

Commentary on Luke chapter 1 verses 39-80, by Chuck Smith 5.29.22

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May memory verse Romans 6:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

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And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, to the city of Juda; and she entered into the house of Zacharias, and she greeted Elisabeth ([Luk 1:39-40](#)). So she entered into the house of Zacharias and greeted Elisabeth.

And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the [greeting] salutations of Mary, that the baby leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as I heard the voice of your greeting sounding in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believes: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord ([Luk 1:41-45](#)).

There was John the Baptist six months along, and yet, there was some kind of a recognition, for when Mary spoke, he responded it to it in the womb.

We are told that as the child is in the womb, that it begins to understand and to recognize voices. That you pregnant mothers should talk to your child. For if you are talking to them while you are still pregnant, they will be comforted by your voice after they are born, because they have learned to recognize it. More and more are we discovering interesting facets of that fetal development. And here at six months with John there was that capacity to leap for joy in his mother's womb when he heard the voice of Mary.

Now remember she is speaking by the Holy Spirit. And thus, we have the word of the Holy Spirit that the child leaped for joy, at the word of Mary.

We talked a little bit this morning about what factors are considered in determining what is right and what is wrong in our present society. And the effect that the philosophy has had upon our entire culture. The idea that the mores determine in a society what is accepted and unacceptable behavior. What is good, what is bad, what is right, and what is wrong. And in this particular philosophical determination, if enough people within a society began to practice a certain thing, it becomes then socially acceptable, or it becomes good, or becomes right, because that is determined by the mores of the

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society itself. Accepting that God does not exist, because it has to come from a totally humanistic base. God does not exist. And therefore, there is no godly standard for right or wrong. And in as much as there is no goodly standard for right or wrong, right or wrong is determined strictly by the practices, the mores of a particular society. And the sociologists will show that there are societies where the father has nothing to do with the children. And so in that society it is perfectly alright as the uncle takes the father role within the home. There are societies where they have a plurality of wives, or a plurality of husbands. And because it's the accepted practice of the society, no one thinks wrong of it or thinks it's bad or evil, and because the mores determine what is right and what is wrong. So you get enough people doing something, and suddenly it becomes right. And so we get enough abortions, killing millions of innocent babies, but it's alright because it has become part of the mores. No one is supposed to say anything against it.

In fact, in L. A. County this year there have been more murders of infants than any time in the history of L. A. It's at record heights. Babies that are beaten to death, they are drowned, or suffocated, abused. It's reached record proportions this year. And I have such difficulty with this. My body begins to recoil. I have to put it out of my mind, because I just can't think about to long, it just affects me too deeply. But I wonder if much of this isn't attributed to the fact that we've began to put a cheaper value on life by the legalizing of abortion. You see, it's alright to abuse the child, as long as it hasn't been born yet. But if it is alright to abuse that child because it really doesn't understand much, it hasn't been born yet, then I wonder if the next step, it, well, it doesn't really understand too much of what's going on, so what difference does it make if you abuse the child? Because it doesn't really know or understand much yet. Whether or not that has anything to do with it, all I know is that with cheapening of the value of life, it seems to be following through all the segments of our society. And I think that we have some extremely dangerous sociological implications that will arise, from some of these humanistic, liberal legislative decisions that are being made. And I only say that to warn you. I don't think we're going to have to deal with it too long. I don't think God will allow things to go on much longer; I would be very shocked if He does.

All I can say, if I was the Lord, I would have closed it down a long time ago.

Now Elisabeth said onto her,

Blessed is she that believed ([Luk 1:45](#)):

Mary believed.

for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said ([Luk 1:45-46](#)),

And here we now get an insight into the beautiful depth of this young girl, as she began to just worship the Lord.

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My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For he has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. For his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. For he hath shown strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud and the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He has filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He's helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; And as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever [in a reference to the promise of God to Abraham, that through thy seed all nations of the earth will be blessed]. And Mary stayed with her for about three months ([Luk 1:46-56](#)),

Probably until the time that John was born.

and then she returned to her own house ([Luk 1:56](#)).

Probably stayed to help during this period of pregnancy.

Now she speaks here, beginning with verse 51, of the revolution that God creates. First of all, "He has scattered the proud and the imagination of their hearts." And so the first revolution is really an individual revolution of God scattering the proud. The second, "He put down the might from their thrones, and exalted them of low degree." And then thirdly, "Filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty," an economic revolution.

Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shown great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her. And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; they called him Zacharias, after his father. But his mother answered and said, Not so; he shall be called John [God is gracious]. And they said unto her, There is none of your family that is called by that name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him to be named. He asked for a writing tablet, and he wrote, saying, His name is John [or John]. And all of them marveled ([Luk 1:57-63](#)).

Now when a woman was in labor, the neighbors would begin to gather, they would bring their musical instruments, and they would bring food and they prepare for a great party when the child was born. And when the child was born, and they would say, "It's a boy," the musicians would start playing, and they all dance, and they would have a big party. If when the child was born, and they said, "It's a girl," they take their musical instruments, fold them up, and go home.

In those days it was considered a great blessing to have a boy born in the home. But girls were sort of disregarded. It took really the teachings of Jesus Christ to elevate women to their proper level. Placing upon them that glory, honor that they deserve.

