

“There Arises Light In The Darkness; He Is Gracious, And Full Of Compassion, And Righteous.”

Luke 1:57-80

Berean Baptist Church

Pastor Skylar Bernick

INTRODUCTION

We have seen Mary sing a hymn, Elisabeth prophesy, and now Zacharias will sing and prophesy. There is much rejoicing and hope here at the beginning of the gospel! Zacharias' message sheds light on the glory of the Gospel – what does Jesus' coming mean?

Find joy, hope, and guidance in Jesus' coming!

Luke 1:57-66 Heraldin “God's Grace”

Vs 57-58 In the fullness of time, Elisabeth's friends and relatives came to rejoice in the new baby. Not many know it but they are seeing the fulfillment of a prophecy.

Vs 59-60 Either Elisabeth had a direct revelation from God or her husband had already written it to her, but either why she believed the message and insists that the boy be named “John.”

Vs 61-62 the crowd wants to hear what Dad has to say on this! It was odd to give a child, especially an only son, a name outside of the family.

But what the crowd doesn't understand, what only Mom and Dad know, for now, is that this boy has already been named. In heaven, before the throne of God and on the lips of angels this child received the name “John” which means “God is gracious.”

“John” was a modern (for Elisabeth's time) form of the ancient name “Johanan” (This not the name Jonathan.) There are no great figures in the Bible named Johanan but the name was in use (1 Kings 25:23, 1 Chr 3:15).

The name “God is gracious” was perfect for the prophet that would come preaching of God's forgiveness and of a new life for those who turn away from their evil actions.

“the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins (Luke 3:2).”

And John would testify to the way that God is able to forgive sins.

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world (John 1:29).”

Vs 62-63 So they asked Dad, and he testified “His name is *God is gracious*. And they marveled all.”

Vs 64 “ his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed” there is excitement and emphasis in this. Imagine Zacharias who was probably the first person to hear from an angel in the Temple in at least ten generations.

He received wonderful news, but his own unbelief left him unable to tell anyone, or even speak for over nine months. We lose much when we fail to believe, but part of the good news is that God's grace and promises do not depend on us.

“and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.” Praise is the right response to God's grace.

Vs 65-66 These people have seen many strange things. The very old have conceived a son, he has received a name that came from no one on earth, and the mouth of his father – mysteriously silent for over nine months has suddenly opened in praise to God.

Praise is not the only response **“And fear came on all that dwelt round about them”** as they told others and considered what all of this meant.

This fear is not a wild dread but a sober reverence – an understanding that God is working, that He deserves our devotion, and his work deserves our attention.

“And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great (Revelation 19:5).”

Praise God for His faithful grace and live in reverence knowing that He is working!

Luke 1:67-80 Rejoice in the Lord and Understand Why Jesus Has Come

Now Luke wants to tell us what Zacharias said when he spoke for the first time in months. Mary and Elisabeth have both testified and now after doubting and silence, John opens his mouth, full of the Spirit and prophecy.

Vs 67 The prophesy that follows is another hymn taking images and style from Old Testament poetry.

Everything before this has been in what we might call “past tense” as Luke tells the history, but now the tense becomes mainly present or future. Zacharias, in the Spirit, looks forward by the eyes of faith.

Vs 68-70 Praise God Who Visits and Saves Those Who Trust Him

Vs 68 “Visited” God has kept the long-hoped-for promise. When Israel suffered as slaves for four hundred years in Egypt, God heard their cry...

“And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped (Exd 4:31).”

And now, again, God's people have been in bondage for four hundred years and “he hath visited and redeemed his people.”

Vs 68 “Redeemed” This is to win freedom for someone.

“Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments (Ex 6:6).”

Vs 69 “an horn of salvation for us” in OT poetry a “horn” stands for power or ability.

“And Hannah prayed, and said, My heart rejoiceth in the LORD, mine horn is exalted in the LORD: my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in thy salvation...The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt the horn of his anointed (1 Sam 2:1-10).”

The same word in the Old Testament describes rays of light. It is translated as the verb “shone” in Exd 34:29 and is used in this way in Habakkuk 3:4 “And his brightness was as the light; he had horns coming out of his hand:”

So there is a theme of God sending light into the darkness here at the beginning of the poem and at the end in **Vs 79** “To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

God has visited His people, He has won their freedom, He has sent out a mighty savior-king, and He has kept His promises from the beginning of time.

Certainly, Zacharias is speaking of these things from a Jewish perspective. All of these things are true specifically for believing decedents of Abraham, but they are also true for all who trust in Jesus.

Rejoice in the God who does not leave His people without hope!

Vs 71-75 Saved to Serve

Vs 71 God's promise is not freedom from a particular set of enemies, but from all who hate the people of God.

Vs 71-73 God delivers from all who hate His people and this is according to the ancient promise

Vs 74-75 God's people are delivered so that they can serve Him, without the fear of man in holiness and righteousness. This has always been the reason for salvation.

“When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. Ex 3:12.” ... “And I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn (Ex 4:23).”

God's people are saved to serve – and this is a wonderful destiny because it is what mankind was made for: to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Rejoice in God who calls his people to meaningful lives in holiness and righteousness!

Vs 76-79 A Light For People in Darkness

Vs 76 John answers the question of **Vs 66**: “**What manner of child shall this be?**” John will be a prophet preaching the message of salvation and forgiveness of sins.

Vs 77 “**To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,**” For Zacharias, this salvation had a political element (as it still does – God has not forgotten His people) but already the scope of this salvation is showing itself to be greater than just political freedom.

Vs 78-79 “**the dayspring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way**”

This is wonderful language. “**Dayspring from on high**” is a poetic reference to sunrise.

Propesies of the Messiah sometimes compare Him to the rising sun or a rising star (Num 24:17, Mal 4:2). David speaks of the ideal king in this way “And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain 2 Sam 23:4.”

The Messiah rises like the sun giving light to those in darkness, life to the dying, and guidance in the way. And all of this comes **“Through the tender mercy of our God;”**

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? (Psl 27:1).”

Do you live in the shadow of fear, do you live in uncertainty about the meaning of this life and your place in the life to come, to stumble and fall, do you feel creeping death coming for you – Believe on Jesus and He will be your light!

“Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life (John 8:12).”

Rejoice in the light of God and walk in Him!

Vs 80 The OT has taught us to associate prophets with life in the desert. John's parents may have died when he was young leaving him no reason to live in mainstream society.

CONCLUSION

Jesus' coming gives us reason to praise God for His grace – His commitment to care for those who trust Him.

Jesus' coming gives us reason to rejoice in a God who visits and redeems.

Jesus' coming gives us reason to rejoice in a God who calls His people to a life of meaning in His service.

Jesus' coming gives us reason to rejoice in a God who gives life and light to His people.

When you are tempted to sin or despair, feeling like your life is meaningless or that evil is just too strong, remember that Jesus has come giving meaning to your life. And He has “delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.”

Find joy, hope, and guidance in Jesus' coming!

But His coming will do you no good if you do not accept His gift of forgiveness and receive Him as the Lord of your life. The sun has risen but its light will do you no good if you do not open your eyes to receive. *Receive Jesus as your savior and Lord so that you can walk in His light.*