

Sunrise
Luke 1:68–79

December 12, 2004

SERMON NOTES

A. Introduction — what happened before

1. Luke 1:5–7: Zacharias and Elizabeth were a R_____ couple who had no C_____ and were now old
2. Luke 1:13–17: God sent an angel to Zacharias who informed him that they would have a S_____ who would be named J_____
3. Luke 1:19–20: Zacharias doubted what was said, and the angel, whose name was G_____ said that Zacharias would not be able to S_____ until all these words were fulfilled
4. when it was all fulfilled, and the naming took place, Zacharias began to P_____, mainly about M_____, and this one who was being named would ...

B. The Hymn “Veni Emmanuel” or, _____

1. Luke 1:68 tells us
 - a. God has visited, ie., He is W_____ U_____ (“I_____”)
 - b. God’s purpose is to R_____ His people
2. Luke 1:69 summarizes a number of Old Testament prophecies
 - a. Isaiah 11:1, 10; Jeremiah 33:15–16: the Messiah is called a R_____ from the stem of Jesse (the father of King D_____) and also a B_____ out of his roots
 - b. As well, from Isaiah 22:22 and Revelation 3:7 we find that Messiah is also called the K_____ of David — all these things being implied by Messiah being of the house of David
3. Luke 1:78–79
 - a. the word “Dayspring” means S_____

- b. in Zechariah 6:12, the word B_____ (a name of Messiah) is literally that which S_____ up or rises, so that it means both that which S_____ as a bud on a tree and that which shines as the R_____ S_____

- c. so, Malachi 4:2 refers to Messiah as the S_____ of righteousness

C. Messiah – Jesus the Christ-child – is bringing Salvation

1. Luke 1:69a: it is a P_____ salvation
 - a. Romans 8:3: the law could not bring salvation because it was P_____ because of human frailty
 - b. Romans 1:16 the gospel of Messiah is the P_____ of God to salvation for everyone who B_____
2. Luke 1:72: it is the P_____ salvation
 - a. Genesis 22:18: in his Seed, Abraham was P_____ that all the nations of the earth shall be B_____
 - b. Galatians 3 tells us that this seed was One Person, M_____
 - c. In 2 Corinthians 1:19–20 we find that in Jesus the Christ-child, the Messiah, all the P_____ of God are affirmed and stand
3. Luke 1:74b–78: it is a T_____ salvation
 - a. John 8:36 because it makes us F_____ indeed
 - b. it means that the believer can truly P_____ by serving Him, without F_____ in holiness and righteousness
4. Luke 1:77: it is a S_____ salvation
 - a. the Jews in Jesus’ day were looking for a P_____ deliverer
 - b. Hebrews 2:8: the time is still to come when the R_____ of Messiah will be fully complete
 - c. Matthew 1:21: Messiah’s came to deliver from S_____
 - (A) from its P_____ (complete)
 - (B) from its P_____ (being done)
 - (C) from its P_____ (to be done)

A. Introduction

1. this morning we are looking at the last of three announcements in the first chapter of Luke, that of Zacharias' prophecy
 - a. in our reading we noted that this took place upon the birth and naming of Elizabeth's and his son, John, the Baptist
 - b. and that he was equipped to prophesy, his mouth having been opened, his having been filled with the Holy Spirit
 - c. what brought Zacharias to this place?

2. we are introduced to this couple early Luke 1:5–7 (NKJV):
 - a. 5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. 6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7 But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well advanced in years.
 - b. here we have a godly couple, serving the Lord, but denied the heartaches and the joys of parenthood

3. but, God, who as we saw last week in Mary's hymn of praise, is merciful and, despite all appearances to the contrary, cares for His children, announced by the angel Gabriel His special plans for them, Luke 1:13–17 (NKJV):
 - a. 13 But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. 14 And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. 15 For he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. 16 And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 He will also go before Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."
 - b. this explains the naming of John of which we read before
 - c. but, Zacharias doubted — not a good idea; because

4. as Gabriel informed him, Luke 1:19–20 (NKJV):

a. 19 And the angel answered and said to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad tidings. 20 But behold, you will be mute and not able to speak until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words which will be fulfilled in their own time."

b. so, the allotted time passed, John was born as we read

c. so Zacharias began to prophesy as we have remarked but let us first note something about this prophecy: it is only incidentally about John, the Baptist, his son

