

# JESUS, THE HORN OF SALVATION

Luke 1:67-80

Key Verse: 1:69

**“He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David...”**

Merry Christmas! We're here to celebrate Christmas. The title of the message is “Jesus, the Horn of Salvation.” Let me give you a pop quiz; see if you can fill in the blank: “If only I didn't have \_\_\_\_\_ in my life, then all of my problems would be solved.” What did you put in that blank? Chances are, whatever you put in that blank is what you consider your biggest problem and biggest enemy. You may have said, “If only I didn't have...my boss, my neighbor, this sickness, these bills, in my life, then all my problems would be solved.” These days, our country seems to be getting more and more polarized, agitated and angry. It looks as if people have lost the ability to communicate and become too sensitive. So instead of working together, we end up in confrontation. We should be one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all, but we've become more like rivals—angry, intolerant, and pitted against one another with the attitude, “If you don't belong to my group, and agree with me, then you are my enemy.” Then inevitably someone puts their anger into action and all of us hear about it on the news. When we see events like the Boston Marathon bombing, or the shootings in San Bernardino, it's easy to point at those who carried out the act, and think they are our enemy and if we just round them up and remove them, then all our problems will be solved. But it's not true.

In today's passage we find a real solution. Look at verses 68-71: **“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—”** Zechariah proclaims that God's solution to our problem is redemption. It's through redemption that we are saved from our enemies. In order to understand this, we must know who our real enemy is. On the surface it looks like the people or things or whatever causes us pain. Those are indeed problems but there is an underlying enemy. However, we are too busy fighting with each other and we're distracted from who our real enemy is. So who is our real enemy? The Bible says that **“our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against ... the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”** (Eph 6:12). We struggle with people because they're the ones who are in front of us, but the Bible

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says that our real enemy is the spiritual forces of evil. To be more direct the Bible tells us, **“Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour”** (1 Pe 5:8). Our real enemy is Satan and his desire is to lead the whole world astray (Rev 12:9). He would rather see us fight then love one another. He’s trying to undo everything that God has done.

Some people don’t think Satan is real. Again that’s exactly what he wants you to think because if you don’t believe, you won’t be prepared for when he attacks. But I assure you he’s out there and he’s a powerful enemy. Here’s an example of what he can do. Once Jesus went into a synagogue and saw a woman who had been crippled for 18 long years. She was bent over and couldn’t straighten up. People thought that she had a medical problem. They must have tried to help her with many kinds of medical treatment, but nothing worked. This does not mean that every medical problem is Satan’s work. My point is that Satan is real. Jesus said that her real problem was Satan and he was the one who had bound her and wouldn’t let her go (Lk 13:10-15). Jesus had compassion on her and laid his hands on her and she was healed and freed. Satan is powerful. He is described as having seven heads and ten horns. Horns are a symbol of power and the more horns you have the more power. Satan with ten horns = powerful; mankind with no horns = weak. We are no match for Satan as he prowls around looking to impale his enemies, you and me.

How does Satan attack his victims? You can imagine he has a horn of anger, and one of hatred, fear, jealousy, revenge, doubt, lust, greed and so on. Just as a bull gores its victim, Satan takes one of these horns and impales his target leaving them badly wounded. Once we’re wounded we become helpless and Satan can enter into us through that wound and make us do what we don’t want to do. We tend to think that radicalized terrorists are our enemies. After all, they are doing things to hurt us. They weren’t born like that. Why are they doing these terrible things? What we come to realize is that they have actually been pierced by the horn of Satan too. Somewhere along the line Satan impaled them with a horn of anger. So they respond in anger, just as we respond. I heard of a North Korean man that hated Americans because both of his grandfathers were killed by Americans in the Korean War. Satan entered through that wound and filled him with hate and revenge. Satan wounds us and then we wound others. Our real enemy is Satan. But since he has seven heads and ten horns, fighting him is like David versus Goliath. We are powerless against him. What is even worse, death is our final enemy. 1 Corinthians 15:26 says, **“The last enemy to be destroyed is death.”** We have graveyards full of reminders that show us death is the one enemy that defeats

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everyone. The Bible tells us that death entered into the world because of sin (Ro 5:12). The wages of sin is death (Ro 6:23). This death is separation from God, and eternal condemnation in the fiery lake of burning sulfur, without any hope (Rev 21:8). This is the final destiny of all mankind.

