

# WORD

WITH PS IAN WONG

*Advent and waiting*

Luke 1:5-25, 57-79

**Advent is a season of  
looking forward to the  
coming of Christ!**

**It is also a season of waiting**

**Why are things like this?**

**How long more?**

**Will the promise be fulfilled?**

**When will my answer come?**

**I. The people were waiting**

When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

**Luke 1:5-7**

# What happened before this?

- 1010BC King David rules over Israel
- 586BC Babylonians destroy Jerusalem/temple, Jews exiled
- 538BC Israel under Persian empire
- 333BC Alexander the Great rules over his empire
- 323BC Alexander the Great dies, enter Seleucid kingdom
- 171BC Antiochus Epiphanes desecrates temple, resulting in Maccabean revolt
- 63BC Romans take over power, Herod installed as King

1. The people were waiting
2. Zechariah was waiting

When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron. Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

Luke 1:5-7

1. Both Zechariah and Elizabeth were from priestly heritage

2. Both were said to be righteous

3. They had no children, and were already very old.



- 1. The people were waiting**
- 2. Zechariah was waiting**
- 3. God was waiting**

**“Look, I am sending you the prophet Elijah before the great and dreadful day of the LORD arrives. His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers. Otherwise I will come and strike the land with a curse.”**

**Mal 4:5-6**

**But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.**

**Gal 4:4-5**

- 1. The Fall of Adam and Eve**
- 2. Wait 2000 years**
- 3. The Call of Abraham**
- 4. Wait 500 years**
- 5. Giving the Law to Moses at Mt. Sinai**
- 6. Wait 1500 Years**
- 7. Ministry of Jesus**
- 8. Wait 2000+ Years**
- 9. (in the Future) The Second Coming of Jesus**
- 10. The New Heavens and New Earth**

**How to respond while waiting?**

**I. The timing of waiting on God  
shows God is perfect**

One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him.

Luke 1:8-12

This might be the only time in Zechariah's life to do this duty. Maybe waited his whole life for this moment.

God waited in his life for this moment to appear to him.

But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. **He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah.** He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will **turn the hearts of the fathers to their children**, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.”

Luke 1:13-17



- 1. The timing of waiting on God shows God is perfect**
- 2. The testing of waiting on God refines us**

**Zechariah asked the angel, “How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years.”**

**Luke 1:18-22**

Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years." Then the angel said, "I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! But now, **since you didn't believe what I said,** you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time."

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of the sanctuary, wondering why he was taking so long. When he finally did come out, he couldn't speak to them. Then they realized from his gestures and his silence that he must have seen a vision in the sanctuary.

Luke 1:18-22

**We may have waited very long,  
even our whole lives. But when  
God moves, are we ready to  
believe? Advent is a reminder to  
get ready to welcome God.**

- 1. The timing of waiting on God shows God is perfect**
- 2. The testing of waiting on God refines us**
- 3. The result of waiting on God is faith in God and fulfilment of God's promises**

When it was time for Elizabeth's baby to be born, she gave birth to a son. And when her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had been very merciful to her, everyone rejoiced with her.

When the baby was eight days old, they all came for the circumcision ceremony. They wanted to name him Zechariah, after his father. But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John!" "What?" they exclaimed. "There is no one in all your family by that name." **So they used gestures to ask the baby's father what he wanted to name him.** He motioned for a writing tablet, and to everyone's surprise he wrote, "His name is John." Instantly Zechariah could speak again, and he began praising God.

Luke 1:57-64

**Awe fell upon the whole neighborhood**, and the news of what had happened spread throughout the Judean hills. Everyone who heard about it reflected on these events and asked, **“What will this child turn out to be?”** For the hand of the Lord was surely upon him in a special way.

**Luke 1:65-66**

**Zechariah had 9 months to wait in silence, unable to speak and hear.**

**Out of his season of silence, this was his declaration**



“And you, my little son,  
will be called the prophet of the Most High,  
because you will **prepare the way for the Lord**.  
You will tell his people how to find salvation  
through forgiveness of their sins.

Because of God’s tender mercy,  
the morning light from heaven is about to break upon us,  
**to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow  
of death**, and to guide us to the path of peace.”

**Luke 1:76-79**

**In the fulfilment of God's promise to Zechariah for a long awaited son, it also resulted in the fulfilment of God's promise to Israel — A prophet to announce the coming of their long awaited Messiah**

# In this advent season

Let us wait for the Lord

More than our loving capacity, what is our longing capacity?  
What is our capacity to come before the Lord when He takes  
a long time to answer our prayers?

Are we ready in the day of this visitation to obey?  
Has waiting made us dull and lacking faith?  
As we wait on God, what would He have us “believe”?

# **In this advent season**

**Let us wait for the Lord**

- 1. What is one area of longing that we have been waiting on the Lord that needs a new lease of hope and faith?**
- 2. How has the Lord been refining us in our seasons of waiting and “delay”? Do we experience His tender care and encouragement to us?**
- 3. In the fulfilment of His promises to us, are we ready to testify to what God has done?**