

# Un-wrapping the Gift of Salvation: Inviting Jesus to Do What ONLY Jesus Can Do

Luke 1:67-79

As we open to Luke 1, we have come to the next element of salvation that we are un-wrapping in this Christmas series. Today we see the wonder of:

## Inviting Jesus to Do What ONLY Jesus Can Do

In Mathew 1 we saw Jesus as the One who forgives our sins; and Jesus is God with us. Now in Luke 1 we see that Jesus is the key to unlocking all the wonders of salvation. The essence of what we will see in Luke 1 that what salvation is all about is:

Only Jesus can save. Only Jesus can transform us. Only Jesus can keep us.

Salvation is a gift, and the gift is only received by asking for it. But to as many as “ask” Him, to all that “receive” Him, for everyone that “calls” and from their heart “invites” Jesus: He does in their life what only He can do<sup>1</sup>. What is it that only Jesus can do? Luke 1 explains to us, just what he does.

Please stand and listen to what Jesus came to do, and is still doing:

*Luke 1:67-79 Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: 68 “Blessed is 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, Who have been since the world began, 71 That we should be **saved** from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, 72 To **perform the mercy promised** to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant, 73 The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: 74 To grant us that we, Being **delivered** from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him **without fear**, 75 **In holiness and righteousness before Him** all the days of our life. 76 “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the*

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<sup>1</sup> The Bible has always connected “calling” upon the Lord, to God’s offer of salvation. Way back in Joel (2:32) is where Paul drew those famous words in Romans (10:13) that say that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Genesis 4:26 shows us that right at the dawn of human history, humans learned the only way to be saved was to call out to the Lord. Once we have received the gift of salvation by faith, the ongoing wonders of salvation also come by asking in faith. Paul explained this to the Colossians (2:6).

*Lord to prepare His ways, 77 To give **knowledge of salvation** to His people By the **remission of their sins**, 78 Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; 79 To **give light** to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To **guide our feet into the way of peace.**"*

## What Jesus Can Do

Look back over those words we just read. There are several clear statements of what Christ's coming would make possible in the lives of those who come to Him:

- v. 68: Only Jesus can “visit and redeem” anyone who calls out to Him. Think about it, who else would even hear anyone, anywhere calling out? Only Jesus would be able to respond anywhere at anytime.
- v. 69: Only Jesus can be the “horn” or power “of salvation”. Jesus is the power of God unto salvation. That Greek word for power is where we get the English word dynamite.
- v. 71: Only Jesus can “save” anyone, anywhere; and v. 72 “perform the mercy promised” to anyone, anywhere.
- v. 74: Only Jesus can “deliver” anyone, anywhere from “fear”.
- v. 75: Only Jesus can make us to be “in holiness and righteousness before Him”.
- v. 77: Only Jesus gives the “knowledge of salvation” to anyone, anywhere that responds to the Gospel; and only Jesus can grant instantaneously the “remission” of their sins.
- Finally, in v. 79, only Jesus can give “light” to anyone in the shadow of death; and only Jesus can guide anyone, anywhere no matter what they have done in their life, “into the way of peace”.

That is what Jesus can do. That is the gift that God sent at Christmas. That is what we are going to start to unwrap as we study God's Word today.

When we ended last week, we saw that most of those in Jerusalem, closest to Christ's coming, didn't really know God. But, among the few who did, is the one we need to listen to today, because:

## Zacharias was Just One of Thousands

Zacharias was just one of 24,000 priests who served at the Temple two weeks per year, but God was looking for him—sending a message by Gabriel. After he hears the good news of his son of promise, John the Baptist, he waits in muted silence for his unbelief. But

then, after John's birth, Zacharias breaks out into the words of Luke 1:67-79.

The praises of Zechariah's hymn summarize the ministry of John pointing to Jesus. The song introduces the Coming One – Jesus, and explains why He came.<sup>2</sup> As we walked through these verses we saw what Jesus alone can do. This morning we pause to see that:

## **JESUS Can OPEN OUR PRISON DOOR— Because Only JESUS REDEEMS (v. 68)**

*“Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and **redeemed** His people.”*

We see such power in that word *redeem* which means “to set free by paying a price.” It referred to the ancient custom of releasing of a prisoner or the liberating of a slave by purchasing them. Christ's redemption means that there is: **NO BONDAGE that Christ's Power cannot break**. So we can:

### **Ask Jesus to Liberate You From Slavery to Any Sin**

Jesus came to release us from sin's captivity, set us free from sin's prisons, and redeem us from sin's slavery. Look at Luke 4:18 for a moment.

Jesus Christ came to earth to bring “deliverance to the captives” (Luke 4:18)—that was the message He preached at His hometown synagogue. Christ's salvation is offered to us who are in bondage to sin and death. We are powerless to set ourselves free; only Jesus the Lamb of God could pay the price necessary for our redemption (Eph. 1:7).

That is what Jesus demonstrated over and over during His ministry. Think of all those that Jesus freed: the leper in Mark 1; the demoniac in Mark 5; the palsied man by the pool in John 5; later Jesus showed His power to Paul in Acts 16 when the earthquake shook the jail doors open, and the chains fell off of Paul & Silas, and on we could go through the NT. Jesus has no less power today.

The only difference from His earthly ministry in the Gospels is that Jesus can now be everywhere at once. What does Jesus offer to any of us who ask?

### **Victory: One Day at a Time**

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<sup>2</sup>The song that Zechariah sings summarizes the ministry of John pointing to Jesus. The song introduces the Coming One – Jesus, and explains why He came. But this song also reflects the notes from Zacharias' 40-week plus Bible study conducted as he waited in mute silence for his son's birth. Here are all the places Zacharias found promises of Christ's coming. First he quotes from Psalms 18, 23, 32, 34, 83, 106, and 132. Plus he uses extensive quotations from Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Malachi!

In a very real sense, each day we surrender to Him: Jesus shakes the prison houses of our habits, our bondages, and our besetting sins with His resurrection power. That is why Paul begged each of the believers in Rome to offer themselves daily on the altar to the Lord (Romans 12:1-2).

The chains that bind us He breaks off, the barred doors that imprison us He bursts open: all we need to do is walk out, and by faith realize we have been freed.

All we have to do is ask Him. Turn back with me for a moment to John 8:31:

*John 8:31-36 (NKJV) Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “**If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.**”<sup>32</sup> And you shall **know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**”<sup>33</sup> They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s descendants, and have never been in bondage to anyone. How can You say, ‘You will be made free?’”<sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, **whoever commits sin is a slave of sin.**”<sup>35</sup> And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever.<sup>36</sup> Therefore **if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.***

Look at the word “know” in v. 32.

The form that the Spirit of God gave this word “know” to us (its morphology) is: future, middle, indicative, second person, plural.

In literal translation that comes out to this in English: “you shall be continually knowing for yourselves the truth” and “the truth shall continually liberate you from bondage”.

## **Just Ask Him to Set You Free**

Are you bound to some secret or public sin today? Jesus came to live and die because He wants to redeem and liberate you—just ask Him.

Say “Jesus: open the prison door that holds me back, let me believe that You have set me free”. “Jesus, help me to experience Your redemption me from my bondage.”

The first Glorious Truth of inviting Jesus to do what only He can do this Christmas is that there is: **NO BONDAGE that Christ's Power cannot break—if you will just ask Him.** What else can ONLY Jesus Do?

## **We Can Ask Jesus to Release us From Any Fear**

Secondly, Christ's redemption means that there is: **NO FEAR that His Presence cannot banish.**

The most frequently repeated negative prohibition in God's Word is: Fear Not. We humans are so much like sheep: we are fearful, weak, helpless, and defenseless against most of the dangers we face. Be honest. Confess your fears to Jesus. Then hear what He says.

Look with me at the commissioning of the disciples in Matthew 28. Notice their launch by Christ into active duty is preceded by an honest assessment of where they were. Without the Spirit of God indwelling and empowering every believer, they had slipped back into their old, fearful ways. We see that “some doubted” in v.17.

What was Christ's solution to doubts and fears? Matthew 28:20b “and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen. Jesus said I am going to be with you, and My Spirit dwelling within, will make you know my presence. My Presence can banish every fear!

Are you chained to fear about the past, or the fear of the present or the future? Jesus banishes all fears when we open our eyes to His Presence. Just say, “Jesus, redeem me from my fears.”

The second Glorious Truth of Christmas is that: there is **NO FEAR that His Presence cannot banish—if you will just ask Him**

## **We Can Ask Jesus to Cleanse us from Any Stain**

Thirdly, Christ's redemption means that there is: **NO STAIN that is Precious Blood cannot cleanse.**

Jesus clearly stated in His ministry that all sins are forgivable. Just ask Him, seek His cleansing. Look in Mark 1:40-41, this is one of the most touching scenes in all of the Four Gospels.

Mark 1:40-41 (NKJV) Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, “If You are willing, You can make me clean.”<sup>41</sup> Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.”

Say to Jesus this Christmas, “Cleanse me now.” And hear Him say, “I am willing—be clean.”

Revelation 1:5b “To Him who loved us and **washed us from our sins** in His own blood”.

The third Glorious Truth of Christmas is that: there is **NO STAIN that is Precious Blood cannot cleanse—if you will just ask Him.**

## **We Can Ask Jesus to Give Us a New Beginning**

Finally, Christ's redemption means that there is: **NO PAST that His Promises cannot make new.**

Jesus will never condemn us if we come to Him. All we need to do is confess and forsake our sins. He does the rest. Just say, “Jesus let me start over again in You—give me Your new beginning.”

Paul tells the Corinthians they should be glad they're not the people they used to be:

1 Corinthians 6:11, 9-10 (NKJV) 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God. What were they? v. 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.

God freely offers new beginnings:

Titus 3:3-6 (NKJV) For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. 4 But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, 5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior,

## **New Birth Means Endless New Beginnings**

Sometimes we forget what being born-again means. The New Birth is an offer of the ultimate fresh start. Think about a baby at birth: a baby is a person with no past, just a future.

The New Birth offers us a brand new start, with the record of every sin, every failure, every stain removed forever. All that a born-again believer has is a FUTURE! That is why salvation is the greatest gift of all.

The Glorious Truth of Christmas is that: there is **NO PAST that His Promises cannot make new—if you will just ask Him.**

**This may be the best gift you get this Christmas.** More than a digital device to add to your entertainment, scheduling, or social interaction: Jesus came to offer you something money, technology, and status can never buy.

Jesus says, I came to give to you TODAY my redemption. Here are the features that owning your own personal copy of His redemption provides:

1. There is **NO BONDAGE that Christ's Power cannot break.**
2. There is: **NO FEAR that His Presence cannot banish.**
3. There is: **NO STAIN that is Precious Blood cannot cleanse.**
4. There is: **NO PAST that His Promises cannot make new.**

If you have not yet overflowed with thanks to God and praise to Him for His sending Jesus, then you must not yet understand what He has done.

We who know Jesus personally and intimately today have His gift of redemption: bought, wrapped, and given to us freely in Christ.

The Glory of Christmas is our Savior Jesus who came to assure us that He has saved us and nothing can take away our gift of the new birth: NO bondage, NO fear, NO stain, and NO past.

We are living each day with an endless new beginning through His redemption.