

Most of us make preparations for an important upcoming event. Whether it's a school test, a critical presentation, or an impactful lesson plan, we prepare so we can be at our best. Many of you are making preparations for travel or the arrival of guests this Christmas.

In Luke Chapter 1, we learn of the preparations that Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph made for the arrival of Jesus.

How are you preparing yourself for Christ's return?

Getting To Know You

Have you ever been surprised by a pop quiz, forgot a test, or been surprised by company?

How did it feel?

What is the largest event you have ever helped to plan?

In what capacity did you serve: planner, music, food, decor, transportation, etc?

Into the Bible

1. An angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah who had been chosen to enter the temple and burn incense. Through his duty there, how was he prepared to receive this "good news" for a son to be born to him and Elizabeth?

In their waiting, how had God prepared them for his favor now?

Was it worth the wait? _____

What does the passage say in vs 13-14,16-17, and 25?

"But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth.'" [Luke 1:13-14]

"And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. It is he who will go as a forerunner before Him in the spirit and power of

Elijah, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS BACK TO THE CHILDREN, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." [Luke 1:16-17]

"This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men." [Luke 1:25]

2. Many of us "wait anxiously" for things. What does Philippians 4:6-7 teach us?

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

3. How do you see the joy in Mary and Elizabeth's visit? _____

What are the blessings they receive in the waiting, the plans, and the preparation ?

What part does the Holy Spirit play in their understanding and reception of this amazing plan?

4. In Matthew 3:1-3, what does John the Baptist tell Israel they must do to prepare the Christ's coming?

"Now in those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS: MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!'"
 [Matt. 3:1-3]

As he quoted Isaiah 40:3, what do you think it means to make "straight paths?"

"A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God." [Is. 40:3]

Taking It Home

1. How are you preparing your heart for this Christmas season, and, more importantly, for Christ's return?

2. In what circumstance of your life do you need to trust, obey, serve, and pray to God in order to come to a place of acceptance, peace, and purpose?

"Prepare for the Lord"

[Luke 1:5-45]

"...to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." [Luke 1:17]

Zechariah and Elizabeth. [Luke 1:5-25]

T _____

"...both of them were upright in the sight of God..." [Luke 1:6]

Are you trusting in Jesus?

O _____

"...both of them...observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly." [Luke 1:6]

Are you obeying God's Word?

S _____

"[Zechariah] was on duty and he was serving as priest before God." [Luke 1:8]

"But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." [1 Peter 2:9]

Are you on duty for God?

P _____

"all the assembled worshipers were praying outside." [Luke 1:9]

"Don't be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard." [Luke 1:13]

Are you a praying person?

Mary. [Luke 1:26-45]

Mary accepted her P _____: God's S _____

"I am the Lord's servant." [Luke 1:38]

Mary accepted her P _____: God's W _____

"May it be to me as you have said." [Luke 1:38]

"Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished." [Luke 1:45]

"For nothing is impossible with God." [Luke 1:37]