

Luke 1:46-49

Sermon: **God's promises to the Jewish people**

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THE DELIVERER

1. **(Luke 1:46)** Last time we touched on the meaning behind Mary's words: "*My soul magnifies the Lord.*" Mary's statement does not come from a shallow emotional state, nor from a superficial intellectual understanding of herself. This declaration comes from the very core of Mary's being—she understands what an incredible gift God has given her. She recognizes that God is good, and she sees what this is truly about. She perceives God's plan and the greatness of His goodness.

1.1. **(Luke 1:47)** Last time we didn't talk about the word *Savior*—in Greek, *Soter*. When Mary here says Savior, she is addressing God, Yahweh, not Jesus Christ. Personally, I prefer to use the word Deliverer¹ rather than Savior. Why? Because when we Christians hear the word Savior, we mostly imagine this in our minds: "Jesus crucified on the cross". But Mary, I believe, has a completely different perspective here. When Mary envisions a Savior (and now I'm not talking about God but about the child she will give birth to), she sees a great and mighty King on a horse, coming with His army to deliver His people from their oppressors. She sees the long-promised Messiah who will eternally reign over God's kingdom.

1.2. Interesting to note, in those days, Greek and Roman generals were called Soter. After King Alexander, it became a common title attached to the name of a general, king, or ruler. In today's modern age, a general who frees a people from their oppressors is called a Deliverer or Liberator. And if we are familiar with the history of the Roman Empire or the era of Alexander the Great, then we know how ironic it is that they called themselves Soter. In reality, they were the oppressors, enslaving other nations.

¹ In (Exodus 6:6) we have a verse that describes how God, as the *Deliverer*, began His relationship with His chosen people.

1.3. So then, what exactly does Mary mean when she says Deliverer? Again, Mary here is speaking about God, Yahweh, not about Jesus. And as we go through Mary's entire declaration, it will become clearer to all of us what I mean. But before we do that, we will go back into history and look at the promises God gave to the Jewish people.

GOD'S PROMISES TO THE JEWISH PEOPLE

Covenant with Abraham

2. Many, many generations before Mary was born, God promised Abraham that a great nation would come from him, and that God would be their God and they would be His people. That promise was passed from Abraham to Isaac, from Isaac to Jacob, and it remained in the minds of the people of Israel throughout their history. But did God fulfill that promise? No. On the contrary, the people of Israel ended up in slavery in Egypt. They had no land, no culture, they were just ordinary slaves crushed under the Egyptian hand. "Israel, God's people? I wouldn't say so!"²

Covenant with Moses

2.1. But after some time, God comes to a man named Moses and appears to him in the form of a burning bush on Mount Sinai. He says to Moses: *"Remember what I promised Abraham long ago, that I would be your God and you would be My people? Ok, now we're going to start putting that into reality."* And God sends Moses to free His people from the Egyptians so that they could go into the wilderness and worship their God, Yahweh³.

Covenant on Mount Zion

2.2. The prophets throughout the Old Testament say that the Book of Exodus is the birth of God's people. God leads His people to Mount Sinai and gives them instructions about what their relationship with Him will look like. In short, it comes down to this: *"If you keep My commandments, I will bless you. But if you do not, I will curse you. If you want to be My people, you must live out the covenant I am making with you today."* Everything God says here to Moses, He had already promised to Abraham, but now He specifies in greater detail what it will look like. God tells Moses: *"The people can now go into the promised land, where they will live in peace, be protected from enemies, and prosper in every way—spiritually, materially, physically, politically, and so on."* But here lies the problem: Israel as a nation never carried out God's Law with all their heart. From the very beginning they were rebellious toward God, and because of that, throughout their entire history, they suffered greatly—in other words, they were cursed by God⁴.

Covenant with David

2.3. After some time, God adds another piece to the Covenant, this time with King David. He tells him: *"From your line will come ONE who will reign forever. He will represent My divine throne on*

² Genesis 12:2–3; Genesis 17:7–8; Genesis 26:3–5; Genesis 28:13–15; Exodus 1:11–14; Exodus 2:23–25.

³ Exodus 3:6–10; Exodus 3:12; Exodus 6:6–8.

⁴ Exodus 19:3–6; Exodus 24:3–8; Deuteronomy 28:1–68; Jeremiah 11:6–8; Ezekiel 20:8–9; Amos 2:4.

earth. He will be from your house, David. He will be the embodiment of Me Myself, and through Him I will be your God, and you will be My people⁵."

2.4. Alright, so what does the concept mean: *"I will be your God and you will be My people"*?

In David's covenant it becomes a little clearer.

It looks something like this: "As God, I will be your King. I will rule over a real, physical kingdom—the promised land I gave to your fathers: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And I will do all of this as a human being. I, Yahweh, will one day pour all My authority into that human being who will represent Me, the invisible God, in the visible, material world."

We know that human being today as (Meshiach – Messiah, Christos – Christ).

Mary, I believe, understood all of this.

2.5. But there is one problem: she knew that as long as Caesar ruled over Israel, this could not yet be fulfilled.

VICTORY OVER THE OPPRESSOR

3. When Gabriel tells Mary that she will be the mother of the Son of the Most High, she knows that if God's promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are to be fulfilled, then the Roman Empire must fall here and now in order for that to happen. Mary knows that throughout Israel's history there were nations who oppressed her people: the Babylonians, then the Persians, then the Greeks⁶... And where are they in Mary's time? Nowhere, scattered, their kingdoms destroyed. Mary recognizes in all of this the hand of God, the hand that does not allow anyone who is not THE ONE to rule over His people forever.

