

In Between

December 29th - January 3rd, 2026

Monday Dec. 29th, 2026

Scripture - Luke 2:27-32 And he (Simeon) came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law, then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Now Lord, You are releasing your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of salvation for the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel."

Observation - Joseph and Mary were bringing Jesus to the temple on the eighth day after birth for the purification/circumcision/naming rite as prescribed.

Narrative: - Scripture states Simeon was righteous and devout, and tradition has it that Simeon was most likely an old man nearing death by the time he saw and blessed Jesus at the temple. Tradition also has it that after having a dream in which the Holy Spirit told him he would see the Messiah before his death, that he went to the temple each day in anticipation of it.

Question: Out of joy and anticipation, for what or for whom would you show up every day of your life?

Tuesday Dec. 30th, 2026

Scripture – Luke 2:39-40 When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. And as the child grew to maturity, he was filled with wisdom; and God's favor was with him.

Observation: Following having Jesus circumcised in the temple on the eighth day as the law prescribed, the family returned to their hometown, even though they had the stain/reputation/mark against them of Jesus being "adopted" (not being Joseph's son) upon them.

Narrative: The last sentence alludes to the concept, if not in reality, that as one grows to maturity, there is a filling of wisdom through life's experiences.

Question: What would you say are the most important areas of your life in which wisdom has increased over the years?

Wednesday Dec. 31st, 2026

Scripture – John 1:1-3 In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him.

Observation: Right out of the gate, the writer of John is proclaiming the main point of the gospel > that Jesus was God and therefore in and of existence from the beginning.

Narrative: At that time (estimated 90-95 AD) the debate over the nature of Jesus had begun; was Jesus human, divine, or both; the biggest challenge of that time and for some time to come would be the claim that Jesus was only human or Jesus was only Divine. While canonically, the debate has been settled as an issue of faith, faith in this instance demands all people of every generation to question, grapple with, pray, and come to their own conclusions.

Question: Where are you presently at in your faith journey concerning Jesus: the humanity, the divinity, or consubstantiality (of the same substance or essence) with the Father of Jesus?

Thursday Jan. 1st, 2026

Scripture – Luke 2:16-18 So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds said to them.

Observation: The angel visiting the shepherds while they were in the fields is one way that the author of Luke symbolically gives us foresight into Jesus' life and ministry to come; Jesus would appeal to people engaged in their regular activities of life >> and they would be astonished and inspired.

Narrative: It is much easier for Jesus to be astonishing and inspirational within the ritual, music, and worship of congregational celebrations >> much more challenging within the daily grind and activities of life when at times there seems to be so much more going on and to be disillusioned by.

Question: How do you keep the inspiration of Jesus alive in your life beyond your participation in the congregational life of a worshiping community?

Friday Jan. 2nd, 2026

John 1:19-23 This was the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He declared, he did not deny but declared, 'I am not the Christ.' So they asked, 'Then are you Elijah?' He replied, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So he said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: A voice of one that cries in the desert: Prepare a way for the Lord. Make his paths straight!'

Observation: It was somewhat natural for the leaders to ask if he (John, the baptizer) was Elijah since he had some of the same trademarks > wearing a leather belt and in some translations clothed in camel's hair. The Isaiah reference is from chapter 40:3 >> roughly written it is thought just before or during the early stages of the exile to Babylon.

Narrative: It is quite common if not natural, when presented with the unknown, to try to get a handle on it, categorize it, or associate it with a known entity >> a slippery slope sometimes ending in convenient stereotypes.

Question: What are some of the common stereotypes in our culture that you find most commonly used and inappropriate, if not disgusting?

Saturday Jan. 3rd, 2026

John 1:34 I (John, the baptizer) have seen and I testify that he is the Chosen One of God.

Observation: The author of John, most interested in portraying Jesus as God, makes this very explicit not only in the first verses of the gospel, but also through John the Baptist.

Narrative: "Seeing" or knowing of the importance of Jesus is one thing, but "testifying" to his divinity is its natural but much more challenging next step.

Question: Was testifying to the relevance of Jesus in your life and for others, whether in word or deed, a challenging next step for you? In what ways HAVE you testified?