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Luke 1

It seems that controversy is in all parts of the academic world as to who wrote what and when and where it was written. Personally, I am satisfied that this book was written by Luke the physician; Friend and traveling companion of Paul. As to when and where the book was written there are varied assumptions, but Alexandria Egypt seems to be the most popular and as to time somewhere between the 12 and 21st year after the Ascension of Jesus Christ.

One of the more interesting notes is by Eusebius;

Eusebius of Caesarea, also known as Eusebius Pamphili, was a historian of Christianity, exegete, (exponder or textual interpreter) and Christian polemicist (orator). He became the bishop of Caesarea Maritima about 314 AD. Together with Pamphilus, he was a scholar of the Biblical canon and is regarded as an extremely learned Christian of his time.

Born: Eusebius, 260/265

Died: 339/340 (aged 74–79)

Occupation: Bishop, historian, theologian

According to Eusebius, the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, were all submitted to John the Disciple for his review before they were released. Eusebius claims that John agreed that all were correct.

Luke

Dedication to Theophilus

(Acts 1:1-3)

1Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

Luke did not meet nor see Jesus; so, in his opening statement he simply claims that this gospel is written about the things that are believed among his fellow Christians. He also indicates that “many” have tried to set for in order a declaration”. How many exactly is not stated but we know that of the many, only 4 were determined to be of such quality as to be included as “Gospels” which simply means “glad tidings”.

Luke was a physician of some sort and was noted for his in-depth examination of issues such as Christianity. He is reported to have interviewed many people who had seen and heard Christ and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit was able to write a factual non-eyewitness account of the Ministry of the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

2Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

As was stated Luke interviewed or was given many accounts by people who had seen firsthand the events around Jesus' ministry.

3It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

This verse seemed a bit pugnacious, claiming "perfect understanding". According to Pulpit Commentary the meaning behind this statement is that Luke was pointing out that he took a step by step investigative approach to this Gospel. It was not that he had complete understanding of all things it was that he had a thorough understanding of how to investigate this or any issue. Investigating physical events is a far cry from investigating spiritual events and being able to explain them.

4That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

There is a division on whom Theophilus was; some commentators and historians believe he was within the Roman Government, some believe he was in the government but this is not his real name in order to preserve him from persecution, some believe he was a fellow believer, the fact is that God simply does not reveal who he is and it does not affect the value of the gospel of Luke. However, there is one other belief that centers around the meaning of the name of Theophilus; "Lover of God". Some

contend that Luke was simply using a name that is directed to all who are “Lovers of God” as the introduction to his Gospel.

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

[\(Matthew 11:7-19; Luke 7:24-35; Luke 16:14-17\)](#)

Luke starts his Gospel with the forerunner to Christ, John the Baptist.

5There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

1 Chronicles 24:1 Now these are the divisions of the sons of Aaron. The sons of Aaron; Nadab, and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar.

Believe me when I say there is no small disagreement with in and without Christendom as to the lineage of Jesus; his mother Mary and his adopted father Joseph. I think it safe to say that Jesus is declared to be King and High Priest by God and that is all that matters. He is what God says He is and no amount of arguing is going to change that. But we will look at this verse to see if we can understand where it is going.

In the Bible there was a certainty that to be a priest you had to be from the tribe of Levi, no exceptions.

In this verse Luke establishes the bonofides of Zacharias, even though the name Abia does not appear hear. The Priesthood was divided into originally 4 courses so one Priest or group had some days off simply put. Abia he was one of the heads of the 24 courses that King David established for the Priesthood later on. It was expanded from the originally 4 courses as the needs increased at the temple for priests. When those of the Aaronic or Levitical line were expanded; Abia was of that line but he was not the father of Zacharias, but Zacharias was of that course. The point being that He was of the lineage of Amram, the father of Moses, 'Aaron and Miriam. Zacharias's wife Elisabeth was also of the same lineage, so John the Baptist pedigree is indisputably linked to the tribe of Levi through Aaron; as this verse clearly says that Elizabeth was of the daughters of Aaron.

So, if Elizabeth was of the daughters of Aaron then so would her siblings including her sister. Her sister was the mother of Mary, so Mary's mother and Elizabeth's mother were sisters, making Mary and Elizabeth cousins.

