

come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels". The echo of Daniel 7 is clear. There are further 'judgement' verses in 12:8,10, and verse 40 is worth quoting: "for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not", a warning that applied prior to A.D. 70, and surely much more so today when abundant signs tell us of the nearness of Christ's return.

Chapter 17 contains four passages with the phrase "Son of man" (vv. 22,24,26,30). Verse 26 is a reminder that the days of Noah are to be replicated in the time leading to Messiah's coming: "And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man". How thankful we are to our God for these warnings as we prepare ourselves for our Lord's return!

The Olivet Prophecy contains two 'Son of man' passages (21:27,36). In a clear allusion to Daniel 7: 13,14 Jesus says, "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (v. 27). And perhaps the words of verse 36 should be our fervent prayer for ourselves and

our loved ones in ecclesia and family: "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man". Finally, in his trial before the Sanhedrin, as day came, Jesus calmly told the council that "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God" (22:69), a statement that again alludes to Daniel 7:13,14.

Surely the day is near when the Son of man will have dominion over all things (Gen. 1:26-28) in the day of the Kingdom, for the apostle says, "For he must reign, till He hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under his feet. But when He saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that He is excepted, Which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto Him That put all things under him, that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:25-28).

Saviour and salvation in the Gospel of Luke

Geoff Henstock

One of the characteristics of Luke's Gospel is the use of the words 'saviour' and 'salvation', especially in the first two chapters. This is part of his overall theme of Jesus as the Man, seeking out those lost through sin.

SALVATION is a central theme in Christian theology. Whilst understanding that our heavenly Father is "a just God and a Saviour" (Isa. 45:21), and that there is no other saviour beside Him (43:11), we know that "God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus" (Acts 13:23).

The Lord Jesus Christ, then, is the agent through whom God extends salvation to perishing man: "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (4:12). We recognise that "the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jno. 4:14); we acknowledge that Christ "is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23); we know that God exalted him "to be a Prince and a Saviour" (Acts 5:31). It

may therefore seem incongruous that the words 'salvation' and 'saviour' are so rare in the Gospel records of the ministry of Jesus. In fact, they are unique to Luke within the synoptic Gospels.¹

"God my Saviour"

It is curious that most of the uses of these words in Luke occur with reference to the infant Jesus, and all but one occur before the Lord commences his public ministry. The first reference occurs within the Song of Mary, that majestic paean about God's work in Christ. Early in the song Mary rejoiced in "God my Saviour" (1:47). This is an allusion to the name 'Jesus', which the angel told her she would give her son, meaning 'Yahweh shall save'.

God as Saviour is the theme of many prophecies, especially in Isaiah, but this particular

1. The words are used once each by John in the record of the Samaritan woman (Jno. 4:22,42).

phrase is firmly rooted in a Messianic prophecy in Habakkuk that may have had a special force for Mary: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (3:17,18). Given the trials Mary experienced, these words must have resonated throughout her life.

The Song of Zacharias

Zacharias was mute for over nine months prior to John's birth and circumcision. It must have been astonishing, therefore, when suddenly he broke his silence at the ceremony. Awestruck, those present must have hung on every word as he uttered prophetic words about the saving work of God in Christ. Bullinger in the *Companion Bible* draws attention to the characteristically Hebraic inverted structure of Zacharias' song in Luke 1:

A v. 68 Visitation

B v. 69 Salvation

C v. 70 Prophets

D v. 71 Enemies

E v. 72 The Covenant

E v. 73 The Covenant

D vv. 74,75 Enemies

C v. 76 Prophet

B v. 77 Salvation

A vv. 78,79 Visitation

Zacharias speaks of salvation twice, in verses 69 and 77. As shown above, these two verses correspond to each other in the structure of the song. 'Horn' is a Hebraism found in several places in the Old Testament, for example 1 Samuel 2:1,10; 2 Samuel 22:3; Psalms 18:2; 132:17; and Ezekiel 29:21. The phrase "horn of salvation" in Luke 1:69 alludes to the first of the above listed passages, the Song of Hannah, a song upon which Zacharias may have meditated as he anticipated the birth of his son, who, like Samuel and Jesus, was raised up by Divine means.

