

The Journey

Daily Readings Week 3

Continue the Journey to Bethlehem by reflecting on these scriptures as you prepare for Christ's birth.

MONDAY 12.13.21 Luke 1:1-4

Like other ancient history writers, Luke began his narrative about Jesus with a formal Greek prologue. In it, he told us several important things. He said his writing was the result of careful investigation. He told Theophilus, and us, what his primary sources of information were—"those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses."

TUESDAY 12.14.21 Luke 1:5-25

Zechariah was one of approximately 20,000 priests. To be chosen by lot to burn incense in the Temple was a privilege that might come only once in his lifetime. Like Abraham and Sarah, he and Elizabeth were elderly and childless. But Gabriel was God's messenger to bring them news of an astounding, unexpected change in their lives.

WEDNESDAY 12.15.21 Luke 1:39-56

When Gabriel told Mary she would bear the Messiah, he vouched for the truth of his words by saying that Elizabeth was also pregnant. Much remains unspoken in this passage. It seems likely that Mary, facing distrust and disapproval in Nazareth, yearned to be with a woman who could understand her experience. In any case, she went to Judea (several days' journey), to see Elizabeth.

THURSDAY 12.16.21 1 Samuel 2:1-11

Long before Elizabeth and Mary, a childless Hebrew woman named Hannah prayed for a child. When God heard her prayer and gave her a son, she dedicated him to God's service. He was the great Israelite leader and prophet Samuel. Then she offered this psalm in honor of God, a poetic prayer much like Mary's expression of praise when she met Elizabeth.

FRIDAY 12.17.21 Luke 1:57-66

When Elizabeth's son was born, her neighbors and relatives shared her joy. Her joy was even greater because many believed childlessness was a sign of God's disapproval. Now she felt God had finally lifted the cloud she had lived under. When they named the baby John as the angel had said (Luke 1:13), Zechariah was able to speak again.

SATURDAY 12.18.21 Luke 1:67-80

Zechariah's joyous words about his new son were more than just fatherly pride. God's messenger had said John would "turn many people in Israel back to their God...herald God's arrival in the style and strength of Elijah...kindle devout understanding among hardened skeptics...get the people ready for God." (Luke 1:17, The Message) Now the aged priest sang with hope of "the path of peace" God was opening for all people.