



## SESSION 4

# WHY DID JESUS COME?

### ***The Point***

Jesus came to remove our sin.

### ***The Passage***

Luke 1:68-79

### ***The Bible Meets Life***

Thanks to the Internet, we have easy access for finding solutions and fixing problems. But how do we fix our greatest problem: a broken relationship with God because of sin? Throughout time, countless people and religious creeds have offered a host of ways to fix our sin problem, but only one solution exists. Only Jesus can remove our sin, and thankfully, He has 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 (ex. Abraham) or a nation (ex. Israel).

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

### **Luke 1:68-79** (CSB)

**68 Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has visited and provided redemption for his people.**

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

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

**71 salvation from our enemies and from the hand of those who hate us.**

**72 He has dealt mercifully with our fathers and remembered his holy covenant—**

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

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

**75 in holiness and righteousness in his presence all our days.**

**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.**

# GET INTO THE STUDY



10 minutes

Notes



**LEADER PACK:** Bring your group's attention to **Pack Item #1**, "Why Are We Here?" poster, to recap the previous topics you've studied in the past few weeks before launching into today's session.

**DISCUSS:** Invite your group members to discuss **Question #1** on page 37 of the PSG (Personal Study Guide): "**When have you recently turned to the Internet for a solution to a problem?**" Allow time for each person to respond.

**SUMMARIZE THE PSG (PAGE 38):** 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 it 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.

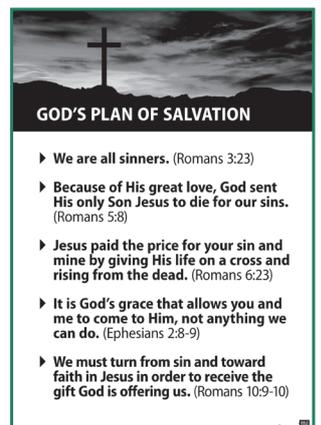
**SAY:** "Thanks to the Internet, we have a fast and easy way to fix many of our problems—except our sin problem. Only Jesus can remove the problem of sin. He's made it possible for us to be forgiven and freed from sin."

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

**LEADER PACK:** Bring your group's attention to **Pack Item #3**, "Plan of Salvation." Use this poster to share briefly what it means to be saved from our sin and given freedom in Christ.

**PRAY:** Transition into the discussion with prayer.

**TIP:** This session offers a great opportunity to talk about salvation with any group members who aren't yet Christ-followers. Use the inside front cover of this Leader Guide for assistance.



## PACK ITEMS:

**Pack Item #2**  
 "Prophecy Chart" handout  
 Pack Item #3  
 "Plan of Salvation" poster

## PLAYLIST PICK:

"Greatest Hallelujah"  
 By Matt Redman



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## **Luke 1:68-71 Commentary**

**Verse 68:** Following the birth of his son, Zechariah was able to talk again after a nine-month silence (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.

**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 (2 Samuel 7:11-16; Isaiah 11:1; Jeremiah 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 (Joshua 24:3; Isaiah 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 (Genesis 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 (Deuteronomy 7:9), Daniel (Daniel 9:4), and Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1:5).

**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 (Romans 8:1; Colossians 2:13-14), reconciliation with God (Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:20-22), and adoption as sons and daughters of God (Romans 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 (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 (Romans 4:22-24; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9) and reflect righteousness in how they live their lives (Ephesians 4:24).



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## **Luke 1:76-79 Commentary**

**Verse 76:** Zechariah's child John would be called a prophet. God had called John to be His prophet before he was born (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 (Malachi 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.

**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 (6:38). Zechariah looked forward to the Messiah's coming.

**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. 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 (Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:20). The word "peace" comes from a term meaning "to join"—peace occurs when we are rejoined or reconciled to God. 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 (John 14:27).

