

• *Mary, Elizabeth and Zacharias*

**1. It is good to have fellowship with a believing friend**

• *To talk and pray*

**2. An occasion when the Spirit came down with power upon the two friends**

• *Filled with the Spirit – different meanings at different times*

• *Special enablings*

• *A constant readiness to live for God*

• *A special enabling to worship in an inspired way*

Mary has been told of the miraculous birth that is about to take place through her. She has expressed her willingness that this should happen, and the angel has let her know that Elizabeth and Zacharias are involved in what God is doing.

1. **It is good to have fellowship with a believing friend.** Mary goes from Nazareth to a city in Judah, about 80–100 miles away <sup>☐1</sup>. It is uncertain which 'town of Judah' is the one in which Elizabeth lived. Mary wants to share her news and pray with her believing friend. John the Baptist and Jesus were part of the same forward movement of God in the history of the world. Their mothers want to pray together.

It is good to have fellowship with other believers. When they are humble, unpretentious, full of faith and of praise, it is a great help to us to talk to them and pray with them. In the days of Malachi, *'those who feared the Lord, talked to one another'*. It was specially pleasing to God. *'The Lord gave attention and heard it'* <sup>☐1</sup>.

2. **The meeting between Mary and Elizabeth was an occasion when the Spirit came down with power upon the two friends.** Mary arrives at Elizabeth's home and greets her <sup>☐1</sup> As she does so Elizabeth feels a forceful movement within her womb <sup>☐2</sup> and at that very point she receives a special filling with the Holy Spirit! God is full of wonders and surprises! There are more things in heaven and on earth than our philosophy ever dreams of! God can give physical manifestations of His presence. He can give fresh fillings of the Spirit to His people at any point. He can fill a baby with the Holy Spirit before the baby is born!

In this particular instance the filling of the Holy Spirit gives a special enabling for worship. The term 'fill' or 'filling' or 'full' of the Holy Spirit may mean different things at different times in the Bible. The term 'filling' of the Holy Spirit is not the same as the baptism with the Spirit. The word is generally used quite differently.

(i) Sometimes it refers to a special enabling <sup>☐1</sup>. In the early chapters of Luke there are several occasions when people are given special enablings by God <sup>☐2</sup>. On the day of Pentecost people were 'filled' in order to be able to speak in tongues <sup>☐3</sup>. Peter was specially 'filled' with the Spirit to be able to reply to the persecuting authorities in Jerusalem <sup>☐4</sup>. Something similar happens in <sup>☐5</sup>.

(ii) There is **another** use of the term where it refers to a constant readiness to live for God. This is what is involved when we are told to 'go on being filled with the Holy Spirit' <sup>☐1</sup> and when people are described as being 'full' of the Holy Spirit <sup>☐2</sup>. Sometimes it is hard to know whether something continuous or something special is being referred to <sup>☐3</sup>.

Here there can be little doubt. A special enabling came upon Mary in which she was specially enabled to lift up her voice in inspired song and worship. The 'filling' was a special enabling of the Holy Spirit. In this story, it was connected with the ability to worship and

<sup>☐1</sup> 1:39

<sup>☐1</sup> Malachi 3:16

<sup>☐1</sup> 1:40  
<sup>☐2</sup> 1:41

<sup>☐1</sup> Exodus 31:3

<sup>☐2</sup> 1:41, 67

<sup>☐3</sup> Acts 2:4  
<sup>☐4</sup> Acts 4:8  
<sup>☐5</sup> Acts 4:3.1; 13:9

<sup>☐1</sup> Ephesians 5:18

<sup>☐2</sup> Luke 4:1; Acts 6:3; 7:55; 11:24; 13:52

<sup>☐3</sup> Luke :15; Acts 7:55

praise God in an inspired way.

### 3. New events in the kingdom of God

• Music, worship and boldness of speech

• New songs

• Quietly righteous and inconspicuous people who know a lot about the Holy Spirit

• The Holy Spirit powerfully at work amongst humble people

3. **The new events in the kingdom of God were introduced with music, worship, and boldness of speech.** This is the way it often is in God's kingdom. The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. When God is doing something new there is always 'joy in the Holy Spirit'! It always produces new songs. Every revival, every forward step, in the kingdom of God produces new songs. 'He has put a new song in my mouth' is what the people of God say, every time He specially blesses them. Here Elizabeth is emotional and deeply moved at what is happening. She cries out with a loud voice <sup>□1</sup>. She congratulates Mary in the power of the Holy Spirit <sup>□2</sup>. She has special revelation and insight. She knows that Mary's baby will be 'my Lord' <sup>□3</sup>. When, it might be asked, did people first realise that Jesus would be the Messiah? Elizabeth knew even before He was born!

People who are not very conspicuous sometimes turn out to know a lot about the Holy Spirit. These people in the early chapters of Luke are humble, inconspicuous people. No one knew about them in Jerusalem. They are quietly 'righteous in the sight of God' <sup>□1</sup>. God is with them <sup>□2</sup>. They worship regularly at the temple <sup>□3</sup>. They know their Old Testament extremely well. Their very language is full of the Old Testament. Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55 is full of echoes of Hannah's song in 1 Samuel chapter 1. The world knew nothing about them but angels come to visit them!



It is in this humble atmosphere that the Holy Spirit is powerfully at work. The Holy Spirit is the one who will produce Mary's miracle child <sup>□1</sup>. The Holy Spirit gives them insight. Sometimes their words are full of prophetic insight. Five times in this first chapter we have reference to the Holy Spirit (1:15, 17, 35, 41, 67). Here are people who have not reached the day of Pentecost. Yet they know much of the Holy Spirit already! They have clear spiritual knowledge. Above all, they are people who know what it means to have faith in the promises of God. 'Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord' <sup>□2</sup>.

□1 1:42  
□2 1:42  
□3 1:43

□1 1:6  
□2 1:28  
□3 1:9

□1 1:35

□2 1:45

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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