

Zechariah's Song

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[0 : 00] Let's begin with reading of the scripture. Please take your Bibles and turn to Luke chapter 1. We're going to read the account of the birth of John the Baptist and Zechariah's song.

Luke chapter 1, verse 56, we're going to read through the end of the chapter. And you remember that Mary had gone and visited Elizabeth and had stayed.

And this is verse 56. Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son.

Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy and they shared her joy. On the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child and they were going to name him after his father, Zechariah.

But his mother spoke up and said, no, he has to be called John. They said to her, there's no one among your relatives who have that name. Then they made signs to his father to find out what he would like to name the child.

[1 : 12] He asked for a writing tablet and to everyone's astonishment, he wrote, his name is John. And immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed and he began to speak, praising God.

The neighbors were all filled with awe. And throughout the hill country of Judea, people were talking about all these things. Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, what then is this child going to be?

For the Lord's hand was with him. His father, Zechariah, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people.

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, salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, to show mercy to our fathers 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 and 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 : 58] And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he lived in the desert until he appeared publicly to Israel. It does seem that the Lord has given us new babies around this time of the year.

We've had some that have arrived and others that are coming. Ben and Allie Carlson had a little girl this week. Choosing the name of your baby can be a challenge.

I wonder how many of you were named after a relative in your family, maybe your first name or your middle name, or you named one of your children after a relative.

Can I see your hands and just hold them up? Oh, wow. Very good. I, too, was named after both my great-grandfathers. So you and I can understand all the fuss, then, that was made about the name of Zechariah and Elizabeth's boy that we've read of this morning.

The friends and relatives, it sounds like, were the ones that were just about to name him John. I don't know what that's all about, letting friends and neighbors name them.

[4 : 18] But Elizabeth objected. No, his name is, he's to be called John. But you don't have any relatives by that name, they said.

And Mary would not back down, so they asked the father. And you remember, Zechariah was unable to speak. He hadn't spoken for nine months, because when the angel Gabriel announced the birth of the baby to him and his old and barren wife, he didn't believe the message. And so he's been unable to speak. And so he wrote on a tablet, his name is John. In other words, he already has a name. God named him.

God named him before he was even conceived in the womb. That's the end of the matter. It's not up for grabs. And the name John means a gift of God's grace.

And what a fitting name, as God is bringing the forerunner of his Savior into the world. The whole mission is all of grace.

[5 : 26] And immediately, Zechariah's tongue was loosed. And the first thing he did when his speech was restored was to praise the Lord.

What are we doing with our ability to speak? What have we come today to do? To praise the Lord with our tongues.

Well, during these four Lord's Days of December, we're looking at four songs surrounding the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Last week, we saw Mary's song and how she magnified the Lord.

For the mighty one has done great things for me. Amazing things. Things, impossible things. He stooped so low.

To a poor, humble virgin like me. And made it so that me as a virgin might supernaturally conceive and give birth to the Messiah.

[6 : 27] And so she magnifies the Lord. Now today we come to Zechariah's song. What we read is as he has just given the name to this, another impossible birth of a son to him and his barren wife, Elizabeth, in their old age.

Now the song divides neatly into two stanzas. Luke 1, 68 to 75, and then verses 76 to 79. And in the Greek, each one of those stanzas is just one long sentence.

So what is Zechariah's song about? Well, we might naturally think that his song would be about his son John, right?

But no, it's not. To be sure, his son is addressed in the second stanza, but only to point to the wonder of Mary's greater son.

And in that, we see the same spirit in John's father as we will later see in John himself. You remember when John's followers started to leave him and started following Jesus, and some of his jealous followers says, look, they're leaving you and going over to Jesus.

[7 : 39] And John says, he must increase and I must decrease. It's all about him. That's why I've come, to point you to him.

And we see that spirit even here in Zechariah, his father. John's birth and role in the drama of salvation is all about Christ.

In fact, you can't even define John without mentioning Christ. Who's John the Baptist? Well, he's the forerunner of Christ, right?

So it's kind of like some of you men. Who are you? Well, you're the husband of, you know. So you're defined by that other important woman in your life.

So John is defined by Christ. He's the forerunner of Christ. And his song then, this song of his father, Zechariah, glories in that fact.

