

JESUS A POWER 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.”

We thank the Lord for the blessed Christmas Bible study. Through Mary's song of praise, we learned about the people God uses in His story of redemption: they are those who accept the grace of God's calling, like Mary, and make themselves available for it out of obedience of faith: "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." They are the truly blessed and happy people. God uses them very preciousely in His history. They also have a song of praise on their lips at all times: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."

Today's lesson is about the birth of John the Baptist and the song of praise of his father Zechariah. The latter and his wife Elizabeth obeyed God more than their neighbors and relatives, trusting in God's promise for their son by giving him the name John. After this, Zechariah sang a song of praise. He praised God who had redeemed and visited his people and raised up in the Lord Jesus a power of salvation. May the Lord give each of you a glorious song of praise, that like Zechariah you may testify that the power of salvation has healed us from all sin wounds and delivered us from the power of Satan. God bless you to be used by the power of salvation as influential leaders for the spiritual revival in Germany and Europe.

1. His name is John (57-66)

Let us look at verses 57 and 58: "When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy." The birth of

John the Baptist occurred nine months after the angel of the Lord announced it (13). The birth was a joy for two reasons: First, God's omnipotence. Zechariah was old and Elizabeth was barren. But God had heard Zechariah's prayer (1:13). God had revealed that with Him all things are possible (1:37). Thus Elizabeth, who was barren and therefore despised in society, gave birth to a son. Second, God's electing grace. The son of Zechariah and Elizabeth was chosen by God to be the forerunner of Jesus to convert many of the people of Israel to God. Our Next Generation co-workers were also chosen from the womb to be men and women of faith in God's salvation history. Zechariah and Elizabeth rejoiced greatly in the great mercy of God, not only on them, but on all the people of Israel whom their son would later serve. Their neighbors and relatives also rejoiced with them because they could see the mighty work of God in the lives of Zechariah and Elizabeth.

Let's look at verse 59: "On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah." After eight days, the neighbors came together to circumcise the child and name him after his father according to custom. Let's look at verses 60 through 63. Elizabeth said, "No! He is to be called John." Zechariah, still mute, confirmed this by writing on a tablet, "He is to be called John." Thus the parents named their son, as the angel of the Lord had commanded (13).

Here we can learn something about Zechariah and Elizabeth's obedience. By naming their son, they showed their faith by obeying

God more than men. The neighbors and relatives wanted to name the child Zechariah after their father. Perhaps some wanted to name him Zechariah Jr. and others suggested Zechariah II. was not a bad idea. Zechariah and Elizabeth could have done right by them. But they wanted to act according to God's will alone. Instead of conforming to the consensus, they obeyed God by naming their son John, thus consecrating him as a man of mission. They raised him according to the promise of God to be a great man of faith. Through daily fellowship based on the Word of God, they helped him to live holy and to be filled with the Spirit. Therefore, he became strong in spirit (80a). They prayed for him daily and ministered to him constantly with the word of God that he, as the forerunner of Jesus, led many of the people of Israel to repentance to God with the word of truth.

Let's look at verses 65 and 66. The obedience of Zechariah and Elizabeth was not without consequences. Fear of God came upon all their neighbors. Because of the naming of their son, fear of God was raised up in the hearts of all who heard of it throughout the mountains of Judea. They realized that this child was no ordinary child, for the hand of the Lord was with him.

In the same way, God blesses the obedience of His people's faith today and uses them to raise up godliness not only in the family and church, but also in a whole country and continent, even to the ends of the earth. The Next Generation is blessed because their parents do not follow the consensus, but like Zechariah and Elizabeth, love God's counsel for them. Not only do they pray for them, but they persevere in all circumstances to faithfully do Bible study with them. By writing the testimony, copying and memorizing Bible verses, they are continually equipped with the Word of God. God has blessed the obedience of the parents that five baptized children have made a decision of faith to suffer cheerfully with Christ. God is using our Gideon team through the International Bible Seminar as a source of blessing as they share the received grace of God in English through their testimonies. May the Lord

continue to strengthen our Next Generation through a word of God and let godliness come upon many young people in Germany, Europe, America, the Middle East and worldwide through them.

2. A Power of Salvation (67-80)

Let us read 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 to his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn[c] of salvation for us in the house of his servant David." Zechariah rejoiced not only because of the birth of his own son, but especially because God had had mercy on his people and had raised up a power of salvation. What does the power of salvation mean?

1) The healing of all sin wounds.

Zechariah calls Jesus the power of salvation or the horn of salvation. The word "horn" (κέρας Keros), is the same word used in Revelation to describe Satan's horns (Reve 12:3). The horn of Satan is also a power and a spiritual reality that we experience daily. Many are afraid of a virus. But the horn of Satan is much stronger than a virus and results not only in death, but in damnation. The horn of Satan, referred to by Apostle Paul as the "sting of death" (1 Co. 15:56a), is sin. The Bible teaches that every human being, has been deeply pierced by the horn of Satan, sin (Romans 3:23). No matter how reasonable or unreasonable, how successful or unsuccessful someone is, all people in this world have contracted a deep wound of sin. Even many young people who are actually promising and hopeful are so pierced by the horn of Satan, the sin, that they do what they do not want to do, say what they do not want to say, and think what they do not want to think. Many try various methods to defeat sin by going to a psychiatrist or getting distracted. Many are also pierced by the sin of indifference, irresponsibility and fear of man that they cannot help anyone live for the glory of God. Because of the power of sin, many people are in despair. Because of the power of

sin, many people have no hope, neither for themselves nor for others.

