

Salvation in Zechariah's Prophecy (Luke 1:68-79)

Praise for Deliverance (Luke 1:68-75)

Zechariah praises God because he has come and redeemed Israel (v. 68). Through the birth of John, his knowledge of the upcoming birth of Jesus, and through his prophetic insight, Zechariah announces redemption as having already occurred even as it is just beginning.

1. What does "redeemed" mean?

The next verse is parallel to this, and in it Zechariah says God has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (v. 69). "Horn" is sometimes a symbol of strength, based on the idea of an animal like a rhinoceros who is powerful due to how he uses his horn. "Horn" is also sometimes a symbol of a king (Daniel 7:24; Revelation 17:12), perhaps because they were anointed with oil poured out of an animal horn (1 Samuel 16:1). Also, at the corners of the altar at the Temple were four horn-like projections which a person in trouble could flee to and appeal for safety (1 Kings 1:50; 2:28). So the idea of God raising up a horn of salvation seems to be a strong king who would save us.

2. Who do you think the "horn of salvation" is in Luke 1:69?

Zechariah says God has raised up salvation "in the house of his servant David" (Luke 1:69). David was descended from Judah (Matthew 1:1-6) but Zechariah was a priest and so had to be from Levi (see also Luke 1:5; Exodus 6:16-20). So, even though Zechariah is prophesying at the birth of John the Baptist, and even though Jesus hadn't been born yet, the horn of salvation cannot refer to John. I'm guessing you knew that instinctively, but double check your answer to #2 just above.

Notice how Scripture points out that Jesus was descended from David in Matthew 1:1, 17; Romans 1:1-4; 2 Timothy 2:8-9. "Son of David" is a Messianic title for Jesus in many passages (Matthew 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 21:15; 22:42 and many more).

3. Why do you think the Bible connects Jesus and David? Is it merely because Jesus is descended from him or is there more to it? (cf. 2 Samuel 7:13, 16; Luke 1:32-33)
4. Who or what did Zechariah say God would save his people from in Luke 1:71? Did Jesus do this? Do you think 1 Peter 1:10-12 applies to Zechariah's prophesy? If so, how?

5. What words or phrases are used as synonyms for salvation in Luke 1:72, 74? How does this broaden your understanding of what salvation is?

Prophecy Concerning John the Baptist (Luke 1:76-79)

Zechariah says his child, John the Baptist, would be a prophet, prepare the way for the Lord, and “give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins” (Luke 1:76-77).

6. What are people saved from in this verse? Were people forgiven for their sins when they were baptized by John? (Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3). What, then, was the difference between the baptism of John and that of Jesus? (Matthew 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 1:5). Do these verses mean baptism in Jesus’ name consists of the Holy Spirit *instead* of water or that it is baptism in water that *also* imparts the Holy Spirit? (Acts 2:38; 8:36-39; 10:47-48; Note: John 3:22-26; 4:1-2 also indicate Jesus baptized people in water (although his disciples actually did), but I don’t think people received the Spirit at that time in light of John 7:37-39.)
7. When the Bible says John would give the “knowledge” of salvation, knowledge can mean *understanding* of salvation or *experience* of salvation. Which meaning do you think best fits the context here? Why? If it means experience, do you think it would be the full experience of salvation? Why or why not?

8. What is salvation based on according to Luke 1:78?

Briefly review questions and answers above and jot down some things you learned about salvation from this. Which aspect is new or especially meaningful to