

A MINISTRY FOR HUNGRY SAINTS

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

† THE BOOK OF LUKE

WHAT WE MOST ASSUREDLY BELIEVE

WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRIES, ASSOCIATED

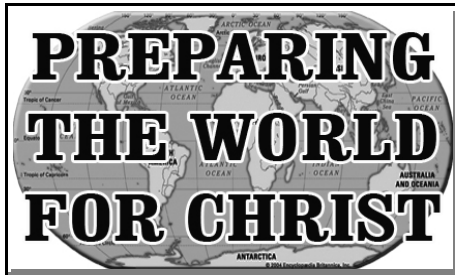
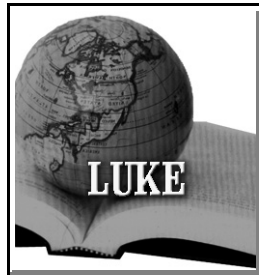
An overview of the Gospel of Luke, by Given O. Blakely

Lesson #6

COMMENTARY ON: 1:67-80

THE PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS

On this occasion Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and like all others so filled, he began to speak (Lk 1:41-42,67; Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 13:9-10; Eph 5:18-19). He first blesses God, affirming that He had visited and redeemed His people. Actually, the work of redemption was just beginning, but because God was the Worker, it would be completed. He spoke of God raising up a "horn of salvation," as He had spoken through the prophets. He affirmed the intention of redemption was that the people might be delivered from their enemies, and serve Him "without fear." This service would be "in holiness and righteousness before Him," and continue "all the days of our lives." He then spoke of his son, John, declaring he would prepare the way for the Lord, and give the knowledge of salvation to the people "by the remission of their sins." Redemption would involve the "tender mercy" of the Lord, and the giving of light, in order that their feet might be guided into "the way of peace."

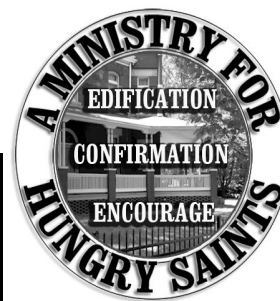


Since May, 1993, a ministry instituted for the encouragement of believers in Christ



The Book of Luke 11/28/2014

Lesson Number 6



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED =Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEB =Common English Bible (2011); CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), EMTV =English Majority Text (2002); ERV =English Revised Version (1885), ETRV = Easy to Read (1999), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GSNT =Goodspeed (1923), GWN =God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), JUB=Jubilee Bible (2003); KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

GREEK LEXICON LEGEND

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT

PERSUADED OF THE NECESSITY OF KNOWING THE CERTAINTY OF THE THINGS WE BELIEVE, LUKE MAKES US MORE FIRM BY BUTTRESSING OUR FAITH, AND CONFIRMING WE HAVE NOT EMBRACED FABLES.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

THE PROPHECY OF ZACHARIAS

LUKE 1:67 "And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, ⁶⁸ Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people, ⁶⁹ And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David; ⁷⁰ As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began: ⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us; ⁷² To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; ⁷³ The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, ⁷⁴ That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, ⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. ⁷⁶ And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; ⁷⁷ To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, ⁷⁸ Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, ⁷⁹ To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. ⁸⁰ And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel." Luke 1:67- 80

INTRODUCTION

A BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

On this occasion Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and like all others so filled, he began to speak (Lk 1:414-42,67; Acts 2:4; 4:8; 4:31; 13:9-10; Eph 5:18-19). He first blesses God, affirming that He had visited and redeemed His people. **Actually, the work of redemption was just beginning, but because God was the Worker, it would be completed.** He spoke of God raising up a "horn of salvation," as He had spoken through the prophets. He affirmed the intention of redemption

was that the people might be delivered from their enemies, and serve God "without fear." This service would be "in holiness and righteousness before Him," and continue "all the days of our lives." He then spoke of his son, John, declaring he would prepare the way for the Lord, and give the knowledge of salvation to the people "by the remission of their sins." Redemption would involve the "tender mercy" of the Lord, and the giving of light, in order that their feet might be guided into "the way of peace."

A SMALL BEGINNING

In the grand scheme of things, the promised salvation was beginning on a small scale. It first involved one person (Zacharias); then two (Zacharias and Elizabeth); then three (Zacharias, Elizabeth, and Mary); then it expanded to Zacharias, Elizabeth, Mary, and the infant John the Baptist; then it expanded to include the neighbors and relatives of Zacharias and Elizabeth; then others were included from Judean hill country. The concentrated work of salvation was now under way.

CONTENTS

- ▶ INTRODUCTION
- ▶ ZACHARIAS WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT (1:67a)
- ▶ VISITED AND REDEEMED (1:67b-68)
- ▶ A HORN OF SALVATION (1:69)
- ▶ AS HE SPOKE BY THE HOLY PROPHETS (1:70)
- ▶ SAVED FROM OUR ENEMIES (1:71)
- ▶ TO PERFORM THE MERCY THAT WAS PROMISED (1:72-73)
- ▶ SERVING WITHOUT FEAR (1:74)
- ▶ IN HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS (1:75)
- ▶ CALLED THE PROPHET OF THE HIGHEST (1:76)
- ▶ TO GIVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION (1:77)
- ▶ THE VISITATION OF THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH (1:78)
- ▶ TO GIVE LIGHT (1:79)
- ▶ AND THE CHILD GREW AND WAXED STRONG IN SPIRIT (1:80)
- ▶ TILL THE DAY OF HIS SHOWING (1:81)

This all happened after there had been a spiritual drought of about five hundred years – a period in which there is no record of a prophet among the Jews. Jerusalem had been brought under the power of the Roman government. Sects like the Pharisees and Sadducees had arisen. The Jewish people were sitting “*in darkness,*” and occupying “*the region and shadow of death*” (Matt 4:16). Some few souls were looking for redemption (Lk 2:38). This certainly did not look like the kind of environment in which a Divine work that was unparalleled would be undertaken.

Great Divine works are not always commenced in ideal environments. The fallow ground has to be broken up (Jer 4:3; Hos 10:12). That is what it will begin with the ministry of John the Baptist.

NOT DESPISING SMALL BEGINNINGS

When Zerubbabel was rebuilding

the Temple, it seemed a small beginning when compared to the magnificent Temple of old. The Lord responded, “*For who hath despised the day of small things?*” (Zec 4:10). The NLT translation reads, “*small beginnings.*” Flesh likes big beginnings. Some church planting organizations have developed strategies for large beginnings – an initial service with a great crowd present. That is the way flesh thinks. **Ponder these small beginnings:**

- ⇨ The human race started with two—Adam and Eve (Gen 2:15-22).
- ⇨ The Jewish race started with one old and impotent man, and one old and barren woman (Heb 11:11-12).
- ⇨ The Jewish nation numbered seventy when they went down into Egypt, where they multiplied (Ex 1:5).
- ⇨ Following the flood, the human race began anew with eight souls (Gen 7:1; 1 Pet 3:20).
- ⇨ The body of Christ began with a single Individual – the Lord Jesus Christ, from whom every member is added, and all Kingdom initiatives are launched (1 Cor 8:6).
- ⇨ The knowledge of the Lord which was going to cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Isa 11:9) was launched by a small group of disciples (Acts 2:1-4), and the response of 3,000 souls (Acts 2:41).

Consider the magnitude of salvation – what it involves, and how it will conclude.

On A Global Scale

- ⇨ The putting away of sin in its totality (Heb 9:26).
- ⇨ The bruising of Satan’s head (Gen 3:15).
- ⇨ The destruction of the devil (Heb 2:14).
- ⇨ The spoiling of principalities and

powers (Col 2:15).

- ⇨ The conquering of death (Col 1:18).
- ⇨ The exaltation of Christ as Head over all (Eph 1:22; Col 2:10).
- ⇨ The ending of the Law for righteousness (Rom 10:4).
- ⇨ God being righteous in justifying sinners (Rom 3:26).
- ⇨ The satisfaction of God Himself (Isa 53:11).
- ⇨ The merging of Jew and Gentile into “*one new man*” (Eph 2:15).
- ⇨ The fulfilling of all prophecies concerning a Savior (Lk 24:44; Acts 3:18).
- ⇨ The giving of gifts to men (Eph 4:8-16).
- ⇨ The creation of “*one body*” (Eph 4:4), of which Christ is the undisputed “*Head*” (Col 1:18).
- ⇨ The opening of a new and living way to God (Heb 10:22).

