

ADVENT 2024:
PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD!

COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
CEDAR CITY, UTAH

AN ADVENT STUDY
DECEMBER 1-DECEMBER 24

INCLUDES A WEEKLY FOCUS TEXT
AS WELL AS DAILY READINGS AND
QUESTIONS FOR READING AND REFLECTING
AND DISCERNING
ON THE READINGS OF LUKE 1.1-80
AND MALACHI 3.1-4

AND THESE HYMNS:
PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD
WILD AND LONE THE PROPHET'S VOICE
NO WIND AT THE WINDOW
WHILE WE ARE WAITING, COME

ADVENT 2024: *PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD!*
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Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed. (Luke 1.1-4)

Luke's prologue (above) is a single sentence in Greek! Theophilus is a relatively common Greek name that means "one who loves God." In ancient Greek literature, authors had patrons: some paid for the volume to be copied; other times the author dedicated the volume to the patron either in gratitude for previous aid or in hopes of new support.

Missing in this introduction is the subject of the volume. Luke's Prologue mentions neither Jesus nor the Church. Theophilus thereby becomes positioned as someone already within the Christian orbit, and so Luke's ideal reader is someone who already knows the story (like you!). [The Gospel of Luke, Amy-Jill Levine, Ben Witherington III, p 22-23]

Advent 2024 is a season of preparation for Christmas beginning on December 1st, offering the opportunity to "overhear" the promises God made regarding God's presence and presents in the world. This study will be the focus of preaching for three of the Sundays of Advent and a daily time of reflection. The texts come from Malachai and Luke. Each week features a reading from the larger Luke 1.1-80 text. There are questions on the pages sharing these weekly readings. There are also foot-note-type comments on verses in the text, along with spaces for you to make your own notes (or drawings!) based on your discerning. May you be led by the Spirit, sharing what emerges in your head and heart.

The hymns, "*Prepare The Way Of The Lord*", "*Wild And Lone The Prophet's Voice*", "*No Wind At The Window*", and "*While We Are Waiting, Come*" are additional resources for this study. "*Prepare The Way Of The Lord*" is self-explanatory, words we are familiar with from the prophet Isaiah as well as the Gospels. "*Wild And Lone The Prophet's Voice*" is one of the few hymns that speak to the witness of John the Baptist, although as an adult rather than as a newborn (a reminder that the Gospels are written from a Christian perspective). "*No Wind At The Window*" is a modern retelling of the Annunciation (Luke 1.26-38), while "*While We Are Waiting Come*" is a simple and meditative Advent hymn.

ADVENT 2024:
PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD!

Prepare The Way Of The Lord

*Prepare the way of the Lord. Prepare the way of the Lord,
and all people will see the salvation of our God.*

Wild And Lone The Prophet's Voice

*Wild and lone the prophet's voice echoes through the desert still,
calling us, to make a choice, bidding us to do God's will.
Turn from sin and be baptized; cleanse your heart and mind and soul.
Quitting all the sins you prized, yield your life to God's control.*

*Bear the fruit repentance sows: lives of justice, truth, and love.
Trust no other claim than those; set your heart on things above.
Soon the Lord will come in power, burning clean the threshing floor:
then will flames the chaff devour; wheat alone shall fill God's store.*

*With such preaching, stark and bold, John proclaimed salvation near,
and his time-less warnings hold words of hope to all who hear.
So we dare to journey on, led by faith through ways untrod,
till we come at last like John to behold the Lamb of God.*

While We Are Waiting, Come

*While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.
With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.
Come, Savior, quickly come; come, Savior, quickly come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.*

ADVENT 2024:
PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD!

No Wind At The Window

*No wind at the window, no knock on the door;
no light from the lampstand, no foot on the floor;
no dream born of tiredness, no ghost raised by fear:
just an angel and a woman and a voice in her ear.*

*O Mary, O Mary, don't hide from my face.
Be glad that you're favored and filled with God's grace.
The time for redeeming the world has begun,
and you are requested to mother God's Son.*

*This child must be born that the kingdom might come:
salvation for many, destruction for some;
both end and beginning, both message and sign;
both victor and victim, both yours and divine.*

*No payment was promised, no promises made;
no wedding was dated, no blueprint displayed.
Yet Mary, consenting to what none could guess,
replied with conviction, "Tell God I say yes."*

MALACHI 3.1-4

(Where is the God of justice?) Well, pay attention!

