St. Luke's Magnificat

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Date: 11 December 2016

Preacher: Harvey Guest

[0:00] After that, I have to add a prescript word, filling in for Jim Packer's a bit.

It proves that heaven does have a sense of humor. Choose Harvey for him. That's a warrior for the gospel, Jim Packer.
He's a bit frail these days, but he's a warrior, as you know. He's a fighter. So I thought, being asked on a bit of short notice, I had to do something seasonal, and it dawned on me, I'm sure it's dawned on you at times, that at Advent, we're in Advent, and as we approach Christmas, what would we do without Luke and his gospel?
At this season, we'd be missing so much. Luke famously aims, doesn't he, at, in his own lovely way, the gospel of Luke is often referred to as a lovely piece of literary art, and it certainly is.
He aims at thoroughness, for sure. And this he signals as he begins his narrative. Let me remind you of it. I'm sure a lot of you know it quite well.
[1:18] I love the openings of the gospels. They're always so interesting. They usually do signal lots, and in Luke's case, a lot lot. He says, you'll recall, Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.

What an opening, the opening, the overture of Luke. Rich stuff there, rich stuff. Is that not, it's worth unpacking that for a bit.
So we begin this morning. That is quite revealing. Luke tells us here that many were writing about Jesus. Many were writing about Jesus by the time that Luke began his own remembrance of Jesus. Many. How many, many, he does not say. Would that there were more footnotes in the gospels. Historians especially would love that. How many, many, Luke?
He doesn't say. It might indicate some, maybe it's an overstatement to call it anxiety, but some concern about remembering as the eyewitness generation grew older.
[3:01] Eyewitnesses, they are mentioned by Luke there. Eyewitnesses have, to put it, to state the obvious, eyewitnesses have authority, don't they?

Eyewitnesses have authority. Eyewitnesses have authority. Also, they have, those taught by eyewitnesses, likewise, have a bit of authority. If you've met someone you want to know about, and you find out they know that person, they have a kind of authority with you.
You're eager to hear what they have to say. Living memory, as it is called, is a remarkable kind of power, in fact. Living memory.
Even, we can go further than that, I think we can in the case of the Christian scriptures, speaking as a Christian to other Christians, we can talk about living memory even as a kind of presence.
So Luke would give us a written witness to this presence. Or Luke's gospel, like all the gospels, like scripture as a whole, it's a form of presence.
[4:15] I find that very helpful and moving. I first read that kind of language about scripture from a Russian, he's alive, he's a contemporary, a Russian medievalist, who talks about writing as a form of presence.

He's a Christian too, this writer. Put this a bit formally. I find it helpful sometimes to put things a bit formally. God has ordained that his word, written and preached, is a form of divine presence.
Wow. When you open a Bible, I say, who's the writer, the American writer, Annie Dillard, he says, when you go to church, you should put on a seatbelt.

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Maybe when you read the Bible, put on a seatbelt. You're in the presence of something divine. Properly understood. That has to be unfolded. Theologians do a lot of work unfolding that kind of thing for us.
At Advent, we remember, we especially remember, that God, that heaven, has caused, you know these words, Holy Scripture, to be written for our learning.
[5:27] So today is a time together to read, to mark, to learn, and hopefully, hopefully, inwardly digest, you recognize the colic language, I know, a part of this divine presence that God has given us.

So today, as advertised, a look at Mary's song, or the Magnificat, those of you who are Latin scholars like that.
The Latin title of this song, My Soul, where the title comes from, My Soul Magnifies the Lord. So before we begin, and go further, let's say a word of prayer.
Our God, we thank you for, this mystery of Holy Scripture, that we want to learn, mark, and inwardly digest, so that we may glorify you, with Mary, to magnify your name, and that, in it all, as you desire, that we would be blessed.
We pray that you'll be with us, Lord, as we look at the things of the gospel, together. Amen. Amen.
Luke remembers for us, again, why Luke's gospel is so, so lovely, and so helpful for us as Christians.
[6:46] He remembers for us some very early things. It's one of his gifts that he wanted to write for Theophilus. The young adolescent Jesus, well, Luke uniquely remembers.

