

Text: Luke 1:67-80

Title: "The Light is About to Break"

Introduction: Please note, John, that while Zechariah is praising God, there is no mention of his newborn son's name. When he does talk about John (vs. 76-77), he talks about how John will serve the Lord. For Zechariah, it's not about him or about his miracle son; it's all about God sending His Son! "It's not your birthday!"

I would suggest that you use an outline similar to the one in the 1st Commentary notes, such as:

- I. **The Prison Door Open** (v. 68)
Jesus offers us freedom from the prison of sin. We did not and do not have the ability to set ourselves free from the death that comes from our sinfulness. Our salvation comes only from Jesus paying the debt ("the wages of sin is death" Romans) on our behalf. Without Jesus, you and I are full of sin and cannot be in a relationship/partnership with God!
- II. **The Battle Won** (vs. 69-75)
Jesus gives us ultimate victory over the enemy (Satan). Jesus victory over death gives us hope for the same. Jesus win = we no longer have to do the things that are not of God (sin), but can count on the power of God to carry us above the life of sin... or something like that.
- III. **The Debt Cancelled** (vs. 76-77)
There is no way that we can repay or pay off what we owe God through Jesus. Our debt comes from our sins ... "we all fall short of the Kingdom of God". Someone needs to pay our debt off to God. Jesus comes and in our place pays off our debt. I wonder how we would treat someone who came and paid off anything and everything we owed (loans, cars, home, schooling, credit cards, etc.) and said that we did not have to pay them back. I don't know about you, but I would spend a whole lot of my time thanking that person any way I could. I wonder if we really understand that all Jesus means to us? I'm not sure we show it with how we do or do not spend our time saying 'thank you' to Jesus!
- IV. **The New Light** (vs. 78-79)
The focus of my title is on the Light that Jesus was (and still is) as he entered into a world that was filled with pockets of darkness. Jesus changed EVERYTHING! The birth of that child in Bethlehem rendered the past obsolete in comparison to what was to come. From the day that Jesus was born, God showed God's incredible love for His children (that's us!), because of Who Jesus is and What Jesus brings to the world (Points I-III)...

Jesus offers you and I (here in 2010) light in the darkness of our world ... the darkness of work-related struggles, the darkness of financial difficulties, the darkness of plain old uncertainty and confusion when it comes to life. Jesus offers us light in the darkness when we agree to follow Him and His Truths (use as segway to “Squint” Series starting January 10th)...

New Year – New Light! Zechariah knew the gifts that Jesus would offer. Do we recognize those gifts and take Jesus up on the offer, or do we continue to flounder in the darkness?!?!? Happy New Year!!

Here are some notes from Commentaries I trust:

“The greatest forces in the world are not the earthquakes and the thunderbolts,” said Dr. E.T. Sullivan. “The greatest forces in the world are babies.”

Traditionally, a baby boy would be named after his father or someone else in the family; so the relatives and neighbors were shocked when Elizabeth insisted on the name *John*. Zacharias wrote “His name is John” on a tablet, and that settled it! Immediately God opened the old priest’s mouth, and he sang a hymn that gives us four beautiful pictures of what the coming of Jesus Christ to earth really means.

The opening of a prison door (vv. 68). The word *redeem* means “to set free by paying a price.” It can refer to the releasing of a prisoner or the liberating of a slave. Jesus Christ came to earth to bring “deliverance to the captives” (Luke 4:18), salvation to people in bondage to sin and death. Certainly we are unable to set ourselves free; only Christ could pay the price necessary for our redemption (Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18–21).

The winning of a battle (vv. 69–75). In Scripture, a horn symbolizes power and victory (1 Kings 22:11; Ps. 89:17, 24). The picture here is that of an army about to be taken captive, but then help arrives and the enemy is defeated. In the previous picture, the captives were set free; but in this picture, the enemy is defeated *so that he cannot capture more prisoners*. It means total victory for the people of God.