But thank God who has raised up Jesus, a horn of salvation for us! Let's read verses 69-71: **"He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago) salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us...."** Zechariah has a message of hope. God sent his one and only son Jesus as our redeemer. Jesus is God who left his position in heaven to come to earth and redeem us. In order to redeem us, Jesus suffered and died for our sins on the cross. Jesus has come to bring us salvation through the forgiveness of sins. Jesus has come to take death away through his resurrection. This salvation includes sanctification. First we are forgiven and then we are transformed. To accomplish this, Jesus becomes the horn of our salvation and our rising sun.

Horn symbolizes power to rule. We find a great contrast between Jesus and the devil in how they use their power. Satan uses his power to enslave and kill people. Jesus, however, uses his power to free us and save us. Satan used his power to pierce Jesus on the cross and it looked like Satan won. But ironically when Satan pierced Jesus, Jesus was the victor. Jesus is more powerful than Satan. Jesus took everything that Satan threw at him, the best that Satan can give, and it didn't stop him. Jesus went into the darkness of death, conquered it and rose from the dead. (Ac 2:24). The fear of death is Satan's biggest weapon. **"God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him"** When Jesus rose from the dead, he destroyed the very thing Satan uses to control us, our fear of death. Because Jesus rose from the dead, we don't have to be afraid of death anymore (Heb 2:14-15). For those who believe in Jesus, death is entering the presence of God to be with Jesus forever. At the resurrection, we will receive a glorious new body that is imperishable, glorious, powerful and spiritual (1Cor 15:42-44). We will all be like Jesus forever.

Praise God for Jesus, the horn of salvation! Not only has Jesus defeated death, but he has power to heal wounded people. The prophet Isaiah tells us how. He said, **"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed"** (Isa 53:5). Since the wages of sin is death and God has a sense of justice, then everyone who sins must die. If God handed out pardons only

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for the people he likes, that would be favoritism. Sin has to be paid for. There is no way around it. So in order to satisfy justice, God sacrificed his Son to pay for all our sins. Jesus suffered for our sins and although he was righteous, he was sacrificed for the unrighteous, to bring us back to God (1Pe 3:18).

Jesus, the horn of salvation, saves us by extending his mercy to us through the forgiveness of our sins. As Jesus hung on the cross, the religious leaders mocked him and spit on him. As he hung there, he said **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing”** (Lk 23:34a). We are sinners and we need forgiveness. We can’t negotiate or get special considerations; we need forgiveness from the one we have offended. When we cry out to Jesus he says, **“I will remember [your sins] no more”** (Heb 10:17). Jesus’ forgiveness has the power to melt our frozen hearts and bring them back to life. That is exactly what he did for Annie Lobert. When she was young, she longed for her father’s love, but instead all he gave her was his anger. This left her wounded and vulnerable. She sought out any attention the boys would give her. Sometime later, she met a guy that she thought was “the one.” She gave her whole heart to him. Instead of loving her back, he used her to get what he wanted and cheated on her with several of her friends. She was deeply wounded and began to think, “I’m no good. I’m not worthy.” Once Satan wounded her, he used that wound to lure her into a lie. Leaving home at 18 she struggled to make ends meet. In order to survive she became a prostitute. When she found out that she could make a lot of money, she wanted to use it to get revenge against men to show them that she could make something of herself. Instead of getting what she wanted, she became a slave of her pimp. He beat her so badly that she had to be hospitalized. He told her, “If you leave me, I will kill you.” She was gripped with fear. To cope with it, she overdosed on drugs and almost died. When she was at her lowest point, she cried out to Jesus to save her. Even though she had not gone to church, Jesus answered her prayer. Jesus rescued her from Satan’s slavery and healed her broken heart. Jesus, the horn of salvation, healed her on the inside and restored her dignity as a woman. She lives as a servant of God without fear, going where prostitutes are, in order to share the gospel with them. Praise Jesus, the horn of salvation, mighty to save!

