

**A Historical Study On The Book Of Luke**  
**Teaching #16: Zechariah's Praise Part Two – God's Promise To Provide Salvation For Israel**  
**Luke 1:67-80**

In our previous study, Luke #15, *Zechariah Gives Praise Part One – God's Promise To Preserve Israel*, we began examining in-depth Zechariah's praise to God.

Prior to the angel Gabriel's announcements to Zechariah, Joseph, and Mary, Zechariah and the Jewish people were wondering what would be the future of Israel, what would happen to the:

- **NATION** of Israel
- **PEOPLE** of Israel
- **LAND** of Israel

The people were wondering if the God of Israel had:

- **FORGOTTEN** Israel?
- **ABANDONED** Israel?

In Zechariah's praise:

- We **LEARN** that God had not forgotten or abandoned the nation of Israel, the people of Israel, or the land of Israel.
- We **SEE** God's plan to preserve Israel unfold through the fulfillment of the promises he made to them by the Jewish prophets and Jewish Scriptures.

To understand the promises God made to Israel and how he will preserve Israel, and to understand the praise of Zechariah that references God's promises and plan to preserve Israel, we must first understand the historical background of Zechariah's praise.

In our previous study, we began to examine the background of Zechariah's praise by examining the promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their ancestors. These promises included:

- The promise of land.
- The promise of a nation.
- The promise that Israel would be a blessing to the nations.
- The promise of a King/Savior (Messiah-Christ) who would come from the family tree of David.
- The promise of a *horn of salvation* – a Powerful King to come who would be Israel's...

**-Deliverer, Rescuer, Redeemer, Ruler.** He would liberate the people from the oppression of foreign nations.

During the days of Zechariah, Rome occupied the land of Israel and suppressed the people of Israel. The people of Israel were **FULLY AWARE** of the promise of the horn of salvation (Messiah/Christ) and were **FAITHFULLY AWAITING** his arrival.

The promises God made to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and their ancestors also included:

- The promise of a forerunner/messenger to prepare the people of Israel for the arrival of the *horn of salvation*...the Messiah/Christ.

The angel Gabriel announced the soon births of the forerunner and Messiah.

- The forerunner of the Messiah/Christ was **John**, the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth.
- The Christ/Messiah – the Horn of Salvation is **Jesus**, the son of Mary and Joseph (Joseph was not Jesus biological father because Jesus was born of the virgin Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit).

Following the naming of John, Zechariah burst forth in praise to God for ***the horn of salvation*** who would bring salvation to Israel.

The *Horn of Salvation*, Jesus, would redeem the people of Israel by:

- **Physically Rescuing** the people of Israel from the hand of their enemies.
- **Geographically Restoring** the people of Israel to the land and the land to the people.
- **Spiritually Reconciling** the people of Israel to God so they could relate to him with no fear of condemnation and no fear of the foreign nations.

Zechariah and the people of Israel were looking forward to fulfillment of each of these.

John would prepare the way of the Lord by proclaiming to the Lord's people, the people of Israel at that time, the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of sins.

In Zechariah's praise, **SALVATION** is mentioned **THREE TIMES**: Luke 1:69; Luke 1:71; and Luke 1:77

- **FIRST MENTION (Luke 1:69)** - the horn of salvation; the Messiah/Christ, King, Deliverer, Ruler, Redeemer.
- **SECOND MENTION (Luke 1:71)** Israel's salvation from the nation of Rome who was oppressing them, and salvation from all of Israel's enemies who hated them.

This is **national** and **geographical salvation** for the people of Israel that would come through the Lord – the horn of salvation, the King.

This salvation **DID NOT COME** during the time Jesus was on earth but will come when Jesus returns.

**THIRD MENTION (Luke 1:77)** - the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins that would come through the *Rising Sun...the Sun of Righteousness...*from heaven.

This is **spiritual** and **personal salvation** through the forgiveness of sins that was not only for the Jewish people but also for Gentiles, meaning all non-Jewish people.

