

STUDY GUIDE WEEK THREE

Songs of Luke: "In the Tender Compassion of our God" - Zechariah's Song

Winter 2025 - Pastor Olson Popp

Overview

From *The New Interpreter's Study Bible*: Like Mary's Song, Zechariah's Song, also known as the *Benedictus*, brings narrative time to a halt in order to provide commentary on the extraordinary events that have been recounted. Major emphases are recapitulated here: the importance of John as prophet and forerunner, the interweaving of John's and Jesus' stories into the one tapestry of God's redemptive purpose, the faithfulness of God, and the character of the coming deliverance and restoration of God's people.

Scripture – Luke 1:68-79

“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,
for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them.
He has raised up a mighty savior for us
in the house of his child David,
as he spoke through the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,
that we would be saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us
Thus he has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors
and has remembered his holy covenant,
the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham,
to grant us that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,
might serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness
in his presence all our days.
And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High,
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
to give his people knowledge of salvation
by the forgiveness of their sins.
Because of the tender mercy of our God,
the dawn from on high will break upon us,
to shine upon those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

Hymns

Blessed Be the God of Israel, ELW 250

Blessed Be the God of Israel, ELW 552

The *Benedictus* in Morning Prayer, ELW pg. 298-306

Zechariah's Song, the *Benedictus*, is sung during Matins, or prayer for the morning time. It is both a song and prophecy, foretelling what both John and Jesus will be coming into the world to accomplish. With the rising sun, we praise God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and we ask the Holy Spirit's help in taking up the cross to follow Jesus into another day. With Zechariah, we proclaim God's breaking into our lives, before we even begin our day.

Luther's Morning Prayer

We give thanks to you, heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ your dear Son, that you have protected us through the night from all harm and danger. We ask that you would also protect us today from sin and all evil, so that our life and actions may please you. Into your hands we commend ourselves: our bodies, our souls, and all that is ours. Let your holy angels be with us, so that the wicked foe may have no power over us. Amen.

Questions

1. Who is this song and prophecy about?
2. What does Zechariah say God has done and what God will do?
3. What makes this a beautiful promise for the morning?