

Zechariahs Song Luke 1v67-79

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Preacher: Jonny Grant

[0 : 00] It's always a concern when the crush helper appears. I hope, I hope, I hope that they're all grand, they're grand.

That's alright. They are. In case anybody's panicking, they're fine. They're fine. So Luke chapter 1. And we're going to read verse 67 through to verse 79, which is another song. This time it's Zachariah's song.

So Luke chapter 1 verse 67, we'll read it. I'm going to pray and then we'll look at it in a little bit more detail. So starting at verse 67.

His father, so he's talking about John, John the Baptist. His father, Zachariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied.

[1 : 12] Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he said through his holy prophets of long ago.

So salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. To show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham.

To rescue us from the hand of our enemies and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

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. To give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.

Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.

[2 : 29] Well, that is Zachariah's song. Let's pray and ask for God's help as we seek to understand it and apply it to our lives.

Let's pray. Father God, thank you for the record of these songs written hundreds, two thousand years ago.

Written down for people like us today so that we can know the certain truth about Jesus Christ. His birth. But more importantly, what his birth means for us today. So Father, as we look at this ancient song, may it be like a new song in our hearts today.

And may this song truly make us a happy people. We ask this in Jesus' name.

[3 : 36] Amen. Got a question for us as we start. You don't have to shout it out, but just to think for yourself.

What makes you happy? What makes you happy? What will you have to get?

Or what will you have to change in your life to make you happy? Well, at the beginning of Luke's Gospel, we meet a variety of different people.

We meet Mary, Zachariah, the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna. And all of these different characters that we meet, all these people have two things in common.

First, they are all genuinely happy. People are singing songs of joy. Others burst into spontaneous praise.

[4 : 43] Some overflow with thankfulness. All these different characters are really happy. And the second thing they have in common is the source of their happiness.

All of them, in some way or another, have been told the good news that God's Messiah, Jesus, is to be born.

The announcement of Jesus' birth makes all these people happy. And so we're going to look at one of these songs that we have just read, Zachariah's song.

And as we listen to this song of praise, we too will discover what will make people like us truly happy. And before we get into the song, just a little bit of background.

Who is Zachariah? And who is he that he should sing this song? Well, at the beginning in chapter one, just into the first few verses, we're introduced to him there. We're told he's a priest.

[5 : 48] That he's married to Elizabeth. They're both well on in years. They have no children. They haven't been able to have children. But then an angel appears to Zachariah and says to him, you are going to have a son and you are to call him John.

He would later become known as John the Baptist. And he would have a special role. Ralph referred to it earlier on. That he will prepare the people for the coming of Jesus.

Zachariah's son would tell people about God's son, Jesus. And in response to all this wonderful news, Zachariah sings a song of joy.

So this whole song that we're going to look at, this outburst of praise, is all about how Jesus makes us truly happy people.

Three things we're going to look at from in this song that make us truly happy. Three words. Incarnation, redemption, and consummation.

[7 : 04] Incarnation, redemption, and consummation, or if you like, new creation. So first, the reality of the incarnation makes us truly happy.

Look at verse 68, the beginning of this song. It says, Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people.

The coming of Jesus into the world is the coming of God into the world. It's what theologians call the incarnation. God in human form.

Not kind of part man and part God, but 100% God and 100% man. And if we can grasp this, it's going to make us truly happy.

First, Jesus is God. Look at verse 76. Zachariah is singing and he's referring first to his own son, John.

[8 : 15] So he says, and you, my child, so, and you, John, will be called a prophet of who? A prophet of the Most High.

It's referring to Jesus. Now, the Most High is not that Jesus is the tallest. Oh, he's the Most High. It's a title. A title that was reserved for God alone.

One who had absolute power and supreme authority. So this is the creator of the universe, the ruler of all nations and all people, the sustainer of life, the provider of all that we have.

This is the greatness of God. You can't contain him and you can't control him. He is the Most High. And now this title has been given to Jesus, declaring that Jesus is God. And as we continue to read through Luke's Gospel, if you were to turn a few pages, you would see Jesus doing only what God could do.

[9 : 28] Controlling the forces of nature, healing the sick, raising the dead, conquering demons. Jesus is God come to us, introducing himself so that we can know him, love him, and enjoy him.

But Jesus is not just God. Jesus is fully human. Jesus' conception was supernatural by the Holy Spirit, but his birth was painfully natural.

He was born like every other baby. He ate and he slept and he cried. He grew and he developed and matured. He walked and he talked and he worked. Jesus was every bit human as you or I, experiencing pain and hardship, struggling with limitations and frustrations, but also enjoying friendships and laughter.

Jesus lived life as we live life. Jim Packer, a writer and author, put it like this.

God became a man. The divine son became a Jew. The almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child.

[11 : 10] And there was no illusion or deception in this. The babyhood of the son of God was a reality. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets.

Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as in the truth of the incarnation. You see, Jesus is both God and human.

