

# **Rejoice in Jesus Our Saviour**

**Luke 1-39-55**

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**December 25, 2011**

The sun had set and the wind had an extra bite in it as it picked up the snow and blew it into the six year olds face. The child strained to pull his small wooden sled loaded with a fifty-pound bale of hay through the deep snow from the barn to the side of the house. He knew he had only a few minutes, as everyone was racing to complete the evening milking in order for everyone to be on time for the Christmas Eve service. Besides having completed his chores he was supposed to be getting ready to go to church and mom and dad would be coming up the path any second. If he could just get this bale on the roof before they came along, for it was a cold night and Santa's reindeer would need food to complete their journey. Santa would be all right because most kids would leave him a snack but not the reindeer because none of the kids from the city would even have access to hay. If he could just get the bale on the roof then the reindeer could eat while Santa was in the house. He studied the situation earlier and thought that the snow bank was high enough for him to push the sled carrying the bale up onto the roof. He didn't want to ask anyone for help because he was a little suspect of the validity of Santa and if this hay disappeared then he would know for sure that

there is a Santa. James York what are you doing with that bale of hay? Asked my mom as my parents ran up the path. I nervously began to explain that Santa's reindeer would be hungry. My Dad quickly agreed and told my mom to go ahead while he threw the bale of hay up on the roof. As my dad and I were getting out of our winter gear I expected to get disciplined for my little escaped instead my dad asked if I thought Santa would be able to break the bale of hay open. I hadn't thought of that I would need to leave my jackknife by the plate of cookies just in case Santa forgot his. On the way Dad explained that this year Santa might be at our church because Santa always stops and worships in every country for Santa knows that the real meaning of Christmas is the celebration of Jesus' birthday and God's love for us which is far more important than delivery gifts. I thought I hope the sermon is short if Santa comes to our church because he has a lot of stops to make. Santa wasn't at church that night. He must have stopped at a church with a shorter service. Christmas morning I awoke to the noise of Santa on the roof. I heard a loud thud as Santa's sleigh came to rest on the roof. I heard Santa walking around on the roof and talking to the reindeer. I looked at the clock it was 5 a.m. it had to be Santa for Dad would already be in the barn milking. As I jumped out of bed my sister met me at the door and motioned for me to be quiet. If Santa hears us he will not leave any gifts so we better hide. After the coast was clear I ran downstairs to see the gifts and then outside and sure enough all that was left were a few spears of hay on the roof. I will always remember the actions

of my parents on that Christmas for it was just one of the many ways that they showed me how much they loved me.

The gospel according to Luke records Mary's song of praise in which we learn that Mary remembered the loving actions of her Heavenly Father. Mary sang. **Luke 1:47-55 "How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For God took notice of God's lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and God has done great things for me. God shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear God. God's mighty arm has done tremendous things! God has scattered the proud and haughty ones. God has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. God has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. God has helped God's servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. For God made this promise to our ancestors, to Sarah and Abraham and their children forever."**

Mary was remembering, rejoicing and celebrating the loving actions of God. Mary remembered the eternal promise to Abraham and Sarah. God said **Genesis 17:7 "I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendents after you for the generations to come to be your God and the God of your descendants after you."** Mary remembered the loving actions of God as God saved her ancestors from famine through Joseph. Mary remembered how God appeared to Moses in a burning bush. God promised to be with Moses and her ancestors. God lead

them into the Promise Land. Mary remembered how David beat Goliath and established a home. Mary remembered how God spoke through the prophets. Mary remembered God's beautiful, comforting sustaining promise to always be with us.

Mary did more than just remember the past actions of God for the tense used is one that expresses what is timelessly true therefore indicating past, present and future action. Mary was so sure, so confident and so certain of God's promises that she proclaims them as an accomplished fact even though Jesus the cumulation of God's love and presence with us is still in her womb.

