

## THE SONGS WE SING: Celebrating the Chorus of Christmas

### "THE MAGNIFICAT" LUKE 1:46-55

#### This Week's Core Competency

**Salvation by Grace** – I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by his grace, through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8, 9 *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast.*

The first candle lit during Advent, called the prophecy candle, represents the hope of Jesus' coming. The second, called the Bethlehem candle, represents the peace that Christ brings to the world and to us. As Advent progresses we are reminded that Jesus is our hope and our peace.

The peace that he gives is *first* peace on earth. It's hard to say how many armed conflicts are going on in the world. Everyone knows about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the tension between India and Pakistan. Skirmishes in the Middle East are common knowledge, and who hasn't seen the saber rattling in North Korea and Iran in the news. In addition to these, the United Nations website reports that it currently has lesser-known peacekeeping operations scattered throughout the world: eight in Africa, one in the Americas, three in Asia and the Pacific, two in Europe, and three in the Middle East—some of

---

***Peace starts, depends, and ends in Jesus Christ***

***-unknown***

---

which have been in place for years. But according to Isaiah's prediction, peacekeeping forces will one day be uncalled for. About the messiah he writes:

*6 For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his  
shoulders.*

*And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

*7 Of the increase of his government and peace  
there will be no end.*

*He will reign on David's throne  
and over his kingdom,  
establishing and upholding it  
with justice and righteousness  
from that time on and forever.  
The zeal of the LORD Almighty  
will accomplish this.*

The peace Christ gives is *second* peace in us. The impossibility of finding peace and contentment in the modern world is noted by Henri Nouwen who writes, "The man and woman of the nuclear age realize that their creative powers hold the potential for self-destruction. They see that in this nuclear age vast new industrial complexes enable people to produce in one hour that which they labored over for years in the past, but they also realize that these same industries have disturbed the ecological balance and, through air and noise pollution, have contaminated their own milieu. They drive in cars, listen to the radio, and watch TV, but have

con't pg. 2

---

lost their ability to understand the working of the instruments they use. They see such an abundance of material commodities around them that scarcity no longer motivates their lives, but *at the same time they are groping for a direction and asking for meaning and purpose*. In all this they suffer from the inevitable knowledge that their time is a time in which it has become possible for human beings to destroy not only life but also the possibility of rebirth, not only human beings but also humankind, not only periods of existence but also history itself. For the nuclear man and woman the future has become an option" (*Seeds of Hope*, 216 italics added).

Finding peace with God apart from Christ is equally impossible. Those who are alienated from God and are his enemies need a Savior (Col 1:21). Thankfully, Christ came to reconcile us to God and give us peace. So Paul can say, "When we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son." And once we're reconciled, once we're justified we have peace with God (Ro 5:1, 10). No longer do we face a future filled with fear and trepidation. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (Jn 14:27).

## day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

### Luke 1:46-55

46And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

47and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

49for the Mighty One has done great things for me—  
holy is his name.

50His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
from generation to generation.

51He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;  
he has scattered those who are proud in their

inmost thoughts.

52He has brought down rulers from their thrones  
but has lifted up the humble.

53He has filled the hungry with good things  
but has sent the rich away empty.

54He has helped his servant Israel,  
remembering to be merciful

55to Abraham and his descendants forever,  
even as he said to our fathers."

## EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- \* Box "for" indicating *reason* in vv. 48 and 49.
- \* Draw a line from "soul" in v. 46 to "spirit" in v. 47, and from "glorifies" to "rejoices" in the same verse.
- \* Underline the words "God my Savior" in v. 47 and "the Mighty One" in v. 49.
- \* Highlight "holy is his name" in v. 49.
- \* Circle the word "his" and the repeated word "he."
- \* Box "but" indicating *contrast* each time it occurs.
- \* Draw a line from "those who fear him" in v. 50, to

- the word "humble" in v. 51, to the word "hungry" in v. 52; then draw another from the word "proud" in v. 51 to the word "rulers" in v. 52, to the word "rich" in v. 53.
- \* Draw a line from the word "mercy" in v. 50 to the word "merciful" in v. 54.
- \* Underline the words "even as" indicating *comparison* in v. 55.

