

Zechariah's Praise-filled Prophecy

Luke 1:57-80 on December 1, 2024

Pastor Jerry R. A. Johnson

Please read Luke 1:57-80 before going further in this transcript.

Good Morning Church! It's good to be back with you after being gone for a little while on medical leave. The surgery on my lower esophagus went well, but I still have about 2-4 weeks of recovery ahead of me. Thank you for all of the prayers and words of encouragement. While I was resting, I had the privilege of reading through some of our Global Partner updates, and I was so encouraged to read about what God is doing in the Solomon Islands. *(If you're wondering where the Solomon Islands are, they're about 1,000 miles NE of Australia.)* This latest update caught my attention because it talked about how the Gospel of Luke was recently translated into a language called "To'abaita."¹ And now they're working on translating Luke's sequel, the book of Acts.

Can you imagine reading the Gospel of Luke in English for the very first time just this past year? And then the incredible anticipation you'd feel, as you eagerly waited for the sequel to come out, so that you could read the book of Acts as well!? We are truly blessed to have all 66 books of the Bible translated into our own personal heart language! Friends, let's give thanks to God that we have His Word so readily available to us! And, let's rejoice that the Gospel is literally going forth all around the world!!! So pray for the Solomon Islands! This ties in well with today's passage, because Zechariah's prophecy is found in the Gospel of Luke, and it's all about the hope of salvation. And that's a hope that we want to share all around the world, including right here in our own Bemidji area.

Luke 1:57 begins, "When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son." Just as predicted by the angel Gabriel earlier in Luke, and doubted by Zechariah, John the Baptist is now born.² This highlights Luke 1:37, "For no word from God will ever fail."³ Despite his many long years of following the Lord faithfully, old Zechariah still needed to learn this lesson, or at least to be reminded of it. And today, you and I stand as the beneficiaries of his private mistake in the temple, being made public. So, let's keep this faith lesson in mind: "no word from God will ever fail."

Luke 1:58 goes on, "[Elizabeth's] neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy." This was also predicted by the angel Gabriel back in Luke 1:14, "He will be a joy and

¹ "two aBITEuh" see https://www.howtopronounce.com/to-abaita#google_vignette

² See Malachi 3:1.

³ Also consider Luke 1:20.

delight to you, and MANY will rejoice because of his birth.” The New Testament calls us to rejoice with those who rejoice, and that’s exactly what Elizabeth’s neighbors and relatives did. In fact, celebration and rejoicing are breaking out everywhere in the beginning of Luke’s Gospel, which explains not only why Mary broke out in rejoicing last week, with her Magnificat, but also why Zechariah is now about to break out in praise-filled prophecy, with his Benedictus. The response to God’s mercy is people’s joy. As our Heavenly Father works and moves in active and tangible ways among us, His great mercy, leads to our great rejoicing.⁴

But as much as this passage rejoices in John’s birth, it quickly moves on to his naming...

Zechariah’s praise-filled prophecy...

1) ...is preceded by John’s unusual naming which causes people to be filled with awe, wondering what God is up to.

Luke 1:59-61 says that “On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah,⁵ ⁶ but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.” ⁶¹ They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.” Now in our day and age, most of us feel the freedom to name our kids pretty much whatever we want to; after all, naming rights are one of the privileges of being a parent. However, 1st century Jews had been steeped in many customs and traditions for centuries, so Elizabeth’s decision to give her son a name outside of the acceptable parameters, caused quite a stir.⁷ ⁸ In fact, the people were shocked, so they checked with the child’s father. Now, I have to admit that I’m reading between the lines a bit here, but “Zechariah Jr.” probably had a nice ring to it.⁹ After all, given the supernatural aspect of their pregnancy, and all of the many long years of praying and waiting for God to answer, why not carry on the family name? It’s not at all surprising that people would think that Zechariah might prefer to have his son named after him, especially since this was very likely going

⁴ “God’s mercy refers to his loving action.” Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 165.

⁵ “Circumcision was the covenant mark (cf. Genesis 17:12–14; 21:4; Leviticus 12:3).” Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 97.

⁶ Consider Luke 1:72-73 in light of this comment on Abraham: “Usually a child received their name immediately after birth, but Abram received the name ‘Abraham’ when he was circumcised (Genesis 17:5,23-24). Both John (v. 60) and Jesus (2:21) received their names when they were circumcised, probably to highlight their connection with the Abrahamic promises.” *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2069 footnote on Luke 1:59.