[8 : 36] And it's a song then not so much about his son as it is about Mary's greater son. Who he is and why he's come. So who is this son of Mary to be born?

Well, number one, he's the divine redeemer of God's people. Notice verse 68. Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and redeemed his people.

It's put in the past tense, what scholars call the prophetic past tense. It's so certain to happen that it's spoken of as if it had already happened. That he has redeemed.

He has come and has redeemed his people. It was right then. This redemption was right then. Beginning. A redeemer is one who sets people free.

Now, this was not the first time God had come to redeem his people. When Israel was in bondage in Egypt, God appeared at the burning bush to Moses and said, I've seen the misery of my people in Israel.

[9 : 42] I've heard their cries and I'm concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians.

I have come down to rescue them. So this isn't the first time God's come down from heaven to rescue his people from their enemies. But all those earlier times were pointing to this time. This is the great redemption to which all the other redemptions pointed. They were shadows and types. This is the real thing. This is what the whole story of the Bible is about. So in a unique way, for the first time, it was indeed the Lord, the God of Israel, who literally came in Jesus Christ. He came.

God came in Christ to redeem his people. He is Emmanuel. God with us. With us to redeem us. And so Mary's son is the divine redeemer.

[10:48] Come to set God's people free. We might call him the great chain breaker. To break the bonds of the chains that held them in captivity.

So he's the great divine redeemer. Secondly, he's our strong salvation. Or if you'd like, he's the horn of salvation. Verse 69.

He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David. Now this horn is not a thanksgiving horn of plenty. Don't think of that.

This horn is not a trumpet. Don't think of that kind of horn. This horn is the horn of a wild ox or a bull. It's a symbol of strength. Now you might look at the horn of a bull and say, this doesn't look like anything strong.

[11:49] But let that horn be backed up by a thousand pound bull. And you begin to understand why the horn is made a symbol of strength in the Bible.

The entire strength of that half-ton beast is concentrated on that horn. Do you get the point? You don't want to feel the point.

That's the strength of the bull, of the wild ox. Bringing all of its strength to bear upon that horn. The horn is a symbol of strength.

After the Lord had delivered David from all of his enemies, Saul and all the rest, he sang this song of praise in Psalm 18. He, the Lord, is my shield, the horn of my salvation.

He, the Lord, all of his power is concentrated in this horn who is my salvation.

[12:54] The Lord is my salvation, David says. And so God had promised David a powerful son who would be a king, who would reign upon his throne and over his kingdom forever.

And long after David was dead, the prophet Ezekiel prophesied in chapter 29, 21, on that day I will make a horn grow for the house of Israel.

A horn to grow. That's a messianic title given to this son to be born to Mary. He is the horn.

He's our strong salvation in the line of David. Mighty to save, as verse 71 says. Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us.

And we'll see a bit later just who those enemies are that Christ has come to save us from. So he's this redeemer, this chain breaker.

[13:51] He's a iron or a horn of salvation, a strong savior. And then thirdly, he's the great promise keeper. Verse 70 tells us that Mary's son is the fulfillment of the prophet's words of long ago.

How long ago? Well, way back in Genesis 3, 15, when Adam and Eve had first sinned, God made a promise long ago that he would raise up the seed of the woman to crush the head of the serpent.

And century after century, the Lord's prophets had been saying, a redeemer is coming, a redeemer is coming to set you free. The Old Testament gives something like four to five hundred different promises about the Messiah king who is coming.

I just want to give you one besides what I've just given. But Jeremiah 23, 5 and 6. The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will raise up to David a righteous branch, a king who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land.

And in his days, Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called, the Lord, our righteousness. Again, these prophets from long ago were speaking of this one who would come and keep those promises that God had been making.

[15:24] Generation after generation, living through dark times of God's judgment upon the nation because of their sins. And nevertheless, a remnant had hoped kept alive by these prophets who kept saying, he's coming, he's coming, he's coming.

And now at last, Zechariah can say he has come to redeem his people as their strong salvation. So Mary's son is the great promise keeper. And that includes his covenant promise to Abraham.

You see in verse 72, to show mercy to our fathers, to remember his covenant, the oath he swore to our father Abraham to rescue us from our enemies.

