

ZACHARIAS' SONG – Part 1

Luke 1:67-75

INTRODUCTION

All 5 songs in Luke, chapters 1-2, are songs of salvation.

Mary's song was more personal. She praised God for sending her a Savior. Zacharias gives us a song that is broader.

His song is a major connecting point to the Old Testament. It has sweeping biblical themes:

- Critical coupling of the Old Testament with the New Testament
- Doctrinal transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament
- Davidic Covenant, Abrahamic Covenant, New Covenant

READ Luke 1:67-80

This text, in the original Greek, was only two single sentences:
vv. 68-75 – “**has ...**” → What God has done in the past
vv. 76-79 – “**will ...**” → What God will do in the future

Proposition: 3 Mighty Acts of God on behalf of His children:

- I. He has **Redeemed** us
- II. He has **Remembered** us
- III. He has **Rescued** us

So That: We would receive our King – “Joy to the World”

1st Mighty Act of God on behalf of His children, ...

- I. He has **Redeemed** us **1:67-68**

Point – Nine months of being a mute under the judgment of God ended suddenly when **Zacharias** wrote down, “John is His name.” His powers of speech were immediately restored. God took them away. He now gives them back.

→ God turns rebuke into rewards for those who keep faith.

Illustration – The change in **Zacharias**’ life is a reflection on a smaller scale of what is going on in Israel. The prophetic voice has been silent for centuries, but the rebuke of God is being lifted; the silence from heaven has ended and God is speaking again.

Proof – “^{67a}**And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit,**”

This is a Spirit filled family ☺

1:15 – John the Baptist; **1:41** – Elizabeth; **1:67** – Zacharias

And by the way, as part of **Luke**’s highlight of crucial importance of women, and as part of God keeping men and leaders humble ... don’t miss that **Elizabeth** was filled with the Spirit 3 months prior to **Zacharias** ☺

“^{67b}**and prophesied, saying:** ^{68a}**Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,**”

This song is called the ***Benedictus of Zacharias*** – the Latin word for “blessed” is *benedictus*.

This is Old Testament language – doxology

Sums up the whole song, characterized by a spirit of thanksgiving.

“**Blessed**” – in the New Testament, this word is used exclusively to refer to God

“^{68b}**for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people**” Heaven has come down. The supernatural has invaded the natural. God is at work.

The word, “**visit**” – brackets/boundaries to Zacharias’ Song
– vv. 68, 78 “**has visited**” and “**will visit**”

The Greek word ἐπισκέπτομαι – from which we get the English words ‘Episcopalian’, ‘episcopacy’
From epi and skwp, *epi* and *skope* (not the mouthwash ☺)

Grammatically, the *epi* intensifies the *skope*, it makes it a super-*skope*

- another English word we derive from this is
‘supervisor’ - one who looks at things carefully, deeply, and fully so that he understands every detail of what is going on

Jesus is the Supervisor of our souls.

Comprehensively, totally – all seeing eye and knowledge

Translated as “overseer” in Acts 20:28; Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-2; Tit 1:7

The English word has morphed in its meaning to a kind of church government. But, the original meaning is:

(1) look after the sick, *go to help*;

(2) *come to help, be concerned about, show care for*

Matt 25:36 – “naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.”

Heb 2:6 – “one has testified somewhere, saying, ‘What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him?’”

➔ Tender Care of the Lord!! ☺	➔ Elders ☺
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“^{68c}**and accomplished redemption for His people,**”

– *provided a ransom, released from slavery or captivity; deliverance, freedom, liberation*

Psa 111:9 – “He has sent redemption to His people; He has ordained His covenant forever; Holy and awesome is His name.”

Psa 130:7 – “O Israel, hope in the LORD; for with the LORD there is lovingkindness, and with Him is abundant redemption.”

Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel” (2:25).
Anna who spoke to those people who were all “looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem” (2:38).

Now, we can ask, is this spiritual redemption or political redemption? ... Yes ☺

Both are promised in God’s covenant promises (**New Covenant** forgiveness of sin is the basis for fulfillment of **Abrahamic Covenant** and the **Davidic Covenant**)

Zacharias likely has some measure of a horizontal, social view of redemption. But he also knows the history of his people and how brief the periods of political liberation had been.

Think of the ministry of Zacharias’s son, **John**. John won’t be pointing to Jesus to tell his disciples, “Behold, the Lion who will conquer Rome.” He will say, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”

Think of the years of John growing up, his old father spending time with him, praying with him about his future ministry, what it would mean for John to be the prophet and forerunner of Messiah.

Perhaps **Zacharias** is holding **baby John** as he is singing this song/saying these words. But John was just born. He hasn’t done anything yet. And he is the forerunner. The One for whom he is the forerunner hasn’t even been born yet.

“**accomplished**” – **Zacharias** speaks in past tense –because the promise of God is so sure, he speaks of it as already “**accomplished**.”

- the revelation from the archangel **Gabriel**, the miraculous birth of his son, **John** ... **Zacharias** knows that redemption is near ... and redemption is certain.

Application – **Zacharias’ Song** is all about God and His great redemption. It is God-centered and God-focused.

→ God has come to redeem his people.

2nd Mighty Act of God on behalf of His children, ...

II. He has **Remembered** us **1:69-71**

Point – God Remembers His Covenant Promises

6 Biblical Covenants:

- Noahic
- Abrahamic
- Mosaic
- Priestly
- Davidic
- New Covenant

5 Irrevocable “Unconditional” Covenants

God – “**I will**” “**Eternal**”

→ Maybe better said “irrevocable” and “revocable”

Noahic (Gen 9), **Abrahamic** (Gen 12), **Davidic** (2 Sam), **New** (Jer 31; Ezek 36), **Priestly** (Num 25)

1 Revocable “Conditional”

Mosaic (Exod 19; 20)

If you will ..., then ...”

No “Eternal”

→ **Davidic Covenant** – the throne and rule of the King

→ Luke 1:27, 32 → 2 Sam 7:8-17

Proof – “⁶⁹and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant”

“**horn**” – The imagery here is not a musical horn, a trumpet. It is an animal horn → the **horn** of an **ox**, a bull.

→ Power! Strength!

Illustration – In our vernacular, “strong as an ox.”

Psa 92:9-10 – “For, behold, Your enemies, O LORD, for, behold, Your enemies will perish; all who do iniquity will be scattered.

¹⁰But You have exalted my horn like that of the wild ox;”

1 Sam 2:10 – “Those who contend with the LORD will be shattered; against them He will thunder in the heavens, the LORD will judge the ends of the earth; and He will give strength to His king, and will exalt the horn of His anointed.”

Turn to: Mic 4:6-13 → ““In that day,’ declares the LORD, ‘I will assemble the lame, and gather the outcasts,‟” This is the same type of language that we see in the gospel of Luke.

- weak, wounded, scattered sheep without a shepherd

“^{7a}I will make the lame a remnant, And the outcasts a strong nation” – there is always a remnant

In fact, **remnant** in Malachi – remnant in priests – the priesthood in Malachi’s day was corrupt but there was a remnant

“¹⁰Writhe and labor to give birth, Daughter of Zion, like a woman in childbirth, for now you will go out of the city, dwell in the field, and go to Babylon. There you will be rescued; There the LORD will redeem you from the hand of your enemies.”

“¹³Arise and thresh, daughter of Zion, for your **horn I will make iron** and your **hoofs I will make bronze**, that you may pulverize many peoples, that you may devote to the LORD their unjust gain and their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.”

Horns of iron, hooves of bronze – invincibility and strength is what Zacharias is bringing out

“**horn of salvation**”

Psa 18:2 – “The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

Phil 1:19 – “deliverance”

“^{69b}**the house of David**” – Zacharias is speaking of **Jesus** here

- **John** is not of “**the house of David.**”
- He is in the line of **Levi**, not **Judah**.
- **Jesus** is the horn of salvation

“⁷⁰**As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old--**”

- From the original Greek ἀπ’ αἰῶνος – from “eons” **Acts 3:21** – “from ancient time.”

Turn to: Luke 24: 27, 32, 44-47 - The resurrected Christ teaching his apostles

“⁷¹**Salvation from our enemies, & from the hand of all who hate us;**”

These words of **Zacharias** would personally mean much to **Luke**
→ **Luke** was with **Paul** in three imprisonments, one in Caesarea, two in Rome.

→ So, he is a firsthand witness to this kind of hatred.

Illustration – We see this even today. President Trump declared the United States will view Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

- 128 UN nations passed resolution condemning
- 35 abstained
- 7 voted with USA and Israel

The enmity towards Israel persists today.

400 years after this promise was given to King David in **2 Sam 7:8-17**, his throne fell. Jerusalem was carried off into captivity in Babylon in 586. For 600 years after the Babylonian captivity, the people of God might have been asking:

- “Lord, has your promise to David failed?”
- Will you ever come back and restore your people again?
- Will you ever raise up the fallen house of David?
- Will you set up the throne of David again?

- How is it ... that we are ruled by these foreign, idol-worshipping Romans who occupy our land??"

In comes God → ^{“72}**to show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant,**” → God has shattered the silence!

Mary:

“⁵⁰His mercy is upon generation after generation”

“⁵⁴He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy”

Point – **Num 23:19** – “God is not a man that He should lie.”

We take the Bible at face value.

God says it, so that settles it for the believer.

Application – A Mighty Fortress Is Our God

Did we in our own strength confide,

Our striving would be losing;

Were not the right Man on our side,

The Man of God's own choosing.

Dost ask who that may be?

Christ Jesus, it is he;

Lord Sabaoth is his name,

From age to age the same,

And **He must win the battle!**

3rd Mighty Act of God on behalf of His children, ...

III. He has **Rescued** us **1:72-75**

Point – Tender care of the Lord!! ☺ And now we see the mighty rescue of the Lord!!

Abrahamic Covenant – seed, land, and blessing

Gen 12:1-3 → Beginning of particular redemptive history, beginning of the nation of Israel, foundation of God’s six redemptive covenants.

Proof – ^{“73}**the oath which He swore to Abraham our father,**”

Gen 15:17 → The Lord didn't swear to Abraham by His mother, because He doesn't have one. He didn't swear by heaven, which is His throne. He didn't swear by the earth, which is His footstool.

Gen 22:16 – “By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD”

“^{74a}**to grant us**” → the grace of God!!

These words make us mindful of **Augustine's** great prayer –
“*Lord command what You will and **grant** what You command.*”

I think **Zacharias** will resonate with all of this quite well.
He is a godly priest who knows the word of God,

but also ... his name means, “God remembers.”

His wife's **name, Elizabeth**, means, “Oath of God”

and his baby son **John's name** means, “Grace of God”

“**that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,**”
brought out of severe and acute danger *save*; inherent in the
word is the recognition of the absolute danger → **Rescue!**

“^{74b}**might serve Him without fear,** ⁷⁵**in holiness and righteousness**”

1) “**without fear**” – in regard to self;

2) “**holiness**” – in regard to God;

3) “**righteousness**” – in regard to God and man

“**without fear**” – it is the first word in the verse for emphasis –
literally “that we, without fear, being delivered from the hand
of our enemies might serve Him”

“**holiness**” – without conflicting devotion

“**righteousness**” – without sin or stain

Application – Eph 4:24 – “put on the new self, which in *the likeness of God* has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” That is the same language of Zacharias, as well.

“**before Him all our days**” – brings us back to Zacharias in the Holy Place in vv. 15, 17, 19!! Now, we are the royal priesthood!

Illustration – In the fall of 2010, billions of people around the globe were captivated by the story of the **Chilean miners**. Trapped beneath two thousand feet of solid rock, the 33 men were desperate. The collapse of a main tunnel had sealed their exit and thrust them into survival mode. They ate 2 spoonfuls of tuna, a sip of milk, and a morsel of peaches every other day. They prayed for 2 months for someone to save them.

On the surface above, the Chilean rescue team worked around the clock. They met with experts from NASA. They drilled - first a communication hole, then an excavation tunnel. No one had ever been trapped underground this long and lived to tell about it. Now someone has.

On October 13th, 2010, the men began to emerge. A great-grandfather. A 44 year old who was planning a wedding. Then, a 19 year old. All had different stories, but all had made the same decision. They trusted someone else to save them.

No one returned the offer of rescue with a declaration of independence. No one said, “I can get out of here on my own. All I need is a new drill.” They had stared at the stone tomb long enough to reach the unanimous opinion: “We need help. We need someone to penetrate into this world and pull us out.”

And when the rescue came, they climbed in.

Application – In the same way, **Zacharias’** song is not a song about how men save themselves. It’s not a song about how God helps those who help themselves. It’s a song about God sovereignly coming in response to:

- His own word
- His own commitment
- His own determination
- His own covenant
- → to **redeem** and **rescue** His children.

CONCLUSION

Application – Friend, if you who are here this morning, more in love with your sin than with your eternity, unwilling to bow your knee before the Savior, the Creator God of the Universe, I ask you:

→ Why do you refuse the rescue?

→ Why do you reject Jesus' free gift of salvation?

Application – Beloved, let the fearful look around. Let the pessimist look down. Let the Christian lift his eyes and look up.

God opens the stream of salvation to a thirsty people all over the world and calls us to drink.