⁷ Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996, p. 74.

⁸ Clearly Zechariah had communicated the angel’s instruction about John’s name to his wife one way or another, during his time of silence, probably with a writing tablet. “How Elizabeth knew that the name to be given was John is not stated. Zechariah probably revealed this to her along with what happened to him in the temple (cf. Luke 1:13).” Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 97.

⁹ “Tradition dictated that the child should receive a family name, honoring a parent, a grandparent, or some other relative.” Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996, p. 74.

to be their one and only child. Even so, much to everyone's even further shock and amazement, in verse 63 Zechariah declares it in writing, "His name is John."

Immediately following this unusual naming, Zechariah's ability to speak returns, and he begins praising God.¹⁰ He chooses obedience to God over the pressure to conform to tradition, in spite of the obvious peer pressure that he was feeling from his neighbors and relatives. Bible scholar Darrell Bock explains it this way: "Zechariah's reply is emphatic. His name IS John. Zechariah does not say it SHALL BE John. ...For Zechariah, the child had a name from the time of the angel's announcement. There was no choice for him. His reply indicates obedience and submission to God's message."¹¹

Luke 1:65-66 goes on, "All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. 66 Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "what then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him." Back in the beginning of Luke's Gospel, the awe and wonder that people were experiencing had to do with elderly Elizabeth's incredibly unlikely pregnancy. But now the drama has shifted to focusing on this unusual name choice, and the unusual behavior of Zechariah, who hadn't been able to speak for months! But now he was now chattering away and praising God! The *ESV* translates the beginning of verse 65, "And *fear* came on all their neighbors..." So the *NIV*'s translation "filled with *AWE*," isn't some kind of "awe shucks... isn't John just the cutest little baby you ever did see." This awe is an awestruck, fearful wonder! So when verse 66 mentions, "For the Lord's hand was with him," it highlights these people's sober realization that God was near, and when God is near it causes us to tremble.^{12 13 14}

The question still stands: "What then is this child going to be?" Indeed, a number of theories as to John's identity would be proposed during his lifetime: some thought he was the Old Testament prophet Elijah, others thought he was maybe even the Messiah. But here's the thing, their

¹⁰ As soon as Zechariah's tongue is set free, he uses that freedom to speak words of praise to God! This is a good reminder to those of us who are blessed with the gift of speech, for it is indeed a marvelous gift for which we should be thankful. How can we use our words each day to give God praise!? Consider Matthew 12:36 and Ephesians 5:4,19,20.

¹¹ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 168.

¹² See Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 169.

¹³ The word order in verse 65 "is emphatic, since the reference to fear is delayed and the reference to *all* is moved forward. Literally the word order translates 'there came upon all, fear.'" Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, footnote # 11 on p. 170.

¹⁴ Psalm 96:9 says, "Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness; tremble before him, all the earth."

question wasn't "who then is this child going to be," but *what?*^{15 16 17} The special circumstances surrounding John's birth, indicate a special child, with a special calling on his life, so a special work of God is in play. John was going to be and do, something well beyond the people's mundane expectations for a "Zechariah Jr." Darrell Bock says it well: "the story is just getting interesting. Stay tuned[!]... there is more explanation to come of just how special this child and the one to follow him is."¹⁸ "For those who are reading the account for the first time and who do not know the story, the question raises a note of mystery. To those who know the story, the question calls for joyous reflection about what amazing things God did through this key child."¹⁹

All of this leads us to Zechariah's prophecy...

Zechariah's praise-filled prophecy...

2) ...declares that God has raised up a horn of salvation.²⁰

Luke 1:67-70 says, "His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: 68 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them."^{21 22} 69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David²³ 70 (as he said through

¹⁵ "What then is this child going to be? The use of what instead of who emphasizes John the Baptist's role as the one who will go before his superior, i.e., the Messiah, and prepare his way. John was important not in himself but because he assisted in preparing for Jesus. Luke sought to help his readers, who knew of John the Baptist's importance, to understand that his importance was due to his role in preparing the way for the One greater than he." Robert H. Stein, Luke, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 98.

¹⁶ "John is described by the question "What?" (1:66), for his greatness is seen in how he served the Greater One. On the other hand Jesus will be described by the question "Who?"" Robert H. Stein, Luke, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 102.