In our previous study, we examined the first two mentions of salvation.

In this study, we will examine the third mention...the forgiveness of sins.

Let's pick up in Zechariah's praise, starting in Luke 1:76.

### **Luke 1:76-79**

*"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."*

The people of Israel were not only looking for salvation from **the nations who hated them**, but they were also looking for salvation through **the forgiveness of their own sins**.

The Jewish Scriptures foretold of the future forgiveness of Israel's sins. Zechariah had several verses in mind when he was praising God for the horn of salvation who would bring the forgiveness of sins.

### **Isaiah 59:20-21 (Benton Septuagint Bible)**

*And the deliverer shall come for Zion's [Zion's] sake, and shall turn away [take away] ungodliness [sins] from Jacob. And this shall be my covenant [promise] with them, said the Lord;*

NOTE: Many translations translate Isaiah 59:20 to read that God will take away the sins of those who repent. However, that is not the only translation. The Benton Septuagint, which is a translation of the Jewish Scriptures from Hebrew to Greek, translate it differently as seen above.

Paul quotes this verse in Romans 11:25-27, which supports the Benton Septuagint translation.

*"The deliverer will come from Zion; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."*

Based upon the promise of God in Isaiah 59:20-21, the Jewish people were expecting the Messiah/Christ/Deliverer to take away their sins. This gives insight into John announcing in **John 1:29** that Jesus is the one who would take away the sins of the world.

Not only did Zechariah have Isaiah 59:20-21 in mind concerning God's forgiveness of sins, but he may have also had Psalm 130:3-8 in mind.

### **Psalm 130:3-8**

*If you, Lord, kept a record of sins, Lord, who could stand? But with you there is **forgiveness**, so that we can, with reverence, serve you. I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits, and in his word I put my hope. I wait for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning. Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. **He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins.***

Why did Israel need to be forgiven of sins?

The people of Israel rebelled to the law given to them by God (see Exodus 19-Deuteronomy).

Rebellion to the law is sin.

Zechariah knew he and the people of Israel had sinned by breaking the law, leaving them in need of forgiveness.

The Jewish prophets in the Jewish Scriptures consistently spoke to their rebellion to the law.

In Jeremiah 31:31-34, God made a promise that he would establish a new covenant/testament of grace that would **REPLACE** the old testament of law and **RESULT** in the forgiveness of sins.

*“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah [Israel had been divided into two regions at this time]. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors [law] when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant [sin], though I was a husband to them,” declares the Lord. “This is the covenant [grace] I will make with the people of Israel after that time,” declares the Lord. “I will put my law [the teaching, instructions about the new testament of grace] in their minds and write it on their hearts [see 2 Corinthians 3:1-6:2]. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me [personal relationship with God], from the least of them to the greatest,” declares the Lord. **For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.**”*

More than likely, Zechariah had these verses in mind when he was praising God for the soon arrival of the horn of salvation...the arrival of the Christ/Messiah...the arrival of Jesus.

It is possible Zechariah also had in mind **Isaiah 53** that told of how the Christ would give himself as a sin offering then rise from the dead.

Jesus, *the Horn of Salvation*, just prior to his crucifixion, stated that through his blood he would establish the new testament, resulting in the forgiveness of sins.

This is the new testament prophesied by Jeremiah.

#### **Matthew 26:27-28**

*When he [Jesus] took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*

The NKJV and a few other translations use the word **new** in Matthew 26:27-28.

For this is My blood of the **new** covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

#### **Luke 22:19-20**

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is **the new covenant** in my blood, which is poured out for you.

Webster's Bible Translation and the King James Version use the word **testament** instead of covenant.

For this is my blood of the **new testament**, which is shed for many for the remission of sin.

It is vital to understand **SEVEN IMPORTANT FACTS** about the new covenant/testament.

### **Seven Important Facts about The New Testament**

**Fact #1:** There is **not** a new covenant and a new testament. In the original manuscripts, the Greek word for covenant and testament (*diatheke*) is the same. Some Bibles use the word **covenant** and others **testament** when translating *diatheke*. There is only a new covenant/testament.

