great things you have done!**] ⁴⁸ for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. [**Mary realizes her own insignificance before the Great King as a recipient of his magnificent grace! Theological knowledge leads to humility before God’s greatness.**] For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed; [**Not pride; rather, Mary is saying that this kind of favor or grace that has been shown to her will cause people to realize the enormity of God’s sublime stooping to her**]

⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name. [**Like other redemptive-historical singers before her, Mary’s soul is uplifted and enlarged with rejoicing over God’s character and attributes; In God’s revelation of greatness and holiness to her, God has done great things for her and for all who believe**]

⁵⁰ And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. [**God’s loving mercies are new every morning, and for each generation of believers**] ⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts; [**Mary realizes that in this humble conception of Jesus, God has already shown the great strength of his arm, and this will be realized in Jesus’ life, death, resurrection, and ascension-enthronement of God’s Anointed One “Messiah”**] ⁵² he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate; [**God has done what is paradoxical and folly in the eyes of the world**]

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent empty away. ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever." [**Mary understands here that in Jesus the**

fulfillment of God's mercies to Israel and to Abraham and his offspring have come to pass- -in Jesus' person and ministry; Genesis 17:1-19; cf. Galatians 3:16; 26-29]

⁵⁶ And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home. ⁵⁷ Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth, and she bore a son. ⁵⁸ And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy to her, and they rejoiced with her. ⁵⁹ And on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child. And they would have called him Zechariah after his father, ⁶⁰ but his mother answered, "No; he shall be called John." ⁶¹ And they said to her, "None of your relatives is called by this name." ⁶² And they made signs to his father, inquiring what he wanted him to be called. ⁶³ And he asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John." And they all wondered. ⁶⁴ And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he spoke, blessing God. ⁶⁵ And fear came on all their neighbors. And all these things were talked about through all the hill country of Judea, ⁶⁶ and all who heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, "What then will this child be?" For the hand of the Lord was with him.

⁶⁷ And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, ⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people [Aorist "present" tense: "God has visited and redeemed his people" that in the coming of John and Jesus, God's plans have already been fulfilled]⁶⁹ and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, ["Horn of salvation" or "power of God's salvation" has come in the House or "Dynasty" of David- 2 Samuel 7:12-18]⁷⁰ as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old, [This work of God in the infant prophet and infant king was prophesied many years ago; cf. Isaiah 9:6-7; 11:1ff; 40:1-5; 2 Samuel 7- Nathan to David; Daniel 7; Malachi 3-4- Malachi to Israel] ⁷¹ that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; [Israel's salvation from their enemies would be more than Zechariah fully expected and understood at this point] ⁷² to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, [God's covenant promises he made to Moses and David]⁷³ the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us ⁷⁴ that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days. [This is the full meaning of God's promises to Abraham in Genesis 12, 15, and 17.]

⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, [Isaiah 40:1ff]⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, [A reference to Isaiah 61:1-4; Malachi 3-4]⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high ⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." ⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.

Introduction

This is a joyous section of Luke's gospel! Mary quickly runs to Elizabeth in the hill country of Judah after hearing of the Angel Gabriel's gospel-news.

John leaps in Elizabeth's womb, and Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit - -then there is song!

Songs at Dawn

Each long night of our lives is ended with the sound of singing at the crack of dawn! In the spring and summer we are awakened to the sound of the beautiful singing of birds, praising God for his provision.

Here in our passage from Luke 1, the night of the Old Covenant is almost over, the gray of dawn is passing over the redemptive-historical landscape, and the New Covenant is dawning in the wombs of two weak women (Elizabeth and Mary), and as the night is passing and dawn is arriving, so we hear song!

!! One professor of the New Testament wrote: "It is striking that Luke alone, the educated and artistically disposed Greek, has committed to writing the songs of Elisabeth, Mary, Zecharias and Simeon and the hymn of the angels... Luke the artist, has gathered and collected, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, the stories which reveal the fact that when Jesus came into the world *poetry expressed itself and music was reborn.*" [my emphasis, quote from Geldenhuys, pg. 81). !!

