

(A Divine Visitation) Man's Great Hope - Part 1

by Richard Owen Roberts

The sermon explores the concept of divine visitation, highlighting God's limited habitation and the significance of Zacharias' song and John's mission.

Duration: 1:02:24

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 1:5, Luke 1:46-55, Acts 2:38, Acts 3:13-15, Acts 3:19-20

Topics: "Divine Visitation", "True Conversion"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of divine visitations. He mentions that he initially struggled with how to handle the topic, but ultimately decided to give a series of four messages on it. The speaker shares a personal anecdote about his parents' conversion and their spiritual journey. He then delves into the biblical passage of Zacharias composing a song about God's visitation in the form of the horn of salvation and the sunrise from on high. The speaker emphasizes the importance of true conversion and the need for brokenness and contrition in order to turn towards Jesus Christ.

Transcript

I'm grateful again for this wonderful opportunity of being at the HeartCry Conference. By God's grace, I've been privileged to be at each one and to have an opportunity to open my heart and the word of God to those who have come. Now, I've been thinking and praying a great deal about this particular conference.

When it was all agreed upon, I didn't know but what we were going to have two duplicate conferences. And so we would simply be repeating next week what we had this week. And then later on it became apparent, no, they weren't going to be duplicate at all.

And then I was, you know, wrestling with the matter. Well, how should I handle my part of it? What ought I to do in the light of this? And I've decided to do what might seem to be perfectly absurd, but you'll probably never encounter anybody less concerned about what others think than me. And so what I'm going to do, God helping me, is to give a series of four messages on the subject of divine visitations to this week, to next week.

I honestly think it will prove beneficial for those who will not be here next week to pick up on this theme over the internet as we've been told we could or by whatever appropriate method. My parents, when I was a boy of eight years of age, were profoundly converted. My mother had no spiritual background at all.

My father was of Welsh descent and had a very godly heritage, but he had departed from it and paid no attention whatsoever until a strange incident occurred. For reasons never quite clear to me, my parents sent my older sister and my brother and myself to a Methodist Sunday school in Scotia, New York. We came home from Sunday school one morning and reported to our mother that we had been learning about the fable of Jonah and the whale.

My mother was shocked and she said, and these, to me, are incredible words, from a know-nothing spiritually. She said, we do not send children to Sunday school to make them unbelievers. We are all unbelievers by nature.

And then she added, you will never return to that Sunday school. But in the providence of God, at just about that time, and aunt and uncle were putting pressure on my parents to attend a series of special evangelistic meetings in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church in Schenectady, New York. And they went and God transformed their lives.

They were immediately drawn into a cottage prayer meeting and went faithfully. And somehow, I never quite understood why, except again the providence of God. I became greatly interested in that cottage prayer meeting and attended, as far as I know, the only child there.

But somehow, through that cottage prayer meeting, I caught something of the beauty of holiness and something of the urgent need of revival. I believe in actual truth I had been regenerated, but not yet converted. Now I know that some of you use those terms interchangeably.

I think you do damage to the kingdom of God and the gospel of Jesus Christ by foolishly abusing the language of scripture. But at the age of 12, I was in attendance at the Bible conference, long out of existence, but it was called Sunrise Mountain Bible Conference, Lake George, New York. An appeal was made for anyone who would surrender to become a missionary.

And I responded with all of my heart, but unwisely. In the course of those few days at Sunrise Mountain, on a hike with some of the other young people, I had sat down on a stump, which unbeknownst to me, was cushioned by poison ivy vines. And I got one horrendous case of poison ivy in those portions of my body, it's best not to describe.

For days, I was unable to walk. I could not climb the stairs to my bedroom. I was laid out on the couch and left alone, pretty much the bulk of the time.

And for a period of several days, was drawn into an incredible struggle over what it meant to surrender for missionary service. For I felt the Lord saying to me, I wished you to make that surrender, but not to be a missionary, but to be a preacher of the gospel and to call my people to repentance and faith. I argued with the Lord, not out of rebellion, honestly thinking he had made a mistake.

I explained to him with great care that I could be a missionary. I had been working on a farm for four years, a truck farm. And I explained to the Lord, I could put a track in every bushel basket of beans.

