

My Soul Magnifies the Lord

Christmas 2020

Sermon Three: My Soul Magnifies the Lord because He has Redeemed His People.

Luke 1:67-79

December 20, 2020

Opening Illustration: Sometimes something extremely significant can be happening to you, and at the moment you have no idea. Example: What I thought was a simple opportunity for some free pizza on September 1, 1996 ended up being the night that I met Jen. 2 weeks later, we had our first date. 3 weeks after that, we were engaged. I had no idea that the people buying my pizza that night would end up being my future in-laws. I just thought I was having pizza. Everyone knows that Christmas is a Christian holiday, but why is it not a Jewish holiday? Why is it that the single most significant occurrence in the history of the Jewish people is all but ignored by them? Simply put, it is because they do not yet understand the significance of that blessed day in Bethlehem. The question for us, then, is whether or not their lack of recognition nullifies the promises made by God. It doesn't, as we will see this morning.

Quote: "He has delivered, he does deliver, and I trust he will yet deliver. My whole history has been a series of marvelous mercies."—John Newton

I. Introduction

A. Is the birth of Jesus Christ significant for Jews or Gentiles? Answer: Yes

1. The birth of Jesus Christ is a literal fact of History.
2. The birth of Jesus Christ (Incarnation) is essential to our deliverance from our sins.
3. The birth of Jesus Christ is also the fulfillment of God's messianic promise to Israel.

B. Why is the birth of Christ significant for Jews and Gentiles?

1. It is significant for all peoples because it is the means by which they made be redeemed.
2. It is significant for Gentiles because it is the means by which they were engrafted into a position of blessing, and no longer alienated because of their lack of Jewishness.
3. It is significant for the Jews because it is the means by which all of the Old Testament Messianic promises have been, are, and will be fulfilled.

II. The Prophecy (Benedictus) *Luke 1:67-68a*

A. What is Zachariah doing here? He is blessing God.

1. What does it mean to "bless" God?
2. How is that different than when we bless each other?
 - a. Most of the time, when we are "blessing" somebody, we are doing something good for them.
 - b. Another use of that word is to say good things about them. That is this word.
 - i. It is the Greek word (εὐλογητός) from which we get the word "eulogy". What is a eulogy? It is when you say nice things about someone.
 - ii. What Zachariah is getting at is that God should be praised—He should be magnified!

B. What is the point?

1. Zachariah is magnifying the Lord.
2. Zachariah is expressing wonder and joy in God's provision.

III. The Lord has Provided the Messiah—*Luke 1:68b-69*

A. Why is Zachariah blessing God?

1. Because God has visited His people.
 - a. Visited (episkeptomai) "as looking after the sick visit, go to help, look after..." The idea here seems to be that God saw the sickness of His people and sent the remedy.
2. Because God has accomplished redemption for His people.
 - a. Why is Zachariah speaking in the past tense?
 - b. How has God done this?
 - c. Why mention that now...in anticipation of the incarnation?

3. Because God raised up a horn of salvation.
 - a. A horn? What does this mean?
 - i. A horn is a symbol of military strength
 - See Psalm 18:2
 - See 1 Samuel 2:1, 10
 - b. Why is it appropriate to think of Jesus as a great warrior?
 - i. Wasn't He meek and mild?
 - ii. Wasn't He submissive to Caesar?
 - iii. What are we thinking about here?
 - c. Notice that Zachariah links this directly to David's throne.

IV. The Lord has Kept His Promises to Israel—*Luke 1:70-73*

A. The birth of Jesus was foretold in the Old Testament.

1. **Isaiah 7:14** Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel.
2. **Micah 5:2** "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity."
3. **Isaiah 9:6** For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

B. The birth of Jesus guaranteed freedom for the people of Israel. (v. 71)

1. Deliverance from oppression
2. Deliverance from everyone who hates them.

C. The birth of Jesus confirmed the fulfillment of the promises to Israel. (vv. 72-73)

1. To show mercy
2. To remember His covenant
3. To confirm the Abrahamic oath.
 - a. See Genesis 12, 17, & 18

V. The Lord has Brought Peace to us—*Luke 1:74-75*

A. Serving God without fear. (v. 74)

1. Imagine the freedom that Zacharias was longing for.
2. This freedom is something we sadly (but gloriously) take for granted.
3. This freedom equates to protection from all oppressors and forgiveness of sin.

B. Serving God with faithfulness. (v. 75)

1. Notice how Zachariah describes this:
 - a. Holiness
 - b. Righteousness

Point: Is this something you honestly long for? Do you long for holiness and righteousness? Or, perhaps, would you be disappointed if you got it. Do you really want to be freed from your favorite sins? It seems to me that for many, the very absence of sin in Heaven would be make it unpalatable to their sin-infatuated hearts.

VI. John the Baptist will Prepare the way for Him—*Luke 1:76-79*

A. Why will John go before Jesus?

1. To fulfill prophecy.
 - a. **Malachi 3:1** "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming," says the LORD of hosts. (Mal. 3:1 NAU)
2. To lay the ground work for Jesus' ministry.

- a. Repentance must come before blessing.
 - b. People must be prepared to listen.
 - c. John the Baptist would be an important witness
 - d. Etc.
3. To call Israel to repentance.
- a. **Matthew 3:1-3** Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." ³For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!'"

VII. Conclusions

A. Does it matter if God keeps His promises?

1. If He doesn't, then nothing is certain.
2. If He does, then everything is certain.

B. Christmas should remind us that God DOES keep His promises.

1. Even though it may seem impossible, God will deliver Israel.
2. Even though it may seem that God rejected them, He will deliver Israel.

C. God did deliver, is delivering, and will deliver again. Magnify Him for this.

Point: We have no idea what God will do in us, through us, despite us in the coming year. We could very well be experiencing an era in our lives the significance of which will not be revealed for a long time. Who knows? There very well may be somebody here today who is hearing the gospel today for the very first time or for whom the gospel is ringing powerfully in their head for the very first time. If that is the case, please understand this: God keeps His promises...The birth of Christ is a clear example of that. He will keep His promises to you as well. Promises like:

1. All who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.
2. I will not leave you as orphans, I will come for you.

May our Christmas celebrations and all of our holiday traditions serve to reinforce the fact that God keeps His promises. Beloved, please let that strengthen you, encourage you and allow you to live

To the Praise of His Glory,
Amen