

## SESSION 4

# WHY DID JESUS COME?

### ▶ **The Point**

Jesus came to remove our sin.

### ▶ **The Passage**

Luke 1:68-79

### ▶ **The Bible Meets Life**

Warning lights on the car dashboard serve a good purpose—usually. When the low tire pressure warning light came on in my wife’s car, I drove her car to the gas station and aired up the tires, but the warning light stayed on. A week later, we decided to buy new tires. But as we drove home on the new tires, we noticed the low tire pressure warning light was still on! I didn’t want to drive back to the tire store, so I took out my smart phone and went to the Internet. I found a short video that showed me how to reset the warning light! Problem fixed.

It’s common these days for us to Google the solution we need. No issue seems too obscure; somebody somewhere has made a video! Thanks to the Internet, we have a fast and easy way to fix many of our problems—except our sin problem. “Solutions” are readily offered in a variety of religions, philosophies, and worldviews, but none of them work. Only Jesus can remove the problem of sin. He’s made it possible for us to be forgiven and freed from sin.

### ▶ **The Setting**

A priest named Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were both old and had no children. While Zechariah was ministering in the temple in Jerusalem, the angel Gabriel appeared to him. Gabriel said the aged couple would have a son, whom they were to name John. The child would grow up to be like Elijah and prepare the people of Israel for the coming Messiah. Because Zechariah doubted the angel’s words, he was struck mute and remained unable to speak until after his son’s birth.

## What does the Bible say?

### **Horn of salvation** (v. 69)—

This term was used to describe God in Psalm 18:2. In Old Testament usage, a horn often symbolized strength, power, and victory. Here it refers to the Messiah.

**Covenant** (v. 72)—A pact or an agreement between parties, it often refers to God's promise or relationship to an individual (Abraham) or a nation (Israel).

**The dawn** (v. 78)—The meaning here is uncertain, but probably refers to the light of the Messiah coming into a world full of darkness and death. (See v. 79.)

### **Luke 1:68-79**

**<sup>68</sup> Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and provided redemption for his people. <sup>69</sup> He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David,**

**<sup>70</sup> just as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets in ancient times;**

**<sup>71</sup> salvation from our enemies and from the hand of those who hate us.**

**<sup>72</sup> He has dealt mercifully with our fathers and remembered his holy covenant—**

**<sup>73</sup> the oath that he swore to our father Abraham. He has given us the privilege,**

**<sup>74</sup> since we have been rescued from the hand of our enemies, to serve him without fear**

**<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness in his presence all our days.**

**<sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,**

**<sup>77</sup> to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins.**

**<sup>78</sup> Because of our God's merciful compassion, the dawn from on high will visit us**

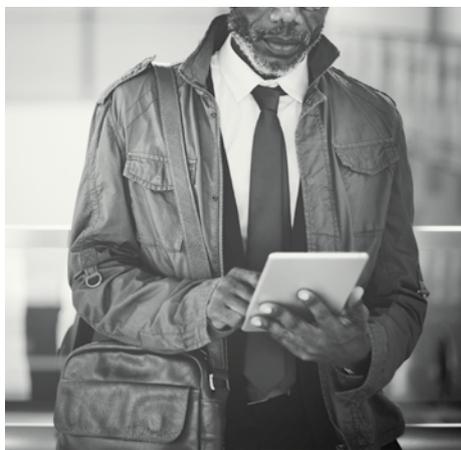
**<sup>79</sup> to shine on those who live in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.**

# GET INTO THE STUDY



5 minutes

Notes



**DISCUSS:** Question #1 on page 37 of the Personal Study Guide (PSG): **“When have you recently turned to the Internet for a solution to a problem?”**

Allow time for each person to respond.

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to **“The Bible Meets Life”** on page 38 of the PSG. Emphasize how Jesus is the only answer for our sin by reading or summarizing the text—or by encouraging group members to read it on their own.

**GUIDE:** Call attention to **“The Point”** on page 38 of the PSG: **“Jesus came to remove our sin.”**

**LEADER PACK:** In advance, make enough copies of **Pack Item 2**, the “Prophecy Chart” handout, for each group member. Invite several members to read various Scriptures from this list. Let one person read the prophecy and another person read the passage that describes its fulfillment.

**PRAY:** Transition into the study by praising the Lord for fulfilling His Word in Jesus. Thank Him for the salvation He offers to each of us through Jesus Christ.

**PROPHECY CHART**

The Old Testament prophecies about Jesus the Messiah were precise and accurate:

PROPHECY	SOURCE	FULFILLED
Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah.	Genesis 49:10	Matthew 1:16
Messiah would be preceded by a messenger.	Malachi 3:1	Luke 1:16
Messiah would be born of a virgin.	Isaiah 7:14	Luke 1:27
Messiah would be a prophet.	Deuteronomy 18:18	John 6:14
Messiah would be a priest.	Psalms 110:4	Hebrews 5:6
Messiah would be betrayed for 30 pieces of silver.	Zachariah 13:7	Mark 14:15
Messiah would be scorned, despised, and mocked.	Psalms 22:6-7	Mark 15:20,20
Messiah's hands and feet would be pierced.	Psalms 22:16	John 19:23,27
Messiah would die for our sins.	Isaiah 53:8	1 Cor 15:3
Messiah would be raised from the dead.	Psalms 16:10	Acts 2:24,32

AND HUNDREDS MORE!

www.PrecisofLife.com



---

## Luke 1:68-71 Commentary

**[Verse 68]** Following the birth of his son, Zechariah was able to talk again after a nine-month silence. (See Luke 1:18-20.) Zechariah broke his God-imposed silence with words of praise to **the Lord, the God of Israel**. He praised God because of what He was doing. The events of Luke 1:5-67 demonstrated that God had already **visited ... his people**. God had **provided redemption** for His people. *Redemption* in this verse is a synonym for “salvation.” In common usage *redemption* meant a price paid to secure another person’s freedom; the person could be a slave or a prisoner. *Redemption* emphasizes an action initiated by a third party; it is something a person cannot do for him or herself. While the people of Israel had long expected a political Messiah who would deliver them from bondage to Rome, God had a greater plan in mind. Through the Messiah God would fulfill His plan to bring about freedom from humanity’s greatest bondage—slavery to sin and death. While Jesus was not yet born and His sacrificial death to pay the price for our sins was several decades in the future, Zechariah noted the events as if they were already accomplished. God had promised redemption to His people, thus Zechariah was certain the Lord would fulfill His promise.

**[Verse 69]** An animal’s **horn** represented its strength and power. Compared to the previous verse, this image provides a more complete description of God’s work **of salvation**. In the act of providing redemption for a person, there was the possibility that the released person could be imprisoned again. What God would do through Jesus, however, was to defeat and destroy both sin and death. No longer could the former captive be enslaved or imprisoned again. Thus while salvation includes redemption, it goes beyond it to incorporate forgiveness, peace, freedom from the fear of judgment, and more.

The term **raised up** pictures an important person who was brought onto the stage of human history. The expected Messiah, for whom Israel had long waited, was soon to be revealed to bring God’s promised salvation. He would come from **the house of his servant David**. David was the great king of Israel who was noted for his loyalty to God and his heart for God. He was also frequently referred to as God’s servant. (See 2 Sam. 3:18; 7:5,8,20-21,25-28.)

**[Verse 70]** Zechariah was not the first to proclaim God’s promise of the Messiah who would bring redemption and salvation for humanity. Throughout history (**in ancient times**) the **holy prophets** of God were inspired to speak His words about the coming Savior from David’s line. (See 2 Sam. 7:11-16; Isa. 11:1; Jer. 23:5; 33:15).

**[Verse 71]** While **salvation** could be interpreted as having political overtones (salvation **from our enemies and from ... those who hate us**), throughout this Gospel and the Book of Acts, Luke primarily emphasized salvation in terms of humanity’s connection to God. Our greatest problem is a broken relationship with God because of our sin. Only through faith in the Messiah’s work can we experience forgiveness for sin and a restored relationship with God. The enemies being referenced are those conquered with the coming of the Messiah—sin, death, and judgment.



## Luke 1:72-75 Commentary

**[Verses 72-73]** One of the purposes of God sending His Messiah was to redeem His people from fear. It was a fulfillment of God's **holy covenant**. Whereas in verses 68-71 Zechariah emphasized elements of God's covenant with David, in verses 72-75 he emphasized elements of God's covenant with **Abraham**, the **father** of the people of Israel. (See Josh. 24:3; Isa. 51:2.) This covenant refers to the **oath** (or promise) God **swore** to Abraham, in which the Lord promised that all the nations of the world would be blessed through Abraham's offspring. (See Gen. 12:1-3; 22:15-18.)