I could, in some fashion, accompany each sale of vegetables with some kind of a witness, which I was more than willing to do. I could go to some dark part of the world and serve as an agricultural missionary, but I couldn't preach. And it was simply true, I could not.

I, if called upon in public school to answer a question, I simply froze up. I could not answer. And so I struggled over the days with both my poison ivy and with what my surrender meant.

Until suddenly it became crystal clear that while it was absolutely true I could not preach, it was also true that God could and he could use a frail vessel. And I simply said, Lord, if that's your choice, that's what you've got. Whatever there is of me is yours.

And by God's grace, since that time, my heart has burned for the church to experience once again the manifest presence of God in her midst. Now for weeks in thoughtful preparation for these days, I was investigating the term visit or visitation in the scripture and honestly was somewhat surprised and a bit grieved to discover that the most frequent use of those terms in scripture had to do with judgments and condemnation. Now I really didn't want to come and speak on that subject, nor am I supposed to in actual fact, but I did discover that there were far fewer passages dealing with divine visitations that were of the positive revival sort than I had originally anticipated.

But what I came to was a series of four messages on the subject of divine visitation, three drawn out of the book of Luke and four out of the other book that the Holy Spirit inspired Luke to write, the book of Acts. And I want to take a moment or two to set in front of you the intention at least, now as was agreed yesterday, the Lord is in charge here. And if I don't get to preach the second message tomorrow or the third and the fourth next week, that's perfectly all right.

But given divine permission and enablement, my intention is to speak this morning out of Luke chapter, not this morning, this afternoon, though I'm feeling energetic enough for it to be morning, but to speak this afternoon on that incredible song that Zacharias the priest wrote. What an incredible passage on divine visitation. Then Lord willing tomorrow out of Luke again, chapter three, those preparations that are necessary for divine visitation using the words, the message of the son of Zacharias, John the Baptist.

And while most of you won't be here, I hope next week to deal first with those incredibly sad words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ to the bulk of the religious leaders of his day, recorded in Luke 19 verses 40 to 44. When he said to them, you did not recognize your time of visitation. I have for years and under the heavy burden of realization that an incredible visitation could occur in our society and the church wouldn't recognize it.

It amazes me even now, why so few long for God's visit? I should think under the circumstances in which we find ourselves, the entire church would be on its face pleading with God to come again. But instead there is every probability unless something wonderful occurs, that the bulk of the church will miss the Lord's visit. If indeed he graces us with another revival.

And then the last sermon again, Lord willing, I intend to bring out of Acts chapter three, where there is a simply unbelievable situation described, where Peter addressing the very people that crucified our Lord and even describing their action. And he said to them, when Pilate had made up his mind to release Christ, you insisted, no, crucify him, give us a murderer instead. But repent and return and enjoy a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

So divine visitations. Let us turn then to the book of Luke and pick up the matter in the first portion that we find concerning Zacharias. I need not comment extensively, but it is certainly important that we at least read the passages where the Lord is confronting this man, Zacharias.

So Luke chapter one, picking it up please at verse five. In the days of Herod, King of Judea, there was a certain priest named Zacharias of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.

And they were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. I wonder how many of us could ever have such a report written concerning our walk with the Lord. Verse seven, they had no child because Elizabeth was barren and they were both advanced in years.

Now it came about while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him standing to the right of the altar of incense.

And Zacharias was troubled when he saw him for fear gripped him. But the angel said to him, do not be afraid Zacharias for your petition has been heard. And your wife, Elizabeth will bear you a son and you will give him the name John and you will have joy and gladness and many will rejoice at his birth for he will be great in the sight of the Lord and he will drink no wine or liquor and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb.

And he will turn back many of the sons of Israel to the Lord their God. And it is he who will go as a forerunner before him in the spirit and power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. And Zacharias said to the angel, how shall I know this for certain for I'm an old man.

And my wife is advanced in years. And the angel answered and said to him, I am Gabriel who stands in the presence of God. I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.

And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place because you did not believe my words which shall be fulfilled in their proper time. And the people were waiting for Zacharias and were wondering at his delay in the temple. But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them.

And they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple and he kept making signs to them and remained mute. And it came about when the days of his priestly service were ended that he went back home. And after these days, Elizabeth, his wife became pregnant and she kept herself in seclusion for five months saying this is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when he looked with favor upon me to take away my disgrace from among men.

Let's turn now to the latter portion of the chapter and let us pick up the reading once again. Her neighbors and her relatives, verse 58, heard that the Lord had displayed his great mercy toward her and they were rejoicing with her. And it came about that on the eighth day, they came to circumcise the child and they were going to call him Zacharias after his father.

And his mother answered and said, no, indeed, but he shall be called John. And they said to her, there's no one among your relatives who's called by that name. And they made signs to his father as to what he wanted him called.

And he asked for a tablet and he wrote as follows, his name is John. And they were all astonished. And at once, his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed and he began to speak in praise of God.

And fear came upon all those living around them. And all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. And all who heard them kept them in mind saying, what then will this child turn out to be? For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

And his father, Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied saying, blessed be the Lord God of Israel for he has visited us and accomplished redemption for his people and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David his servant. As he spoke by the mouth of his Holy prophets from of old, salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us to show mercy toward our fathers and to remember his Holy covenant, the oath which he swore to Abraham our father to grant us that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our day. And you child will be called the prophet of the most high for you will go on before the Lord to prepare his way to give to his people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins because of the tender mercy of our God with which the sunrise from on high shall visit us to shine upon those who in darkness and the shadow of death to guide our feet into the way of peace.

I trust that all of you understand the biblical issue of God's limited habitation. I say I trust you understand I know full well the church by and large does not. Isaiah in his 57th chapter and verse 15 makes a declaration we've got to pay strict attention to the sayeth the high and the lofty one who inhabits eternity whose name is holy.

I dwell in a high and lofty place with him also who is broken and contract to revive the high to the broken one to revive the spirit of the contract. God's habitation is severely limited to two places the high and the lofty place where he reigns and rule. And the only exception he makes is the high when he inhabits the heart the spirit of the broken and the contract.

Now the vast majority profess Christians in America know nothing of brokenness and contrition. They know nothing now they never knew anything. Nobody ever told them concerning God's limited habitation.

Many who honestly believe they are Christians and our living in what they consider true assurance of faith are under the delusion that God lives anywhere and everywhere and all you have to do is to say come and inhabit me and he has no choice but to dwell in the proud in the arrogant in the unholy in those who love sin in those who both give themselves to iniquity and push iniquity upon others. But in actual fact there are only these two places where he dwell. Now he may in his providence visit the arrogant but normally those visits as I reported earlier are visits of condemnation visits in which he justifies his destruction of them by taking away their excuses.

I don't know how many of you are preachers I know personally I was troubled for a season in my life in going somewhere to preach and in observing the hardness of the heart. You see my ministry really began in the county poorhouse of Schenectady at the time my father was converted he became burdened to reach the poor and the down and out and he started a ministry in the county poorhouse every Friday night for years and years my dad went and preached Christ in the poorhouse. Indeed my wife Maggie knew my father long before she knew me because she was part of the team of young people that accompanied my dad on Friday evenings to proclaim Christ to the down and the outers.

But after God graciously brought me into a vital relationship with himself at the age of 12 my dad said I want you to help me in the poorhouse. He had four stations where every Friday night he preached and he said now you take station A tonight and I'll take B, C and D and in time he took two and I took two I was only a kid but a kid who understood that Jesus Christ only dwells in the broken and the contract. Now while that's not an official part of my sermon I do want to urge upon you to get that fact straight.

Some of you are guilty of calling people converts who know nothing of brokenness and contrition who never came anywhere near that point in life where they abhorred their sin and longed for Christ's righteousness. We are calling incredible numbers of people Christians who have no thought in all the world of turning away from iniquity in order to turn toward the Lord Jesus Christ. As I said there are these visitations that God makes many of which as I have reported are visitations of condemnation but there are also visits of the sort that Zacharias has described in this passage.

I don't know how many of you have acquainted yourself with this beautiful song that Zacharias composed and in some fashion sang or chanted but this song has two stanzas. If you look through it carefully you understand that really there are only two sentences in this passage. I am speaking now of the passage beginning at verse 67 and running through verse 79, two long sentences.

