



**Growth Group Questions**  
**December 21, 2025**  
**“Come Thou Long Expected Jesus”**

**SCRIPTURE**

**Luke 1:8-18**

<sup>8</sup>Once when Zechariah's division was on duty and he was serving as priest before God, <sup>9</sup>he was chosen by lot, according to the custom of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the Lord and burn incense. <sup>10</sup>And when the time for the burning of incense came, all the assembled worshipers were praying outside.

<sup>11</sup>Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. <sup>12</sup>When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. <sup>13</sup>But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. <sup>14</sup>He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, <sup>15</sup>for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. <sup>16</sup>He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup>And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”

<sup>18</sup>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 1:67-79**

<sup>67</sup>His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

<sup>68</sup>“Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,  
because he has come to his people and redeemed them.

<sup>69</sup>He has raised up a horn<sup>[a]</sup> of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David

<sup>70</sup>(as he said through his holy prophets of long ago),

<sup>71</sup> salvation from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us—  
<sup>72</sup> to show mercy to our ancestors  
and to remember his holy covenant,  
<sup>73</sup> the oath he swore to our father Abraham:  
<sup>74</sup> to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,  
and to enable us to serve him without fear  
<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.  
<sup>76</sup> 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,  
<sup>77</sup> to give his people the knowledge of salvation  
through the forgiveness of their sins,  
<sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God,  
by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven  
<sup>79</sup> to shine on those living in darkness  
and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the path of peace.”

#### **Malachi 4:4-6**

<sup>4</sup> “Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel. <sup>5</sup> “See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. <sup>6</sup> He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction.”

#### **Matthew 11:2-6**

<sup>2</sup> When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples <sup>3</sup> to ask him, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?” <sup>4</sup> Jesus replied, “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: <sup>5</sup> The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy<sup>[a]</sup> are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. <sup>6</sup> Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.”

#### **QUESTIONS**

1. In Luke 1:18, we see that Zechariah had doubts about what the angel of the Lord told him about Elizabeth bearing a son. In Matthew 11:2-3, we see that John had doubts about whether or not Jesus was truly the Messiah. Are you ever tempted to doubt your faith? If so, what helps you deal with your doubts?
2. How does Zechariah’s song in Luke 1:67-79 encourage you to trust God’s timing and promises, even when things don’t happen on the timetable you would like?
3. In Luke 1:67-75, Zechariah praises the Lord for several reasons. Which of these reasons resonate the most with you? Why?

4. Zechariah rejoiced in song at John's birth because of God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises. During this week of Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, how can we best rejoice at God's faithfulness?
5. How does Malachi 4:4-6 serve as a powerful transition between the Old Testament and the New Testament and the coming of Jesus?
6. Pastor Paul spoke about the tension between the manger and the cross that we feel during Advent. What do you think he meant by this? How would you describe this tension?
7. In Matthew 11:4, Jesus responds to John's question "Are you the one?" by telling John's disciples to report to him what they have seen Jesus do. What evidence of God's work in your life or in the lives of others can you point to when you or others struggle with faith?
8. Pastor Paul said that while we wait for God to "fix" all the problems we may see in the world, we need to be more intentional about recognizing the small points of reconciliation and restoration that happen around us. How do you think we can best do this?

#### **PASTOR PAUL'S SERMON QUESTIONS**

1. Where might God be restoring something you thought was beyond repair?
2. As you sing "Come Now Long Expected Jesus," what fear, sin or burden do you need to release so you can find rest in Jesus?