**Fact #2:** The new testament is **not** a set of twenty-seven books (Matthew-Revelation). Instead, the new testament is about **ONE SAVIOR'S BLOOD** poured out for the forgiveness of sins. In the same way, the old testament is not a set of 39 books (Genesis-Malachi). Rather, the old testament is the law of Moses established in the blood of animals in Exodus 24:8 and was in effect until Jesus died on the cross.

**Fact #3:** The old testament could only provide temporary forgiveness of the sins of the people of Israel. It was continual based on the blood of sacrificed animals. The new testament provides eternal forgiveness of sins for all people through the blood of Jesus when he was scarified for the sins of the word. The forgiveness Jesus has provided is received by faith.

**Fact #4:** Through following the law of Moses, as prescribed in Leviticus, the people of Israel were temporarily forgiven of sins. Through faith in Jesus, as spoken by Jesus (Acts 26:15-18), anyone can receive the eternal forgiveness of sins (see also Acts 10:43; 13:38-39).

**Fact #5:** The old testament of law was in effect until Jesus died on the cross to establish the new testament of grace. This is why we see Jesus, while he was living, telling Jewish people to sacrifice animals as prescribed by the law of Moses.

**Fact #6:** The old testament of law was about continual and conditional forgiveness of sin. This is why we see Jesus teaching that forgiveness of sins was also based upon people's forgiveness of someone who sinned against them, such as in the Lord's Prayer and his parable of forgiving 70x7.

**Fact #7:** The new testament is about eternal and complete forgiveness of sins. This is why we see Jesus saying that his blood would result in the forgiveness of sins. It is also why we see Jesus telling Paul that forgiveness is received by faith. And it is why we see Paul in his letters teaching believers to forgive others as they have been forgiven, such as in Colossians 3:13. Paul taught in his letters about the blood of Jesus that secured the

forgiveness of sins (see Ephesians 1:6-8). He also taught about the complete forgiveness of sins based upon the death of Jesus (Colossians 1:13-14; 2:13-14).

**Other important facts to know about the new testament (the blood of Jesus that secured the forgiveness of sins):**

The writer of Hebrews wrote to educate the Jewish people about the identity of Jesus as the Messiah/Christ and about the new testament of grace established in the blood of Jesus. He encouraged the unbelieving Jews to place their faith in Jesus for forgiveness, explaining to them that the old testament way of forgiveness prescribed in Leviticus is no longer valid (Hebrews 8:13; 10:17-18). The writer also encouraged the believing Jews to continue their belief in Jesus and the new testament he established in his blood, even though they were undergoing tremendous persecution for their faith.

Paul wrote about the new testament of grace in 2 Corinthians 3:1-6:2. In 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 Paul wrote,

*The old [testament/covenant of law] has passed away. Behold, the new [testament/covenant] 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 trespasses against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*

Paul also wrote about the new testament in Galatians 4:21-31 (see also Hebrews 12:18-24; 13:20).

Let's return to Zechariah.

Zechariah did not understand the fullness of the new testament for the forgiveness of sins as we do. We have greater understanding of the new testament because we have the Bible that explains its fullness.

What did Zechariah understand about the new testament/covenant?

Zechariah understand that a new testament was coming, a way of relating to God where we would:

- Know God **PERSONALLY** (they will **know** me from the least to the greatest)  
and be
- Forgiven by God **ETERNALLY** (I will forgive their wickedness and remember their sins **no more**)

The writer of Hebrews explains the eternal forgiveness of sins provided in the new testament through the blood of Jesus.

Zechariah understood a new testament was coming that would be established by the *horn of salvation*.

Let's continue with Zachariah's praise to God in **Luke 1:76-79** and examine the salvation to come through the forgiveness of sins.

*“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...”*

We see that salvation would come through the forgiveness of sins.

What salvation was Zechariah referring to in his praise?