The setting of *The Magnificat*: Luke records for us the setting of Mary's song *The Magnificat* in Luke 1:39-45. In these verses, Six-month-old John, baby still in the womb, recognizes by the Spirit that the baby in Mary's womb is none other than the Son of God. 30 years before John's ministry, he acts out his first prophecy of preparing the way as forerunner for Messiah under the influence of the Holy Spirit- -even while both are in their mother's womb!

Elizabeth also asks humbly: "*Why is this granted to me that the mother of 'my Lord' should come to me?*" (v. 43).

Elizabeth's crying out in exultant joy in verse 43 is an echo of David's Psalm (Psalm 110), teaching us that the baby in Mary's womb will be the Lord of all who believe (cf. Psalm 110: "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand..."). Jesus is Mary's son and Mary's Lord!

Then Mary sings a wonderful theological song of God's character and works.

We should be reminded that we see in Mary's song an example of true worship and praise of God. Mary's worship is an example of true worship in spirit and truth; worship

from one's whole being, where Mary is rejoicing in the attributes and acts of God in history, in her own life, and in the lives of all who believe.

Let us learn to sing like this! Let us learn as much as we can about whom God is, and what he has done (his attributes and acts) as his people- -no matter what your age!

Mary's Song: "Magnificat"

Form of Song: (1) God's care, redemption, favor, and mercy to Mary (Luke 1:46-49); (2) God's care, redemption, favor and mercy to all who believe (Luke 1:50-55): "...His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation." (v. 50).

- A. **Mary is in Awe! "My soul makes great the Lord" or "My soul enlarges the Lord" (vv. 46-47):** Latin translation is *Magnificat anima mea Dominum*- -we get the "Magnificat" from the word "Magnify" or "makes great" or "enlarges" [$\mu\epsilon\gamma\alpha\lambda\acute{\upsilon}\nu\omega$ enlarge, extend].

Mary's song is a virtual "collage of biblical texts" (Joel Green, NICNT, pg. 101). The people of God were steeped in the theology and poetry of the Scriptures (they memorized the Songs throughout Scripture, and they sang the Psalms regularly).

All believing Israelites knew by heart songs from the Old Testament and often sang them in the home circle and at celebrations....Mary's song bears the unmistakable signs of her knowledge of the poetical literature of Israel and the Scriptures (Geldenhuis, pg. 85).

We should be reminded that Mary could have been as young as 12 years of age, and she knows her bible and her theology very well! Young (as well as old) should never think you're beyond knowing and understanding well the theology of the Scriptures!

Hebrew Poetic Parallelism: And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior... ("A...what's more...B", NOT My soul, as well as my spirit...but "my soul, even my spirit").

"Soul" or "spirit" refer to Mary's inner self; ***the "I" of her whole being.***

Mary Rejoices in "God My Savior" (v. 47): Mary calls God "my Savior". Mary was a sinner upon whom God bestowed special favor and grace, but she recognizes herself as a sinner. This is not like the Roman Catholic heresies of Mariology.

Mary is the mother of our Lord, but she will also be the recipient of her Son's grace as all other believers. As we learned in our last sermon from Luke 1:26-38, Mary is NOT the "Mother of Grace" but a "daughter of grace. Mary does not

distribute or administer grace to sinners, she is a sinner who is a recipient of God's grace in Christ- -this is important!

Redemptive songs in Scripture: There are throughout the Scriptures hymns and praise sung in response to God's gracious and powerful intervention of his people:

- 1) The Song of Moses (Exodus 15:1-18)
- 2) The Song of Miriam (Exodus 15:19-21)
- 3) The Song of Deborah (Judges 5:1-31)
- 4) The Song of Asaph (1 Chronicles 16:8-36)
- 5) The Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2:1-10)

Contrast between Hannah's Song and Mary's Song: They both join in a redemptive-historical chorus:

ESV **1 Samuel 2:1-10:** And Hannah prayed and said, "My heart exults in the LORD; my strength is exalted in the LORD. My mouth derides my enemies, because **I rejoice in your salvation.** ² "There is none **holy like the LORD;** there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God. ³ **Talk no more so very proudly,** let not arrogance come from your mouth; for the LORD is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed. ⁴ **The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength.** ⁵ Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but **those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.** The barren has borne seven, but she who has many children is forlorn. ⁶ The LORD kills and brings to life; he brings down to Sheol and raises up. ⁷ **The LORD makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and he exalts.** ⁸ He raises up the poor from the dust; he lifts the needy from the ash heap to make them sit with princes and inherit a seat of honor. For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's, and on them he has set the world. ⁹ "He will guard the feet of his faithful ones, but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness, for not by might shall a man prevail. ¹⁰ The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven. The LORD will judge the ends of the earth; he will give strength to his king and exalt the power of his anointed."

It seems that Mary knew Hannah's song well, and had written her poem about God and his redemption on her journey to see Elizabeth (Morris, pg. 83).

The differences between the songs of Hannah and Mary is that Hannah is rejoicing **looking forward** to God's promises being fulfilled and Mary is singing and **rejoicing with the realization** that all of God's Old Covenant promises are coming to pass in the present (within her own womb!).

Application: *Theological Knowledge of God and His Acts leads to enlargement of the soul.*

- Theology does not necessarily lead to “dry and unfaithful” worshippers of God. Theology should “enlarge” or magnify our souls.
- The study of theology, that is who God is and what he has done for us is the “indicative” or present tense reality that informs the way we think, walk before him, and worship!
- We live in a theologically shallow time, where theology is frowned upon as divisive. We must study to show ourselves approved, rightly dividing (or correctly handling the Word of Truth) as we see Mary doing in her theological song in Luke 1.
- We should remember that God is seeking worshippers to worship Him in “spirit and truth”

^{ESV} **John 4:22-26:** You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. ²³ **But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.** ²⁴ **God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.** ²⁵ The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things." ²⁶ Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he."

True worship is not merely feelings (sometimes this will accompany true worship- -and should!), but True worship is informed by God’s character- -who he is, as well as what God has done for his people- -his works on behalf of his people. This is the summation of Mary’s soul-enlarging song!

B. **Mary is humbled** by God’s revelation to her (v. 48): “God has looked upon her humble estate.

^{ESV} **Luke 1:49 “...for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.”**

Mary is singing of the **“Divine Warrior” motif** found in the Old Covenant where the Mighty God is a Warrior on behalf of his people, bringing redemption to his people and destroying his enemies!

^{ESV} **Psalm 24:7-10:** Lift up your heads, O gates! And be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ⁸ **Who is this King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!** ⁹ Lift up your heads, O gates! And lift them up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in. ¹⁰ Who is this King of glory? **The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory!** Selah

Mary is a Bondservant-Female Slave of God: "...for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant...[**dou, lh**, female servant or slave]." (v. 48a). This is the second time Mary humbly and with obedience calls herself a bondservant of God. In verse 38, upon hearing and believing Gabriel's words she said: "Behold, **I am the servant of the Lord**; let it be to me according to your word."

The Epistle of James reminds us of our humility before God our Creator and Redeemer:

^{ESV} **James 4:6-9:** ... Therefore [Scripture] says, "**God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.**" ⁷ **Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.** ⁸ **Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

Application: *Theological Knowledge of God and His Acts leads to humility*- - not to arrogance in our knowledge of him, but loving wonder in our puniness, and how he has looked upon us all in his Greatness, and had loving compassion on sinners.

- Those who understand God and study theology should allow this knowledge to go deeply into their hearts creating a great humility before God and man- **-never pride**.
- If only we could by God's grace see more humility in ourselves, and those in the Church- -particularly those who know theology well. I remember when some of my friends would learn of the sovereignty of God's grace and would then run to make sure everyone else knew it as well- -but without humility (How do you think I recognized this? ☺- -I had done the same).
- Once we are Christians for awhile, we seem to slip into a prideful haughtiness where we tend to judge other Christians unfairly, as well as unbelieving neighbors around us- -rather than to show humility— recognizing that because of grace, we have nothing to boast about- -except the LORD!
- As God comes to Mary in humility, weakness and in her helplessness, so he comes to us in his power in salvation. This should humble us greatly to the dust! Our salvation is by grace alone. The Apostle Paul reminds us in Ephesians 2:8-9:

^{ESV} **Ephesians 2:8-9:** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

- C. **Mary Proclaims the Gospel** (vv. 50-55): “And His mercy is for those who fear him...”

