

THE HORN OF SALVATION

Luke 1:57-80

Key Verse 1:69

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

A Happy Third Advent! Last week we learned that Jesus is the Savior, the Son of the Highest and the eternal King whose kingdom remains forever. It is God's grace that we, like Zechariah and Elizabeth and like Jesus' mother Maria, may live as His servant and handmaid, respectively, and be pioneers. Today's message is about the birth of John the Baptist. The father of John the Baptist, Zechariah, saw through the birth of his son the wonderful grace and mercy of God through Jesus, for whom his son John would serve as a forerunner. He sang a hymn of praise, praising Jesus as the power of salvation. I pray that God will help us to receive Jesus, the power of salvation, and sing a glorious song of praise like Zechariah.

1. His name is John (57-66)

Let us look at verse 57: "When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son." Nine months after the angel's announcement, Zechariah and Elizabeth's son was born. It was like a miracle and a hopeful sign in an otherwise dark and depressing time. All the neighbors and relatives rejoiced in God's mercy on this devout household. True joy comes not from the things of this world, but from God's merciful work. We also rejoiced greatly that God did mercy on the house churches of Sh. Peter & Sh. Anja, Sh. Stefan & M. Debora and M. Petrus & M. Pauline and that Joshua Elsholz, Samuel Abraham, Sarah Schweitzer, Peter Josef, and Sarah Grace gave their lives to God in their youth and confessed it publicly through baptism. It is a miracle of God and a hopeful sign in these otherwise dark and depressing times. Let us look at verse 59. After eight days, the neighbors came together to circumcise the child and name him after his father according to custom. They wanted to celebrate a happy family feast, just as Christmas, the birth of our Lord Jesus, is celebrated like a family feast today. But it went from being a Family Day to a

holy and spiritually significant event. The neighbors wanted to name the child "Little Zach." Elizabeth, however, corrected them and said, "No he is to be called John. The neighbors were amazed. They thought that perhaps Elizabeth was still suffering from the aftermath of pregnancy "Pregnancy brain." Then they asked Zechariah what he wanted the child named. Let us look at verse 63: "He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John.'" Zechariah also confirmed clearly, "His name is John." Immediately he was able to speak again and praised God.

I had big plans to become a clinic director: Prof. Dr. med. P. Chang. But my parents said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas." My first son also has big plans: "Samuel Zuckerberg" I pray for him that he will be named Samuel Abraham Chang, a man with whom the Lord is, who will not let any of the Lord's words and his great spiritual heritage fall to earth and be used as a blessing for the whole world.

Zechariahs' and Elizabeth's statement "His name is John" shows their true piety before God. It is very remarkable that first Elizabeth (verse 60) and later Zechariah (verse 63) independently of each other, but in the same sense, confirmed the name of God for their child, "John". After the great blessing of God, they did not lead a life of faith only according to appearances or tradition, but they continued to live devoutly before God. Just after the great blessing of God, they continued to obey God by consecrating their only child to God as a man of missions and telling him accordingly, just as our parents do not consider their children as their children but consecrated them for the mission of God. Their piety and concrete obedience to the faith meant that they did not act according to the consensus and current of the times, not only for themselves but also for their child. Their life and

John's life of practical piety at first caused astonishment among the neighbors. But God blessed the obedience of faith of Zechariah and Elizabeth. The Lord's hand was with their child (66b); the latter grew and became strong in spirit (80a) like our baptized children. Their obedience of faith brought fear of God upon many people, and their faith story became known everywhere (65). The house church of Missionary Dr. Peter and Missionary Sarah Chang has been serving the campus mission in Germany for 40 years. They led a devout life by opening and giving their lives completely to the spiritual life community until today. Not only that, but with the mercy and vision of God, they established true piety, namely the concrete obedience of faith to the Word of God and the guidance of God, even in their own children and among the students. This astonished many; many even among those who call themselves Christians. The obedience of this house church brought godliness upon many students, youth and all who heard about it. Therefore, God is using our missionary work as a sensational work of salvation for the young students on the campus in Europe, for the mobilization of the Next Generation and for the Middle East mission until today. Let us obey God and make history of faith so that the fear of God will come again upon this generation and the hand of the Lord will be with our children and Bible students and this people.