Zechariah was referring to the salvation from the wrath to come when God would remove all sin and sinners and all the wicked and unrighteous from the earth prior to the eternal establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.

How do we know this?

In his praise to the God of Israel, Zechariah quotes directly from **Malachi 4:2** when he says, *the rising sun will come to us*.

The context of the verses that Zechariah quotes from Malachi are about the coming wrath.

Let’s take a look at these verses in Malachi.

#### **Malachi 4:1-2**

*Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming will set them on fire,” says the Lord Almighty. “Not a root or a branch will be left to them. But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves.*

#### **Malachi 4:5-6**

*See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. **6**He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”*

#### **Malachi 3:1-2**

*I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come,” says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap.*

#### **Malachi 3:18**

*And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.*

The day that is coming is the day of wrath, when God removes all the sinners, the unrighteousness, the ungodly, and the wicked from the earth. Only the righteous ones will remain.

We see this throughout the Psalms, in Proverbs, as well as in Matthew 13:24-50, 2 Peter 3, and Revelation 20.

Righteousness was the topic of the teaching of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount as he defined the righteousness needed to live eternally in God's kingdom.

Paul, in Romans and Galatians, wrote about how one becomes righteous.

In Romans, Paul writes that judgment/wrath is coming upon all people because all have sinned and all are sinners.

This judgment/wrath is when God removes all sinners, the unrighteous, from the earth (see Psalms 1).

There are none who are righteous so all will be removed in judgment.

However, God provided Jesus (the Son of Righteousness) for our salvation from the wrath to come.

Jesus took upon himself our sinfulness and the wrath to come. God freely offers us righteousness as a gift of grace (see Romans 3:21-24).

Those who place their faith in Jesus are declared righteous by God and will not be judged with wrath but will enjoy eternal life.

Let's summarize.

- Zechariah is praising God because God has not forgotten or abandoned Israel.
- Zechariah is praising God because the messenger (John) of the Messiah (Jesus) has been born. The comings of the Messenger (John) and the Messiah (Jesus) were prophesied by the Jewish prophets and recorded in the Jewish Scriptures...Scriptures Zechariah was very familiar with.
- Zechariah is praising God because the Messiah, the horn of salvation will bring Israel salvation from the nations that suppresses and hate them.
- Zechariah is praising God because the Messiah, the horn of salvation, will bring individual salvation through the forgiveness of sins.
- Zechariah is praising God because the time for the Messiahs arrival has come, since his (Zechariah's) son, John, has been born.
- Zechariah is praising God because the Messenger will announce the arrival of the Messiah...Israel's Deliverer, Redeemer, Rescuer, Restorer, King, and Ruler.
- Zechariah quotes Malachi about the rising son who comes to Israel from heaven with healing in his wings.
- Zechariah understands the wrath of God will come upon all sin and sinners because he understood the context of Malachi 3-4 about the coming day of wrath to cleanse the world of all sin sinners.

- Zechariah understood that salvation (the forgiveness of sins) would come through the Messiah.
- Zechariah understood Psalm 130:5, Isaiah 53, and Jeremiah 31:31-34 about the forgiveness of sins through the Messiah/Christ and through the new testament.
- Zechariah is praising God because he understood the Messiah/Christ would bring peace on earth as ruler of the world (Isaiah 9:6-7; Zechariah 9:9-10; Micah 5:2-4).

Let's continue looking at Zechariah's praise in **Luke 1:76-79**, paying attention to the phrase **the tender mercy of our God.**

*"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...**"*

Let's take a look at what Zechariah was thinking when he praised God for his tender mercies...***the tender mercy of our God...***

*The tender mercies of God* is a common phrase in the Jewish Scriptures and would have been very familiar to Zechariah and those listening to his praise to God.

