

**Local Group Meeting – “Celebrating Christmas”**  
**Hillcrest Bible Church ❖ ❖ ❖ December 2019**

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Christmas is a time to remember and rejoice in the birth of Jesus Christ. We are all acquainted with many Christmas carols and songs which help to celebrate the season. The “Twelve Days of Christmas” is a song about twelve days between the birth of Christ and the arrival of the Magi on January 6 – the Epiphany of the three wise men. The specifics of this have been interpreted in many ways, but in the end, the song is fanciful and fun at its best. On the other hand, the gospel of Luke reveals three songs with reference to the birth of Jesus that are true and accurate – the very Word of God. This year’s Christmas series focuses our attention on these three songs: the song of Mary, the song of Zacharias, and the song of Simeon. All delight in the hope of salvation through the coming and arrival of the Messiah. May every Christmas season delight our heart with the faith and hope we have in the Lord Jesus Christ – our Savior and King.

**The Song of Mary – “The Magnificat” (Latin)**

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1) “The Song of Mary” → Luke 1:46-55 – read the context: Luke 1:26-45

The Magnificat – a title based on the first line “My soul exalts/magnifies the Lord” – is Mary’s inspired response to the wonder of God’s dealings with her. She recognized her humble presence in the outworking of God’s eternal plan. She also rejoiced in the fulfillment of God’s promises to Israel. Take special note of what is said about the Lord in the last sentence: “*He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our father, to Abraham and his offspring forever*” (54-55). The word for “offspring” is the word “seed” which references the Davidic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, the Noahic covenant, and the beginning promise in Genesis 3:15. What God promises – God provides.

**The Song of Zacharias – “The Benedictus” (Latin)**

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2) “The Song of Zacharias” → Luke 1:67-79 – read the context: Luke 1:57-66

Zacharias, filled with the Holy Spirit, rejoiced in the birth of his son John. The Benedictus – “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel” – signified the birth of John the Baptist and the coming of the Messiah. John was the forerunner – proclaiming the truth and preparing the way for the coming of Jesus the Messiah. It is Jesus who would bring salvation, the forgiveness of sins, the way of peace, and the light in the face of darkness. Zacharias rejoiced in what the Messiah would do – we rejoice in what the Messiah has done for us.

**The Song of Simeon – “Nunc dimittis” (Latin)**

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3) “The Song of Simeon” → Luke 2:27-32 – the context: Luke 2:22-26 & 33-38

Simeon rejoiced in Jesus after his birth for now he could depart in peace. The Lord’s promise was fulfilled to him – Nunc dimittis “now you dismiss”. Simeon was in the temple and in the Spirit when Jesus was placed in his arms. As he looked at the baby Jesus and rejoiced in the salvation of the Lord, he knew he was holding the Messiah. This amounted not only to the salvation of Israel but also the Gentiles. The whole world was to be blessed by the Messiah. It is for this reason that we rejoice in the very salvation that Simeon acknowledged and Jesus accomplished on the cross. Truly Christmas is about Christ and God’s provision of salvation for all in Christ.

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December 4<sup>th</sup> “The Song of Mary” → [Luke 1:46-55](#) – read the context: [Luke 1:26-45](#)  
December 11<sup>th</sup> “The Song of Zacharias” → [Luke 1:67-79](#) – read the context: [Luke 1:57-66](#)  
December 18<sup>th</sup> “The Song of Simeon” → [Luke 2:27-32](#) – the context: Luke [2:22-26](#) & [33-38](#)

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**Memory Verse:** Luke 1:32-33 · Gabriel’s message to Mary about Jesus

*“He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High;  
and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David;  
and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever;  
and His kingdom will have no end.”*

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**Discussion Questions:**

1. Describe the historical event recorded in this passage of Scripture.
2. What was the personal significance of this event and this song to the singer?
3. What is the broader significance of this song to the gospel and the world?
4. What does this text reveal about the Messiah ... the Christ?
5. How does this text impact the way that Christians remember the birth of Christ?