He was about 12. He tells us his age, conversing with teachers in Israel, specifically teachers in the temple. He had gone missing from his parents when he visited the temple for some conversation with teachers, and when he was discovered by his parents, you remember this story, he responded to their agitation, understandable agitation.
He responded with the famous, somewhat enigmatic words, perhaps, did you not know that I must be about my father's work, that I must be about my father's business, like Luke King James, which translates that.
Perhaps Theophilus had asked for some early pictures of the man Jesus that he was learning about, and that, as Luke says, many were remembering by writing about Jesus.
He grew up, says Luke, under the authority of his parents, growing in stature, growing in wisdom. Luke's beautiful little comments. Anything earlier, Luke, Theophilus might have asked, and well, yes, Luke may have inquired from Mary herself.
[8:14] Earlier, perhaps he had gone to speak with Elizabeth, the wife of Zechariah, the temple priest. Perhaps he had met with brothers and sisters of Jesus.

And from these, he had put together the story of a uniquely, we can call it a mystery-laden, my words, I don't know if this is a good way to think of it, but I think Luke has given us sort of a first framework to look at the man Jesus.
Jesus, yeah, an early framework that Luke wants to give us. This story, we now know, and the Holy Catholic Church knows, that's who we are here this morning together, in obedience to the Word of God, says, we said it this morning, you'll be saying it later today at service, you go to, born of the Virgin Mary.
So the Church incorporates into her credo witness this early remembering that he had been born of a virgin named Mary. That's an early remembering that informs us all.
We're part of this early remembering. And in this early framework, this early, I like to think of it as a picture album of the youth of Jesus.
[9:35] Pictures of us, Mom, do you have that at your house? Oh, here's what you looked like when you were five and ten. You close it quickly sometimes. In this early picture album, we find, famously, Mary's song that Luke uniquely gives us.

Again, my soul magnifies the Lord. I thought that, I wanted to say right off the bat, forgive me today for, I'll be doing a lot of repetition.
I think it's worth it with this psalm prayer. Soren Kierkegaard, we heard about him last week from Brother Joe over here, wonderfully. He says, you know, that faith is repetition.
You keep on repeating faith. It can't sit stale in you. You keep repeating it. Scripture is for constant repetition. My soul magnifies the Lord, says Mary, as her famous song prayer begins.

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Elizabeth, famously, just before this song is recorded, Luke has told us that Elizabeth had greeted Mary as the mother of my Lord.
[10:49] amazing. Remember the moment Mary greets Elizabeth and she's, the babe in Elizabeth's room leapt. Very, talk about mystery-laden narrative.

And Elizabeth wants to know about the mother of my Lord. The mother of my Lord. So Mary begins and says, my soul magnifies the Lord.
Lord. The church must always, with Mary, as Luke tells us, ponder these things. Luke goes out of his way to tell us that Mary was a thoughtful person and she pondered the mystery that she'd been involved in, that she got caught up in.
Mary pondered these things, Luke tells us, in her heart. The church does that in many ways. certainly theology is a pondering.
Theology thinks. Theology, hopefully, prayerfully, seeks illumination. Prayer itself and theology, properly understood, they are an arduous task.
[12:10] You're meant to struggle. The gospel happily tells us, struggle with this. Ponder it. You'll grow in your understanding of it. Peter Taylor Forsythe is a great teacher of the, how prayer is an arduous activity.

Mary may have arduously thought about how to speak about what she was caught up in. She pondered these things in her heart. Mary is famously, of course, with child.
But this child enters the world, well, shall I put it this way, trailing clouds of glory.
You may have heard those words. Wordsworth may have there indulged in magical thinking. Mystery is not magical thinking. It's weightier than that.
It's a divine revealing of things that we would otherwise not know. but Luke certainly has been made aware in his inquiries of a something strange going on here in the birth of Jesus.
[13:15] Strange in the birth of John the Baptist. The mother of the Lord. The mother of the Lord magnifies this Lord.

To call it paradox seems pathetic. It's more than that. It's only a divine action that brings about such mystery. The mother of the Lord magnifies the Lord.
I mentioned Peter Taylor Forsyth. I've been reading a bit of him recently. So helpful. For many years I've loved his. He's a congregationalist by about 1860.
He died about in the 1920s. He speaks of God our Savior at this kind of season emptying himself, the famous language of Paul and Philippians 2.
And Forsyth, again, the theologian ardently struggling with what's going on at Advent and Christmas. He talks about the Lord entering into the oblivion of birth.
[14:21] The emptying of God, the second person. And we don't know about our birth. He entered into our oblivion.