The first sentence is a sentence in which Zacharias is delighting in giving praise to God who visits men in the form of the horn of salvation. So the first mention of the visitation specifically focuses upon the horn of salvation. The second stanza which begins at verse 76 and obviously runs to verse 79 gives Zacharias the joy and the privilege of realizing and expressing gratitude for the mission that his own child was called to and this mission focuses upon the visitation which is stated in these beautiful words, the sunrise from on high will visit man.

So we have the visit depicted in the language of the horn of salvation and the visit depicted in the language of the sunrise from on high. Now we read in verse 67 that the father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied. I've been in numerous situations where prophecies were given.

I had occasion when it occurred to wonder if indeed it was true and often it proved to be just ridiculous. If one is truly prophesied, they are literally filled with the Holy Spirit as was Zacharias. I brought along a quotation from a Lutheran Bible expositor I want to share with you.

Some of you who haven't yet formulated good libraries may want to make note now of this recommendation of a fabulous commentary. Lenski, the Lutheran, has a 12 volume set on the New Testament that is magnificent but the poor man was a Lutheran and some of you are Baptists. We all have something to apologize for.

There's in almost every instance something in our background that weakens us. Some affiliation that we hold dear that lessens our effectiveness. If brothers and sisters, you can forgive dear brother Lenski for being a Lutheran and occasionally you have to because when it comes to the subject of the Lord's Supper, he has to give it a Lutheran twist.

Or when it comes to the subject of Baptism, you're expecting to find the Lutheran twist there. So when I read Lenski, I start out saying to myself and acknowledging to the Lord, here is a dear brother who suffers weaknesses such as I have. And I'm not going to lay him aside because there's something that he writes that I stumble over.

I'm going to rejoice in the incredible truth that is brought forth. And I want to give you a quotation about this matter of the Holy Spirit and prophecy from Lenski. To prophesy is not merely to foretell the future, or to speak an exalted language that resembles psalms.

But, now catch this, but to understand the will and the acts of God in their inner connection and to reveal this connection for the hearers in their present situation and as it regards the future. Thus any man who is moved by the Spirit in the ordinary way may prophesy, even as stated in 1 Corinthians 14, one. But the strict sense to prophesy is to speak with that understanding of the will and the acts of God and their inner connection.

Thus, while under the extraordinary influence of the Spirit who is granted for the time or the occasion, being as a special gift so that what is spoken is spoken by inspiration and bears the mark of infallibility. Now you see that's precisely the song of Zacharias. Every single word of it inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Every dot and tittle of the song fulfilled completely and with absolute accuracy. I believe one of the reasons we have so many who think they're prophets and are giving us all this wild spouting is because they don't really know anything about God's limited habitation. Once they understand he only dwells in the broken and the contrite, they put some very severe restrictions on their own mouth activity.

Now in verse 68, Zacharias speaks these words. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited us and accomplished redemption for his people. Now let's remind ourselves of when this song appeared.

This is at the circumcision of John the Baptist, eight days following his birth. And here in this prophecy, it is clearly stated that the visit has already begun. There had been no birth of Christ.

There had been no preaching and teaching. There had been no cross and no tomb and no resurrection, but there had been the conception in the womb of the virgin. And thus this salvation is treated as accomplished because God has already set in motion those incredibly beautiful matters that end up in salvation for the nations.

I remember hearing many years ago, someone speaking very carefully and explaining why our Lord often in dealing with an individual gave them another name. And this person made the statement, Christ is viewing them not as they are, but as they are going to be under his power and his influence. And what beautiful truth there is here.

And Zacharias, I believe, is doing a similar thing, knowing that indeed the virgin had conceived, he is able to proclaim the salvation as if it were already fully and wonderfully accomplished. But as I pointed out earlier, in verse 69, he has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David, his servant. Now we are in danger of supposing this horn of salvation might be like a cornucopia.

And most of you can call to mind immediately a picture of a cornucopia, a horn of plenty. And you see in your mind's eye even now, this array of fruit just sort of spilling out of this horn. But that's not what Zacharias is making reference to.

