

Faculty Work Comprehensive List

12-10-2015

Waiting for His Plan to Unfold

Leah A. Zuidema

Dordt College, leah.zuidema@dordt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty_work



Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Zuidema, L. A. (2015). Waiting for His Plan to Unfold. Retrieved from https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty_work/405

This Blog Post is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Collections @ Dordt. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Work Comprehensive List by an authorized administrator of Digital Collections @ Dordt. For more information, please contact ingrid.mulder@dordt.edu.

Waiting for His Plan to Unfold

Abstract

"During Advent, our focus is supposed to be on waiting for the Lord and what he will do. This season of the church year is a time to 'wait for God's plan to unfold' to borrow words from Psalm 106:13."

Posting about Luke's account of the first Advent from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/waiting-for-his-plan-to-unfold/>

Keywords

In All Things, Advent, waiting, scripture, Elizabeth, Zechariah

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Waiting for His Plan to Unfold

 [all in allthings.org/waiting-for-his-plan-to-unfold/](https://allinallthings.org/waiting-for-his-plan-to-unfold/)

Leah Zuidema

This is post 11 of 11 in the series “*Advent Devotions*”

1. [Advent: The Messy Preparation](#)
2. [Preparing, Advent and Psalm 51](#)
3. [Advent: Clearing a Path for Christmas](#)
4. [Advent: Ring the Bells that Still Can Ring](#)
5. [Preparing: Be Filled](#)
6. [Through Generations](#)
7. [Advent: Waiting](#)
8. [Advent: Lessons in Waiting](#)
9. [John the Baptist and Advent](#)
10. [Moses](#)
11. [Waiting for His Plan to Unfold](#)

“*But they soon forgot what he had done
and did not wait for his plan to unfold.*” – *Psalm 106:13*

In the gospel of Luke, we read a slow and ponderous account about the first Advent. Luke’s book doesn’t start with Jesus’ birth; nor does it start with his mother Mary. Luke doesn’t even begin with the prophet who prepared people for Jesus. Rather, the story opens with a close-up on Zechariah and Elizabeth, the elderly parents of John the Baptist.

Imagine Luke the author taking a rough draft of his manuscript to writing class. What kind of comments might his professor give? As someone who taught many writing students, I imagine something along these lines:

Luke, you give a lot of backstory at the beginning. But after a few chapters, all of the attention is on Jesus. Is it really necessary to start with Zechariah and Elizabeth? Maybe you should begin in the middle of the action, or at least with the relationship between John and Jesus. Too many character can distract from the main plot and confuse your readers.

The problem with this scenario, as I am sure you’ve already noticed, is that Luke’s book isn’t just any book. His gospel is a canonical biblical text, a portion of God’s infallible and inspired word. It is Scripture, “God-breathed” ([II Timothy 3:16](#)). Clearly, any “problems” with the opening chapters of Luke are not with the writing. Instead, we need to reconsider our reading.

Let’s look more carefully at the opening scene. Is the focus really on Zechariah and Elizabeth? These two certainly catch our attention, especially as we learn that their son will “be filled with the Holy Spirit even

before he is born" (1:15) and will "make ready a people prepared for the Lord" (1:17).

But notice Elizabeth's words at the end of the passage. Her exclamations are not about the angel, her husband, her pregnancy in old age, or even her son. In [Luke 1:24-25](#), we read:

*After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. **"The Lord has done this for me,"** she said. **"In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."***

By recording Elizabeth's outburst of praise and placing it prominently at the end of this scene, the author Luke shines a spotlight. He directs where our focus should be as we read this gospel: on what the Lord has done.

During Advent, our focus is supposed to be on waiting for the Lord and what he will do. This season of the church year is a time to "wait for God's plan to unfold," to borrow words from [Psalm 106:13](#).

Our tendency is to rush ahead from Advent to Christmas, just as we want to speed past "the backstory" of Luke 1 and into Luke 2, the story of Jesus' birth. Sometimes we act as though life would be better if we had a fast-forward button to get us to the most exciting highlights. But when we rush ahead, we miss the chance to notice the main event: God, at work!

The Lord is surely at work today. How are you waiting for his plan to unfold?