**Let Us Worship Like Mary** **By Pastor Francis Williams**

Mary’s Hymn of Praise to the Lord is known as the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55; cf. 1 Sam. 2:1-10). The term magnificat is Latin word which means “magnify” which is found in the first line of the hymn. The theme of this song can be summarized by the phrase “From Rags to Riches!”

Of the four evangelists**,** Luke is the only one who has recorded four songs in his birth narrative. These songs are known as the “Lukan Canticles.” The term canticle is the Latin word for “little song.” The titles of these four little songs are Latin terminologies. They are as follows: Mary’s Song, “The Magnificat” (Lk. 1:46-59); Zacharias’ Song, “The Benedictus” (Lk. 1:67-79); The song of the Angels, “The Gloria excelsis” (Lk. 2:14) and Simeon’s song, “The Nunc Dimittis” (Lk. 2:29-32).

In her song of praise, Mary magnifies the Lord for three wonderful things He has done: (1) for showing mercy to her, (2) for executing justice to the needy; (3) and for helping His servant, Israel. In this week’s update, we will focus on the opening words of Mary’s song.

Mary begins her song by declaring that she magnifies the Lord with her whole being (vv. 46b-47). She proclaims, “My soul magnifies the Lord.” The English word “soul” is a translation of the Greek term *pysche*. The “soul” is the seat and center of the inner life of humans and the location of feelings and emotions, especially love. It is a person’s most important possession (See Psa. 49:7-8; Matt. 16:26). The “soul” is that part of the human person that survives after the death of the body and receives the rewards and punishment of the afterlife (Heb. 10:39; Matt. 10:28)

Mary also declares that her “spirit rejoices in God my Savior.” The word “spirit” is a translation of the Greek term *pneuma*. The word can also mean wind. Like the wind, the spirit is invisible, immaterial and powerful (see Gen. 1:2). The spirit is the breath which gives life to the body. When the breath is taken away, the soul separates from the body (Eccl. 12:7).

When Mary declares that her soul magnifies the Lord and her spirit rejoices in God, she is not suggesting a dichotomy of soul and spirit. In other words, Mary is not making a distinction between her soul and spirit. What she is simply stating is that her entire being is involved in her praise to the Lord. The psalmist, likewise, declares “My soul shall make its boast in the LORD” (Psa. 34:2). This is precisely how we are to love God, with all our soul and spirit (see Deut. 6:5; 10:12; 11:13; 30:6; Matt. 22:37). To love God with all our being is to worship Him with all our being. Jesus said something to the same effect to the Samaritan woman: “God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth” (Jn. 4:24). Like Mary, when we worship the Lord, we must engage our entire inner being; if not, we are merely doing lip service (Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:8-9).