May also recognized that God's promise of mercy extends to everyone for she sings: **Luke 1:50 "God's mercy is for those who fear God from generation to generation."** Eugene Peterson translates this verse as **"God's mercy flows in wave after endless wave on all those who are in awe of God."**

Mary calls God her Savior. When one calls God Savior they are admitting their desperate need for help. They realize that their deliverance depends on the grace of God and not on their own strength, ability or status. To confess God as Savior means that we will look only to God and not to some other power for our salvation. The word Mary uses for Savior carries the meaning of an eternal savior once again she is speaking of loving actions of God that are timeless, past, present and future. John Calvin comments that "this is the first and greatest reason that Mary is blessed that she calls God Savior thereby recognizing that she has been born again by the Holy Spirit to

a new and eternal life. The remarkable honor of carrying God's only begotten son is the second and lesser reason that Mary is blessed." Ponder that for a second. Your salvation through Christ is a greater blessing than if you would have been chosen to give birth to Jesus. Mary remembered that she was a servant. Mary was a poor teenager from a disreputable city, unwed and possessed no maternal experience. Yet Luke records a few verses early that the angel Gabriel addressed her as **Luke 1:28 "you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."** God does not look at outward appearances as we often do instead God looks at the heart. Mary's heart was rejoicing because God was her savior. Mary sang, **Luke 1:46 "My soul magnifies the Lord"**

Mary found her heart full of joy, and her soul magnifying God because she remembered the loving actions of God and God's promise to always be with her. Mary realized that the cumulation of God's love and presence was about to take place in the birth of Jesus. Arnold Fleagle calls the birth of Jesus the "great exchange" for God sent the pure for the impure, the Divine for the human, the Prince for the pauper. There is no parity in the manager of Bethlehem for God emptied heaven's bank with the expenditure of God's beloved son, which can never be equaled by anyone who receives the priceless treasure of Jesus. It is only by God's love that the unequal can be made equal. Jesus Christ humbled Himself so that every sinner could become a saint, so that every orphan could become a member of the family of God. The Son of God became a human child, accessible, approachable, and adorable. We do not come to Jesus, rather Jesus comes to us. Jesus comes and

knocks on the door of every heart hoping that he will be invited in for Jesus wants to become your close personal friend and savior. Rejoice in Jesus your Savior. Be amazed and inspired by the personification, the incarnate, the love of God, in the babe laying in that lowly manger in Bethlehem. Praise God for the unmerited gift of Jesus and for Jesus' promises. Jesus said I will never leave or forsake you. Jesus promises to come again and take us with him so that where God is there we can be also. The book of Revelation puts it this way **Revelation 21:3-4** “**See, the home of God is among mortals. God will dwell with them; they will be God's people, and God will be with them; Jesus will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more, mourning and crying and pain will be no more for the first things have passed away.**”

Mary rejoiced in Jesus her Savior for she knew he was sent for all people. What God has done for Mary models what Jesus does for us and all people. The shepherds in those days were the outcasts of society considered to be ritually impure and morally inferior yet the angels appeared to the shepherds. They hurried to see Jesus. Upon seeing Jesus they rejoiced in their Savior and spread the good news of Jesus birth praising and glorifying God for God's love and presence with them. Jesus came for all people at the other end of the spectrum kings, wise people, came from the East and rejoiced in Jesus their savior and worshiped God.

After Jesus, Mary's Savior, was born, after the Angels appeared and the shepherds and wise men had gone, **Luke 2:19** “**Mary treasured up all these**

**things and pondered them in her heart.”** John Calvin, comments that if we are wise we will be like Mary remembering the loving actions of God, which build up our faith. Our chief employment, the greatest object in our life is remembering the loving actions of God, which will cause our hearts to rejoice in Jesus our Savior and then to offer our thanksgiving through our worship.

Remembering the actions of God’s love will fill us with joy. Remember God’s mercy which washes over us in wave after endless wave, will sustain us when we make mistakes. Remembering God’s guidance by prophets, a star, a still small voice and the promptings of the Holy Spirit will guide us through times of doubt, fear and loneliness. Remembering the actions of God’s strong arm will empower us when we experience setbacks and challenges.

Remembering how God has lifted up the lowly and filled the hungry will sustain us when we find ourselves in need. Remembering the birth of Jesus will fill us with joyful certainty that God is with us that no matter what happens to us, no matter what we do, we will always be saved and will be welcomed home to the glory of heaven. .

Remember, rejoice, in God’s love. Remember, rejoice, that you are the reason for Christmas for Jesus came to be with you. Rejoice in Jesus your Savior. Amen.