

Luke 1:57-80

Last week, we observed how a 400 year silence was broken by God with

1. Two angelic visits: one to Zecharias and one to Mary
2. Two miraculous events: one in an old barren womb and one in a young virgin womb
3. Two promised births: John the Baptist and Jesus the Messiah
4. One song of Praise that will one day culminate in a song of praise to the Lamb as all those who have been redeemed from every nation, tongue, tribe, and people group give glory to Jesus for His salvation!

This morning, we see the outcome of the first of those two angelic visits. We see the first of those miraculous events we discussed last week come to pass. We see the first of those promised births take place. And we see another song erupt, this time from the lips of Zacharias.

57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. 58 Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her.

1. Isn't it nice when your neighbors and relatives rejoice with you instead of envy you?
2. They are truly celebrating this birth and are excited that righteous Elizabeth has finally been blessed with a long awaited child.

59 And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father.

1. That would be plain common sense wouldn't it?
2. Zacharias had been longing for a child for years.
3. Now he had a son! Zacharias Jr. makes perfect sense.

60 But his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John." 61 And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name." 62 And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called.

1. We learn here that Zacharias might have not only lost his ability to speak when he doubted the angels words.
2. He might have lost his ability to hear as well.
3. So they made signs to him.

63 And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished. 64 And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. 65 Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. 66 All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, "What then will this child turn out to be?" For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying:

1. Zacharias had learned, probably more about his own heart, and about God, than he ever knew before.
2. The proof of that is the praise for God that leapt from his mouth that day.
3. He prophesies concerning the long awaited salvation of God's people saying...

68 *“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, 69 And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant—70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—71 Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; 72 To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The oath which He swore to Abraham our father 74 To grant us that we, being rescued 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 on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; 77 To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, 78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, 79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace.*

We receive 5 insights into salvation from Zacharias in our text.

I. A Powerful Salvation v68-71

68 *“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,*

1. The Lord God of Israel has accomplished redemption
 - a. Salvation is not something that can be accomplished by Jewish ceremonial law or sacrifices
 - b. By law keeping
 - c. By our greatest efforts.
 - d. God must accomplish it! And how? By visiting us.

68 *“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,*

2. You see every religion on planet earth gives its followers a list of do's and don'ts to guide them up to God, except Christianity.
3. In Christianity, God visited us!
 - a. He came to us.
 - b. THE GOSPEL MESSAGE

69 *And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant—*

4. A horn is used in the Bible to symbolize strength or power.
5. He raised up a horn of salvation...a strong and powerful salvation
5. Romans 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

II. A Promised Salvation v70-73

70 As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old—71 Salvation FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US; 72 To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The oath which He swore to Abraham our father

This salvation had been promised by God from the beginning.

1. In Genesis 3
2. By the mouth of the prophets of old
3. The promise sworn to Abraham Himself.

The Bible has one story: God visiting His people to accomplish their powerful salvation.

1. That was and is, and has always been the plan.
2. It has been promised since the beginning and throughout history.
3. It is a promised salvation

III. A Purposeful Salvation v74-75

74 To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

The goal was service. God saves, so that we might serve.

1. Through salvation God rescues His people from their enemies.
2. He sets them free...free for what? To serve!

1 Peter 2:16 *Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.*

1. We are free...not free to play fast and loose with our holiness and our efforts to live above reproach.
2. We are free to live as Christ's subjects...His bondslaves.
3. We are free to live for, witness for, and be faithful to Christ with respect for our King.
4. Imagine if we took as much pride in this freedom as we do our freedom as Americans?

The Lord God, just as He promised, visited us and accomplished in His omnipotent power our salvation so that we can serve Him!

1. And not just serve Him, like a slave would serve a master in fear, but without fear!
2. We can serve Him wholeheartedly without fear, guilt, shame, or despair because he has made us holy and righteous before Him all our days!

IV. The Prophet of Salvation v76-77

76 *"And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;*

1. He is not referring to Jesus here.
2. He is speaking of his son, John the Baptist.
3. He goes on...

For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS; 77 To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins,

1. Malachi 4:5-6 *Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. 6 He will restore the hearts of the fathers to their children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.*

2. Luke 1:17 *It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

The angel's visit and Zechariah's prophecy both define John's life in relationship to Jesus's life and mission.

1. John the Baptist would live in obscurity until the time came to prepare the way for Jesus!
2. VERSE 80...80 *And the child continued to grow and to become strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.*
3. He would go back into obscurity once Jesus comes onto the scene.
4. He said Himself, *"He must increase, but I must decrease."*

Lasting meaning is found when we define our lives the way Zacharias defined John's life...and the way John viewed His own life...lasting meaning is found when we define our lives in relation to what we can do and should do for Jesus.

1. Be satisfied with obscurity in the world as long as you bring Jesus to the forefront
2. Be satisfied with personal decrease, as long as Jesus gets increase
3. It is about Jesus.

V. The Peace of Salvation?? v77-79

77 To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins, 78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us, 79 TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, To guide our feet into the way of peace.

Cliff analogy: Imagine the ocean...the tide is going out. On the beach is a high cliff overlooking the ocean. ON the high cliff stands Christ with his back to the edge of the cliff with his back to the ocean as the tide goes out. You meet him there and present to Him your sin.

1. Micah 7:19 *he will tread our iniquities underfoot*
2. Isaiah 38:17 *you have cast all my sins behind your back*
3. Micah 7:19 *You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea*
4. Psalms 103:12 *as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*
5. Jeremiah 31:34 *I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more*

Do you have this peace with God?

1. If so, then you have a purpose!

- a. Serving Him from now throughout eternity. That is why you exist!
- b. He has blessed you with salvation so that you may serve Him wholeheartedly.
- c. Psalm 67:1-2, 7 *God be gracious to us and bless us, And cause His face to shine upon us-- Selah. 2 **That** Your way may be known on the earth, Your salvation among all nations... 7 God blesses us, **That** all the ends of the earth may fear Him.*

2. If not, you can.

- a. We can have peace with God if we receive this forgiveness and mercy by faith.
- b. Romans 5:1 *Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ*