

ADVENT (The End of Waiting)

Andy Deane · 12/17/2023 · Luke 1:57-79

All advent season we've been talking about waiting well, but when does all this waiting come to an end? For some, if the goal is Christmas morning, it ends on that day. For others the focus is on waiting for a difficulty to end, or to see loved ones again in heaven, or it's a longing for Jesus to come fix all of this world's injustice once and for all.

The END OF WAITING will come when the fruit is ripe.

Luke 1:57-66, 57 When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy. 59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, 60 but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John." 61 They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name." 62 Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. 63 He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. 65 All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. 66 Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

- Look at how patient God is. He could have used angels to prepare the way for His Son, or just adults, but instead, he calls a child who waits 9 months in the womb, then all of childhood, before he starts ministry.
- The best things take time: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness & self-control.
- Fruit can only grow one way: slowly. *John 15:5, I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*
- The spiritual fruit God wants to bless you with only grows in the unique circumstances & timing God determines.

The END OF WAITING is better when it's a surprise.

Luke 1:67-75, 67 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: 68 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come to his people and redeemed them. 69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David 70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), 71 salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us— 72 to show mercy to our ancestors and to remember his holy covenant, 73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham: 74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies, and to enable us to serve him without fear 75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

- What did Israel want after 400 years of silence? For God to speak to them!
- Can you guess what Israel wanted based on their history? Freedom from the nations who ruled over them!
- Yet it's almost like Zechariah is previewing for people that God will give us a new way to deal with our enemies.
- When God finally speaks what do they get? The captivity of the Romans continues despite the Messiah arriving.
- Instead of Jesus using his influence to overthrow Romans, He uses it to teach them to: *turn the other cheek; go the second mile; love your enemies; do good to those who hate you; bless those who curse you...*
- They are told that their sin and satan are actually their worst enemies.
- That's not what they wanted to hear, so they crucified Him.
- Is it possible that the desire we hope for isn't actually the most important thing we need from God now?
- When we pray, "God speak!" We can be like those we read about, and only accept the answer we want. Or we can have an open mind, and open Bible, and let God actually speak to us.

The END OF WAITING is a joy if we're working toward it.

Luke 1:76-79, 76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, 77 to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, 78 because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven 79 to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

- Zechariah now speaks to His child and basically says: you will work for God.
- What a great use of a life. To serve the Lord in His mission!
- Matthew 11:8-11, ...*what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you." Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.*
- You are called to a similar mission as John. The only difference, you are better equipped than him: You have the Spirit in you; you have example of Jesus; and you know the end of the story.
- Christmas morning will be a much better arrival waited for, if it's worked for first:
 - Work this week to carve out margin for quiet moments with God.
 - Work this week to focus your mind on why Jesus came on that first advent.
 - Work this week to shine the light of Christ to others and help us pack this place Sunday by inviting neighbors.
- The end of waiting will only truly happen at second advent of Jesus when He returns.

THIS WEEK: READ THROUGH THESE 15 BIBLE VERSES ON THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS:

- Acts 1:10-11, *They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go..."*
- Revelation 22:20, *He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.*
- Hebrews 9:28, *so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.*
- Matthew 24:42-44, *"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.*
- 1 John 2:28, *And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.*
- 2 Peter 3:10, *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.*
- Hebrews 10:24-25, *And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*
- Philippians 1:6, *being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.*
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever.*
- John 14:1-3, *"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.*
- Titus 2:13, *while we wait for the blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God & Savior, Jesus Christ*
- Colossians 3:4, *When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*
- Matthew 16:27, *For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.*
- James 5:7, *Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains.*
- Luke 18:8, *I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"*