¹⁷ "The use of WHAT [TI in the Greek] shows that the focus of concern is the role that John will have in God's plan." Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 170.

¹⁸ Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1996, p. 75.

¹⁹ Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, pp. 170-171.

²⁰ Sometimes we get a little bit hung up or confused by this word "prophecy." "Prophecy isn't limited to PREDICTING but can also mean PROCLAIMING God's word. Both Zechariah and Elizabeth were enabled by the Holy Spirit to express what otherwise they could not have formulated." *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1702 footnote on Luke 1:67.

²¹ Verse 68 begins with the words "Praise be" which is where it gets its reputation as the "Benedictus." Benedictus is the opening word from the Latin vulgate for "praise be" (commissioned by the Roman church in the late 4th century. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vulgate>)

²² Zechariah is a Jew, and the focus of his understanding here was on how God is fulfilling His OT promises to the people of Israel, but perhaps unbeknownst to Him, these OT promises extended to all peoples, Jews and Gentiles alike, including you and me today.

²³ Verses 68-69 make an intriguing use of the past tense, as though God's people have already been redeemed, as though the Lord has already come, and as though this "horn of salvation" has already been raised up. But in the context of Luke 1, Jesus hasn't even been born yet, so how could God have already redeemed his people? Well, apparently the birth of John the Baptist, who is the forerunner of Christ, created a certainty in Zechariah's mind, and under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he's declaring it as good as done. After all, he was recently reminded that "no word from God will ever fail," so even if he seems a bit presumptuous here, he's really not out of line. To be clear, at this time in history, God's people were still waiting for Jesus' work on the cross to make them right with God, but their faith in their future Messiah was enough to save them in real time. The certainty of Messiah's coming has never been in question, and now with the birth of John the Baptist complete, the birth of Jesus is just around the corner, in Luke chapter 2. "God has already, in the events recorded in 1:5-67, visited his people, and although the "redemption" awaits the future work of the Son of God, its certainty is such that a past tense corresponding to a prophetic perfect can be used to describe this future event." Robert H. Stein, Luke, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 99.

his holy prophets of long ago).^{24 25} Now, the first thing to notice here, is that Zechariah is talking about something much grander than just his infant son John. So even though we still have the question from verse 66 in the back of our minds, “what then is this child going to be?”, Zechariah doesn’t specifically address his son until later on in verse 76. Before he gets to this, filled with the Holy Spirit, Zechariah begins to prophecy about the God of Israel coming to His people and redeeming them.^{26 27 28}

In the minds of 1st century Jews, this redemption would have likely brought to mind the security of the Jewish nation. In fact, verse 71 later specifically mentions “salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,” so redemption most certainly includes a component of being rescued from our earthly enemies. But, as we make our way through to the end of Zechariah’s prophecy, we’ll find that redemption has a much broader and more far-reaching spiritual component to it as well; it brings forgiveness of sin, which ultimately applies to the spiritual wellbeing of all peoples, Jews and Gentiles alike.²⁹

When we read about “a horn of salvation” we may at first wonder if it’s referring to a musical instrument that’s used for trumpeting out the good



news about Jesus. But this horn refers to the strong fighting horns of a bull or a ram. It’s a symbol of power.³⁰ My favorite illustration for this, is a Dodge Truck built “Ram Tough.” (No offense to any Ford fans, or Chevy people, or Honda, or whatever else.) The point here is to convey the immense power being represented. This “horn of salvation” should cause us to think about the power and strength of the mighty king who brings us salvation, whose

²⁴ “While Luke doesn’t disclose what Old Testament texts are in mind here, we can nearly be certain that popular texts from such books as 2 Samuel and Ezekiel are in view.” Benjamin L. Gladd, *From the Manger to the Throne*, Crossway, Wheaton, IL, 2022, p. 22.

²⁵ Through the mouths of the OT prophets, the Lord God of Israel Himself spoke. So let there be no question about the divine origin of our OT Scriptures, and let us never think that they are outdated or unhelpful to our faith today. “the singular reference to the mouth of the prophets portrays them as secondary agents in the presentation of God’s promise. It also presents their message as unified: they speak from God ‘with one mouth’ about Messiah.” Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 181.

²⁶ “1:68–75 consists of a single sentence in Greek.” Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 99.

²⁷ “‘redeemed’ is found in Luke 2:38; 21:28; 24:21 and is a synonym for “salvation” found in 1:69, 77.” Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 99.

