



**GOD THE REDEEMER AND THE MINISTRY OF
JOHN THE BAPTIST**

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Text: Luke 1:67-79

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I. INTRODUCTION

Luke 1:1-4: Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been **fulfilled among us**, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first **were eyewitnesses** and **servants of the word**. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent **Theophilus**, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. -NIV

Luke was not the disciple of Jesus as was John and Matthew. Thus, why he writes as an investigator of everything from the beginning of those things fulfilled among the people of his time “as they were handed down to us by those who from the first **were eyewitnesses** and **servants of the word**.” So, what Luke is accounting to us is a historical event, not a mere story that we like for a good night’s sleep.

The main aim of the preaching is to re-emphasize the purpose of Luke’s gospel that is “to know the things that have been **fulfilled** so that we may know the **certainty** of the things we have been taught.” In other words, to prove beyond any reasonable doubt that we are standing on the solid rock when it comes to our God and His promises not on sinking sand. As the word of God bears witness to the promises of God it also bears witness to the Character of God.

If anyway the word of God would not point to any fulfillment of the promises of God, then God would not be trusted at all. So, for those who are servants of the word as Luke says shows of those who have seen the word of God come true and labor to make known of the trustworthiness of the word of God pointing to the very character of God. Because God is trustworthy His word is also trustworthy.

With the prophecy of Zechariah, we are going to see how God fulfilled His word in the story of redemption. The prophecy can be divided into two major sections: *Introduction to who God is and His promises* and second, *The ministry of John the Baptist*

II. INTRODUCTION TO WHO GOD IS AND HIS PROMISES, HIS WORK

We are introduced to the person of the Holy Spirit as the one through whom men receive prophecy and also as the one who makes clear of what was said in the past. We are introduced to the truth that salvation is from “*the Lord, God of Israel*” and later John is said to go before the Lord, showing that it is the Lord, God who has come to redeem His people.

A. The ministry of the Holy Spirit

“*His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied (v. 67)*”:

Zechariah spoke after the word of the angel concerning John the Baptist was fulfilled. It is good to note from here that Zechariah's unbelief did not prevent the Lord, God from fulfilling what He promised a long time ago through His servants the prophets. This shows how God is sovereign over our unbelief. His promises of redemption are not dependent on us but wholly on God. And we are going to see this as we learn of our Faithful God.

Let us address the nature of the prophecy: It recalls the previous prophecies, confirming what is happening as the fulfillment of what the servants of God prophesied. This emphasizes how Luke addresses this gospel "things fulfilled among us." The ministry of the Holy Spirit shows:

- The faithfulness of God in His promises because of this, the Character of God brings hope to His people. We can trust Him.
- The word of God is trustworthy: we can trust the Lord when He has spoken

The Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of the prophets is truthful: His work is trustworthy throughout generations. Mic 3:8 "*But as for me, I am filled with power, with the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice and might, to declare to Jacob his transgression, to Israel his sin*" - NIV. He is the witness to the fulfillment of what was spoken. He makes clear what was spoken through the prophets, hence removing any man's interpretation of scripture.

B. The blessedness of God and His work of Salvation

68 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because He has come and has redeemed His people.

69 He has raised up a ***horn of salvation*** for us
in the house of his servant David

C.f Ps 18:2: The Lord is my rock,
my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take
refuge. He is my shield and the horn
of my salvation, my stronghold. -
NIV

Comment: v.68 The blessedness of God is what controls how we praise Him. I remember Mr. Lauger on this very subject of the blessedness of God. He emphasized how God from the abundance of His being discharges blessings to His creation.

Creation exists out of the will and pleasure of God. It is a gift to be made by God. It is a gift to be fed by God. In all His marvelous ways of providence, he gives us strength to work and even allows our labor to produce results and we rejoice because that has happened. Of those blessings, this one is the greatest "The Lord God has come and redeemed His people."

How has God come and redeemed His people? "He has raised up a ***horn of salvation*** for us in the house of his servant David." That is, He has brought salvation through the line of David.

Because of this praise and adoration are to be given to God. “Blessing or praising God is the way of acknowledging God with adoration (Kennedy Tembo)” which is what the word *Eulogetos*¹ used in the verse means

Not only do we acknowledge who God is we love Him for who is and delight that HE is like that.

Jamieson, Fausset, comment on Luke 1:69

v.69 “And hath raised up a horn of salvation for us - that is, a 'strength of salvation,' or 'a mighty salvation;' meaning the Saviour Himself, whom Simeon in his song calls "Thy Salvation" (Luke 2:30). The metaphor is taken from those animals whose strength lies in their horns, and was familiar in the Psalmody of the agricultural Jews, (Ps 132:17; 75:10; 18:2, etc.)”²

C. The Faithfulness of God to His promises

The following verses account the faithfulness of God by giving us a look at the promises of God given in the Old Testament each emphasizing that what the Holy Spirit is revealing through Zechariah is happening through the birth of John the Baptist and is going to be fulfilled through Jesus who has been announced to be carried by Mary (Luke 1:26-38).