Jesus would save Israel from their enemies (v. 71), and this saving work is linked to the testimony of the prophets (v. 70). Zacharias goes on to proclaim that, after a silence of four centuries, the prophetic ministry was to be revived in the work of his son John the Baptist (v. 76). The prophetic ministry is presented as a continuum, bringing men to the revelation of the Messiah: "And thou, child, 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 unto his people by the remission of their sins" (vv. 76,77). Significantly, Zacharias links forgiveness and salvation. "Prepare his ways" recalls Isaiah's prophecy of the work of John: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (40:3). Luke returns to this passage when he presents John's work as the forerunner of Christ, as we will see later.

Simeon

Angels identified Jesus as a saviour when announcing to the shepherds his birth "in the city of David", applying to Bethlehem a title which alludes to the Davidic promise (2:11). Later, Simeon linked the word 'salvation' to the work of Jesus when he met the infant Jesus, when Mary and Joseph came to offer sacrifice following the Lord's birth. Described as "devout", he was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (v. 25), which, as we shall see, means forgiveness through the Messiah. The Holy Spirit was upon Simeon that day. We may presume this was a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, for there were at this time no Israelites who had the Holy Spirit as a permanent gift, as, for instance, was the case after Pentecost.

Waiting is the lot of the faithful in every generation, and the phrase "waiting for the consolation of Israel" is redolent of the opening words of Isaiah's servant prophecy (chs. 40-66), which reveals Jesus as the suffering servant and deliverer of Israel: "Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins" (40:1,2). The record of Simeon's encounter with Jesus is heavy with allusions to Isaiah, as the [table](#) opposite demonstrates.²

The Holy Spirit had told Simeon he would see the Messiah before he died, and when he saw Jesus he took the child and proclaimed, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Lk. 2:29-32).

2. Adapted from one prepared by Brother George Booker and published in the *Testimony*, Oct. 1981, p. 317.

Simeon's song and Isaiah

Luke 2:26-35		Isaiah	
26	And it was revealed unto him by the Holy [Spirit], that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.	61:1	The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings
27	And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,	6:1,3,5	The Lord . . . [in] the temple . . . Holy, holy, holy . . . for mine eyes have seen the King
28	Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,		
29	Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word:	57:1,2	The righteous perisheth . . . and merciful men are taken away . . . from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace
30	For mine eyes have seen Thy salvation,	62:11	Behold, thy salvation cometh
31	Which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people;	52:10	The LORD hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations
32	A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.	42:6 49:6 60:1,3 45:25	. . . for a light of the Gentiles I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles . . . thy light is come . . . And the Gentiles shall come to thy light In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory
33	And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.		
34	And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;	8:14,15 26:19 7:14 8:18	. . . a stone of stumbling and . . . a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel . . . many among them shall stumble, and fall Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise . . . a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders
35	(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.	53:5, 7,8	. . . wounded for our transgressions . . . oppressed . . . afflicted . . . cut off out of the land of the living.

Verse 29 is especially interesting. It explains what “the consolation of Israel” meant to Simeon. Farrar says verse 29 should be rendered, “Now art Thou setting free Thy slave, O Master, according to Thy word, in peace”.³ The word “depart” in the AV, Greek *apoluō*, means ‘to set free’ (Thayer). Bullinger defines it as ‘to loose from, set free, release from’. The same word is used of the release of Barabbas (Mk. 15:11,15; Lk. 23:17,18,25).

It seems evident that Simeon recognised this babe as Messiah, the one God had raised up to deliver (set free) the faithful from bondage to sin and death, “our enemies and . . . all that hate us”, to use Zacharias’s terms from Luke 1:71. Although the one in his arms was just an infant, Simeon knew nothing could impede God’s redemptive work. Thus he referred in 2:30 to “Thy salvation”; Simeon knew that “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

In verses 31 and 32 Simeon recognised that the ministry of Jesus is for all men, whether Jews or Gentiles. Although the Lord’s disciples would later struggle with the idea of the gospel going forth to the Gentiles, this concept is firmly rooted in the Old Testament, especially in the servant prophecies of Isaiah, and indeed in the Abrahamic covenant, and was well understood by Simeon.

