

Zacharias Prophecies

Luke 1:67-80

- A. Words Referring to Jesus (1:67-69)
- B. Words Referring to the Jewish People (1:70-75)
- C. Words Referring to John the Baptist (1:76-80).

A. Words referring to Jesus (1:67-69).

1. (vs. 67) Now able to speak again, Zacharias had just spoken “in praise of God” (vs. 64) and the common question was, “What then will this child *turn out* to be?” As was his wife, so also Zacharias was “righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord” (vs. 6) like the apostle Paul in Phil. 3:6b (cf. Ac. 23:1). Having obediently named his son, John (vs. 63), and now ready to serve in new ways, Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit.

- Remember that being filled with the Spirit is not the same as walking by the Spirit but refers to being under the control of the Spirit in a special way to be able to accomplish something in ministry or to be the object of something special in the sight of God such as the unborn John the Baptist and Elizabeth his mother were in Luke 1:41; cf. 1:15. Of course, being filled with the Spirit is connected with speaking in tongues in Ac. 2:4. For other occasions of the filling of the Spirit see Ac. 4:8 (Peter); Ac. 9:17 (Paul).

1. (cont.) Not surprisingly, here also ministry is connected with the filling of the Holy Spirit. And so having been filled with the Spirit, Zacharias “prophesied (ἐπροφήτευσεν – lemma; προφητεύω propheteuō),” literally, “to speak before.” Generally, there are two meanings, to “forthtell” and to “foretell.” To “forthtell” means to “to make public : PUBLISH,” basically the reference is to public speaking. “The meaning of FORETELL is to tell beforehand : predict.” There are elements of both kinds of prophecy in the statement of Zacharias.

2. (vs. 68) Zacharias said, “Blessed” or “well-spoken of” “*be* the Lord God of Israel,” the one true God. Paul said, “For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is *but* one God, the Father,” the One to Whom Zacharias had reference, “from whom are all things and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him” (1Cor. 8:5-6). This is why Zacharias called Him blessed: “For He has visited us and accomplished redemption for

2. (vs. 68) His people.” Redemption generally is the “experience of being liberated from an oppressive situation.” OT Israel is seen as redeemed from bondage in Egypt (Is. 51:10; Dt. 13:5; 24:18). There are hints of spiritual redemption in the OT (Is. 44:22; Ps. 130:7-8). Job looked down the halls of time and saw a future redemption: “And as for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth” (Job 19:25). This will happen when Jesus comes at the end of the tribulation period (Lk. 21:27), properly the 2nd

2. (cont.) advent, the “redemption” of the nation Israel “is drawing near” (Lk 21:28). This is that redemption for which Israel had been waiting from OT times. It was to this that Zacharias, father of John the Baptist, referred in Lk.1:68, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people,” and also Anna in Lk. 2:38, “And at that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of

2. (cont.) Jerusalem.” Again, clearly, this is what Jesus had in mind in Lk. 21:27-28, “And then they will see THE SON OF MAN COMING IN A CLOUD with power and great glory. But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” The two on the road to Emmaus had the same perspective when they said that they “were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel” (Lk. 24:21). Ordinarily, we correctly think of redemption in spiritual terms:

2. (cont.) “And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth; knowing that you were not redeemed (ἐλυτρώθητε) with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (1Pt. 1:17-19). But as with Israel, so also with us, there is a future aspect (1Cor. 1:30). So also, we are waiting for

2. (cont.) the redemption of our bodies (Rm. 8:23, “And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption [ἀπολύτρωσιν] of our body.”). The future aspect is manifest in Eph. 1:14 where speaking of the Holy Spirit, Paul said that He, “is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption (ἀπολύτρωσιν) of God’s own possession.” It is impossible to miss the future emphasis in Eph.

2. (cont.) 4:30, “And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption (ἀπολύτρωσιν).”

- When Zacharias said, “He has visited us,” he was likely thinking of the four hundred years that had just passed since Israel has heard from God in Mal. 4:6. God had visited in the form of the angel Gabriel. He added that He had “accomplished redemption for His people.” The work of redemption had not yet literally been accomplished, but it was as good as done.

