

The Voice of Hope

Luke 1:67-79

MPS Jesus is our eternal hope because even when faith is weak God's promise remains strong.

OBJ Every person should know Jesus is our eternal hope because of three reasons.

READ Luke 1:67–79

67 And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,

68 "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people

69 and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,

70 as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

71 that we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us;

72 to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant,

73 the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us

74 that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

76 And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,

77 to give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins,

78 because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high

79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

TRANS Today we look at Zechariah's prophecy, a prayer of restored faith in God, a word of hope in His promised redemption. But before we consider what he said, we need to know Zechariah. Luke introduces us to Zechariah and Elizabeth at the beginning of chapter one.

Zechariah was a priest, the son of Abijah. This was not his father, but the head of his family lineage. Abijah was appointed as a priest to serve under King David.^{1Chron24:10} This means that Zechariah enjoyed a long line of family lineage in the service of the Lord. But Luke also tells us that his wife, Elizabeth, had a strong family lineage as well. She was a daughter of Aaron. Yes, that Aaron, the priest who served alongside Moses. So, we are not dealing with "newbies" here. Zechariah and Elizabeth were both righteous before God and walked blamelessly in the Lord's commandments & statutes.^{Luke1:6} This means that their faith was not external only, for others to see, but where it mattered most, in the heart, for God to see. Zechariah and Elizabeth knew what it meant to serve the Lord because now advanced in age, they had walked with God for many years, and in a family that had followed the Lord for many generations. "Zechariah and Elizabeth represent the best of OT piety and as the faithful remnant received the good news of the gospel (Luke 1:19)."¹

TRANS With this in mind, it is important for us to ask one other question, "**why was Zechariah made mute?**"

Immediately prior to his prophecy, Zechariah is mute and unable to speak. This arose because when the angel appeared to tell him that Elizabeth was going to have a baby, the angel said He did not believe His word.^{Luke1:20} **Mute was an act of discipline from God on Zechariah's unbelief.**

Q? But why "mute"? Why not some other form or act of discipline?

Zechariah's whole livelihood revolved around speaking. As a priest in the division of Abijah, his whole life was ordained to "*pronounce blessings in the Lord's name forever.*"^{1Chron23:13} People gathered and waited, expecting him to speak a word from the Lord. Mute was a sentence not only on his work but upon his whole life. Unbelief muzzled Zechariah of the very purpose of his life.

¹ Robert H. Stein, [Luke](#), vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 73–74.



The work of God goes forth in the world by the Word of God, His truth! When His Word is wrongly spoken or spoken by one wrongly authorized, it makes a statement about the One whose Word it is. God's Name is on the line when those who use it speak for it. God considers it of greatest importance that those who speak His Word in His Name are made worthy by Him to do so. And that those who speak His Word FIRST believe His Word. And that "belief" is demonstrated by obedience, holding to it by faith. Faith in God's Word is essential for the one who would stand to speak that Word to others.

God is not interested in baseless words uttered for entertainment or to impress. He commands truth to flow by the tongue of those who are holding to His truth in their own life. The one who does not believe in the One he serves should not be passing out blessings, the principle work of priests, in the name of the One in whom he claims to believe. But sadly, this is all too common, as it was in Zechariah's day. So, Zechariah was made mute because he did not believe. But God's Word will not be denied or thwarted. Mute was a sentence not only on his work but upon his whole life. Unbelief muzzled Zechariah of the very purpose of his life to discipline him against a false dichotomy of saying something he didn't really believe. And not believing in the One in whose Name he dared to speak before others. [God muted Zechariah's mouth so that he would not speak contrary to the unbelief that held his heart.](#)

But know this, Zechariah and Elizabeth were chosen by God. His "mute-ness" was but a moment of discipline, not a terminal sentence, to turn his heart in repentance to believe and proclaim the One he knew to be true! And I assure you of this, every second of Zechariah's mute-ness felt more like an eternity, and served as a reminder of God's goodness and faithfulness as it was locked up inside, unable to get out. But while Zechariah couldn't get it out, it was working transformation like never before within. There was a level of faith rooting deep within like he never before known. [Zechariah prophecies a voice of hope in God NOT because of the miracle of nature that his wife was pregnant, though advanced in age, but because God by his discipline birthed a new depth of belief in Him by the revelation of His Word.](#)