On the Individual Level

- ⇨ The drawing of people to Christ (John 6:44).
- ⇨ The giving of repentance (Acts 5:31; 2 Tim 2:25-26).
- ⇨ Confessing that Jesus is Lord (1 Cor 12:3).
- ⇨ Being baptized into Christ’s death (Rom 6:3-4).
- ⇨ Being baptized into Christ (Gal 3:27).
- ⇨ Being baptized into one body (1 Cor 12:13).
- ⇨ Being born again (1 Pet 1:23).
- ⇨ Experiencing the washing of regeneration (Tit 3:5).
- ⇨ Being placed in Christ’s body by

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>God, where He pleased (1 Cor 12:18).</p> <p>⇒ Being justified (Rom 5:1).</p> <p>⇒ Being delivered from this present evil world (Gal 1:4).</p> <p>⇒ Being delivered from the condemning Law (Rom 7:6).</p> | <p>(1 Cor 6:19-20).</p> <p>⇒ God working in the people both to will and to do of His own good pleasure (Phil 2:13).</p> <p>⇒ Strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man that Christ</p> | <p>⇒ The Holy Spirit intercedes for us when we do not know what to pray for as we ought (Rom 8:26-27).</p> <p>⇒ An effective means of overcoming the world (1 John 5:4-5).</p> |
| <p>You can no doubt add to this brief listing. However, there is enough here to confirm the greatness of “the salvation of God.” It is big enough to remove any and all excuses for sin, or lapsing back to an inferior status.</p> | | |
| <p>⇒ Becoming a new creation (2 Cor 5:17).</p> <p>⇒ Being made righteous (Rom 5:19).</p> <p>⇒ Being made acceptable to God (Eph 1:6).</p> <p>⇒ Being freed from the dominion of sin (Rom 6:18,22).</p> <p>⇒ Being seated with Christ in heavenly places (Eph 2:6).</p> <p>⇒ Having access to God with confidence (Eph 2:13; Heb 4:15-16).</p> <p>⇒ Being able to do all things through Christ (Phil 4:13).</p> <p>⇒ Having every temptation accompanied with a way of escape (1 Cor 12:13).</p> <p>⇒ Being “washed,” “sanctified,” and “justified” (1 Cor 6:11).</p> <p>⇒ Being reconciled to God (Rom 6:9-10).</p> <p>⇒ Old things pass away, and all things become new (2 Cor 5:17).</p> <p>⇒ Sin no longer having dominion over us (Rom 6:14).</p> <p>⇒ The purchase of our body, which become the temple of the Holy Spirit</p> | <p>may dwell in our hearts by faith (Eph 3:16-17).</p> <p>⇒ Changed from one increasing stage of glory to another (3 Cor 3:18).</p> <p>⇒ Being taught by Christ (Eph 4:20-21; 1 John 5:20).</p> <p>⇒ Being filled with all joy and peace in believing (Rom 15:13).</p> <p>⇒ Being given everlasting consolation and good hope through grace (2 Thess 2:16).</p> <p>⇒ Being taught by God to love one another (1 Thess 4:9).</p> <p>⇒ Love abounding more and more in all knowledge and judgment (Phil 1:9).</p> <p>⇒ Being rooted, built up, and established in Christ (Col 2:7).</p> <p>⇒ Being kept from falling (Jude 1:24)</p> <p>⇒ Being able to resist the devil, and he will flee from us (James 4:7).</p> | <p>⇒ An efficacious means of growing up into Christ in all things (Eph 4:15).</p> <p>You can no doubt add to this brief listing. However, there is enough here to confirm the greatness of “<i>the salvation of God</i>” (Psa 50:23; Lk 3:6; Acts 28:28). It is big enough to remove any and all excuses for sin, or lapsing back to an inferior status. Those who invent views that teach people they cannot fall away have not helped them at all. That liability is the very reason for such a great salvation. God uses the fellowship of Jesus (1 Cor 1:9), the communion of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 13:14), the holy angels (Heb 1:13-14), and “<i>the household of faith</i>” (Gal 6:10) as a means to the perfecting of the saints. Then there is personal faith and hope that are essential to completion of our race.</p> <p>Now, in the Gospel of Luke, we are reading of the commencement of this large salvation. We do well to pay special attention to the things that are being reported, for they are readying us to comprehend God’s great salvation.</p> |

ZACHARIAS WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

LUKE 1:67a ***“And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied.”***

ZACHARIAS WAS FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT
“And his father Zacharias was

filled with the Holy Ghost . . .”

This is the second person in this

chapter that is said to have been “filled with the Spirit”– the first was the mother, Elizabeth (Lk 1:41). In this case, the wife was first filled, later the husband was filled. I realize that will not set well with some –but it is a “thus saith the Lord.”

The fact that Zacharias was “filled” confirms this was not a self-induced condition. It was not the result of following some revealed procedure. **This filling was initiated and carried out from heaven.** Such fillings are strictly controlled by the Lord.

What Does It Mean to be “Filled with the Spirit”

I understand this to mean that the Holy Spirit has control of the heart, the mind, the mouth, and the tongue. Both words and thoughts become the fruit of inner enlightenment and understanding.

This includes being “filled with the spirit of wisdom” (Ex 28:3), yet involves more, and at a deeper level. The same is true of being “filled with the knowledge of the Lord” (Hab 2:14). That is included in being filled with the Holy Spirit, yet is not as focused as being filled with the Spirit. There is also being “filled with the fruits of righteousness” (Phil 1:11), which has more to do with living than with speaking. There is also the phenomenon of being “filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding” (Col 1:9) – but that is more general than the filling described in this text. Joshua was “full of the spirit of wisdom” (Deut 34:9), which was more of a practical nature than the filling of our text.

Speaking a Particular Word

This filling has to do with **speaking** a particular word, tailored, as it was, for that specific time.

⇒ John the Baptist was “filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb” (Lk 1:15) – and he was particularly noted for what he **said** (Matt 3:1; Lk 3:3).

⇒ Elizabeth was “filled the with the Holy Ghost: and **spake** out with a

loud voice” (Lk 1:41).

⇒ Now Zacharias “was **filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying . . .**” (Lk 1:67).

⇒ On the day of Pentecost, the disciples “were all **filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance**” (Acts 2:4).

⇒ Before the Jewish rulers, Peter was “filled with the Holy Ghost and **said unto them**” (Acts 4:8).

⇒ When the early church gathered to pray because of persecution, “they were all **filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness**” (Acts 4:31).

⇒ When Paul confronted Elymas the sorcerer, he was “filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and **said . . .**” (Acts 13:10).

⇒ The brethren in Ephesus were admonished, “**And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord**” (Eph 5:19).

Being filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking is equivalent to a man or woman delivering a word from God – a word that God wants said at that particular time, and under those specific circumstances. This is not something that can be done merely by the human will. It cannot be scheduled or planned by men.

AND PROPHESED

“ . . . and prophesied.” Other versions read, “and spoke this prophecy,” ^{NRSV} “with the voice of a prophet said these words,” ^{BBE} “gave this prophecy,” ^{NLT} “told them what was going to take place,” ^{LIVING} “spoke in a rapture of praise,” ^{WEYMOUTH} “uttered the following prophecy,” ^{WILLIAMS} “began to speak,” ^{CEV} “told the people a message from God,” ^{ERV} “spoke God’s message,” ^{GNB} “uttered a divine message,” ^{GOODSPEED}

“speaking like a prophet,” ^{PHILLIPS} and “did prophesy.” ^{YLT}

I have provided an academic definition of the word “prophesying.” It is germane to this text, but, in my judgment, is not thorough enough. First, prophesying, although it is often done by men, does not have its origin with men. That is, it is not the result of independent or scholastic reasoning. True prophesy does involve the comprehension of what is being said, although the insight has come from God.

In this particular prophecy, Zacharias will put together a series of statements made by past prophets, introducing a thread of reasoning that reflects what God intends the listeners to know. Although not the particular result of a focused study on a subject of emphasis, the words of Zacharias did deal with revelations with which he was familiar. As the Holy Spirit filled and directed him, he was able to ascertain how the events that were then taking place correlated with what God had promised would come to pass. It was this reality that gave particular weight

THE ACADEMIC DEFINITION OF PROPHESYING

“To prophesy, i. e. to be a prophet, speak forth by Divine inspiration; to predict; to utter forth, declare, a Thing which can only be known by divine revelation; to break forth under sudden impulse in lofty discourse or in praise of the divine counsels: to teach, refute, reprove, admonish, comfort. ^{THAYER} prophesy; (1) generally, of speaking with the help of divine inspiration proclaim what God wants to make known, preach, expound (AC 2.17; 1C 11.4); (2) as speaking out divinely imparted knowledge of future events foretell, prophesy (MK 7.6; JN 11.51; RV 10.11); (3) as bringing to light what was concealed and outside the possibility of naturally acquired knowledge prophetically reveal, prophesy.” ^{FRIBERG} “To speak under the influence of divine inspiration, with or without reference to future events - 'to prophesy, to make inspired utterances.” ^{LOUW-NIDA} “proclaim or interpret a divine revelation.” ^{GINGRICH} “According to the uniform teaching of the Bible the prophet is a speaker of or for God. His words are not the production of his own spirit, but come from a higher source. For he is at the same time, also, a seer, who sees things that do not lie in the domain of natural sight, or who hears things which human ears do not ordinarily receive.” ^{ISBE}

to his words. While this may be apparent to some, we must not take for granted that it is clear to everyone – namely this: **God will not mold the thinking of men with utterances that had their genesis with mere men.** In order build sound thinking, and have proper assessments, **men must be brought to consider something that God Himself has said.** Further, human reasoning cannot be that thread that weaves these thoughts together – a practice that has taken place in antiquity, as well as modern times.

What Zacharias states is the result

God will not mold the thinking of men with utterances that had their genesis with mere men.

of the Spirit’s work, who illuminated, put together, and summarized various revelations pertaining to the day of salvation.

THE OFFICE OF THE PROPHETS GOD HAS SET IN THE CHURCH

There is an office Christ has placed in the church called “*prophets.*” This does not refer to the Prophets that

were sent to prior to the coming of Christ. Rather, they are gifts given particularly to the church (Eph 4:8). They rank behind the apostles, who were chosen to declare the proper “*doctrine*” (Acts 2:42). They are the highest rank of men within the church, and continue to testify through their doctrine, as made known particularly in the book of Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation. As it is written, “*And God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Are all apostles?*

are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?” (1 Cor 12:28-30).

The function of the “*prophets*” that have been “*set*” in the church is specified in First Corinthians 14:3: It is the impact of their ministry that confirms its reality. “*But he that*

prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort” (1 Cor 14:3).

Zecharias’ prophecy will also have that effect.

PROPHETS AT ANTIOCH

The church at Antioch had “*prophets*” among them: “*Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul*” (Acts 13:1). None of these were apostles of Christ: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul. Notice, that the time of the event recorded in Acts 13, Saul was not yet called an “*apostle.*” He was, however, in the class of prophets and teachers. It is interesting to note that the word “*apostle,*” in the singular, is not mentioned in the book of Acts. Paul is not referred to as the “*apostle*” until the epistles (Rom 1:1; 1 Cor 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Gal 1:1; Eph 1:1; Col 1:1; 1 Tim 1:1; 2 Tim 1:1; Tit 1:1).

This suggests that Paul’s official apostleship began after he had spent three years being personally tutored by the risen Christ (Gal 1:19). He was not taught by the other twelve apostles.

VISITED AND REDEEMED

^{1:67b} saying, ^{68a} **Blessed be the Lord God of Israel;** ^{68b} **for he hath visited and redeemed His people,”**

BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL

“ . . . saying, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel . . .*”

Other versions read, “*blessed is,*” NKJV “*Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,*” NIV “*Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,*” BBE “*Let us praise the Lord, the God of Israel!*” GNB “*Blessings on the Lord, the God of Israel,*” GOODSPEED and “*Blessed (praised and extolled and*

thanked) be the Lord, the God of Israel.” AMPLIFIED

It is the Holy Spirit who has moved Zacharias to refer to God in this manner (Lk 1:67). God being the “*eternal God*” (Deut 33:27) does not have appellations that reflect temporary associations.

The phrase “*God of Israel*” is mentioned two hundred and three times in Scripture: two hundred and one from Genesis through Malachi, and twice from Matthew through Revelation. Once God is referred to as “*the Mighty God*

of Jacob”(Gen 49:24).

Paul writes concerning this nation: “*Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen*” (Rom 9:4-5).

VISITED

“ . . .for He hath visited . . .”

Other versions read, “*has come,*”

NIV "looked favorably on," NRSV "has come to," BBE "come to take care of," GWN "did look upon," YLT "watches over," IE "has not forgotten," WEYMOUTH "turned His attention to," GOODSPEED and "He came." MESSAGE

Most of the versions read "visited." The lexical meaning of the word translated "visited" is "A LIGHT FROM ON HIGH HATH LOOKED (OTHERS, SHALL LOOK) UPON US (CF. OUR THE SUN LOOKS DOWN ON US, ETC.), I. E. SALVATION FROM GOD HAS COME TO US, LUKE 1:78," THAYER "1. LOOK FOR, SELECT AC 6:3.—2. GO TO SEE, VISIT Mt 25:36; AC 7:23; 15:36; LOOK AFTER JS 1:27.—3. VISIT FOR THE PURPOSE OF BRINGING SALVATION Lk 1:68; 7:16; BE CONCERNED ABOUT AC 15:1," GINGRICH "VISIT, COME TO HELP," FRIBERG "TO SELECT CAREFULLY, TO CHOOSE AFTER CAREFUL INVESTIGATION," LOUW-NIDA

Some of the versions are too general in presenting this text:—i.e. "looked favorable on," NRSV "come to take care of," GWN "watches over," IE "has not forgotten," WEYMOUTH and "turned His attention to." GOODSPEED There is infinitely more here than a Divine interest in the people. God is not here depicted as merely assessing Israel, or seeing how they are doing, or coming to assist them. **This text is speaking of the Living God commencing to work out the salvation that was promised of old.** He is not going to deliver them from the Romans, or move Rome's puppet governors to deal with Israel more kindly. God has come to do something He has promised with holy intent. The next word will tell us of the Divine objective behind this visitation.

REDEEMED

". . .and redeemed His people." Other versions read, "accomplished redemption," NASB "wrought redemption," ASV "made them free," BBE "delivered," CEB "made a ransom to liberate," CJB "given them freedom," IE

As I see things, those who take in their hand to translate Scripture have a solemn obligation to have an understanding of the doctrine of Scripture. It simply is not enough to know how educated Greeks used the Greek words found in Scripture.

"brought His people deliverance," WILLIAMS "made a ransoming," ABP "given them freedom," ERV "set them free," GNB "worked redemption," LITV and "brought deliverance and redemption to His people." AMPLIFIED

Again, many of the versions are doctrinally weak in their representation of this word. While Greek philosophers did use this word to refer to freedom (Plutarch, Aratus), in Scripture freedom or liberation is the result of redemption, and not the redemption itself. Wherever the words "redemption" or "ransom" are used in Scripture the stress is on a cost or sacrifice – **what was required to obtain liberty, or freedom.** This is especially true in the apostles' doctrine (Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7; 4:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:12).

The "redemption" of reference was procured at a great cost. As it is written, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Gal 3:13). And again, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; **But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot**" (1 Pet 1:18-19). And again, "Thou art

worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for **Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation**" (Rev 5:9).

Let it be clear in your mind, **The liberation from the guilt and power of sin is strictly owing to the price that was paid for it.** It is wrong to, in any way, exalt the liberty realized above the awful price that procured it.

As I see things, those who take in their hand to translate Scripture have a solemn obligation to have an understanding of the doctrine of Scripture. **It simply is not enough to know how educated Greeks used the Greek words found in Scripture. The doctrine of Scripture is the filter through which the text must be passed.** That includes all sayings that bear upon the subject being delineated, from Moses and the Prophets through the Lord Jesus, the apostles, and other inspired writers like Mark, Luke, James, and Jude. This ought to be very apparent, for the Lord Jesus is declared to be the Object that drives all Scripture (John 5:39). **The redemption of reference is the promised redemption.** That promise was formerly veiled, but it unveiled, or made known. However, it is intended only for those with understanding. (Psa 11:9; 130:7; Isa 35:10; Lk 2:38).

A HORN OF SALVATION

"⁶⁹ **And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David.**"

This is something that God has

done. He visited His people, redeemed them, and raised up a horn of salvation.

RAISED UP A HORN OF SALVATION
"And hath raised up an horn of

salvation for us . . ."

Other versions read, "a mighty Savior," NRSV "a mighty Deliverer," CJB "a horn of deliverance," DARBY "a horn of

Zacharias is filled with the Holy Spirit and delivers an insightful prophecy concerning the ministry of Christ and of John – *Given O. Blakely*

redemption," ^{MRD} "a horn {Horn here symbolizes strength.} of salvation," ^{NIB} "a saving power," ^{NJB} "a powerful Savior," ^{LIVING} "a horn of saving health," ^{JUB} "set the power of salvation in the center of our lives," ^{MESSAGE} and "a Horn of salvation [a mighty and valiant Helper, the Author of salvation]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

This is the only place this phrase is used in standard Bible versions (KJV/NKJV/ASV/NASV/NIV/RSV/ESV/ERV).

The term "horn," as used here, is a depiction of great power and influence. There are at least three places where it is used, and they were in a prophetic sense.

⇒ **THE BREAKING OF ADVERSARIES.** "The adversaries of the LORD shall be broken to pieces; out of heaven shall he thunder upon them: the LORD shall judge the ends of the earth; and he shall give strength unto his king, and exalt **THE HORN** of His anointed" (1 Sam 2:10).

⇒ **A TIME OF GREAT INFLUENCE.** "There will I make **THE HORN** of David to bud: I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed." (Psa 132:17).

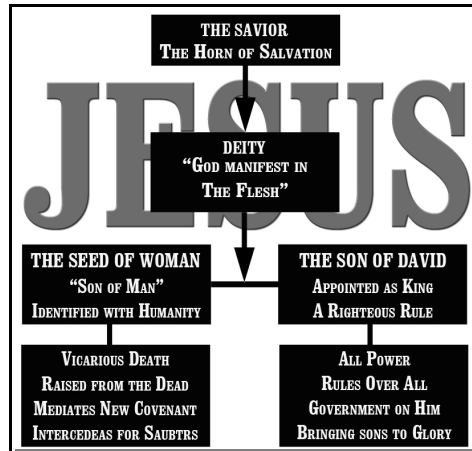
⇒ **THE REMOVAL OF POWER.** "He hath cut off in his fierce anger all **THE HORN** of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about" (Lam 2:3).

⇒ **A TIME OF GREAT REVELATION.** "In that day will I cause **THE HORN** of the house of Israel to bud forth, and I will give thee the opening of the mouth in the midst of them; and they shall know that I am the LORD" (Ezek 29:21).