This covenant with Abraham meant a whole lot more to the first century Christians than I think it does to us. Mary quoted it as well, you remember, in her song in verses 54 and 55. And it's important for us to understand what is so important about this oath-sworn covenant to Abraham. Well, let me read one of the places where the promise is recorded in Genesis 22, after Abraham has just about offered, and in the mind of God had offered his son, his only son, Isaac, on the altar.

[16:48] The Lord said to him, I swear by myself, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies.

Galatians 3.16 points out the singularity of that word.

And your seed, not meaning many, but one who is Christ. Galatians 3.16. And through that one seed, all the nations of the earth will be blessed.

And so it's through Christ that Father Abraham has many sons and daughters. For if you belong to Christ, the seed of Abraham, then you too are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise. Galatians 3.29. Now we see why God points to the stars and he points to the sand. We are the stars.

[17:57] We are the sand, you see, who are in Christ and being in Christ, this seed of Abraham. We are the fulfillment of this salvation coming to all the nations.

Well, you see, he's the Mary's son. He's God coming to keep his oath-bound promise and covenant to Abraham. He's the great promise keeper. And that just reminds from these prophecies of long ago.

And it just reminds us that our Old Testaments are all about Mary's son. If you find the Old Testament boring, you're missing the key. All that the prophets said was said about this coming son.

It's about Jesus. And if we miss Jesus in the Old Testament, we've missed the main character. He's the great promise keeper of all these promises that were made long ago.

And then lastly, he's not only the chain-breaking redeemer, the strong horn of salvation, the promise keeper. He is, fourthly, the service enabler. Verses 74 and 75.

[19:01] He's come 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.

Mary's son rescues us to enable us to serve him. Do you see that? That means that we've been saved to serve.

Have you considered that God's aim in saving you is to free you from your enemies in order that you might serve him instead?

And to serve him without fear. Now, we cannot serve him without fear unless we're saved from our sins. Unless we're saved from the coming wrath of God.

Unless we're saved from death with all of its sting. We can't serve God without fear unless he first rescues us and saves us from our sins so that we're at peace with God.

[20:06] And so Hebrews 9.14 says that's exactly why this son of Mary has been born. The blood of Christ cleanses our consciences from acts that lead to death.

That's sin. So that. Why does he cleanse us from acts that lead to death? So that we may serve the living God. The purpose for which he saved us is that we may no longer serve our sin.

But that we might serve the one who has saved us from our sin. And we can only do that without fear. If our consciences are cleansed from sin.

That's what the blood of Jesus does. So Revelation 1 says to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood. And has made us to be a kingdom and priest to serve his God and Father.

You know how the Bible ends? It ends with his servants serving him. Interesting. Those he's redeemed and rescued and been a strong salvation for.

[21:12] How do they spend eternity? Revelation 22. Revelation 22. The last chapter of the Bible. Verse 3. Takes us into the new Jerusalem. Of the new heavens and the new earth.

No longer will there be any curse. Therefore no more fear you see. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city. And his servants will serve him.

His servants will serve him. You remember God had charged Adam with the task of filling the whole earth. With God's image bearers.

Who would serve him in holiness and righteousness. All their days. Well he failed in that task. But God didn't give up on his aim for creating a world.

And creating mankind. And so now. God himself comes. To redeem these sinners. And to do what Adam failed to do.

[22 : 11] And here we are at the very end. And what do we find? Sure enough. Here's God's perfected people. Reflecting his image. Throughout the whole new world. And in all that they do.

They are doing it in service. And worship. To God. In his presence. Before him. All our days. So Mary's son will save us.

And so. Thereby enable us. To serve him forever. That's stanza one. And it's all about Mary's son. Stanza two. Begins with Zechariah.

Speaking to his infant. Son John. Can't you just see. Zechariah holding him in his arms. And now he looks into his face. And he. He's going to.

Tell him his role. What his role will be. In this great redemption. Of God's people. That he's just spoken of. And you my child. You will be called a prophet.

[23 : 08] 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.

So let's. Unpack that. Let's. Let's. See. What is the role. Of John the Baptist. As he is later called. This John. Of Zechariah.

And Elizabeth. Well first of all. He's a prophet. Of the most high. You see that. A prophet. Of the most high. What an honor. To be a prophet. Of the most high.

A chosen mouthpiece. To receive. The very words. Of God himself. And then to. Announce it. To his people. And so.

After 400 years. Without a prophet. There is no word. From God. John. They didn't want. God's word. So now. They've got a famine. For the hearing.

[24 : 03] Of God's word. No prophet. For 400 years. And. And then one day. A voice. In the wilderness. The prophet. John.

Bringing to Israel. The word. From heaven. He's a prophet. Of the most high. But secondly. He's the forerunner. Of the Lord himself. This one. Who's coming. To redeem his people.

He's called. To go before him. And to prepare. The way for him. Jesus. Will later. Say to the crowd. About John. In Matthew 11.

What did you go out. Into the wilderness. To see. A prophet. Yes. I tell you. And more. Than a prophet. So yes. He's a prophet. Of the most high.

But he's more. Than a prophet. This is the one. About whom. It is written. I will send. My messenger. Ahead of you. Who will prepare. Your way. Before you.

[24 : 58] Jesus is quoting. Those words. In Malachi. Chapter 3. In verse 1. In which the father. God the father. Speaks to his son. And says. I'm going to send. My messenger. To go before you.

To prepare the way. In front of you. You see. All the prophets. Said of God's. Messiah king. He's coming. He's coming. And John 2.

Would say. He's coming. But he was the last. Of all the old testament. Prophets. And had the unique. Privilege. Of introducing. The Messiah.

To Israel. To actually say. To Israel. He has come. To redeem his people. There he is. Behold. The lamb of God.

Who takes away. The sin of the world. Now. This idea. Of a forerunner. To go before. The king. To prepare the way.

[25 : 52] For him. Was something. That was. Common. And familiar. To the nations. As a king. Was coming. To a certain. Town.

A forerunner. Would. Do just that. Run before him. And run into the town. And gather the people. And make sure. That they gave a warm welcome.

To their king. When he arrived. That's a forerunner. He runs before. You thought. It was a Toyota. No. It's. It's. It was. Named after.

Someone. That ran before the king. To make sure. The people were ready. To receive him. When he did arrive. That's John. That's his role. The angel Gabriel.

Had told this to Zechariah. About his son. He said. In verses. 16 and 17. Many of the people. Of Israel. Will he bring back. To the Lord. Their God. And he will go on. Before the Lord.

[26 : 47] In the spirit. And power of Elijah. To turn the hearts. Of the fathers. To their children. In the disobedient. To the wisdom. Of the righteous. To make ready. A people. Prepared for the Lord. You see. He's to prepare them. For the coming king. Jesus. And to point them. To him. That was the prophecy. Of Malachi. 4. Verses 5 and 6.

That Gabriel. The angel. Quoted. To Zechariah. About his son. And you remember. Isaiah 40. That voice. In the wilderness. Sent to prepare.

The way. For the Lord. Again. Pointing him. Out. As the forerunner. So how does. John fulfill. His role. As the forerunner. Of the coming.

Son of. Mary. The coming king. And this is crucial. I want you to notice. What Zechariah says. In verse 77. This is how John. Will prepare the people.

[27 : 43] For the coming king. By giving them. The knowledge. Of salvation. Through the forgiveness. Of their sins. How does he prepare. The people for Christ.

By giving them. The knowledge. Of salvation. Through the forgiveness. Of sins. That's the gospel. Friends. That's the gospel. Plain and simple. And there's not. A single word here.

About political salvation. From Rome. About. A king. Coming to free us. From an oppressive government.

For nearly. 700 years. They've been under the heel. Of oppressive governments. From Assyria. And Babylon. The Medes. The Persians. The Greeks. And now the Romans.

And how popular. Was the. This. This idea. That Messiah. Is going to come. And drive. Every. Infidel. Out of Jerusalem. And bring the world.

[28 : 41] To bow to us. Here and now. The religious leaders. Were thinking that way. The common people. Were looking for such a king. To come. And yes. The gospels reveal.

That even the 12 disciples. Took a long time. To shed themselves. Of that idea. Of the coming Messiah. And the mission. That Christ.

Was on. In his first coming. King. And that's why. John's role. Of preparing. The people. Was absolutely. Necessary.

They weren't ready. To receive the king. And the salvation. That he was bringing. They were ignorant. Of the true knowledge. Of salvation. They didn't even know.

What they needed. To be saved from. They didn't even know. The enemy. That he had come. To free them from. They thought. It was Rome. And John says. No.

[29 : 37] It's your sins. You sinned. Against the king. Most high. And your sins. Have been your downfall. Your sins. Have separated you. From God. Your sins.

Condemn you. As guilty. And deserving. Of God's unending wrath. And it's that. Knowledge of salvation. Begins. With the right. Understanding. Of our greatest enemy.

You need to know. Why. You need Christ. Why do I need this. Son of Mary. This coming king. I need him. Because I'm a sinner. And only he is able.

To set me free. And to save me. From my sins. And church. Hear me. How easy it is. In these days. For the church.

To forget. What it is. To be the church. The church. Of Jesus Christ. How easy it is. To be drawn. Away from our task. Of proclaiming.

[30 : 33] The gospel. And making disciples. And baptizing them. Into local churches. And teaching them. To obey. Everything that Christ commands. Because that's how. He rules.

Over his people. By them serving him. Keeping his holy. And righteous commandments. Easy to be drawn. Away from that task. And instead. To think that our greatest.

Need. Is to be freed. From an oppressive government. Yes. As private citizens. You have a responsibility. To the government. And concerns. For those who rule you.

But let the church. Be the church. Let the church. Not trade. Her mission. That Jesus. Left her with. As he left this earth. But be busy.

About our master's business. Of offering salvation. Through the forgiveness. Of sins. That's the knowledge.

[31 : 27] Of salvation. That our world. Desperately needs to hear. Even as. John's world. Desperately needed. Our world. Still thinks. The greatest problem. That they have.

Is an oppressive government. Or the economy. Or racial prejudice. Or our health crisis. Or education. Or any other. Half dozen things. That these are the things.

That we need to be. Saved from. Extricated. Out of. We must tell them. They're just symptoms. Of the greatest problem. Of sin.

S-I-N. That's the problem. And that's why. The king is coming. Are you ready. To receive him. He's coming. To save you.

And to save you. From your sins. If it's a salvation. Through the forgiveness. Of sins. Then it's a salvation. By grace. And not by merit.

[32 : 21] Isn't it? If the salvation. That the king's bringing. Is forgiving sin. It's not something. Based on. Who we are. And what we've done. It's.

It's based on. God. Forgiving the debt. And if God. Forgives the debt. That means. He absorbs. The debt. Himself. The debt.

Has to be paid. And if he's not. Going to require you. To pay it. But he's going to forgive you. He's going to have to. Take that debt. Upon himself. Justice must be served. The debt. Must be paid. And he absorbs the debt. He pays the debt. Himself. The Messiah. King. Bringing salvation. Will pay the full debt. For sin. That we might be forgiven.

The debt. And that's why. God's redeemer. Has come. To free us. From our enemies. And that's why. The strong savior. From David's line. Is here.

[33 : 15] To save us. From our sins. And that's why. The promised seed of Abraham. Comes to bring blessing. And this is how. He brings blessing. To all the nations. Of the world. And that's why.

When John. The forerunner. Introduces him. To Israel. He says. Behold. The lamb of God. Who takes away. The sin. Sin.

Of the world. That's our enemy. That's your enemy. Sin. Is the problem. And the lamb of God. Is the only solution. As we sang. Earlier. Mary's son.

That lamb of God. Who takes away sin. And forgives it. By paying for it. Himself. Who lays down his life. That we might have. The free gift. Of eternal life. And by the way.

That's why. Mary's son. Is given the name. Jesus. Not because. Mary was always. Fond of that name. And said someday. When I have a boy. I want to name him. Jesus. Not because.

[34 : 13] There was some. Jesus. Relative. Of Joseph. And he thought. It would be nice. To name him. Jesus. No. They named him. Jesus. Because he was already. Given that name.

By his father. You'll give him. The name Jesus. Because he'll save. His people. From their sins. That's the enemy.

That's the enemy. And Israel. And Israel. Was missing the boat. All together. Rome was the enemy. In their mind. No.

It's. It's your sin. It's your sin. And so. My child. You will be.

Called a prophet. Of the most high. For you will go. Before. The Lord. The Lord. The Lord himself. To prepare the way. For him. By giving the people.