So, as we approach Zechariah's prophecy we should know this; when the gospel is proclaimed, God is working for the salvation of everyone! These words are not uttered from a man who in any way does not know deep in the marrow of his bones of what He speaks. He's walked it, felt it, shut-up by it and now released to tell it. The voice of hope you hear today in the prophecy of Zechariah is not a hollow, holiday feel good. [This voice of hope are words that exalt and anoint the born and risen Lord Jesus Christ as Savior of the world!](#)

TRANS Today I want you to understand the voice of hope that declares to us...

[Jesus is our eternal hope because even when faith is weak God's promise remains strong.](#)

OBJ Zechariah's prophecy that proclaims God's will revealed and [three reasons why Jesus is our eternal hope.](#)

1. [Jesus is God's salvation, His Messiah.](#) .68-69

Zechariah begins by blessing the Lord and declaring His power as a response to God's promise long held, but now realized. This was no ordinary promise, and surely not a vain "religious promise". This promise is so unique it remains unmatched by any other, God "*has visited and redeemed his people*". [God has come to us to save us.](#)

God's power displayed is a perfect picture of his compassionate heart. God does not claim to save from afar. He comes to look upon his people and redeem. [God is a loving father attentive to his children's cries for help.](#)

God accomplishes salvation by raising up a "horn of salvation". This Old Testament phrase signifies strength, majesty and power to save and fulfill God's promise. And while John the Baptist will announce Jesus' ministry, this reference is not to John but to the One he will announce, Jesus himself. Zechariah was very familiar with this phrase because he had read it many times in David's psalms.

"The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." **Psa 18:2**

Jesus is Savior because his power is supreme. **READ** Heb 1:1-4



Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. Hebrews 1:1-4

God's great power to save is in Jesus Christ, and in Him alone. He is our hope, our only hope.

ILLUS Hallmark movies meme *At this time of year, do you know what has 15 actors, four settings, two writers and one plot? "A Hallmark movie", you say?* No, that is not correct. 632 Hallmark movies! The only movies that make "spoiler alerts" impossible. If Hallmark is not your flavor, then Star Wars likely will be. No matter how sappy or twisty the plots may be, we are suckers for stories of redemption. We have to know there is hope!

Jesus, our great hope IS here! There is no redemption without Him. But, as the voice of hope tells us today, because of Jesus no one who believes is without hope. For the voice of hope tells not of how you can get to God, but of how God has come to you. *Jesus has come as God's salvation, and He alone is our great hope!*

2. Jesus perfectly serves God's purpose and our good in salvation. .70-75

Zechariah proclaims that salvation is the will and work of God. What God IS doing is what He has been about doing from the beginning. God's declared His salvation from prophets of old in His Word.(.70) *Salvation is anchored in the eternal will of God, not simply in some momentary act of personal experience.*

TRANS Listen to how Zechariah shares this hope.

The salvation we receive in Jesus is complete to bring us to God. He saves from our enemies.(.71) Not, not the enemies we identify, but the one enemy Satan. Paul expresses the certainty of our salvation to strengthen our hope in this way.

For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 8:38-39

When we know we are not and cannot be defeated by our enemies, we are empowered to relate differently to them, even to pray for and labor for their redemption. *Salvation in Jesus gives us eternal hope, and the freedom to extend it to others, even our enemies.*

Jesus IS God's mercy and grace promised to us.(.72-73) **ILLUS** My kids used to love to say, "Dad, remember what you said." They would often use my words 'against' me. As a father, I've failed by "forgotten-ness" far too many times. But let this settle deeply into you, *God never forgets. Jesus reminds us that God remembers His covenant.*

The fulfillment of His promise in Jesus assures us of the truth of His Word that He will come again. Hope births anticipation! *God remembers us to remind us of Him by giving His Word. Our hope in God is anchored in knowing Jesus, the living Word, and walking in the light of His Word, which holds us until his promise is fulfilled.*

TRANS And when we know Go's promise is secure, our hope is sure so our steps, our life, can be stable.