3. (vs. 69) Zacharias declared that God “has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant” (2Sam. 7:12-16). The reference is to an “exceptional kind of might or power, horn (of power) (and so) “a mighty Savior.” The Redeemer will die to pay for sin, but He would rise in omnipotence in glory and power to lead His people to peace and tranquility in the kingdom. And for Him John the Baptist, son of Zacharias, would be the forerunner. Zacharias had every reason to be thrilled.

B. Words Referring Jewish People (1:70-75)

1. (vs. 70) Much OT material follows from the mind of Zacharias: “As He (God) spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from of old (ἀπ’ αἰῶνος, lit., ‘from ages’)—” the reference is to “a long period of time, without ref. to beginning or end,” “readily suggesting a venerable or awesome eld” – elder or old age, NKJV adds “who *have been* since the world began” – this expression “underlines the unchangeableness of God’s promises.”
2. (vs. 71) More excellencies follow: “Salvation

2. (cont.) FROM OUR ENEMIES, And FROM THE HAND OF ALL WHO HATE US.” Opposition to the Jews is about as old as there have been Jews back to the generations immediately following Abraham. Just yesterday this headline ran in USA Today: “Texas Synagogue Hostages Safe after Hours-long Standoff.” Such events are rather common both here and abroad. I believe they will intensify as we get closer to the Tribulation period. That time of Jacob’s trouble (Jer. 30:7) will be awful. Jesus’ description of it is staggering (Mt. 24:21). But God will deliver

2. (cont.) His people just as Zacharias said here. You can see a description of that manifestation of power in Rv. 19. Yes, faithful believers from the church age will have a part in that.
3. (vs. 72) God's plan is further, "To show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant." For this it seems they must be alive: "God will actually resurrect the patriarchs so that they can participate in the blessings wrought by the Messianic deliverance (cf. Dn. 12)." God will not forget His covenant with Abraham (Gen. 12; 15;

4. (vs. 73) This reiterates the holy covenant from the previous verse: “The oath which He swore to Abraham our father” (See Gen. 22:16ff; Heb. 6:13).
5. (vs. 74) According to Zacharias, arising from that oath would be a broad array of blessings to the Jews; “To grant us that we, being rescued from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear.” So much of Jewish history has been marked by fear. To show that this will no longer be the case in the Millennial Kingdom, the expression “without fear” stands first in the original clause for emphasis.

6. (vs. 75) Jewish minds will no longer be polluted by impurity and compromise in the kingdom, but they will serve God “In holiness and righteousness...all” their “days” even though some, having gone in as children, will be in their natural bodies.

C. Words Referring John the Baptist (1:76-80)

1. (vs. 76) As the father of John the Baptist, Zacharias now turns his attention directly to his son, “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;” and as the servant of God in this way, Zacharias said to John, “For you will go on BEFORE THE LORD TO PREPARE HIS WAYS.” See Is 40:3; Mal. 3:1.
2. (vs. 77) Further, Zacharias’ said that John would “give to His,” God’s, “people the knowledge of salvation.” The emphasis is on “temporal, political and spiritual deliverance for the Jewish nation.”

2. (cont.) (GNTC). “Obedience brought national blessing. Disobedience reversed these blessings and led to subjugation by a foreign power (cf. Deut. 28–30; Judges).” No, not even national deliverance was possible without “the forgiveness of their sins.”
3. (vs. 78) Zacharias continued, “Because of the tender mercy of our God, with which the Sunrise from on high will visit us,” TC says, “God’s loving compassion motivated Him to give salvation. The Greek word anatole, translated ‘visit’ (NASB) and ‘come’ (NIV), can describe the rising of a heavenly

3. (cont.) body or the growing of a plant shoot. It is perhaps a double reference to messianic prophecies about the star arising out of Jacob (Num. 24:17) and the shoot growing out of Jesse (Isa. 11:1–2).”
4. (vs. 79) “TO SHINE UPON THOSE WHO SIT IN DARKNESS AND THE SHADOW OF DEATH, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” This verse “continues the first allusion (cf. Isa. 9:1–2; 59:8).”
5. (vs. 80) Zacharias is finished with his prophecy and Luke comments on John’s growth and development: “And the child continued to grow and to become

3. (cont.) strong in spirit, and he lived in the deserts until the day of his public appearance to Israel.” This set the stage for John to become as described in Mt. 11:7-19).