The word *salvation* (Luke 1:69, 71) carries the meaning of “health and soundness.” No matter what the condition of the captives, their Redeemer brings spiritual soundness. When you trust Jesus Christ as Saviour, you are delivered from Satan’s power, moved into God’s kingdom, redeemed, and forgiven (Col. 1:12–14).

Where did the Redeemer come from? He came from the house of David (Luke 1:69), who himself was a great conqueror. God had promised that the Saviour would be a Jew (Gen. 12:1–3), from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10), from the family of David (2 Sam. 7:12–16), born in David’s city, Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). Both Mary (Luke 1:27) and Joseph (Matt. 1:20) belonged to David’s line. The coming of the Redeemer was inherent in the covenants God made with His people (Luke 1:72), and it was promised by the prophets (Luke 1:70).

Note that the results of this victory are sanctity and service (Luke 1:74–75). He sets us free, not to do our own will, because that would be bondage, but to do His will and enjoy His freedom.

The canceling of a debt (vv. 76–77). *Remission* means “to send away, to dismiss, as a debt.” All of us are in debt to God because we have broken His law and failed to live up to His standards (Luke 7:40–50). Furthermore, all of us are spiritually bankrupt, unable to pay our debt. But Jesus came and paid the debt for us (Ps. 103:12; John 1:29).

The dawning of a new day (vv. 78–79). *Dayspring* means “sunrise.” The people were sitting in darkness and death, and distress gripped them when Jesus came; but He brought light, life, and peace. It was the dawn of a new day because of the tender mercies of God (see Matt. 4:16).

The old priest had not said anything for nine months, but he certainly compensated for his silence when he sang this song of praise to God! And how joyful he was that his son was chosen by God to prepare the way for the Messiah (Isa. 40:1–3; Mal. 3:1). John was “prophet of the Highest” (Luke 1:76), introducing to Israel “the Son of the Highest”

(Luke 1:32) who was conceived in Mary's womb by "the power of the Highest" (Luke 1:35).

Instead of enjoying a comfortable life as a priest, John lived in the wilderness, disciplining himself physically and spiritually, waiting for the day when God would send him out to prepare Israel for the arrival of the Messiah. People like Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25–38) had been waiting for this day for many years, and soon it would come.

God calls us today to believe His Good News. Those who believe it experience His joy and want to express their praise to Him. It is not enough for us to say that Jesus is *a Saviour, or even the Saviour*. With Mary, we must say, "My spirit hath rejoiced in God *my Saviour*" (Luke 1:47, italics mine).

¹

IV. God Visits His People (1:57–80)

"He has visited and redeemed His people" (v. 68) is the major theme of this hymn of praise. The little boy being named (John means "grace of God") was the forerunner of the Messiah who would bring salvation to lost sinners and one day deliver Israel from all her enemies. God was visiting His people, but they did not know "the time of their visitation" (19:44). Zacharias took literally God's covenants and promises with Israel and expected God to fulfill them (vv. 72–73).

In this beautiful song, Zacharias gave several pictures symbolizing the salvation we have in Jesus Christ: purchase from slavery (v. 68), deliverance from danger (v. 74), forgiveness of a debt (v. 77), and the dawning of a new day (vv. 78–79; Isa. 9:2). Note the emphasis on salvation (vv. 69, 71, 77).

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68–79. There is not a word in this noble burst of divine song about his own child; like Elisabeth losing sight entirely of self, in the glory of a Greater than both.

Lord God of Israel—the ancient covenant God of the peculiar people.

visited and redeemed—that is, in order to redeem: returned after long absence, and broken His long silence (see Mt 15:31). In the Old Testament, God is said to "visit" chiefly for *judgment*, in the New Testament for *mercy*. Zacharias would, as yet, have but imperfect views of such "visiting and redeeming," "saving from and delivering out of the hand of enemies" (Lu 1:71, 74). But this Old Testament phraseology, used at first with a *lower* reference, is, when viewed in the light of a loftier and more comprehensive kingdom of God, equally adapted to express the most spiritual conceptions of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.

