**“JESUS, THE HORN OF SALVATION**

Luke 1:67-79

Key verse: 1:69

**“He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David”**

Good morning everyone! Merry Christmas! As we will have our Christmas worship service next Sunday, we may prepare our hearts for it through today’s passage. The title of my message today is “Jesus, the Horn of Salvation and the Rising Sun.”

My message has two parts:
**Part 1 - The Horn Of Salvation (verses 67-75)
Part 2 - The Rising Sun (verses 76-79)**

Part 1: The Horn Of Salvation

Verse 67 says, **"His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:**"

Although the Bible calls this passage Zechariah's Song, this is really a prophecy inspired by the Holy Spirit which is all about the coming of the Lord Jesus. The previous passage shows who Zechariah is and what happened in his life. Zechariah was a priest in the time of Herod king of Judea. Both he and his wife, Elizabeth were upright in the sight of God, but they had no children, until they became very old. Then one day, while he was serving God in the temple, burning incense, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, and delivered God’s message that their prayer had been heard and his wife Elizabeth would bear a son, John. But at the very moment of his prayers being answered, he became unbelieving. He replied to the angel :**"How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." The angel answered, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time."** Zechariah probably got mad and said to himself: "Why didn't I just believe!" He couldn't speak, and probably couldn't hear either, so he couldn't vent or be consoled. This was a rare time of deep silence. During this time the Holy Spirit most likely inspired him to know what God was doing in his life. His focus shifted from himself to God. This time of silence and study, meditation and isolation became the time for God to broaden Zechariah spiritual perspective. Finally, the word of God came true, and his son was born, and Zechariah obeyed God to name him John. Then immediately his tongue was loosened, and he was filled with Holy Spirit and prophesied. What did he praise God for?

Look at verse 68. **“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people”.**

Although Zechariah had just experienced a miracle with the birth of his son, he only spends two verses in this passage talking about John. The rest of his song is dedicated to praising the Lord, the God of Israel. For Zechariah could realize God’s redeeming work for all his people through his personal blessing. At the time it was a very dark period in the history of Israel, due to Roman occupation and corrupt religious leaders. But Zechariah praised God. He saw God's fulfilment of His promises to David, through all the prophets, His mercy and remembrance to all their ancestors based on His holy covenant and the oath to Abraham. As God promised, He came to his people and redeemed them. God had this plan for His people from the beginning, that all nations would be blessed through them (Ge 22:17-18). They would be for Him a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex 19:5-6). Although they were too weak and failed to live up to this on their own, God himself has come to redeem his people from all their failure. (This is the true meaning of Christmas.) Praise God, because he has come and has redeemed his people!

Now, how did God accomplish this?

Let’s read verses 69 together: **“He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David”**

What does it mean by “a horn”? According to NIV Bible footnote, horn here symbolizes ‘strength.’ God has redeemed his people by raising a horn, a mighty horn of salvation. Jesus, who was born in the house of David, is this mighty horn of salvation. According to the Bible, Satan is our fundamental enemy. He also has 7 heads and 10 horns. (Rev 12:3) Therefore, no human being is as crafty and powerful as Satan. From the beginning, Satan used his craftiness and power to tempt Eve and through her Adam, with his lie. When Adam and Eve were deceived by him, and listened to him, disobeying God, they fell—losing God’s given paradise, the Garden of Eden, and living in the cursed world. They were filled with shame and fear and meaninglessness and loneliness, losing love relationship with God and with each other. Not only so, they had to return to dust, dying physically, and after that facing God’s eternal judgment. Spiritually speaking, they fell from the kingdom of God to the kingdom of Satan, as his slaves. This is the spiritual reality of all Adam’s descendants. There has been no one among mankind to defeat such powerful horn of Satan and save us. But God has raised Jesus as a horn of salvation. Jesus defeated Satan’s temptations through his absolute obedience to the word of God, saying “It is written…” Fundamentally, Jesus crushed the head of Satan, defeating Satan’s ultimate power, that is the power of sin and death, through his death on the cross and resurrection, and saved all who believe in him.

However, our enemy the devil still works through our doubt, unbelief and disobedience. He leads the whole world astray with his powerful deception and temptation and cruel hatred. (Rev 12:9) Therefore, the Bible says **“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour”** (1 Peter 5:8). He would rather see us fight than love one another. He’s trying to undo everything that God has done. He actively seeks to destroy our lives, families and communities. We see his work come out often in relationships. Satan takes advantage of our weaknesses working through accusations and condemnation, wanting us to focus on each other's weaknesses and complain or slander instead of encouraging and building up. Sometimes he uses a miscommunication out of a generational, gender or cultural difference to plant doubt or misunderstanding about a person's motives. Trust relationships are broken. In this way he isolates people, and destroys them, like a lion targets the weak straggler of the herd.

Personally, I know I need to be alert to Satan’s attacks in regards to my marriage. God has blessed me with a beautiful God-fearing wife in Jemmie and the devil often works hard to destroy what God has established. But I thank you God that whenever Jemmie and I feel overwhelmed in our relationship, we can pray together. Thank God that through prayers, we can depend on Jesus our horn of salvation against Satan’s horn, and have victory. I thank God for raising Jesus, a horn of salvation for us.

Look at verses 70-73: “(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us to show mercy to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath he swore to our fahter Abraham.”

These verses show the background of raising a horn of salvation for us. God promised to send the Messiah throughout the Old Testament. As his faithful fulfillment of all such promises, holy covenant and oath, he finally raised a horn of salvation in the house of David. God is faithful in keeping with his promise, and all the prophecies of the Bible will be fulfilled without failure.