A point on Herod, he was the first non-Jewish King of Jerusalem and Judea. He claimed to be a Jew but his father was of Idumean (Edom) by birth and Herod was loyal only to Rome, giving no religion any consideration unless it helped him in some way. He

would use whatever he needed to grow in importance and recognition by the Emperor. This fulfilled a prophecy from;

Genesis 49:10 The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.

Shiloh is of course another name for the coming Messiah.

6And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. 7And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were *now* well stricken in years.

Luke make the point that not only were they of a priestly lineage, they were righteous before God. The Law was in full effect and a priest would indeed need to be in compliance. There are two types of righteous, the righteous in man's eyes and the True Righteous in God's eyes. Zechariahs and Elisabeth were both righteous in God's eyes. Righteousness not gained through works but through the Power of the Holy Spirit in belief. The same type of Righteousness that God had declared of Abraham.

Genesis 15:6 And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.

Romans 4:3 For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

So, Elizabeth and Zechariah's righteousness were not their works in the law but because they believed God. In the Old Testament if you believed God like Abraham and Zechariah's and Elizabeth you also, even though not evident yet, believed in His Son. It is that faith in Jesus Christ that grants us salvation.

They were both in advanced years and without children. Reminds us of the story of Abraham and Sarah in part. Due to the connection between who was to be the son of Zachariah and Elizabeth, it had to be of a miraculous nature. Christ Himself would be born in a miraculous way and anything connected to Him would have to be of the same nature, miraculous.

8And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, **9**According to the **custom** of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

The idea of "lots" to select various jobs came about like this.

There were a number of priests that would care for the temple; sweeping cleaning, burning incense etc. According to tradition two like priests were running up the ramp to the alter to sweep it and one pushed the other down and his leg was broken. The priests as a whole realized how dangerous it was to compete for these jobs, so they decided to do it by lot. It was through this process that Zechariah's was carrying out his task of burning incense at

the altar. According to tradition that is how each Priest was given their job in the “course”. It would change by drawing lots each time their “course” would come to perform the care of the temple.

According to Gill;

"There were four lots there, and this was the first lot (i.e. to cleanse the altar); the second lot was, who should slay (the sacrifice,) who should sprinkle (the blood), who should remove the ashes from the innermost altar, who should cleanse the candlestick, who should bring the members (or parts of the sacrifice) to the ascent of the altar----the third lot was, ye new ones, to the incense come, and "cast lots"; and the fourth, ye new ones, with the old ones, who shall bring up the parts from the ascent of the altar to the altar.

10And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

It is likely that this was the Sabbath due to a large number of people there praying. On most days aside from the Sabbath it would only be the priests carrying out their assigned tasks but on the Sabbath all the people would be present in the court praying. Praying according to Psalms was an act of sacred burning of incense; a sweet aroma to be lifted up to God.

Psalms 141:2 Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

11And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

Q. Does anyone remember where the Alter of Incense would be located in the Holy Place?

It sits just outside the Holy of Holies along with the table of Show Bread, and the Menorah.

An angel appeared to Zacharias just to the right of the table of Incense.

12And when Zacharias saw *him*, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. 13But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

It is likely that they had abandoned their prayer for a son as they entered their old age. Little did they know that God had heard their prayers from long ago and in His Timing fulfilled their request. They had prayed for a son, God heard their prayer and not only granted it but determined in advance what the name of the boy was to be. The name John or in the Hebrew

Transliteration: Yochanan

Phonetic Spelling: (yo-khaw-nawn')

Definition: Johanan

It means; Yah is Gracious, or in our vernacular God is Gracious.

14And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. 15For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

This new creation by God would bring delight to all who would be near him. God in His already not yet power had determined that John would be great in His sight. God wanted John to remain pure in his body and so no alcohol would pass his lips. God declared that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit, even in his mother's womb. How could that be, it is only a blob of tissue? Ah the evil of our generation; sorry for the political commentary.

16And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. 17And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

The focus of John the Baptist was for the coming Messiah and toward Israel and its people. There were others reported to have come to John for baptism but the focus just like Jesus was toward the Israelis.

Isaiah 40:3 The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

The part of the verse that says he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, comes from Malachi.

Malachi 4:6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

All was in preparation for the arrival of the Messiah; Jesus Christ.

