

Scripture and Background Information for November 25-December 1

This week will prepare us for the coming Christmas season by looking at the story of John the Baptist who prepared the way for Christ. To prepare for discussion each week, group members should use the **Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page. You will notice that we are continuing the pattern of your discussing scripture *after* the Sunday message on that passage.

Background for Luke 1:76-79

John the Baptist prepared the way for the coming Christ, and his father, Zechariah prepared a way for John. As we should do today, Zechariah sings a song of praise that tells all those around him of the time of hope that will soon come.

Chapter one begins with the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Though we cannot be certain if Mary and Elizabeth were cousins, we do know that they were related. And we do know that John and Jesus while still in the womb had a unique relationship (v41).

An elderly Zechariah was visited by an angel and told that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son. Because Zechariah doubted the angel that told him this message, he was made mute for the duration of his wife's pregnancy. However, when Zechariah's son was born, and he followed the angel's instruction to name him John, Zechariah was soon able to speak. He immediately began to sing praise to God empowered by the Holy Spirit and he announced his son, John the Baptist, as the one who would prepare the way for Jesus and the hope that he would bring.

Luke 1:76-79 is just a small part of Zechariah's praise, but his words remind us that the hope of God's promised deliverance is contagious and it is meant to be shared.

Here are the Scriptures for group discussion for this series:

December 2-8

Isaiah 9:1-3

December 9-15

Luke 2:8-11, 13-14

December 16-22

Matthew 2:1-2, 9-11

December 23-29

John 3:16-21