

Message #8**Luke 1:67-80**

One of the most thrilling things for a parent is to hear their children saying I have the best dad and mom in the world. You don't hear that much and if you ever do hear it, it touches your heart.

God doesn't hear that much either. For the most part, when people use their mouths to talk about God, it is either to question Him or to criticize Him or to doubt Him. Rarely will you hear people exalting God with their mouths and say God you are the Best and you are the Greatest.

In fact, when was the last time you got alone with God and told Him how great and wonderful He was? When was the last time you just got alone with God to thank Him for all the blessings He has given to you?

Well there was a moment like that in the life of Zacharias. It truly was a Spirit-led moment. There are many things that people claim God's Spirit leads them to do and say and frankly most of it is nonsense. But when you read **verse 67**, this is literally something really prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Zacharias had been speechless for over nine months (Luke 1:20, 64). That was due to a judgment of God. During those nine months, he could have increased in bitterness and anger, but instead he increased in spirituality and thankfulness and appreciation for all God had done. When he finally opened his mouth, the Spirit of God filled him and he offered a tremendous praise to God.

It was a special moment and Luke wanted it recorded. What we see here is this:

WHEN ZACHARIAS WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT HE PRAISED GOD FOR SENDING HIS SON (JESUS) TO THE WORLD AND FOR SELECTING HIS SON (JOHN), TO ANNOUNCE IT TO THE WORLD.

Zacharias was overwhelmed with the thought that God would send His Son to this world to save people. Zacharias has a clear understanding of this. He was completely overwhelmed with the fact that God would select his son, John, to be the one who would announce that to the world.

Now these verses have been called Zacharias' "Benedictus." It is called this because the first word in the Latin Vulgate is the word "Benedictus" which means blessed (v. 68). This praise is truly led by God's Spirit. Now there are two Spirit-led reasons for this praise:

REASON #1 – Because God sent His Son to Israel. 1:68-75

In Greek, these verses (68-75) are one long sentence. That word "Blessed" (1:68) is one that means to verbally praise God. Notice carefully that Zacharias praises "the Lord God."

Those two nouns indicate that this is the God who is Lord and Master over everything. This is the only true God with all power and authority. This is the God who has total Dominion over all things.

Now specifically this great glorious God is the Lord God of Israel. That point is stressed all throughout these verses. He is the Lord God of Israel (v. 68); of the House of David (v. 69); and of Abraham (v. 73). **When one is truly Spirit-led, one will realize and honor the importance of Israel.**

Now one thing that is interesting is the use of past tense verbs: “visited us” (v. 68a); accomplished (v. 68b) and “raised” (v. 69a). In Greek these are called “futuristic aorists.” **In the mind of God and obviously in the mind of the Holy Spirit, who was prompting Zacharias to say this, the sending of Jesus Christ to the world and the accomplishment of salvation for Israel and sinners was all past tense.** This is a done deal.

God planned this from eternity past and the sending of His Son for Israel and for us was already accomplished before Jesus Christ was even born as a human.

Now Zacharias zeroes in on two main themes concerning God sending His Son:

Theme #1 - God sent His Son to visit and redeem His people. **1:68**

The word “visit” is an interesting word. It is a Greek word that means to visit in the sense of an inspection visit to help and care for someone who is sick and afflicted. It also is used in the sense of visiting someone with the idea of punishment (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 173).

Now connected to this visit was the “accomplishment of redemption.” That word accomplishment means Jesus Christ came to carry out and produce redemption (*Ibid.*, p. 369). The word “redemption” is the one that means He came to pay the price to set people free from sins.

This verse is powerful. God sent His Son to provide total and complete salvation for His people who are sick and afflicted by sin. He came to set them free from condemnatory judgment. This is why Zacharias is praising God. Now God saw Israel as being sick and afflicted by sin; the problem was they did not see themselves in the same way.

One that is truly led by God’s Spirit will be always be amazed by the fact that God has provided a redemptive plan that can get people out of their sick and afflicted sinful state.

Theme #2 - God sent His Son to rise up a salvation for His people. **1:69-75**

When you read verse 69 you cannot help but be amazed with the fact that Jesus Christ has not even been born yet and Zacharias, led by God’s Spirit, is praising God for the theme of the resurrection. At the heart of this salvific program is the resurrection. This is what will set Jesus Christ apart from every other political and religious leader.

Now to the Jewish mind the “horn” (v. 69) represented strength and power both religiously and politically (Deut. 33:17; Dan. 8:20-21; Rev. 5:6). Zacharias is praising God because the one who will be born will be the one who will be raised from the dead. He will be the One who will bring the power of salvation to the people of God. The One who is raised from the dead will be the strong, ultimate ruler of God. He is the only one with the strength to bring salvation for Israel and for us.

Zacharias brings out six facts about this salvation:

Salvific Fact #1 - It is a salvation that is Davidic. **1:69b**

II Samuel 7:12-13 specifically states that the King who would save and one day reign would come from the Davidic line.

A couple of things need to be realized. First, Israel is always special to God and we need to esteem Israel because Jesus Christ is Jewish and Jesus Christ is Davidic and one day He will rule the world. It is a Jewish, Davidic person who will save Israel.

Second, we who have believed on Jesus Christ are greatly privileged to have some of the crumbs of a program designed for Israel. Our salvation is by God’s grace and it is clearly connected to Israel.

Salvific Fact #2 - It is a salvation that is prophetic. **1:70**

Keep in mind that what Zacharias is saying is prompted by the Holy Spirit. Notice how many times the focus is on what is said in the written Scriptures (1:70, 72, 73). It was clearly predicted in the Scriptures by the prophets that a child would be born who would be the Mighty God (Is. 9:6). Those O.T. prophets predicted one would come who would be able to save people from their sins.

