

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning

Week 51 (December 13-19, 2015)

Now that we have seen the Holy Spirit's arrival at the Day of Pentecost, let's look at the Spirit's workings that brought about the birth of Jesus Christ.

Sunday, December 13 (read Luke 1:5-25)

*He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit **even from his mother's womb**. (Luke 1:14-15, emphasis mine; see NIV footnote)*

I want you to read the entire account of the miraculous birth of John the Baptist so that you can understand the Holy Spirit's role in this story. Zechariah and Elizabeth are both "upright in the sight of God" (v. 6a). This is the best position we can ever obtain by our personal efforts to obey God's laws. However, the child to whom they will give birth "will be **filled with the Holy Spirit** even from his mother's womb" (v. 15, emphasis mine). This is clearly an unmerited act of God since the child has no part in it at all. God **still** rewards those who walk in all the light they currently have, as he did with Zechariah and Elizabeth, by sending additional light until He leads them to salvation through His Son, the One who died for their sins. We will look at this event more closely in tomorrow's devotion.

Monday, December 14 (read Luke 1:39-45)

"As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy". (Luke 1:44)

In yesterday's devotion, I used the NIV footnote instead of the actual words in the text. Today's passage will tell you why I **know for sure** that John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit from Elizabeth's womb and not from birth as the verse states. John is six months old in the womb when Mary visits his mother. Jesus is only a few days old in Mary's womb, and yet, the unborn baby recognizes the Son of God and leaps for joy. If you can be pro-choice (or vote for someone who is) after reading this, something is drastically wrong with your understanding. Only a person who is filled with the Spirit of God can recognize the unseen Jesus. We have learned that Zechariah and Elizabeth are rewarded because of their obedience and that John the Baptist is filled with the Holy Spirit in his mother's womb. Now Elizabeth is filled with the Spirit when her unborn son kicks up his heels in joy (v. 41). We will continue to follow the Spirit's work in the Christmas story in tomorrow's devotion.

Tuesday, December 15 (read Luke 1:26-38)

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God." (Luke 1:35)

God chooses a young girl named Mary to give birth to His Son. The only human qualification that she has is the fact that she has chosen to keep herself pure while living in Nazareth, a town known for immorality. She is engaged to Joseph who, like Mary, is a descendant of David (v. 27). The young girl is troubled by this heavenly visitation (v. 29), but the angel says, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God" (v. 30). While Zechariah and Elizabeth are "upright in the sight of God" (v. 6) and their son, John the Baptist, is "great in the sight of the Lord" (v. 15), Jesus is independently "**great**" because **He is God** in the flesh (John 1:14) "and will be called the Son of the Most High" (v. 32). He has been given the throne of David and He will rule over the entire world forever. Don't lose sight of that marvelous truth as we continue to study the role of the Holy Spirit in tomorrow's devotion.

Wednesday, December 16 (reread Luke 1:26-38)

For nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:37)

Mary has no idea how she can become pregnant since she has never had a sexual relationship with a man (v. 34). The angel says, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will **overshadow you**” (v. 35a, emphasis mine). That’s still what happens when we are born again or when we move to a higher plain in our spiritual journeys. The Holy Spirit has to overshadow our personal agendas so that we yield to His leading and not to our own sinful natures. God reminds young Mary that Elizabeth’s pregnancy is God’s gift since she is too old to have a child (v. 36). Then the angel tells Mary (and us) that, “nothing is impossible with God” (v. 37). Do you truly believe that? Then what do you have to worry about today? Are you ready to say, like Mary, “I am the Lord’s servant, . . . may it be to me as you have said”?

Thursday, December 17 (read Luke 1:57-67)

His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied . . .(Luke 1:67)

God has kept Zechariah silent during the entire time of Elizabeth’s pregnancy because he doubted the angel’s declaration regarding the birth of a son (v. 19-20). His tongue is loosened only when he writes, “His name is John” (v. 64). The name means “Jehovah has shown grace,” reminding us that this birth and all births come as a result of God’s grace. Zechariah is allowed to speak after he gives glory to the Lord by giving him the name God has chosen (v. 13). Is it possible that, “There is no one among **your** relatives who has that name” (v. 61)? In other words, is there no one among your relatives who realizes that **every** child is a gift from God through his grace? Is it possible that God will not fill **you** with His Spirit until you are willing to give Him all the glory (v. 67)?

Friday, December 18 (read Luke 1:67-80)

And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for Him, to give His people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, . . . (Luke 1:76-77)

Through the Holy Spirit (v. 67), Zechariah prophesies about the upcoming ministry of his son, John the Baptist. He acknowledges that this boy will be a tool in the hands of almighty God, the only One who can redeem the lost world (68-69). He also acknowledges that the words of the Old Testament prophets are true, pointing readers to New Testament salvation through mercy and grace (v. 70-75). Lastly, he realizes and proclaims that the supernatural birth of his son came about only to bring glory to God by preparing the way for Jesus to redeem the world (v. 76-79). John’s entire family is now filled with the Spirit of God! I hope you can say the same.

Saturday, December 19 (read Luke 2:1-39)

He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. (v. 25b-26)

I want you to read the entire Christmas story to remind you of how God fulfills His Word. In v. 22-24, Mary and Joseph obey the law by bringing pigeons or doves to the temple in Jerusalem “to present (Jesus) to the Lord.” That’s a bit ironic since **He is** the Lord! The young couple cannot afford a lamb, but that is insignificant since He is “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29)! They meet a man called Simeon who has been told by the Holy Spirit that he will not die before he has seen the Christ (v. 25-26). Simeon declares, “Sovereign Lord, as You have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen you salvation . . . “. If you have received Jesus as your Savior and Lord, you can make the same declaration. Praise His holy Name!