The "horn of salvation," therefore, speaks of a Personality being raised up who would effect salvation, powerfully overthrowing any and all who opposed it.

The salvation of God is associated with **POWER**.

⇒ "Nevertheless **He saved them** for his name's sake, that He might make



His mighty power to be known" (Psa 106:8).

⇒ "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, **mighty to save**" (Isa 63:1).

The Gospel of Christ is "**the POWER of God unto salvation**" (Rom 1:16). Those who are being saved "are kept by **the power of God** through faith **unto salvation** ready to be revealed in the last time" (1 Pet 1:5). "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are **saved it is the power of God**" (1 Cor 1:18).

THINGS RELATED TO SALVATION THAT REQUIRE DIVINE POWER

- ⇒ The bruising of Satan (Gen 3:15).
- ⇒ Destroying the devil (Heb 2:14).
- ⇒ Spoiling principalities and powers (Col 2:15).
- ⇒ Raising men from death in trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1-2).
- ⇒ Subduing our iniquities (Micah 7:19).
- ⇒ Keeping us from falling (Jude 1:24).
- ⇒ Making the weak to stand (Rom 14:).

- ⇒ Establishing us (Rom 16:25).
- ⇒ Stopping inhibiting influences from separating us from His love—i.e. tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril, sword, death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, or any other living thing (Rom 8:32-39).

These are all things that require the kind of power than cannot be found within man. Neither is it inherent in any part of the creation. It is "*Divine power*" (2 Pet 1:3), resident only in the Godhead, and, in salvation, localized in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and which can only be accessed by faith.

THE HOUSE OF HIS SERVANT DAVID
 "... in the house of His servant David."

Other versions read, "a descendant of his servant David," ^{CJB} "in the family of his servant David" ^{GWN} "from the royal line of his servant David," ^{NLT} and "from the family of David, His special Servant." ^{IE}

Roots: Eve, Abraham, David, and Melchisedec

The various aspects of Christ's Saviorhood is accented in four views of His Person.

- ⇒ **THE SEED OF THE WOMAN.** This accents the humanity of Jesus. It was necessary that Satan be defeated by a "Man," and that salvation was fully wrought out by a "Man." Salvation could not come through an angel, or directly from God without a Representative (Gen 3:15; Gal 4:4; 1 Cor 15:21).
- ⇒ **THE SEED OF ABRAHAM.** This accented the blessing of man, or the experience of Divine favor. (Gen 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; Gal 3:8,14,16; Heb 2:16)
- ⇒ **THE SON OF DAVID OF DAVID.** This concerns Jesus being a King. His kingly lineage was traced back to David, who conquered all of the enemies, extending the border of the

Kingdom, and taking tribute from all of the ancillary nations (2 Sam 7:12-16; Psa 2:6-7; Isa 9:7; 32:1; Jer 23:5; 30:9; Ezek 37:24; Acts 2:30-36).

⇒ A HIGH PRIEST AFTER THE ORDER OF MELCHISEDEC. An essential aspect of Christ being our Savior is His High Priesthood. This addresses the Intercessory ministry of Jesus, and His mediation of the New Covenant. Our salvation requires them both. He is a High Priest *“after the order of Melchisedec”* (Heb 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:11; 7:17,21) to distinguish Him from the Aaronic priesthood. Under the Law, a priest could not be a king, and a king could not act as a priest. Jesus, however, is required to act as both – even as Melchisedec, who was before the Law, and was both a king and a priest (Gen 14:18; Heb 7:1)

The adverse impact of this ignorance is far beyond the grasp of man. It has yielded a powerless and unformed church which, at the very best, limps through life under the weight of its own ignorance – without Divine power.

THE NEED FOR A FULLER VIEW OF JESUS CHRIST

There is a need in our time for a more complete view of Jesus, *“the Savior of the world”* (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14). A very abbreviated view of Jesus is altogether too common within the professed church. One hardly ever hears of either His intercession or mediation of the New Covenant. The fact that He is reigning now, and

cannot possibly be reigning in a fully sense, is virtually unknown in our time.

The adverse impact of this ignorance is far beyond the grasp of man. It has yielded a powerless and unformed church which, at the very best, limps through life under the weight of its own ignorance – without Divine power. This has dishonored God and disgraced the Christ.

AS HE SPOKE BY THE HOLY PROPHETS

“⁷⁰ As He spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began.”

The real *“Savior of the world”* is the one that was spoken of *“by the mouth of the holy prophets.”* It is not the Savior men perceived as needed. He is not the Savior the poor longed for, or the sick, or the oppressed. **The real Savior will address everything associated with men being freed from the guilt and power of sin, being delivered from the devil, and being reconciled to God.** Any *“Savior”* that cannot be so described is *“another Jesus”* (2 Cor 11:4), a *“false Christ”* (Matt 24:24), and *“a thief and a robber”* (John 10:8). Itemize the prophesies of Christ. Particularly note from Samuel (Acts 3:24; 13:20).

Peter affirmed that *“all the prophets from Samuel”* spoke of the days over which *“the Christ”* presides (Acts 3:24).

THERE WERE FEW PROPHECIES

BEFORE SAMUEL

⇒ A BRUISER OF SATAN. From the mouth of the Lord Himself: *“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and Thou shalt bruise his heel.”* (Gen 3:15). **Confirmed by Paul** in Hebrews 2:14-15

⇒ ONE BRUISED BY SATAN. From the mouth of the Lord: *“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel.”* **Confirmed by Isaiah** in Isaiah 53:5.

⇒ THE PEOPLE WILL GATHER TO HIM. From the mouth of Jacob: *“The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.”* (Gen 49:10). **Confirmed by a word from Jesus** in John 12:32.

⇒ A PROPHET TO WHOM THE PEOPLE WOULD HEARKEN. From the mouth of Moses: *“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken”* (Deut 18:15). **Confirmed by Peter** in Acts 3:22), and **Stephen** in Acts 7:37).

⇒ A PROPHET WHO WILL SPEAK WHAT GOD TELLS HIM. From the mouth of Moses: *“I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him.”* (Deut 18:18). **Confirmed by Peter** in Acts 3:23.

⇒ THE SEED OF ABRAHAM THROUGH WHOM ALL NATIONS WOULD BE BLESSED. Spoken by God to Abraham: *“And in thy Seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.”* (Gen 22:18). **Confirmed by Paul** in Galatians 3:8.

PROPHECIES FROM SAMUEL ON

- ⇒ ONE WHOSE THRONE GOD WOULD ESTABLISH. Spoken through Samuel: *"And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever"* (2 Sam 7:12-13). **Confirmed by Gabriel the angel** in Luke 1:32.
- ⇒ THE PEOPLE WOULD RAGE AGAINST HIM. Spoken through David: *"Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us"* (Psa 2:1-3). **Confirmed by the disciples** in Acts 4:25.
- ⇒ GOD WOULD DECLARE HIM TO BE HIS SON, BEGOTTEN OF HIM. *"I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee"* (Psa 2:7). **Confirmed by Paul** in Hebrews 1:5.
- ⇒ HE WOULD REST IN HOPE WHILE HIS BODY WAS BURIED. *"I have set the LORD always before me: because he is at My right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: My flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show Me the path of life: in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."* (Psa 16:8-11). **Confirmed by Peter** in Acts 2:25-28.
- ⇒ HE WOULD COME TO DO THE FATHER'S WILL. *"Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast Thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O my*

God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." (Psa 40:6-8). **Confirmed by Paul** in Hebrews 10:5-12.

- ⇒ HE WOULD LEAD CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE, AND RECEIVE GIFTS FOR MEN: *"Thou hast ascended on high, Thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them."* (Psa 68:18). **Confirmed by Paul** in Ephesians 4:8-10.
- ⇒ HE WOULD BE A STONE THE BUILDERS REJECTED, YET WAS MADE THE HEAD OF THE CORNER. *"The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the LORD'S doing; it is marvelous in our eyes."* (Psa 118:22-23). **Confirmed by Peter** in Acts 4:11 and 2 Pet 2:7.
- ⇒ WOULD BE BORN OF A VIRGIN. *"Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Immanuel."* (Isa 7:14). **Confirmed by Matthew** in Matthew 1:23.
- ⇒ WOULD BE PUT UPON THE THRONE OF DAVID. *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."* (Isa 9:6-7). **Confirmed by Gabriel** in Luke 1:33, and **Peter** in Acts 2:30-34.
- ⇒ A BRANCH GROWN OUT OF JESSE'S ROOT. *"And there shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots"* (Isa 11:1). **Confirmed by John** in Revelation 5:5 and 22:16).
- ⇒ THE KEY OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID WILL BE PAID UPON HIS SHOULDER. *"And the*

key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open. And I will fasten him as a nail in a sure place; and he shall be for a glorious throne to his father's house." (Isa 22:22-23). **Confirmed by John** in Revelation 3:7.