The combined words ***tender mercies*** are used about 24 in the Jewish Scriptures. These two words reflect the gracious lovingkindness of God. A few of these are:

**Psalm 51:1**

*Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your **tender mercies**, Blot out my transgressions.*

**Psalm 69:16**

*Hear me, O LORD, for Your lovingkindness is good; Turn to me according to the multitude of Your **tender mercies**.*

**The following two Psalms are the Psalms that were probably in the minds Zechariah and of the Jewish people prior to the announce by Gabriel to Zechariah about John and to Mary about Jesus.**

**Psalm 77:9 (NKJV)**

*Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His **tender mercies**?*

**Psalm 79:8 (NKJV)**

*Oh, do not remember former iniquities against us! Let Your **tender mercies** come speedily to meet us, For we have been brought very low.*

In Zechariah's praise he states that God has not forgotten Israel and their need for salvation from their enemies and from their sins. **God has come to them with tender mercy.**

Now, let's continue with Zechariah's praise in **Luke 1:76-79**.

*“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.**”*

Zechariah was so familiar with the prophecies about the Messenger and the Messiah/Christ, that he combined/linked/connected the prophecies together in his praise.

He combined Jeremiah 23:5-6 about ***I will raise up for David a righteous Branch*** and Malachi 4:2 about ***the rising sun from heaven*** with Isaiah 9:1 about the ***dawning light to shine on those living in darkness and the shadow of death.***

#### **Jeremiah 23:5-6 (see also Jeremiah 33:14-16)**

*“The days are coming,” declares the Lord, “when **I will raise up for David a righteous Branch**, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. 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 Righteous Savior.”*

#### **Luke 1:68-69**

*“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*

God through the prophet Jeremiah said ***I will raise up*** for David a righteous Branch. In Luke 1:68-69, Zechariah praises God because ***He (God) has raised up*** the righteous Branch of David, the horn of salvation...The Righteous Savior.

#### **Malachi 4:2**

*But for you who revere my name, **the sun of righteousness will rise** with healing in its rays*

#### **Isaiah 9:1-2**

*Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—**The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.***

NOTE: Matthew quotes Isaiah 9:1-2 in Matthew 4:12-16, proclaiming that Jesus is the **GREAT LIGHT** the **DAWNING LIGHT**.

We see Zechariah combining these prophecies from Jeremiah, Malachi, and Isaiah when he states...

*“...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.”*

Zechariah’s praise was filled with **EXCITEMENT** because of the soon birth of Israel’s Messiah/Christ and the **EXPECTATION** the Messiah/Christ would bring salvation to Israel through the:

- **FORGIVENESS** of their sins (Jesus did this with his first coming as Savior)

- **FREEDOM** from the nations that hated them. (Jesus will do this when he returns as King)

Zechariah concludes his praise by stating the Messiah/Christ would ***guide our feet into the path of peace.***

Through the salvation provided by the Messiah/Christ, there would be **PEACE ON EARTH** and **PEACE WITH GOD.**

Concerning **PEACE WITH GOD**, Zechariah was probably thinking about **Isaiah 53:5-6**, which reads *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; **the punishment that brought us PEACE was on him**, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

NOTE: See Romans 5:1-2 about how faith in Jesus brings peace with God.

Concerning **PEACE ON EARTH**, Zechariah was probably thinking about the many prophecies concerning the Messiah/Ruling as King and bringing peace on earth.

One of these prophecies is **Isaiah 9:6-7**, which reads,

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Of the greatness of his government and PEACE there will be no end.** He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*

Remember, this is the prophecy Gabriel quoted from when he appeared to Mary, saying

### **Luke 1:30-33**

*"Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."*

Zechariah knew the time for Messiah/Christ (the Savior-King) had come. Therefore, he burst into praise to God with excitement and expectation.

What Zechariah did not know was that Israel would reject Jesus as the Christ, and the kingdom of peace would be delayed until the return of Jesus.

Yet it was in their rejection that Jesus died for the sins of the world, bringing peace with God for all who believe.

One day Jesus will return as King and will bring peace on earth.

We eagerly await his return.

And when he returns, we, too, will erupt in praise to God!

Thanks for being a part of this Bible study!

*All verses are NIV unless otherwise noted.*

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