With the coming of the Messiah God **dealt mercifully with**, or showed His mercy to, **our fathers**. God's mercy is His steadfast, unfailing love to unworthy and undeserving human beings. It is always an action—including the elements of provision, deliverance, forgiveness, and restoration. While God emphasized His covenant to the actual fathers of the people of Israel—the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—other spiritual “fathers” of the Jewish people also testified to God's merciful covenant. These included Moses (see Deut. 7:9), Daniel (see Dan. 9:4), and Nehemiah. (See Neh. 1:5.)

God's covenant of mercy was not just a promise to the patriarchs or to others in ancient times. Zechariah noted he and his contemporaries (**He has given us**) had now received God's promise. God's oath and covenant were about to be fulfilled during Zechariah's time. They would have **the privilege** of being redeemed and of experiencing the fullness of God's salvation.

**[Verse 74]** Zechariah next emphasized the crux of God's covenant—deliverance from the power and control of sin and death. Having received forgiveness of all their sins (see Rom. 8:1; Col. 2:13-14), reconciliation with God (see Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:20-22), and adoption as sons and daughters of God (see Rom. 8:14-17), believers have no need to fear. Believers have the privilege of serving God **without fear**. Those who repent of their sins and receive the salvation found in God's Messiah Jesus Christ are set free from sin to serve God. (See 6:16-23.)

**[Verse 75]** True service to God is rendered **in holiness and righteousness**. The Greek word for *holiness* emphasizes piety or devotion in a person's actions toward God; carefully doing what God expects and has commanded. It reflects integrity both inside and outside—a new lifestyle (outward) that is a reflection of a new heart (inward). Holiness also carries the meaning of being separated out from the world for devotion or service to God.

*Righteousness* comes from a Greek root that means just or right and reflects conformity to a standard. Whereas holiness usually deals with a person's conduct toward God, righteousness adds the element of a person's behavior toward other people. Those redeemed in the Messiah by faith receive Christ's righteousness as a free gift and reflect righteousness in how they live their lives. (See Eph. 4:24.)

We who have been redeemed and have experienced the salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ should exhibit right actions toward both God and others **all our days**. This emphasizes a permanent, ongoing action for as long as we live. This can happen because we live in God's **presence**—or to put it another way, because He lives in us through His Spirit. (See Rom. 8; Gal. 5:16-25.)



15 minutes

# STUDY THE BIBLE

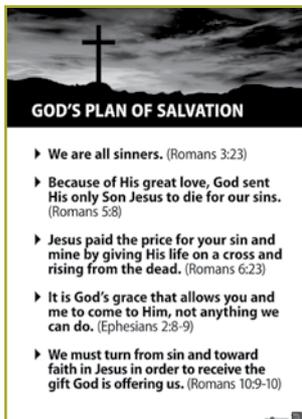
## NOTES

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

### ALTERNATE QUESTION:

*How does our culture's view of sin compare to God's view of sin?*

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....



## Luke 1:76-79

***76 And you, child, will be called a prophet of the Most High, for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, 77 to give his people knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins. 78 Because of our God's merciful compassion, the dawn from on high will visit us 79 to shine on those who live in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.***

**READ:** Ask a group member to read aloud Luke 1:76-79 on page 41 of the PSG.

**SUMMARIZE:** Highlight the main points from page 42 of the PSG.

**DISCUSS: Question #4** on page 42 of the PSG: **“What are some ways you’ve experienced God’s forgiveness and merciful compassion?”**

**DISCUSS: Question #5** on page 42 of the PSG: **“How can our group guide others to the way of redemption and peace?”**

**DO:** Direct group members to complete the activity “Reaching Others” on page 43 of the PSG to help them understand the importance of sharing his or her faith with others. Since we are here to enjoy fellowship with God and to tell others about His love, take some time to identify people you can tell about God’s love and the forgiveness of sin He offers through Jesus Christ:

*(In my family. In my neighborhood. Where I work. Where I hang out. Other places.)*

*Spend some time praying for these individuals and asking God for opportunities to have gospel conversations with them in the coming weeks.*

**LEADER PACK:** Display **Pack Item 3**, the “Plan of Salvation” poster, to summarize the gospel as the session ends. Point to the problem of sin and remind the group that God has provided a solution. Encourage group members to commit this plan to memory so they can share with others.

