





## The Long-Awaited Visitation

Notice two remarkable things from the words of Zechariah, Elizabeth's husband, in Luke 1:68–71.

First, nine months earlier, Zechariah had not believed that his wife would have a child. Now, filled with the Holy Spirit, he has become so confident of God's redeeming work in the coming Messiah that he puts it in the past tense: "He has visited and redeemed his people." For the mind of faith, a promised act of God is as good as done. Zechariah has learned to take God at his word and so has a remarkable assurance: God "has visited and redeemed!" (Luke 1:68).

Second, the coming of Jesus the Messiah is a visitation of God to our world: the *God of Israel* has visited and redeemed. For centuries, the Jewish people had languished under the conviction that God had withdrawn: the spirit of prophecy had ceased, and Israel had fallen into the hands of Rome. And all the godly in Israel were awaiting the

visitation of God. Luke tells us that another old man, the devout Simeon, was “waiting for the consolation of Israel” (Luke 2:25). Likewise, the prayerful Anna was “waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38).

These were days of great expectation. Now the long-awaited visitation of God is about to happen—indeed, he is about to come in a way no one has expected.