

Shocked By Joy

Long Beach Alliance Church • December 13, 2015 • Advent Week Two • Pastor Chris Lankford

*My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...*
~Luke 1:46-47

1) **God Is Always At Work, Even When You Cannot Not See It**

- A) Throughout the history of God's people, there are times when it seems all hope is lost, when death or destruction are imminent. It is an overstatement to say that when God's people are in a bad spot, God will always miraculously "show up" to deliver His people from trouble. In fact, there are many more verses indicating the exact opposite of this type of easy-believing-Genie-in-a-bottle type of Christianity (John 16:32-33; James 1:2-4).
- B) Oh, but there are moments of true wonder. The Israelites standing on the edge of the Red Sea, the water before them and Pharaoh's army rushing in behind them (Exodus 14). Israel living in captivity under the iron-wickedness and cruelty of the Canaanite commander Sisera (Judges 4). The desperate prayer of a barren Hannah, childless and hopeless, dramatically crying out to God to the point where Eli thought she was a drunken fool (1 Samuel 1).
- C) Each of these moments are significant for three reasons. First, there is a woman in a position of weakness. Second, God delivers all of Israel through their lives. Third, each of these women respond with joy when God delivers His people (Exodus 15, Judges 5, 1 Samuel 2).

2) **Explosions Of Joy Set Our Hope On His Deliverance**

- A) These amazing moments in Israel's past form the background for the ultimate shocking moment for God's people, when God shows up in the life of a young teenager, Mary (Luke 1:26-38). Her response of faith, and God's assurances (1:39-45) despite bizarre circumstances, result in an explosive example of Advent joy spoken by Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. Her "Magnificat" (from "mega-loonoh," to magnify), is a wondrous song of praise (Luke 1:46-55).
- B) Mary's "magnifying God" response (1:46-47), despite wonky circumstances (Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:26-38), is a pure response of joy and wonder at the mystery of God's presence. What we learn about God in these songs of response teaches us how to live in "Advent-urous" expectancy of God in our lives. These responses in the history of God's people are profound guides for living both before and after we see God's bewildering hand at work in the midst of our lives (note Psalm 113). What do we learn about God in the midst of these worship songs?