

# Advent: A Savior for All People

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Week 1

# Be Prepared

By Mark Mitchell



Text: [Luke 1:1–25](#)

Topic: [How to prepare for Christmas](#)

**Big Idea:** [God is able to step into our lives and bring joy and blessing where there has been disgrace and disappointment, but are we prepared to receive it?](#)

## **Illustration:**

Most of us have heard of Billy Graham. Since the 1950s, Dr. Graham has conducted hundreds of evangelistic crusades throughout the world. Most of us have seen him preach on TV; we've seen how thousands walk the aisle in that moment of decision.

But what few of us realize is the amount of preparation that goes in to bringing Billy Graham to a city. Only after extensive research is a crusade placed on the calendar, and that's most often done years in advance. And then Graham representatives come to the city and begin to work in the community months in advance. They put in countless hours promoting the crusade. Thousands of counselors are trained. Hundreds of prayer meetings are held. All this takes place because they believe that, without preparation, the event itself will fail. It's no different with Christmas. In order for the event of Christmas to be successful, there has to be some preparation.

Some of us may have written off Christmas. Maybe it brings up too many old issues for us. Maybe we're sick of the commercialization of it all. Maybe we're the kind of Christian who feels like every day ought to be a celebration of the birth of Christ, so why make such a big deal out of December 25?

I can identify with some of those feelings. But I'm not ready to give up on Christmas. I'm not ready to give up on it because, as creatures bound in time and

space, we need real time and space markers in our lives that remind us of the great events that define our faith. But I also believe that, if our Christmas is to be spiritually successful, we're going to have to fight for it. And the way to do that is through preparation.

That's why we talk about this strange thing called Advent starting four weeks prior to Christmas. Advent is all about preparation. Sometimes we forget that, before God sent his Son into the world, he saw to it that the way was prepared. Jesus arrived on the scene only after 400 years of silence from God—preparation. He arrived only after numerous people were visited by an angel named Gabriel—preparation. God even saw fit to prepare the way for his Son by sending a man named John to call people to repentance. God is into preparation.

This morning, we're starting a study of the Gospel of Luke. The Gospel writer who focuses most on preparation is Luke. I wonder why that is. Maybe it was because he was a physician. We all know the amount of preparation it takes to become a doctor. Or maybe it had something to do with the purpose of his writing. Luke was a prolific writer. He wrote more of the New Testament than anyone else, including Paul!

Luke tells us of his purpose in the opening of his Gospel:

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus; so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught (Luke 1:1–4).

Luke's purpose is that a man named Theophilus would know the exact truth about the things he'd been taught; specifically, the truth about Jesus Christ. Theophilus was probably a Gentile who had become a Christian, and Luke wants him to get the straight scoop. Luke himself was a Gentile who had never seen Jesus, but he took the accounts of those who were eyewitnesses of Christ. He investigated everything carefully, and laid it all out in logical order. It was a two volume work: Volume 1 is his gospel; Volume 2 is the Book of Acts.

In a day and age of best-selling books on lost gospels, it's good to know that someone—a very well-educated, thorough researcher—did his homework. And so, in keeping with his purpose, Luke carefully chronicles what happened before Christ was born. It was all about preparation for the coming of Christ.

### **Elizabeth and Zechariah were in need of a blessing.**

I want to ask you this morning, are you prepared for Christmas? I don't mean do you have your tree up, or have you done your shopping. But are you really prepared? Are you prepared for the arrival of God's Son? You might wonder how you do that. How do you really prepare for Christmas? Luke helps us here, too. He helps us by telling the story of an old Jewish priest and his wife. We're introduced to this couple in verse 5–7:

In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth.