

The Sound Doctrine of Christmas Joy

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Luke 1. We're going to chronologically go backwards a little bit here and look at Zacharias' great great joy and great praise as he has finally had the curse lifted. You remember he was in the temple, he's a priest, and in the temple the angel appeared to him telling him that he would bear a son. Well, his wife is older, Elizabeth, she had a barren womb and he couldn't believe that he was going to have a son and of all things, this son would be the forebear of the Messiah, the Savior who was about to be born, and Zacharias said, "Well, how can I know that this is going to be true?" He had unbelief and the angel said, "Well, because you haven't believed, you're going to become mute and you will not be able to speak until the child is born." That's John the Baptist, his child. So the child has been born and Zacharias immediately starts praising God and he is praising God primarily, and this is not one of the points in my outline, but it probably will be when I preach it again one day, and that is that Zacharias is wholly Christ-centered in his praise. His son is John the Baptist, the forerunner, but Zacharias' whole heart is on Jesus, not his wife's son, the unborn Christ and what he would do and what he would accomplish.

So let's look at it together. I call this "The Sound Doctrine of Christmas Joy." What I mean by that is Christmas joy requires you to grasp and embrace and treasure rich Bible doctrine. What a great great lie Satan has perpetrated on us and on the world that you don't really have to know much about the Bible, all that really matters about Christmas is that God sent his Son and it's a precious, beautiful, sweet story, and we exchange gifts and half of us get drunk and that's just what it is, and that's not what it is. If you're going to really know Christmas joy, you need to know Bible doctrine and we see that so clearly as Zacharias says in Luke 1, beginning in verse 67.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, 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." 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.

So many today know Christmas but don't really know anything about Christmas. So many today during the Christmas holiday season are happy, are celebratory, have something of a joy but actually they know really nothing of Christmas joy. Now, I'm not saying to you today that you have to grasp all the great Bible doctrines of Christ and his coming and soteriology, the doctrine of salvation, I'm not saying you have to grasp all of that to have Christian joy. Here's what I am saying, though: the greater you grasp those truths from the Scriptures, the greater your joy will be as you look at the coming of God on Christmas morning.

I. As we look at Zacharias and we use him as a pattern of Christmas joy, notice he praises God for particular redemption. He begins immediately to praise God for particular redemption. I mean that in a theological sense, not a generalized redemption but a particular redemption. Zacharias all of a sudden can speak. He is filled with the Holy Spirit and he immediately goes to this expression, verse 68, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people." Now, the word "redemption" has the idea of a ransom paid. It was from the slave market of the day where you would pay for somebody and buy them out of slavery and then they were free. So for us, there is a spiritual application that God takes us out of the slave market and he puts it in a spiritual context for Christians, how we are ransomed and redeemed from the penalty of sin.

Notice the effectual nature of this salvation he's talking about. He says God has accomplished, past tense. It's done. God has accomplished salvation. Notice how he says it there, God has accomplished this redemption, is the word I should say, to the salvation. God has accomplished redemption for his people, a particular people. Not for all people in this case. Zacharias is very clear, a particular people. That's what I mean by effectual. Effectual means it accomplishes the purpose which it was set out to accomplish and he is saying God has sent this salvation. This salvation is in his Son, Jesus Christ, and through this one who has come, he has now accomplished, past tense, finished, this redemption for a particular people.

Have you ever praised God for particular redemption at Christmas? My question is why haven't you? It's right here in the book. Have you ever looked at the Christ child, I mean in your mind's eye, and thought about him being born of the virgin Mary and laid in a feed trough and said, "That one came to accomplish particularly for me, his elect, my salvation"? I'm telling you, the joy of Christmas will grow when you meditate on that.

You see, look at verse 69. We'll go a little further, "And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of David His servant." The point is he does and has done more than just provide for salvation, he actually has accomplished salvation. A good question in theological debate says when Jesus died, did he accomplish anything? Was anything finished? Was anything finalized? Or did he just die to offer a possibility? You mean to tell me the Lord Jesus Christ came to the earth, God Incarnate, fully God and fully man, and died on the cross for the possibility that he might have children to be with him forever? You need to read your Bible. Jesus came and died and everything and everyone and every purpose he died for was fully, perfectly, absolutely, completely accomplished. That's what Zacharias is saying. He came and accomplished this salvation, not just to provide an offer of salvation.

Here's one of the problems that Arminians or more man-centered doctrine has. They just always want to emphasize the limited man-ward perspective, and from a limited man-ward perspective, we can only see man's responsibility and man's side of the salvation experience. The Bible doesn't allow that very often. The Bible requires you to step into a divine eternal perspective. God is not limited to time so Zacharias could say when this Christ child was conceived, or you might say even given into the womb of the virgin Mary, that it's settled, it's done. He is here. Redemption is accomplished because the eternal God has done this and he is not stuck in time. In God's eyes, it's already done. Now it does have to be played out in time and space history but from a God-ward perspective, it's eternal and it's settled.

We are talking about this as a particular redemption. Now Zacharias, of course, being a Jew, is speaking of a political or national redemption that Israel as a nation will be redeemed, but that is still very particular. He's not saying Rome or Babylon or the Egyptians. He's saying Israel has one who has come to accomplish her redemption. But we know that the Bible uses this as also a truth about the redemption of all of those who will believe on his Son, God's Son that is, Jesus Christ. They particularly are the ones he came to die for. A. T. Robertson said the word "visited" here, what is it there in verse 69? No, verse 68, "For He has visited us," has the idea of inspecting or examining. It says God has come down and he has inspected and examined our situation and after God has thoroughly examined our condition, he knows all the facts, and he with his omnipresent eye and his omniscient mind has studied the case and he has concluded the proper course of action to save his children. And having examined this situation that we are in, in sin, having examined our condition with his omnipresent eye and his omniscient mind, has decided that he knows exactly what needs to be done to accomplish our redemption and he has done that, past tense, in his Son, Jesus Christ.

So God does not here tell us he's seeking to help us toward redemption. God through Zacharias' prophecy here does not tell us he's seeking to offer us a shot at redemption. God does not through Zacharias' prophecy here tell us he seeks to provide a way for redemption. Zacharias in rapturous joy and enthusiastic praise said, "God has sent this child to be born of the virgin Mary and he's going to be born and God has through him accomplished our redemption."

I'm going to go home if you don't look more excited about that. I mean, can you look at that baby in Bethlehem's feed trough and see that in him my redemption is accomplished. He didn't come to say, "Now, Jeff, you're on trial. You'd better jump through the right hoops, say the right things, do the right things, join the right churches, be baptized by the right people, and then maybe you'll get it." No, he says, "I've come to accomplish something you could never accomplish." That's Christmas joy. You need to teach your children and your children's children and your children's children's children this kind of truth because this is the doctrine that brings Christmas joy.

We are just too weak and helpless to achieve this redemption on our own so this praise of Zacharias, unequivocally clear, that it teaches the doctrine of what you might call particular or effectual or definite redemption, again that is that when Jesus died he actually accomplished our redemption. His death was an actual literal redemption. His death was an actual ransom payment for us. He did not just die to give us a chance at redemption but when he died, my redemption was actually, literally, really finished.

When one in this day used this Greek word, the writer here Luke uses for the word we have translated as "redemption," it's a Greek word that, again, came out of the culture of the day and particularly the slave market. So in their minds if you wrote this to a people in this day, and by the way, interpreting the Bible, it must have always made sense to the people of that day. It certainly has applications for our day, of course, but it had to make sense to those people and in that day, to tell someone you accomplished their redemption meant absolutely and only and always one thing: that you particularly and specifically have already paid my master the full redemption price and I am now today a free man. Period. It's done, past tense. If that's not the case, it's not yet redemption. If it's not the case, it's not yet ransom. But when you say he has been ransomed or he has been redeemed, in this cultural context, it meant you were a slave and somebody, a relative or friend, somebody paid the price and that master who had you as a slave has now released you to full freedom and Zacharias is praising God this first Christmas over that glorious and precious truth. Accomplished means he brought it to pass.

Now, again, to elaborate on this a little bit further, there was a national aspect to this and a spiritual aspect. Nationally, Israel was receiving her Redeemer because there will be a day when Israel nationally will turn to Christ and know him as Lord and Savior. But it had a broader spiritual application for all those who would be God's children through the merits and the works of Jesus Christ on their behalf. But speaking of the national and particular application for Israel, Genesis 13:14 through 16 says, "The LORD said to Abram, after Lot had separated from him, 'Now lift up your eyes and look from the place where you are, northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your offspring forever. I will make your offspring as the dust of the earth, so that if anyone can count the dust of the earth, then your offspring would be counted.'" Particular, isn't it? I will give you this particular land for you, a particular people. This is not for the Canaanites or the Jebusites or the Philistines or the Babylonians. This is for you, Israel, and this land is for you. By the

way, that's why I feel like we should always as a nation, the United States of America, have a policy that is pro-Israel. God gave those people that land.

So God promised Abraham and his descendants that very land. You say, "Well, wait a minute. Abraham's descendants didn't really possess that land and for generations Abraham's descendants were carted away into exile and made captive by the Babylonians, the Egyptians first and then the Babylonians." And as Luke writes this narrative story of how Zacharias is praising God, Israel at this time is enslaved by Rome itself. So the land is under Roman control, ultimately speaking, but God said he would accomplish, he would redeem that land back to them. It was not a general redemption, it was not a universal redemption, it wasn't all lands to all nations, it was this land to this particular people. So in every aspect of this whether you are talking about national Israel and the specific promise of a literal place, a literal geographic place, that is, and a literal people, that was true but it was particularly true. And if you're taking the spiritual application, it's particularly true also. Christ came to die and accomplish redemption for his children.

That's part of the great doctrine behind the joy of Christmas and if you believe on Jesus Christ and you meditate on and contemplate God being born of the virgin Mary, God being clothed in human flesh and wrapped in scraps of cloth, whatever Mary could find, and laid in a feed trough, you need to look on that baby in your mind's eye and say, "He came particularly for me. He came for me. He came for me." Now, you know our balance here at Grace Life. We must urge all men everywhere to repent and believe the Gospel, amen? We urge all men everywhere to come to faith in Christ but if they do, then that proves that they were one that he particularly came to redeem.

Well, Zacharias, he's not stopping. He is full of praise. He is so overflowing with joy about what God is doing so let's notice that he praises God not only for a particular redemption but he praises God for a powerful redemption. He uses some phrases here to show that the great might of God is involved in this salvation. In verse 69 he uses the phrase, "And has raised up a horn of salvation." The horn in this cultural context had probably at least four ideas behind it. First of all, it had the idea of dignity. I'm a deer hunter and when a dominant buck in the area wants to show his dignity, he'll raise his head so you can see the majesty of his horns. When horns were raised up, it speaks of dignity. It speaks of a call to battle. Again, a wild animal who has horns will show his horns and he will prepare and he will use those horns in battle, and horns in this day were often used to sound the call to battle for people. It's an emblem of strength. Again, the buck that is the largest and strongest and has the most prominent rack or horns on his head, he was the one who has the greatest strength; he was the dominant one. And also it speaks of victory. For example, Alexander the Great would have horns on his coinage to show that he is the great victor of all of his conquests. So dignity and a call to battle, strength and victory is all tied up when Zacharias says, "God has given us this great horn of salvation."

Then he said it's a horn of salvation, verse 69, "In the house of David." What he's pointing to is David was the great, successful, military king of Israel and he provided a

redemption in the sense that he reclaimed Israel's land for her, but we know this horn of salvation is coming in a spiritual sense. He will not just reclaim the land for Israel, he is reclaiming the souls of his children back for himself. They will become his and he has the strength to do it. So David was a type of Christ in the Old Testament. He won Israel's redemption through his might as a warrior and so also Jesus Christ born of the line of David, he is the Warrior Savior who earns our redemption, who fights to battle for us, if you will. He fights the war for us. He earns the victory for us. He is our horn of salvation. Jesus is the horn of salvation because he has the righteous dignity for the office of Savior. Jesus is the horn of salvation because he has the righteous courage to enter the arena of battle to win our salvation. Jesus is the horn of our salvation because he has the righteous strength to defeat the enemies who would be against our salvation. And Jesus is the horn of salvation because he has won the victory over all the enemies of our salvation.

So Zacharias is praising God and he praises God and says, "Hallelujah," he wouldn't have used the word Christmas but I'll say it because you know what I'm saying in context, "This Christmas, this first Christmas the Lord and Savior has come and he is coming to give us a particular redemption. He has come to give us a powerful redemption," and then thirdly, "He is giving us a prophesied redemption." Zacharias is saying, "God promised to do all this. All the holy prophets taught us these things." And he is just overwhelmed. He is overcome, if you will, with the glory of knowing these truths and believing these truths and studying these truths and now in his own day it is coming to pass.

Look at verse 70, if you will. It says, "As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old." He has spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets. In other words, the holy prophets of old all spoke of Jesus. They all prophesied of Jesus. I've told you before but there was a preacher one time that got up and said, "All right, y'all, get your him-book." People started grabbing for the songbook in the back of the pews. He said, "No, no, I mean the him-book from Genesis to Revelation. This book is about him, Jesus Christ." It all points to him and in all things he must have the preeminence. From Genesis, the first book in the Old Testament, all the way through Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, it all speaks of him.

Let me give you a couple of quick verses. Genesis 3:14 and 15, right there in the beginning. "The LORD God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, Cursed are you above all the livestock, And all the wild animals; You will crawl on your belly, And you will eat the dust All of your days; And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your offspring and hers.'" Who is her ultimate offspring, who is the enmity, who is the enemy of Satan himself? It Jesus Christ. "He will crush your head." That's Jesus crushing Satan's head though Satan will strike his heel. On the cross, Satan struck his heel but he didn't crush him but on the cross Jesus crushed Satan's head. It's all about Jesus.

Then you go all the way to the end of the Old Testament and, of course, thousands of prophecies in between here, but in Malachi 4:1 and 2, the last book of the Old Testament, "Surely the day is coming, it will burn like a furnace and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble; and the day that is coming will set them on fire,' says the LORD

Almighty, not a root or a branch will be left of them, but for you who revere my name," here he is, "the sun of righteousness," that's Jesus, "will rise with healing in his wings and you will go up and leap like calves released from the stall." That's the prophecy of the victory of our Savior for us on our behalf, the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus has been foretold from Genesis all the way through to the end of the Old Testament in the book about Malachi here. So we see Zacharias with great joy and great praise over the wonders of Jesus.

Now there are three subpoints I want to point out as we close out this section of Scripture. First of all, notice Zacharias continues to praise God because through Jesus we have deliverance from all of our enemies. In verse 71 and the first part of verse 74, he says, let me just read it there, "Salvation from our enemies." Verse 74, "To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies." And he uses the words "those who hate us." Now for Israel proper, you could just make your pick. Who were Israel's enemies? Well, the Medo-Persians, the Romans, the Babylonians, the Egyptians. Whoever and wherever they were, if they were God's enemies or the enemy of God's people, God says, "I'm going to deliver you from them." Now what is the spiritual application? Spiritually speaking, who are our enemies? Well, you just named them and he came to conquer them. Satan. Sin. Death. Hell. The flesh. The law. All of these things. The Bible says the law is even hostile to us because it points out our fallenness and our transgression and causes us to be offenders of the law and therefore crushed under the judgment of God. But Christ has delivered us from all of those enemies. He's the Victor.

So deliverance from all of our enemies and, secondly, not only that but a determined mercy. Zacharias praises God this first Christmas because God came in the person of his Son with absolute determination to pour covenant mercies on his children. Did you hear that? When you contemplate that little baby laid in that feed trough in Bethlehem, you need to think, "God sent him with a God-sized determination to rescue me and cleanse me and shower mercies upon me." Oh my goodness.

In verse 72, Zacharias words it this way, "To show mercy toward our fathers, And to remember His holy covenant." God promised he would come and save Israel and he's going to remember that covenant, and in a broader sense, God has promised that those who are his, now you use the Bible word you want to use: the called, the chosen, the elect, the predestined, the foreknown, use whatever Bible word you are comfortable with, as a matter of fact, you'd better get comfortable with all of them because it's God's idea and not yours and you need to get over your little prejudice against some of the things about the way God does stuff. Just choose the Bible word you want, God is coming for those and he's going to be faithful to run them down and pour tender mercies, God-sized mercies on those wicked, vile, wrath-deserving sinners. That's what Christmas is about and Zacharias cannot hold back the passion of his joy over this. As God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants was based on his determined and infinite mercies, so his covenant to those who would believe on his Son, Jesus, will be the recipients of his determined covenant mercies.

Verse 73, he says there, "The oath which He swore to Abraham our father." I just commented on that. It started with Abraham but it transcends from Abraham and national Israel to all of those who would believe on Abraham's ultimate descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then look at verse 77, "To give to His people the knowledge of salvation By the forgiveness of their sins." You could say to give to his people the knowledge of salvation consisting in the forgiveness of their sins. He's going to make sure through the work of his Son, Jesus Christ, he comes and showers the tender mercy of enabling his children to know what salvation is, how they can obtain it, so that they will have the forgiveness of their sins. Zacharias is present God for that glorious truth. It's so securing. It's so certain. It's so absolutely reassuring. You talk about you believe in the assurance of salvation, you believe in once saved, always saved, you believe in perseverance of the saints. Absolutely I do because he was born, if you will, to take his omniscient power, strength and wisdom, and run me down to pour out mercies on me including enabling me to have knowledge of what salvation is, how one is saved, and secure for me the forgiveness of my sins. Zacharias says, "I can't help but shout and praise God at Christmas because that's what he came to do." How many people do you think really have the true joy of Christmas?

Verse 78, all of this the contextual flow, all of this, this tender mercy, this knowledge of salvation, this forgiveness of sins, all of this because of "the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise from on high will visit us." All this flows out of this determined mercy of God. By the way, the phrase "tender mercy," the word "tender" means the innermost heart of a being. The people of this day would have literally said the bowels. That's where they said, from his innermost bowels. It just means the core depth of his being. So God says, "I reach into the core depth of my being and find the very deepest intent, the very deepest desire of my heart, and the very deepest intent and desire of my heart is to find you and pour mercy on you and make you mine." That's Christmas and that's some of the great doctrine behind Christmas joy. So like the hounds of heaven, you know what hounds do? They get on the trail of something and they just stay on it until they get it, and when Jesus came, he was the hound of heaven and he's on the trail of his children and he's going to get you so he can pour out his mercies on you and give you forgiveness of sins. Wow. Wow. This is a determined mercy.

Well, we've talked about deliverance from all enemies, that was prophesied. We're talking about a determined mercy for his own children, that was all prophesied, Zacharias says. But there is another thing, another aspect of what Christ came to give us was prophesied also and that's a discipleship of perpetuity. A discipleship of perpetuity. It means it never ends. He didn't come just to get you in and then you fall out. He didn't just come to make you his own and then you lose it again. You didn't get saved and get unsaved again. No, he came to make you his and that once he made you his, and in a very very very real sense in the eternal mind of God, you are already his. He didn't come for you to try to see if you might become his, he came for you because you're his and then when he makes you his in time and space history by you repenting of your sins and placing faith in Jesus Christ, he keeps you as his disciple forever.

Tell me something, tell me something tell me something, since you were made to love and serve God, how can you love and serve God if your very nature is offensive to his holy character? And if you are the rightful and righteous object of his holy wrath? How can you love and serve him when your very being calls for judgment? How can you serve him if you cannot dare to even appear in his presence?

Look at verse 79, "To shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death." That's where you are in your sins, friend. You're in darkness and in the shadow of death. Look at the last phrase of verse 79, "To guide our feet into the way of peace." Zechariah says through this one who is going to be born of the virgin Mary is coming this horn of salvation and through the provision of him, the Son of God, he will bring us into a position of full and even joyous peace before the Triune, infinitely holy God. Therefore I can be his disciple. I can be his servant. I can be one of his because his Son provides for all I'm lacking. Where I should be consumed just being in his presence, the provision of his Son on the cross on my behalf has paid my payment, has cleansed my guilt and now I can be his disciple. All this nonsense about, "Oh, the cost of discipleship and you ought to be his disciple," that's not the question. The question is how can you possibly be the son or the disciple of such a God? You can't. You are unqualified, yet his Son can make you qualified. His Son can make you acceptable, even one who will walk with the infinitely holy Triune God and you can walk with him in an enjoyable peace. Enjoyable peace.

Look at verse 74, the last half of verse 74, that we "Might serve Him without fear." There is rich doctrine in this praise by Zacharias. You can go to bed at night and if you knew your heart the way God knows your heart – are you listening to me – the last thing you probably do before you fall asleep is sin against God, and if you know your heart like God knows your heart, the first thing you do when you have your first conscious thought in the morning is sin before a holy God because he's that holy and you are that fallen in contrast. But because of God's purpose through the Son, Jesus Christ, on your behalf, you can go to bed, sleep all night, wake up in the morning, and live all that day without any fear, know you are loved and accepted and welcomed and cleansed and a child of God. Woo! That's good news. That is such good news. My goodness. The problem with some of you is you think you're in fairly good shape. You're a wretched, ungodly, filthy rag that's offensive to his Triune holy God. The next breath you should be consumed and plunged into the presence of his wrath forever but through his Son, you're not going to be. You can just keep on serving him every day without fear through the merits of his Son. Zacharias is just tore up about this. He's just full of Christmas praise.

Do you know how many preachers, not just professing Christians, do you know how many preachers would hear this and say, "That's not the Christmas story." I'd like to get them in a headlock and say, "You'd better open your Bible and don't get back up and go into the pulpit until you know the doctrines of God." All this silly, sentimental nonsense around Christmas. I'm not saying it's all wrong, I'm just saying it's too little. Get the rich meat of the great joys, God-centered joys of Christmas. I want the best for you.

Verse 75. Zacharias just keeps on here talking about this discipleship of perpetuity. It just keeps on going. We always walk with him and are his disciple, we never lose it. Verse 75, "In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days." Notice it's before him. You don't just serve God, you serve before him. It means you are fully completely welcomed in his presence in intimacy with him all of our days. You say, "Well, pastor, that sounds wonderful but what if?" Listen, the covenant God has initiated with us through his Son, Jesus Christ, covers absolutely every possible "what if" you can come up with. Ain't no what if going to get in the way of this.

So Zacharias praises God this first Christmas for particular redemption. He came to accomplish for a particular people their salvation. He praises God for a powerful redemption. He's the horn of salvation, dignity, strength, courage. Jesus had to achieve it. Then he praises God for all the prophecy that he is pulling out and saying, "He said he'd do all this." The prophecy of deliverance from our enemies. The prophecy of a determined mercy for his covenant children. And a prophecy that when he saves you, he will continue to own you and have you for his own and I call that a discipleship of perpetuity.

Well, Zacharias, don't you have a child involved in the Christmas story somewhere? Yeah. He mentions him. He gets to him. He's just pretty enthralled with Jesus, you understand. I mean, if you know Jesus, you do love Jesus more than your own children. Verse 76, "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High." My son that God has miraculously given to Elizabeth and I in her older age, in her barren woman even, "For you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways."

Well, that's the sound doctrine of Christmas joy. If you'll study hard, if you will think hard on these things, your joy will increase.

Let's stand together in prayer, all right?

Father, we cannot fathom what kind of spiritual ecstasies Zacharias was in as he was given by your precious Holy Spirit such illumination and such understanding of how Christ was the particular Redeemer and the powerful Redeemer and how he was the prophesied Redeemer. But Lord, I pray as we approach this season, that we have set aside just to remember your coming that we would have the true Bible doctrine behind what Christmas is all about so that we can have the real, enduring, deep, God-wrought joys surrounding Christmas.