- ⇒ A SURE FOUNDATION AND CORNER STONE. *"Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."* (Isa 28:16). **Confirmed by Peter** in 1 Pet 2:6-8.
- ⇒ A KING WHO WILL REIGN INJ RIGHTEOUSNESS, A PLACE OF SAFETY. *"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land"* (Isa 32:1-2). **Confirmed by Paul** in Romans 5:21, Colossians 3:3, and Hebrews 1:8-9.
- ⇒ SHALL FEED HIS FLOCK LIKE A SHEPHERD. *"Behold, the Lord GOD will come with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young"* (Isa 40:10-11). **Confirmed by Paul** in Hebrews 13:20, and **Peter** in 1 Pet 2:25 and 5:4.
- ⇒ SHALL BRING FORTH JUDGMENT, AND NOT BREAK A BRUISED REED. *"Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him: He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth He shall not fail*

nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law" (Isa 42:1-4). **Confirmed by Matthew** in Matthew 12:18-20.

⇒ WILL GIVE THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID. "Incline your ear, and come unto me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even **the sure mercies of David**" (Isa 55:3). **Confirmed by Paul** in Acts 13:34

⇒ A WARRIOR WHO WAGES WAR IN RIGHTEOUSNESS. "For he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak" (Isa 59:17). **Confirmed by John** in Revelation 19:11-13.

⇒ SHALL TURN TRANSGRESSION FROM JACOB. "And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD" (Isa 59:20). **Confirmed by Paul** in Romans 11:26-27).

⇒ HE IS COMING WITH HIS REWARD. "Behold, the LORD hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, **Behold, thy salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before him**" (Isa 62:11). **Confirmed by John** in Revelation 22:12.

⇒ A KING SHALL REIGN AND PROSPER. "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). **Confirmed by Gabriel** in Luke 1:32-33, and **Paul** in First Corinthians 1:30.

⇒ WOULD BE GIVEN DOMINION, GLORY, AND A KINGDOM. "'I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near

before him. **And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed**" (Dan 7:13-14). **Confirmed by Matthew** (Matt 28:18), Paul (Eph 1:10-22), and Peter (1 Pet 3:22).

⇒ MAKE AN END OF SIN AND BRING IN EVERLASTING RIGHTEOUSNESS. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (Dan 9:24). **Confirmed by John** (John 1:29; 1 John 3:8), and **Paul** (2 Cor 5:18-21; Heb 9:26).

⇒ WILL RAISE UP THE TABERNACLE OF DAVID. "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old" (Amos 9:11). **Confirmed by James** in Acts 15:15-17.

⇒ THE DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS WILL COME. "And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts" (Hag 2:7). **Confirmed by Paul** in Romans 15:9-12.

⇒ GOD WOULD BRING FORTH HIS SERVANT. "Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men

wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth my servant the **BRANCH**" (Zech 3:8). **Confirmed by Paul** in Philippians 2:7.

⇒ HE WOULD COME INTO JERUSALEM RIDING ON THE FOAL OF AN ASS. "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: **He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass**" (Zech 9:9).

⇒ A FOUNTAIN WOULD BE OPENED FOR SIN AND FOR UNCLEANNESS. "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech 13:1). **Confirmed by Paul** in First Corinthians 6:11, and Ephesians 5:25-27, and Titus 3:5, and **John** in Revelation 1:5 and 7:13-14.

⇒ HE WOULD BE THE MESSENGER OF THE COVENANT. "Behold, I will send My Messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even **the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the LORD of hosts**" (Mal 3:1). **Confirmed by John** in John 8:28-29, and **Paul** in Hebrews 8:6 and 12:24.

⇒ HE WOULD CAUSE THE PEOPLE TO GROW UP AS CALVES OF THE STALL. "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall" (Mal 4:2). **Confirmed by John** (John 15:2-5), **Paul** (Ephesians 4:15 and First Thessalonians 1:3, and **Peter** in Second Peter 3:18.

The adverse impact of this ignorance is far beyond the grasp of man. It has yielded a powerless and unformed church which, at the very best, limps through life under the weight of its own ignorance – without Divine power.

The adverse impact of this ignorance is far beyond the grasp of man. It has yielded a powerless and unformed church which, at the very best, limps through life under the

weight of its own ignorance – without Divine power. There was no legitimate reason for the people to be surprised by the manner and work of the Savior. A few people were able to associate Jesus of Nazareth with the promised

Messiah – but they were few and far between (John 1:41; 4:29,42;7:41; 11:27). Like the Kingdom of God, Jesus did not come “with observation” (Lk 17:20). In order to recognize Jesus, God had to illumine the individual.

SAVED FROM OUR ENEMIES

“⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us.”

FROM OUR ENEMIES

“That we should be saved from our enemies . . .”

Other versions read, “*Salvation from our enemies,*” ^{NASB} “*Salvation from those who are against us,*” ^{BBE} “*deliverance from our enemies,*” ^{DARBY} “*He promised to save us from our enemies,*” ^{GWN} “*redeem us from our enemies,*” ^{MRD} “*deliver us from our foes,*” ^{WEYMOUTH} and “*salvation from ones hostile to us*” ^{LITV}

Moses once said to Israel, “*Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the LORD, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places*” (Deut 33:29). **At that time God had already saved them from the Egyptians** (Ex 14:30), **Amalek** (Ex 17:13), the **Canaanites** (Num 21:3), **Sihon** (Num 21:23-25), **Og** (Num 21:33-35), the **Midianites** (Num 31:5).

hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy” (Psa 106:10). **But, alas, such great deliverances had long disappeared when John the Baptist was born.** Israel was no longer shouting praises for great deliverances from their enemies. In fact, they were being ruled by their enemies at that very time.

Yet, God had promised a time of safety to them through the prophets.

⇨ “*And it shall come to pass in the day that **the LORD shall give thee rest from thy sorrow, and from thy fear, and from the hard bondage wherein thou wast made to serve.***” (Isa 14:3).

⇨ “*In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall **dwell safely**; and this is His name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.***” (Jer 23:6)

⇨ “*Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again unto this place, and I **will cause them to dwell safely**” (Jer 32:37)*

and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence, when I have executed judgments upon all those that despise them round about them; and they shall know that I am the LORD their God.” (Ezek 28:26)

⇨ “*Behold, at that time I **will undo all that afflict thee**: and I will save her that halteth, and gather her that was driven out; and I will get them praise and fame in every land where they have been put to shame. At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you: for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth, when I turn back your captivity before your eyes, saith the LORD.”* (Zeph 3:19-20)

FROM THE HAND OF ALL THAT HATE US

“ . . . and from the hand of all that hate us.”

Other versions read, “*the power of all those who hate us.*” ^{CEB} “*the clutches of those who hate us,*” ^{CSB} “*from the grip of all who hate us,*” ^{ISV} “*the hand of the ones detesting us,*” ^{ABP} “*the hand of all the ones hostile to us,*” ^{LITV} “*every hateful hand,*” ^{MESSAGE} and “*the hand of all hating us.*” ^{YLT} [*a mighty and valiant Helper, the Author of salvation*] ^{AMPLIFIED} for us.”

This defined **why** people, oppressed them – **why** they hated them. They hated them because of their difference from the rest of the world – their manners, their customs, and, primarily, their God. This was, and continues to be, while they are in a fallen state.

The Psalmist wrote, “*And He saved them from the hand of him that*

⇨ “*And **they shall dwell safely therein,***

The professed Christian community is not always clear about who hates them. This is owing to its frequent alliances and compromises with the world.

One thing the Jews were sure of – and still are: **those who hate them.** This is something that is not so clear to some. However, in spite of what men say about them disappearing, **the Jews are still a distinguishable people.** That is the reason they are hated.

The professed Christian community is not always clear about who hates them. This is owing to its frequent alliances and compromises with the world. Yet, where there is some semblance of faithfulness to God, the “Christians” are hated for their stands against abortion, sodomy, and the erroneous teaching of evolution. **Wherever there is any degree of separateness from the world, there is vehement and aggressive hatred.**

THE DELIVERANCE OF REFERENCE IS ASSOCIATED WITH A SAVIOR

This is not speaking of the mere cessation of hostility, but of something directly associated with the Messiah – the Redeemer. There is, of course, for the believers, an ultimate deliverance from every human oppressor, and from all that hate us. It will occur either at death, or when the Lord returns in all of His glory. The Psalmic expression will be totally fulfilled: *“For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be”* (Psa 37:10).

However, on an immediate basis, when one comes under the salvational care of Jesus, there is deliverance from the power of spiritual oppressors – the devil, demons, wicked spirits, principalities, and powers.

However, on an immediate basis, when one comes under the salvational care of Jesus, there is deliverance from the power of spiritual oppressors – the devil, demons, wicked spirits, principalities, and powers. As it is written, *“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”* (Heb 2:14-15). In Christ we *“have NOT received the spirit of bondage again to fear”* (Rom 8:15). We have been liberated, made free, and are admonished *“be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage”* (Gal 5:1).

When Jesus embarked on His ministry, He boldly announced that this promise was fulfilled in Him: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he*

hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19).

The Nominal Church Does Not Teach This

Instead of boldly announcing this liberty, the nominal church has chosen to make agreements with the world to use its solutions in addressing the matter of bondage. First, it has adopted the world’s jargon, referring to “addictions” and “habits.” Some more advanced Babylonians use terms like “generational curses,” also adopting certain routines and incantations alleged to free the ones in bondage. Of course, under such conditions it is not sufficient to announce, or proclaim, liberty – something that is to be believed, as compared to a routine that is to be adopted.