(A) in fact verse 76 is the only direct reference to his son: (NKJV): "And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways"

(B) and verse 77 describes his message by which he would initiate preaching Messiah's message of the "kingdom of God" (Mark1:15), (NKJV): "To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins,"

(C) but the rest of Zacharias' prophecy is all about Messiah and what He will do

5. Veni Emmanuel

a. last Sunday morning we sang "Veni Emmanuel," an 800-plus-year-old Latin hymn. You don't remember? Probably that is because we sang it in English: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," thanks to John Mason Neale's having translated it some 150 years or so ago.

b. now, I'll put the words of that hymn up on the screen — or it's number 171 in your hymn books

c. and you will see how this, like many other ancient hymns, is based upon Scripture, and is a way of teaching us as well as a way in which we can give praise

B. Luke 1:68 (NKJV): "Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, For He has visited and redeemed His people"

1. think of those words ...

a. God has visited – that is God with us, that is Immanuel

b. redeemed – God has paid the price, He has ransomed

2. verse 1 of that hymn begins with Israel's prayer:

"O come, O come, Emmanuel,
And ransom captive Israel,"

3. and now, says Zacharias, that prayer is answered

C. Luke 1:69 (NKJV): "And has raised up a horn of salvation for us In the house of His servant David"

1. summarizing a number of Old Testament prophecies, such as,

a. Isaiah 11:1, 10 (NKJV) "There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. ... And in that day there shall be a Root of Jesse, Who shall stand as a banner to the people; For the Gentiles shall seek Him, And His resting place shall be glorious."

b. Jeremiah 33:15–16a (NKJV): "In those days and at that time I will cause to grow up to David A Branch of righteousness; He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the earth. In those days Judah will be saved, And Jerusalem will dwell safely."

c. now, we will talk more of that Branch in a moment, but note now that Jesse was the grandson of Ruth and Boaz and the father of King David, the ancestor of Jesus

2. so verse 2 of that hymn sings as:

O come, Thou rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save
And give them vict'r'y o'er the grave.

3. and we will see that the salvation which Zacharias prophesies is not political but spiritual

4. and, though we will stop on it but for a moment, verse 4 of the hymn is also a reference to Messiah, being of the house of David, fulfilling prophecy

O come, Thou Key of David, come
And open wide our heav'nly home
Where all Thy saints with Thee shall dwell—
O come, O come, Emmanuel!

- a. as found in Isaiah 22:22 (NKJV): “The key of the house of David I will lay on his shoulder; So he shall open, and no one shall shut; And he shall shut, and no one shall open.”
- b. as explained in Revelation 3:7 (NKJV): And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, “These things says He who is holy, He who is true, ‘He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens’”

D. let’s dip down to Luke 1:78–79 (NKJV): 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.

1. with verse 3 of that hymn framing this as

O come, Thou Dayspring, come and cheer
Our spirits by Thine advent here;
O drive away the shades of night
And pierce the clouds and bring us light.

2. now that word “Dayspring,” means “sunrise” as in the NAS, or “rising sun” as in the NIV; we get our sermon title from this

3. now is the time to come back to the Branch: we read from two passages and now Zechariah 6:12 (NKJV): Then speak to him, saying, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, saying: ‘Behold, the Man whose name is the Branch! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the Lord’”

a. that word Branch is literally that which “springs up” or that which “rises” or that which “sprouts”

b. Nearly every January or February we have a thaw; when that happens John and I will stand outside and look at the buds on the maple trees across the street. Maureen looks at the buds on our forsythia — and if they are really well progressed, she cuts some branches and brings them in so that we can enjoy the flowers. Because John, Maureen and I are all concerned with the same thing: if the buds spring forth too much, then when the thaw is over, and the cold returns it will freeze and kill these buds so that we will have reduced foliage — and reduced or no blooms — come the spring. Well, “bud or sprout” is one meaning of this word.

c. but there is another meaning of the word translated “Branch” and this is very evident in the Aramaic

(Syriac) a close relative to Hebrew: it is to shine, as the rising Sun

d. Zecharias, possibly thinking of his namesake's prophecy, tells us that the Messiah, this Branch who will spring up, is the Sunrise — "the Sun of Righteousness" of Malachi 4:2 who will usher in the dawn of a bright, new day