2. The Horn of Salvation (67-75)

Let us consider verses 67 to 69: "His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has redeemed his people. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." After Zechariah's mouth was opened, this time no words of unbelief came out, but a beautiful song of praise. The subject of his praise song, however, was not God's blessing on him, but Jesus. At that time, Mary was four months pregnant with Jesus. Zechariah saw in Jesus God's marvelous counsel and plan of salvation over 2000 years, through which the promises of the prophets were fulfilled (70) and God's mercy was shown on the faith of the progenitors and their faith was completed (72.73). This time is also very dark. But by looking to Jesus, recognizing God's wonderful plan of salvation, we can sing praises and live influential

lives of faith. Let us reflect on what Jesus' coming means for His people.

First, God has visited and redeemed His people. The fact that God "visited" his people describes the one sided, initiative love of God. God did not forget His people when they were far from Him and could not come to Him. He visited his people in Jesus to be with them and to save them. With this initiative love of God, many lay missionaries from Korea also visited the intellectual young people in Germany and invited them to Bible study, so that many of them could encounter God. Sh. Jochen Schweitzer visits and invites Olaf, even in the time of the pandemic. In this Christmas time 2020 in the sign of the pandemic there are also many lonely people. Let us also visit them with the initiative love of God.

Secondly: God has raised up a power of salvation. Verse 69 says, "He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." God has raised up for us a power in Jesus. But Jesus is not a military, financial or political power. These powers have mostly been very destructive in history. But Jesus' power is a power of salvation. In this time many people expect the power of salvation through the vaccination, which should enable us to live a normal life again. Many place great hopes in the art of doctors. But some of the people who are currently under medical treatment are experiencing that the art of doctors and medicines, whether Western or Far Eastern, is limited. We doctor ourselves also experience this fact every day. The word "power" in verse 69 means "horn" (κέρας Keros), the same word used in Revelation to describe Satan's horns (Rev 12:3). The horn of Satan is also a power and a spiritual reality. The horn of Satan is much stronger and much more deadly than Covid-19. The horn of Satan, described by Apostle Paulus as the "sting of death" (1 Cor. 15:56a), is sin. When a person is pierced by Satan's horn of sin, he or she becomes like withered bones or boiled vegetables, lifeless, powerless, and useless. Perhaps he is still alive biologically, but spiritually he is useless and dead. Many young people are pierced by Satan's horn of the sin of laziness and pleasure seeking mentality, so that they become very paralyzed and prone to other sins, such as pleasure seeking, poverty and mental illness. Many are pierced by the sin of lust, so that they hurt others and are hurt themselves. Many are also pierced by the sin of self-centeredness and

fear, so that they are unable to help others and even their own children and live for the glory and mission of God. Ultimately, all people have been pierced by Satan's horn of sin, so that all people, no matter how smart, successful, and rich they are, have lost the glory that God intended for them and must kneel before the power of death.

But thanks be to God, who raised up for us the power of salvation in Jesus. The power of Satan's horn through sin is extraordinarily strong and deadly, so doctors and psychologists cannot cure it. But Jesus, the power of salvation, is much stronger than the power of Satan. Jesus, the power of salvation, makes people pierced by the horn of Satan spiritually healthy and alive again, so that instead of living a life of self-destruction and shame, they may live a life for the glory of God and be used as an exceedingly great army of God. Jesus, the power of salvation, makes the spiritually dead people alive again, so that they finally also have passed through into eternal life. How can we experience this power of salvation? We can experience this power of salvation through repentance, i.e., conversion, through the concrete obedience of faith, and through the change of dominion, simply put, by following Jesus. We can experience this power of salvation in our children and sheep by sharing God's truth through forming one-on-one Bible study teams and building up gospel faith in them.

Third, God saves His people from their enemies. Let us look at verse 71: "salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us." Those who live devoutly before God have many enemies and many haters. The real enemy and hater is Satan, the spirit of godless humanism and the spirit of the age, who wants to rule authoritatively and absolutely over all people, including Christians, and destroy those who do not submit to him. The struggle of believers, who seem to be in absolute minority, sometimes seems almost hopeless. But Jesus, the power of salvation, saves his people and makes them endure and finally win the victory. Fourth, those who have been saved from Satan's horn by the power of salvation serve God without fear. Let us look at verses 74 and 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." Fear is not a characteristic of God's people. Fear comes from Satan. Fear is a horn of Satan to make people helpless and useless.