TO PERFORM THE MERCY THAT WAS PROMISED

“ 72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant; 73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham.”

Notice that throughout this inspired word there are continual references to promises stated in the Scripture. The working of the Lord is being explained by referring to the Word of the Lord. There is no assumption, theorizing, or supposition in anything Zecharias affirms.

THE MERCY PROMISED

“To perform the mercy promised to our fathers . . .”

Other versions Read, *“To show mercy toward our fathers,”* ^{ASV/NASB/NIV} *“To do acts of mercy to our fathers,”* ^{BBE} *“He has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,”* ^{CEB} *“This has happened so that he might show the mercy promised to our fathers,”* ^{CJB} *“He has dealt mercifully with our fathers,”* ^{CSB} *“to fulfil mercy with our fathers,”* ^{DARBY} *“he hath exercised his mercy to our fathers,”* ^{MRD} *“show faithful love to*

our ancestors,” ^{NJB} *“That he would deal mercifully with our fathers,”* ^{PNT} *“To fulfill the mercy promised to our fathers,”* ^{TNT} *“To do kindness with our fathers,”* ^{YLT} *“He dealt pitifully with our forefathers,”* ^{WEYMOUTH} and *“To make true and show the mercy and compassion and kindness [promised] to our forefathers.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The meaning of this verse is slightly obscured by many of the versions. It appears that the academicians, with their noses in their lexicons, forgot the message that was

Zacharias is filled with the Holy Spirit and delivers an insightful prophecy concerning the ministry of Christ and of John – *Given O. Blakely*

being declared. The prophecy is not about the fathers themselves, but about the fulfillment of the mercy what was promised to them. The “mercy” of reference is not what “our fathers” experienced, but what was promised that their progeny would experience. The particular promise was, “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen 12:3; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14). Peter referred to this when preaching in the Temple: “Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, **And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.** Unto you first God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities” (Acts 3:26). This promise was fulfilled in Jesus Christ.; Seeing that his son was to prepare the way for the Christ, Zecharias is prophesying that the time of blessing promised to the fathers was then being initiated.

HIS HOLY COVENANT

“ . . . and to remember his holy covenant . . . ”

Other versions read, “to keep in mind his holy word,” ^{BBE} “to remember his holy testament,” ^{DOUAY} “his holy promise,” ^{GWN} “his sacred promise,” ^{LIVING} and “His holy covenant [to bless, which is all the more sacred because it is made by God Himself].” ^{AMPLIFIED}

This was God’s promise to bless the world through Abraham’s Seed.

THE OATH

“ . . . The oath which he sware to our father Abraham.”

Other versions read, “the solemn pledge,” ^{CEB} “the covenant,” ^{NLT} “His sacred promise,” ^{LIVING} “He told,” ^{CEV} “the promise,” ^{ERV} “solemn oath,” ^{GNB} “What he swore,” ^{MESSAGE} sealed by oath.” ^{AMPLIFIED}

Lexically, the word translated “oath” (orkos) means, “that which has been pledged or promised with an oath,” ^{THAYER} “formal and binding statement oath,” ^{FRIEBERG} “in the case of a deity taking an oath, his divine being is regarded as

validating the statement.” ^{LOUW-NIDA}

Some of the versions are very sloppy in their representation of this statement–i.e. “the solemn pledge,” ^{CEB} “the covenant,” ^{NLT} “His sacred promise,” ^{LIVING} “He told,” ^{CEV} “the

does so to strengthen the faith of His people, who dwell in an uncertain realm, and cannot see into the future.

A VITAL DISTINCTION

A vital distinction must be made. Zecharias’ prophecy provides the reason



promise.” ^{ERV} Let it be clear, the “oath” was not the promise, and it was not a pledge, or the covenant.

A delineation of this statement is provided in Hebrews 6:17-18: “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us.” The promise was, “That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (Gen 22:17-18). The oath as “By Myself have I sworn,” or “I swear by Myself” ^{NIV} (Gen 22:16). The same expression is used in Isaiah 45:23, Jeremiah 22:5 and 49:13. This is the same as saying “As I live saith the Lord,” a phrase mentioned nineteen times in Scripture (Num 14:28; Isa 49:18; Jer 22:24; Ezek 5:11; 14:16,18,20; 16:48; 17:16; 18:3; 20:31,33; 33:11; 34:8; 35:6,11; Zeph 2:9; Rom 14:11). Also, the word “surely,” or “I will surely,” NASB is equivalent to an oath, for an Immutable God does not have say “surely.” But He

for Christ being sent into the world. In this text, it was to fulfill the promise that was given to Abraham – the blessing of the whole world through His Seed.

The Savior did not come into the world because men were asking for a Savior, or seeking a Deliverer. By implication, that means He was not sent to resolve humanly defined problems or circumstances. Nor, indeed, did God send Him into the world in order to bring men’s dreams to fruition. The truth of the matter is that in order for the blessing in the **Abrahamic promise to be fulfilled, the matter of sin had to be resolved.** Until someone from heaven took away the sin of the world, and it was judged by God against whom all sin is committed, no promise of eternal life or participation in the world to come could happen. **The devil had to be soundly defeated, and principalities and powers that ruled the world had to be plundered before anything with eternal ramifications could be done for men.** It is imperative that men perceive this. Give thanks for it, and live accordingly.

In this text Zecharias, moved by the Holy Spirit, announces that these and other things relating to an “eternal salvation,” would be announced by his Son, John the Baptist, and were now the focus of immediate Divine activity.

SERVING HIM WITHOUT FEAR

"⁷⁴ That He would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear."

THAT HE WOULD GRANT US

"That He would grant unto us. . ."

Other versions read, *"to enable us,"* ^{NIV} *"He has granted,"* ^{CEB} *"He has given us the privilege,"* ^{CSB} *"to give"* ^{DARBY} *"He promised,"* ^{GWN} *"by granting us."* ^{LIVING}

Most versions include this word – either *"grant,"* or *"given."* Several versions omit it altogether (

unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." (Rom 12:3)

⇒ *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is **given** to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith."* (Rom 12:6)

⇒ *"Now the God of patience and consolation **grant** you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus."* (Rom

- ⇒ Redeeming His people. (1:68b)
- ⇒ Raising up a horn of salvation for the people from the house of David. (1:69)
- ⇒ Speaking of this by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began." (1:70).
- ⇒ Declaring they would be saved from their enemies. (1:71a)
- ⇒ Declaring they would be saved from those who hated them (1:71b).
- ⇒ For performing the mercy promised to their fathers. (1:72a)
- ⇒ For remembering His holy covenant (1:72b)
- ⇒ For performing the oath He swore to their Abraham. (1:72c).
- ⇒ For granting that they, Being delivered out of the hand of their enemies, might serve Him without fear. (1:74).
- ⇒ For granting that they might serve Him in holiness and righteousness before Him the days of their lives. (1:74).
- ⇒ That John the Baptist would be called *"the prophet of the Highest,"* going before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways." (1:76).
- ⇒ That God would give His people the knowledge of salvation through the remission of their sins. (1:77).
- ⇒ That the remission would come from the tender mercy of God. (1:78a)
- ⇒ That they would be visited by *"the Dayspring from on high."* (1:78b)
- ⇒ That God would *"To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death."* (Luke 1:79).

This was not a mere declaration of what God saw the people doing, but was rather a declaration of what the Lord was going to do.

15:5)

⇒ *"That he would **grant** you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"* (Eph 3:16).

⇒ *"The Lord **grant** unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day: and in how many things he ministered unto me at Ephesus, thou knowest very well."* (2 Tim 1:18)

That should suffice to confirm that the prophecy is referring to an ability that was given by God, and would therefore be successful. **This was not a mere declaration of what God saw the people doing, but was rather a declaration of what the Lord was going to do.** Zecharias blessed *"the Lord God of Israel"* for:

- ⇒ *"And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is **given** unto us."* (Rom 5:5)
- ⇒ *"According as it is written, God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day."* (Rom 11:8)
- ⇒ *"For I say, through the grace **given***

⇒ That light would be given them “to guide [their] feet into the way of peace.” (1:79b)

There are at least seventeen things God would do – all contained in a brief prophecy by a single man. In those words the greatness, mercy and power are made known, as well as His purpose and great love. The weakness inherent in men is also revealed, together with the fact that help and direction must come from above.

BEING DELIVERED

“ . . . that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies . . . ”

Other versions read, “rescued from,”^{NIV} “made free from,”^{BBE} “saved out of the hand,”^{DARBY} “redeemed from,”^{MRD} “freed from,”^{LIVING} and “deliverance from our enemies’ grip.”^{ISV}

In the beginning God came down to “deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians” (Ex 3:8). During the time of the Judges, God “delivered them out of the hand of them that spoiled them” (Judges 2:16). When God raised up a Judge, “then the LORD was with the judge, and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge” (Judg 2:18). On one occasion it

is written that “the children of Israel remembered not the LORD their God, who had delivered them out of the hands of all their enemies on every side” (Judg 8:34). He delivered them “out of the hand of Midian” (Judges 9:17), and “the Philistines” (Judges 13:5).