Let’s look at verses 74-75: **“to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.”**

The horn of salvation does not only rescue us from the horn of Satan, but also enables us to serve him. We were created in the image of God to serve God. Therefore, this is what we really wanted to do, but couldn't as we were slaves to Satan. But Jesus rescued us from the hand of Satan and enables us to serve him. He enables us to serve him without fear. Actually, there are so many kinds of fear that cripple us inwardly, such as the fear of rejection, fear of failure, fear of losing family or friends, fear of being alone. In this global pandemic there is fear of bankruptcy, fear of losing our job and the fear of contracting COVID-19. Although we long to serve Christ, these fears are overpowering. Many of these fears come because we are depending on our own strength. But Jesus enables us to serve him without fear, trusting in his power and ability, not ours. Jesus enables us to serve him in holiness and righteousness. Holiness is the character of God. Jesus enables us to grow in God's character, compassion, mercy, love, and sacrifice. We become set apart, with a new identity as his loved and chosen people. Growing in holiness makes us salt and light in the world. For Jesus' blood was shed to forgive our sins and impart his righteousness to us. Jesus also enables us to serve before Him all the days of our life. His calling isn't just for a moment or a season, and there is no irrelevant or unimportant person, no matter how young or old. In Jesus, we all have a part in serving his kingdom and world salvation plan.

When I was in my 20’s, I became rebellious and was constantly seeking pleasure. Against my parents' wishes, I dropped out of university, wandered around the world aimlessly and fell into a prison of sexual sin. I was badly impaled by the horn of Satan. Even after I became a church goer, I didn’t know how to serve God, serving only myself. Humanly speaking, I was an average Sunday Christian. I would tithe each week, sing the worship songs, listen to the pastor preach, and then leave church, seeking my worldly desires and pleasures. I saw God as a spiritual ATM which I would come to every time I needed or wanted something to satisfy my desires. My view of being a Christian was that I was saved by God’s grace but I could also pursue all my own ambitions until I die and go to heaven. However, Jesus, the horn of salvation, saved me and called me to serve him. And through faithful Bible study, God gradually opened my spiritual eyes to come to the realization that my old way of Christianity is not biblical and is borderline “prosperity gospel” which is from Satan’s powerful deception. Now by God’s grace, I’m growing in spiritual maturity, discipline and obedience as a Bible teacher and spiritual leader not only for my family but for God’s flock. This is only possible because of Jesus, the horn of salvation enabled me to serve God in holiness and righteousness. I really thank God for God’s grace upon my life, and pray to serve him without any fear before him all my days till the end, by faith in Jesus, my horn of salvation.

Part 2: The Rising Sun

Let’s look at verse 76-77: **“And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins”**

Zechariah is briefly speaking about his son John the Baptist: John would become a prophet of the Most High. He would be the forerunner who would go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Jesus by giving his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. What people most need is the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. Of course, no one likes to think of themselves as a sinner. Rather we think our suffering is because of other people’s sins. But the knowledge of salvation begins with recognizing our real need. We need the forgiveness of our own sins, and in Jesus, God has provided this. Only God's people in Jesus' kingdom have this knowledge, knowing their sins are forgiven.

Look at verses 78-79. **“because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."**

Here, Jesus is depicted as the rising sun. It is the tender mercy of our God to provide Jesus as a rising sun. The rising sun in the dawn gradually breaks darkness, and shines across the earth. Jesus, the rising sun, coming from heaven, not from the horizon, shines within us, and drives darkness from our hearts and dispel the shadow of death. His sunlight is the ray of healing and hope. There seem many things that make us troubled and dark and fearful, especially this year. The most current issue of Time Magazine has the year “2020” on the cover and then three words below: Worst. Year. Ever.It was indeed a hard year: Some of us lost our job, or worry about how we will find a job. Some feel lost in their marriages, personal relationships and academic or career path. I’m sure many people have felt weak and uncertain, fearful and doubtful and anxious because of the current COVID-19 pandemic. But no matter how we feel or what has happened to us throughout the year 2020, the truth is that the rising sun has come to us from heaven in God tender mercy to shine in us. Even in the worst year and in the worst situation, if we have the light of the rising sun, Jesus, we are not ruled by the power of darkness and shadow of death. The rising sun is also the symbol of hope for life and the future. Jesus gives us a living hope that sustains us over the long term and in all circumstances. The surety of death and the meaninglessness of life cast a dark shadow over many people's lives. Many have noble desire and dreams, but no strength or hope to carry it out. We’ve all read about the suicides of countless rich and famous actors, musicians and celebrities. These people seemed to have many friends, lots of money and millions of adoring fans but still they decided to end their life. Why? Because they had deep feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness and no peace in their hearts. The living hope is found only in Jesus, who has come from heaven and dispels the power of darkness—meaninglessness, hopelessness in the shadow of death.

Not only that, the rising sun Jesus guides our feet into the path of peace. Jesus continuously guides the steps of our lives, not to the path of destruction but to the path of peace, the perfect peace that transcends all human understanding. What we need to do is to positively come to his light and follow his guidance with humble trust. According to the prophecies of Revelation we have studied, this world is heading into more and more troubles. But no matter what is ahead, we have bright living hope that never fades away in Jesus. As long as we positively follow his guide, he will continue to lead us into the path of peace in the new year 2021 as well.

I thank God for his faithfulness and tender mercy for us, by sending his son Jesus Christ, as the horn of our salvation and the rising sun, to rescue us from our enemy, and to enable us to serve him, and to continue to guide us into the path of peace, despite all our sins and weaknesses and this trouble-filled world. I pray that we may newly welcome this Jesus and continue to follow him and serve him by faith.