

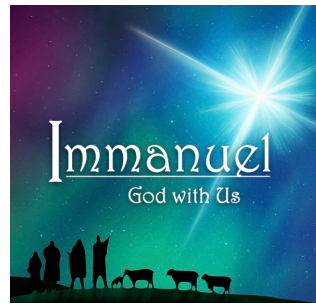
SEQUOIA NOTES

Today's Sequoia Message...

God with Us in Our Waiting

With Shawn Woods

December 7, 2025



Luke 1:5-25 (NLT): 5 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. 6 Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations. 7 They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old. 8 One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. 9 As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. 10 While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

11 While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. 12 Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. 13 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. 14 You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, 15 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. 16 And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. 17 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." 18 Zechariah said to the angel, "How can I be sure this will happen? I'm an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years." 19 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! 20 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."

21 Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of the sanctuary, wondering why he was taking so long. 22 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. 23 When Zechariah's week of service in the Temple was over, he returned home. 24 Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months. 25 "How kind the Lord is!" she exclaimed. "He has taken away my disgrace of having no children."

What are you waiting for today?

Malachi 4:6: 6 "His preaching will turn the hearts of fathers to their children, and the hearts of children to their fathers."

- **God is on a mission to heal our "barrenness" and give voice to the marginalized and distressed.**

Luke 4:18-19 (adapted) "The Spirit of the Lord is upon you, for he has anointed you to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent you to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD's favour has come".

Big Idea: Trust God in your barrenness.

- **You can trust God's heart even when you can't trace His hand.**
- **Share about your season of waiting, your "barrenness".**
- **Pray for one another and remind each other about God's mission to heal the whole world of its barrenness.**
- **Ask God how he might be inviting you to practically work for the Kingdom of God this Christmas season.**



**Sequoia Impact Communities are where we
live out our identity as a
Family of Servants on Mission.**
To get plugged in email:
impactcommunities@sequoiachurch.org

**God with Us in our Waiting
#1 of 4 - December 7, 2025**

Context

- 1) What do you notice about the cultural, political, and spiritual environment Israel was living in during Luke 1? How might this have shaped their experience of waiting?
- 2) How would the long history of Israel's captivity and their expectation of a "new Exodus" influence how people heard the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth?

Observation

- 3) What stands out to you about Zechariah and Elizabeth's character and posture in their long season of waiting?
- 4) What details in the story emphasize God's initiative—His timing, His presence, and His action?
- 5) How does Zechariah initially respond to the angel's message? What does this reveal about the human struggle to believe good news after disappointment?

Meaning

- 6) What does this passage teach us about the nature of biblical waiting? How is waiting portrayed as part of God's redemptive process rather than wasted time?
- 7) In what ways does the story of John's promised birth reveal God's heart toward the marginalized, the barren, and those who feel forgotten?
- 8) How does this story help us understand the larger Gospel theme that God comes to heal the world's "barrenness"?

Application

- 9) Where do you personally feel "barren" or in a season of waiting? How is God inviting you to trust Him in that place?
- 10) What would it look like for you to "wait well," as Zechariah and Elizabeth did—showing up faithfully, staying prayerful, and keeping hope alive?
- 11) How might God be inviting you to bring good news, healing, or encouragement to others who are waiting this Christmas season?



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