Now, however, they were under another oppressive people – the Romans. Although, by the providence of God, they were allowed some latitude, yet they were not a freed people. Yet, through Isaiah God promised, “And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labor in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them” (Isa 65:21-23).

However, peaceful surroundings and deliverance from all of their enemies were not ends of themselves. It was all in order to something greater.

SERVING HIM WITHOUT FEAR

“ . . . might serve Him without

fear.”

That is, without fear of the enemy, or their enemies. Serving God “without fear” has a New Covenant equivalent that is worded differently. Speaking of Christ Jesus, it is written, “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him” (Eph 3:12). This is also the same as having “full assurance” (Col 2:2; Heb 6:11; 10:22).

In the past, deliverance from their enemies was manifested in at least two ways.

⇒ First, their enemies could not defeat them, but were rather defeated by Israel – when Gold delivered their enemies into their hands (Deut 3:3; Deut 21:10; 2 Sam 14:47-48; Josh 10:12-14).

⇒ Second, there were times when God would not even allow their enemies to think of overcoming them. In such cases, the fear of the Lord came upon their enemies (Deut 2:25; 11:25; 1 Chron 14:17; 2 Chron 14:14; 17:10; Esth 8:17). All of this was done in order that the Israelites might serve the Lord without fear.

IN HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

“⁷⁵ In holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life.”

IN HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

Serving the Lord is not merely an outward act. There is a certain condition that must be found within the people.

“In holiness and righteousness before Him . . . ”

Other versions read, “righteousness and holy living,”^{BBE} “holiness and uprightness,”^{NJB} “holy and acceptable,”^{LIVING} “piety and uprightness,”^{WEYMOUTH} “sacredness and

righteousness,”^{ABP} “holy and good,”^{CEV} “holiness and justice,”^{DOUAY} “holy and honorable,”^{GW} “consecration and righteousness,”^{LITV} and “rectitude and uprightness.”^{MRD}

HOLINESS means “PIETY TOWARD GOD, FIDELITY,”^{THAYER} “A DISPOSITION, DEDICATION.”^{FRIBERG} This has to do with character.

RIGHTEOUSNESS means “THE STATE OF HIM WHO IS SUCH AS HE OUGHT TO BE: THE CONDITION ACCEPTABLE TO GOD,”^{THAYER} “UPRIGHTNESS,”^{FRIBERG} “THE ACT OF DOING WHAT GOD REQUIRES.”^{LOUW-NIDA} This relates to the uprightness of what men do.

Serving God properly involves both of these. The necessity of character emphasizes that more is involved than merely carrying out a religious routine. Also having correct motives and purity of heart must be combined with proper expression.

ALL THE DAYS OF OUR LIFE

“ . . . all the days of our life.”

Serving God is not intended to be seasonal – even though under the Law is may have appeared to be that way. However, special seasons were appointed because of the unregeneracy of the people. They were fundamentally

hard-hearted, and required consistent prodding and chastening. The salvation of God, as announced by John the Baptist, and declared and carried out by the Christ, would introduce a new era in which the people would be made holy.

CALLED THE PROPHET OF THE HIGHEST

“⁷⁶ And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways.”

Now Zecharias prophesies over the eight-day-old infant. All that is said here is to be considered with the fact in mind that John was filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother’s womb.

CALLED THE PROPHET OF THE HIGHEST

“And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest . . .”

Other versions read, “*prophet of the Most High,*” ^{NIV} “*prophet of God in heaven above.*” ^{CEV}

To this day, all peoples who acknowledge the existence of Deity, also acknowledge there is a God who is above all other gods. Heathen religions, as a general rule, concede they do not know who this is. Moses told Israel, who had just soent fdour hundred years in Egypt, “*For the LORD your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward*” (Deut 10:17).

When Israel took the land of Canaan, and the children of Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh decided to live on the other side of Jordan. However, they acknowledged to all Israel that God was “*The LORD God of gods, the LORD God of gods*” (Josh 22:22). The Psalmist also referred to “the God of gods.” (Psa 136:2). Having heard Daniel interpret his dream of the great image, and after his own wise men who worshiped other gods had failed to interpret his dream, Nebuchadnezzar said, “*The king answered unto Daniel, and said, Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of*

gods, and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret” (Dan 2:47).

As well as being above all other gods (who are really demons feigning to be gods – Lev 17:7; Deut 32:16-17; Psa 106:37-38; 1 Cor 10:20; Rev 9:20), God is also over Satan himself, “*the god of this world*” (2 Cor 4:4).

It would be apparent, however, that John the Baptist was the prophet of the Highest. Although he would do “no miracle” (John 10:41), he did not speak like other men. Under his powerful preaching multitudes repented and were baptized for the remission of sins – something the world had never seen before that time.

GO BEFORE THE FACE OF THE LORD
: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord . . .”

Other versions read, “*before the Lord,*” ^{NASB} “*ahead of the Lord,*” ^{GWN} “*go on in front before the Lord,*” ^{LIVING} and “*You will go first before the Lord.*” ^{ERV} Most of the versions read “*before the face of the Lord.*”

The word “*face*” [prosopon] is in the Greek text. It means “*The face, i. e. the anterior part of the human head,*” ^{THAYER} “*face, countenance,*” ^{FRIBERG} and “*the face, visage, countenance.*” ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT}

There is no question concerning John the Baptist going before the Person of Christ, announcing His coming, and preparing the way for Him. However, it does not seem to mke that this is what is intended by the phrase “*before the face of the Lord.*” Wherever this expression is used in the Scriptures, it refers to what the Lord Himself, or some other personalities/ personalities are beholding (Gen 19:13;

1 Sam 26:20); Lam 2:19; 3:35; Lk 2:31; Acts 7:45).

I see this text as affirming that John the Baptist will be performing His ministry in the presence of the God who called Him. He will be preparing the way of the Lord precisely as He was sent to do. The focus will not be on what John is doing, but on what the “Most High is doing through Him.

TO PREPARE HIS WAYS

“ . . . to prepare His ways.”

Other versions read, “*prepare the way for Him,*” ^{NIV} “*make ready His ways,*” ^{ASV} “*prepare a way for him,*” ^{NJB} “*prepare the way for the Messiah,*” ^{LIVING} and “*prepare his road for him.*” ^{GNB}

The word “*ways*” is plural in both the Greek [ōdoūs] and English texts. The question is, What are “His ways.” The word “*way*” itself refers to a road, path, or highway – something that leads to a specific destination. In this text, it has to do with the way to God, or the means through which salvation can be realized through the Christ.

This has to do with certain frame of mind, and type of that is being lived. The type of life has already been described: “*in righteousness and holiness before Him*” (1:75). His ministry of calling men to repentance commenced that kind of life. Because of the twisting of God’s Word, there had been little or no repentance among the people. In that condition they were not ready to receive the Lord. Therefore John came with a powerful message that called upon men to repent, for the kingdom of God was at hand. In so doing he was straightening out the road (), and gathering the stones of hindrance that were strewn upon it. **Jesus would not enter a cluttered road.**

TO GIVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION

“ 77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins.”

THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION

“To give knowledge of salvation unto his people . . .”

Other versions read, *“tell his people how to be saved,”* ^{CEB} *“spreading the knowledge among his people that deliverance comes by,”* ^{CJB} *“knowledge of deliverance,”* ^{DARBY} *“make his people know that they can be saved,”* ^{GWN} *“give the knowledge of life,”* ^{MRD} *“tell his people how to find salvation,”* ^{NLT} *“tell his people how to find salvation,”* ^{LIVING} and *“giving knowledge of saving health.”* ^{JUB}

The versions that say John was to tell God’s people how to find salvation misrepresent this text (CEB,GWN,NLT, LIVING,IE,CEV,ERV,GNB,GW,MESSAGE). The point is not declaring how men were to be saved! John came to introduce Jesus the Savior!

Salvation Had to Be Redefined

The Jewish concept of salvation had to be redefined. The word “salvation” is found ninety times from Genesis thru Malachi. Only once is it remotely associated with the forgiveness of sins: *“Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name: and deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name’s sake”* (Psa 79:9).

When Moses and the [prophets referred to being “saved,” it was never from sin, transgressions, or condemnation. It is said they were saved from their “enemies” (Num 10:9; 2 Sam 22:4; Psa 18:3; 44:7; 106:10; Isa 37:17-20). Also, the saving of life in the flesh (Gen 19:19), and out of distress (Psa 107:19). However, the idea of being saved from the guilt and power of sin, if known at all, was only

in a very rudimentary sense.

The promise of a coming Redeemer was given that referred to dealing with sin: *“And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD”* (Isa 59:20; Rom 11:26-27). Daniel did mention the people had not prayed for God to turn them from their iniquities so they could understand His truth (Dan 9:13).

Therefore, salvation was nearly always associated with physical deliverances from enemies, plagues, distresses, etc – but generally never from sin and transgression.