69. horn of salvation—that is "strength of salvation," or "mighty Salvation," meaning the Saviour Himself, whom Simeon calls "Thy Salvation" (Lu 2:30). The

¹Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Lk 1:57). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

²Wiersbe, W. W. (1997, c1992). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (150). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

metaphor is taken from those animals whose *strength* is in their horns (Ps 18:2; 75:10; 132:17).

house of ... David—*This shows that Mary must have been known to be of the royal line, independent of Joseph; of whom Zacharias, if he knew anything, could not know that after this he would recognize Mary.*

70. since the world began—or, “from the earliest period.”

72. the mercy promised ... his holy covenant ...

73. the oath ... to ... Abraham—The whole work and kingdom of Messiah is represented as a mercy pledged on oath to Abraham and his seed, to be realized at an appointed period; and at length, in “the fulness of the time,” gloriously made good. Hence, not only “*grace*,” or the *thing* promised; but “*truth*,” or *fidelity* to the promise, are said to “come by Jesus Christ” (Jn 1:17).

74, 75. That he would grant us, &c.—How comprehensive is the view here given! (1) The *purpose* of all redemption—“that we should *serve* Him”—that is, “the Lord God of Israel” (Lu 1:68). The word signifies *religious* service distinctively—“the *priesthood* of the New Testament” [BENGEL]. (2) The *nature* of this service—“in holiness and righteousness before Him” (Lu 1:75)—or, as in His presence (compare Ps 56:13). (3) Its *freedom*—“being delivered out of the hand of our enemies.” (4) Its *fearlessness*—“might serve Him without fear.” (5) Its *duration*—“all the days of our life.”

76–79. Here are the dying echoes of this song; and very beautiful are these closing notes—like the setting sun, shorn indeed of its noontide radiance, but skirting the horizon with a wavy and quivering light—as of molten gold—on which the eye delights to gaze, till it disappears from the view. The song passes not here from Christ to John, but only from Christ direct to Christ as heralded by His forerunner.

thou child—not “my son”—this child’s relation to himself being lost in his relation to a Greater than either.

prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before him—that is, “the Highest.” As “the Most High” is an epithet in Scripture only. of *the supreme God*, it is inconceivable that inspiration should apply this term, as here undeniably, to Christ, unless He were “God over all blessed for ever” (Ro 9:5).

77. to give knowledge of salvation—To sound the note of a *needed* and *provided* “salvation” was the noble office of John, above all that preceded him; as it is that of all subsequent ministers of Christ; but infinitely loftier was it to be the “Salvation” itself (Lu 1:69 and Lu 2:30).

by the remission of ... sins—This stamps at once the *spiritual* nature of the salvation here intended, and explains Lu 1:71, 74.

78. Through the tender mercy of our God—the sole spring, necessarily, of all salvation *for sinners*.

dayspring from on high—either *Christ Himself*, as the “Sun of righteousness” (Mal 4:2), arising on a dark world [BEZA, GROTIUS, CALVIN, DE WETTE, OLSHAUSEN, &c.], or the light which He sheds. The sense, of course, is one.

79. (Compare Is 9:2; Mt 4:13–17). “That St. Luke, of all the Evangelists, should have obtained and recorded these inspired utterances of Zacharias and Mary—is in accordance with his character and habits, as indicated in Lu 1:1–4” [WEBSTER and WILKINSON].

80. And the child, &c.—“a concluding paragraph, indicating, in strokes full of grandeur, the bodily and mental development of the Baptist; and bringing his life up to the period of his public appearance” [OLSHAUSEN].

in the deserts—probably “the wilderness of Judea” (Mt 3:1), whither he had retired early in life, in the *Nazarite* spirit, and where, free from rabbinical influences and alone with God, his spirit would be educated, like Moses in the desert, for his future high vocation.

his showing unto Israel—the presentation of himself before his nation, as Messiah’s forerunner.

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³Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., Fausset, A. R., Brown, D., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Lk 1:68). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.