

Prophet of the Highest

Luke 1:76-80

INTRODUCTION: Context:

- The birth of John (Luke 1:57-58)
- The naming of John (Luke 1:59-63)
- The prophecy of Zecharias (Luke 1:64-79)

Names:

- John – *the Lord is gracious*
- Zecharias – *The Lord remembers*

The Highest:

- Five times in the Bible (Psalm 18:13; Luke 1:32, 35, 76; 6:35)
- Three times in Luke 1
 - The Son of the Highest (v.32)
 - The power of the Highest (v.35)
 - The prophet of the Highest (v.76)
- Isaiah 57:15 – For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS SENT: (John 1:6)

I. TO PREPARE THE WAYS OF THE LORD (1:76)

A. Before the Face of the Lord

1. A place of prayer (1Kings 13:6)
2. A place of judgment (1Peter 3:12)

B. To Make Ready a People Prepared for the Lord (Luke 1:17)

C. To Prepare the Way of the Lord (Luke 3:3-5; Isaiah 40:3-5)

D. Importance of Preparation (Proverbs 16:1; 24:27; 30:25)

II. TO GIVE THE KNOWLEDGE OF SALVATION (1:77-78)

A. By the Remission of their Sins (v.77)

1. A dispensational work to bring the Jews (“his people”) to a readiness to receive their Messiah
2. A reminder to us that repentance is an important part of our salvation (Acts 20:21; 2Corinthians 7:10; 2Timothy 2:25)

B. Through the tender mercy of God (v.78)

1. God’s mercy leads to His grace (Hebrews 4:16)
2. God’s mercy led Him to send His Son
 - a. The dayspring from on high
 - 1) Description of the morning (Job 38:12)
 - 2) The day star (2Peter 1:19)
 - 3) The arising sun of righteousness (Malachi 4:2)
 - b. Hath visited us (1John 4:10)

Around the World to Save a Soul – “A dying publican’s wife, in England, recently gave the following encouraging testimony, as narrated by the evangelist who visited her. He says: ‘I was asked to go to a public house in Nottingham and see the landlord’s wife, who was dying. I found her rejoicing in Christ as her Saviour. I asked her how she had found the Lord. “Reading that,” she replied, handing me a torn piece of paper. I looked at it and found that it was part of an American newspaper containing an extract from one of Spurgeon’s sermons, which extract had been the means of her conversion. ‘Where did you get this newspaper from?’ I asked. She answered: “It was wrapped round a parcel which was sent me from Australia.” Talk about the hidden life of a good seed! Think of that, a sermon—preached in London, conveyed to America, an extract printed in a newspaper there, that paper sent to Australia, part torn off (as we should say, accidentally) for the parcel dispatched to England, and, after all its wanderings, conveying the message of salvation to that woman’s soul. God’s Word shall not return unto Him void.” [Isaiah 55:11] –from *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers* by Lewis Drummond (p. 326).

III. TO GIVE LIGHT TO THOSE IN DARKNESS (1:79a)

A. To Them That Sit in Darkness (John 8:12; 12:46)

B. To Them That Sit in the Shadow of Death (Psalm 23:4; 107:10-16)

Not Killed by Water Baptism – This story is told by the Baptist preacher John Taylor of an incident that occurred in Kentucky during the 1780's: "I was invited to baptize some people there [on Silver Creek in Madison County, Kentucky]. I think five were baptized at the time and among them an old man the name of Wilson, apparently far gone in a consumption. This became a great trial to my faith. I found [that] the old man could only speak a little above a whisper. And though he had been much of a singer and a prayerful man in his family, all had been laid aside perhaps for a twelvemonth for want of breath.

"I had lately been reading Mr. [David] Rice's pamphlet on infant baptism, where he had aver[r]ed that it was instant death to wet a man allover in the last stages of a consumption. If all this is true, thought I, which I did not know to the contrary, in this thing I had great perplexity.

"This old man came foremost to the water. And I [was] almost ready to tremble with fear, but in we went. As quick as he recovered from the water, he raised his hands [and] with pretty strong voice cried, 'Glory to God! Glory to God!' The first thought I had was, 'Old man, you are not yet killed.'

"A handsome, little revival of religion went on. This old gentleman's voice was so far restored that he resumed worship in his family and became a pleasant singer in public worship. And [he] lived after this for several years, so that wetting him allover did him no harm." –from *Baptist on the American Frontier: A History of Ten Baptist Churches* by John Taylor (p. 192).

IV. TO GUIDE INTO THE WAY OF PEACE (1:79b)

A. To Guide our Feet (Psalm 32:8; 48:14)

B. Into the Way of Peace

1. Not Known by those who reject God (Romans 3:17)
2. Given to those who receive Christ (John 14:27)

CONCLUSION: Nightly Meetings with Bwana – The English missionary C. T. Studd (1860-1931) established and operated the Heart of Africa Mission in his later years. He was known to the African nationals and the other missionaries as Bwana. His work with the other missionaries was amazing. "Probably the times with Bwana which will live most in their memory are the nightly meetings at Ibambi. More than anything else they kept the Mission on the true foundation of all spiritual work—the Bible and prayer. There were no time limits, but he just opened the Bible, read maybe two or three chapters, and then talked. The Epistles were his favourites. One hour, two hours, in Conference days till after midnight, night after night, it was always the same, our hearts burned within us as we met with Jesus. The greatest of all the lessons that we learned there was that if Christian workers want continual power and blessing, they *must* give time to meet together daily, not for a short, formal meeting, but long enough for God really to speak through His Word, to face out together the challenges of the work, to deal with anything that arises to hinder unity, and then to go to God in prayer and faith. This alone is the secret of victorious and spiritual warfare. No amount of hard work or earnest preaching can take its place." –from *C. T. Studd: Cricketer & Pioneer* by Norman Grubb (p.218).

Step out of your comfort zone. Or, as the Bible says, launch out into the deep Luke 5:4). Find out what wonderful things God has for you.