

Comfort in Our Covenant Keeping God

Luke 1:67-75 ⁶⁷ Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: ⁶⁸ "Blessed is 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, who have been since the world began, ⁷¹ That we should be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us, ⁷² to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, ⁷³ the oath which He swore to our father Abraham: ⁷⁴ to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, ⁷⁵ in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

We come now to the place where Zacharias proclaims that God is going "to perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham: to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life." Think of the joy that must have filled the hearts of the hearers when Zacharias informs them that God is now going to fulfill the promise of mercy by accomplishing the covenant He had made to Abraham some two thousand years previously. Indeed God was now going to fulfill in time what He had decreed before the world was. Peter speaks of the ". . . precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," who was ". . . foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." (1 Peter 1:19,20) Once again as God's people we can be assured that what God has purpose, He will fulfill, that nothing can stay His hand. As we noted last Lord's Day the accuser of the brethren has been defeated, now we shall see that this was part and parcel of the covenant, the oath God had made with Abraham. And we shall see that it has as its foundation the everlasting mercies of God.

We shall look at this portion of Zacharias' prophecy under these headings: Fountain, the Foundation and the Fulfillment. The Fountain is mercy - The Foundation is God's Promise and Covenant - The Fulfillment is found in Christ our righteousness

A. The Fountain is mercy - It is mercy alone whereby God was moved to make a covenant with the fathers
- We are told that God is about "to perform the mercy promised to our fathers

Calvin on this passage wrote, "that the fountain from which our redemption flows is the *mercy* and gracious *covenant* of God."

1. Mercy differs somewhat from Grace in that grace speaks of God's bountiful gifts, whereas mercy speaks of relieving the misery of the guilty.

- a. That difference can be seen in God's dealing with the angels that did not fall
- b. It was grace that elected some angels thereby keeping them from falling.

I Tim. 5:21- I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and **the elect angels**.

- c. But it should be noted that the angels do not stand in need of mercy for they had never sinned
- d. Mercy is necessary when you are guilty

2. The promise made to Abraham then was a promise of mercy

- a. A mercy that will provide a deliverance from just punishment for the guilty
- b. We are guilty, we deserve God's wrath, we stand in need of mercy
- c. Yet, this mercy that God promises cannot ignore the demands of justice
- d. God being just cannot and will not clear the guilty, overlook our guilt

Num 14:18 *'The Lord is longsuffering and abundant in mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He by no means clears the guilty*

3. God must in some manner show mercy and at the same time not violate His justice in doing so

- a. God to be faithful to His promise must provide a means of mercy while also providing a means whereby justice will have been met in full.
- b. How then can sinful man be made free from the law of sin and death?

B. Foundation for the hope spoken of here is God's Promise and Covenant - *and to remember His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham.*

1. God must fulfill all His promises made through the prophets and keep the covenant he made to Abraham that in His Seed all the nations of the earth would be blessed
2. Remind you that we noted at that time that God's word cannot fail
 - a. It is true much time has passed but God is not slack concerning His promises as some men count slackness
 - b. God is in no manner controlled by or is a captive of time
 - c. Remind you that we noted that Jesus is the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world
 - d. What God promises is as sure as completed

Matt 24:35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away.

3. But now in actual time it is being fulfilled
 - a. God is performing the promise He made to the fathers
 - b. God is remembering His covenant He made with Abraham by sending His Son into the world.

Gal 4:4-5 But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

Rom 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

C. Fulfillment is found in Christ our righteousness - *to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.*

1. It is in the virgin born Son of God that all the promises and in Him the covenant with Abraham is fulfilled.
 - a. The Seed of Woman will crush the Serpent's head, the enemy of God's elect will be finished once and for all - ***being delivered*** from the hand of our enemies
 - b. In the promised "Seed" of Abraham justice will be met and Mercy will be provided.
2. It is here that we begin to see that it is in the promised "Seed" that mercy and justice can kiss.

Ps 85:10 Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed.

- a. The babe conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary will be the means whereby justice will be met and mercy will be provided.
- b. Justice will be met when God places upon Jesus the sin and guilt of His elect and when He bears our punishment in our place

Isa 53:6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned, every one, to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

Isa 53:5 But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.

- c. Mercy can be granted God's elect when our guilt is removed and we will be justified before God.

Isa 53:11 By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities.

Conclusion: Therefore we may "*serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life*".

Since: *Christ is that fountain from which mercy flows,*

Christ is that Covenant Promise fulfilled

Christ is our righteousness and therefore we stand guiltless before a Most Holy God

We no longer fear the wrath of God for Christ is our peace

We stand in His righteousness And therefore we stand guiltless before God eternally