

PREPARE THE WAY OF THE LORD

SERMON NOTES

Week 1 December 1, 2024

“A People Prepared for the Lord”

Malachi 4:5-6; Luke 1:6, 8-10, 13, 17; Psalm 92:14

I. Introduction - Advent

- A. During the 4-week season called _____, we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Christ and preparing our hearts for Christ’s second coming.
- B. In the same way the ancient world sent messengers into cities to announce the coming of a ruler, John the Baptist was the messenger sent to _____ the people for the arrival of the long-awaited messianic king.
- C. The 4th-century church decided the 4 weeks leading up to the Christ-Mass, or birth of Jesus, was to be a time of _____.

II. Prophecy and The Annunciation

- A. The earliest Christians, including Jesus, believed that John the Baptist was the prophesized _____ that was to come.
- B. According to the Angel _____, John’s task is to be the one foretold by Malachi.

III. God and Prayer

- A. When God chose parents to bring someone into the world for a special purpose or a prophet, he chose people who were wrestling with _____.
- B. God hears every single _____ you pray.
- C. There are times _____ prayers shape our lives.

IV. Never Too Old

- A. In the Bible, we find that God chooses and uses _____ people.
- B. The most profound work that God may do in your life might be the work that happens in your _____ years of life.
- C. We are called to become like John the Baptist: instruments of God’s _____.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *December 2-7, 2024*

INTRODUCTION

Advent is a 4-week season of preparation. John the Baptist was the messenger sent to prepare the people for the arrival of the long-awaited messianic king. What lessons can we learn about preparing ourselves for the celebration of Jesus' birth and preparing our hearts for his second coming from the events surrounding the birth of John the Baptist?

Monday: Luke 1:5-20

We find this reaction several times in the Advent story: "When Zechariah saw the angel, he was startled and overcome with fear" (verse 12, CEB). Zechariah's fear made it hard for him to find hope in the angel's "good news" (verse 19). Yet the angel's first words were, "Don't be afraid, Zechariah" (verse 13). "Don't be afraid" is the most common command that God and God's messengers give in the Bible. This Advent season, in what part(s) of life do you most need to take in the message, "Do not be afraid"?

Tuesday: Luke 1:21-25

Luke's story was no "once upon a time" tale. It was about real people and places, which he said he'd verified with eyewitnesses (cf. Luke 1:1-4). He tied the story to the reign of specific rulers (cf. Luke 1:5, 2:1-2). Does it help you to trust Luke's story that he referred to names and dates that people in his day could easily have verified? Why or why not?

Wednesday: Genesis 18:1-15, 21:1-7

Genesis said 25 years passed after God promised Abraham that he would make him a great nation until the birth of the son who was the first link in making that promise real. Are there divine promises you are waiting for because they aren't happening right now? Can you live with hope that, in the end, God's promises will prove true (even if differently than you can picture now), as they did for Sarah, Abraham, Zechariah and Elizabeth?

Thursday: Judges 13:1-14

A Nazirite was dedicated to living a life according to promises like those in Numbers 6:1-21. When Samson grew up, he refused to abide by many of those promises, and limited his impact for good. After a 20-year career, Judges summed up his work by saying, "He killed more people [Israel's enemies] in his death than he did during his life" (Judges 16:30, CEB). What choices can you make to give your life a better epitaph than that?

Friday: 1 Samuel 1:9-20, 2:1-10

Hannah's song said "those who stumbled are armed with strength... those who were hungry are hungry no more... The Lord... raises the poor from the dust." Jesus, whose arrival John the Baptist announced, was born, not in a palace, but in an animal shelter. How can you as a Christ-follower more fully live into God's attitude toward material wealth and poverty?

MOVING FORWARD

We learned from the Angel Gabriel that God heard the prayers of Zechariah and Elizabeth about their struggles with not having a child. Just like Zechariah and Elizabeth, God hears all of our prayers too. And just like Zechariah and Elizabeth, God calls people to work for his purpose regardless of how old you are. This week ask yourself: "What breaks my heart and what can I do about it?" This may be where God wants to use you to become an instrument of hope.

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) Advent, B) prepare, C) preparation. IIA) Elijah, B) Gabriel. IIIA) infertility, B) prayer, C) unanswered. IVA) older, B) last, C) hope.