

Luke 1C

- Two women, Elizabeth & Mary, at opposite points in their lives, are expecting children
 - Elizabeth's knows it is a miraculous birth and she has given God credit in faith for the child to be
 - Mary actually heard from an angel concerning the nature of her child, and she responded in reverence and submission
- To encourage both women, the angel told Mary about her relative Elizabeth, and of course Mary will rush to find her and share their experiences

[Luke 1:39](#) ¶ Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah,

[Luke 1:40](#) and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth.

[Luke 1:41](#) When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

[Luke 1:42](#) And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb!

[Luke 1:43](#) "And how has it *happened* to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me?

[Luke 1:44](#) "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy.

[Luke 1:45](#) "And blessed *is* she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

- Mary lived in Nazareth, located in the northern part of Judah about 64 miles as the crow flies from Jerusalem
 - Elizabeth and her husband live outside the main part of the city in the hill country of Judah
 - This phrase is often associated in scripture with Hebron, which is another 20 miles south of Jerusalem
 - So Mary likely walked by herself approximately 60-80 miles to see Elizabeth – at least a 4 day journey

- How excited do you suppose Mary was about this child and about hearing that Elizabeth was having a child?
 - Did Mary have any other plans I wonder?
 - Was she scheduled to be somewhere and to do something important that week?
 - Did she wonder how she was going to be cared for while away?
 - Did she worry about what her friends would think?
 - Another man did much the same thing – Abraham left Ur
- You see, when God takes hold of you and gives you new direction and purpose – when He awakens you to His work and makes you a part of it...
 - Your interest in normal life, worldly life will naturally drop
 - You will find yourself losing interest in things you used to find so important
 - And you will become consumed by things you should have been consumed by in the first place
 - My call into a teaching ministry
 - My list of things I don't find so interesting any longer
- But you have to listen to God, hear His instructions, and take them to heart
 - You may be tempted to say that Mary heard so clearly from an angel that she couldn't miss God, of course
 - But let's be honest - many times so do we, yet we aren't in the habit of listening much less responding
 - So we don't often take the kind of radical steps that the characters of the Bible so often do
 - There are probably many reasons why we don't
 - Less time in study, in prayer, in reliance on God
 - But perhaps the most important reason for our culture is really very simple – we're too busy

- We have busy calendars, we have action-packed lives
 - We pass that to our kids – they can only do three sports, two club activities, two musical instruments, and no more than 4 sleep overs per week
 - We drive our kids much like we drive ourselves, to be completely absorbed in the life of this world – forgetting that as a Christian we are to be as foreigners in this world knowing it is all passing and worth nothing
 - How much better would life be – and how ,much better would we hear and respond to God – if we observed what David said in Psalms 46-10: **Cease striving and know that I am God.**
 - And what if we taught our kids that same principle?
- We could all learn from Mary, and recognizing that when we give Him space to direct our steps, we will hear from God,
- And when we hear Him, nothing else will matter and there will be no doubts, no need for excuses – we can just respond and start walking like Mary and like Abraham
- So Mary arrives at Zacharias’ house, and at the sound of Mary’s voice, the baby in Elizabeth’s womb leaps and she is filled with the Holy Spirit
 - The Holy Spirit features prominently in this passage, and there are several things to note about the HS work
 - First, remember the angel who announced the child to Zacharias in the temple...he said in verse 15 that her child will be filled with the Holy Spirit
 - This seems to be the point when that occurs
 - The child reacts to Mary and likewise, Elizabeth herself is filled with the HS
 - The presence of the HS in Elizabeth brought about her speech in praise of Mary and of her child
 - In fact, Elizabeth calls Mary’s child her Lord

- And Elizabeth even calls Mary blessed because she believed the promise that her child would be the Messiah
- Her entire outburst seems to have occurred before Mary says anything to her whatsoever about her child
 - Elizabeth would not have known about Mary's pregnancy from observation (it certainly wasn't visible yet)
 - So, we must conclude that the words she spoke were inspired words, as Luke records them, the direct revelation of God given to Elizabeth through the Spirit
- This is one of many examples in scripture of how the HS works in the lives of men and women
 - The HS has always had a ministry on Earth
 - -He's seen in the second verse of Genesis hovering over the surface of the waters
 - Later in OT times, the HS would come upon men for various reasons to accomplish God's purpose
 - He would give power to men, wisdom, or revelations and prophecies
 - He would also give utterances – as with Balaam in Num 24 when the Spirit of the Lord comes upon him as he tried to curse Israel
 - But the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit did not happen – at least not routinely to men of faith
 - Christ told the disciples that the HS would baptize them after His ascension – thus beginning a new period in history where the HS would now indwell men permanently
 - Elizabeth's experience seems consistent with the OT manner of how the HS worked
 - He came upon her for a time to produce this utterance but did not remain continually