18And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years. 19And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

One of the rare occasions in which an angel identifies themselves by name. Two dominate named angels of the Old and New Testament are Gabriel who appears to be a chief messenger for God and Michael the Arc Angel who appear to be a waring angel.

Gabriel tells Zacharias he is to be a father and the many things his son will accomplish in the name of God.

But where is Zacharias mind; it is of the first impossibility and that is he and Elizabeth's age. Gabriel's answer does not answer the age question, he answers the all the questions filling Zachariah's mind now by telling Zacharias who he works and speaks for and that is sufficient.

20And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

Knowing that God is everything, knows everything and can do anything; perhaps not the best question is to ask, "where shall I know this"? The better option for us when spoken to by an angel

is just nod in agreement and hold all questions. But human nature is as it is and Zacharias is of course curious about their child bearing years.

God is not without response that will confound people and that is to keep Zacharias quiet for the next 9 months. Can you imagine the frustration of knowing what you have been told by God about something so amazing and exciting as the coming of the Messiah and your son will be the one who fulfills prophesy about that momentous occasion and you can't speak.

The angel speaks for God in telling Zacharias and us, that God has a season for all things, including the times we are living in. God had a time for Israel to come back to being a nation, just like He had a time for His Son to be born; laying aside His power and becoming a man in order to save the world from sin. Like Zacharias we have a job to do;

Q. What is our job? First to be patient and carry out the great commission all in God's timing, giving Him honor and glory. We are to Love one another; we are to Forgive those who have trespassed against us and we are to extend Grace and Mercy as God has extended it to us and we are to "sin no more".

21And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

These practices had gone on for years, just like church today, people are used to various things taking place in a certain amount of time in a certain order. When things are not as usual, people generally are aware of it almost immediately. God is predictable in many things but not in all things. He is God and can-do things in any order He chooses, at any time He chooses and in any way He chooses. Our part is to be flexible in His domain as He is our God.

Q. Some of the things God is predictable in are? His Love for us. Truth, Grace, Mercy. The laws He has established in His world environment are consistent and will only change when He deems it appropriate.

22And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. 23And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

It was customary for the attending priest to come out of the Holy Place and give a short benediction; prayer for the people of Israel, but Zachariah could not speak.

Patience is one of God's precious gifts, it is one that no one really searches for but one that all believers need. We all are in anticipation of the return of Christ, that has been a hope of every generation since His Resurrection, even His disciples had hope that He would return in their lifetimes.

When Zacharia could not speak, those in attendance likely knowing Zacharia for years knew something was not normal and they were able to perceive that he had encountered an angel. The verse also says;

“for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.”

He was likely signing to them what had happened, but with out verbal confirmation they could only guess.

The days of each courses ministry was set so they would work a week of seven days then have a whatever days off were assigned.

1 Chronicles 9:25 And their brethren, which were in their villages, were to come after seven days from time to time with them.

According to Jewish culture this verse 1 Chronicles 9:25 established the length of time each course would serve.

24And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, 25Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

The information provided by Luke about perhaps the second most important birth of earth's history, simply dries up and we are transported without comment 14 months forward. The reason was; the focus was not on John but on what John was going to do and become. But that had to wait until THE event; the birth of our Lord and Savior took place.

It is interesting that Elizabeth would conceal herself for 5 months. Perhaps we can learn something from another woman who was blessed with a son that would be special.

*Judges 13: 2And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. 3And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son. 4Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and **drink not wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing:** 5For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. 6Then the woman came and told her husband, saying, A man of God came unto me, and his countenance was like the*

countenance of an angel of God, very terrible: but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name: **7**But he said unto me, Behold, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and **now drink no wine nor strong drink, neither eat any unclean thing:** for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death.

8Then Manoah intreated the LORD, and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born. **9**And God hearkened to the voice of Manoah; and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field: but Manoah her husband was not with her. **10**And the woman made haste, and ran, and shewed her husband, and said unto him, Behold, the man hath appeared unto me, that came unto me the other day. **11**And Manoah arose, and went after his wife, and came to the man, and said unto him, Art thou the man that spakest unto the woman? And he said, I am. **12**And Manoah said, Now let thy words come to pass. How shall we order the child, and how shall we do unto him? **13**And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, Of all that I said unto the woman let her beware. **14**She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine, neither let her drink wine or strong drink, nor eat any unclean thing: all that I commanded her let her observe.

15And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, I pray thee, let us detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee. **16**And the angel of the LORD said unto Manoah, **Though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread: and if thou wilt offer a burnt offering, thou must offer it unto the LORD.** For Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the LORD. **17**And Manoah said unto the angel of the LORD, What is thy name, that when thy sayings come to pass we may do thee honour? **18**And the angel of the LORD said unto him, **Why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?** **19**So Manoah took a kid with a meat offering, and offered it upon a rock unto the LORD: and the angel did wondrously; and Manoah and his wife looked on. **20**For it came to pass, when the flame went up toward

heaven from off the altar, that the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame of the altar. And Manoah and his wife looked on it, and fell on their faces to the ground.

Points of interest in this story as opposed to what happened to Elizabeth and Mary is that the angel refused to reveal his name saying it was secret. Additionally, Manoah's wife was not to drink any alcohol or eat anything that was unclean. There may be several explanations as to why she chose not to go out; perhaps it was challenging to know if any food had been mishandled making it unclean, the same could be possible with drinks; and Elizabeth wanted to ensure she would not violate God's expectations.

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

26And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

Nazareth, which is in Galilee was in the eyes of the Jews a place of idolatry, paganism and intermarriage. It started hundreds of years before this event. The land was given to Joseph, Jacob's favorite son and then divided between Ephraim and Manasseh. It was part of the Northern tribes that separated from Judah after Solomon's son became king.

The northern tribes, called Israel, at the time were conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC and dispersed. A few were left but the Assyrians forced other conquered people to move into the land

and occupy it. They brought with them their idols to worship and so the remaining Israelites joined with them not only in worshipping these false gods but intermarrying with the gentiles. This was all of course detested by those in Judea who felt they were the only ones walking with God.

The same befell Judea when Nebuchadnezzar conquered Judah and sent them into exile.

70 years later when a remnant of 43,000 were allowed to come back to Jerusalem and Judah and start to rebuild the city and temple, the folks in the norther kingdom now referred to as Samaria, as were its occupants, did not want the Jews back in Jerusalem. The hatred only continued to grow over the next 500 years so when Jesus arrived on the scene this animosity had gone on for 600 years. Some of the Samaritan's had Israeli blood due to the intermarrying. Remember the woman at the well that Jesus spoke to. She commented on why a Jew would even speak to a Samaritan woman as the hatred ran deep.

Nazareth was where Mary was and was not held in esteem by the rest of Judah.

John 7:52 They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

This was in response to questioning by the pharisees on the issue of Jesus during His ministry in Judea. Nikodemus who had gone to Jesus by night and had a conversation with Jesus recorded in John was giving a partial defense of Jesus and the Pharisees answered his defense with this verse John 7:52

27To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

From before time, God had determined that Mary would be the mother of Jesus. Before she or her parents or the earth was formed God had determined this to be so. God had a perfect timing for many reasons to bestow this immense responsibility on Mary and Joseph.

28And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, *thou that art* highly favoured, the Lord *is* with thee: blessed *art* thou among women.

Aside from the amazing tribute paid to Mary by God some churches have taken this verse to the extreme, bestowing upon Mary more than God had declared. She is not equal with Jesus according to this verse, she is not able to forgive sins as Christ is, according to this verse. Not to diminish this verse in anyway or diminish the important role Mary played in all of creation, it is what

it says, “thou are highly favored, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.”

Mary was chosen to be the vessel to carry the Lord in her womb to birth. The only woman in all of creation so chosen.

29And when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Percentage wise not many people encounter angels, less perhaps this messaging angel and few still the waring angel Michael. So the term used to describe Mary’s reaction is “troubled”. Troubled may not be what I would feel at the sight of an angel, but that is just me. The angel does broach the idea of fear in the next verse.

30And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

Isaiah 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

The entire Nation of Israel was aware of what was to come sometime, but no one ever thinks it will be in their time, let alone involve them specifically. So “troubled” may be a good word to use to describe Mary’s reaction. She undoubtedly knew of the prophesy of the Messiah; it was perhaps Israel’s greatest hope.

But remember, they were looking for a King to rid them of their oppressors.

