

# a Jesus Christmas

## Preparing the Path

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### Summary

The follower of Jesus has countless reasons to praise him. Two are specifically mentioned in verse 68 of today's passage: he has (a) visited and (b) redeemed his people. Luke 1:67-79 is Zechariah's prophecy (sometimes called Zechariah's Song). These are words that Zechariah speaks after not being able to talk for about 9 months. Zechariah's inability to speak was brought on by his unbelief in the message brought to him by the angelic messenger, Gabriel. The message Gabriel brought to Zechariah was that he and his wife, Elizabeth, would miraculously have a child in their old age (Luke 1:8-20). Despite the protests of the neighbors and relatives of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Zechariah insists that the child be named John, (as Gabriel had said he would be). Immediately Zechariah's mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed and praise to God flowed from it.

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### Outline

#### Introduction

Last week in the study of the first part of Isaiah 9 we learned about the the reversal of the heart that only God, our Creator can bring about. This God-induced reversal of the heart renews the mind and shapes the life of an individual which brings praise to the lips of the one who has experienced it!

Zechariah's Song begins with this sort of praise to God for his action on behalf of his people. It goes on to speak of how the people of God react to what God had done for them. This song finishes with the father of the newborn prophet John the Baptist outlining the role his son will play in going before the Lord "...to prepare his ways."

Zechariah's Song concludes as the results of God's purposeful fulfillment of his promises to his people are listed: (a) the forgiveness of sin that corrupts the human heart; (b) light being brought to those who previously were in darkness and (c) the guiding of the feet of his people in the way of peace with God where once there was separation.

1. The Action of God [v67-70]

2. The Reaction of God's People [v71-75]

3. The Proaction of God's Prophet [v76-79]

## Reflection Questions

1. How can your praise for the Lord God be magnified as a result of having read and meditated upon Luke 1:67-79?
2. Of the actions of God cited in this passage, which had the deepest impression on you? Why? How will the result of that action be reflected in your life in the weeks to come?
3. How does Luke 1:67-79 speak to the singular story of the Bible? In what ways do you specifically see this? What other passages of Scripture might you use to sustain your answer?
4. What is the purpose stated in Luke 1:67-79 for which God saves his people?
5. What does holiness and righteousness have to do with the purpose for which God saves his people? How can God's people obtain holiness and righteousness?
6. How did John the Baptist "go before the Lord to prepare his ways"? (Luke 3:1-21)
7. What was the result of the life of holiness and righteousness for John the Baptist (Matthew 14:1-12)? How did John's understanding of God shape his behavior? What lessons should we, as followers of God, learn from this?
8. What attribute of God is highlighted toward the end of today's Scripture passage (v. 78)? Have you received this attribute from God in your own personal life? In what ways?