Not a horn of plenty. Indeed, he specifically describes it as a horn of salvation. And in my mind, at least, the best way that I've been able to conceive of envisioning this is in terms of a rhinoceros.

Now there are many horned beasts, but not all that many that have a single horn. And this passage is obviously in the singular. But if you think of the horn of salvation as the horn of a wild beast that puts on

the run.

Now it wasn't a wild beast with horns that set you running. But at least you know something of pursuit and the fear. But think in terms now of our Lord Jesus Christ as the horn of salvation.

There is nothing that stands against this horn. He can root out every evil. He is the one who is on the attack.

He is the one who is dealing with our arch enemy. He is the one who has assured victory. He is the one that cannot be defeated under any circumstance.

God has raised up for us the horn of salvation. I don't know that surprise would be the right term. Grief might come closer to it.

But in the early days of my ministry, I was dealing with a far more victorious church than I am today. And how can that possibly be? Has our savior lost his power? Has the horn of salvation been broken? Has the enemy become stronger? Why in listening to some preachers, you almost get the notion that somehow what Satan has done is to take that manufacturing plant where he has been producing demons, which ran but eight hours a day on a five day week. And he's churned things up and has put on three shifts and another group to work the weekends.

And he has been producing demons at an incredible rate and then unleashing them upon us. And we all are in danger and we ought to flee for our lives. And so our great concern these days in much of the church is to say, hurry up and come back Lord Jesus and rescue me from this miserable mess.

No, God raised up a horn of salvation. And that horn is his sharp. And indeed, the one behind the horn is able as ever in the history of mankind to bring about the very salvation that he has promised.

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. The Messiah has been conceived. The redemption is underway.

And when he refers here to redemption, he's referring to the purchase being enacted. The payment has been made. We have been liberated.

Satan no longer has us under his control. We're not on his leash. He's not giving the orders.

He's not in command. But notice in this passage that the word remembered occurs. Verse 72, to show mercy toward our fathers and to remember his holy covenant.

There are seasons when it almost seems as if the Lord has forgotten his commitments. But when we are almost inclined in our prayers to remind him of what we think he is in danger, at least, of having lost sight of. But no, even if there were 400 years of silence that preceded this song of Zacharias, the Lord hadn't forgotten it.

And I often remind myself, having been led to a burden for revival as a boy of 12, and having committed myself shortly thereafter to read and deed to master every book on the subject ever written, which I still haven't succeeded in doing, but I keep at it. But I have to remind myself from time to time, well, you may not choose to visit again in my lifetime. But does that give me reason for letting up? Does that give me grounds for relaxing and forgetting my call? I live in hope that he'll visit even this week.

But if it's yet a while before he comes among us as the horn of salvation and as the sunrise from on high, we must faithfully persevere. Over the years, nothing has disturbed me more regularly and deeply than to see young people caught up, in some sense, at least, of the burden for revival and making outlandish promises as to how they're going to persevere and stick with what God has laid upon their hearts, only discover months or years later, they've forgotten all about those early commitments. And I'm glad of the opportunity to speak to you young people right now and say a burden from the Lord is a lifetime burden.

Don't lay it aside. People often say to me, Mr. Roberts, how long have you been preaching along these lines? Well, don't you get discouraged? What reason have I got to be discouraged? I wasn't called to bring revival to pass. I was called to plead with the people of God to repent and return.

And although it hasn't happened in masses, thank God, there are individuals who have heard and responded. I'm pleading with you. Once you set your faith on this great issue of calling upon God to visit and upon the people of God to make ready for his coming, don't lay it aside no matter what.

Now, as I said, this song is divided into two parts and we've noted something in terms of the first part. But look now, if you will, at the second part of this precious song. You, child, will be called the prophet of the most high for you will go on before the Lord to prepare his way.

To give to his people the knowledge of salvation by the forgiveness of their sins because of the tender mercies of our God with which the sunrise from on high shall visit us to shine upon those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace. But perhaps I better back up and call a little bit more to your attention in the first stanza. Look at verse 70.

He spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of all. Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us to show mercy toward our fathers and to remember his holy covenant. This coming of the horn of salvation, this coming, this visitation of the sunrise from on high has to do with the covenant.