The angel wastes no time in getting to the point of his visit. She is going to have a baby, and not any baby but THE baby that was prophesied hundreds of years before this day she heard these words. More specifics are to come.

32He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

In one sentence Mary learns she will be the mother to Messiah. He will be called the Son of the Highest; He will be given the Throne of David by God Himself. That is some pretty intense thing to consider for a young girl who is not married and has never known a man.

33And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Just to make sure she knew the depth of this baby; He would be King over the house of Jacob or in other words Israel AND He will be that King for eternity.

34Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Mary's question centers more on the methodology than the possibility. Zachariah questioned the possibility, Mary did not she only asked about how she would become pregnant without knowing a man. Petty valid question and certainly not doubting the angel's statement different from how Zachariah responded.

In other words, Mary accepted without question that she would become pregnant, her only question was how does that work?

35And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

The answer was simple, the Holy Spirit would manage all of the details of placing a seed in her womb, perhaps in the same way that God declared something or some place to be Holy due to His presence that was the premise of what was being told Mary here. Here womb would be Holy unto God with the baby that she would carry there.

The final declaration about this child was that "He would be called the Son of God."

The angel has additional Good News for Mary;

36And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37For with God nothing shall be impossible.

So Mary's cousin who was quite old is also declared to have a miracle in her own life; being pregnant.

38And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

Mary sets herself apart from Zachariah in simply accepting what has been told her by the angel as fact. Her only inquiry again was how does this take place?

Mary Visits Elizabeth

39And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;

Q. What city would Elizabeth and Zacharias live in or near?

Jerusalem

40And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. 41And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost is often called the Spirit of God. He is first mentioned in Genesis;

Genesis 1:2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The two terms “Spirit of God” and the “Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost” are, in my opinion after reading a number of studies, one in the same. Linguistics can manage to show a difference but in what the Bible says about both it is hard to distinguish a difference.

In the Old Testament there are verses that indicate the Spirit of God came upon men just as in the New Testament the Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost comes upon men. Out of curiosity is there any indication that the Spirit of God indwelled people in the Old Testament, or did it simply empower them?

In the New Testament perhaps the two most precise verses that show without a doubt the indwelling/possessing of the Holy Spirit are;

Acts 19:2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

1 Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

Now let's look at the Old Testament;

Isaiah 63:10 But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

Ezekiel 11:24 Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.

Numbers 24:2 And Balaam lifted up his eyes, and he saw Israel abiding in his tents according to their tribes; and the spirit of God came upon him.

These specific verses all indicate that the Spirit empowered or came upon various humans for a specific purpose or reacted to people's rejection, but none of these indicate an indwelling of the Spirit of God into a human being.

The most striking difference between verses I studied in the Old and New Testament is this one verse, words spoken by Christ Himself;

John 14: 15If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Jesus is so clear here, in a way we do not find in the Old Testament, but the moment He started this new phenomenon of

indwelling was at Pentecost. Since then all believers are indwelled; have the Holy Spirit living in each of them.

42And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed *art* thou among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of thy womb. 43And whence *is* this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45And blessed *is* she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

This immediate confirmation of Mary's plight recognized by Elizabeth through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was perhaps in the body of John at that moment, it is not clear. However, Elizabeth declares that her "baby leaped in my womb with joy". In studying pre-Pentecost Holy Spirit/Holy Ghost/Spirit of God verses, it is clear that prior to Pentecost the Spirit of God regardless of name ology would temporarily empower certain men. Only after Pentecost did the Spirits presence remain within the believer.

Mary's Song of Praise

(1 Samuel 2:1-11)

46And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,

47And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.

Without question we would all have to agree that Mary had the indwelling of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit was the overshadowing presence of God in her pregnancy and now the seed generated by God and placed in Mary's womb was the essence of God Himself. So, the Holy Spirit was within Mary's womb, but it would only be there for 9 months and like all other Pre-Pentecost humans, the presence of the Holy Ghost was temporary.

The point of these two verses is evident that Mary's spirit, the spirit that had been dormant from the time of Adam was stirred. It would have the ability to find new life at the resurrection of Christ, but it definitely was stirred by God's Holy presence in her. It came in the form of Joy.

48For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

As we talked about before, the entire Israeli Nation new that someday some woman of their nation would be the vessel selected by God to carry the child Messiah, and Mary knows now it is she.

