**The Witness of John the Baptist Part 1**

**Holy Spirit series # 4 Handout**

**Luke 1:8-17 NIV**

**Luke 1:8Once when Zechariah’s division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, 9he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. 10And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside. 11Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. 12When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear.13But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John.**

**14He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, 15for 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 before he is born. 16He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. 17And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”**

John the Baptist would be a Nazarite for life which meant that like Samuel and Samson. They were special children who either were prayed for in the case of Samuel and then given to God, or whose birth was foretold by an angelic messenger as in the case of Samson. They too were used greatly by God. So, too, would be Zechariah and Elizabeth’s child. But there is something never seen before here. John would be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born.

Six months later, the Holy Spirit was preparing for a greater work.

**Luke 1:26-45 NIV**

**26In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”**

**29Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”**

The co-eternal Son of God, one of the three persons of the Holy Trinity perfect in all ways and transcendently supreme over all creation would enter time and space. The creator would now live in His creation. The Son of God would empty Himself and live among us in full submission to God and complete reliance on the Holy Spirit, just as we should. And when He later ascended, He would send the Holy Spirit who would give us a new nature that is capable of being a dwelling for the Spirit of God to live in it. Jesus emptied Himself so that we might be filled.

**Luke 1:36Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37For no word from God will ever fail.”**

**38“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.**

**39At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea,40where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. 41When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”**

**Luke 1:57-67 NIV**

**Luke 1:57When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. 58Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.**

**59On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, 60but his mother spoke up and said, “No! He is to be called John.”**

**61They said to her, “There is no one among your relatives who has that name.”**

**62Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. 63He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone’s astonishment he wrote, “His name is John.”**

**The fact that the people made signs to Zechariah leads me to think he may have been both mute and deaf for this time.**

**64Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. 65All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. 66Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, “What then is this child going to be?” For the Lord’s hand was with him.**

**67His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:**

Gabriel’s message was fulfilled. And with Zechariah’s obedience he was restored and gave praise to God. And Zechariah was then filled with the Holy Spirit.

Because of Christ’s sacrifice, the Holy Spirit brings every true believer, even the least of them, into a condition of greatness that is greater than John the Baptist. Jesus even told us in John 14:12 that after Jesus went to the Father, we who follow Him would do greater works than Jesus did. That is because the Holy Spirit would come and live in those who believe in Christ.

The Holy Spirit can unleash the very power and greatness of Almighty God through you. Be sure you are open to His leading. God wants to do very great things in and through your life by the Holy Spirit.