70 (as He said through His holy prophets of long ago),

71 salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—

C.f: Ps 106:10: So He saved them from the hand of the one who hated them,
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. -NASU

Comment: The faithfulness of God is seen in the fulfillment of the salvation promised.
Knowing that the primary purpose of the first coming of Christ was to save us from our sins, faithful saints who have gone before us understand this passage as

¹ NT:2128 **eulogetos** (yoo-log-ay-tos'); from NT:2127; adorable: (Biblesoft's New Exhaustive Strong's Numbers and Concordance with Expanded Greek-Hebrew Dictionary. Copyright © 1994, 2003, 2006 Biblesoft, Inc. and International Bible Translators, Inc.)

² from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved

talking of salvation from sin, death, and the devil. Matthew Henry says, “Luke 1:67-80: it is a salvation from sin, and the dominion of Satan over us, both by corruptions within and temptations without. The carnal Jews expected to be delivered from under the Roman yoke, but intimation was betimes given that it should be a redemption of another nature. He shall *save his people from their sins*, that they may not have dominion over them, Matt 1:21.”³

Adam says, “As Zacharias spoke by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the salvation which he mentions here must necessarily be understood in a spiritual sense. Satan, death, and sin are the enemies from whom Jesus came to deliver us. Sin is the most dangerous of all, and is properly the only enemy we have to fear. Satan is without us, and can have no power over us, but what he gets through sin. Death is only in our flesh, and shall be finally destroyed (as it affects us) on the morning of the resurrection. Jesus redeems from sin; this is the grand, the glorious, the important victory. Let us get sin cast out, and then we need, fear neither death, nor the Devil.”⁴

D. The mercy of God in Salvation

72 to show mercy to our fathers
and to remember His holy covenant,

C.f: Mic 7:20: You will be true to Jacob, and show mercy to Abraham, as you pledged on oath to our fathers in days long ago.

Comment: The act of God bringing salvation is the act of mercy toward our fathers and the remembrance of His holy covenant. Talking of Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac.

³ from Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, PC Study Bible Formatted Electronic Database Copyright © 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All Rights reserved.

⁴ from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1996, 2003, 2005, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc. All rights reserved.

-NIV

This shows that even Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac do not deserve the very act that God has brought to fulfillment. The next verse helps us understand:

73 *the oath he swore to our father Abraham:*

C.f Gen 22:15-19: Then the angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, and said, " By Myself, I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing and have not withheld your son, your only son, indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore, and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. " In your seed, all the nations of the earth shall be blessed because you have obeyed My voice." -NASU

C.f Heb 6:13-14: For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, " I **WILL SURELY BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU.**" NASU

Comment: God swore an oath to Abraham that He will bring to pass what He has promised Him and Abraham has to trust God for that. As that was not enough, God demonstrated His commitment to this oath by putting Himself as one not to be trusted if anything fails concerning His promises, as many biblical scholars have noticed to be the point of Genesis 15:17 when God passed through the sacrifices. Even Genesis 12:1-3 points to the fact that God is fully responsible for blessing Abraham.

Gen 12:2-3 "I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse, and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." -NIV

This act of God of mercy was a serious issue to the writers of the New Testament that they made sure that they made it clear: John writes:

“For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him (John 3:17-18, NIV).”

2 Cor 5:17-20: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.” -NIV

The act of God remembering His Holy covenant stretches our thoughts on the

blessings reaching to the people of the world as God promised, “all the families of the earth will be blessed through you”

One of the visitors who came here at Ambassador International university mentioned a very profound statement concerning God’s remembering. He said, “when God remembers He acts”

74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without fear

75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

C.f Prov 1:7: The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline. -NIV

Comment: In **Isaiah 33:14-16** because of the terrifying judgment of God towards sinners and the godless, there is a cry “*Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?*”⁵

Isa 33:14-16: “The sinners in Zion are terrified;
trembling grips the godless:
"Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"”

The answer to the cry is this:

“**15** He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil — **16** this is the man who will dwell on the heights, whose refuge will be the mountain fortress.
His bread will be supplied, and water will not fail him.” -NIV

With this passage, we see that only the righteous person dwells with God. As Mr. Sandwell said during home Bible Study “God is not for sin.” In our verses 74-75, we notice that even when it comes to serving God, the necessary condition for serving

⁵ Lyengamuwa, “The Lord is the consuming fire,” accessed December 3, 2021, <https://elpislive.com/the-lord-is-a-consuming-fire/>

Him is holiness and righteousness. And the good news is that God is the one who makes us holy and righteous before Him as it is written, "to enable us to serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days (vv.74b-75)." **And this proclaims the Mercies of God toward us in salvation.** We were once a people that did not have a way to dwell with God but now we have a way through Christ the Lord. All our days us His children we have God with us. As it is said of the Messiah that He is God with us (Matthew 1:23)

III. THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

When we reach John and his ministry, we already have the background of who God is. Answering the question, who is He, whom John is going before? It is the Lord God faithful to His promises, Merciful and the redeemer of His people in whom we are called to put our hope as Jews and Gentiles.

