

In the Spirit & Power of Elijah

In [Luke 1](#), an old priest named **Zechariah** was given an incredible message:

But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a _____, and you shall call his name _____. And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 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. And he will _____ many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, and he will go before him in the spirit and power of _____, 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." ([1:13-17](#))

What would it mean for someone to act **"in the spirit and power of Elijah"**? Maybe [1 Kings 17:1](#) would come to mind...

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to _____, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word."

...or [1 Kings 18:21](#)...

And Elijah came near to all the people and said, "How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is _____, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him."

What was the great goal of Elijah's work? What was the aim of his **"spirit and power"**?

"...that this people may know that you, O LORD, are God, and that you have _____ their hearts back." ([1 Kings 18:37](#))

John the Baptist, son of the aged Zechariah and Elizabeth, grew to serve God **"in the spirit and power of Elijah."** In [Matthew 3:2](#) he preached, "_____, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Listen carefully to what Jesus made clear in [Matthew 11:13-14](#):

"For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John, and if you are willing to accept it, he is _____ who is to come."

Just as the angel promised Zechariah, John was "great before the Lord" ([Luke 1:15](#)). **"In the spirit and power of Elijah,"** he went "before" God's Son "to make ready for the Lord a people prepared" ([1:17](#)). Recognizing John helps us see Jesus—the Lord our God—clearly.



For Class & Family Discussion:

- ▶ Zechariah and Elizabeth weren't the first couple to be promised a miraculous birth. What other couples from Biblical history come to mind and what role did their eventual children play in the unfolding of God's plan?
- ▶ Of all the places to begin, why do you think Luke begins his Gospel—a sweeping account of Jesus' life—with the birth of John?
- ▶ As John grew and began his work, passages like [Matthew 3:4](#) reveal that he wasn't like everybody else. And yet, God had promised, “he will be great before the Lord” ([Luke 1:15](#)). In what ways was he “great,” and how ought that to shape our conception of “greatness,” even today?
- ▶ Let's turn to [Luke 3](#) and read [3:1-18](#) together. How would you summarize John's message? Where do you see connections to or expressions of “the spirit and power of Elijah”?
- ▶ What is Jesus communicating in [Matthew 11:11](#)?
- ▶ Let's make sure we see clearly and fully understand the significance of what Jesus said in [Matthew 11:13-15](#). What is he saying about John the Baptist? Even more significant, what is he saying about himself by connecting the dots between Elijah and John?
- ▶ In what way did John “prepare the way of the Lord” ([Luke 3:4-6](#))?

For NEXT Sunday:

- ▶ We'll examine the prophecy of [Isaiah 7:14](#) and its fulfillment in [Matthew 1:18-25](#). What does “Immanuel” mean? Why does Matthew connect [Isaiah 7](#) to [Matthew 1](#)? In what way is Jesus the ultimate fulfillment of the name “Immanuel”?