3.1. All those powerful and mighty kingdoms were destroyed by God Himself, Yahweh. And Mary knows it will be the same with the Roman Empire. And who will bring down the Roman Empire? The child that Mary will bear, Jesus Christ! Now the One will be born who will reign over Israel forever!

3.2. Was Mary right when she thought this way? Yes, and no!

We know today that Jesus, when He was 21 years old, did not take up the sword and slaughter the Romans. Mary did not yet have the revelation we have today. But the truth she understood will indeed come to pass. It did not happen in her time, and even to this day God's promise has not yet been fulfilled.

But when Jesus returns the second time, He will establish His kingdom over Israel⁷. He will strike down God's enemies, free Israel from their oppressors, and they will sincerely repent as a nation and

⁵ 2 Samuel 7:12–16; 1 Chronicles 17:11–14; Psalm 89:3–4, 27–29, 36–37; Psalm 132:11–12; Isaiah 9:6–7; Jeremiah 23:5–6; Ezekiel 34:23–24.

⁶ Book of Exodus 14:26–28; Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 50:17–18; Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 51:37; Book of the Prophet Daniel 2:31–45; Book of the Prophet Daniel 7:17–27

⁷ Acts of the Apostles 1:6–7; Epistle to the Romans 11:25–27; Book of Revelation 11:15; Book of Revelation 19:11–16; Book of Revelation 20:4–6

begin to keep God's Law with all their heart. – Finally, the promise God gave to Abraham, Moses, and David will be fulfilled! –

3.3. Mary is short-sighted in the sense that God is writing a story much more complex than what she understands and perceives. But her understanding of how God's kingdom will be established on earth is absolutely on point.

Alright, now that I've tried to explain that briefly, let's return to the text.

3.4. When Mary says in (Luke 1:37): *"God is our Savior"*, what exactly does she mean? God will now send into the world His Son, Jesus Christ, who will fulfill the promises God gave in the Old Testament.

ONLY THE NEW ADAM (JESUS) IS SINLESS

(Luke 1:48) Why does Mary use the word "lowly"? Mary was a peasant girl, she had no special status in society. Her husband Joseph was a carpenter, probably working in Sepphoris building palaces for the Herodian kings. If we looked at their status through our eyes, they would be barely middle class – working class.

4.1. In the text we read: *"He looked upon me with favor."* God had mercy on Mary and gave her a gift, one of the most important roles in His plan. Mary would be the mother of the future king who would reign over Israel forever. If we look at Mary's reaction, we can conclude that her response was mature, wise, humble, and grateful. She was given an incredible honor by God. She, who was completely insignificant in the society and culture in which she lived, received that honor.

4.2. We have to ask ourselves: would our attitude be wise, humble, and grateful if something like this happened to us? Imagine: we are poor, insignificant in the culture we live in, and then we are given the chance to become important in the eyes of our nation.

4.3. Look, Mary would be the mother of the future king of Israel. How would we react if God said to us: *"Your son will be the president of Croatia, Germany, Italy...?"* Would we become puffed up and think we are now special, better than others? Or would we respond like Mary – with gratitude and humility? Mary understands that what God gives her is more important than anything this world has to offer: fame, money, power, titles, etc.

– I think it's key to understand that it is the role God gives us that is special, not we ourselves. That kind of perspective about God will in the end make us humble. –

4.4. Mary goes on to say: *"From now on all generations will call me blessed."*

In Catholic and Orthodox theology, Mary is honored as "blessed" because, by God's grace, she is sinless and chosen as the Mother of God. The Catholic Church teaches her Immaculate Conception, while the Orthodox emphasize her purity without dogmatic definition. Yet in both traditions, Mary is not equated with Christ, but remains a *perfectly holy creature*, not a divine person.

4.5. That is not the biblical perspective. She is not a perfectly holy creature. Mary is not above us, and we should not worship her nor pray to her. As I mentioned in a previous sermon, the word “blessed” means fortunate. What meaning lies behind the word blessed? I believe this: anyone who recognizes that God has given them “eyes to see and ears to hear,” that God has forgiven them, that He has given them that incredible gift – a gift that includes eternal life with King Jesus Christ – understands how blessed Mary was, how fortunate she was. Why? Because he or she has received that same blessing. – In other words, by “generations” Luke means the rest of God’s children who will receive the same gift as Mary. –

THE ROLE IS SPECIAL, NOT US

5. Only a child of God can truly understand how blessed Mary was and how great God’s gift to her was. Mary was an insignificant village girl, and we see that reflected in her attitude, but the role she was given was extraordinary.

5.1. As I said earlier, it is not about what we want, but about the role God gives us. Mary understood the honor she received, and that is why she says: *“All generations will call me blessed.”* But not because of who she was, but because of the role given to her by God. Paul understood this, and that is why he writes in his Epistles: *“It is a gift from God⁸!”*

5.2. **(Luke 1:49)** Mary declares in this verse: **“For the Mighty One has done great things for me, holy is His name.”** In other words: *“I will be the mother of the One who will fulfill all of God’s promises given to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and King David.”*

5.3. Finally, let us notice that in none of her statements does Mary exalt herself, but she humbly and gratefully accepts the role God appointed for her. Mary is an example to all of us of what our relationship with our Creator should look like.

⁸ First Epistle to the Corinthians 4:7; Epistle to the Romans 6:23; Epistle to the Ephesians 2:8