I am sending my messenger to prepare the way for me; the One you seek will suddenly come to the Temple, the messenger of the Covenant whom you long for will come, says YHWH. But who can endure the day of that Coming? Who can stand firm when that One appears? That day will be like a smelter's fire, a launderer's soap. The One will preside as refiner and purifier, purifying the Children of Levi, refining them like gold and silver— then they will once again make offerings to YHWH in righteousness.

Luke 1.1-80 The Inclusive Bible

1.1-25

Many others have undertaken to compile a narrative of the events which have been fulfilled among us, exactly as those happenings were passed on to us by the original eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word. I too have investigated everything carefully from the beginning, and have decided to set it down in writing for you, noble Theophilus, so that you may see how reliable the instruction was that you received.

In the days of the ruler Herod, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the priestly class of Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was a descendant of Aaron. Both were worthy in the sight of God and scrupulously observed all the commandments and observances of our God. They were childless—unable to conceive—and they were both advanced in years.

Now it was the turn of Zechariah's priestly class to serve. And as he was fulfilling his priestly office before God, it fell to him by lot, according to priestly usage, to enter the sanctuary of our God and offer incense. While the full assembly of people was praying outside at the time of day when the incense was offered, an angel of our God appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was deeply disturbed upon seeing the angel, and was overcome with fear.

The angel said to him, "Don't be frightened, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son, whom you'll name John. He will be your joy and delight and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of our God. He must never drink wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. And he will bring many of the children of Israel back to their God Most High. He will go before God as a forerunner, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the rebellious to the wisdom of the just—to make ready a people prepared for God.

Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife too is advanced in age."

The angel replied, "I am Gabriel, who stands before God. I was sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. But because you have not trusted my words, you'll be mute—unable to speak—until the day these things take place. They'll all come true in due season."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah and wondered about his delay in the sanctuary. When he finally came out he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision inside. But he could only make signs to them and remained mute. Then, when his time of priestly service was over, he went home.

Sometime later, Elizabeth conceived. She went into seclusion for five months, saying, "our God has done this for me. In these days, God has shown favor to us and taken away the disgrace of our having no children."

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What does the introduction to Luke's Gospel tell you about Luke? God?

What does the story about Zechariah and Elizabeth tell you about them?
About Luke? About God?

What question would you like to ask Zechariah? Elizabeth?

What character do you identify with in this story? How and Why (or Why Not!)?

MALACHI 3.1-4

(Where is the God of justice?) Well, pay attention!

I am sending my messenger to prepare the way for me; the One you seek will suddenly come to the Temple, the messenger of the Covenant whom you long for will come, says YHWH. But who can endure the day of that Coming? Who can stand firm when that One appears? That day will be like a smelter's fire, a launderer's soap. The One will preside as refiner and purifier, purifying the Children of Levi, refining them like gold and silver— then they will once again make offerings to YHWH in righteousness.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Malachi means "Messenger" in Hebrew. What "message" does the prophet have from God?

1.1-4 The Prologue

The inclusion of a prologue signals Luke's intention to reach an educated audience. Prologues were popular then (as now) to help set a tone.

1-2 Luke, not an eyewitness to the events, is dependent on prior written sources.

1.3 The two-volume work (Luke/Acts) is dedicated to Theophilus (Acts 1), a common name meaning "lover of God." It is likely that Theophilus was a prosperous benefactor of Luke.

1. John 20.20-31

2 Acts 1.21; 10.39; Hebrews 2.3; 1 John 1.1

3. Theophilus, an unknown Christian, perhaps of social prominence

4. John 20.31

1.5-25 Announcement of the birth of John the Baptist

The unexpected birth of John to Zechariah and Elizabeth echoes stories about infertile couples in the Hebrew Bible, particularly the story of the aging Abraham and Sarah. The historical John the Baptist was a well-known first-century Jew. Early Jesus followers believed that John's preaching and baptizing prepared the way for Jesus. For Luke, that preparatory role begins with John's conception and birth.

8 The Jerusalem temple is a pivotal site in Luke-Acts

13-20 The angelic announcement to Zechariah precedes a parallel announcement to Mary. Balancing a story about a man with a story about a woman is a characteristic Lukan technique.

13 Prayer is emphasized throughout Luke.

15 Priests (Leviticus 10.9) and nazirites (Numbers 6.2-4) were expected to abstain from alcohol. "Filled with the Holy Spirit": Luke associates the Spirit with prophecy, a major theme in Luke-Acts. John is a prophet even before his birth.

19 Gabriel, a divine messenger

5. Herod the Great reigned 37-4 B.C. (until the time of his death)
The priestly order of Abijah: there were twenty-four priestly orders of which Abijah's was the eighth.
- 8-9 2 Chronicles 31.2; Exodus 30.1, 6-8
- 14-17 Canticle in honor of John
- 15 Numbers 6.1-4; Luke 7.33
- 17 He will go before him, that is, he will be the forerunner of the Messiah
Malachi 4.5-6; Matthew 11.14
- 19 Daniel 8.16, 9.21
- 22 He could not speak: he was unable to pronounce the priestly blessing for which the people were waiting.
- 25 Among the Jews barrenness was regarded as a sign of divine disfavor and therefore a disgrace. Genesis 30.23; 1 Samuel 1.1-18; Psalm 128.3

FEEL FREE TO USE THIS SPACE AS YOU DESIRE AND ARE LED!

Verse references in bold-face type from The Westminster Study Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Updated Edition (Westminster John Knox Press, 2024)

Verse references in non-bold-face type from The New Oxford Annotated Bible, New Revised Standard Version (Oxford University Press, 1991, 1994)

Week 1: December 1-7 Luke 1.8-20

Now it was the turn of Zechariah's priestly class to serve. And as he was fulfilling his priestly office before God, it fell to him by lot, according to priestly usage, to enter the sanctuary of our God and offer incense. While the full assembly of people was praying outside at the time of day when the incense was offered, an angel of our God appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. Zechariah was deeply disturbed upon seeing the angel, and was overcome with fear. the angel said to him,

"Don't be frightened, Zechariah. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear a son, whom you'll name John. He will be your joy and delight and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of our God. He must never drink wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit from his mother's womb. And he will bring many of the children of Israel back to their God Most High. He will go before God as a forerunner, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of parents to their children, and the rebellious to the wisdom of the just—to make ready a people prepared for God."

Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man, and my wife too is advanced in age."

The angel replied, "I am Gabriel, who stands before God. I was sent to speak to you and bring you this good news. But because you have not trusted my words, you'll be mute—unable to speak—until the day these things take place. They'll all come true in due season."

Sunday: Zechariah was a priest, and thus a member of a group, or a "class", by virtue of his ancestry. Do you belong to any groups or organizations from your ancestry?

Monday: Zechariah becomes the priest to offer prayers for the people of God by chance (there were more priests than days, so they cast lots for who would be selected). Have you ever been selected for something by chance?

Tuesday: An angel (Gabriel) appears to Zechariah. When has an angel appeared to you?

Wednesday: How was your impending birth announced in your family?

Thursday: The child is not only named, but given a job description. Did your family have an anticipated "job description" for you?

Friday: Zechariah questions Gabriel. What would you have asked him were you Zechariah?

Saturday: How do you respond to Gabriel's reason for causing Zechariah to become mute? What impact would this have on his ability to serve as a priest?

BECAUSE OF SPACING NEEDS IN THIS ADVENT STUDY
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FEEL FREE TO USE THIS SPACE AS YOU DESIRE AND ARE LED!

Six months later, the angel *Gabriel* was sent from *God* to a town in *Galilee* called *Nazareth*, to a young woman named *Mary*; she was engaged to a man named *Joseph*, of the house of *David*. Upon arriving, the angel said to *Mary*, "Rejoice, highly favored one! *God* is with you! Blessed are you among women!"

Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel's greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, "Don't be afraid, *Mary*. You have found favor with *God*. You'll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name *Jesus*—'Deliverance.' His dignity will be great, and he will be called the *Only Begotten of God*. *God* will give *Jesus* the judgment seat of *David*, his ancestor, to rule over the house of *Jacob* forever, and his reign will never end.

Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have never been with a man?"

The angel answered her, "The *Holy Spirit* will come upon you, and the power of the *Most High* will overshadow you—hence the offspring to be born will be called the *Holy One of God*. Know too that *Elizabeth*, your kinswoman, has conceived a child late in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with *God*."

Mary said, "I am the servant of *God*. Let it be done to me as you say."

With that, the angel left her.

Within a few days *Mary* set out and hurried to the hill country to a town of *Judah*, where she entered *Zechariah's* house and greeted *Elizabeth*.

As soon as *Elizabeth* heard *Mary's* greeting, the child leaped in her womb and *Elizabeth* was filled with the *Holy Spirit*. In a loud voice she exclaimed, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why am I so favored, that the mother of the *Messiah* should come to me? The moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who believed that what our *God* said to her would be accomplished!"

Mary said:

*"My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.
For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant,
and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed.
For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name.
Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you.
You have shown strength with your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;
you have dropped the mighty from their thrones
and raised the lowly to high places.
You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of Israel your servant,
mindful of your mercy—
the promise you made to our ancestors—
to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever."*

Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

What does this part of the story say about God? About Luke? About Mary?

What is different about Mary's response than Zechariah's? Why might this be?

Why do you think Luke models Mary's song on Hannah's song?

Joseph is not an active participant in Luke's story (compare Matthew 1.18-25). Mary is the primary person, Elizabeth is a companion. Your thoughts on the emphasis on women? Why might Luke compose the story this way?

What human needs/desires are found in this text?

Luke 1.26-56 The Inclusive Bible

- 1.26-42 The birth of Jesus is foretold (the Annunciation)
- 27 **The identification of Mary as a virgin emphasizes the role of the Spirit in Jesus' conception.**
- 32 **Those who love their enemies are also said to be "children of the Most High" Luke 6.35. "God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David": Mary's son will be the Davidic Messiah**
- 34 **"How can this be?" Because she has not been sexually active, Mary is puzzled by the angel's announcement.**
- 35 **Ancient readers would have been familiar with stories about human women impregnated by Greek and Roman gods.**
- 38 **"The servant of God", literally "the slave of God". The Hebrew Bible names a number of important figures as "slaves of (the LORD)," and deities. "Let it be done to me as you say": while some readers are disturbed by Mary's self-identification as an enslaved woman, others are inspired by her agency in questioning the angel before asserting consent.**
- 26 In the sixth month, after the conception of John the Baptist
- 31 Jesus, the Greek form of the Hebrew Joshua
- 33 Matthew 28.18; Daniel 2.44
- 42 Luke 11.27-28
- 1.39-56 Mary's Visit to Elizabeth: a rare scriptural encounter between two women.
- 41 **"The child leaped in her womb": Even before birth, John serves as a forerunner to Jesus. "Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit": Elizabeth is empowered to speak prophetically.**
- 1.46-55 The "Magnificat", so called from the first word of the Latin translation, is based largely on Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2.1-10. **Mary praises God for reversing the fortunes of rich and poor, powerful and oppressed, a central Lukan theme (6.20-26)**
- 47 I Timothy 2.3; Titus 3.4; Jude 25
- 55 Genesis 17.7, 18.18, 22.17; Micah 7.20

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Week 2: December 8-14 Luke 1.8-38

Six months later, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a young woman named Mary; she was engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. Upon arriving, the angel said to Mary, "Rejoice, highly favored one! God is with you! Blessed are you among women!"

