

Songs for the King: Benedictus (Zechariah's Song) Luke 1:57-80

Introduction

- **Opening Comments and Prayer**
- **Contextualization**
 - **Connection**
 - 4th message in Luke, 2nd of the “Songs for the King” series
 - 1:1-4 Introduction to Luke’s Gospel – The Preface
This Gospel presents an orderly account of Jesus’s life and ministry intended to confirm and strengthen the faith of his audience. He presents a biblical, historical, verifiable faith.
 - Luke 1:5-38 Birth Announcements of John the Baptist and Jesus the Christ
Remain faithful to God in times of disappointment. Respond faithfully to God in times of confusion.
 - Luke 1:39-56 The Magnificat (The Song of Mary)
The greatest joy in the world comes when a person recognizes Jesus is the Christ. John, yet unborn, Elizabeth, and Mary all rejoiced because of their relationship to Jesus, the then-unborn Savior of the world.
 - Luke 1:57-80
Today, in Luke 1:57-80, we see the account of the birth of John the Baptist and the song of his father, the priest Zechariah, which is known as the Benedictus. It is so named because it is the first word of the song in the Latin translation of v. 68, it’s English translation being, “Blessed.”
 - **Connection**
 - This text follows in chronological order the preceding accounts. It serves more specifically as the sequel to the angel’s prophetic promise to Zechariah about the birth of John the Baptist, recorded in vv. 5-25.
 - Next up, beginning in Luke 2, we find the account of the birth of Jesus the Messiah. Just as John was foretold to be the messenger who would go before the Lord to prepare the way for his mission and message, John preceded Jesus in conception and birth by 6 months, and so these accounts unfold in that order. V. 80 is a sort of “to be continued” cliffhanger with ties to the continuing narrative of the book, resumed in ch. 3.
- **Summarization:** Blessed be God for his faithfulness. He has saved us because he said he would from the beginning.
- **PNP:** We should praise God for his faithfulness with reference to two aspects of our salvation.
Specifically, we will see the certainty that God is faithful to fulfill his *word* of salvation and his *work* of salvation.

Body

- I. We should praise God for his faithfulness with reference to the word of salvation.
 - A. Promises Fulfilled (57-66, cf. 1:13-20)
 1. John’s birth (57)
 2. The joy surrounding John’s birth (58)
 3. John’s name (60, 63)
 4. Zechariah’s speech restored (64)

5. John's divine support (66)

Promise...fulfillment. This is reminiscent of Genesis 1: "Let there be...and there was."

Cf. Isa 55:11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

B. Past Tense (67-69) => certainty

Zechariah saw the birth of John as the advent of the Messianic event. He knew that John was preparing the way for Jesus, the Messiah, the Lord. He surely would have known of Mary's pregnancy and the nature of the Holy Child she carried, who caused John to leap for joy and Elizabeth's blessing of Mary. I think that both births are in view here; they are taken together in Zechariah's prophetic benediction. He knows that the births are the beginning of the entire Messianic ministry of salvation. Although John's birth is the proximate cause of his praise, I don't think he is blessing God only for John's birth, but all that it implies and all that will follow according to the promise he received. Thus, he speaks his benediction in the past tense. In his mind, it seems that Messianic salvation is as good as done simply because of the fulfillment of God's promise concerning the birth of his son John, which serves as a sort of sign akin to the virgin's birth prophesied in Isaiah 7:14. John's birth is the sign of sure fulfillment of the salvation to come in the Messianic age.

C. **Illustrations:** A 100% Success Rate

That God is faithful is a basic Christian truth and affirmation, but let's reflect on its profundity for a minute.

- a) A 100 batting average; Ty Cobb's is .366. (etc.)
- b) A 100% ROI: if you invested 1¢ at a 100% rate of return on just one transaction each day, in 30 days you'd have \$5,368,709.12.
- c) If connecting a bat and a ball is a difficult task for us humans, think of the daunting task of successfully accomplishing the salvation of the world, the redemption of mankind, the salvation and transformation of the souls of men, women, boys, and girls.

D. **Applications**

- 1. You can trust God to do what he has promised to do.
 - a) Wait for it with patience, as did the martyrs under the altar in heaven cried, "How long, O Lord, until you avenge our blood?" As did the faithful in Israel who believed the prophets through the millennia in spite of all evidence to the contrary. As did Zechariah and Elizabeth in their barrenness, in spite of the physical impossibility.
- 2. God's word is the foundation of our faith.
 - a) Note that this applies to God's will and promises we know with certainty, not impressions or "God told me." This isn't name it and claim it, blab it and grab it stuff.
- 3. Pray with confidence and boldness.

1Jo 5:14-15 And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests that we have asked of him.

II. We should praise God for his faithfulness with reference to the work of salvation.

Summary: Blessed be God for his faithfulness. He has saved us because he said he would from the beginning.

- A. Why he is to be blessed (68-70)
 - 1. He has saved us (68-69)
 - 2. Just like he said he would from the get-go (70)
 - a) Israel's history – Abraham onward
 - b) Mankind's history – Genesis 3 onward
- B. Main phrase: that we should be saved (71a)
- C. Saved from whom: our enemies (71b)
 - 1. Immediate context: Israel's history
 - 2. Broader application: expound on our enemies (sin, death, hell, the devil, the world, God Himself)
- D. The purpose of our salvation: to show himself faithful (72-73)
- E. The result of our salvation: we can serve God in sanctification (74-75)
- F. The true nature of our salvation: spiritual, the forgiveness of sins (76-77)
- G. The divine motive of our salvation: the tender mercy of our God (78-79)
- H. **Applications**
 - 1. To be saved is to be a sanctified servant, from which there is no retirement. How are you serving?
 - 2. Like John, the messenger of the Messiah's first advent, we are messengers preparing the way for the Messiah's second advent into the world. We bear the same mission and message: God has purposed to save people by the forgiveness of their sins.

Conclusion

- **Transition**
- **Summary:** Blessed be God for his faithfulness. He has saved us because he said he would from the beginning. He shows himself faithful with regard to both his word and his work of salvation.
- **Gospel Presentation**
 - Tender mercy of God
 - God's purpose is to save you: "that we should be saved"
 - Forgiveness of sins
 - No fear, but rather a path of peace [subjective and objective] (**Rom. 5:1; 8:1**)
 - Christ's first coming was for salvation, but he's coming again for judgment (**Jn 3:16-18**)
 - Give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: Is his light dawning in your heart this morning?
- **Clenching Element: "How Firm a Foundation"**

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?

...

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
that soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake!