

DAY 22

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 20TH

Our theme for today: God's strength

Mary, and the nation of Israel can rejoice and have joy because of God's mercy. But they can also rejoice because of God's strength.

Scripture

⁵¹ *He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.*

Luke 1:51

Thought provokers

- If there was reason for Mary to feel fearful, there were also many reasons for her to feel powerless. What reasons do you think Mary might have felt powerless?
 - Are you facing any situations in which you feel powerless?

Reflections

Many things were out of Mary's control. Indeed, her whole country was suffering. This was nothing new to them. Israel often faced times when things were "out of control". In Mary's time there was oppression from their overlords in Rome. Yet this was nothing new. Before that it was Greece, and before that Persia. Before that it was Babylon and Assyria. Before that it was the Philistines and the Ammonites. Before that it was Egypt. The people of God constantly faced oppression. They constantly lived with "someone else being in charge."

All this might leave us feeling overwhelmed, but if we take another look, we might discover a different perspective. Despite all these overlords, Israel still existed! The Egyptians, Ammonites, Philistines, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, and Greeks – all had been laid aside. True, the Romans now held earthly power, but God still yet upheld Israel. No matter how big all of those powers were, none of them were a match for the God of all the universe. And what of the Roman Empire? Today it is a vacation destination.

We might ask, "what hope is there to be found that might recover joy; indeed, is there any hope that might bring joy?"

There is a pathway to hope, there is a pathway to joy. When we feel overwhelmed, when we feel powerless, God will bring His strength. His strength is enough, more than enough.

Prayer and Song

Take time to pray and sing praises to Him. It's by Johann von Rist.

Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light,

Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light,

and usher in the morning;

O shepherds, shrink not with affright,

but hear the angel's warning.

This Child, now weak in infancy,

our confidence and joy shall be;

the pow'r of Satan breaking,

our peace eternal making.

Break forth, O beauteous heav'nly light,

to herald our salvation;

He stoops to earth—the God of might,

our hope and expectation.

He comes in human flesh to dwell,

our God with us, Immanuel;

the night of darkness ending,

our fallen race befriending.