[35 : 09] The knowledge of salvation. Through the forgiveness. Of sins. So what did John's gospel. Or John. God's prophet. John. Say to Israel.

This would be. Just a check. Have we rightly. Understood. What Zechariah meant. Well. Let's. Let's see. What. What did John. Say when he came. How did he prepare.

The people. And. Thankfully. We're given that. In the gospels. What John said. Was only. In everything. That God told him. To say. That was the role. Of a prophet. To hear the word of God. And to declare it.

To the people. And what he told. The people. Was what. Zechariah. Here says. The knowledge of salvation. Through the forgiveness. Of sins.

So in Luke chapter 3. You're there in chapter 1. Just turn over to 3. In verse 2. During the high priesthood. Of Annas and Caiaphas. The word of God. Came to John.

[36 : 03] Son of Zechariah. In the desert. Let us see the prophet. Now. Receiving the word of God. It wasn't something. In his own mind. This was the very word. Of the living God.

Came to John. And what is he then. Announced to the people. Verse 3. He went into all the country. Around the Jordan. Preaching a baptism. Of repentance. For the forgiveness. Of sins. Salvation. That comes through. The forgiveness.

Of sins. Repent. For the kingdom. Of heaven. Is at hand. Is the summary. Of John's preaching. Heaven's king.

Has come. Turn from your sins. Receive him. As your lord and savior. Bow before his rule. Obey his laws. And that's the very same message.

[36 : 58] That Jesus himself. And his prophet. His apostles. That he sent out. Preached. The knowledge of salvation. That unless you repent. You too. Will all likewise perish. But if you repent. You will be forgiven. Of your sins. Luke's account. Shows how unprepared. The nation was. To receive their king. There in chapter 3.

Some of the crowd. Came to receive. The sign of repentance. Which was baptism. The outward sign. Of that inward repentance. And John saw. That this was nothing but. An excited group. Out to take the sign. But the no. There was no inward reality. Of repentance. And so he. He challenges them. Who warned you. To flee from the coming wrath. Produce fruit. In keeping with. Repentance. Chapter 3. 7 and 8. Others were leaning on their heritage. And their bloodline. That we're. We can trace our ancestry.

[37 : 51] Back to. Abraham himself. And. And John says. Don't you even. Begin to think about. Talking about. Abraham. As your father. God is able.

From these stones. To raise up children. To himself. No. Salvation. The forgiveness. The forgiveness of sins. Doesn't come. From being. A child.

In a Christian home. By being a Jew. A descendant. Of Abraham. It comes by being. Attached. To Jesus Christ. By faith. And repentance.

Isaiah 59. 20. The redeemer. Will come to Zion. To those in Judah. Who repent. Of their sins. So yes. We have rightly seen. That the great enemy. Is indeed sin.

And Mary's song. Is the only remedy. To escape. God's wrath. For sin. It's the knowledge. Of salvation. That they needed. That our world needs. Repent.

[38 : 46] And believe. And receive. The forgiveness. Of sins. As the free gift. Of this. King. This strong savior. This redeemer. That's not the message.

Israel wanted to hear. But that's the message. They needed to hear. And it's precisely. The need of our nation. And our world today. So back to. Father Zechariah. Holding baby John.

In his arm. The reason. This savior. Is coming. To offer salvation. Through the forgiveness. Of sins. Is verse 78. Because of the tender. Mercy of God. By which the rising sun.

Will come to us. From heaven. You see. For Zechariah. It's not enough. To say that this salvation. And forgiveness. Of sins. Is coming to us. Due to the mercy. Of God. No.

It's the tender. Mercy. Of God. The savior. Is the outflow. Of the heart. Of God. Which is. Tender.

[39 : 42] Mercies. Mercy. Is one thing. Give thanks for it. But. Tender. Mercies. Tender. Mercy. That's what.

Wells up. In the heart of God. And sends. The savior. Into this world. His own. Tender. Mercy. Have you tasted. The tenderness.

Of God's mercy. Haven't you found him. Gentle. Tender. In heart. Toward the end of his life.

I was. Helping dad. Clean up. And bathe. And. Was washing his ears. One time. He had big ears. And he. He. He told me.

You know. My mother used to scrub them. With a wash rag. It's like sandpaper. But if I went and stayed with my cousin. My aunt would wash them.

[40 : 39] And she was so tender. So tender. Do you know. The tender mercies. Of God. To not treat you. As your sins deserve.

To not repay you. According to what your iniquities. Should have coming. Have you tasted that. Has it melted you. That's the heart of God. That overflowed.

And sent this. Baby. In Mary's womb. Into the world. What a name. Then. For. The son of God. She. He says. The tender mercy.

Was the fountain in God. That welled up. And overflowed. In the rising sun. Coming to us. From heaven. What a name. The rising sun. The day spring.

You're up in the morning. It's pitch black. And then the rising sun. Brings light. Verse 79. To shine on those living in darkness.

[41 : 34] And in the shadow of death. To guide our feet. Into the path of peace. This was the condition of the world. Into which. The rising sun. Came to us from heaven. Living in darkness.

And in the shadow. Of death. Words taken from Isaiah. Eight and nine. Only distress. And darkness. And deepest gloom. So there we were.

Making our way through a dark. And dangerous world. With the very shadow of death. Itself hanging over us. That would lead to eternal. Second death.

Many hidden traps. And many enemies. Lying devils. And worst of all. Our own sins. And the wrath of a holy God. Because of them. And never more than one step away. From eternal torments. In outer darkness. We were groping in the dark. The scriptures say. Blinded. Living in darkness. It's sin and gloom.

[42 : 32] Despair. Oh but then. The light of the world appeared. The rising sun dawned. And shined on us. And scattered our darkness. Malachi 4.2.

The sun of righteousness. Rise. Risen with healing in his wings. For all who fear him. Bringing to light. Light. Immortality. And eternal life.

Through the gospel. So that the people living in darkness. Have seen a great light. Those people in the northern part. Of Palestine. They were sitting in darkness.

But when Jesus went there. They've seen a great light. And on those living in the land. Of the shadow of death. A light has dawned. Jesus said.

I'm the light of the world. Whoever believes in me. Whoever follows me. Will never walk in darkness. But will have the light of life. The light of life.

[43 : 29] He went through our outer darkness. For three hours on the cross. From noon to three o'clock. That we might never have to. Endure that outer darkness.

That we might walk in the light. And so he. This rising sun. Has brought light. The light of the gospel to us. There is hope for those in despair.

Over their sins. Shining on those living in darkness. To guide our feet. Into the path of peace. The path of peace. Peace with God.

How can you have peace with God. If he's your enemy. How can you have peace of God. In your heart. If the next step in the darkness. Leads you to hell.

Leads you to death. And the sting of death. Which is God's wrath forever. How can you ever have peace. You see that's. That was the picture. We didn't have peace.

[44 : 28] We were afraid. And. And then the light came. To shine. And to guide our feet. Into the path of peace. Jesus is our peace.

And it's through him. That we. Have peace with God. And so therefore. Have the peace of God. We can be at peace. We can serve him. Without fear. All our days.

Being justified by faith. We have peace with God. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Are you at peace with God? God. If your next step. Was a step into eternity.

Are you ready to meet. Your maker? Would you meet him with confidence? Because you're in Christ. And all those promises. Are secured to you in Christ.

About eternal life. Repent and trust in Christ. Receive this salvation. This forgiveness of sins. It's a free gift. From this savior. That he bought with his own.

[45 : 24] Precious blood. That's why he came. And if you are at peace with God. Through our Lord Jesus. Then serve him. Serve him without fear. In holiness and righteousness.

Before him. All your days. Let everything you do. Your first rising thought. To your last thought. Let it all be done. For him. And with him.

And upon him. The great chain breaker. Has come bringing redemption. The strong horn of salvation. Is still mighty to save. The faithful promise keeper.

Cannot go back on his word. The rising sun. Has dawned. The prince of peace. Is here. Well.

All theologies. To lead. To doxology. To praise. It was that way for Mary. It's that way for Zechariah. Let's stand and sing our praises back. To God. For our Lord Jesus Christ.

[46 : 26] It's number 679. The light of the world. Is Jesus. He's the rising sun. That this world. Needs. Six. Seventy-nine.

Seventy-nine. Thank you.