

December 15, 2025 - Luke 1: 45-55 Joy

Every line of Mary's praises has the story of God's presence and work behind it. Israel had waited about two thousand years since Abraham received the promise that in his descendants, all the work would be blessed. (Gen 12). The promised one was coming in Mary's child.

Luke has organized his material to give three beautiful hymns in the first two chapters. Mary's song, called the **Magnificat**, we read today, the song of John the Baptist's father, Zechariah, the **Benedictus**, and Simeon's song when Jesus was presented to the temple at eight days, the **Nunc Dimittis**.

Christians believe that the Holy Spirit inspired selected people to write out of their own skills and experience the message given to them. Luke could have used hymns or songs which might have been used by Christian communities and placed them in his work. Luke could have edited what he learned from his sources was the content of these individuals' praises to God into elegant hymns. Or Luke may have recorded exact copies of what he learned that the three joyous believers said.

The author of this Gospel is not named, but he (almost certainly a man) named his patron, Theophilus, a real person who financially and with influence supported the writing of this Gospel. Most scholars think that the Gospel was written around 80-90 AD. Quite early, the Gospel was attributed to Luke. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyon (120/140-200/203) wrote, "Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the gospel preached by Paul."

These three hymns, and the accounts of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus, place the life of Jesus Christ squarely in the Temple and faith of Israel. Each of the hymns relates how long centuries of prayer have been answered for God's community of faith, and how the individual rejoicing is linked to that story.

Our message this morning is very simple, but can change the way we see each morning. God is working in the community of faith, no matter how many years we have waited, and our own stories are linked into God's big story.

Mary's song begins with her own situation (47-49) and expands into how all history fulfills God's purposes (50-53) and ends with how the promises to Abraham and Israel have specifically been fulfilled (54,55). The prayers of a young girl, the sorrows of the world, and the prayers of the worshipping community are answered. The time has come, after long waiting.

Those three elements are still of great interest to us today.

You and I, today, reading this psalm.

The situation of **the world**.

The situation of **God's community of faith**.

As we hear this hymn, we are humbled as well as raised to dignity and confidence. We see our small but important part in the plans of God. v 47-49

Has the balance of goodness and justice in the world tipped significantly since Mary sang this song? Has human misery and the bullying of the rich been eliminated? Are more of the hungry filled in 2024 than in the time of Mary at the beginning of the years of our Lord (Anno Domino)? Perhaps, but all the words of this song have not been fulfilled yet in our world and we still wait with faith and hope. v. 50-53

And what of the condition of Christ's church, the community of faith that lives out what God intended for human society? As in Christ's day, power and wealth are in the hands of religious leaders who intend to keep their advantage. It is sobering to see and anticipate what Christ is doing to fulfill his promises in the churches, especially the wealthy White churches, of our own nation, and communities of faith around the world. v. 54-55

Resources

This week again, background study was essential, but in the end it seemed most important to try to listen to the text itself. Mary's people waited for the Child approx. 2,000 years from the promise to Abraham, the same period that the church has waited for fulfillment of the promises for the hungry filled and the mighty brought down. God is using each of us to bring that promise to reality.

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