Where were you when you were born? Do you understand the mystery of how you were formed in your mother's womb? No one does. He entered into that oblivion. And then, as Forsyth says, he joined us in, oh, this language, he joined us in the humiliation of life.
There's a weighty word. Theologians do ponder and say weighty things. The church learns in the church's intellectual life, her thinking life, her inquiring life, her pondering life.
The Lord Jesus, second person of the infinite trinity, has joined us in this humiliation of life. Life is a humiliation.
It's more than that, but it is. He entered into this veil of tears, tears, where things go so catastrophically wrong. This morning, James led us in prayers, the prayers of the people.
[15:35] We remember some whose life right now is a kind of nightmare at this season, who know they're dying. Life has become, at one level for them, bitter.

You've made my way bitter, says Job. The humiliation of life. If anyone finds that, if anyone finds that message on a Hallmark Christmas card, I will buy you a cup of coffee.
And you can't make it up yourself now, I'd pick that up. You don't find that on Christmas cards, do you? It's all, hey, have a great season. The Lord has entered the humiliation of life with us.
Well, he has to save us. I magnify the Lord, God my Savior. He's come to do a great work for us.
Mary knows this. My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.
That's famous, of course, Hebrew parallelism, as you know. When you read about the Psalms, you always hear about parallelism. The Jews, wonderful people of God, love to say a sentence and then say it again, sometimes in a slightly different way, sometimes expanding, but essentially saying the

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same thing twice.
[16:53] So, magnifies is paired with rejoices, my soul is paired with my spirit, same thing, soul and spirit there, a bit of Bible wisdom and knowledge there, and then is paired the Lord and God my Savior.

The Lord that Mary refers to is God my Savior. I'm a Protestant, I don't apologize for that, but calling Mary with our Roman Catholic brothers and sisters, calling her the Mother of God, my Savior, is in Holy Writ.
It was used in a particular moment of history to do some good hard work of theological clarification, but Mary is the Mother of God, our Savior, and we don't have to apologize for that language or back away from it.
Mary is the Mother of God, the Savior. There it is. God has looked upon Mary, I know this is only good for people in the front row, maybe the second, but as I refer to these moments in the song, you'll see it in your handout.
God has looked upon Mary's lowliness, her humble estate, her lowliness, or the ESV has it, her humble estate.
[18:22] There it is, her humble estate. So what is unstated here, the church will get around to saying in different ways and expand on it.

For he hath, Mary says, regarded the lowliness of his handmaiden. But the church has come to see as she ponders and unfolds Mary's song.
The greater wonder here, is this a safe thing to say? It certainly is part of theological pondering of Mary's song. The greater wonder, perhaps, is that in Mary's womb, God has made himself lowly. He beholds the lowly handmaiden, but he has made himself lowly. in his identification with us in the humiliation of life.
God makes himself lowly. It's the season for celebrating these kind of things along the way, just a couple of times. I can't resist.
[19:28] Do you know the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, he just says so simply, God's infinity dwindled to infancy. infancy. It's worth pondering in our hearts.

With poetry, as Ed Norman helped us with music, the church unfolds and celebrates and finds ways to remember God's infinity dwindled to infancy.
Dwindled to infancy. Wow. With fear and trembling, just a passing remark. These things do make the church think and think and think.
Sometimes when the church thinks and thinks and thinks it gets yourself into sort of thinking troubles. So Calvin, next year we're celebrating the remembering the half a millennium since the Reformation.
At the time of the Reformation, the incarnation was thought about a lot because the church was rethinking a lot of things about what this mystery means.
[20:39] God taking upon himself flesh. Calvin believed that the word became flesh and also he remained the second person of the Trinity, the word upholding the universe by his word of power.

That's central to reformed thinking that got into the Anglican tradition deeply at the time the Roman was a Calvinist the prayer book is a Calvinist piece of work. So they have word made flesh but the word also upholds the universe.
Calvin sort of had extra Calvinistic in this called. But the Lutherans thought differently. Luther said no, no, Luther thought that the whole mystery of the second person became incarnate.
Full stop, absolutely. so the body of Jesus is ubiquitous now. So the Lutherans think that on the holy table the Lord is present in his body and the reform said no, he's there spiritually.
See, the church can think theologically about this incarnation thing. It has rich, amazing possibilities in its unfolding.
[22:00] The church must ponder this. Where is the body of Jesus now? It was in Mary's womb, now it's at the father's right hand. Is it ubiquitous when you meet Jesus in prayer?