Mary has been singing of God’s goodness and mercy to her (vv. 46-49), now she sings the gospel promises that these are not just for “I” (for me!), **but for all those who fear him!**

To fear God means to cherish reverence and respect for him- -not to be afraid, but to honor Him lovingly by avoiding what is contrary to His will and by striving after what pleases Him (Geldenhuys, pg. 85).

There are many themes in Mary’s song that will be unpacked and further nuanced in Luke’s gospel.

Note the Extensive Poetic Parallelism (Joel Green points out in NICNT, pg. 99):

v. 48a “lowliness of his servant” → v. 49a “for the Mighty One has done great things...”

v. 51a “he has shown great strength → v. 51b “he has scattered the proud...”

v. 52a “he has brought down the powerful (mighty) → v. 52b “he has lifted up the lowly...”

v. 53a “he has filled the hungry” → v. 53b “he has sent the rich away empty”

v. 55a “according to the promise” → v. 55b “to Abraham and to his descendants...”

Again in Luke, we can appreciate the form as well as the content of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit upon the writer!

A. **“Eschatological Reversals”: Morally, Socially, and Materially-Spiritually**

- **What is an Eschatological Reversal?** It is where God intervenes into history, allowing his justice and mercy that will be fully and completely be revealed on the Last Day, to intrude upon men in the present. *The world of men continues as the proud get prouder, the mighty get more tyrannical, and the rich get richer*, but God intrudes upon this way of

thinking in the Person and teaching of Jesus Christ, Mary's Son, and God declares in HIM that vindication and justice will be accomplished according to His plan.

- What the world expects or seeks as “normal”- -God turns around and reverses (Pride → Humility/ Mighty → Overthrown-Destroyed/ Rich → Poor).

Here in Mary's song (vv. 50-55) we see God's reversing the way of sinful man to show a glimpse of the New Heavens and New Earth. There is a moral reversal (the proud), a social reversal (the mighty), and a material-spiritual reversal (the poor).

- **The Proud (Self satisfied and reliant in their own way and will)**- God has shown his strength (v. 51) and “has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts”- the idea here is as the wind blows the chaff, so the purposes and goals of the proud of blown with the wind. God opposes not merely the proud but “*the thoughts of their hearts.*” God does not look on outward appearances, but sees our the thoughts of our hearts (cf. Hebrews 4:12-13).

^{ESV} **Hebrews 4:12-13**: For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³ And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

- **The Mighty (Self-satisfied and reliant upon their own power)**- “God has brought down the mighty from their thrones” (v. 52)- God had “taken them down from their supposed rule”. Greek “brought down” ESV or “put down” KJV: **καθαίρω** (fut. **καθελω** ; aor. **καθεῖλον**, ptc. **καθελών**) **take down; pull down, destroy, overthrow.**

“The Mighty” here are not merely powerful people (they are that), but they are actually rulers of this world who even at Mary's present time are seated on the throne (King Herod of Judea, Caesar Augustus, Emperor of Rome, Quirinius Governor of Syria, et al).

From the perspective of the “mighty rulers of the earth” this may seem like **revolutionary language**: “Our God will put down or overthrow the might” and he will feed the poor and oppressed.

But in Jesus' coming, the Kingdom of God is being firmly established in this sinful world of the kings of men, and there is only room in YHWH's economy for one King: His Anointed One, or Messiah (Psalm 2).