49For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy *is* his name.

50And his mercy *is* on them that fear him from generation to generation.

These two verses can be declared by all Christians. Mary carried Jesus to birth, the Holy Spirit, the same one that caused this miracle also caused the miracle within each believer. To be Born Again, it is the same leap of Joy that Mary experience that each new believer experiences when that moment comes that they realize that the God of Creation has saved them from their sins and filled them with the Spirit of God for eternity.

We deserve death, but through God's Mercy and Grace He has seen fit to offer us a free gift of salvation, saving us from our sins if we will only say yes to Him.

51He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

52He hath put down the mighty from *their* seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of *his* mercy;

55As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

Mary declares a number of things that God has done for and to Israel; those within and without the Nation. The declaration covers

a number of issues but all indicate the Omniscient Power of God in all aspects of men's lives.

56And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

We were told in vs 36 that Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant when Mary came to see her. Mary stayed until it was time for Elizabeth to give birth. It is not abundantly clear if Mary stayed for the birth of John or not but the next verse may show that she did.

The Birth of John the Baptist

57Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son. 58And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

In this verse it indicates that her cousin, likely meaning Mary and the neighbors heard the story of Zacharias encounter with the angel and how Elizabeth became pregnant; how God had showed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.

Now the rejoicing could have been at distance but seeing that Luke was pretty clear on the timing of Elizabeth being 6 months along when Mary came to her and the fact that it was the most important births in history, one would lean toward the idea that Mary and Elizabeth were together when John was born.

59And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. 60And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John. 61And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. 62And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. 63And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

The time of testing has arrived, Zacharias had shown doubt to Michael the angel, when he first told him that he would become a father and it caused him his voice for 9 months. Now was the moment of truth, had Zacharias had time to think about how he had responded with doubts to the angel, had he figured it out now that all the angel had told him was coming true?

Circumcision was the law; it was the outward sign of an inward commitment to God and to be counted as one of His. In the beginning of carrying out the law and even for those who had reached adulthood, circumcision was still required. A child that was circumcised at the age of 8 days; was deemed to be the optimum time for the child to have circumcision medically speaking for male organs to be in their appropriate place.

This circumcision of the flesh was the forerunner to what God called Circumcision of the heart. Anyone can say they are a Christian, and even act like a Christian to a point, but without a

heart change; a heart fully given to Christ and the Circumcision that takes place separating spirit from flesh in the heart then claiming to be Christian is a false claim.

64And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue *loosed*, and he spake, and praised God.

Zacharias found victory in the eyes of the Lord. He spoke from his heart and verified what his wife said about the name of the child. God says the “Truth will set you free”. The truth indeed loosened Zacharias tongue, can you image what he had to tell his wife after 9 months of not speaking. Like most men he probably said something like; wow.

65And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea. 66And all they that heard *them laid them up* in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

It was obviously tradition to name the first son after the father or even in some cases grandfather. When Elizabeth declared his name to be John it is pretty clear there was a great deal of silence in the room. Those in attendance immediately turned to Zachariah who would have the final say in the matter and it was at the moment that he declared what the angel had told him that his voice was returned to him.

Zecharia's Song

67And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

Zacharias is the third person in the New Testament to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

The decree that Zacharias was here filled with the Holy Ghost leads us to two questions; Zacharias was determined to be a righteous man along with his wife early in this chapter. In this case it was possible to be righteous without the indwelling of the Holy Ghost; the answer is yes. That would be accomplished by walking in the law even though doing it in the flesh. The entire Temple was based on this, the Temple, the Law and obedience were a type of and shadow what was to come. To be righteous you had to believe God and believe in Him. That would then move you to walk according to the Law. You would sin, but there was a temporary remedy; the Law allowed for a blood sacrifice to cover that sin temporarily.

The second question is; did the Holy Ghost remain in Zacharias? We are not told the answer to that question. However, if we take the whole council of God it appears that the Holy Ghost would only remain temporarily in those whom He indwelt until Jesus

declared to the world that He would send a comforter and that was the Holy Ghost on Pentecost.

I was wondering what were the most important events Biblically speaking in time; 12 moments in time when BY GOD'S HAND EVERYTHING CHANGED!

