

Luke 1:67-80

Sermon: : **Without him, it is impossible to create such a society**

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FRAMEWORK PICTURE

1. Before we enter the text, I want to share something with you. Some of us have only been in the faith for a short time, while others have been Christians for many years. All of us more or less know the essence of the Gospel and the Epistles. We know how to put together the basic framework, the core message given to humanity: *Jesus came to save the world from destruction, and whoever believes in Him will be saved*. And of course—that is true.

1.1. But we—as Gentiles in the 21st century—make a great mistake when we interpret this text before us only in that way. What do I mean? We have been taught that these prophetic statements we are reading are directly about us, Christians, about our salvation and redemption. And yes, if we take a verse here and a verse there, we can prove that. But if we want to connect these statements with God's plan from the very beginning of the Old Testament, then we see that these words are primarily about Jesus and what He means for the Jews—not first of all about us, today's Christians.

1.2. The Bible is—and must be—a well-crafted story that God Himself is writing. If what we claim cannot be connected to God's promises and the other events in Scripture, then we have missed the message and we must go back and search again until we connect it all into one clear and harmonious picture.

1.3. We must stop looking at these prophetic statements through the lens of Christian tradition, because if we do, we will miss the heart of it. To truly understand them, we must go far back in time—to when God said to Abraham: *"I will bless you, and all the nations on earth will be blessed through you."* Later, the apostles confirmed that this promise was not given only to the Jews, but to all nations. The blessing is eternal life, which God gives to all humanity¹.

¹ Genesis 12:2–3; Genesis 22:18; Acts of the Apostles 3:25–26; Epistle to the Galatians 3:8,14,29

1.4. But the promise has another part: God promised Abraham land—a specific, physical piece of land. And He promised Abraham’s seed, his physical descendants, that they would live in that land and be His people. *“I will be their God, and they will be my people².”*

1.5. Several centuries later, God revealed Himself to Moses and said: *“Moses, do you remember what I promised your father Abraham—that you would be my people and I your God? I paused that promise, but now I am ready to begin fulfilling it. Here is how it will look: I will give you my commandments. If you keep them and live by them, I will bless you in every way.”* And God then made a Covenant with the people of Israel³.

1.6. Hundreds of years later, God gave another promise—to King David. He promised that He would give all His authority to a human being, a descendant of David. And so, one day, God would rule His people through that human being. That descendant has been known throughout history as Meshiach—Messiah, Christos—Christ⁴.

1.7. Now, in the minds of the people we read about here in the text—Zechariah, Mary, and Elizabeth—all of this was very well known. It was through this *framework* that they understood the words and statements of the angel who appeared to them. If the promise given to David was to be fulfilled, then the promises given to Abraham and Moses also had to be fulfilled. Everything was connected, one with the other.

1.8. And then, thousands of years after those promises, Jesus enters the scene. And the Jewish people finally receive physical proof that God truly fulfills what He has promised.

1.9. To better understand what this is about, each of us can personally open the Old Testament and study the three Covenants: the Abrahamic, the Mosaic, and the Davidic. And I believe you will come to the conclusion that they are really one and the same Covenant, one great promise, only revealed in different stages. (All the books are listed in the footnotes.)

1.9.1. God says: *“Abraham, from you will come a physical nation. Moses, I will be your God, and you will be my people. David, I will rule over you through a human being. I will bless you in every way—spiritually, materially—you will have shalom. The surrounding nations will marvel at your kingdom, many will envy you, and I will defend you from your enemies. You, as a people, as a whole, will love me with all your heart, all your soul, and all your being—grandfathers, grandmothers, fathers, mothers, children—you will all love me. I will be your God, and you will be my people.”*

1.9.2. Personally, I believe this has not yet been fulfilled. As I have already said in previous sermons—the statements of Mary and Zechariah were true, but they believed it would happen in their time. They did not know that God’s story was far more complex.

² Genesis 15:18; Genesis 17:7–8; Book of Exodus 6:7–8; Deuteronomy 30:3–5

³ Book of Exodus 3:6–8; Book of Exodus 6:6–8; Book of Exodus 19:5–6; Book of Exodus 24:3–8

⁴ Second Book of Samuel 7:12–16; First Book of Chronicles 17:11–14; Psalm 89:3–4, 27–29, 36–37; Psalm 132:11–12; Book of the Prophet Isaiah 9:6–7; Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 23:5–6; Book of the Prophet Ezekiel 34:23–24

1.9.3. Their statements are true, but the fulfillment is still awaited—it will come only with the second coming of Jesus to the earth. We will see through Luke's Gospel that even Mary, the mother of Jesus, was astonished by His words and actions. At certain points, she thought Jesus had strayed from the path God had given Him. That shows us that she too believed that Jesus would establish God's kingdom while she was still alive.

1.9.4. Let us look more closely at what Mary says in her hymn of praise. She proclaims everything connected with God's promises—but what she did not know is that Jesus had to die as the sacrificial Lamb for the whole world. That was hidden from her, not only from her, but from the entire Jewish nation. The question is: when Mary was astonished at Jesus, was that an expression of unbelief, or simply a lack of knowledge? Personally, I believe it was the latter. She did not have the full revelation. And through the Gospel, I will try to show and prove that this was indeed the case.

HESED OF GOD

2. (Luke 1:72) The phrase “to show kindness” in some translations means “to show mercy.” It comes from the Greek word *eleos*, which is a substitute for the Hebrew word *hesed*. In a rough translation, *hesed* describes the characteristics of a person – and in this context, it describes God Himself.

2.1. What does that mean? God is faithful to His promises. When God promises something, it will happen. Every covenant He made, every promise He gave, He will fulfill. That is *hesed* – God's faithfulness, mercy, and consistency.