Are you meeting his body? Meet him through his spirit? End of theological footnote. Just to show you, the church has to ponder this deeply.
We celebrate it in song, we remember it in poetry, but the church goes on thinking about this mystery. God means us to think about this mystery. I received the bread and wine this morning and I need to ponder that in my heart as Mary did.

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What did I receive today? It's worth thinking about, not to become intellectually perplexed, but because it's a good thing to think about the gospel. What did I receive today?
It doesn't matter if I understand it much. God gave me his grace by meeting him in the word preached, the bread and the wine. God has made himself lowly.
[23:07] The letter to the Hebrew says that Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brethren. He calls us his brothers and sisters. The letter to the Hebrew says so God is not ashamed to become one of us and to have a mother.

I'm sorry to repeat, but surely if that's not worth repeating and pondering over and over what is in scripture, God is not ashamed to become one of us and our Lord Jesus our brother our elder brother is a mother named Mary.
He that is mighty then Mary says he that is mighty hath magnified me.
It's about four lines down in the handout. He that is mighty hath magnified me and holy is his name. Mary magnifies the Lord because the Lord has magnified Mary.
Just noting the obvious what's on the surface here is wondrous. Mary magnifies the Lord. The Lord has magnified Mary. And so it's no wonder then that she goes on to say all generations shall call me blessed.
[24:32] I have been so magnified to be the place where the second person of the Trinity she didn't know that language took up his residence to come into the world to be with us.

Again excuse me for the obvious but it's wonderful to rehearse the obvious. All generations should call Mary blessed. Should we think again the church ponders the word of God should we think I ask this rhetorically to you maybe in the discussion time we can go over this if it appeals to you should we think more frequently of God's intention to magnify us.
Do you think that God has an intention to magnify you? Surely he does. That's what salvation is. God wants to magnify you. To make you glorious in his creation.
To make us immortal. To think of it. To make us immortal. The gospel reveals immortality. I don't know if we think enough about that.
I'm getting older. I'm beginning to think about it more. Doctor am I immortal? He always says no. Even after I got a pneumonia shot this week.
[25:56] Is that going to make me immortal? Sorry buddy. The immortal stuff is in the back you got to pay big bucks for it. I'm not immortal. But maybe someday I should say to him Doctor I am immortal.

The gospel of Jesus Christ promises me immortality. He would pick up the phone. Exactly. Psychiatry floor six.
Exactly. The gospel says we are immortal. The gospel reveals that we are immortal. We will be made immortal. Again, Joe talked about Soren Kierkegaard, one of my favorites.
Kierkegaard says it is a profound thing to be a human being. Will knows. He's in battles all the time in our culture and at the heart of it is the belief that it is not a profound thing to be a human being. In our culture it's not profound to be a baby anymore or to be old. At both ends of the game of life we get casual about getting rid of people. It's because we do not believe in our culture and it's getting more and more deeply ingrained that it is not a profound thing to be a human being.
[27:15] But the gospel says it is. God has created us for immortality. mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations.

And his mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. That is a very Hebraic kind of thing to say it seems to me. God is working out Mary knows this a strange very slow humanly speaking complex story over time with an identifiable people.
Mary lived in the midst of that identifiable people throughout generations. Genealogies are not an afterthought in the Bible.
Jesus when he went to synagogue in Nazareth with Mary and Joseph and the brothers and sisters in the family if there were such they would have learned genealogies.
Mary knew she was part of a story in which God was working. Salvation is worked out slowly in a very complex manner by our God.
[28:28] His mercy she says next five lines down is on them that fear him. His mercy is on them that fear him. It recalls doesn't it that Abraham called God his fear.

That's a profound little moment in the Old Testament. Abraham the one who was called by God called God his fear.

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So I take it the hymn has it right. It was grace that taught my soul to fear and grace my fears relieved. Abraham feared God because God was becoming his friend.
A friend of God. And they worked out that profound friendship. It involved deep reverence and respect. Abraham called God his fear.
His mercy is on them that fear him throughout all generations. Now to keep moving right along there's a change of tone now in Mary's song.
[29:35] He showed strength with his arm. She now says things like this. He has showed strength with his arm. He has scattered the proud in the imaginations of their hearts.