- The second aspect of the HS to notice here is that the HS's primary ministry is to glorify God, in particular here through Elizabeth's speech
 - Giving glory to Christ and the Father is a consistent role for the HS
 - He does so by how He causes men to behave (our sanctification) and speak and praise God (worshipping in Spirit and Truth)

[John 16:7](#) "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

[John 16:8](#) "And He, when He comes, will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment;

[John 16:9](#) concerning sin, because they do not believe in Me;

[John 16:10](#) and concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father and you no longer see Me;

[John 16:11](#) and concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world has been judged.

- The HS has three roles in glorifying the Son and the Father
 - He brings conviction of sin
 - He brings about righteousness in believers as a picture of Christ in Christ's absence
 - And He testifies to coming judgment through signs and wonders appointed by God
- The final aspect of the Spirit visible in this passage is perhaps the most profound
- Paul taught in Romans that the definition of a Christian is anyone who has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

[Rom. 8:9](#) ¶ However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

[Rom. 8:14](#) For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

[Eph. 1:13](#) And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a **seal**, the promised Holy **Spirit**,

- So, if the Holy Spirit comes upon men as a seal of their faith, what does it mean that the Holy Spirit came to John the Baptist in the womb?

- First, it confirms the truth of Eph 2:8-9

[Eph. 2:8](#) For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God —

[Eph. 2:9](#) not by works, so that no one can boast.

- The gift we all received from God was our faith – it was a supernatural moment when we believed in the Gospel, because our belief in God was a product of a faith He gave us
- He acted first and we responded

[1Cor. 12:3](#) Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed”; and **no one can** say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.

- The second thing John’s indwelling means is that God is not dependent on the intellectual faith of the believer to provide the gift of faith
 - Since it is a gift, it comes as a matter of God’s power and right to give it without regard to our understanding
 - we don’t think and reason our way into our salvation – that would be a work and we could boast
 - But so that no man may boast, faith itself is given to men apart from intellect – though we disclose our faith to others by our intellect
 - Even to ourselves, we come to a realization of the faith we have been given
 - Since John the Baptist was given the Holy Spirit prior to birth, it proves that God was not dependent on John the Baptist’s understanding the Gospel and the need for him to agree with it before he could bring John the Baptist to faith
 - Like Paul says in Romans about Jacob, and Esau

[Rom. 9:10](#) And not only this, but there was Rebekah also, when she had conceived *twins* by one man, our father Isaac;

[Rom. 9:11](#) for though *the twins* were not yet born and had not done anything good or bad, so that God’s purpose according to *His* choice would stand, not because of works but because of Him who calls,

[Rom. 9:12](#) it was said to her, “THE OLDER WILL SERVE THE YOUNGER.”

[Rom. 9:13](#) Just as it is written, “JACOB I LOVED, BUT ESAU I HATED.”

- John the Baptist was going to believe in the Gospel because God gave him the gift of faith while in the womb
 - The implications of this truth run deep
 - This means that God may be producing saving faith in people we may have always wondered about
 - Infant deaths, invalids, mentally handicapped
 - Secondly, there is no need to manufacture the extra-biblical teaching of an age of accountability

- Before we move the next passage in Luke, consider how Elizabeth addresses Mary
 - She says that Mary is mother of her Lord
 - This is not the same as saying Mary is Mother of God
 - Jesus is God, but not all of God is Jesus
 - Though others have called Mary “Mother of God,” scripture never uses that term

[Luke 1:46](#) ¶ And Mary said:

“My soul exalts the Lord,

[Luke 1:47](#) And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

[Luke 1:48](#) “For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondslave;

For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed.

[Luke 1:49](#) “For the Mighty One has done great things for me;

And holy is His name.

[Luke 1:50](#) “AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION
TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.

[Luke 1:51](#) “He has done mighty deeds with His arm;

He has scattered *those who were* proud in the thoughts of their heart.

[Luke 1:52](#) “He has brought down rulers from *their* thrones,

And has exalted those who were humble.

[Luke 1:53](#) “HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS;

And sent away the rich empty-handed.

[Luke 1:54](#) “He has given help to Israel His servant,
In remembrance of His mercy,

[Luke 1:55](#) As He spoke to our fathers,
To Abraham and his descendants forever.”

[Luke 1:56](#) ¶ And Mary stayed with her about three months, and *then* returned to her home.

