

When God Comes Down

Luke 1:67-80

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Background

“Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down,” cried Isaiah. Advent is a season of anticipating God’s *coming*; this is what *advent* means. In his song the *Benedictus*, Zechariah praises God that he has come down and visited his people and will again visit his people. How so? In the birth of two babies: John the Baptist and Jesus. Will the people be hospitable when God comes to visit? Are we hospitable to God’s visitation?

Sermon Text: Luke 1:67-80 (ESV)

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.”

⁸⁰ *And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and he was in the wilderness until the day of his public appearance to Israel.*

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- b. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

2. Sunday questions

- a. What stands out to you the most from this sermon?
- b. The Benedictus celebrates God's visitation to earth (v 68). It seems the earth has generally not been very hospitable to his first visitation. Is your heart hospitable to the celebration of his visitation this Christmas? Explain.
- c. God saves his people *from* slavery *for* service to Him. This is what the Exodus is all about. This is what Jesus is all about, deliverance *from* the slavery of sin *for* service to Him. Where are you finding yourself serving him these days?
- d. The Benedictus also celebrates God's mercy and compassion (v 78). Do you really believe that God is full of mercy and compassion? Why or why not?
- e. Bernard concluded his sermon with the collect from the feast of St. Augustine (see below). In it, the freedom of obedience and service to Jesus is celebrated. Do you feel this freedom? Why or why not?

Lord God, the light of the minds that know you, the life of the souls that love you, and the strength of the hearts that serve you: Help us... so to know you that we may truly love you, and so to love you that we may fully serve you, whom to serve is perfect freedom; through Jesus Christ our Lord... Amen.