And more he has put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted the humble and meek. And more even more reversals they're piled on here aren't there? He hath filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty.
Real from a tone of wonderment at what God was doing in Mary's life she now has a tone of militancy almost about what the God of Israel is doing as he works salvation into the midst of the earth.
At that point you can begin to wonder though what do such words really mean in what's their payoff really in the real world that we know? Well as history it seems to me again this is back to a theological pondering of Mary's song this speaks of God as the hidden presence in history as the hidden presence of the world we believe that God is working out his purposes in history but it's very hidden we're not always going to see the proud get what they deserve and the lowly ones raised up Mary here is speaking in fact eschatologically she's speaking about God's perfect future that he's giving the world it speaks of what will be made openly obvious at history's end when the Lord returns Mary really has pondered these things in her heart and worked out where the mystery she's caught up in where it stands in the mystery of
[31:41] God's unfolding of his plan salvation there will be great reversals he fills the hungry with good things the rich he sends away empty of course we may recall of course at this point that Mary's song has a clear as you know a clear model a model a forebear in Israel scripture you'll recall that in 1 Samuel chapter 2 I won't spend much time on this it shows us another woman in Israel singing a song of high celebration you recall this you Bible readers Hannah after the gift to her of a boy Samuel she sang a song that is somewhat like Mary's song Mary must have known Hannah's song the Lord right off the bat in a free willing translation the

Lord says Hannah has filled my heart with joy my heart will magnify the Lord she's saying there he saved me he none are holy like the Lord Mary acknowledges the Lord's holiness in her song she says Hannah just like Mary he makes a poor he makes rich God does great reversals in the world she sings like Mary of these great reversals he brings down says Hannah and he lifts up she even goes so far as to say Hannah those who oppose the Lord are destroyed he thunders against them says Israel's God through Hannah so there's militancy in in the midst of God as he works out salvation it has to be acknowledged Tom Wright I think overstates it he's a little bit shy of the militancy
I just looked up one mention he makes in one of his books about this song he says wow Mary gets really tough here he wonders about it as Hannah was strong in her language Israel and those who speak for Israel often celebrate the gift of a child Abraham famously and Sarah Elkanah that's the husband of Hannah they celebrate the gift of a child and of course as we're looking at this morning Mary the same would you agree it's the same and yet not the same Luke wants to tell us this birth is quite different it's utterly unique nothing less than that I heard the Messiah on Friday night the privilege at the Orpheum unto us a son is given and the government will be upon his shoulders this this birth is the answer to that expectation of
Israel he will be called mighty he will be called you know the words so well the prince of peace how to think this of course all of this is a challenge it's meant to be I think we call it a happy challenge thinking through how this unfolds in the mystery of scripture how often in your whole life long may I ask how often have you used the word I'll spell it for you palimpsest hands up I've never used it in conversation maybe once do you do you know the word palimpsest there you go just for the curious pal i m p s e s t palimpsest a dictionary definition of this obscure word goes like this it's actually an important word a parchment manuscript etc written upon two or three times the earlier writing continues the definition the earlier writing having been wholly or partially erased to make room for the next apparently it's from a greek word that literally means scraped again palimpsest there's a book called palimpsest that little dictionary interlude if it's obvious where this goes it gives us a sort