And that means that Jesus is both powerful powerful, because he's God, and personal, because he's just like one of us.

He's powerful over your life. That means he can change you, he can transform you, he can take your fears and give you joy, he can take your brokenness and your hurts and bring healing.

But he's also personal in your life. That is, he understands all your struggles and frustrations, all the things that you go through in life.

[12:17] He walks with you in your suffering, he comforts you in your pain, and he wipes away your tears. But best of all, God did not wait for us to call out to him.

He came to us. God didn't wait to be invited into this chaotic world. He took the initiative and came to us in power and in person.

God, most high, now stooping so low to come to people like us.

You see, knowing and believing the reality of the incarnation, makes us happy. The personal and powerful God-man with us today.

So first, the reality of the incarnation makes us truly happy. Second, the plan of God's redemption makes us truly happy.

[13:27] You see, God became man for a reason. God came to us in Jesus for a purpose. Look at verse 68 again.

Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel. Why? Well, because he has come to his people to redeem them.

Whenever the Bible starts talking about redeeming or redemption, it means rescue and salvation. It implies a victory has taken place and liberty has now been given.

Victory over enemies and liberty to live a new way. So think back to the story of the Exodus in the Old Testament. God intervening, a rescue, bringing victory, defeating enemies, and setting people free so they can live a new way.

That is what God has done for people like us. First, let's look at Jesus' victory. Verse 69, it says, God has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David.

[14:46] So he was to come from the kingly line of David, as he had said or as he had promised through the holy prophets. hearts. Now when it talks about the horn of salvation, just think for a moment of the horn on an animal, like a ram or a bull.

The horn of an animal is its strength and power. With the use of its horn, it fights and goes into battle. So when God says he's raising up a horn, he's saying, in Jesus, here is one who has come in power and in strength, who's going to fight and go into battle for you.

A battle, verse 71, that will mean salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us. Now Zachariah, as he was singing this song, he knew who the enemy was.

He lived in a land where the Roman authorities had invaded and taken over. The might of Rome was, if you like, holding people like Zachariah and others captive in their own country.

They needed liberated. They needed set free. And at long last, it seemed God had come to defeat the enemy. But as Zachariah goes on to prophesy, the salvation that God had promised was not what they expected and perhaps not what we expected.

[16:27] So we actually get to see what that salvation is if we look down again at verse 76. So Zachariah praises and he says, and you, my child, and you, John, will be called a prophet of the Most High, that's Jesus, for you will go before the Lord to prepare the way for him.

To do what? Verse 77. To give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. You see, the salvation, the liberation that God was going to bring was primarily against our most fierce enemy, sin and Satan.

salvation. And as we read through Luke's gospel, we see Jesus going into battle as Jesus begins to forgive people their sins and as he overthrows the powers of Satan.

Jesus comes into the world and confronts our enemy head on. But what we see taking place in Luke at the beginning are just like little skirmishes, little battles taking place because the final battle will take place at the cross as Jesus is crucified.

And Jesus goes into that battle not armed with swords and spears, but in weakness and humility, taking upon himself the sin of people like you and me.

[18:07] And he surrenders himself to the cross and dies in our place. The judgment falls on him. But this is no defeat.

This is God's plan of redemption. This is God's victory for people like you and me. Look at how Paul says it in Colossians.

These are great verses that explain the victory that has taken place as Christ died. Look how it starts. For in Christ all the fullness of the deity lives in bodily form.

That's the incarnation. All of God in Christ, in bodily form. And he is the head over every power and authority.

That means he's over Satan, over every evil power that may exist. and he forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us. [19 : 20] He has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, disarming Satan, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

You see, at the cross, Jesus defeated our greatest enemy and greatest power, sin and Satan. So now there is no more condemnation.

There is no more accusation because Christ has dealt with it all. He went into battle for us. He crushed our enemies. He destroyed their hold over us.

Jesus is victorious and we today can share in that same victory. But not only is it victory, it also means our liberty.

Look at verse 74. Jesus came to rescue us from the hand of our enemies and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

[20 : 41] You see, without God intervening, sin and Satan are like evil tyrants that rule over us, enslaving us to our own selfish and destructive desires, ruining our lives and breaking our world.

world. We couldn't resist him. We just obeyed him continually. They held us captive and we surrendered willingly.

But now through Jesus we have been redeemed, set free. We've been set free from our enemies. Liberty is now ours.

The victory is ours. And we can now go and serve the purposes of God. we're no longer held back by crippling guilt and shame. But now we can live as God's loved and treasured children, belonging to him, part of his family, filled and equipped with his Holy Spirit.

We no longer have to sin. We no longer have to go against God. We've been set free and empowered by God to live as God's people in the world today.

[21 : 55] This is what makes us truly happy. The incarnation, God becoming man, but becoming man so that he would redeem us, give us victory, set us free to be a new kind of people.

But there's another reason for our happiness. The promised consummation makes us truly happy. Look down at the end, or sorry, look at the beginning of the song again in verse 68.