²⁸ “The term “Savior” found in Luke 1:47; 2:11; Acts 5:31; 13:23 appears only once in the other Gospels (John 4:42); “salvation” is found ten times in Luke-Acts but only once in the other Gospels (John 4:22); and the verb “to save” is found seventeen times in Luke (more than any other Gospel) and thirteen times in Acts. This salvation is not primarily concerned with political matters but with the individual’s relationship to God. It involves the individual’s “life” (Luke 9:24) and is for those who recognize that they are “lost” (19:10). It comes through faith and involves the forgiveness of sins (1:77).” Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 99.

²⁹ See *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1702 footnote on Luke 1:68.

³⁰ Consider Deuteronomy 33:17.

kingdom harkens back to the promises made to the house of David.³¹ My *Study Bible* says it well: “Jesus... has the power to save!”³² Friends, our God is mighty to save!³³ ³⁴ So verse 69 is saying that Jesus is the horn of salvation that’s been raised up for us. His power and greatness as God’s Messiah makes Him well capable of saving us, not only from our human enemies, but also from sin and Satan, and from hell and death as well.

Luke 1:71-75 goes on, “salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—72 to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, 73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham: 74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.” In addition to His promises to the house of David, alluded to earlier in verse 69, God will also be faithful to remember his covenant with Abraham, here in verses 72-75.³⁵ ³⁶ Everything that was promised and foretold in the Old Testament, will be remembered by our promise-keeping God. All of this flows out of the opening words of Luke’s Gospel, his effort to draw up an orderly account of the things which are being fulfilled among them.³⁷

As I was studying this week, I would have blown right by something pretty profound here in verses 74-75. I would have missed it, if not for Bock’s commentary: “The goal of redemption is not a rest in heaven or material prosperity, but service to God in holiness and reverence. Here is Luke’s call to his reader. God does many things: he saves, redeems a people, and keeps his word. But he also grants the saved a privilege: to serve him.”³⁸ ³⁹

³¹ In 2 Samuel 22:2-3, King David sings these words to the Lord, “...The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield and the horn of my salvation. He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior...” See also Psalm 18:2.

³² *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1703 footnote on Luke 1:69.

³³ Hillsong has a great worship song called “Mighty to Save.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCZ3Kcl4uEQ>

³⁴ Back in verse 31, Gabriel tells Mary to name her son, Jesus. Then in verse 32, he says, “He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.” Verse 76 later describes John the Baptist as “a prophet of the Most High.” You don’t get any stronger or more powerful than the MOST High God. Jesus is so much greater by far than John, because even though John a PROPHET of the Most High, Jesus is the SON of the Most High! John could only prepare the WAY for the Lord; he couldn’t do the WORK of the Lord. Jesus could do the work because of who He was; His Person and His Work are the key means of our salvation. Jesus alone is mighty to save!

³⁵ “The idea of remembering is not merely cognitive, but refers to God’s brining his promise into operation. ...God’s acting for his covenant should encourage Luke’s readers that he will act on the rest of his promises.” Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 184.

³⁶ “For Luke the coming of Christ clearly did not bring the creation of a new religion but the fulfillment of the covenantal promises God made to the saints of the OT.” Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 100.

³⁷ See Luke 1:1-4.

³⁸ “...Salvation leads to service; it is a means to an end.” Citing Bovon in part, Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 176.

³⁹ Later on, Bock adds... “The expectation of the devout for a political and spiritual rescue is not merely because of a pragmatic desire to be politically free, but also because of a wish to serve God. God’s covenant people were constituted as a theocracy in the Old Testament. Some wished to return and serve God as a united, sovereign people without the burden of domination by those who did not know the God of Abraham.” Darrell L. Bock, *Luke, Vol. 1: 1:1-9:50*, Baker, Grand Rapids, MI, 1994, p. 185.

Here's our final point, Zechariah's praise-filled prophecy...

3) ...reveals that John will prepare the way and the rising sun will shine on those living in darkness.