76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,

C.f Mal 3:1

"Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. NASU

C.f. Luke 1:11-20

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to give him the name John. He will be a joy and delight to

Comment: John was chosen by God to be the prophet that goes before Him and prepare the way for Him. This work of preparing the way for the Lord is characterized with what the Angel said in the previous verses concerning John that:

1. Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to God
2. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous

The next verse 77 gives more clarity on this work of preparing the people ready for the Lord

you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, *for he will be great in the sight of the Lord.* He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and ***he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even from birth.***⁶ Many of the people of Israel will *he bring back to the Lord their God.* And *he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous — to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.*"⁷

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."

NIV

77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins,

C.f Jer 31:33-34: "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,"

Comment: specifically, what will bring people back to God and turn the hearts of the fathers to their children so that they

⁶Barnes, *Luke 1:15* [**Shall be filled with the Holy Ghost ...**] Shall be divinely designated or appointed to this office, and qualified for it by all needful communications of the Holy Spirit. To be "filled" with the Holy Spirit is to be illuminated, sanctified, and guided by his influence. In this place it refers:

1. To the divine intention that he should be set apart to this work, as God designed that Paul should be an apostle from his mother's womb, [Gal 1:15](#).

2. It refers to an actual fitting for the work from the birth by the influence of the Holy Spirit, as was the case with Jeremiah ([Jer 1:5](#)), and with the Messiah himself, [Ps 22:9-10](#).

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⁷ Mal 4:5-6 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. ⁶He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."-NIV

<p>declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34" "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." -NASU</p>	<p>are ready for the Lord is the knowledge of salvation. That through the forgiveness of God they can be reconciled to God.</p>
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78 because of the tender mercy of our God,
 by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven

C.f.; Mal 4:1-3

2 "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall. **3**"
 "You will tread down the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing," says the LORD of hosts.

NASU

Comment on Luke 1:76-79 concerning the rising sun

"This may mean either Christ Himself, as "the Sun of Righteousness" arising on a dark world (so Calvin, Beza, Grotius, de Wette, Olshausen, etc., understand it), or the glorious light which He sheds: the sense is the same."⁸

So, what we are learning here is that the Mercies of God have brought righteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord.

79 to shine on those living in darkness
 and in the shadow of death,
 to guide our feet into the path of peace."

C.f. Isa 9:1-2: Galilee of the Gentiles.
 The people who walk in darkness
 Will see a great light;
 Those who live in a dark land,
 The light will shine on them. -
 NASU

C.f. Isa 59:8: They do not know the way of peace, And there is no justice in their tracks;

⁸ (from Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary, Electronic Database. Copyright © 1997, 2003, 2005, 2006 by BibleSoft, Inc. All rights reserved.)

<p>They have made their paths crooked, Whoever treads on them does not know peace. NASU</p>	
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John the Baptist was Christ-centered: each of the four writers of the gospel faithfully points out how he did not miss his purpose as the servant of God. Beginning with Mathew, Mark, John who quotes Isaiah who said concerning John, "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him (Isiah 40:3, c.f Matt 3:3, Mark 1:3, John 1:23, NIV)."

He made known the greatness of the Messiah

John did not at any instance consider himself to be the Christ. He pointed people to the Messiah and how great the Messiah is, that he is not even worthy to carry His sandals: "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt 3:11-12, NIV

He made known that salvation is through belief in the Messiah

Speaking of His ministry in making known the salvation of the Lord Apostle John speaks of John in this way, "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29, NIV"

John 3:26-36

26 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan — the one you testified about — well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

27 To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven.

28 You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ but am sent ahead of him.' 29 The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. **30 He must become greater; I must become less.**

31 "The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. 32 He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. 33 The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. 34 For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. **36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."**

NIV

The Holy Spirit's ministry is Christ-centered and the men He raises as servants of God are also trained to be Christ-centered. Who else is to be proclaimed for the salvation of men if not Christ? How can we know God if not through Christ?

The work of the Holy Spirit is evident in our assemblies also when we are Christ-centered. We gather because of Christ (because of who He is and what He has done for us) and for Christ: For the praise of Christ, exalting Him in the midst of His congregation.

So, what should we think of John the Baptist? Well, he is the prophet of the Most High God, sent to go before the Lord Jesus Christ. **He is Not the Messiah, but the servant of the Messiah.**

Isaiah 40:3-5

A voice of one calling:

"In the desert prepare

the way for the LORD;

make straight in the wilderness

a highway for our God.

Every valley shall be raised up,

every mountain and hill made low;

the rough ground shall become level,

the rugged places a plain.

And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,

and all mankind together will see it.

For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

-NIV-

The Food For My Soul

Remember O you poor preacher, used as a vessel to display such glories of God you are unworthy to speak of, to Sanctify the Lord Jesus in your heart and before His people for this exalts the Lord Jesus and brings Joy to your soul