However, the One for whom John the Baptist is preparing the way is not coming for deliverance from our earthly enemies and circumstances. Such deliverances did not require the humbling of the Word in taking the form of a servant, or a vicarious death in which the iniquities of us all were laid upon the Savior. That is a mind of salvation that was unknown until the time of John the Baptist.

BY THE REMISSION OF THEIR SINS

“ . . . by the remission of their sins.”

Other versions read, *“forgiveness of their sins,”* ^{NASB} *“having sins forgiven,”* ^{CJB} *“release of their sins”* ^{ABP}

The word translated “remission,” and elsewhere “forgiveness,” has the following lexical definition: “RELEASE, AS FROM BONDAGE, IMPRISONMENT; FORGIVENESS, PARDON, OF SINS (PROPERLY, *THE LETTING THEM GO, AS IF THEY HAD NOT BEEN COMMITTED,* ^{THAYER} OF CAPTIVITY RELEASE, LIBERATION, DELIVERANCE; CANCELLATION OF GUILT,” ^{FRIBERG} “TO REMOVE THE GUILT RESULTING FROM WRONGDOING - ^I TO PARDON,” ^{LOUW-NIDA} “A LETTING GO, DISMISSAL,” ^{LIDDELL-SCOTT} AND “ PARDON, CANCELLATION

OF AN OBLIGATION, A PUNISHMENT, OR GUILT.” ^{GINGRICH}

This kind of release could not be accomplished by sacrifices made under the Law. As it is written, *“And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins”* (Heb 10:11). Wherever God said a sin was forgiven (Psa 32:1; 78:38; 85:2; 103:3), it was always in anticipation of the vicarious death of Christ Jesus. We know this is the case, for it is written, *“And for this cause He is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance”* (Heb 9:15).

True salvation is from Divine wrath (Rom 5:9; 1 Thess 1:10), sin (Rom 6:7,18), this present evil world (Gal 1:4), the power of darkness (Col 1:13), and the condemning Law (Rom 7:6). Experientially, all of those deliverances are initiated by the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 10:43; 13:38,39; 26:18; Rom 4:7-8; Col 2:13; 1 John 2:12).

When a person – any person – is persuaded that their sins have been forgiven, and that they really been reconciled to God, and made pure in His sight, then, and only then, do they possess *“the knowledge of salvation.”*

There are promised realities that cannot be realized until the remission of sins has been experienced. That was something John the Baptist pioneered. He *“did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins”* (Mark 1:4). In that experience the definition of salvation was made more clear.

THE VISITATION OF THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH

" 78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us."

THE TENDER MERCY OF OUR GOD

"Through the tender mercy of our God . . ."

Other versions read, *"loving mercies of our God,"* ^{BBE} *"God's deep compassion,"* ^{CEB} *"God's merciful compassion,"* ^{CSB} *"the bowels of mercy of our God,"* ^{DARBY} and *"the faithful love of our God."* ^{NJB}

The idea here is that sin had made men morally and spiritually frail. Exposure to God in the most limited manner could very well mean their destruction. By the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us, men could have dealings with God without being consumed. They could even be taught by God of things hitherto unknown among men. God could even speak to them frankly about the fierce foes they face in Satan, demons, and his principalities and powers. The delineation of such powers prior to Jesus could not have been endured by the people. In all of Moses and the

Prophets, David is the only one who mentioned God's *"tender mercies"* (Psa 25:6; 40:11; 51:1; 69:16; 77:9; 79:8; 103:4; 119:77,156; 145:9). As a whole, this aspect of God remained unknown. But, with the coming of Christ, this facet of the Divine nature was accented and delineated.

THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH

" . . . whereby the dayspring from on high . . ."

Other versions read, *"the Sunrise,"* ^{NASB} *"the rising sun,"* ^{NIV} *"the dawn from on high,"* ^{NRSV} *"the day shall dawn,"* ^{RSV} and *"dawn from heaven."* ^{BBE}

Jesus is *"the sun of righteousness"* that has risen *"with healing in his wings"* (Mal 4:2). When He began His ministry it is written that *"The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up"* (Matt 4:16).

More God was seen than ever before. His great salvation began to be unfolded. Life itself was illuminated. When John commenced his preparatory

work, the world was morally and spiritually like it was when the creation commenced, *"darkness was upon"* it face (Gen 1:2). Now faith and hope will be able to be birthed and grow to fruition.

HATH VISITED US

" . . . hath visited us."

Other versions read, *"shall visit us,"* ^{NASB} *"will come to us,"* ^{NIV} *"will break upon us,"* ^{NRSV} *"will dawn upon us,"* ^{RSV} and *"has come to us."* ^{BBE}

Who would ever have thought such a thing could happen! Men had drifted from God. The Gentiles had corrupted themselves. The Jews had departed from God in their thoughts and ways. Yet, humanity is visited by the Lord from heaven! Man could not go up, so He came down. Man could not lift himself up, so the Lord humbled Himself. Heaven was beyond the reach of mortals, so the immortal One came down to us. He *"dwelt among us"* (John 1:14). He became identified with the ones He came to save. What wondrous love is this!

TO GIVE LIGHT

" 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

TO GIVE LIGHT

"To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. . ."

Other versions read, *"to shine upon,"* ^{NIV} and *"To enlighten them."* ^{DOUAY}

This was equivalent to causing the blind to see. It is what was prophesied of old time, *"And in that day shall the*

deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness" (Isa 29:18). And again, *"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped"* (Isa 35:5).

Now the people would be able to see God Himself more clearly. They would be able perceive the truth, detect the presence of the Lord, know the tactics of the enemy, and comprehend more of their own persons. The promises of God would be clarified. The

dangers of this present evil world would be discerned. They would be able to live without stumbling.

TO GUIDE OUR FEET

" . . . to guide our feet into the way of peace."

The *"way of peace"* may involve being peaceable, but that is not the focus here. This has to do with peace with God, and being able to live within the circumference of that peace. It is being able to live without provoking God, or tempting Him.

AND THE CHILD GREW AND WAXED STRONG IN SPIRIT

Zacharias is filled with the Holy Spirit and delivers an insightful prophecy concerning the ministry of Christ and of John – *Given O. Blakely*

^{80a} *And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit.*"

This provides all of the information we have about John the Baptist from his circumcision until he went into "the deserts."

THE CHILD GREW

"And the child grew . . ."

Other versions read, "the child continued to grow," ^{NASB} "became tall," ^{BBE} "grew up," ^{CEB} and "kept growing." ^{NET}

As John grew, he maintained the status of the Nazarite, as Gabriel informed Zacharias: "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and

he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). The devil was not able to hinder his growth, and his life apparently was never threatened.

WAXED STRONG IN SPIRIT

"...and waxed strong in spirit. . ."

Other versions read, "became strong in spirit," ^{NKJV} "strong in character," ^{CEB} "became spiritually strong," ^{CSB} "strengthened in spirit," ^{DARBY} "greatly loved God," ^{LIVING} "gain strength in the Spirit," ^{WILLIAMS} "fortified in spirit," ^{ABP} "God's Spirit gave him great power," ^{CEV} and "healthy and spirited." ^{MESSAGE}

So far as men were concerned, John, like Jesus, grew in wisdom and stature, which are comprehended in the word "grew." However, so far as God was concerned, he "waxed strong in spirit." This does not mean stubborn or hard to control, but firm in his thinking, manners, and resolution. He had to be the sort of man who could not be turned about by those who were cunning, or easily lured into various temptations. He could not be the sort of man who would need to recover from moral laxness and stupidity.

There is a crying need for people of this caliber today – people who are resolute, firm in their persuasion of the truth, and bold to stand for the Lord.

TILL THE DAY OF HIS SHOWING

^{80b} *. . . and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel.*"

HE WAS IN THE DESERTS

" . . . and was in the deserts . . ."

Other versions read, "in the wilderness," ^{NRSV} "waste land." ^{BBE}

Matthew writes of John the Baptist, "And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey" (Matt 3:4). Mark writes, "And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a

skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey" (Mark 1:6).

What a figure he was! He was preparing himself for six months of ministry – a period during which he must prepare the way for the Christ. He could not afford to be mingling with the other people during the time he himself was preparing, and God was instructing him.

TILL THE DAY OF HIS SHOWING

" . . . till the day of his showing unto Israel."

Other versions read, "his manifestation," ^{NKJV} "his public appearance," ^{NASB} "until he appeared publically to Israel," ^{NIV} "when he came before the eyes of Israel," ^{BBE} "until he began his public ministry to Israel," ^{CEB} "til the day came that he should show him self unto Israel." ^{GENEVA}

It was God Himself who showed John, bringing him forth out of the desert to commence his ministry. There came a time when John should commence his ministry. It would be coordinated with Jesus' coming down from Galilee to be baptized by him.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 12/12/14. We will continue our series of lessons in the Gospel of Luke. The seventh lesson will cover verses 1-20 of chapter 2: "THE BIRTH OF JESUS" – the most significant and far-reaching birth in all of time. It was the dawning of a new day – the time God had taught the people, through His holy prophets, to expect. Even though it was the most significant birth of all, yet God only allowed a few people to know what was happening. The Christ would be made known when He commenced His ministry, going about doing good and healing all who were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38). Until that time, He remained in relative obscurity. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.