Salvific Fact #3 - It is a salvation that is protective. **1:71**

God’s salvation is a delivering and protective salvation. This language clearly has militaristic and national redemptive overtones for Israel and for us. The idea here has both deliverance and preservation in mind. God’s salvation delivers His people from enemies who would seek to destroy them and it delivers them from those who hate them and it preserves them for the future. For Israel, this has not happened yet, but one day it will.

For a believer today, Jesus Christ saves us and preserves us. We are saved from the enemy of sin and we are set apart for His eternity and glory. There will come a day when Jesus Christ will deliver us from every evil thing and every evil enemy.

Salvific Fact #4 - It is a salvation that is merciful. **1:72a**

Whether it is the nation Israel or individual us, we must always remember God's salvation is due to His mercy. God pitied us and provided salvation for us. God does not need us, He pitied us. He saw us as totally hopeless and helpless. He knew there was no hope of us ever being right with Him, so in pure grace and mercy, He sent His Son.

Salvific Fact #5 - It is a salvation that is covenantal. **1:72b-73**

Israel's salvation and ours is due to a promise God made to Abraham in Genesis. When Paul developed the doctrine of the N.T. Gospel of Grace, he clearly saw it as something rooted in the Abrahamic history of Israel (Rom.9:1-5). Jesus Christ will one day fulfill every covenant promise to Israel. She will have her land, she will be esteemed as the nation of God and her righteous King will rule the world. Mary's baby would be the One who would do this.

Salvific Fact #6 - It is a salvation that is practical. **1:74-75**

Notice carefully from **verse 74** that God's salvation is a "rescue" mission. We need to be rescued from enemies. The enemies are not specified, but they are plural. We need to be rescued from our many sins, from the world, from our flesh and from the Devil. We need to be rescued from enemies who would seek to destroy us and devour us. God provides that for us. He is our liberator who rescues us so that His people may serve Him in three ways:

(Way #1) - God's people may serve God without fear. **1:74b**

God does not want His people fearful about whether or not they are saved. **He saved us through Jesus Christ so we may serve Him without fear**. Those who wonder about whether or not they are saved cannot possibly serve God without fear. God does save us for service purposes. He does not just save us for worship purposes, but for service purposes. God wants us serving Him fearlessly. Sometimes people who serve God get threatened, criticized, challenged and questioned. But God wants His people to keep serving fearlessly.

(Way #2) - God's people may serve God in holiness. **1:75a**

Luke uses an interesting word for "holiness." This word emphasizes a righteous piety. God wants us to be holy, dignified, pious people. He did not save us to be shaky, unstable, fickle, emotional, irrational and inconsistent people. He saved us to be holy and devout.

(Way #3) - God's people may serve God in righteousness. **1:75b**

We have been saved to conform our lives to the righteous standards of the Word of God. Those standards are found in the Bible for there is where the righteousness of God is revealed.

God did not save us so we could remain the way we are. He saved us to transform us so that we could serve Him.

Zacharias is praising God that He sent His precious Son. The first part of his praise is focused on the Son of God, but the last part is focused on his son.

REASON #2 – Because God chose John to be His forerunner of God’s Son. **1:76-80**

Zacharias was overwhelmed with the fact that his son John had been chosen by God to play such a special role in regard to Jesus Christ:

Assignment #1 - His son would be the prophet of the Most High. **1:76**

This is how God viewed John. He was the prophet singled out by God to introduce His Son to Israel and the world.

Now Zacharias says John will be the prophet of the Most High God and he will prepare the ways of the LORD. So this Person for whom he will be a forerunner is the Most High God, Savior, Messiah and King.

In fact, John would say that he did not believe he was even worthy enough to untie his sandal (John 1:27).

Assignment #2 - His son brings knowledge of salvation. **1:77-79**

There are four areas of knowledge that John would bring to the world:

(Area #1) - In Jesus Christ is the forgiveness of sins. **1:77b**

In order for people to have knowledge of salvation, they must realize they need forgiveness of their sins (plural). You cannot have God’s salvation until you realize you need God’s forgiveness of your sins.

There is only one way to have sins forgiven and it is not by works or accomplishments or good deeds or religion or by your holiness or righteousness; it is by Jesus Christ. John would bring knowledge of this very fact to Israel and to us. **In fact, the first thing John said when he actually saw Jesus Christ was “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).**

(Area #2) - In Jesus Christ is the mercy of God. **1:78**

Part of John’s message in bringing knowledge of salvation was to communicate to people it was by the mercy and grace of God. John never taught a works salvation. He taught that salvation and the tender mercy of God and the total mercy of God is found in one person, Jesus Christ.

God will bring His Son into this dark world like a sunrise and He will pay us a visit to offer us God's grace.

(Area #3) - In Jesus Christ is the deliverance of God. **1:79a**

Jesus Christ is the one who delivers from darkness and death. Without Jesus Christ we are doomed.

(Area #4) - In Jesus Christ is the guidance of God. **1:79b**

Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to have peace with God. In fact, He will guide us into all truth. When we follow the Word of God, we are led to the way of peace.

Now **verse 80** gives us some interesting data about John. He grew and he became strong in spirit and he lived an isolated life unto the time that God wanted him to publicly appear to Israel. Notice "strong in spirit." His spirituality and understanding developed in the Word of God and the will of God.

His growth and maturation took place out in the desert and this continued until somewhere around when he was 30 years old (Luke 3:23).

This is interesting. Apparently John did not hang around city streets and places preaching and witnessing to people. He spent 30 years learning and preparing for his job, to be the forerunner of Jesus Christ.