

I. Introduction.

II. John's birth is accompanied by joy and wonder. v. 57-66,80

A. Elizabeth gives birth to a son, just as the Angel Gabriel had said. v. 57-58,13-15

1. This elderly couple has miraculously conceived and given birth to a son. v. 18
2. Friends and family rejoice with them because of God's mercy. v. 58,14 Ro. 12:15
3. There will be greater (cosmic) joy at the birth of Jesus. 2:10ff

B. His name is John. v. 59-63

1. The infant boy is circumcised according to the Law. v. 59 2:21 Lev. 12:3 Gen. 17:11ff Should we give a covenant sign to our infants? Gal. 3:7
2. Friends and relatives want to name the baby after his father. v. 59 Ruth 4:17
3. Why is Elizabeth so adamant that he shall be named John? v. 60
4. Zacharias confirms that the baby's name IS John. v. 61-63,13

C. There is worship and wonder in the aftermath of John's birth. v. 63b-66,80

1. Zacharias regains his ability to speak and praises God. v. 64,20
2. The people are abuzz with astonishment. v.63b,65-66a 2:18-19,51 1:12,40 5:26
3. The Lord's hand is with John. v. 66b,15 Acts 11:21
4. John grows to maturity in obscurity. v. 80 2:40,52 3:2 1 Sa. 2:26 Judg. 13:24-25

D. Application.

1. Affliction can be spiritually beneficial. v. 64 Ps. 119:67,71 Js. 1:2ff Heb. 12:5ff
2. We too should ponder the significance of what God is doing. v. 66a
3. Do you pray that the hand of the Lord will be with your children? v. 66b

III. Zacharias sings a prophetic song of praise. v. 67-79

A. *Benedictus* – Blessed be the Lord. v. 67-68a Ps. 41:13 72:18 1 Ki. 1:48 1 Pe. 1:3

1. This is the second hymn of praise in the birth narratives. 1:46-55 2:13-14,29ff
2. How does Zacharias' song compare to Mary's *Magnificat*? 1:51-53,71,74,68b
3. Zacharias is filled with the Holy Spirit as he prophesies. 1:15,41 2:25 Acts 2:4
4. In what sense is Zacharias' song prophetic? 2 Pe. 1:20-21 2 Tim. 3:16

B. The Lord has saved and redeemed His people. v. 68-75

1. He has visited us in our oppression. v. 68b,78b 7:16 Ex. 4:31 Ruth 1:6 Jo. 1:14 Ps. 106:4 Gen. 21:1 Mt. 25:36,43
2. The Lord has accomplished redemption for His people. v. 68c Heb. 9:12 Mark 10:45 1 Pet. 1:18
3. God has kept his promise to David by raising up a powerful Horn of salvation. v. 69 1:32 2:11 Ps. 132:17 148:14 89:4 18:2 2 Sa. 22:3 7:12-13 Acts 3:22 13:22 5:31
4. He has fulfilled the prophets' words. v. 70 24:26-27,44 Acts 10:43 3:18,21 Gen. 3:15 12:1ff 49:10 Isa. 53 Ps. 89 Zech. 9:9
5. He has delivered us from our enemies. v. 71,51-53 4:16ff 10:18 20:43 21:17 Ps. 18:17 106:10 2 Sa. 22:17-18 Jo. 12:31 16:11,33 1 Jo. 3:8 Heb. 2:14-15
6. God has remembered His covenant with Abraham by showing us mercy. v. 72-73 1:54-55,78 Gen. 15:1ff 12:1-3 22:15ff Dt. 7:8 John 8:56 Heb. 6:13-18 Gal. 3:16 Ps. 105:8-9 106:45 98:3 Ex. 2:24 Mic. 7:20
7. The Lord has saved us that we might serve Him. v. 74-75 2:37 4:8 1:6 Ex. 7:16 19:6 Josh. 24:18 1 Pe. 1:18-19 Eph. 1:3ff Heb 2:14ff 9:14 Ro. 12:1-2 Titus 2:14

- C. John will prepare the way for the Lord (Jesus). v. 76-79
1. He will be called the prophet of the Most High. v. 76a
 2. He will go before the Lord to prepare His way. v. 76b,17 3:4 7:24ff Is. 40:3 Mal. 3:1 4:5 Acts 2:36
 3. He will proclaim a message of salvation through the forgiveness of sins. v. 77 3:3 5:31-32 24:47 Mt. 1:21 Jo. 1:29 Acts 13:24 5:31 2:38 Ps. 103:12 Jer. 31:34 Is. 43:25 53:6 Heb. 9:22 Col. 1:14 Mark 1:4
 4. The source of our salvation is God's tender mercy to undeserving sinners. v. 78a 1:50,54,72 Ps. 103:13-14 Isa. 1:18 Eph. 2:4
 5. The coming (visitation) of the Messiah will be like the rising of the sun upon people who are in spiritual darkness. v. 78b-79a 2:32 Isa. 9:1-7 60:1-3,19 59:8-9 Mal. 4:2 2 Pet. 1:19 John 8:12 Rev. 22:16 Ps. 27:1
 6. Jesus Christ guides our paths in the way of light and peace. v. 79b Eph. 5:8-9,14 Rom. 5:1 Ezek. 34:23ff Prov. 3:5-6 2 Th. 3:5

IV. Concluding applications.

- A. We too have cause to praise God with the Spirit's help. v. 67-68 John 4:24 Ps. 71:19 Col. 1:13
- B. Many people today are looking for God to save them from earthly problems, not realizing that their great need is spiritual.
- C. We who are united with Christ have been delivered from our enemies. 6:22 12:52 Eph. 6:10ff Rev. 17:14 Heb. 2:14ff Acts 4:25ff Ps. 56:11 27:1ff Jo. 15:18-19
- D. We can rely completely upon God's promises.
- E. We have been saved from sin to serve God in holiness. v. 74-75 Titus 2:14 1 Jo. 2:29 Eph. 1:3ff Josh. 24:18 1 Th. 4:7 1 Pet. 1:18-19 Col. 2:6 Ro. 6:4,11ff Eph. 2:10 4:24
- F. Have you come out of spiritual darkness to embrace the Light of the world? v. 78-79 Heb. 7:25 Mt. 13:43 John 3:19

Discussion questions

1. Why were Jewish babies circumcised? v. 59
Who should receive the sign of baptism? Why? Gal. 3:7
2. How have you, like Zacharias, benefitted from the Lord's chastisement? Heb. 12:11
3. How is Zacharias' song similar to Mary's *Magnificat*?
What are some differences?
4. How does the Holy Spirit help us to praise God? v.. 67
5. Which Old Testament promises are fulfilled with the coming of Messiah? v. 68-75
6. What is the nature of redemption and salvation which the Messiah brings? v. 68-75,77
Explain your answer from our passage.
How might the Israelites have misunderstood this?
How do people today misunderstand the nature of God's deliverance?
7. What is the source of our salvation according to Zacharias' song? v. 72,78
8. To what end has God saved us according to Zacharias' song? v. 74b-75
How is that purpose being fulfilled in your life?
9. How can Zacharias speak of the fulfillment as having already taken place, given that Jesus was not yet even born?
10. What is John the Baptist's role in God's plan of redemption?
11. How is the coming of the Messiah like a sunrise?
12. How did Zacharias understand the gospel so well given that he only had the Old Testament?