But praise be to the Lord our God, who has visited and redeemed us and raised up for us a power of salvation in Jesus! The power of Satan through sin is strong and deadly. But the power of salvation that has come to us through Jesus is stronger than the horn of Satan. Jesus, the power of salvation, heals people pierced by the horn of Satan and gives them the new life so that instead of a life of self-destruction and shame, they can live a life for the glory of God. The power of salvation liberates you and me from the cruel dominion of sin. Spiritually dead people come back to life that they have finally broken through to eternal life as well. Everyone who puts away his sin and leaves everything that offends him spiritually experiences the power of salvation. Everyone who looks up to Jesus by receiving the Word of God with repentance and obeying Him experiences victory over Satan through the power of salvation.

We have experienced this power of salvation in the Last Two Years in the Next Generation and in the students. Especially in the time of challenge and pandemic, God worked mightily through His word from 1 Peter 4:13 in a high school graduate that she did not only come to Jesus, but even made a decision of faith to suffer with Jesus. This morning she preached the word from Luke 1:38 and testified to God's grace in allowing her to serve God's great redemptive work as a determined servant of the Lord. May God continue to lead her through His Word that she may raise up the power of salvation in the lives of many young women of this generation as a mother of faith and a determined servant of the Lord. Thanks be to the Lord that the power of salvation in us defeats all cunning attacks of the devil, also in the hearts of our children, the next generation, and students in all faculties, that they may no longer live a meaningful, truly blissful life as a blessing to many under the dominion of the ego, but under the dominion of Jesus.

2) Salvation from the power of Satan

Let's read verse 71: "salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us..." The true enemy and hater of believers is Satan. We are in a spiritual war against Satan, as the prophet Daniel also saw, "And I saw the horn fighting against the saints,..." (Daniel 7:21). Many of us have experienced the power of salvation in that we have been saved from our miserable, fatalistic lives and are now free to fully commit our new lives to our Lord. But the spiritual reality is that Satan does not pause. He is waiting every moment for us to come down from the cross of mission. We absolutely need the power of salvation even today to win the battle against Satan. That is why Hebrews 12:4 says, "In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood." It is important for each of us not to give up this fight along the way, but to fight faithfully until death, until the return of our Lord Jesus.

Then, in this world where the power of Satan is still present, how can we be true victors and spiritual conquerors with the power of salvation? Let us read 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." This verse says something about the goal of our redemption. It is elementarily necessary for us not to continue our old life after being redeemed from our sins, nor to long to return to our old life. Nor have we been redeemed merely to live a petty life in better conditions. We, who have been redeemed and healed by the power of salvation, have a new purpose, which is to serve God without fear in holiness and righteousness throughout our lives. Praise God who has saved us from the mighty horn of Satan so that we can no longer serve our ego but God our Lord. Let us serve God with gratitude and confidence because of the power of salvation by giving ourselves for the raising of Jesus' disciples and spiritual leaders in the 1700 colleges in Europe and setting up 10,000 one-to-one Bible study teams.

I strove to be a decent Christian on the outside. But I was leading a double life, being

involved in the church while having clandestine relationships. I also repeatedly had a strong urge to make quick, big money by gambling. I thought I could control these sinful habits myself. But it got worse and worse. I felt ashamed and lost all joy in life because I kept pretending in front of people and kept doing what I didn't want to do. But my parents and shepherd did not stop praying and helping me with the word of God so that I could be saved from Satan's horn. I praise my Lord for the power of salvation I experienced through the Word of God Deut. 6:5: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." God helped me to lay aside my ego, that I no longer worshiped anyone else, but God. The power of desire was so cruel. But the power of salvation was stronger. The power of salvation changed me from an immoderate deceiver to a servant of God who now participates in the suffering of Jesus with joy and with the vision of God with the next generation and cooperates for world mission.

Charles Spurgeon grew up in a Christian home. He read the Bible a lot and was active in the church. But he was desperate because he did not know how to obtain forgiveness from his sins. One day he heard God's word Isaiah 45:22: "Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other." The power of salvation made him completely free from all his sins. The power of salvation changed him into a preacher of the Word who preached the Word of God on the streets of England, preaching almost ten times a week. As a result, many frauds and criminals were changed to blessings, and to this day numerous people all over the world experience the power of salvation through his preaching.

God bless you in this pre-Christmas season to personally encounter Jesus, the power of salvation, through Bible study. The power of salvation does something great, that God not only gives you the forgiveness of your sins, but even uses you as sources of blessing for your society, for your country and for your continent in a very precious way.

Let's look at verses 76 and 77. Now Zacharias speaks about the role of his own child in the history 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 the Baptist, was to be a prophet of the Most High. As a prophet of the Most High, he was to give knowledge of salvation. This comes through the forgiveness of sins. This is why John preached the baptism of repentance, "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance." (Matthew 3:8) By calling his people to repentance, John would give them knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of their sins. Therefore, the sermon of repentance is the best preparation for us to experience the power of 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 the shadow of death because of Satan's horn have no hope. But the coming of Jesus, the power of salvation, means for all people, for you and for me, the rising of the light from on high. Finally, the coming of Jesus 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. Praise and thanks be to our Lord that we no longer have to remain in a life pierced by Satan's horn, but by receiving and serving Jesus, we may experience the power of salvation. Jesus is the power of salvation for all people. God use our work of making disciples through life fellowship and Bible study that the people in Germany and Europe and as far as Muslim countries may realize the power of salvation and surrender their lives to God without fear in holiness and righteousness and be used in God's great plan of salvation as pioneers and main agents for spiritual revival.