Once we have been saved by the horn of salvation, then we need sanctification and guidance to help live our lives. We need to grow to be like Jesus. Take a look at verses 78-79, **“because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.”** Even though our enemy death has been defeated, it still casts its shadow over us causing

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us to live in darkness. When we are stuck in the shadow of death, we have no way to dispel that darkness ourselves. Darkness draws out our fears. There's a reason horror movies take place at night, because it's scarier at night. Darkness can be unnerving. You may not know this, but I am a certified scuba diver. Once, while diving, I could only see ten feet ahead of me. As I swam along, things would emerge out of the darkness as I approached them. Let me tell you, it was creepy because I didn't know what was going to come next. But at least in that situation I could just swim to the surface. But when we're stuck in a spiritually dark place, sometimes we don't know how to get out. We just can't swim to the surface. The emptiness and meaninglessness of life can leave one depressed. The shadow of death can make us do irrational things. In the wake of the San Bernardino shootings, the Liberty University president urged their college students to go out and get a gun so that they could protect themselves and end those Muslims before they could walk in and kill. It's hard to believe that a Christian university leader spoke like this. Satan uses the shadow of death to try and make us fight against one another. But thank God for Jesus, the rising sun, who shines on those living in the shadow of death. Jesus said, **"Love your enemies"** (Lk 6:27). There is no fear in love but perfect love drives out fear (1Jn 4:18).

God in his tender mercy sent us his precious Son to shine on those living in darkness and bring them into his wonderful light. Jesus said, **"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life"** (Jn 8:12). When we accept Jesus into our hearts, he shines upon us; he is the true light that shines on all men. The image that Zechariah gives us is so clear and simple. When the sun comes up, the darkness goes. All our darkness is replaced and we can have a living hope in the kingdom of God. We look forward to the day that all of us will rise and be with Jesus in heaven.

These days' peace is a serious matter. The rising sun came to lead us to the path of peace. That path includes serving God. In our sins, we neither desire, nor are able, to serve him. However, when the rising sun shines on us, he enables us to serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness, before him all our days (74-75). In order for us to serve God, and to serve before him, we can no longer live our lives before the world, no longer before one another. Who calls the shots in your life now? If we are really honest, we live before the opinions of the people around us. Jesus enables us to live before God instead of people. He enables us to turn around and run to God instead of running away and hiding. Not only does the rising sun enable us, but he also elevates us. That is, he lifts us up from what sin does to us, which is always degrading, and he gives us holiness and righteousness. He frees us from sin which has its hooks in us and won't let us go. He frees us

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from all the things that we consciously and willingly and actively do, that pull us away from God. We're not victims in all this; let's not fool ourselves. We're more like rebels. But the rising sun frees us from that which we cannot free ourselves from. We're part of the problem, and he separates us from it and gives us holiness. The relationship that has been broken by our sin, he restores with God. Our offenses, which have been piled high, he removes. He lifts up our life from the mess that sin makes it, and puts our feet on higher ground, right into God's presence so that we are able to serve him. Not only does he enable us to serve him, but he gives us meaningful work to do. There is nothing worse than being stuck at a dead end job doing meaningless work. It's degrading. But Jesus the rising sun gives us the most meaningful job: serving God by shepherding his people.

I too have experienced the wounds of Satan. When I was around 12, I was shocked to find out that that my dad was not my biological father. It made me wonder what other deeply held beliefs of mine might be wrong. Satan used this, coupled with my dad's angry outbursts, to wound me. As a result, I felt oppressed and rejected thinking that he only loved my sister, his biological child. My response to that was, "I'm going to do what I want to do." So I left home at 19 with the intention of never coming back and began to live a reckless life. My apartment with my roommate and best friend became known as "party central." But my life didn't turn out as I thought it would. Actually it kind of spiraled out of control. At my lowest point, I was kicked out of college twice—I had to beg to get back in. I'd been fired from two of the three part-time jobs I was working at, and our landlord thought I was the problem. So he kicked me out of the place I was living at. Having nowhere else to go, I returned home feeling like a failure, having to listen to my father's comments about what a screw-up I was. It was at this low point that the word of God began to speak to me. It was through God's word that I tasted his love for me. Even though I had made a mess of things, he still loved me and was my heavenly Father. I received Jesus and experienced the horn of salvation. Then Jesus the rising sun shined upon me and helped me to learn what it meant to live as his child, as his servant. He guided my feet to the path of peace and my life changed dramatically. I graduated from college and by his grace have had a good-paying, stable job ever since then. I got married to a loving, godly wife Julia, and have four children. God enabled me to become a lay pastor of a student ministry for the past nine years. This summer I finished my master's degree. I couldn't do any of that before, but God has enabled me to serve him. He took away my sins. I'm not righteous or trying to brag, I just want to tell you how God poured out his wonderful love and redeemed a screw-up sinner like me. As Christmas draws near, please remember that God loves you and he has raised up a horn of salvation, as a

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mighty Savior, just for you. Jesus wants to be your rising sun, so that he can light your path and guide you to peace.