Luke 1:76-77 talks about John, "And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him,⁴⁰ 77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins."⁴¹ Now at this point, in my mind, I can't help but picture this proud father tenderly picking up his son in his arms, and speaking these words to him as he looks into his eyes, "And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High...."⁴² And so, Zechariah finally answers our question from back in verse 66, "What then is this child going to be?" The answer: He's going to be a prophet of the Most High God! In fact, he'll be the final prophet before the coming of the Lord. Now, as honorable as his role of a *prophet* of the Most High will be, Jesus will be far superior as the *son* of the Most High.⁴³ John Himself will later confess that the One coming after him is more powerful, "whose sandals I am unworthy to untie."⁴⁴

John's ministry is detailed in verse 77: he "prepares the way for the Lord" by teaching people the knowledge of salvation, which comes through the forgiveness of sins.⁴⁵ John became known as "John the Baptist," because called people to a baptism of repentance. This prepared people for Jesus' message, which He would preach right on the heels of John's public ministry. In other words, Jesus' message would echo John's message of "salvation through the forgiveness of sins." The forgiveness of sins would only find its ultimate fulfillment through Israel's coming Messiah, Jesus Christ. The key difference between John's ministry and that of Jesus, is that John could only provide people with the knowledge of salvation, but Jesus would provide them with the means of that salvation through the shedding of His blood.

Luke 1:78-79 concludes, "because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven 79 to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace." All of this is motivated and brought about, by "the tender mercy of our God." Mary sang about this mercy last week: In verse 50, "His *mercy*

⁴⁰ "There is a change of tense at this point, from the past tense, which describes what God had already begun to do, to the future tense, which speaks specifically of John's future mission." Robert H. Stein, Luke, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 100.

⁴¹ "In 1:76-77 Luke clearly referred to John the Baptist, since in 1:76 the allusions to Mal 3:1 and Isa 40:3 are used of his mission elsewhere (cf. Luke 3:4) and 1:77 contains terminology used of John's baptism (cf. 3:3)." Robert H. Stein, Luke, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 101.

⁴² See Luke 7:24-35.

⁴³ See Luke 1:32.

⁴⁴ See Luke 3:15-16.

⁴⁵ We see this demonstrated later on in Luke 3:3, "He [*John the Baptist*] went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins."

extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.” And again in verse 54, “He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be *merciful*.” So not only is God remembering His covenants with David and Abraham, and fulfilling His promises from the Old Testament, but He is also fulfilling His character as a God of tender mercy. Friends, of all the many things for which we can be thankful today, and for which we can worship God, surely His tender mercy is one of them.⁴⁶ *Aren’t you thankful today for the “tender mercy of our God”?*

Verse 79 points out how God sees our human dilemma, “to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.” God is well aware of the darkness in which we live, and the shadow of death that looms over us. That is why “the rising sun” will come to shine on us. This is referring to none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

- > He is shining on those of us living in darkness.
- > He is shining on those of us who are living in the shadow of death.
- > He is guiding our feet into the path of peace, just like the good Shepherd of Psalm 23.^{47 48}

The coming of this “rising sun” is precisely what this season of Advent is all about. We’re celebrating Jesus first coming, by remembering back to when God’s people were anticipating that coming. In the early part of the 1st century, God’s people were eagerly anticipating and deeply longing for the rising sun to come, and shine on them.⁴⁹ So clearly verse 79 isn’t referring to physical darkness but spiritual darkness, to being spiritually lost and wandering in sin, and to being separated from God because of it. Spiritually speaking, if we’re without Christ, then we’re living in the dead of night, which causes us to long for the morning to come, and for the sun to break over the eastern sky.⁵⁰ In the words of Isaiah 9:2, “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”^{51 52 53}

Friends, the light of our Salvation is on the horizon!

⁴⁶ Also consider Luke 1:72 as well as Luke 6:36;10:37; 18:13,38-39.

⁴⁷ Consider 1 John 1:5-7.

⁴⁸ This path of peace includes aspects of social and political peace as well as ultimate salvific peace.

⁴⁹ This connects us back to the Old Testament book of Malachi once again: Malachi 4:2 prophecies, “But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays...”

⁵⁰ Consider all of this in light of Luke 7:16 and 19:44, as well as 2 Peter 3:3-4.

⁵¹ Isaiah 9:1 says, “Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—” Interestingly, “Jesus spent most of his public ministry ‘in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali’, which is north and west of the Sea of Galilee.” *NIV Study Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 2011, p. 1598 footnote on Matthew 4:15-16.

⁵² Isaiah 42:6-7 says, “I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.”

⁵³ See Isaiah 49:8-9. Isaiah 60:1-3 says, “Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.”