Mary was deeply troubled by these words and wondered what the angel's greeting meant. The angel went on to say to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God. You'll conceive and bear a son, and give him the name Jesus—'Deliverance.' His dignity will be great, and he will be called the Only Begotten of God. God will give Jesus the judgment seat of David, his ancestor, to rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his reign will never end.

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The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you—hence the offspring to be born will be called the Holy One of God. Know too that Elizabeth, your kinswoman, has conceived a child late in her old age; she who was thought to be infertile is now in her sixth month. Nothing is impossible with God."

Mary said, "I am the servant of God. Let it be done to me as you say."

Sunday: Gabriel goes to visit Mary in Nazareth. How do you imagine Gabriel's appearance?

Monday: What do you make of Gabriel's greeting to Mary? How might you have felt if you were Mary? Remember, Mary is a young woman.

Tuesday: What is the translation in the Bible you most often used of the description of Mary being "deeply troubled by these words"?

Wednesday: "Mary wondered what the angel's greeting meant." If you were Mary, what would you be wondering? What have you pondered/wondered regarding God?

Thursday: Once again, the birth is foretold and the child is named and given a job description. Have you ever been called to embody an act of deliverance?

Friday: Mary is concerned that she is not yet married. However, she is engaged, part of the two-part process of legal marriage for Jews in that day. How formal/informal was your engagement process if you have been a part of one?

Saturday: Gabriel references Elizabeth as an indication that the promise being extended to both of them is of God. Are you surprised at Mary's response?

Week 3: December 15-21 Luke 1.46-55

Mary said:

*"My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.
For you have looked with favor upon your lowly servant,
and from this day forward all generations will call me blessed.
For you, the Almighty, have done great things for me, and holy is your Name.
Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you.
You have shown strength with your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;
you have dropped the mighty from their thrones
and raised the lowly to high places.
You have filled the hungry with good things,
while you have sent the rich away empty.
You have come to the aid of Israel your servant,
mindful of your mercy—
the promise you made to our ancestors—
to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever."*

Sunday: This is known as Mary's Song. What words/phrases strike your eye?

Monday: This "song" is similar to Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2.1-10. Read that today. How are they similar/different?

Tuesday: What "great things" can you imagine Mary acknowledging that God has done for her? What "great things" are you able to acknowledge as God's gifts to you?

Wednesday: Mary reflects how God's mercy is felt by those who trust (fear) God. How have you experienced God's mercy in your own life?

Thursday: The song references how some have been humbled by God. How has God humbled you? How has it deepened your relationship with God?

Friday: The song references how some have been raised to high places by God. What is a "high place" in your life that you have been privileged to experience from God?

Saturday: How does Mary understand her role as helping to fulfill God's "promise..made to (Mary's) ancestors"?

Luke 1.57-80 The Inclusive Bible

When the time came for Elizabeth to deliver, she gave birth to a son. When her neighbors and relatives heard that God had been merciful to her, they shared her joy. When all had assembled for the circumcision on the eighth day, they intended to name the baby after his father Zechariah.

But his mother spoke up, "No, he is to be called John."

They pointed out to her, "But no one in your family has this name." Then they made signs to the father to find out what he wanted the child to be named.

The father asked for a writing tablet and wrote, "His name is John."

They were all astonished.

Immediately Zechariah's mouth was opened and his tongue was loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. Their neighbors were all filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea, people were talking about these events. All who heard the news stored in in their hearts and said, "What will this child turn out to be?" For God's hand was with him.

Zechariah, John's father, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

*"Blessed are you, the Most High God of Israel—
for you have visited and redeemed your people.
You have raised up a mighty savior for us of the house of David,
as you promised through the mouths of your holy ones,
the prophets of ancient times:
salvation from our enemies and from the hands of all our foes.
You have shown mercy to our ancestors by remembering
the holy covenant you made with them, the oath you swore to Sarah and Abraham,
granting that we, delivered from the hands of our enemies,
might serve you without fear, in holiness and justice,
in your presence all our days.*

*And you, my child, will be called the prophet of the Most High
for you'll go before our God to prepare the way for the Promised One,
giving people the knowledge of salvation through forgiveness of their sins.
Such is the tender mercy of our God, who from high
will bring Rising Sun to visit us,
to give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death
and to guide our feet into the way of peace."*

In the meantime, the child grew up and became strong in spirit. He lived out in the desert until the day he appeared openly in Israel.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Compare 1.24 with 1.58. What has changed in Elizabeth? Who had said it would?

