

© Come All Ye Faithful



*Are You Ready for
Christmas?*



1. Zechariah & Elizabeth Needed a Blessing



When Herod was king of Judea, there was a Jewish priest named Zechariah. He was a member of the priestly order of Abijah, and his wife, Elizabeth, was also from the priestly line of Aaron.

(Luke 1:5-7, NLT)



1. They Needed a Blessing

Zechariah and Elizabeth were righteous in God's eyes, careful to obey all of the Lord's commandments and regulations.

They had no children because Elizabeth was unable to conceive, and they were both very old.

(Luke 1:5-7, NLT)



But God showed how much
he loved us by having Christ
die for us, even though we
were sinful.

(Romans 5:8, CEV)



2. God Blessed Them When the Time Was Right



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One day Zechariah was serving God in the Temple, for his order was on duty that week. As was the custom of the priests, he was chosen by lot to enter the sanctuary of the Lord and burn incense. While the incense was being burned, a great crowd stood outside, praying.

(Luke 1:8–10, NLT)



While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him.

(Luke 1:11–14, NLT)



But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord.

(Luke 1:11–14, NLT)



2. God Blessed Them When the Time was Right



It's a waste of
energy to pressure
God, ourselves and
others.



...for there is a time and a way for everything, even when a person is in trouble.

(Ecclesiastes 8:6, NLT)



3. The Blessing Didn't Come the Way They Expected



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“He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God.”

(Luke 1:15-17, NLT)



3. The Blessing Didn't Come the Way They Expected

“He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will cause those who are rebellious to accept the wisdom of the godly.”

(Luke 1:15–17, NLT)



“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 1:18, NLT)



Then the angel said, “I am Gabriel! I stand in the very presence of God. It was He who sent me to bring you this good news!”

(Luke 1:19-22, NLT)



3. The Blessing Didn't Come the Way They Expected

“But now, since you didn’t believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time.”

(Luke 1:19–22, NLT)



3. The Blessing Didn't Come the Way They Expected

Meanwhile, the people were waiting for Zechariah to come out of the sanctuary, wondering why he was taking so long. When he finally did come out, he couldn't speak to them. Then they realized from his gestures and his silence that he must have seen a vision in the sanctuary.

(Luke 1:19–22, NLT)



3. The Blessing Didn't Come the Way They Expected

When Zechariah's week of service in the Temple was over, he returned home. Soon afterward his wife, Elizabeth, became pregnant and went into seclusion for five months.

(Luke 1:23-25, NLT)



She said, “The Lord
has done this for me.
He has removed my
public disgrace.”

(Luke 1:23-25, NLT)



People who aren't
spiritual can't receive
these truths from God's
Spirit.

(1 Cor. 2:14, NLT)



Underestimating God is
just as sinful as rebelling
against God.
It's a form of blasphemy.



3. The Blessing Didn't Come the Way They Expected

Faith isn't just something
we exercise to get into
God's family.



Faith isn't just something
we exercise to get into
God's family.

*Faith is evidence that we
belong to God's family.*



It's possible that Zechariah
was secretly disappointed
with God, but afraid to
admit it.
That caused doubt.



Are you ready for
God to change you
in unexpected
ways?



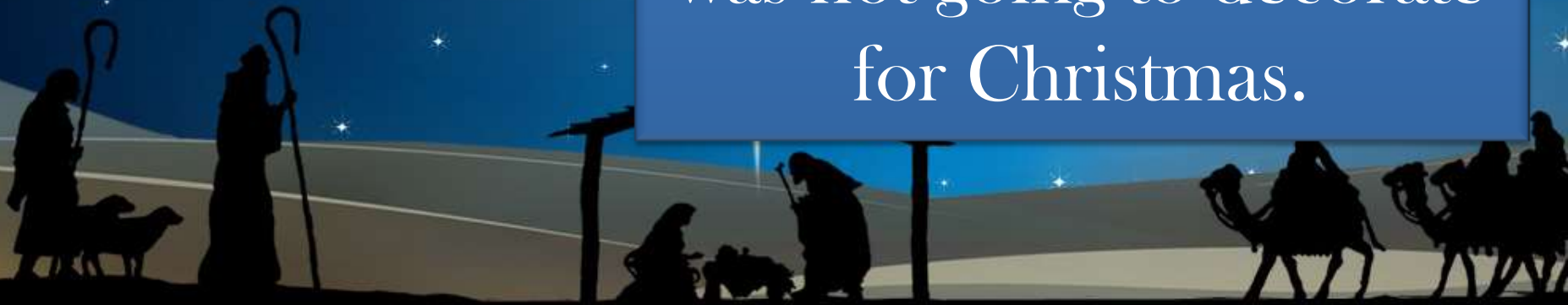


James Dobson



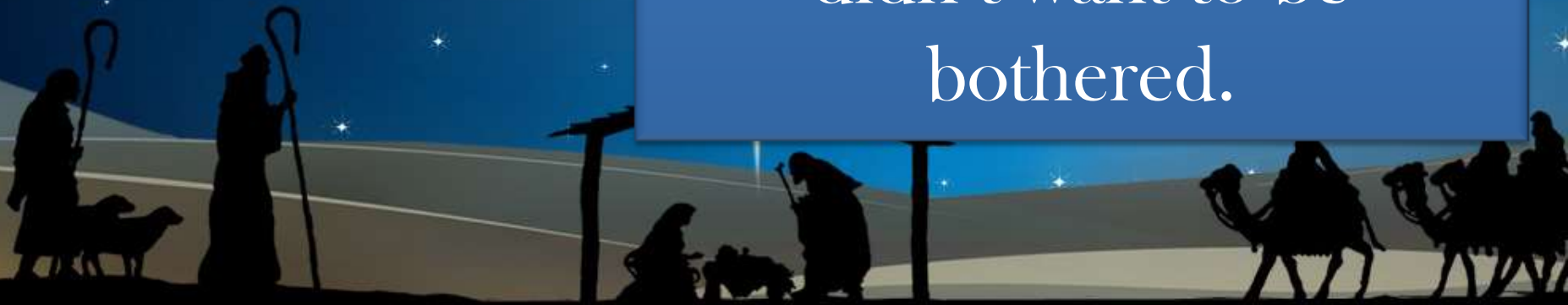


Sara Thornhope was struggling with her first Christmas alone. Her husband had died of cancer just a month earlier. Now, days before Christmas, she felt terribly alone. She decided she was not going to decorate for Christmas.





Late that afternoon, the doorbell rang, and there was a delivery man with a box. Inside the box was a 2 month old puppy. The puppy was cute but when Sarah saw him she was frustrated. She really didn't want to be bothered.





“Who sent this?” she asked impatiently. The young man handed her an envelope, and said: “It’s all explained here in this letter, ma’am. The dog was bought last summer while its mother was still pregnant. It was meant to be a Christmas gift for you.”





Sara opened the letter and
saw familiar handwriting.
It was from her husband
and read,

*"Dear Sara, I know this is
your first Christmas without me
and thought you might like some
company. Waiting for you in the
arms of Christ..."*

*Love Always,
Doug."*





Sara thanked the
delivery man, took the
puppy in her arms and
together they got the
Christmas decorations
out of the closet.

James Dobson, Focus on the Family, 2007



When we were utterly
helpless, Christ came at
just the right time and died
for us sinners.

(Romans 5:6, NLT)



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