2.2. Through the prophets we clearly see that this is the central theme: God's faithfulness to His promises. Hundreds and hundreds of years had passed, and God had still not fulfilled His promises to Israel. And the prophets kept warning the people: *“What will you say? That God is a liar? That He is a deceiver? That He doesn't stand behind His promises? That would be a terrible mistake, Israel!”*⁵

2.3. The Apostle Peter confirms this when he says: *“With the Lord a day is like a thousand years”*⁶. In God's eyes, a promise made centuries ago is just as fresh and real as if He made it yesterday. The problem was that Israel didn't understand *hesed* – God's faithfulness – and that's why they thought and believed differently.

2.4. And it is precisely this faithfulness and consistency of God that leads to forgiveness and mercy. What do I mean by that? Thousands of years ago, God chose the nation of Israel. And throughout their history, they did everything to reject Him: they spat in His face, they were disobedient, rebellious, they went after other gods, they called Him by different names, and even committed unimaginably horrible things in His name⁷.

⁵ Book of the Prophet Isaiah 55:10–11; Book of the Prophet Jeremiah 33:20–21, 25–26; Book of the Prophet Ezekiel 36:22–24; Book of the Prophet Malachi 3:6

⁶ Second Epistle of Peter 3:8–9

⁷ Deuteronomy 31:27; Book of Judges 2:11–12; Book of Isaiah 65:2–3; Book of Jeremiah 7:30–31; Book of Ezekiel 16:15, 20–21

2.5. And now I ask: what should God Yahweh have done? Turn a blind eye to all that? Pretend as if nothing happened? Of course not. As a just God, He punished their disobedience and rebellion. But at the same time – He did not forget His promises.

And here is where hesed comes into focus: forgiveness and mercy. God will forgive thousands of years of their sin and unfaithfulness – but not because they deserve it, rather because He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

– That promise is the key. And this is exactly what Zechariah is prophesying about in verses 78 and 79. –

WITHOUT HIM THERE IS NO PEACE ON EARTH

(Luke 1:78) *The rising sun from on high or the morning star at dawn.* Here, I believe, Zechariah is speaking about Jesus. The same thought appears in John's Gospel, where Jesus is called *the light of the world*. Jesus came to earth to illuminate the path to the Father. With his coming, people finally received clear proof of how God will fulfill his promises. At last, we know how to walk in wisdom, how to avoid destruction and darkness. The Apostle Paul in the Letter to the Hebrews writes that God spoke in the past through the prophets, but in the end, he spoke to us through his Son. He is the final, essential piece of the puzzle, the one who finally reveals to us the complete picture of God's plan. Now we know whom God wants as his people and with whom he wants to share his kingdom.

3.1. (Luke 1:79) *"Those who sit in darkness."* Here this refers to the Law of Moses. When Joshua was leading the Israelites into the promised land, Moses had already warned them in Deuteronomy: *"Keep and observe God's law and you will be blessed; if you reject it, you will be cursed. If you obey—you will live, if not—you will die⁸."*

3.2. The problem was that Israel as a nation never carried out the Law as God demanded. Throughout history there were individuals who wholeheartedly tried, but as a whole nation—never. That is why Israel carried with it the curse of disobedience throughout its history. Those are "the ones who sit in darkness."

3.3. But now, says Zechariah, "The rising sun from on high" will finally free Israel from that darkness, from the curse that has followed them for centuries.

3.4. And what is darkness? Darkness is when a person is faced with God's truth—but rejects it. Such a person can intellectually understand and even acknowledge the truth before them, but never personally commit to living in accordance with it. They don't allow truth to shape them and transform their life. Instead, they may use theology or beliefs for their own interests, but never reach the point of saying: *"God, your opinion matters more than anything, I want to please you and serve you, not myself."*

⁸ Deuteronomy 28:1–2,15; Deuteronomy 30:15–19

3.5. That person remains in darkness—under the curse. The Bible calls this the second death. And here lies the tragedy: of all the nations in the world, the Jews should have best understood who God is, what he does, and what he desires from people. But no—because of the hardness and rebellion of their hearts, they remained in darkness.

3.6. If my interpretation is correct, then at first glance this looks contradictory. Because today we know that Jesus did not shine forth in his own nation. His own—the Jews—crucified him. So, what Zechariah is declaring has not yet been fulfilled.

3.7. But, as I said earlier, the declarations of Zechariah and Mary were true, just not fully realized in their time. They will be fulfilled only when Jesus returns a second time and establishes his kingdom.

3.8. In their words we clearly see: the Messiah is the key to God's promises to Israel. Without the Messiah, there is no *shalom*. And for the Jews, *shalom* means much more than just peace. It means protection from enemies, wealth and prosperity in every sense—spiritual, economic, physical health. It means living in mutual peace, loving God with all their heart, a life without injustice. It means Israel will finally be a priestly nation, a witness and messenger of God's holiness to all other nations. Their kingdom will be so powerful that their values will shape the culture of the entire world.

3.9. Can we even imagine a nation where the whole community loves God and serves only him? A nation without corruption, lies, deceit. Without poverty. People walking the streets of their city at any hour of day or night without fear: *"Will someone harm me?"* A mother letting her child go out, knowing a stranger will help them, not harm them. Justice and mercy ruling the land.

4. Imagine a world where everyone you meet thinks the same way as you do: promoting your good, because the King watches carefully from his throne. That will be the atmosphere where God's righteousness and holiness reign. And all of this will be carried out by one righteous King—Jesus Christ. The one who hates evil, and loves mercy and justice.

— Without him, it is impossible to create such a society. —