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of picture of how revelation in scripture works seems to me god reveals god promises and in doing so he creates meaning and spaces if you will for more revelation he wrote a story about abraham sarah and their kid this elk and ahana story they're like manuscripts and then the spirit comes and says let's tell this story over again and writes over it like a oh a palimpsest it would be called yeah that's how scripture works it's not sort of linear it's all that's over now no the later stuff is sort of pictured with what came earlier and it teaches it reveals the meaning of what comes later that's why the church never dreamed really of getting rid of the old testament we don't understand jesus without the old testament mary doesn't understand what's happening in her womb without the story of israel as a framework to understand it in so luke records this wonderful fulfillment of earlier mysteries of parents with children god was preparing israel giving her an expectation of how this story was going to go hannah's hannah's story of a child given the child was samuel we call for a special prophetic and priestly ministry again now told again but with a fullness all but unthinkable in its glory as luke puts it in front of us and mary then speaks of this strange if you will way of israel's god he she continues in her song we get towards the end of it here he remembering his mercy his mercy hath helped hope in this is from the prayer book this magnifica he has helped his servant israel mary remembers this whole thing i'm involved in is part of israel's story there's no gospel without israel's story jesus in a sense is is israel he's israel's true identity yes he remembering may we gloss that i i with reverence of course as god remembering
that he has more story to tell god remember that i haven't quite finished that story yet that i'm working out in the middle of the world hannah's song must be a part of this uh this ongoing revelation this uh one more time i promise not again this palimpsest you can start using that in conversation if you don't expect comprehension yes you yes he god has promised to mary's and israel's forefathers that he would fulfill his words to abraham and his line forever god remembers abraham and sarah he remembers hannah and alkanah he remembers and he fulfills what the story he's telling and luke says this with mary's help obviously the story has taken an astonishing turn here the infinite has dwindled into an infinite an infant if mary had read hopkins she would have incorporated luke luke obviously to repeat intends completeness he intends thoroughness and so does mary she praises within heaven's plan within heaven's story of uh salvation mary's happiness if you will is israel's happiness mary's happiness is our happiness she sings sort of on our behalf doesn't she we have entered into the mystery of what happened to mary i must close i must close because i want lots time for feedback and a conversation about these wonderful things the poetry of advent and christmas i think is obvious isn't it i think i'm glad i'm very much glad for the poetry i haven't been quoting a bit of poetry and there just for the fun of it this season generates poetry so does so does easter this season in the church's life generates poetry it's hard to imagine this season without its music that's why a couple weeks ago to hear ed norman playing centuries of glorious song and music about advent mysteries and christmas mysteries is no entertainment for the christian is it it's part of sort of palimpsest the church tells the story over and over again in poetry in song and music in deep theological arduous work theologically and i think it's true to say as becky reminded us last week in architecture in how the church struggles with art is really important because it's our way of saying see what god has done it's a it's a form of word architecture and and the arts in and in and outside of the church space as becky was talking about last week is so important about and this season highlights it it seems to me it's not an accident that luke remembers mary singing a poem there are other poetry in scriptures filled with poetry said bruce waltke used to say you should read a lot of poetry or and eugene peterson used to say this to pastors i'm told should read a lot of poetry because if you don't you're not going to understand the bible the holy spirit loves poetry wrote lots of it psalter's poems the lord's teaching takes on the cadences of poetry in the
[42:50] sermon on the mountain other places paul wrote him the himy sounding poems lipians 2 though he was in the form of god i think that's worth remembering that advent god's infinity one more time dwindled to infancy elliot and milton and hopkins and lots of others and the hymnody that we sing at this time of the year is such a joy and at the same time as we mentioned earlier the deep theology of it all it that deserves our best efforts for sure i'm going to close uh alas the late john webster great speaking of theologian jordan center was running off is now in um st andrews in scotland mr webster learned it theologian it's going to be his uh thesis director but he passed away a while ago john webster so he's got another thesis director john webster i'd love to read his book he says very simply the chief act of theological existence is to pray this give me understanding according to thy word that's what a theologian does boy it gets complicated that calvin luther

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discussion in the 16th century got awfully complicated but they were seeking lord give us understanding of what you're saying in the mystery of your actions through mary through jesus coming into the world give me understanding according to your word and it's worth reminding ourselves that in as this gospel open opens we hear that luke and mary sought understanding luke he says i inquired mary luke reminds us she pondered it you can't just get the gist of the gospel quickly you can get it that way a bit but it won't bless you deeply you've got to struggle with it see what it's saying um mr um mr webster talks about in this regard we seek an intensive apprehension intensive apprehension of these things and so should we of course mary pondered because she wanted to understand what was going on here in the mystery of what was happening to her and the word became flesh for sure yes mary thought to understand that we should not be surprised at the it seems to me at the formal beauty of this uh of this song that mary sang mary pondered these things she thought about how to say this mystery that had surprised her life if you will if that's the right way to put it the beauty of luke's gospel is part of the revelation the poetry of it this high mystery the word indeed became flesh and dwelt among us and of this mystery mary sings for us and we pay a lot of attention to it i hope at advent mary sings it's a i find it a blessing just to uh just to go through her song and ponder it with her what god has done for us a word of prayer before we converse about these things lord we thank you for mary's song and we pray that you will teach us to learn mark inwardly digest it so that your name will be glorified and we will be instructed in these wonderful mysteries that you are doing for us we pray in jesus name amen amen well there we go

