

Proclaim Him!

Song of Zechariah, Luke 1:67-80

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⁶⁸ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people
⁶⁹ and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,
⁷⁰ as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
⁷¹ that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;
⁷² to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,
⁷³ the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us
⁷⁴ that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,
⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.
⁷⁶ And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare
his ways,
⁷⁷ to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,
⁷⁸ because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
⁷⁹ to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way
of peace."
⁸⁰ And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his
public appearance to Israel.

Our Christmas Series is on the songs of praise in Luke 1-2:

- **Praise Him!** (Song of **Elizabeth**, Luke 1:39-45, 57-66)
 - Benedictus Minor Of Elizabeth (1:41-45)
- **Magnify Him!** (Song of **Mary**, Luke 1:46-56)
 - The Magnificat Of Mary (1:46-55)
- **Glorify Him!** (Song of the **Angels**, Luke 2:8-14)
 - Gloria of Angels (2:14)
- **Proclaim Him!** (Song of **Zechariah**, Luke 1:67-80)
 - Benedictus Major Of Zechariah (1:67-79)
- **Trust Him!** (Song of **Simeon**, Luke 2:25-35)
 - Nunc Dimittis Of Simeon (2:29-32)

Introduction:

- One thing I really miss is the birth of our babies. We're missing babies growing up. (We will have a brand new nursery in a few months).

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- Magnify Him! (Song of Mary, Luke 1:46-56)
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- Glorify Him! (Song of the Angels, Luke 2:8-14)
 - Gloria of Angels (2:14)
- Proclaim Him! (Song of Zechariah, Luke 1:67-80)

- o Benedictus Major Of Zechariah (1:67-79)
- Trust Him! (Song of Simeon, Luke 2:25-35)
 - o Nunc Dimittis Of Simeon (2:29-32)

- Zechariah's hymn is a song of his first child being born
- In Latin, this hymn is called Benedictus Major of Zechariah
- "Benedictus" is Latin for the first word of the song "Blessed"
- A Benediction is a Blessing

- For you parents out there, what was your emotion after your child was born?
 - o Praise and rejoicing
 - o ie/ Stevie Wonder wrote "Isn't She Lovely?" when his daughter was born
 - o Zechariah sang this song after John the Baptist was born
 - o Remember that both Zechariah and Elizabeth were much older - beyond the normal child-bearing age - this was a special blessing

Responding To A Birth:

- **Birth of a Child:** A new parent typically does 3 things -
 - o **Sharing** with others - in the old days, the doctor would share with the dad in the waiting room; today, it's a Facebook or Instagram post - we're eager to share a birth!
 - o **Serving** - the parents are now taking care of a baby who can't serve them back - feeding, changing, cleaning
 - o **Shaping** - preparing the heart of the child to love and serve Christ, to fulfill the destiny God has for them

- **Birth of the Savior**
 - o Sharing the Good News
 - o Serving the Savior
 - o Shaping the Next Generation

Proposition: Our response to a birth is sharing, serving and shaping. The response to the birth of our Savior is sharing the Good News, serving the Lord and shaping the next generation in Christ.

<h2>I. Sharing The Good News (67-73)</h2>
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⁶⁷**And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,**

- Zechariah was a Temple priest
- The priests were divided into 24 teams by David in 1 Chronicles 24:1-6
- Each priest division consisted of 4-9 priestly families (Bock, Vol. 1, p. 76)
- V. 5 notes that Zechariah was on Team Abijah or Abijah's division/order

- Zechariah is full of the Holy Spirit and prophesies about salvation, his son and the Savior

⁶⁸**"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people**

- **"visited"** = *epeskepsato* – God graciously visited
 - Which famous person has ever visited your home?
 - We were honored to have the visit of kind and generous friends sharing Christmas gifts this past week. Of course we were face masked and distanced
 - To see friends in person again made these visits special.
 - Here's the most special visit – that God would visit us.
 - Jesus' birth began a 33 year visit to earth

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- **"redeemed"** = a payment made to free somebody
 - This baby born on Christmas day, Jesus, would die on the cross to pay for the sins we committed
 - Zechariah is seeing his nation of Israel being redeemed by a victorious King – but this redemption extended beyond a nation – to all of mankind being freed from sin

⁶⁹ **and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,**
⁷⁰ **as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,**

- **"horn of salvation"** = horn depicts a battling animal – ox, bull – this is a reference to Deuteronomy 33:17

Deuteronomy 33:17 A firstborn bull—he has majesty, and his horns are the horns of a wild ox; with them he shall gore the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth;

- This imagery is of a warrior fighting on behalf of his people
- Jesus fought the battle for our salvation and achieved a decisive victory

- **"spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets"** = it's a single message (singular mouth) by many prophets

Hebrews 1:1-2 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ²but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

⁷¹ **that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;**
⁷² **to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,**
⁷³ **the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us**

- **"saved from or enemies"** – by the Warrior/Ox that fights before us
- **"all who hate us"** – Christians are not favored in the world – great persecution exists for believers
 - The Scripture cites 3 enemies of the believer:
 - Satan – wants to destroy anything that credits or glorifies God
 - World – a systemic attack on all things God
 - Flesh – our old nature that prefers sinning over obedience
 - Jesus defeated 2 ultimate enemies: Sin and Death

Colossians 2:14-15 Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

- **"mercy"** – God's gracious act of protecting us
- **"covenant"** – God made a promise to Abraham about our protection
 - God promised Abraham in Genesis 12 that he would make his family a great nation that will bless other nations
 - Those who bless Abraham's people will be blessed. Those who curse Abraham's people will be cursed.