The covenant which cannot be broken. The oath, verse 73, which he swore to Abraham, our father, to grant us that we being delivered from the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all our day. And brothers and sisters, I remind you that that prophecy has only been fulfilled in part.

Israel is not yet to the full extent the blessing to the nations that has been promised. And I want to remind those of you who haven't considered this issue that we are plainly told that the day must come when the Gentile church will provoke Israel to jealousy. Don't lose sight of that.

You will never find a record in past history where this has been fulfilled. Indeed, by and large, the Gentile church has done harm to Israel. And many Jews today can't believe in Christ because they can't believe in those who profess to love him.

And in our present circumstance, there is no realistic possibility of hoping that any true Jew will be provoked to jealousy by the conduct of the Gentile church. I can only conceive of one way where God can keep this covenant, and that's to revive us, the Gentiles around the world. And oh, what a lovely thing to think of the possibility of that day coming when the church that we love and serve provokes Israel to such jealousy that they say, this is not right.

He is our Messiah, first and foremost. We're not gonna let the Gentiles have all the blessing. We're going to get in on it.

This belongs to us, and we're going to have it. But we're gonna have to change, brothers and sisters, and the church is going to have to change. And if you can't think of any other reason to be burdened for revival, this one ought to grip you.

Why not plead with God for a revival that will so refashion the church of Jesus Christ that the Jew will insist that it's his blessing as well and get in on it to a degree that has never happened before in history? God's covenants will be kept. You can be sure of that. It is clearly said that through Abraham and his seed, the whole world will be blessed.

And by God's grace, that is going to happen. And oh, how precious it would be if we were privileged to be part of that incredible happening. But there is a strong focus here as well upon holiness and righteousness.

Look back again at verse 74, to grant us that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies, might serve him without fear. People often say to me, how do you dare to say that in a given setting? And I look with them at astonishment, and I say, how do you dare not to speak the truth? What have we to fear from man? So some of us may yet die for our faith. We may suffer imprisonment and severe persecution, but oh, for a church that serves the Lord fearlessly and in holiness and in true righteousness.

But as I began a moment ago, and now come back to where I was, we pick it up in terms of the second stanza at verse 76. Zachariah's joy in realizing the child's mission was to prepare the way for the sunrise from on high to visit men. Have you ever dwelt upon that phrase? The sunrise from on high will visit us.

Now clearly, the horn of salvation, as I've tried to point out already, deals with the enemy, puts him on the run, guarantees victory for those who are servants of the living Christ. But we obviously live at a very dark time. Maggie and I don't get to travel together regularly for the most part.

I go off alone and she stays home to tend to things as is necessary. But once in a while she's with me and I often turn to her and say, can you imagine that stupid statement just made by that prominent individual? That ridiculous falsehood just sent forth on its mission of error? I ponder over the church, I ponder over the statements that are made and I groan and I say, how can men who believe be in such darkness? The position of the church today on many critical issues is simply unbelievable. Any wonder that so many of the young people are saying just chuck the whole rotten mess.

But no, we can't just chuck the whole rotten mess. I suppose the main thing I dislike about all these new ways of doing church is that they pretend that the rotten mess doesn't exist and they just skirt around it and extend it by creating another rotten mess of a different sort. What to God we'd lay hold of the horns of the altar and say by the grace of God, I'm gonna be part of revolutionary change.

But that won't happen unless the sunrise from on high visits us. At that time I mentioned earlier when I had sat on the poison ivy vines and I was by myself much of the time, my mother helped me to take a seat by the window. And I sat there one day when the sun broke through the clouds and it shone beautifully.

But I sat there in horror for the rays of the sun were hitting the dust in the air in such a fashion that I could scarcely believe that my mother who was such a diligent housekeeper had failed so grievously. I can see those dust specks even now and feel something of the horror of my mother's failure. But indeed it wasn't failure.

She had done everything known to do at that time. It was the rays of the sun striking things that made them look utterly different than in ordinary times. When the sunrise from on high visits us, everything is going to take on a different appearance.

Things that seem acceptable now will be overwhelmingly unacceptable. Conduct that appears to be perfectly innocent at the moment will be seen with all of its wicked aspects. But oh for a day when both the horn of salvation and the sunrise from on high visit us.

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