---

## Luke 1:76-79 Commentary

**[Verse 76]** Zechariah's **child**, John, would be **called a prophet**. God called John to be His prophet before he was born. (See Luke 1:13-17.) A prophet sometimes foretold what would happen in the future but most often proclaimed God's message of judgment and salvation to a specific person or nation. John would fulfill this dual function as he spoke for **the Most High** God. John would **go before the Lord** as a herald **to prepare his ways**. As the Messiah's forerunner John would turn the hearts of the Jews back toward God and prepare them to meet their Redeemer. (See Mal. 3:1; 4:4-6).

**[Verse 77]** John would **give** God's people **knowledge of salvation**. While the Jews of that day wanted salvation from their Roman oppressors, their greatest need was to experience deliverance from their slavery to sin and death. John would instruct them about repentance from sin and about the true salvation that comes through **the forgiveness of their sins**.

The Greek word translated *forgiveness* pictures a debt being canceled and someone being released from obligation. Humans are powerless to do anything about our sin, which ultimately brings condemnation and death. Through the Messiah, God made it possible for our sin debt to be canceled.

**[Verse 78]** Salvation is possible because of **our God's merciful compassion**. *Mercy* is a tangible action to alleviate the affliction of others. The Greek word for *compassion* literally means bowels or intestines, the innermost part of a person that was considered the center of emotions. Taken together, the two terms point to the depths of God's concern for sinful humanity.

**The dawn from on high** most likely refers to the coming of the Messiah. Jesus is the "light of the world" (John 8:12) who came down from heaven to accomplish the Father's plan of salvation. (See 6:38.) Zechariah looked forward to the Messiah's **visit**. This word pictures someone who shows up with the intention of helping, of bringing comfort and relief. This is what Jesus did in His incarnation as He ushered in God's new covenant with humanity.

**[Verse 79]** The Messiah would **shine on those who live in darkness and the shadow of death**. The word *darkness* is a metaphor for ignorance, captivity, and sin. To speak of those living in *the shadow of death* emphasizes fear, misery, and hopelessness. The coming Messiah would break through the darkness and call people out of the shadow of death, offering freedom, hope, and life for those who by faith put their trust in Him.

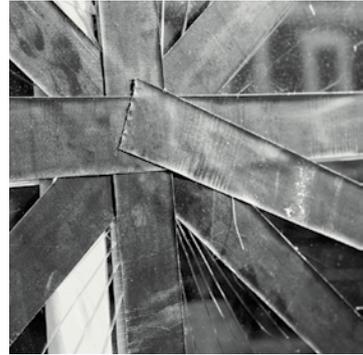
The Messiah's light would also **guide our feet into the way of peace**. A guide knows the way and will not get lost or take a wrong turn. The emphasis of the word *guide* is also on the one who removes any obstacles that hinder the goal. As sinners we were considered enemies of God. Through His sacrificial death on our behalf Jesus made it possible for us to have peace with God. (See Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:20.) The word *peace* comes from a term meaning to join—peace occurs when we are rejoined or reconciled to God. When we have peace with God we experience harmony, wholeness, and security. This was made possible by Jesus the Messiah, the Prince of peace who promised His peace to all who through repentance and faith in Him experience the redemption He brings from sin. (See John 14:27.)



5 minutes

# LIVE IT OUT

**GUIDE:** Direct group members to page 44 of the PSG. Encourage them to complete the following activities this week:



## Notes

Dotted lines for taking notes.

▶ **Stop using spiritual duct tape.** You might be able to “mask” your sin problem, but you can’t fix it. Without Christ, you’re lost. Accept the fact that you can’t fix your sin problem and ask Jesus to forgive you. If you need help with this step, look on the inside front cover of this book.

▶ **Live free from fear.** If worries periodically arise, memorize Romans 8:38-39. Embed the truth in your mind that nothing you might fear can separate you from Christ and His love.

▶ **Share the truth.** You know others who are spiritually broken. Give them hope by sharing what you’ve learned in this study about the redemption Christ offers.

## Wrap It Up

**TRANSITION:** Read or restate the final paragraph from page 44 of the PSG:

We are a people who love to fix things ourselves, but when it comes to sin, we can’t do it. Thankfully, we don’t have to because Jesus removed our sin for us. Jesus made it possible for us to be forgiven and freed from sin.

**PRAY:** Conclude by thanking God for sending Jesus to remove our sin. Ask Him to convict group members of sin in their lives and to give them the wisdom to confess.



Free additional ideas for your group are available at [BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra](http://BibleStudiesforLife.com/AdultExtra)