don't you ask myself some questions you don't look like jim packer sir good sir can you can you remember can you sorry remind us when luke was writing because what you say about eyewitnesses is is really important and of course it's that richard bacham book jesus and the eyewitnesses yeah yeah so yes so um could you repeat the question i just yeah that's a good you mentioned that luke was talking about oh yes those still alive yes remind us what years we're talking about oh yeah many people are still under the delusion that these words are written down hundreds of years later um according to some fantasies of some faith community somewhere and uh yeah it was very much more immediate than that yeah yeah i just want yeah um it's worth hearing again in as much as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things which have been accomplished among us just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us and he said it seemed good to me put this story together for you theophilus so luke i i don't think it's doubted by even uh very uh uh skeptical scholars that luke probably knew eyewitnesses to the jesus circle there was jesus and his circle and luke definitely would have known people in the jesus immediate circle i don't think that's doubted but in terms of um in terms of dating of course it's always open to who you're going to listen to i like john a.t robinson who's not an orthodox christian in any way the famous bishop but he concluded by the end of his life that every document in the new testament had been written before 70 a.d so if that's true luke is maybe writing in the 50s luke almost certainly knew paul paul knew uh the brothers of the lord he knew james he knew peter he fights with peter so that he's close to the inner circle so luke uh i think that's not too disputed very much is that a good but the date in terms of date anybody subscribes he's out at 90 a.d and others would have no no he's 50 years yeah it's only it's speculation it's just it's interesting because we we're reminded of there's so much history going on right now oh yeah overloaded with history at the moment yeah you know the election in the states oh yeah ferment in in in the rest of the world and it's just interesting to speculate that luke was no further from the crucifixion perhaps than we are from the first gulf war or something yeah yeah yeah yeah that's why living presence issues for for memory people inquire about memory issues in a culture i find it always marcus balknell one of our own to speak has written very interesting things about living memory issues uh very it's just fascinating stuff i please just um you touched on earlier about how you know there's the language of scripture mary being the mother of our god savior and do you think that we in the protestant world have not given her her due in one sense because maybe we're reacting too much against the excesses of the roman catholicism where she's effectively the fourth person of the trinity uh and here you see this and then even in the definition of chalcedon which we affirm that she is called god bearer yeah sure sure uh do have we not maybe blessed her have we not been of the generations to call her blessed enough as we should not necessarily but we're reacting

i think maybe oh i think so i think so you know we're afraid of doing that too much because we're that way well i i think you've said it nicely i think that's true i remember ernie eldridge used to say uh