1. God created life
2. God brought the flood
3. God's promise to Abraham
4. John was born
5. Jesus was born and lived on earth
6. Jesus was Crucified
7. Jesus rose from the dead
8. Pentecost- the indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Yet to come

9. Rapture
10. Return of Christ to earth
11. Millennium
12. Great White Throne Judgment

68Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,

Zacharias now searches his heart and looks for those things he has seen God personally do for Israel. He starts with perhaps the most important single act that not only affected Israel but the entire world; Redemption. For humans to come back into a relationship with God, individually, one person at a time. Separated from God since the fall of Adam; the first step in bringing Spiritual life back to humanity was the birth of John the Baptist.

Zacharias is declaring redemption done but we know that there were yet 32 years, (the span of Christ's life on earth) before that event would take place.

69And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

Normally the term "horn" usually speaks of power. The power spoken of here is the (power of salvation). This horn or power of Salvation is Christ himself.

70As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:

71That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

The hope of Israel and all mankind is peace. But peace is not the absence of war, peace is peace of heart the only peace that

comes from Christ indwelling us through the Holy Spirit. Israel at the time of Christ wanted a King, with power to remove the weight of Rome from their necks. They were not looking for a Savior Messiah, they were looking for a King Messiah.

The question for Zacharias and perhaps most of humanity even today is who is the enemy that hates us?

It is not the Chinese, Russians, Muslims, liberals, communists; they are just the pawns, it is the father of lies, Satan. Satan has cast such a stain upon man that man hates and sometimes does not even know why. Look at the hatred of the Northern tribes later to become Samaria against their brothers and sisters of the Tribe of Judah and vice versa. Look at the hatred today of liberals toward conservative, of non-believers against believers. It is insanity, who could cause such craziness. When hatred reaches a certain point, I believe we could call it the point of no return, then God intervenes and puts on those who hate what He calls a "Strong Delusion". I had asked that you read 1 Thessalonians 2, here is an excerpt from that book.

1 Thessalonians 2: : 9Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11And for this cause God shall send them **strong delusion,**

that they should believe a lie: [12](#)That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Satan has brought hatred to the hearts of man and man welcomed it. To some it seemed justified that they hate, because of some perceived injustice. A current day perceived injustice for those alive today would be slavery. None of us nor none of those who claim offense at slavery were ever slaves or slave owners. There are examples of slavery in every civilization on the planet. Some more dishonorable than others. Slavery can be of a righteous nature; we are to be slaves to Christ; He is our master. In today's spiritual economy we are all slaves; some to the law others to Grace, Mercy and Love. Unlike some evil slave owners of the past Jesus' is a benevolent master. He gave His life to protect those whom He loves. To Him, His slaves are His brothers and sisters.

A hatred directed at God and Christians is from the homosexual so called community. It is sin, not because I declare it so, it is sin because God judged it as sin. But for me to repeat what my God has said is now hate speech? God is trying to save any sinner including those who have chosen homosexuality. In order to save them THEY must admit that they are sinners just like you and I did. Once you admit you are a sinner the miracle of redemption is

possible for you on a one to one basis with God. He paid the price that we could be saved.

Acts 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost that made you overseers, to feed the church of God **which he hath purchased with His Own Blood.**

Romans 5:8 But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. 9 Much more then, being now justified by His Blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.

Romans 6: Read entire chapter

But only after you admit you are a sinner. Once the sin is admitted to and the redemption takes place, you must turn from you sin and follow Christ. To not do so place your redemption into question; did you really ask Christ into your heart or was it into your head. The distance from heaven to hell is about 18 inches, the distance from you head to your heat!

72To perform the mercy *promised* to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;

Only man is guilty of forgetting the Holy Covenant that God made through Abraham, Moses and again the New Covenant through Jesus. We forget; not God, He always remembers.

The original promise was to Abraham in;

Genesis 12:2 And I will make thee a great nations, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great and thou shalt be a blessing. 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

The promise involved all of mankind, how far have we fallen from the blessing how near have we come to the curse? Many people who say they walk with Christ yet look more like the world in the conversation and actions are playing a dangerous game between curses and blessing.

73The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,

Again, the perception at this time was the enemy was flesh, and Israel needed to be delivered from that fleshly enemy. There was no doubt that Rome as well as all the other conquerors had made life miserable for Israel with many being killed outright, but let's not forget that was self-imposed. They chose to worship false gods and not the God of Abraham Isaac and Jacob.