---

## day 2

**EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. What prompted Mary's outburst?
2. Imagine how she felt.
3. Compare the Magnificat with Hannah's song (1Sam 2:1-10) and note any common themes.
4. Explain why Mary is glorifying and rejoicing in God.
5. Mary can be called "blessed" for good reason. Why?
6. To say that the name of the "Mighty One" is "holy" means what?
7. What is it about God's mercy?
8. Two groups of people seem to be contrasted in verses 51-53. Identify them.
9. Explain the relationship of verses 51-53 to verse 50.
10. What's the point of the words "even as" in verse 55?
11. **Discussion:** Talk about the divine One in light of the designations for him in verses 46-49.

---

## day 3

## EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

The opening chapters of Luke contain details regarding the birth of Jesus that are not found in any other Gospel. The opening dedication to Theophilus (1:1-4) is, of course, unique to Luke, but so are the narratives concerning Gabriel's visit to Zechariah (1:5-25) and Mary (1:26-38), Mary's visit to Elizabeth (1:39-45) and her song of worship, the Magnificat (1:46-56), the birth of John (1:57-66) and Zechariah's song of worship, the Benedictus, following it (1:67-80), certain details surrounding Jesus' birth, namely the census, the journey to Bethlehem, and the full inn (2:1-7), the angels' appearance to shepherds (2:8-20), Jesus' circumcision and the temple offering (2:21-40), and finally Jesus' visit to the temple as a boy (2:21-42).

Following Gabriel's announcement (1:26-38), Mary hurried to tell Elizabeth the good news. Elizabeth lived with her husband, Zachariah, in the hill country of Judea, somewhere outside of Jerusalem, a three-day journey of some eighty to one hundred miles from Nazareth. But when Mary arrived before she could say a word, Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, welcomed her with this blessing, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear." At the same time unborn baby John kicked with excitement inside her. Both of them rejoiced at the prospect of Jesus' birth, the one Gabriel said would be great and would be called the Son of the Most High, the one who would rule over the house of Jacob forever (1:32, 33).

Unable to contain her joy, Mary then worshipped God in song expressing her praise to him for what had done for her and what he would do for believing Israel as well as all those who fear him. About her song one author writes, "The Magnificat is like an aria in opera; the action almost stops so that the situation may be savored more deeply. At the same time, this savored meaning contributes to the flow of the narrative, for Mary's song both develops a mood which has already been established and opens perspectives that will be more fully developed in the following canticles. The first three verses, the most personal section of the poem,

contribute to the parallel portraits of the parent of John and Jesus rejoicing at God's salvation which is to be brought through their sons. Certain repeated theme words contribute to this portrait. Gabriel told Zechariah concerning his son, 'He will be joy for you and exultation' (1:14). This exultation actually begins with Elizabeth and the unborn John (1:44), but Mary immediately joins in, 'My spirit has exulted in God my savior' (1:47). Similarly, Mary 'magnifies' the Lord, and the word is later repeated in John's birth scene, for neighbors and kin heard that 'the Lord was magnifying his mercy with' Elizabeth (1:58). In addition, Elizabeth had said that the Lord 'looked upon' her to take away her reproach (1:25), and in parallel Mary states, 'He looked upon the humble state of his slave girl' (1:48). Zechariah, of course will belatedly match Mary's hymn with a hymn of his own. Other key words in the early part of the Magnificat are linked to the preceding narrative: Mary as the Lord's 'slave girl' (1:38, 48); God as the 'mighty one' (1:49); see the references to God's power in 1:35 and 1:37; God as the one who does 'great things' (1:49; both of the promised sons will be 'great' according to 1:15, 32). Furthermore, Mary's statement that 'all generations will call me blessed' in 1:48 is a direct response to Elizabeth doing that very thing in 1:45.