What does this portion of the story say about God? About Luke? About John's parents?
What role does the naming aspect of the story play? How did you come by your name? Did anyone disagree with the choice, have a different idea?

What strikes you about Zechariah's Song, "The Benedictus": "Blessed Be"?

This text contains strong feelings: joy/astonish(ment); What's behind the feelings?

The child is to be named. Did family members have differences regarding your name?

Why do you think Zechariah's mouth is opened once again at this point in the story?

1.57-80 The Birth of John the Baptist

59 **"When all had assembled for the circumcision on the eighth day": Zechariah and Elizabeth are depicted as Torah (Law)-observant Jews.**

Leviticus 12.3; Genesis 17.12; Luke 2.21

63 See 1.13

65 Awe (also rendered "fear" indicates recognition of the limits of human understanding and power before God

Luke 2.9. 7.16; Acts 2.43, 46-47, 5.5, 5.11; 19.17

1.67-79 The "Benedictus," so called from the first word in the Latin translation. **Zechariah's song emphasizes continuity with the ancestors and prophets of Israel and the role of John in preparing Jesus' way.**

69 a mighty savior, one who will bring salvation

Psalm 18.1-3; 92.10-11; 132.17-18

76 Malachi 4.5; Luke 7.26

77 Mark 1.4

78 the "rising sun" will be when God fulfills his purpose to bless humankind

Malachi 4.2; Ephesians 5.14

79 Isaiah 9.2; Matthew 4.16; Luke 4.18

80 These words cover a period of approximately thirty years.

The day he appeared openly, Luke 3.2, 3

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Week 4: December 22-24 Luke 1.67-79

Zechariah, John's father, was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

*"Blessed are you, the Most High God of Israel—
for you have visited and redeemed your people.
You have raised up a mighty savior for us of the house of David,
as you promised through the mouths of your holy ones,
the prophets of ancient times:
salvation from our enemies and from the hands of all our foes.
You have shown mercy to our ancestors by remembering
the holy covenant you made with them, the oath you swore to Sarah and Abraham,
granting that we, delivered from the hands of our enemies,
might serve you without fear, in holiness and justice,
in your presence all our days.
And you, my child, will be called the prophet of the Most High
for you'll go before our God to prepare the way for the Promised One,
giving people the knowledge of salvation through forgiveness of their sins.
Such is the tender mercy of our God, who from high
will bring Rising Sun to visit us,
to give light to those who live in darkness and the shadow of death
and to guide our feet into the way of peace."*

Sunday: Zechariah's prayer/song is about remembering the past. What out of your past are you remembering this Advent/Christmas season?

Monday: Zechariah's prayer/song is about the future. What are you imagining regarding your future as 2024 winds down and you look to 2025?

Tuesday: *While We Are Waiting, Come*

*While we are waiting, come; while we are waiting, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.
With power and glory, come; with power and glory, come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.
Come, Savior, quickly come; come, Savior, quickly come.
Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel, while we are waiting, come.*

How has your "waiting" been during this Advent Season? How challenging or comforting?

How would you like *Jesus, our Lord, Emmanuel* to enter your life this Christmas?

ADVENT IS PAST...
THE SEASON OF CHRISTMAS BEGUN!

MAY THIS ADVENT STUDY HAVE HELPED YOU
PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD IN YOUR LIFE
WELCOMING THE PRESENCE AND PRESENTS

OF THE LORD:

HOPE

PEACE

JOY

AND

LOVE OF GOD

IN JESUS **THIS** CHRISTMAS SEASON...
MAY YOU ENJOY A BLESSED CHRISTMAS
AND A BOUNTIFUL NEW YEAR IN 2025!!