

Luke 1:46

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

Analysis

Mary's Magnificat (vv.46-55) begins 'My soul doth magnify the Lord' (μεγαλύνει ἡ ψυχή μου τὸν κύριον). The verb 'megalynō' (μεγαλύνω) means to make great or enlarge—not that Mary can literally make God greater, but that she exalts and proclaims His greatness. This hymn is saturated with Old Testament allusions, particularly Hannah's prayer (1 Samuel 2:1-10), demonstrating Mary's deep scriptural knowledge. The structure follows Hebrew poetic parallelism, and the content emphasizes God's mighty acts in salvation history: remembering mercy, scattering the proud, exalting the humble, filling the hungry, sending the rich away empty. Mary sees her personal experience as part of God's larger redemptive pattern of reversing worldly values and vindicating the faithful.

Historical Context

The Magnificat represents one of four hymns in Luke's infancy narrative (along with Zacharias's Benedictus, the angels' Gloria, and Simeon's Nunc Dimittis). Early Christian worship incorporated these hymns, as evidenced by their preservation in liturgical language. Some ancient manuscripts attribute the Magnificat to Elizabeth, though overwhelming textual evidence supports Mary. The hymn's revolutionary social content—exalting the lowly, deposing the mighty—would resonate with Luke's emphasis on Jesus' concern for the marginalized.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Mary's Magnificat demonstrate that worship involves both personal praise and theological reflection on God's character?
2. What does Mary's extensive biblical knowledge reveal about spiritual formation and the importance of Scripture memorization?

Interlinear Text

Kαὶ	εἶπεν	Μαριάμ	Μεγαλύνει	ἡ	ψυχή	μου	τὸν	κύριόν
And	said	Mary	doth magnify	G3588	soul	My	G3588	the Lord
G2532	G2036	G3137	G3170		G5590	G3450		G2962

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 35:9 (References Lord): And my soul shall be joyful in the LORD: it shall rejoice in his salvation.

Isaiah 61:10 (References Lord): I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

1 Corinthians 1:31 (References Lord): That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

Isaiah 45:25 (References Lord): In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

Romans 5:11 (References Lord): And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.

Philippians 4:4 (References Lord): Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.

2 Corinthians 2:14 (Parallel theme): Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.

1 Peter 1:8 (Parallel theme): Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

Philippians 3:3 (Parallel theme): For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

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