

LOOKING AT LUKE
SONGS OF ANTICIPATION

Monday, August 17

Reading: Luke 1

Luke 1:76 *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, **77** to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, **78** 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."*

I remember as a child the anticipation of Christmas morning. The excitement of seeing all those presents under the tree was almost too much to bear. We had several traditions at our house. One, we usually opened our stockings on Christmas Eve. This was like a preview of coming attractions. Then on Christmas morning, we had to eat breakfast and do the dishes before we could open presents. Then we would read the Christmas story from the Bible and "dig in."

Luke chapter 1 is all about anticipation. The long-awaited gift of Messiah was about to become reality. We see the excitement displayed in two songs: one sung by Mary as she rejoices in God's choosing her to bring the Savior into the world and the other by the old priest Zechariah. Listen to the words he uses as he rejoices in God's promise: redeemed, brought salvation, shown mercy, rescued, tender mercy! The great promise of salvation was about to be fulfilled.

For me, the birth and ministry of John the Baptist (Zechariah's son) is kind of like opening our stockings on Christmas Eve. It was a preview of what was to come. This "prophet of the Most High" would prepare the way for the coming of Jesus. He would prepare the people's hearts to receive the Savior.

The line in Zechariah's song that always impressed me is in verses 74-75:

"...to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve Him
without fear in holiness and righteousness before Him all our days."

To this old priest, the coming of salvation through Messiah did not merely mean the rescue and exaltation of Israel from the nations. It meant the opportunity to serve God! The salvation found in Jesus Christ not only prepares us for eternity but gives purpose to our lives right now. We are to be holy and righteous as we serve the Lord. We are to shine His light on those "living in darkness and in the shadow of death." We are to be guides who lead people into "the path of peace" (1:78-79).

Does your salvation drive you to service?

Can you join Mary and Zechariah in singing a song of praise because God has chosen you to minister in His name?