Jesus saves that we might serve God without fear, in holiness & righteousness.(.74-75) This is the salvation that Zechariah knew. And it is also why God's discipline in muting his unbelief did not create bitterness or anger within, but grew great praise as it worked. *Service is our expression of love for God. Blessing and discipline are God's demonstration of His love for us. In both we can rest confident of His love and saving power at work within us.*

Salvation sets us free to live demonstrating God's glory in all of life. When the shackles fell from Zechariah's tongue, the praise flowed! He was a man on fire, unstoppable in his praise! I want to live this way, so sure of God's work in my life that even in His discipline I "kiss the wave that throws me against the rock of Ages.", Charles Spurgeon said. And as you've



heard me quote many times, the little 4'+ lady that bought a one-way ticket to China to tell them all about Jesus stated, "I have a firm conviction that I am immortal til my work is done." God fulfills every "small" promise through the ages to establish our faith in the one promise of His redemption by His Word; Jesus is our hope as Savior. **Jesus perfectly serves God's purpose and our good in salvation by setting us free to serve God in all of life.**

Is your "hope" this secure? Is that which is holding your life untouchable by anything on earth and in the heavenlies? If not, why not? Happy endings are not trademark of Hallmark or the imagination of Hollywood. **Jesus saves because He alone perfectly serves God's eternal purpose and our good.**

3. **Jesus fulfills God's promise for us.** .76-79

John the Baptist served a distinct role and purpose of God's plan in the coming of Jesus. He was the threshold to close one era and usher in another, last Old Testament prophet. He was a sign from God of the Messiah's coming. He was the voice crying in the wilderness to prepare the way of the Lord. The angel said of John the Baptist, *"He will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the father to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."* **Luke 1:16-17**

God made people ready to receive the living Word by the Spirit-empowered preaching of the Word through John the Baptist. Zechariah received the "prophet" because he knew God's Word. *"Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple."* (Malachi 3:1)

APPL **Do you see how knowledge of God's Word defeats doubt of God's work in Zechariah's life?** God's Word in you will do no less. It's power gives faith and overcomes even our doubts and unbelief when it is present in us, when we know it and place our hope and faith in it.

The birth of John the Baptist reminded Zechariah of God's promise, He will save. That there are none too far outside his reach, none without hope. That no sin can hold you captive from God today, because He forgives sin. That no darkness can keep you separated from God today because He gives light to those who sit in darkness. That no condemnation can remain in the heart for the one who places faith in Jesus because He guides our feet on the path of peace. **Jesus fulfills God's promise for our good in salvation.**

Jesus is our eternal hope because He is God's salvation who perfectly serves God's purpose and our good.

Jesus is our eternal hope because even when faith is weak God's promise remains strong.

CLOSE Zechariah's story is one of misplaced (lost) hope that fueled doubt. He was passionate about God. His life teaches us one final lesson that we must not overlook. His question in 1.18, **"How shall I know this?"**, also stated as, **"How are you going to prove this for me, God?"** is a trap that we must be careful not to fall into. He doubted God's Word and what it said He would do.

Doubt and unbelief have serious consequences in life. It caused Zechariah to miss the joy of active participation of all God was doing in his life. He didn't necessarily see himself as "doubting" or living in unbelief, he just questioned God's ability or willingness to work in His life. **The most righteous of people are not beyond the most subtle doubt, and even unbelief.**

Beware the most subtle of doubt in your heart and mind. Beware the ways you dismiss the work of God because of what you know as **"realities" in this world.** Zechariah doubted God because he allowed the situational details of life to be of greater reality to Him than the promise of God revealed through the Word of God. **The most subtle doubt grounded in the strongest rationale grows the greatest unbelief.**



Repentance and faith (obedience) restored Zechariah's relationship with God. Ask yourself, "How do I miss God because the things of this world are a greater reality to me than God's Word and the promises held within?" When hope is lost, it's always because it was placed in the wrong things, when what we place it in is not strong enough hold it. The voice of hope tells us of God's promise that cannot be shaken and will never perish, spoil or fade; His name is Jesus. Do you know the Messiah who brings eternal hope? I invite you to receive Jesus today.