The real enemy that Jesus warned us about is not flesh and blood but spirit, evil spirit enemies that seek to devour mankind. The spirit of lust, of envy, of hatred, of addictions, of lying, stealing, covetousness etc. etc.

The real enemy uses all of these elements of life to attack people, even believers. The advantage believers have over non-believers is the ability to know who the enemy is and how to respond to him, not through the flesh but through the power of the Holy Spirit. We don't have the power to defeat this enemy, but the Holy Spirit that lives in us does have the power. I personally feel it is a mistake for us to ever "rebuke the devil" on our own; rely wholly on the Holy Spirit by asking Him to rebuke Satan.

If we walk in carnality even as believers, we handcuff the Holy Spirit in defending us. When we walk in truth and light, the Holy Spirit will guide our way, He will help us make the right decisions, decisions filled with wisdom and love, grace and mercy.

75In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.

The enemy is not of the flesh even though it can manifest using other flesh against us. Flesh that wants to destroy Christianity, hinder the Church in its mission by causing Christians to walk in carnality, not only having evil thought but carrying those evil thoughts out to the disgrace of the Church, the Body of Christ.

Holiness and righteousness can only be present when God is present. It is similar to the absence of darkness when there is total light. God asks us "What does darkness have to do with

light?” Holiness is not only the absence of evil, but the overwhelming presence of God.

76And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

Zacharias song now points toward his own son, the son that will cry in the wilderness and make straight the path for our Lord and Savior. He will with boldness, the type of boldness Jesus wants from us; and in that boldness speak the truth of God. Not for monetary gain, or for recognition but in order to carry out the Great Commission.

John was one of the greatest prophets God ever sent. Totally committed, even unto death. He was actually a cousin to Jesus and so they knew each other growing up. At what point John recognized Jesus for who He is, is not certain but when He saw Jesus walking toward where John was baptizing, John made the comment “behold the Lamb of God”. John obviously knew what the angel had told his father Zacharias and he would know what the angel told Mary, the question was, would John do what he was asked to do?

77To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,

Israel knew it needed to be forgiven, the priest knew it, they know it today, but they rejected the Messiah when He came, now they must suffer the consequences of that decision. The suffering to come will make the Germans look like child's play when the Anti-Christ attacks Israel.

People know today they need to be forgiven, but they are strong willed so much so that God has sent a "Strong delusion" upon them. It comes in many forms but always accomplishes the same goal; separate them from God. Do it with environmentalism do it with science and technology, do it with myths, do it with UFO's, with Big Foot, with lying and deceiving pastors and teacher. The goal is always the same; separate them from God. Their hatred runs deep, just like the hatred of the Samaritans and the Jews, 600 years of built up hatred, and the result; a "strong delusion" will be put upon them.

1 Thessalonians 2:3 Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; 4 Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. 5 Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things? 6 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only

*he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. **8**And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: **9**Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, **10**And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. **11**And for this cause God shall send them **strong delusion**, that they should believe a lie: **12**That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*

Satan wants separation from God for mankind and mankind in their infinite wisdom seeks redemption from all the wrong places and things. They think they are smarter than God and smarter than idiot Christians. The delusion is strong and will drive them to the end of their days on earth, then all they have is eternity, without God without hope without, Mercy and Grace. Forever in a state of terror.

78Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,

The term Dayspring is a reference to Christ, the new light of the morning as it chases darkness from before it.

God's Mercy has been extended to mankind for centuries, but to what avail, to what end; for the believer for eternity with Christ, for

the non-believer to eternity in outer darkness where there is gnashing of teeth, forever hopelessness, despair and terror.

79To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

Only light can defeat darkness, light reveals what darkness is hiding. Light causes darkness to flee. To the believer the shadow of death is meaningless, oh we mourn when loved one pass on but as believers we know if they are believers, they have reached the goal, they have persevered and are in the arms of Christ Jesus.

80And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

An entire childhood that is so quickly glossed over much like that of Christ, but it was exceptional without doubt. The key for John was to wax strong in the Spirit. That is our key as well, an entire life can be used or wasted. If used with care it generates many offspring for Jesus, if wasted, it is one of millions of carcasses that will be heaped in the darkness where there is gnashing of teeth.