

Text: Lk 1.41, 67

Last week, we talked about the sun setting on the prophets, as we considered the fact that John the Baptist was to have the filling of the Spirit right from the womb.

John came on the scene as a final blaze of the glory of OT prophecy.

He is the last prophet in a long line of prophets pointing to the rising of the Son of God, the new era of the New Covenant.

There is a transition between Old Covenant and New. The Gospels tell us the story of that transition. They highlight the central figure of that change, and they prefigure the change that will come upon believing people as they serve the Lord in the New Testament era, the era that looks back to the cross for the foundation of its world-wide ministry.

Today our topic is:

The Spirit and the Saints

Our theme will highlight one of the most significant differences between the Old and New Testaments in the Spirit's operation (mostly) on ordinary people. We will focus on Elizabeth and Zacharias, John's parents, for this message.

“According to the rabbis the Spirit departed from Israel after the prophet Malachi, and his return was indicative of the Messianic age (cf. SB, in loc.)”¹

What we are talking about today is the change brought about by the Spirit of God in the lives of God's people in the Messianic age.

We get a hint about this as we meditate on what was happening to Elizabeth and Zacharias as their son came to be born. There are similar hints when we meet Simeon (and Anna), but we are going to let John's parents stand in for this new era of the Spirit in the lives of God's people.

Read Lk 1.39-45, 62-69

Proposition: The Spirit fills, then speaks — this is the mark of the Messianic Age.

¹ E. E. Ellis, “Nunc Dimittis” in D. R. W. Wood and I. Howard Marshall, eds., *New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 837.

I. The progress of the Spirit in Luke-Acts

“Luke’s Gospel highlighted how God gave his Spirit for prophecy to Elizabeth (Luke 1:41–42), Zechariah (Luke 1:67), Simeon (Luke 2:25–28), and Jesus (Luke 4:17–18). Acts shows God’s next great advance in the gospel through the Spirit. He gave his Spirit to believers in Jesus the Messiah to enable them to proclaim the gospel. The Spirit is viewed as coming from the exalted Lord who sits at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33–36). The Spirit is the person through whom God touches and rules the world.”²

A. Elizabeth was filled, and cried out (Lk 1.41-42)

Lk 1.41-42 When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.⁴² And she **cried out** with a loud voice and **said**, “Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb!

B. Zacharias was filled, and prophesied (Lk 1.67)

Lk 1.67 ¶ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, **saying**:

C. Simeon was filled, and he came in the Spirit and said (Lk 2.27-28)

Lk 2.27-28 And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law,²⁸ then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, **and said**,

D. Jesus was full of the Spirit, and was anointed to preach (Lk 4.17-18)

Lk 4.17-18 And the book of the prophet Isaiah was handed to Him. And He opened the book and found the place where it was written,¹⁸ “THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME **TO PREACH** THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME **TO PROCLAIM** RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED,

² Robert B. Hughes and J. Carl Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary* (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 493.

E. The believers at Pentecost were filled, and spoke with tongues (Ac 2.1-11)

... but more on this one later

II. The people of the Spirit represented by Elizabeth and Zacharias

A. Elizabeth (Lk 1.41-43)

1. "And she cried out..."

a. The Spirit prompts Elizabeth to speak (41-42)

1) What did she know? She must have known much from Zacharias, incl. that the Messiah is near

a) She could not know *when*

b) She could not know *of whom*³

2) She knew Mary: and she spoke by the Spirit

a) Not the same as the filling of John, this is her own filling

b) She knew who Mary bore

"We are not told how Elizabeth knew Mary was pregnant; most likely the Spirit made her aware of it. The baby's leap of joy and her exclamation of blessing were both Spirit reactions to the baby Jesus."⁴

b. The mother of *my Lord* (43)

1) Elizabeth means Jesus when she says, "Lord"

2) Elizabeth cannot know *all* she means when she speaks this word

a) Very unlikely she has a full sense of incarnation

³ Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. 1 (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1896), 152–53.

⁴ Grant R. Osborne, *Luke: Verse by Verse*, Osborne New Testament Commentaries (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018), 42.

- b) Yet she has a thorough sense of Messiah, though not all that Messiah means (even John will never really have this)

“Luke brings in a higher **Christology** than she could have known.”⁵

- c. Her words preach a bold truth: Jesus is always Lord

“It is above all by the resurrection that Mary’s child is recognized as Lord (Acts 2:36), although this verse indicates that from his conception he was already Lord.”⁶

B. Zacharias (Lk 1.67, 68, 69)

1. The miracle of speech, the blessing of silence

- a. When Zacharias doubted the announcement, the Lord struck him dumb
- b. When Zacharias named his son, “John,” *at once* his tongue was loosed (64)

“Zechariah during his own personal nine-month seclusion, when he could not communicate with others, had come to an enormous understanding of the significance of the events in which he was taking part, encompassing not only his son but the baby Jesus as well.”⁷

2. Some things Zechariah said

- a. Blessed: a unique word of blessing (68)

1) We see other words of blessing in the chapter

- a) A related word, from which we get *eulogy*, a good word (Elizabeth’s blessing of Mary, 42)

⁵ Osborne, 43.

⁶ Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 90.

⁷ Osborne, *Luke: Verse by Verse*, 54.

b) The word of the beatitudes, “happy, privileged, blessed” (Elizabeth’s description of Mary’s faith, 45)

2) This word is only ever used of God: “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,” Zacharias says

“We best bring out its religious significance along the lines of Luther that God is praised in Himself but that we pray here that He may be praised among us.”⁸

a) Zacharias spent nine long months thinking about what God was doing

b) Zacharias calls for men to praise God for what he has done

b. God has raised a horn of salvation (69)

1) The image is a symbol of strength, in keeping with the prophecies

Ps 132.17 “There I will cause the horn of David to spring forth; I have prepared a lamp for Mine anointed.

Ps 18.2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

2) The Spirit, speaking in Zacharias’ loosened tongue, rejoices in the strong salvation God is bringing about

“The question of unbelief had struck the Priest dumb, for most truly unbelief cannot speak; and the answer of faith restored to him speech, for most truly does faith loosen the tongue.”⁹

⁸ Hermann Wolfgang Beyer, “Εὐλογέω, Εὐλογητός, Εὐλογία, Ἐνευλογέω,” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed., vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 764.

⁹ Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, 1:159.

III. The purpose of the Spirit in God's people

A. Fast forward to the day of Pentecost (Ac 2.1-11)

1. The Spirit came upon the disciples
2. They began to speak "the mighty deeds of God"

"The filling with the Spirit was closely associated with the act of speaking. It took the sense of prophetic utterance involving the sovereign work of the Spirit of God."¹⁰

B. Consider the state of all believers (Rm 8.9)

1. The gift of miraculous tongues does not remain
2. The gift of the mighty deeds of God is ours forever
3. You have the Spirit: do you speak?

Conclusion:

"Luke's Gospel highlighted how God gave his Spirit for prophecy to Elizabeth (Luke 1:41-42), Zechariah (Luke 1:67), Simeon (Luke 2:25-28), and Jesus (Luke 4:17-18). Acts shows God's next great advance in the gospel through the Spirit. He gave his Spirit to believers in Jesus the Messiah to enable them to proclaim the gospel. The Spirit is viewed as coming from the exalted Lord who sits at the right hand of God (Acts 2:33-36). The Spirit is the person through whom God touches and rules the world."¹¹

The Spirit and the Saints

That's us. Let's always be speaking in His name!

¹⁰ Hughes and Laney, *Tyndale Concise Bible Commentary*, 444.

¹¹ Hughes and Laney, 493.