Isaiah 40 again

As mentioned above, Isaiah’s servant prophecy and the concept of salvation are linked in the context of the work of John the Baptist. In Luke 3 John’s ministry is introduced with a quotation from Isaiah 40, the passage to which allusion had been made in the Song of Zacharias. Luke 3:4,5 reproduces the words of Isaiah 40:3,4. Verse 6 continues the quote in these terms: “and all flesh shall see the salvation of God”. In Isaiah, however, the prophet used different words: “and the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (40:5). Luke appears to have paraphrased the prophet’s words to bring out their significance that in Christ “all flesh” (Jews and Gentiles) have access to salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, who is “the glory of the LORD”.

Unsurprisingly, given his background as a Greek, Luke emphasises the extension of grace to the Gentiles in his Gospel record. (The same emphasis is also the focus of Acts 10–28, another narrative penned by Luke.) When Jesus encountered scepticism and hostility during a visit to

his home town of Nazareth he drew attention to God’s extension of grace to Gentiles in the past, at times to the exclusion of the faithless in Israel (Lk. 4:24-27). Later, in the Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:30-37), Jesus contrasted the barren legalism of a priest and a Levite, men who represented the very pinnacle of Jewish society, with the tender neighbourly care of a Samaritan, a member of that mixed race so utterly despised by the Jews.

Jericho

The parable of the Good Samaritan is set on the road to Jericho, to which town the priest and the Levite presumably were travelling. Jericho was a cursed city: “Cursed be the man before the LORD, that riseth up and buildeth this city Jericho: he shall lay the foundation thereof in his firstborn, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it” (Josh. 6:26). The curse involved a death sentence for the descendents of those who would build the city. In this respect it parallels the curse of mortality to which the sons of Adam are subject, and from which salvation is possible only through faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

In spite of the fact that most Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah, salvation was available to those who were responsive. Luke’s last use of the word ‘salvation’ occurs within the context of his next reference to Jericho. Only Luke records the story of Zacchæus, a rich tax collector whose determination to see the Lord was rewarded by a visit to his home by Jesus (19:1-6). Jesus was thronged by people as he “passed through Jericho”. Being short, Zacchæus was forced to climb a sycamore tree, a type of wild fig, so he could see the Master. Does the use of a wild fig tree invite a contrast with the Israelitish fig tree that was so unresponsive to our Lord? As a tax collector, Zacchæus would have been as despised as a Samaritan, yet in all Jericho there was no man more faithful.

Shallow men, witnessing the Lord’s response to Zacchæus, disparaged his decision to be the guest of “a sinner” (v. 7), even though this is exactly the type of man to whom the Lord reached out—then and now. In Luke 18 the Lord related the Parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, who both went to the temple to pray (vv. 9-14). The Pharisee self-righteously made extravagant claims about his religious acts, and looked down

3. F. W. Farrar, *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges: St Luke*, p. 72.



PICTURE: Tony Benson

View eastwards across Jericho, scene of several incidents in Luke's Gospel. It still warrants its Old Testament description, "the city of palm trees".

on the publican, whereas the publican claimed to be no more than a sinner. It was the publican who "went down to his house justified". And now, just a short time later, we see another publican sinner being blessed by the Lord.

The priest and the Levite in the parable of the Good Samaritan were going down to the cursed Jericho. Evidently they preferred the city of the curse to the city of God, and in this they were not alone among their fellows. Brother Harry Whitaker quotes the Talmud as saying that nearly as many priests dwelt in Jericho as in Jerusalem.⁴ Portrayed in the Parable of the Good Samaritan as smugly self-righteous, the priest and the Levite represent the class in Israel who turned their back on the salvation offered by Jesus. Zacchæus, in contrast, strove against natural disadvantage to become associated with the Master.

His encounter with the Master had a profound impact on Zacchæus, and he made a bold declaration: "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold" (19:8). Here is contrition, self-denial and repentance; the hallmarks of conversion. The Lord had told Zacchæus, "I must abide at thy house" (v. 5),

and God said through Isaiah, "I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit" (57:15). So this despised tax collector, a "sinner", having descended from the sycamore tree, was elevated to heavenly places by Christ.