Because of fear, many parents and church people cannot say anything and even participate in suppressing those who speak the truth. When a pastor in Bremen told the truth based on the Bible, he was strongly criticized by his own church and even put on trial. When a young man decided to act according to God's grace and truth, he was also greatly misunderstood and receives various persecutions to this day. But those who are saved and healed by the power of salvation, Jesus, serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness, that is, in the firm love relationship with God. They do not live with the spirit of fear according to the consensus of the majority, but they live according to the promise and vision of God, serving their entrusted sheep with the spirit of power, love, and prudence with the love of Jesus to the end and being used as a mighty army of God for the spreading of the gospel faith. In this time with Jesus of the power of salvation, let us fearlessly serve the work of revival through the formation of 10,000 ZBS teams, through the pioneering work and prayer vessels in the faculties and schools, through the mobilization of the next generation, and through the establishment of the three bases for the Middle East Mission to God in holiness and righteousness throughout our lives.

Although I grew up in such good conditions in that country, I also lived pierced by the horn of Satan. I was pierced by the horn of the sin of laziness and pleasure seeking mentality and youthful lust. I acted destructively in self-preoccupation, hurting myself and others. I led a self-centered life of fear without vision with the failure mentality of a little man with black hair. I thought this was ok and understandable because of my immigrant background. I was not aware that I was living a low and abnormal life pierced by the horn of Satan as a spiritually dead person. I thank God who made me experience the power of salvation, Jesus, through His word Deut. 6:5 and Ezra 7:10 and through the spiritual servanthood and prayers of my parents. The power of salvation, Jesus, healed me from laziness and pleasure seeking mentality and helped me to master medical school, residency, doctorate, and secular work for the glory of God. The power of salvation, Jesus, made me come alive from my self-centeredness and fear and gave me a spiritual vision to be used as a Bible teacher and spiritual leader like Ezra for spiritual revival. At present, amidst the persecutions and difficulties of many kinds, I may serve God without fear in holiness and right-

eousness to the end and cooperate for the pioneering work of the medical school, the mobilization of the Next Generation and the establishment of three mission bases in the Middle East and be used as a spiritual conqueror and global spiritual leader.

3. The rising light from on high (76-80)

Let us look at verses 76 and 77. Zechariah finally speaks about the role of his own child in the story of salvation: "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," The mission of Zechariah's son, John, was to be a prophet of the Most High. As a prophet of the Highest, his task was to give knowledge of salvation. Currently, we are seeking knowledge of salvation through artificial intelligence and Big Data, even in medicine. However, knowledge of salvation does not come through Big Data, artificial intelligence or through Google. The knowledge of salvation comes through the forgiveness of sins. That is why John preached the baptism of repentance: "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance!" By calling his people to repentance, John would give them knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of their sins. The sermon of repentance is therefore the best preparation for us to experience the power of Jesus' salvation. Let us look at verses 78 and 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." Those who sit in darkness and shadow of death because of the horn of Satan and sin are hopeless. But the coming of Jesus, the power of salvation, means for all people the rising of the light from on high, as Judges 5:31a says: "But may they who love you be like the sun when it rises in its strength." Jesus' coming ultimately means peace with God for all people.

Through today's text, we have learned that God has raised up in Jesus a power of salvation. Let us no longer remain in a dead life pierced by the horn of Satan, but by receiving Jesus and serving him, let us experience the power of salvation in ourselves and in our children and sheep. In this time, people bear so much sufferings and live in fear because of a small virus. But not medicine, technology, or improved conditions,

but Jesus is the true power of salvation for the intellectual young students and for all people. May God use our work of forming one-to-one Bible study teams and spiritual life communities so that people in Germany and Europe and even in Muslim countries may recognize Jesus, the power of salvation, and live a life for God without fear and in holiness and righteousness and be used in God's great plan of salvation as pioneers and main persons for the spiritual revival.