"Even more important are elements in the Magnificat which prepare themes to be more fully developed in the rest of the birth narrative and beyond. The description of God as 'my savior' in 1:47 anticipates the emphasis on salvation in Zechariah's and Simeon's words (1:69, 71, 77; 2:30), as well as in the angels' announcement of the birth of a savior (2:11)" (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1:31, 32).

On a more practical note, the passage teaches us how to respond to God's involvement in our lives as we share Mary's joy for what God has done for her and are caught up in her worship and praise for the Mighty One who does great things for those who fear him.

***The Message of the Passage***  
***Worship God because he exalts the humble and shows mercy to all those who fear him.***

---

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you through his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Give Yourself Some Good Advice Based on the Message of this Passage.**
  
- **Pick a verse or verses from the passage to memorize or think about this week.**
  
- **Relate the message of this passage to any of the following:**
  - o Belonging
  - o Becoming
  - o *going* Beyond
  
- **Journal your thoughts on the passage.**
  
  
- **Home Group Discussion** (for those involved in the deeper connections of a home group)

Celebrate Advent. Decide that you're going to follow the instructions for celebrating Advent with your family in your home group "family" instead.

**“The Magnificat”**

(Use the space below for Sunday's message notes)

---

# notes STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 46 **Mary said** Mary's song is "almost wholly made up of Old Testament quotations" (Norval Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke*, 84; for a list of scriptural allusions see Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 29, 30).

v. 46 **My** The first part of the hymn (vv. 46-49) pertains to Mary in particular, and the second (vv. 50-55) pertains to believing Israel in general, and probably others outside of Israel who also fear him (cf. v. 50), as the change of pronouns from first person singular to third person plural indicates.

v. 46, 47 **my soul, my spirit** I.e., synonyms for "I." These verses contain an example of poetic parallelism. The second line in Mary's song expresses the same idea as the first. Speaking about verse 47 one author writes, "This verse stands in synonymous parallelism with Luke 1:46 and thus emphasizes the praiseworthiness of God by repetition" (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 91). The synonyms "glorifies" and "rejoices" both allude to Mary's hymn of praise to God.

v. 47 **rejoices** Cf. 1:14. "When Mary says that she rejoices (*egalliasen*), she uses the same term that appears in 1:14. In other words, this is the first fulfillment of the promises made about the significance of John the Baptist. Even though Mary has in view the events associated with the bearing of Jesus, those events are not detached from her contact with Elizabeth and John. By this word association, Luke fills the account with an air of fulfillment from its earliest moments" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 66).

v. 49 **holy** To say that the Mighty One's name is holy is another way of saying that he, God, is holy (cf. Ps 111:9). In the immediate context, what God has done for Mary indicates that he is holy, set apart or unique.

v. 51 **performed, etc.** The Greek verbs in verses 51-55 are in the aorist tense. They may simply refer to past events. However, they may be *gnomic* aorists that refer to what God habitually does, and as such would be translated by the present tense in English, e.g., "He performs mighty deeds with his arm," etc. Then again they may be *prophetic* aorists that express events so certain that they are stated vividly as if they had already taken place. While it is difficult to be sure, it is likely that Mary is referring to the future work of God through her son, Jesus, in the no uncertain terms of past events. Nevertheless, we know theologically that what is said about God here is timeless. "With these words her hymn reaches its climax, where she sings of the mighty reversal of things which in principle has already been accomplished by the entrance of God upon the course of history and in the life of mankind, through the coming Messiah, her promised Son. In God's choice of two persons of humble life like herself and Elisabeth she sees the powerful revolutionary principle according to which God is going to renew everything through the Messiah. This principle entails a complete reversal of all human opinions of greatness and insignificance. The proud, those who exalt themselves and take no account of God, He puts down—beaten by His mighty arm. The powers that be, oppressors who tyrannise over the poor and lowly, are deprived of their power and high standing, while those who are truly humble are exalted to great things. The hungry, those who realize their own need and yearn for spiritual food, are blessed. But the rich, those who are self-satisfied and proud, are shamed in the imagination of their hearts" (Geldenhuys, 86).