Genesis 12:1-3 Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ²And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

II. Serving the Savior (74-75)

⁷⁴ **that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,**
⁷⁵ **in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.**

- **Delivered** – rescued, freed from, release from
 - Zechariah was expecting a political deliverance of Israel from Rome
 - But Zechariah would get a lot more – a deliverance over the greater enemies – sin and death
- We were delivered from our enemies so we could serve God without fear
- Our enemies would be a great cause of our fear
- **Fear**
 - Lit. **"serve God fearlessly"** (Hendriksen, p. 131)
 - "It reflects a life without the distraction of **oppression.**" (Bock, Vol. 1, pp. 185-186)
 - The **problem** of racism and oppression is real
 - The **solution** is not social or political equity, but deliverance from sin
 - **Racism and oppression are a problem of sin – Jesus died for sinners**
 - **You don't make poor sinners into rich sinners** (hence the solution of critical race theory – CRT)
 - You don't redistribute power of sinners to others sinners – it will only keep the wheel of injustice spinning
 - We need to see sin stopped and only Christ can stop that moving train and redirect us on the right course
 - **What needs to be distributed is forgiveness**, not power
 - **What needs to stop is sin**, not one class or type of oppressors
 - **You don't make minority sinners into majority sinners**

- **You make the poor and rich to be without sin and only the power of Christ from the cross and His resurrection can do that**
- **You get white, black, yellow and brown saved from the sin of prejudice of pigmentation and culture**
- **Salvation gives us the proper realization our oneness in the Body of Christ and image of God**

- **God wants us to serve Him fearlessly without concern of oppression – only Christ can do that!**

- Fear from **Covid** – we don't want to get near people
 - While we need to be appropriately cautious, we can't neglect meeting the needs of people

- Fear of **politicians** making horrible decisions
- Fear of being **politically incorrect** – making a statement that would offend – even if it's clear from the Word of God that there is one Savior, one way to heaven

- **Holiness** – set apart for God's purpose solely
 - a soldier is set apart to fight for his country, not the other side
 - When the Warriors drafter James Wiseman – he's to go 20/10 for us alone – not the Bucks, Rockets or Lakers
 - Cutting board – designated for veggies and another for raw meat
 - We are set apart to serve God

- **Righteousness** – committed to God's laws and standards, to live apart from sin
 - *Hosioteti kai dikaiosne* "reflects an attitude that respects God's moral demands in obedience and conforms to his call to righteousness" (Bock p. 186)

- **All our days** –
 - Covid is exhausting
 - People are finding this an opportunity to not be involved in serving God
 - Some are quitting
 - Thom Rainer states that churches will be 20-30% smaller than their prepandemic size (<https://churchanswers.com/blog/twelve-major-trends-for-churches-in-2021/>)
 - Which points to many giving up on church and serving God
 - There are some who content with giving some of their days – not all our days.
 - Some may just be giving their youth to God and living for oneself in adulthood – He wants all our days

III. Shaping The Next Generation (76-80)

⁷⁶ **And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,**

- These two verses are prophecies about **baby John**

- John the Baptist will be the prophet of the Most High
 - Prophets forthtell and foretell
 - They proclaim and predict
 - He announces Jesus before He comes – that’s proclamation with prediction
- John **“will go before the Lord to prepare his ways”**
 - He is the announcer – “Ladies & Gentlemen, let me introduce the host of the Tonight Show ...” – but you don’t see that person announcing the host
 - Rennell announces who’s coming up to the plate to bat for the Giants – but she’s not the feature nor the batter – she’s the announcer
 - That’s what John the Baptist did
 - He prepared hearts

Luke 3:2-4 ² the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³ And he went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. ⁴ As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, “The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,

- “to give knowledge of salvation” is sharing the Good News of the Gospel
- Man is **sinned**
- Our sin is an **offense** to God
- God must **condemn** the sinner as righteousness punishment
- But God **love** His creation – men and women
- He wants to **save** them from their sin
- But **justice** needs to be paid
- So Jesus became a **Man** to bear the justice of wrath that we deserved for our sin
- God **raised** Jesus from the dead 3 days after the cross to demonstrate the final victory over death and sin
- Placing your faith in Christ provides forgiveness of sin

78 because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high

- **Tender mercy** – *splanchna* – compassion from the gut or heart
 - **“tender mercy”** - Jesus is coming because God is **merciful** – He doesn’t want to see sinners condemned in hell

2 Peter 3:9b not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance

- **Sunrise** – emphasizes a light that springs up – like a sunrise – that spreads light gradually but quickly
- But this sunlight is Sonlight

79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

- These next two verses are prophecies about the coming **Baby Jesus**
- Jesus dispels the darkness of sin with His radiant, righteous presence
- Shadows of sin and death are eliminated by light

⁸⁰ **And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.**

- V. 80 is a summary by Luke of the life and career of John the Baptist
 - Spiritually strong
 - Unaffected by poverty and politics – he lived off the grid in the wilderness
 - John was probably living life before ministry in the wilderness of the Jordan Valley – west of the Dead Sea
 - Fulfilling God’s destiny
 - Impacted by Christ himself, John the Baptist **shared** the Good news, **served** His Lord and **prepared** His generation for receiving Christ!

Conclusion and New Year Resolution Time:

- Who will you share Christ to this coming year?
 - Family member, new Zoom friend
- How will you serve the Lord?
 - What is your passion?
 - What have you learned to do this Shelter In Place season that you can bless others with?
- Will you commit to serve the Lord to the end of your days?
 - One way to demonstrate our commitment is by joining the church.
 - Ministries may, like music, vary in tempo, dynamic and melody. We go through seasons.
 - Single years can give you more time and energy than parenting years.
 - Sickness will prohibit intensity and capacity of serving.
- How can we prepare the next generation to serve Christ?
 - How can you prepare your own children to believe and service Christ?