

NOTES FOR FURTHER STUDY

**Supplemental Texts**

Gen. 22:16-18; Num. 24:17-19; Due. 4:31; 1 Sam. 2:1,10; 2 Sam. 22:3; Pss. 18:2; 23; 72:18-19; 88:18; 89:17; 105:8-9; 106:45; 111:9; 131:17; 132:17-18; Isa. 9:2, 6; 11:6-9; 32:14-20; 40:1-5; 42:9; 43:19; 44:1-4; 61:11; 65:17-25; Jer. 23:5-6; 31:34; Eze. 16:60; 29:21; Joel 2:28; Mic. 7:20; Zeph 6:12; Mal. 3:1; 4:2; Matt. 4:12-17; 5:8; 11:9-10; Mark 1:4; Luke 1:17; 2:14; 7:50; 19:38, 41-43; 24:36; John 14:27; Acts 2:18; Acts 26:18; Eph. 4:23-24; 6:15; Col. 1:19-20; Heb. 9:19

**Study Summary**

This is a prophetic song from Zechariah, whose mouth was recently opened after the miraculous birth of his son John. The song answers the question of the people about this strange boy in the previous passage (v. 66). It begins not with thankfulness for his son, but with praise to God for keeping His promises to Abraham in bringing an anointed king from the line of David to save the people of Israel from their enemies. Zechariah notes the roles of Jesus and John in God's plan of redemption, heralding John as a prophet who will prepare the way for the coming Messiah, Jesus.

This joyous song sets the stage for what is to come next, the birth of Jesus the Messiah, the long-awaited Savior of Israel and the world. Through these prophetic words we get a glimpse into the coming story of Jesus, who steps into our broken world and conquers chaos, winning a peace for God's people that enables us to be a people of peace.

**Historical & Theological Background**

**History:** LXX is an abbreviation for the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. While some Israelites returned to Israel during the Persian Period (450-330 BC) there were still many communities of Jews scattered across the Mediterranean. When Alexander the Great defeated the Persians (334-323), he began to spread Greek culture throughout the area, believing that it would bring unity. Greek eventually became the common language of the region and as Jewish communities began to lose their ability to understand Hebrew, the need for a new translation of the Scriptures was paramount. Beginning in 250 BC, a group of 72 translators began the task of translating the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek. By the time of Jesus, the OT was entirely translated into Greek. While Jesus most likely spoke Aramaic, the NT writers would come to rely heavily upon the Greek translation of the OT, writing in Greek themselves, which allowed them to communicate with most of the communities in the world of their time.

**Teaching Notes**

It might be best to do the Discussion Primer at the end of your time together this week.

DISCUSSION PRIMER

The holiday season can be a chaotic and depressing time for many. Take some time to consider how, in this season, you could be a person of peace in your family, our church community, your neighborhood, our city. Share with the group your ideas and look for ways to support one another.

TEXTUAL INVESTIGATION

LUKE 1:67-80

**Big Idea:** Peace arises when we find our place in the purposes of God.

**Fallen Condition Focus:** Purposeless/Aimless and the Anxiety Caused

- Why does Zechariah begin his song by thanking God for the coming Messiah instead of the gift of his son John? (See v. 67).
- *Horn* is a symbol of strength so that "a horn of salvation" (v. 69) means "mighty salvation" or "mighty savior". How else is this phrase used in the Bible? How does this define the work of Jesus? (See 1 Sam. 2:1,10; Pss. 18:2; 132:17-18; Eze. 29:21)
- How does the work of Christ enable us to serve God "without fear" (v. 74)? (See Heb. 9:14)
- What is the role of John in God's plan of redemption (v. 76-77)?
- "Rising sun" (v. 78) is from the Greek word *anatolē* which is used in the LXX for "branch" (Zech. 6:12) and "star" (Num. 24:17-19). What does this imagery tell us about the ministry of Jesus?
- **Gospel Connection:** Read John 14:27. What kind of peace does Jesus offer? How does He secure this peace? (See Col. 1:19-20)

TEXTUAL INTERSECTION: How does the text intersect with our lives?

- How should Zechariah's song of praise inform how we respond to God's blessings in our own lives?
- What place does fear or hatred have in your life? How should the work of Christ inform how we deal with our fears? With our enemies?
- How do you view God? As a father, a boss? What would it look like to serve Him "without fear" (v. 74-75)?
- How has the work of Christ brought light into your darkness? Into the darkness of our city? Our world?
- How might we serve those around us who do not have the hope of the gospel and are living in "the shadow of death" (v. 79)?
- Are you living in the peace Christ has won for us? Why or why not?
- What would it look like for us to live as a people of peace? (See Matt. 5:9-12; Eph. 6:14)

REPLICABLE QUESTIONS

Read **Luke 1:67-80** and explore together what the passage reveals about:

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|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) The character and purposes of God? | 4) Our identity in Christ?    |
| 2) The fallen human condition?        | 5) Our obedience to Christ?   |
| 3) The gospel of Jesus Christ?        | 6) Our relationship to others |

TEXTUAL APPLICATION: "So, what now?"

Have each participant identify a personal take-away in light of this study. Is there . . .

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|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| • a command to obey?  | • a beauty to behold?  | • a mission to fulfill? |
| • a promise to claim? | • a truth to believe?  | • an example to follow? |
| • a sin to repent of? | • a service to render? | • a person to tell?     |