ESV **Psalm 2:1-12: Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain?** ² **The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his anointed, saying,** ³ **"Let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us."** ⁴ **He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord holds them in derision.** ⁵ **Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury, saying,** ⁶ **"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill."** ⁷ I will tell of the decree: The LORD said to me, "You are my Son; today I have begotten you. ⁸ Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. ⁹ You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." ¹⁰ Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. ¹¹ Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. ¹² **Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.**

Mary's language here, in fact, IS revolutionary language, but God does so much more than a mere "people's rebellion and revolution" that might end up with just another powerful tyrant and oppressor- -the revolution that Messiah brings is one of the heart- -***turning men's hearts back to the True King and Living God!***

In the Book of Revelation, at the time of Christ's return, we see Jesus on a white charger- - a war horse- -making war upon God's enemies, and the kings of the earth are pictured as recipients of his wrath (even now, Mary is singing, this is being realized in the "overthrow of the mighty"):

Revelation 19:16-21: On his robe and on his thigh he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords. ¹⁷ Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and with a loud voice he called to all the birds that fly directly overhead, "Come, gather for the great supper of God, ¹⁸ **to eat the flesh of kings, the flesh of captains, the flesh of mighty men, the flesh of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all men, both free and slave, both small and great.**" ¹⁹ And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth with their armies gathered to make war against him who was sitting on the horse and against his army. ²⁰ And the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who in its presence had done the signs by which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped its image. These two were thrown alive into the lake of fire that burns with sulfur. ²¹ And the rest were slain by the sword that came from the mouth of him who was sitting on the horse, **and all the birds were gorged with their flesh.**

- **The Rich** (Self-satisfied and reliant upon their many possessions and security in this world)- "God sent them away empty (v. 53)

Application: *The three great positions that all men desire and long for:* To make a name for themselves and to be acknowledged as great among men (the proud); To be powerful and able to exert your power over people (the mighty); To be wealthy beyond belief- -with no cares in this world (the rich).

The Person and Work of Christ has turned these three worldly desires upside down: God's greatness and power in Christ should humble us all; God's greatness and power in Christ should cause all of us to be meek ("Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.");

God's greatness and power in Christ should cause us to realize our true spiritual poverty before God, to repent of our self-sufficiency, and realize that all we have is because of God's goodness to us (and to realize that God truly gives- -and he takes away- -and to be able to say: "Blessed be the Name of the LORD!").

By Contrast, God has acted on behalf of...

The Humble
The Lowly
The Hungry

Application: These three are what no sinner wants or desires apart from God's grace. No one can be humble without God's grace, no one desires to be the lowly in a society, and no one wants to be hungry depending on the benevolence of others!

Yet in these three, we see what Luke will teach us further in his Gospel. The humble, the lowly, and the hungry are real in all societies, but particularly for Luke and His Gospel, the ministry of Jesus reveals that all sinners are truly and really at the end of the day before God's holiness, greatness and power, those who are humble, lowly, and hungry.

Sinners are those who are ever dependent upon God's power, his exaltation, his taking care of us, both spiritually and physically.

"Yet God's mercy is for those who fear him." (v. 50).

This is the gospel message that Mary proclaims and sings in her song: The Great, holy, powerful, and awe-inspiring God extends mercy to sinners who will repent of their pride, their abuse of power, and their dependence upon themselves for survival!

- **Notice the Historical-Prophetic Focus:** Mary is looking back on God's redemptive acts in history, and she is looking in the present

and future as if these events are already historical! This is a historical-prophetic focus.

It is significant in these verses that Luke records Mary's song in what is known as the "**prophetic past tense**" tense in the Greek. You will notice that Mary speaks of God's salvation in Jesus Christ as if it has already occurred (Luke 1:49-55):

(Six Aorist Tenses- "Prophetic Aorists" [Luke, Vol. 1, ECNT, Bock, pg. 155]):

He who is mighty has done great things...

He has shown strength...

He has scattered...

He has brought down...

He has filled the hungry...

He has helped his servant Israel...

Mary speaks as if God had already done these things and this is significant ("Prophetic Aorist Tense"). This shows that what God has foreordained, planned according to his will, will come to pass in his time. Mary can sing as if all these things have already occurred.

