

THE PERSON AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (continued)

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE IMMEDIATE FORERUNNERS TO THE COMING OF CHRIST - Of all the synoptics Luke seems to have a particular interest in the role of the Spirit in those preparing the way for the coming of the Messiah:

- 1) **JOHN THE BAPTIST** - John is the only person who is said to be filled with the Spirit from birth - **Luke 1:15-17** - "...for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. [16] And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, [17] and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared." See the link with this important prophecy in **Malachi 4:5-6**.

John the Baptist plays an absolutely unique role in preparing the way for Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Holy Spirit prepares him in a unique way also. However, it's interesting that Jesus, the Messiah, isn't said to be filled with the Spirit from Mary's womb. He is *conceived* by the Holy Spirit, in a miracle that happened to Mary. But Jesus is filled, or has the Spirit come upon Him, at His adult baptism. I believe this is intentional. John would identify Jesus as the one who would *baptize in the Holy Spirit* - **Mark 1:8-11** - "have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." [9] In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. [10] And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opening and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. [11] And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus is *visibly* baptized with the Spirit to mark His identity with what His ascended ministry would largely about.

- 2) **MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS** - **Luke 1:30-35** - "And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. [31] And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, [33] and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." [34] And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" [35] And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."

Again, the Holy Spirit played an absolutely unique role in Mary's life. She was never pronounced sinless but her role was unique. No human father would be involved in the conception process of Jesus Christ. It was to be the sovereign, dynamic work of the Spirit of God Himself.

As in most *pre-pentecost cases*, the coming of the Spirit on Mary shouldn't be interpreted as a *permanent indwelling*. This is at least hinted at by Luke when he takes the time to specifically record her by name as in the upper room waiting for the fullness of the Spirit at Pentecost - **Acts 1:14** - "All these with one accord were devoting themselves to prayer, together with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers."

- 3) **ELIZABETH, THE MOTHER-TO-BE OF JOHN** - **Luke 1:39-42** - "In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, [40] and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. [41] And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, [42] and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!"

It's significant that her "*filling of the Spirit*" took place as Mary, the mother of Jesus, entered the room. Again, the Holy Spirit is uniquely involved in the coming of Jesus. We are meant to note an *intensifying* of the work of the Holy Spirit around the Person of the Messiah.

- 4) **ZECHARIAH, THE FATHER-TO-BE OF JOHN** - **Luke 1:67-69** - "And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, [68] 'Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and redeemed his people [69] and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David....'"

Zechariah's filling was born out of a background of confusion and doubt (**Luke 1:11-20**). It was when Zechariah named the child "*John*," not a family name, nor one they had likely chosen, that Zechariah's tongue was loosened and he was "*filled with the Spirit*" (**Luke 1:59-67**). The Spirit came when faith and obedience were renewed.

- 5) **SIMEON, THE DEVOUT MAN IN THE TEMPLE** - **Luke 2:25-27, 30-35** - "Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. [26] And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. [27] And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law....[30] for my eyes have seen your salvation [31] that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, [32] a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." [33] And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. [34] And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed [35] (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

There are **three** references to the Spirit in **two** verses (**25-27**). Notice again that the work of the Spirit is to prepare Simeon for the coming of Jesus. The Spirit even ensures that Simeon is in the Temple courts precisely as Mary and Joseph arrive with Jesus. The Spirit then gives him **discernment to recognize the world wide ministry of Jesus to the gentiles as well** (**30-32**).