- Now it’s Mary’s turn to give an inspired utterance in praise of God
 - It’s hard to know if she had been working on this beforehand or if it was entirely spontaneous
 - It’s worth noting that many of the phrases she uses come directly out of the OT, notably the Psalms
 - Even if the Spirit brought these things to her mind, which is likely the case, it also illustrates how much glory God receives from praises that rely on His word
 - A primary requirement of worship should be that God’s word features prominently – not just in study but also in praise music and prayer
 - When His word is missing, we are not worshiping in spirit and in truth and He is not glorified

- This passage also helps us refute a common heretical teaching concerning Mary held by the Catholic Church
 - Mary, as we know, gave birth to Jesus while as a virgin, and since Christ was a second Adam, He didn’t carry the original sin of Adam
 - The RCC goes one step farther, however, and they declared that Mary herself was also born free of original sin – the Immaculate Conception they call it
 - This passage has Mary praising her Lord, her God, her Savior
 - If Mary was born without original sin, then she would have no need for a savior just as Christ needed no forgiveness for His own sins

- Instead, she acknowledges her need for a savior as does the rest of mankind – she suffered from sin as do the rest of us
- She didn't pass that sin to Christ, because He was merely placed in her by the Holy Spirit – not created from her
- In mentioning all the great things God was doing for Israel and the world through the gift of his son, she counts herself blessed for all time
 - Every orthodox Jewish girl who ever lived grew up hoping that she might be the one through whom the Messiah would come
 - In realizing that dream, Mary is overwhelmed with admiration and joy
- And as the passage finishes, we learn that Mary stays long enough to see the birth of John, and then return while she still had strength to travel home
- Now Luke transitions to concluding the account of Elizabeth and particularly Zacharias

[Luke 1:57](#) ¶ Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son.

[Luke 1:58](#) Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her.

[Luke 1:59](#) ¶ And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father.

[Luke 1:60](#) But his mother answered and said, "No indeed; but he shall be called John."

[Luke 1:61](#) And they said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name."

[Luke 1:62](#) And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called.

[Luke 1:63](#) And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, "His name is John." And they were all astonished.

- Elizabeth and Zacharias have their son and the family and neighbors have been praising God for the miracle of a healthy child for such an older couple
 - How wonderful it is when God's graciousness in the lives of His people results in praise of His name
 - We should always make sure that His blessings upon each of us results in not only our praise of Him but in others as well

- Impress upon those you know how much God has done and give them the example to follow in giving credit where credit is rightfully due
- At the eighth day, under Jewish tradition as given to Abraham by God, it's time to name the child and circumcise him
 - Naming the child was the Father's right, although the woman no doubt played a part in choosing that name
 - Since this was their only child – and likely to be their only child – and since it was a first born son, the natural assumption among the family was the child would be named after the father
 - Remember the father can't speak yet, so there isn't effort being made to engage in conversation with him, so they ask the mother if he will be named Zacharias
- She says he will be John, which we know is because the angel gave him that name
 - Naturally, the family is confused since the name has no connection to the family
 - They ask the father for confirmation
 - Curiously, they use hand gestures to communicate to Zacharias – Why? Was he mute and deaf
 - The word for mute (kophos) in 1:23 can mean deaf and mute, so perhaps he was unable to hear either
 - If true, this would better explain the rest of the account, because when Zacharias writes John, it astounds them all
 - If Zacharias could hear but not speak, then his repeating of John wouldn't seem so amazing – just an odd name to pick
 - But they are astonished – marveled and amazed
- Upon hearing him give the same name, his voice returns
 - It would seem that God was determined to receive the glory and praise that Zacharias should have given God in His temple when he saw the angel
 - Instead of praise, Zacharias asked for proof, doubting God's word

- God will not be put to the test and because Zacharias denied God the glory He deserved, he was silenced
- Until the day when God could use even Zacharias' silence as a means of gaining glory, as He has now done
 - This crowd would now give God glory over the amazing way the baby was named – clearly his name came from God
 - Then God would give Zacharias' voice back, having gained the glory He deserved in the end
- This is exactly how God deals with each of us
 - We are His creation and we exist for His pleasure
 - He takes pleasure in us, but He created this world to His own glory
 - And He saved us by His will and through His own Son also for His glory
 - When demonstrate doubt in His Word,
 - or when we fail to give Him the glory for His work in our life,
 - or when we bring shame upon Him and grieve the HS by our disobedience
 - God will find ways to discipline us for our errors yet all the while bringing glory to Himself through our errors
 - Because His glory will not be diminished one bit
 - How much better is it to give God glory through obedience than through disobedience!
 - Remember what God said concerning obedience versus dead religious practice:

[1Sam. 15:22](#) Samuel said,

“Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices
As in obeying the voice of the LORD?
Behold, to obey is **better** than **sacrifice**,
And to heed than the fat of rams.