It says, Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel. Why? Because he has come to his people. So the song starts by saying, God has come.

But look at the end of the song, verse 78. because of the tender mercy of our God by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven.

So God has come in the past, in Christ, and it's saying that God will come again in the future.

[23 : 13] The second coming of Jesus will bring about the consummation of all things, consummation, big word I know, but it simply means the fulfilment or the conclusion of God's redemptive plan.

All that God is doing in history, all that he is doing through his son, has one goal, one end, and that is to bring about the fullness and the completeness of God's salvation, where all things are going to be renewed and restored.

let's look at them in part. First, the renewal of all things. Look at verse 78.

Because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven, to shine on those living in darkness, and in the shadow of death.

darkness is a great way to describe the world that we live in. All the mess and all the chaos that we see and experience is a darkness that covers the world.

[24 : 29] Disease, disorder, and death surround us every day. The world and its people, as it says to us in verse 79, are living in darkness.

we live in a chaotic and broken world. But the promise is that Jesus is going to come again, and like a light, will banish the darkness.

darkness. I love the scene in Tolkien's The Two Towers. You'll probably see it on one of the channels over Christmas.

Well, in The Two Towers, there's a battle that takes place in a valley called Helm's Deep. So, picture this enormous, great, rocky gorge, a valley, and it's dark.

And the evil armies of Saruman are marching against King Theoden. Ten thousand and more demon-looking orcs are relentlessly marching against the king who just has a few hundred fighting men.

[25 : 41] And just as defeat looks imminent, Gimli turns to the king and says, do you remember the words? The sun is rising and with that the king remembers the words of Gandalf.

Look to my coming. At first light on the fifth day, at dawn look to the east. And as they all turn and look to the east, there above this dark valley is Gandalf.

in blazing glorious light. And with a thunderous roar, he charges down the hill into the deep darkness below, blinding the enemy with the brightness, destroying the darkness and defeating the enemy.

Well, we too are to be people who are on the lookout, who are waiting for the coming of that light from heaven.

One day the risen Lord Jesus is going to come again into this world in glorious light. Like the sun that rises in the morning, he will banish the darkness of evil forever and ever and ever and Satan and his dominions and all his followers will scurry into the pit of hell itself.

[27 : 16] look for the coming of that light. Not only is there renewal, there is restoration.

Look at verse 79. He will come from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death to guide our feet into the path of peace.

When the Bible talks about peace, it conjures up two ideas. On the one hand, it means the absence of evil and suffering and trouble.

Picture a world like that, of no evil, no suffering, no trouble. but it's more than that. It also means wholeness and restoration, joyful, flourishing life, things bursting into bloom.

The Hebrew word for that peace is shalom. And speaking of that eternal, final peace, one writer put it like this, evil will be destroyed and creation will explode into fullness and beauty.

[28 : 45] That's the peace that we can look forward to. Evil will be destroyed and creation itself will explode into fullness and beauty.

And to find our way to enable us to get there, to be able to experience that peace in all its fullness, us. Look at the end of verse 79. He will guide our feet into the path of peace.

That light is the person of Jesus who has come to us and who now dwells within his people by his Holy Spirit.

God in us. God who has redeemed us. given us victory and liberty over sin and Satan so that we might walk with him, so that he might walk with us and take us through the darkness of this world, shining the light onto our path and onto our life and bringing us through this life into peace itself. death. And not even death will be able to keep its hold upon us. Nothing in all creation, not even death, not even the demons, nothing at all will be able to keep us from that path of bringing us to that eternal home.

[30 : 17] the new creation awaits. The renewal and restoration will come just as sure as Christ came 2,000 years ago.

So God will come at a time that he has planned and he will come again. Look for the light. Watch out for his coming for he will come.

The promise of the consummation makes us truly happy. Let me ask you again what we asked at the very beginning.

What makes you a happy person? What will you have to get this Christmas to make you happy? What gift would you long for?

What would you have to change in your life to make you happy? Well in this song we have everything we need that will make us eternally happy.

[31 : 30] The incarnation God coming to us in Christ now dwelling in our lives by his spirit.

Redemption from sin and the powers of Satan and the glorious peace shalom the consummation that awaits all this because of Jesus.

Sing the song fill your hearts with this song and you will have a very happy Christmas. us.

Let's pray together. Father we thank you for every gift that we have received from you.

Our health and strength the friends and the family that are with us here this day. The work that you've provided for us.

The resources and the money that we have to be able to buy gifts and presents for other people. All of this comes from you and we are thankful for everything.

[32 : 55] And yet when we sing this song nothing compares to the wonder of the amazing gift of Jesus Christ the incarnation God coming to people like us to redeem us to set us free to live a completely new way of life so that we can all look forward to our eternal home the new creation the home of peace thank you so much for Jesus thank you so much for his gift to us in Jesus name we all pray amen me for one go the same too high grave north

Lord him in on Avec very beaten him money