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You women should be extremely thankful for Jesus Christ. All you have to do is go into a culture where the gospel of Christ has not had a strong influence, and look at the role of the woman, and you will appreciate more and more what Jesus Christ has done for you.

Look at the Bedouin society, look at the Indian culture, look at the culture of those people in New Guinea. Read the book, *Lords of the Earth*, it's a tremendous sociological insight into the culture of the New Guineans before the coming of Christianity. You'll really appreciate what Jesus Christ has done, in His elevation of womanhood, to its beautiful, proper place.

Now as soon as he had written on the tablet, his name is John,

His mouth was opened, and his tongue was loosed, and he spoke, and praised God. And fear came on all those that dwelled about them: and all of these sayings were noised abroad throughout all of the hill country of Judea. And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What kind of a kid is this going to be? For the hand of the Lord was with him. And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit ([Luk 1:64-67](#)),

Now Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit when Mary greeted her. Now Zacharias is filled with the Holy Spirit,

and he prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he has visited and redeemed his people ([Luk 1:67-68](#)),

Blessing God for, first of all, the fact that God has visited His people. Jesus Christ is God, manifested in the flesh. And through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as he is prophesying, the first declaration is that God, the Lord God of Israel, has visited His people. "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God. The same was in the beginning with God, and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" ([John 1:1-2, 14](#)).

He visited His people. But the purpose of His visit was redemption. He was visited and redeemed His people. Jesus, in announcing His purpose, declared, "For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" ([Luke 19:10](#)). Redemption, the purpose of the coming of Christ. The Lord has raised up a power of salvation. The horn was always symbolic of power. And so He's raised up the power to salvation in the house of His servant David.

Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ: it is the power of God unto salvation to those that believe" ([Romans 1:16](#)).

The preaching of the cross is to them that perish, foolishness, but unto us who are saved, thereby it is the power of God.

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Oh, blessed be God. He has visited His people. God has come to bring redemption, to give power for salvation through the house of His servant David.

As he spoke by the mouth of the holy prophets, which have been since the world began ([Luk 1:70](#)):

Recognizing that the prophecies concerning the Savior, concerning the Messiah, have been in existence from the beginning of men's existence from the beginning of the fall, actually from the time of the fall, when God said to the woman, "Cursed be the serpent. Crawl upon the earth." But then He said that the seed of the woman will bruise his head. That sin would be destroyed by the seed of the woman. Blessed be God, He has brought now the power of salvation. He has redeemed through the seed of the woman, through the virgin-born child.

For God is performing the mercies that he has promised to our fathers, and he is remembering his holy covenant; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham ([Luk 1:72-73](#)),

"Through thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear ([Luk 1:74](#)),

Salvation is more than being saved from sin. Yes, God has delivered us from the hand of our enemy, but He has saved us for the purpose that we might serve Him, without fear.

In holiness and in righteousness ([Luk 1:75](#))

Now both holiness and righteousness have as their root idea that of being right. But holiness is a rightness of character, whereas righteousness is a rightness in conduct. But the one springs out of the other. Holiness is the root. Righteousness is the fruit that springs forth from the root. The difficulty that so many people have today is their endeavor to be right without holiness. But ultimately, any endeavor to be right will break down, for there is no motive strong enough to maintain righteousness, other than holiness. You've got to be pure at the core. You've got to have the holiness, the right attitude, if you are to have the right actions or activities.

And so it is God's purpose, first of all, that we walk before Him, or serve Him in holiness. That God does that work within our heart, changing our character, our life, in order that we might also serve Him in righteousness.

The Pharisees had a system of righteousness apart from holiness, and it was total failure. And Jesus remarked on the failure. He said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you're not going to enter the kingdom of

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heaven" ([Matthew 5:20](#)). So to the disciples that must have been one of the most shocking statements that Jesus had ever made. Because who was more right, who did the things more right than did the Pharisees? And yet, unless your righteousness exceeds those, you're not going to make it, Jesus said. Why? Because theirs was a righteousness without holiness. It wasn't from the heart. Their attitudes were stinking according to Jesus.

"The outside you're like a whitened sepulchre, but inside dead man's smelly bones. The outside of the platter is all clean, but the inside of the cup is filled with vermon. You may clean the outside, but the inside you have a righteousness without holiness, totally unaccepted. And unless your righteousness exceeds the scribes and the Pharisees, you are not going to make it into the kingdom of heaven." Because you have to have a righteousness that springs from holiness. The holiness of character. And God's purpose that we serve Him in holiness and in righteousness,

all the days of our life ([Luk 1:75](#)).

And now addressing the child. This is a prophecy concerning the one that the child is to go before, but concerning the child himself, little John lying there.

And thou, child, shall be called the prophet of the Highest ([Luk 1:76](#)):

Jesus said, of all the prophets born of woman, there hasn't been a greater one than arise than John. "Thou shalt be called the prophet of the Highest."

for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation onto his people, by the remission of their sins. Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the sunrising from on high hath visited us [Or the dayspring, or the sunrising, or the rising of the sun], to give light to those that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace [again referring to Christ] ([Luk 1:76-79](#)).

God, by His tender mercy, has sent the sunrise from on high to visit us, that He might give us light, for those who are sitting in darkness, and in the shadows. That He might guide our feet in the way of peace. Peace with God.

And so the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert until the day of his showing onto Israel ([Luk 1:80](#)).