

The Dayspring From on High — When God Visits His People

Series: Luke: An Orderly Account - Dr. Randy White

I. Mercy Made Visible (vv. 57–66)

The Promised Son Arrived in God's Time

- Elisabeth's "**full time came**," and she brought forth the son God had promised. The ordinary birth made an extraordinary mercy visible in history (Luke 1:13, 57).
- Her neighbors and relatives recognized that "**the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her**." The joy promised before John's birth now became shared joy (vv. 14, 58).
- On the eighth day John was circumcised within Israel's covenant order. Circumcision was commanded; naming the child after his father was family custom (Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3).
- Luke repeatedly marks completed and appointed times. The promise did not remain a religious impression; it arrived as a bodily, verifiable event at the time God had ordered.

The Divinely Given Name Prevailed

- Elisabeth resisted the expected name: "**Not so; but he shall be called John**." The name—*the LORD is gracious*—had been assigned by God before conception (vv. 13, 60).
- Zacharias wrote, "**His name is John**." He did not propose a name but submitted to the identity already established by God's word.
- His mouth opened immediately, and his first restored speech praised God. The discipline announced in verse 20 ended precisely when the promised word was fulfilled and obeyed (Psalm 51:15).
- Zacharias had asked, "**Whereby shall I know this?**" Now his written confession showed that corrected unbelief had become obedient faith; God's discipline produced praise rather than bitterness.
- Fear spread through Judaea's hill country. The people stored these events in their hearts and asked, "**What manner of child shall this be!**" The answer began with the Lord's hand upon him.

II. Redemption Raised Up (vv. 67–71)

The God of Israel Had Visited His People

- Filled with the Holy Ghost, Zacharias interpreted the events prophetically. His months of silence ended in a message centered first upon Messiah, not his own son.
- "**Blessed be the Lord God of Israel**." God had visited and redeemed "**his people**"—Israel—by intervening in covenant mercy (Exodus 4:31; Luke 7:16).
- Zacharias spoke of promised redemption as accomplished because God's saving action had begun and His word could not fail.
- "**Visited**" means more than observing from a distance. As when the LORD visited Israel in Egypt, God had looked upon His people in order to intervene for their deliverance (Exodus 4:31).

The House of David Supplied the Horn

- God had raised up "**an horn of salvation**" in David's house. The horn pictures victorious royal strength; Jesus is the promised Davidic Saviour (1 Samuel 2:10; Psalm 132:17).
- The Davidic location matters: John came from a priestly household, but the saving Horn arose in "**the house of his servant David**." The forerunner could announce salvation; only the King could accomplish it.
- This salvation agreed with what God had spoken by His holy prophets from ancient time. Messiah fulfills Israel's prophetic hope rather than abandoning it.
- Salvation "**from our enemies**" describes real deliverance for Israel from hostile powers. Forgiveness is essential in verse 77, but it does not erase the national hope stated here (Isaiah 11:11–14).

III. Covenant Remembered (vv. 72–75)

Promised Mercy Rested upon God's Oath

- The visitation would "**perform the mercy promised to our fathers**" and "**remember his holy covenant**." Divine remembrance means faithful action, not recovered information (Exodus 2:24).
- Zacharias identified the covenant's sworn foundation: "**The oath which he sware to our father Abraham**" (Genesis 22:16–18; Micah 7:20).
- Genesis 22 joins the two themes Zacharias celebrates: Abraham's seed would possess the gate of his enemies, and all nations would be blessed. Israel's deliverance and blessing to the nations need not compete.
- Grace and covenant faithfulness are not rivals. God's mercy performs what His truth pledged to Israel's fathers.

Deliverance Was Freedom to Serve

- God would grant His people deliverance "**out of the hand of our enemies**" so they might serve Him without hostile intimidation.
- Biblical liberty is not independence from every master. Like the exodus, deliverance has worship and service as its purpose: "**Let my son go, that he may serve me**" (Exodus 4:23).
- "**Without fear**" means free from the intimidation of Israel's enemies, not without reverence toward God. The same chapter commends those who fear Him (v. 50).
- The promised service would be "**in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life**." Deliverance produces devoted living; devoted living does not purchase deliverance.

IV. Dawn Breaking (vv. 76–80)

John Would Prepare the Lord's Way

- John would be called "**the prophet of the Highest**." His greatness lay in going before the Lord, never in becoming the center of the message.
- Isaiah and Malachi had promised a messenger who would prepare the LORD's way. Luke applies that role to John going before Jesus (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1; Luke 3:4–6).
- Jesus therefore occupies the place of the LORD whose coming the prophets anticipated. John's identity is wholly preparatory: he is a voice, a messenger, and a prophet of the Highest.
- John would give God's people "**knowledge of salvation ... by the remission of their sins**." Israel's national hope could not bypass its need for forgiveness (Jeremiah 31:31, 34).

The Dayspring Would Visit Those in Darkness

- Remission flows "**through the tender mercy of our God**." The saving visitation originates in God's deep compassion, not human merit.
- "**The dayspring from on high hath visited us**." Messiah is heaven's dawn breaking upon those seated helplessly in darkness and death's shadow (Isaiah 9:2; Malachi 4:2).
- "**Dayspring**" is the sunrise—the point at which daylight springs forth. The KJV follows the received text's past form, "**hath visited**," celebrating Messiah's visitation as already begun and certain.
- His light does more than expose darkness; it guides feet "**into the way of peace**." The visitation brings revelation, direction, and peace under God's rule.
- John grew strong in spirit in the deserts until his appointed public appearance unto Israel. Hidden preparation preceded public service, but the coming Light—not the herald—remained the hope of God's people.