

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"ROYAL CONFIRMATION AND CELEBRATION"

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: December 12, 2021

SPEAKER: Brian/Chad

SERIES: Advent

PASSAGE: Luke 1:57-80

Family Dinner Table

The Horn of Salvation

If you notice in verse 69 of Zechariah's *Benedictus*, he speaks of God raising up "a horn of salvation."

You find a similar reference in *Hannah's Song* (I Sam. 2:1-10) where she concludes her canticle with the words, "He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."

The horn is a symbol of strength and victory used throughout the Bible. Like a strong ox who lifts up his head after battle, the raised horn is a common biblical symbol of victory, especially being rescued from oppression. Jesus is our horn of salvation, because his power secures and protects his people.

In the beloved children's story, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, C.S. Lewis also draws on the imagery of a salvific horn, when Father Christmas gifts to Susan an enchanted horn that will bring help where none can be found:

"Susan, Eve's Daughter," said Father Christmas. "These are for you," and he handed her a bow and a quiver full of arrows and a little ivory horn. "You must use the bow only in great need," he said, "for I do not mean you to fight in the battle. It does not easily miss. And when you put this horn to your lips; and blow it, then, wherever you are, I think help of some kind will come to you."

- How is Jesus our promised help, refuge, and strength in times of trouble (Psalms 18, 46, and 132)?
- Who are our enemies and why do we need a "horn of salvation" (Luke 1: 71)?
- What are reasons why God raises a horn of salvation for his people (Luke 1: 72-75)?
- For further study read John Piper's devotional, [Jesus is the Horn of Salvation](#)

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Transformation Project

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Bible Mission Global (*pastoral training, Bible translation, and Hope Centers*)

Continuing our Advent series in the Gospel of Luke, we come to the passage in scripture known as the *Benedictus*, Zechariah's hymn of celebration for the long-anticipated Messiah. As we study the events surrounding the birth of John the Baptist, we are reminded of the great role the arrival of the herald of the King of kings plays in the Christmas story.

Our study this week begins at the home of Elizabeth and Zechariah. The relatives have gathered to rejoice in the birth of their son, but a debate has arisen amongst them over his being named "John."

- Why are the relatives surprised at Elizabeth's choice of a name for the baby? Why are they astonished when Zechariah writes "John" on the tablet (vv. 60-63)?
- It was customary in Zechariah's day to name a child after one's relative, but Elizabeth and Zechariah obey God's word by naming their son "John" instead. Can you note any cultural customs that are at odds with God's Word today? How might you be a witness by obeying God, causing others to "wonder" (v. 63)?

In verse 68, Zechariah begins his *Benedictus* by blessing God for the fulfilled promise of redemption. After 400 years of silence, God had finally visited his people again through the birth of the prophet of the Most High. Theologian R.C. Sproul describes a visitation by God in this way:

In the Old Testament, there is the idea of the supreme, providential Lord who will visit His people. Those visits can be either wonderful and redemptive or tragic as they bring His judgment.

The people of God in the Old Testament looked forward to the promised day of the Lord. In the beginning, the day of the Lord was a future day when God would come and redeem His people, bringing peace and justice to them, redeeming them from their enemies, and fulfilling all of His covenant promises. But as the people of Israel grew cold in their hearts and became hardened, they were warned that the day of the Lord might not be so good. The prophet Amos said to them, "The day of the Lord is a day of darkness and there is no light in it." So, you have this two-edged sword in the Old Testament: on the one hand, the looking forward to the bright dawn of the day of God's visitation; on the other hand, the fear that day might be a day of judgment.

Beloved, the ultimate visit from on high was the entrance of Christ into the world, and for those who received Him, to them He gave authority to be called the children of God. To those who rejected Him, it was the day of the Lord of redemption. But for those who reject Him, it is the day of darkness, with no light in it.¹

God's tender mercies should produce in us, like Zechariah, a song of praise, for he has visited us from on high and has illuminated the path of peace in the midst of our darkness (vv. 76-80).

- How are the words 'salvation' and 'deliver' used in Zechariah's *Benedictus*?
- What Old Testament prophecies does Zechariah mention (cf. Jeremiah 23:5-6 & 33:14-16; Ezekiel 29:21)?
- What did Zechariah believe God would do for his people through the Messiah (vv. 78-79)?

We will fail to grasp the depth of the Christmas story if we lose sight of the significance of John the Baptist's birth. Let us celebrate and rejoice along with Zechariah, and as the forerunner of Christ, announce to others, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" Immanuel, God with Us, has brought light into sin's dark night, a message our world so desperately needs to hear today.

¹The Benedictus (Part 1), a Sermon from R.C. Sproul: <https://www.ligonier.org/learn/sermons/benedictus-part-1>