4. let us look at a few things about that new day which came when the Lord Jesus Christ was born into this world and carried out God's plan and ministry of the ages

E. Messiah – Jesus the Christ Child – is bringing Salvation

1. It is a powerful salvation

a. Luke 1:69a (NKJV): **And has raised up a horn of salvation for us...**

b. the word "horn" when you find it in the Bible – whether it be in the Psalms or the books of Prophecy – is a poetic, graphic description of power or strength

c. **I lived on a farm when I was very young, and I was very comfortable at that age around the cows; but later, in my teens when I visited the farm and saw the size of their horns – especially on the massive head of a bull – I became a little more appreciative (and nervous) of the power involved**

d. now God gave to the children of Israel a set of observances whereby they could have atonement for their sin through obedience and faith – but these had a great weakness as Romans 8:3 tell us (Weymouth): **For what was impossible to the Law — powerless as it was because it acted through frail humanity — God effected. Sending His own Son in a body like that of sinful human nature and as a sacrifice for sin, He pronounced sentence upon sin in human nature.**

e. so, the salvation Messiah brings is powerful, Romans 1:16 (NKJV): **"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ {Messiah}, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek."**

2. It is the promised salvation

a. Luke 1:72 (NKJV): **To perform the mercy promised to our fathers And to remember His holy covenant,**

b. in this baby boy, this Christ-child, all the promises to the patriarchs, the covenant with Abraham, **"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed"** (Genesis 22:18) are to be fulfilled and carried out

- c. Paul discovers to us in Galatians 3 the exact meaning of this promise, that this Seed is One Person, Messiah Himself
 - d. therefore, this promised salvation is to be found in one place alone, 2 Corinthians 1:19–20 (NKJV): 19 For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us — by me, Silvanus, and Timothy — was not Yes and No, but in Him was Yes. 20 For all the promises of God in Him are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us.
3. It is a transforming salvation
- a. Luke 1:74b–75 (NKJV): 74b ... Might serve Him without fear, 75 In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.
 - b. while there is a filial fear – respect, awe, reverence – for God in the believer, gone is the slavish fear of the prisoner of sin; John 8:36 (NKJV): Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.
 - c. and not only free, but for the first time in our lives, because of Christ’s salvation provided freely to the believer, he can (and the context is clearly so) in this life serve God in a way that truly pleases God: in holiness and righteousness
 - d. and finally,
4. It is a spiritual salvation
- a. Luke 1:77 (NKJV): “To give knowledge of salvation to His people By the remission of their sins,”
 - b. while the opinion of most Jews of Jesus’ day was that the Messiah was a political, national deliverer who would set up an earthly kingdom – and Jesus is reigning now and the day is coming when He will reign, Hebrews 2:8 (NKJV): “You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. ... yes, that day is coming – but this Jesus born in Bethlehem, the Christ-child, came as a spiritual Saviour
 - c. to defeat our spiritual enemies the devil, his demons, depravity, dearth, disease, and “the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death” 1 Corinthians 15:26
 - d. Matthew 1:21, Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people from their sins
 - e. and spiritual salvation — eternal salvation — is His work, in the past, in the present, and in the future; for believers

- (A) have been saved from the penalty of sin
- (B) are being saved from the power of sin
- (C) will be saved from the presence of sin

F. Conclusion

1. sin has put benighted man into perpetual gloom and darkness
 - a. but “blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people”
 - b. this Jesus, this Christ-child, Zacharias prophesied, is going to enter into this world, Luke 1: 79 (NKJV):
“To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, To guide our feet into the way of peace.”
 - c. so what an invitation God gives to lost mankind!

2. in the words of Philip Paul Bliss
The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin—
The Light of the world is Jesus;
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in—
The light of the world is Jesus.

Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee!
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;
Once I was blind, but now I can see—
The light of the world is Jesus. —{2}.

3. This is the Jesus, the Light of the world, the Sunrise, the dawn a new day, the One who will, if you but let Him, change your life and your world
 - a. this is the One come “to guide our feet into the way of peace”
 - b. the One who will bring peace to your life
 - c. a peace that exists despite all appearance to the contrary, as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow describes in our closing carol, “I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day” [#196]

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick’s database are identified by “Holwick” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. “The Light of the World Is Jesus” by Philip Paul Bliss (1836–1876)