

Mary's Magnificent "Magnificat" ♦

Luke 1:46-55

It's remarkable how few of the words of Mary are found in the Bible. Her recorded words occur in only fifteen verses (Luke 1:34,38; 2:48; John 2:3,5), ten of which are found here in Mary's reverent hymn of praise in which she magnifies the Lord (Luke 1:46-55). Her "Magnificat" reads like a Psalm of David, with tender, heartfelt expression, and is remarkably similar to Hannah's ten-verse prayer (1 Sam. 2:1-10).

She begins by confessing God has her Saviour, thus recognizing her sinful condition before a holy God and dispelling the myth of her sinlessness (v. 47). Just as those who are healthy do not need a doctor, so those who are sinless do not need a Saviour (Luke 5:30-32). She recognizes the Lord's absolute ownership over her life, describing herself as the Lord's handmaiden which means "bondservant" or "female slave" (verse 48).

Mary displays an exalted view of the matchless character of her God. She speaks of His unrivaled might (v. 49), His awesome holiness (v. 49), His tender mercy (verses 50 and 54), and His undiminished strength (v. 51). She speaks of God's wondrous works. He is the God who pays attention to the humble and who greatly blesses the undeserving (v. 48). He is a great God who does great things (v. 49). He is able to abase those who are proud and exalt those who are humble (verses 51-52). He meets the spiritual needs of the hungry and He is able to impoverish the rich (v. 53). He is able to provide great help to Israel even as He promised Abraham (verses 54-55).

What a wonderful part Mary played in bringing the "seed of the woman" into the world! In these brief ten verses Mary quoted from fifteen Old Testament passages, revealing how richly the Word of God dwelt in her.

♦ a canticle [song for church service], from the Latin, "magnifies," from the opening words, which translate as 'my soul magnifies the Lord.'



~George Zeller: www.middletonbiblechurch.org

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