

Confident Christmas Joy

1. Joy in Our Christmas Salvation
2. Confidence in God's Christmas Covenant

- ~15 mos before J born, Jewish prst nmd Zech: serving at tmpl in Jrslm. He & wife Elzbt: both quite eldrly; and thruout marg: unable have chldrn. On this occsn, Zech: leading/worship by burning/incense, when all/sudn angel fr hvn appr'd him, right there in tmpl. Zech terrfd, but angel/Gabe made happy ancmt: "Your wife Elzbt going have baby; you're going name Jn; and he's going prep way Mes." But Zech did not bel angel; doubted msg. So as punshmnt: unable speak for durtn of wife's pregncy. But 9 mos later, when baby Jn born: "[Zech's] mouth: opened & tongue set free & he began speak, praising Gd" (Lk 1:64). And w/confdnc & joy (& voice back!), Zech burst into song, vs. 68a – wrds/today's Gos, a song that's come knwn: Bendcts. Zech's Bendcts fr Lk 1: one those songs/Scptr that's been sung in Xian wrshp for many centrs, bec in this song Zech exprses confdnc/joy in Mes soon/come. 2k yrs later, those/us who've alrdy seen coming/Mes & are celbrtng birth this Xmas season – we also join sing Zech's Bendcts, bec also share Zech's CXJ.
- W/Zech we have CXJ in our Xmas salvtn. Vs. 68-69a. Back in Oct, Wed AMBC gave me nice gift: this horn; ram's horn, shofar, real. Horn like this: used in OT for # diff purps. When man was set apart serve God's ppl as prpht/prst/kng: anointd w/oil fr ram's horn. They'd fill horn w/oil & pour over hd. Cermny: kinda like our inaugrtn/instltn; it set man apart for his spl office. So for instnc: Elijah anointd Elisha prpht (1 Kngs 19); Moses, Aaron/prst (Ex 30); Sam, first Saul later Dvd, kng/Isrl (1 Sam 10; 16) – all w/oil fr ram's horn. Ram's horn also blown as trump. Try. They'd blow ram's horn: at festvl wrshp srvc, like when tmpl dedctd (2 Chr 7) or when ark bght to tmpl (2 Chr 15); blew when marched arnd city/Jericho, and walls came tumbng down; and blew for other miltry purpss, like givng dirctns to soldrs or signalng victry. This ram's horn/shofar played very imp role in Isrlt/Jewsh culture – so imp that ram's horn actly became cultrl symb l strngth/pwr. So, in Ps 18 Dvd: "The Lord: my rock, my fortss, & my delvrr...my shld & the horn of my salvtn, my strngld" (2). Dvd calls God horn, his pwr/strngth. Or Ps 112: for God's ppl, "their horn'll be lifted high in honor" (9) – not litrl horn but their strngth/pwr.
- In Zech's Bendcts, he uses wrd horn as symb l for God's strength/pwr. Vs. 69a – not litrl ram's horn, but strng person/Sav, who'd delvr God's ppl fr enms! Zech's talking re J here! Vs. 69 – you remem: J is fr "house/line of Dvd" (Lk 2:4). Vs. 70 – prphts like Isa ("Virgin'll concv & give birth Son & call him Imml") [7:14]; and "To us child born; son given; gov't shldr; Wndrfl Cnslr; Mghty God; Evrlstng Fr; Prnc Peace" [9:6]; like Micah ("But you, Bthlm Ephrth, thgh small amng clans/Judah, out/you come for me, one: ruler/Isrl" [5:2]). So, vs. 70, 71. Well, who hated Zech/Jews? Talking Romans here? Nazis? No, Zech's talking re enms: of sin/Stn/hell; we all share; no miltry campaign can ever ovrthrw. Lot/ppl at time/J, incldng discs: hoping for miltry Mes who'd overthrw Romans. But that's not what J came do; came to bring vs. 71. Stn hates J, & you; and wants nothing more than to drag you into hell w/him frvr, out/spite for J. But J alrdy suffrd hell in your place, on cross, where died to pay for all your sins & where defeated Stn frvr. J even rose fr dead & descndd into hell to blow a ram's horn of victry in Stn's ears. All this is to say: in Bendcts, Zech is filled w/CXJ when: vs. 68-69. He's talking re J, Zech's strong Sav & ours, born for us at Xmas, who fills us w/CXJ – joy in our Xmas salvtn.



- And who also gives us confdnc in God's Xmas covnt. Zech is an intrstng chrctr in Bible bec got one ft in OT, one in New; he's an OT temple prst, but holding in arms forerunner of Mes, his baby son, JB. NT's about begin, and Zech's able connect dots btwn God's covnt proms/past & their fulfillmnt in imminent future. Says: **vs. 72a** (looking back), **vs. 72b-73**. Well, oath/holy covnt he swore to Fr Abraham is what we hrd in 1st rdng for today, Gen 17, where God: **"As for me, this is my covnt w/you: you'll be the fr of many ntns."** Then chngs name fr Abram to Abraham, which litrlly means "fr/many"; then says: **"I'll make you very fruitful; I'll make ntns of you, and kings'll come fr you."** What kings? Dvd? Slmn? Yeah. How re King/kngs, Lord/lrds – J himself! Abrhm was forefr/J, and here in Gen 17 God is making **"everlstng covnt"** or prom to Abrhm that his descndnt would be King/Sav of wrld.
- And 2k yrs later (that's time btwn Abrhm/Zech), Zech sings song re God's covnt prom: **vs. 72-73**. J: fulfillmnt/prom; God's Xmas covnt. You/I know that – we've known it for 2k yrs. But Zech had been waiting for it for 2k yrs, and now practcly at doorstep. Elderly Zech & wife Elzbtb probly died before their son baptized God's Son; they probly nvr heard J prch or watched him die/cross or saw him risen fr dead. But Z/E: bels. They put faith/confdnc in God's Xmas covnt. And so do we! Like Z/E, we bel that J came to **vs. 74-75**. Like Z/E, we bel that their son JB: **vs. 76-** (prpht, who, like us) **-78a**.
- We bel in **"tender/mercy/God"** too, bec when we look in manger, we see tender/mercy/God. He kept his prom & fulfld his Xmas covnt by sending us J. And so we trust w/Xian confdnc in the Sav: born for us Bthlm, proclaimd by JB, & prophesied about by Jn's fr Zech. And w/that same CXJ we look forwrd to day when J'll return, like **"rising sun [coming] to us fr hvn"** **vs. 79**. God: prom keeper; when makes covnt, keeps covnt. Zech sang song re that; called Bendcts, and it's in Lk 1. We sing it in ch, and we carry its msg in our hrts. **Vs. 68-69, 72**. Birth/J fills us w/CXJ:1&2. Happy Xmas!

Luke 1:68-79

⁶⁸"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. ⁶⁹He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David ⁷⁰(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), ⁷¹salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us—⁷²to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, ⁷³the oath he swore to our father Abraham: ⁷⁴to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear ⁷⁵in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

⁷⁶And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, ⁷⁷to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, ⁷⁸because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven ⁷⁹to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."