

## The Song of Zechariah – A Song of Prophecy

“Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD. <sup>6</sup> He will restore the hearts of the fathers to *their* children and the hearts of the children to their fathers, so that I will not come and smite the land with a curse.”

Those were the last words God uttered to the nation of Israel as recorded by the prophet Malachi. After giving this word, God was silent for 400 years.

We cannot grasp that in our New Testament days, for we as followers of Christ have the Holy Spirit who speaks to us through His Word, prayer, other people and circumstances to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.

But for the people of the OT, the 400 years had no Holy Spirit to speak to the hearts of people. There was no prophet who prophesied. Imagine if God had not spoken to the world since 1616. That is the equivalent to what Israel experienced.

And then it happened! There was a man named Zechariah who was a prophet. He and his wife Elizabeth had no children. Oh, they wanted children. They prayed for children, but their prayers went unanswered. Zechariah and Elizabeth both were devoted to following the ways of God. They were devout, living their lives in a blameless way. They were up in years.

It came about that it was time for the temple priests to offer incense to God. This required a few priests to enter the temple, but only one would go into the Holy Place to offer incense. The priest who would enter in was chosen by lots. It's kind of like rolling the dice. Keep in mind that there were 18,000 priests in Jerusalem. Most priests would never have the privilege of offering incense in their lifetime. When it did happen, the chances are they would never do it again.

The lot fell to Zechariah. When he entered the Holy Place, he found that he was not alone. Someone was there. It was an angel of the Lord. Specifically, it was Gabriel. Nothing like that has ever happened to any priests. As you can imagine, fear gripped Zechariah. The angel said, “Don't be afraid. God has heard your and Elizabeth's prayer. She's going to have a baby boy. You will name him John.” Gabriel went on to tell Zechariah what this man child was to accomplish. Zechariah kept arguing and doubting the angel to the point that the angel said, “Enough! You will no longer be able to speak until all these things take place.” From that point until John was born, Zechariah was unable to speak. Imagine Elizabeth, “Thanks, Gabriel. I had enough trouble getting information out of him as it is. Now this happens.”

Nine months passed. Many other things happened. But finally, John is born into the world. When the time of circumcision came, they were discussing what to name the child. Elizabeth said, “John.” Others said, “There's no one in the family with that name.” Zechariah asked for a tablet. He then wrote, “His name is to be John.” People were amazed.

This brings us to our text for the morning.

Begin reading with verse 67.

This is the Song of Zechariah, the first thing he spoke after nine months of silence. He was filled with the Spirit. So that which he spoke was of God. It is a Song of Prophecy regarding Christ and the role that John was to have. What is remarkable is that there are only two mentions of what John,

who we know as John the Baptist, will do. The rest is about the One whose way John is to prepare. It is a Song of Prophecy. But more, it is a Song of Salvation. For in it we have what Jesus is to bring to us as far as His ministry of salvation.

## He Purchases from Slavery v 68

He has visited or has looked upon as if with favor or grace. He has accomplished redemption for His people.

See the word redeemed? It is a release that comes from payment of a ransom. A kidnapper sends a ransom note to someone who will see his victim of worth. Should the person pay the ransom, the victim will hopefully be released. Other places in scripture says we were redeemed from all iniquity. We are redeemed from a vain manner of life that is from bondage of tradition. The tradition in NT is the tradition of trying to keep the rules and laws that will make us right before God. We are redeemed from that tradition by the One who has kept the Law and the rules to perfection.

The death of Christ was the payment of our redemption. Quite a huge payment isn't it? Imagine then the worth that God has placed on your soul.

## He Is Strong in Salvation v 69

Have a look at verse 69. "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David.

Horn of Salvation

The kind of horn meant here is not a musical instrument but the deadly weapon of the wild ox. This is the only place in the New Testament where Jesus is called a horn, so we must go back to the Old Testament, no doubt where Zechariah got the image, to see what it means.

Psalm 92:9 and 10 gives us a picture of what the horn stood for:

For lo, thy enemies, O Lord, for lo, thy enemies shall perish; all evildoers shall be scattered. But thou hast exalted my horn like that of the wild ox.

The horn is a sign of strength and a means of victory. In Micah 4:13, God says to Jerusalem, "Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make your horn iron and your hoofs bronze; you shall beat in pieces many peoples."

The same image is used for a warrior. 2 Sam 22:3 - *"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation."*

The image is also used of a king who saves (1 Sam 2:10; Ps 132:17). Luke's starting point for thinking about Jesus is that he is a king.

He is the King who saves.

He saves to the uttermost. His salvation is powerful. It is cleansing. It is life changing.

## He Delivers from Danger v 74

To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies,  
Might serve Him without fear,

In the strength of His might, He rescues from the hands of the enemies.

If He rescues from the hand of the enemy, then I must need to be rescued. From what do I need to be rescued? If I need to be rescued from my enemies, then who is this enemy? Why do I need to be rescued from the enemy?

Many who read or heard this song was no doubt thinking about a rescue from a political enemy which Messiah was prophesied as doing. However, there is something much deeper which I think Zechariah was given vision to by the Holy Spirit.

The enemy is the one who is the god of this world. He is Satan. He is the enemy. He seeks nothing more than to destroy you by sin and by death. "Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion seeking someone to devour" ([1 Peter 5:8](#)). "He is the god of this world and blinds the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ" ([2 Corinthians 4:4](#)). So there is a deadly disease and an awesome enemy. And every one of us will die from this disease and be devoured by that enemy if there is no horn of salvation for us.

He delivers so that we may serve. We are freed from the enemy to serve the Savior. It is something we do freely.

### **He Forgives Sin** v 77

In addition to an enemy from which we need to be delivered, there is a disease from which we need to be healed. It is called sin. All have this disease. Romans 3:23 says "For all have sinned and come short of God's glory." Romans 6:23 goes further to tell the seriousness of sin. "For the wages of sin is death."

Christ followers, at times, find themselves trapped in some sin. You also need forgiveness possible only through Jesus Christ.

### **He Brings About the Dawning of a New Day 78-79**

It is a day when we no longer are in darkness of sin. It is a day when we are in the light of Jesus Christ.

That light has penetrated the world of darkness. Over a period of time, we find civilization change because of the influence of Jesus Christ.

He never wrote a book, yet libraries around the world contain volumes and volumes of books concerning Him.

He never wrote a song. Yet, some of the greatest composers of this world chose Him as the subject of their works that became masterpieces.

He never painted. However, go into finest museums of art, and you will find Him to be the subject matter of many of the most beautiful works ever put to canvas.

He never married. Yet, the community which finds commonality with Him as Lord treats women with such esteem that record numbers of women joined their community.

John Ortberg write,

Humility was scorned in the ancient world. However it became enshrined in a cross and was eventually championed as a virtue. Enemies, who were thought to be worthy of vengeance ("help your friends and punish your enemies"), came to be seen as worthy of love. Forgiveness moved from weakness to an act of moral beauty. Even in death, Jesus' influence is hard to escape. The practice of burial in graveyards or cemeteries was taken from his followers ... It expressed the hope of resurrection.