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when the protestants get to heaven they're gonna meet jesus and the first thing he's gonna say to you i want you to meet my mother you ignored her a bit i don't know on the big front here's where theology plugs in again i mean the roman our roman friends say you know you've got an adam and a second adam you've got an eve where does the other foot fall do we have a second eve they think so yeah we say show us in scripture the old story but i'm glad that catholics and protestants are talking about these things in learned ways the fellow i'm standing in for now you know as part of the evangelicals and catholics together movement and they're going over making sure we really understand one another and hear one another thoroughly no more bearing false witness about one another so now mary plays a rich role in the piety of wonderful christians and we protestants have taken a step back from that and there you go it's always it's all it's on the church's uh discussion list isn't it there there's some oh martin please so you've said something about the difference between the lutheran calvinist yes yes yes and i you went very by very quick yes by yes oh thank you thank you my profundities are usually hit and run you just don't want to more conversation might reveal other things than for fun to be yeah calvin somehow thought this through and thought it was obviously i think it was regarding sacramental mysteries calvin believed as i understand it and i wish jim pack was here today but here's a a brief overview from a i hope i'm not a casual read about these things calvin thought yes the second person of the infinite trinity becomes man takes upon himself a body but then in the reformed tradition the formal way it's referred to is it's called the in latin the extra calvinisticum for some reason it's calvin also the second person of the trinity remains at the with his father upholding the universe by his word of power as the letter to the hebrew says so there's a kind of there's a kind of dualism in calvin's thinking about the word made flesh that the body is there but it doesn't totally encompass the second person somehow whereas the luther luther said oh no the the mystery of the lord's body is that it partakes of divinity so much so perfectly that it is everywhere present so that's why the lutherans to this day have they don't believe in transubstantiation but something like it you meet you meet jesus on the holy table you meet his body whereas we calvinists say through the mystery of the spirit we are given jesus and at calvin could be very mystical what he wanted to be he thought as you eat and drink you ascend with jesus and meet him in his body in heavenly places echoing paul in ephesians and colossians so there i see next year is the 500th anniversary of the mystery of that great event and some of these issues will be discussed again why in the world did the reformed and the lutherans not agree about the sacrament well it's sort of like that that's the backdrop to it as i understand it and it bothers me to this day this is silly but they should have worked out a deal of within this parameter we'll agree that we're all in christ we're participating in the mystery and your footnotes about it all may be different than my footnotes about it all but we will be one in christ and i if you know was that a possibility maybe not but the the reformation had its weird aspects we protestants are now willing to say that as we talk to catholics we didn't have the whole we didn't own the truth back then there's things that have to be unfolded further i'm a protestant i don't i won't apologize for that but i see there's room for more with mary and with luke pondering and inquiring sir thanks harvey for stepping in thanks last night i watched a documentary my gosh it was on the smithsonian channel maybe other people saw it so it was on the decadence of the west and the thesis of the documentary was that the western world is in decline like all great empires when they reach their zenith they then may start to crumble so many descriptors or evidences of how that is happening in the western world primarily focusing on the united states consumerism a variety of indicators so with that in my recent background of last night i was intrigued with mary's descriptor of the word emptiness and the rich he has sent away empty yeah and i just i just the spiritual assessment that that human experience that when we part from god we're left with emptiness yeah yeah yeah well my own prejudice i'll let them show here i mean on the the the the amazing scholar whatever else you think of him as a man but the charles taylor has uh uh uh uh unpacked uh our the humanism and the unbelief of western culture and and he sees it as as indeed the humanism is crumbling it's fragile it's one of his favorite words that the richness of our culture is unsatisfying and all around us he would say in with great scholarly detail that is evident humanist the the formal guy is just the spies taylor because he's with such scholarly acumen shown that their worldview is just it isn't working anymore he calls humanists interestingly the worst conversation partners in our culture because if you ever meet them i meet one once a week we get together you cannot get through a barrier that is up there oh religion is bad it's the crusades it's you know you people are warriors you're bad you just can't but it's it's a fragile absolutism i think so you just patiently listen the sovereign self the rich self is the sovereign self taylor would say and it needs it's it's made to be poor and receiving life as a gift with

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praise to magnify our creator it's the first step towards sanity isn't it a secular age charles taylor it's a oh there's also book called how to read charles taylor by christian forex which i've read both i'm quite proud there's also there's also um lang or not lang lectured yeah he did lang lectured yeah but the cbc ones you can you can get those massey massey taylor's get a script of that and that's quite um easy to understand taylor's not a card carrying uh evangelical christian in mind he's sort of a liberal roman catholic but he's really got his uh his i think his hand on the pulse of where we are now and the strangeness of where we are now i think but i um um who's this on my lap we have one bonus question a bonus question i'm just amazed with um the way mary finishes this is before the descent of the holy spirit she's already aware of trinitarian oh okay that's not in luke's text this was taken from the prayer book so but she is she is um you know she's implicitly a trinitarian we'll give her that yeah sorry i missed i think john had his hand up for yeah i you know the catholics where did the two things when you said the holy spirit loves poetry poetry is kind of like a blending paragon rhythm of words it's a pleasant waiting for but the catholics and the queen of heaven where who who and where did they start using the term we both use mother of god reform and catholic yeah but where did they develop the term queen of heaven i wonder you know i the details uh i'm not the guy to ask but a kind of a at trent especially after the reformation there was this what the protestants don't like will will magnify to use that term so mary they started to say in your face protestants mary is really important to us and we do pray to the saints and it so it was magnified it was exacerbated from the protestant point of view at that time but the catholics will back off from that you know when they they get our sophisticated distinctions and they know the mary stuff has to be handled carefully and i think they're willing to say that they know there was some strange errors that crept into that sort of stuff i didn't mention but just on the trinitarian stuff holy is his name i i wonder for time's sake i left it out mary says holy is his name i love why mary you might say carl bart famous a theologian who arduously struggles with these things he calls god he who loves in freedom a lovely definition of god he who loves in freedom god freely chose a teenage girl in nazareth and if we ask why it's because he our god loves in freedom why did he choose us to be here knowing jesus he loves in freedom he's shown us his salvation so

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