In response to Zacchæus' repentance, a prerequisite for forgiveness, the Lord proclaimed, "This day is salvation come to this house, forso-much as he also is a son of Abraham" (Lk. 19:9). In two senses salvation had come to Zacchæus' house. He received forgiveness from the one whose name means 'Yahweh shall save'. His contrite faith demonstrated he was a true son of Abraham. The religious leaders of Israel might vainly claim, "We be Abraham's seed" (Jno. 8:33), but their faithlessness betrayed this as a worthless self-deception. Zacchæus was not such a man. He reminds us that all who embrace the faith of Abraham through Christ will find salvation (Gal. 3:29). So the Lord went on to explain that his dealings with Zacchæus showed that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"

4. *Studies in the Gospels*, p. 537.

(Lk. 19:10), especially those who are despised and lowly-regarded, like publicans and Gentiles.

We who recognise the wonder of God's grace, as outlined in the promises and the prophets, need never despair about any natural disadvantage that might attach to us. Such limitations mean nothing

to Almighty God. Luke's use of the words 'salvation' and 'saviour' demonstrates that, regardless of natural circumstances, all may become heirs of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, whom God sent to be "the Saviour of the world" (Jno. 4:42).

The women of Luke's Gospel

Mary Benson

It is immediately obvious, just from a brief look at Luke's Gospel, that women have an important place in this book. More than in any of the other Gospels, women and their part in the momentous events surrounding the birth, life, death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus are focused on by Luke, writing under inspiration. The characters most prominent in the first two chapters are two women, Elisabeth and Mary—yet one of them, Elisabeth, does not appear at all in any of the other three Gospels. And even Mary has much more written about her in Luke than anywhere else. This prominence given to women continues through Luke's Gospel, with a number of women appearing in the narrative who are not mentioned elsewhere.

THE PROMINENCE of women in Luke's Gospel can best be shown by listing them. Table 1 lists all those who are mentioned in Luke but not in any of the other Gospels. Other women, who are also mentioned elsewhere, include:

- Mary mother of Jesus
- Jairus' daughter
- The woman with an issue of blood
- Martha and Mary of Bethany
- The Queen of the South
- The woman in the parable who had seven husbands
- The widow who threw her last mites into the temple treasury
- The maid of the high priest at Jesus' trial.

In all, quite a remarkable list!

Another interesting feature of the Gospel is that it presents a number of linked pairs or groups of similar types of events or parables, and a high proportion of these are male/female pairings. These are shown in Table 2. Not all are unique to Luke's Gospel.

What are we to make of these? One clear lesson is that the gospel message is available for all. In

Christ "there is neither male nor female"; all can have equal access to the salvation from sin and death depicted in the miracles Jesus performed. All, too, have equal access to the Father through prayer. Jewish men and women were looking for the consolation of Israel at the birth of Christ, but Gentile men and women also can hear the gospel preached and can repent and come to the greater than Solomon. Luke's Gospel appears to have been written mainly for Gentile readers, and this aspect would have great relevance for his readers.

There must, however, be more to Luke's inclusion of so many women in his Gospel. Why does he devote so much space to Elisabeth and Mary in the first two chapters, for instance? We turn now to consider some of the women who make up the Gospel narrative, and in the process we hope to find some answers and bring out some of the underlying themes of the Gospel.

Childless women

Think for a while, to begin with, of Elisabeth and Mary. We see in them both similarities and contrasts. Both were godly women, and they must have been among those who, like Simeon and Anna, were "waiting for the consolation of Israel", and "look[ing] for redemption in Jerusalem" (Lk. 2:25,38). At a time when many women in Israel would have hoped to be the one chosen to bear their Messiah, one can imagine that it would be a great grief to the elderly Elisabeth that she was barren. The years went by, and all hope of having a "godly seed" would grow dim.

Mary, in contrast, was a very young woman, as yet unmarried, too soon even to consider having a child. Yet surely, as she matured from childhood into young adulthood, her heart would have