## What is Advent?

A time to Celebrate Christ's Birth and Look Forward to His Return.

Advent is the four week period leading up to Christmas. The word *advent* means arrival. When we celebrate Advent we focus on Jesus birth in the past and his return in the future. Traditionally, Advent is a very serious holiday; people pray and fast to make sure they are ready to meet Jesus when he comes. Each week of Advent becomes more joyful as Christ's birthday gets closer. Today, many Christians follow the tradition of lighting an Advent candle each week as a way to focus on Jesus' first and second coming.

### How to Celebrate Advent with My Family

#### Make you own Advent wreath or purchase one in The Connection Bookstore

The Advent Wreath is a circle of evergreen sprigs with four candles around the circle and one candle in the middle. The candles around the circle are 3 purple and 1 pink. The one in the middle is white.

#### Pick a time to Light the Candle with your family

Once a week, Sunday is the traditional day, sit down with your family to light the candle for the week. Read the scripture, sing the song, and talk with your family about the meaning of the candle for the week. Pray with your family that God will help you slow down and prepare your hearts to celebrate Jesus.

### Week Two Dec 6-12

#### Bethlehem Candle - Purple

Today you will light two candles, last week's and this week's. As you light this week's candle, think with your family of ways you can ready yourself for Christ's coming. This is the candle of PEACE.

#### Scripture to Read - Luke 2:7

#### Song to Sing - Silent Night

### Week Two Reading Guide

Pick a time each day to read the Scripture together

<i>Sunday Dec 6:</i>	Lk 2:15-16
<i>Monday Dec 7:</i>	Lk 2:17-18
<i>Tuesday Dec 8:</i>	Lk 2:19
<i>Wednesday Dec 9:</i>	Lk 2:20
<i>Thursday Dec 10:</i>	Lk 2:21
<i>Friday Dec 11:</i>	Mt 2:1-2
<i>Saturday Dec 12:</i>	Mt 2:3-6

### Advent Color symbols

Talk about what its symbols mean.

**Purple**— Traditionally this color represents repentance and royalty. It is used to help us prepare our hearts to welcome our King.

**Pink**— Pink represents a change from reflection to celebration as Christmas gets closer.

**White**— White is the Christ candle. It represents purity. Christ is the sinless Savior and we are made pure through Christ's gift.



### Challenge

*Kids preschool through sixth grade receive Kid Pix Tokens for participating in the spiritual discipline of Bible study.*

*My Family Read Through the Week Two Reading Guide for Advent:*

# 30 CORE COMPETENCIES

## 10 CORE BELIEFS

### Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

### Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

### Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

### Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

### Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

### Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

### Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

### Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

### Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

## 10 CORE PRACTICES

### Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

### Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

### Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

### Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

### Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

### Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

### Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

### Giving Away My Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

### Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

### Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

## 10 CORE VIRTUES

### Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

### Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

### Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

### Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

### Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

### Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

### Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

### Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

### Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

### Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

## About the Authors

**Tom Bulick** (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than thirty-five years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) for twelve years before accepting the position of Spiritual Formation Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. He and his wife Ruth have been married forty years and have one son, Zach.

**Keith Smith** (B.A. in Speech Communication, Texas Tech University and M.A. in Religious Education, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary) is the Family and Children's Pastor at Pantego Bible Church. Keith is a featured communicator for Song of Solomon for Students and speaks at children/student camps across the country. He has developed a number of relational parenting seminars designed to motivate parents to empower their parenting by emotionally connecting with their kids. Keith lives with his wife, Denise, and their two children, Jordan and Alex.



8001 Anderson Blvd.  
Ft. Worth, TX 76120  
1-866-PANTEGO  
Fax 817-275-6403  
www.pantego.org

The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is [tbulick@pantego.org](mailto:tbulick@pantego.org).