New Testament scholar Darrell Bock writes: "These events [Mary sings about] are seen as so certain that, even though they are future events, they can be portrayed as past realities... The total salvation of those who fear God is so certain that it can be viewed as having taken place." (ECNT, Bock, pg. 155).

New Testament scholar Leon Morris says in his Commentary on Luke:

"...Mary may be referring to acts still future but which have begun to be realized. It is perhaps more likely that she is looking forward in a spirit of prophecy and counting what God will do as so certain that it can be spoken of as accomplished (this is frequent in the Old Testament prophets)." – Luke, pp. 84-85.

We see this in Isaiah's Prophecy 14:4-7, 12-15:

^{ESV} **Isaiah 14:4-7: you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:**
"How the oppressor has ceased, the insolent fury ceased! ⁵ The LORD has broken the staff of the wicked, the scepter of rulers, ⁶ that struck the peoples in wrath with unceasing blows, that ruled the nations in anger with unrelenting persecution. ⁷
The whole earth is at rest and quiet; they break forth into singing....^{ESV} **Isaiah 14:12-14:** "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you

are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! ¹³ You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' ¹⁵ But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit.

B. The Gospel to Israel

^{ESV} **Luke 1:54-55:** He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, ⁵⁵ as he spoke to our fathers, *to Abraham and to his offspring forever.*"

The last strophes of Mary's hymn are a revelation of the gospel to the Nation of Israel.

In Jesus the Messiah, Mary is singing that the covenant promises to Israel are being realized: "to Abraham and to his offspring forever." Let us look at a few Old Covenant passages:

Old Testament Promises:

^{ESV} **Genesis 12:3** I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and *in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*"

^{ESV} **Genesis 17:7-8:** And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God."

^{ESV} **Genesis 18:18** seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and *all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him?*

^{ESV} **Genesis 22:18** and *in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,* because you have obeyed my voice."

^{ESV} **Exodus 2:24** And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

^{ESV} **Micah 7:20** You will show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as you have sworn to our fathers from the days of old.

Zechariah's Benedictus:

^{ESV} **Luke 1:71-75:** ...that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; ⁷² to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, ⁷³ the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us ⁷⁴ that we, being

delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

Compare these promises with Galatians 3:16, 26-29:

^{ESV} **Galatians 3:16** Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ.

^{ESV} **Galatians 3:26-29:** for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

In Jesus, both Gentiles and Jews find their salvation and the full revelation of God's covenant promises. In Jesus Christ, God's mercies to the world are revealed! Praise be to God!

Yet many in the Nation of Israel did not believe like Mary, Elisabeth and Zechariah. In fact, when Elisabeth's baby John would grow up and begin his ministry many years later, many in Israel had yet to repent and grasp by faith the eschatological reversal that had begun in the coming of Jesus.

In fact, the reason many would not repent was because of their pride (that they were Abraham's descendents), their might (as those influential in their Jewish culture), and their wealth. Notice John's words to the Nation of Israel recorded later in Luke's Gospel:

Luke 3:7-14: He said therefore to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers [**Seed of the Serpent**"]! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? [**Already in John's ministry the wrath of God was being realized in unrepentant hearts!**]

⁸ Bear fruits in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. [**Do not trust in merely your ethnicity, when you have hard and unbelieving hearts.**]

⁹ Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." [**The Last Day judgment of God has begun...**]

¹⁰ And the crowds asked him, "What then shall we do?" ¹¹ And he answered them, "Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise." ¹² Tax collectors also came to be baptized and said to him, "Teacher, what

shall we do?" ¹³ And he said to them, "Collect no more than you are authorized to do." ¹⁴ Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages." [John is saying "get in line with the eschatological reversal that is taking place in the world by God's grace: Seek NOT to be self-sufficient SELF-worshippers who are proud, mighty and rich, rather be dependent upon God and his grace by being humble, lowly and hungry]

Application: Theological Knowledge roots believers in God's story.

Luke 24:25-27, 44-47: ²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?" ²⁷ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself... "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.