

## Zachariah's Praise

Luke 1:57-80

Zechariah means "Yahweh remembers."

"As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust." Psalm 103:13-14

Yahweh remembers His staggering promises and He remembers His struggling people. He is a God who stoops to our weakness and brings us into the light of His salvation.

Doesn't it cause you to be filled with wonder and amazement that God stooped down out of tender mercy toward us and met us at our level and at our greatest need in Christ?

### **I. Illumination: He Remembers Our Blindness. Luke 1:68-70**

"And his father Zechariah **was filled with the Holy Spirit** and prophesied, saying, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David...' Luke 1:68-70

" But the angel said to Zechariah, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and you wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. And you will have joy and gladness, and may will rejoice at his birth for he will be great before the Lord.' Luke 1:13-15

"And Zechariah said to the angel, 'How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.'" Luke 1:18

Christ must not only be born into the world. He must be born in us for us to both see and to celebrate the coming of the Christ to save His people from their sins.

**It is only by the illuminating work of the Spirit can we actually believe that God would come to us and to meet us with His mercy. We only believe in the incarnation of the Son of God when we experience the illuminating work of the Spirit of God.**

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the people; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you... Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and exult." Isaiah 60:1-3

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”  
Galatians 4:4-7

## **II. Liberation: He Remembers Our Slavery. Luke 1:69-70**

“He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David as he spoke by the mouth of prophets of old, that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us; to show mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham to grant us that we, being delivered from our enemies, may serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.”  
(Luke 1:69-70)

God has shown up so that sin, death, and Satan no longer have dominion over us. The purpose of Jesus is not just to deliver us from sin’s guilt. It is to rescue us from its power.

Sin is the great joy-killer. It promises life but it alienates from the true source of Joy – Yahweh. Christ has come to free us from the dominion of sin and Satan.

“One of the glorious lessons God taught Israel is that sin does not liberate you; sin enslaves you. And He gave them a tangible imprisonment to remind them of that truth. Sin is not a good thing; sin is not a good thing that makes your life better; sin always makes your life smaller, and narrower, and worse. It may take it a while for that to seep home to us, but that's the way it always is. And so, in this picture of the prisoner, He reminds us that sin imprisons; it takes dominion over us.” Ligon Duncan

"But, one of the things that He does to us when He saves us is that He redeems us from that captivity to sin; He redeems us from that domination of sin. Sin no longer is our master; we're no longer imprisoned by sin. The Lord Jesus Christ takes dominion of our life and we are not dominated anymore by that sin. It doesn't mean that we don't cease to struggle against sin, but it does mean that sin is no longer our master." Ligon Duncan

“For freedom, Christ has set us free...” Galatians 5:1

"What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." Romans 6:1-3

Christ came not to only to forgive us but to free us from its tyranny so that we can live for God.

“Come, thou long expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
**from our fears and sins release us,  
let us find our rest in thee.**

Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.”

Charles Wesley

### **III. Consolation: He Remembers Our Misery. Luke 1:76-79**

“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace.” Luke 1:76-79

John went ahead to announce that God was coming in the Christ in order to bring us:

- Forgiveness: To teach us the forgiveness of our sins because of the tender mercy of God.

“to give to his people the knowledge of the forgiveness of their sins because of the tender mercy of our God.”

“He doesn’t handle us roughly. He doesn’t scowl and scold. He doesn’t lash out, the way many of our parents did. And all this restraint on his part is not because he has a diluted view of our sinfulness. He knows our sinfulness far more deeply than we do. Indeed, we are aware of just the tip of the iceberg of our depravity, even in our most searching moments of self-knowledge. His restraint simply flows from his tender heart for his people.” Dane Ortlund

“Look to Christ. He deals gently with you. It’s the only way he knows how to be. He is the high priest to end all high priests. As long as you fix your attention on your sin, you will fail to see how you can be safe. But as long as you look to this high priest, you will fail to see how you can be in danger. Looking inside ourselves, we can anticipate only harshness from heaven. Looking out to Christ, we can anticipate only gentleness.” Dane Ortlund

- Hope: To remove the dark shadow of hopelessness and death.

“whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.”

- Peace: He came to bring us His Peace.

“to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Have you the ability to “wonder and be amazed” at the coming of Jesus this Christmas? Do you feel forgotten?

Yahweh Remembers!

Ask God’s Spirit to open your eyes to the most beautiful reality that He hasn’t and will not ever forget us? He cannot forget His people.

He sees your struggles with sin and you can trust the power of Christ to help you triumph over the things that long have held you and to live for God in holiness and in righteousness all your days.

Christ has a tender heart toward all our miseries. He sees our sin, sorrow, and anxiety. In His tender mercy, he had come to bring us forgiveness, hope, and peace.

Study Questions:

**Zachariah’s Praise – Luke 1:57–80**

**“Yahweh Remembers”**

**Opening / Icebreaker**

1. When you hear the phrase “*God remembers*,” what emotions or images come to mind? How is that different from the way humans remember—or forget?

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**I. Illumination: He Remembers Our Blindness (Luke 1:68–70)**

2. Read Luke 1:68–70 aloud. What words or phrases stand out to you in Zechariah’s praise, and what do they reveal about God’s initiative toward His people?
3. Zechariah doubted the angel’s promise earlier (Luke 1:18). How does his silence and later praise illustrate the difference between **human skepticism** and **Spirit-given faith**?
4. The lesson says, “*Christ must not only be born into the world; He must be born in us.*” What does that mean practically for how we understand faith and spiritual sight?

5. How do Isaiah 60:1–3 and Galatians 4:4–7 help us understand the role of the Holy Spirit in moving us from darkness to light?
  6. Can you share a time when God used His Word or Spirit to help you “see” something about Christ that you hadn’t seen before?
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## II. Liberation: He Remembers Our Slavery (Luke 1:69–75)

7. In Luke 1:69–75, what does Zechariah say God has saved His people *from*, and what has He saved them *for*?
  8. The lesson emphasizes that Christ frees us not only from **sin’s guilt** but also from **sin’s power**. Why is it important to hold both of these truths together?
  9. Ligon Duncan says, “*Sin always makes your life smaller, narrower, and worse.*” How have you seen that to be true—either in your own life or in the world around you?
  10. Read Romans 6:1–4. What does “walking in newness of life” look like in everyday obedience, not just in theory?
  11. Where do you still feel the pull of old “masters”? How does the gospel speak hope into those ongoing struggles?
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## III. Consolation: He Remembers Our Misery (Luke 1:76–79)

12. According to Luke 1:76–79, what specific gifts does Christ bring to people who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death?
  13. How does the phrase “*because of the tender mercy of our God*” reshape the way we think about repentance, forgiveness, and approaching Christ?
  14. Dane Ortlund emphasizes Christ’s gentleness toward sinners. Why is this often hard for believers to believe about Jesus?
  15. Which of these do you most need to receive afresh right now: **forgiveness, hope, or peace**? Why?
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## Reflection & Application

16. The lesson asks, “*Do you feel forgotten?*” How does Zechariah’s praise challenge that feeling in light of God’s covenant faithfulness?
17. How can remembering that “*Yahweh remembers*” change the way we face suffering, temptation, or discouragement this season?
18. As Christmas approaches, what might it look like for you to recover a sense of **wonder and amazement** at the coming of Christ?