

## Advent Songs

### The Angels' Song

*Adore*

*Scripture Reading & Candle: Klingenberg Family - PRAY*

#### **4MIN**

- Out of all the various parts and characters of the story of the first Christmas in Luke 1-2, I think the scene you just heard is the most well-known section.

- Whether someone goes to church or not, is a Christian or not, most people at least know the basic parts of this scene.

- In the Christmas classic, "A Charlie Brown Christmas", the main point of the movie is when Charlie Brown, after pursuing many different options, cries out, "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?!?"

- Then wise Linus (**LINUS PIC 1**), *with his blanket in hand*, steps up, "I can tell you what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown." – then goes on to recite Luke 2:8-14.

- Linus isn't wrong; this is what Christmas is about. But these familiar words are not meant to be merely sentimental or nostalgic.

- If that's all they are to us, while they might be some of the most familiar words from Luke 2, they can also be some of the least considered words from Luke 2.

- As we continue learning about why Jesus came from the songs we find throughout the story of Luke 1-2, today we come to the angels' song.

- **Jesus came to secure our peace.** – *walk the path of 3 phrases the angels say in this famous scene that lead us to this truth: fear not...behold...peace.*

## 6MIN

### "FEAR NOT"

- Luke describes the scene in a way that should lead us to imagine ourselves there: **Luke 2:8**
  - Think about what this would look like in a field outside the small town of Bethlehem
  - See: stars in the sky, sheep scattered across the field, a band of shepherds caring for them
  - Hear: mostly quiet with the occasional sheep noise
  - Smell: not like your favorite Christmas candle, some unpleasant smells
- A night just like any other night, but it's about to become a night *unlike* any other night! **Luke 2:9**
  - The night completely changes at this point
  - No longer is it just the shepherds and their sheep in the field, an angel of the Lord is with them
  - No longer is it a dark night with some faint light from the stars, the bright and blinding glory of the Lord envelops them
  - No longer are they calm, just waiting for the night to pass, they are terrified!
- The first words that the angel speaks to the shepherds are, "Fear not!"
  - Some of same first words the angel spoke to Zechariah (1:13) and Mary (1:30)
  - I don't think the shepherds are afraid just because something out of the ordinary is happening; throughout the Bible, people always feel fear when they experience the holy presence of God – even an angel that came from His presence
- Same experience since Genesis 3, Adam and Eve disobeyed, hid from His presence, "I was *afraid*"
  - ~~Even fear we feel in coming to church sometimes can be connected to this reason~~
  - This kind of fear was not supposed to be a part of our lives, but it is because all of us are born with a broken relationship with God. Not because of God's doing, but because of our rebellion.
- Not about the fear of the dark or fear of heights, deeper than that – we fear rejection, we fear the future, we fear other people, we fear death
  - We've been tricked by the lies of sin to think that our fear can be fixed by control, that the opposite of fear is control; but that's not true; 'fear not!' – the opposite of fear is peace
- *Because **Jesus came to secure our peace**, the angels are going to turn the shepherds' attention (and ours!) from fear to peace...*

## 6MIN

### "BEHOLD"

- There's a word just after the angel says "Fear not" that may be removed from your translation because it's an old word, but it's in the original language and is important for the shepherds and for us

- Luke 2:10a, "Fear not, for *behold*..."

- 'Behold' means look, pay attention

- The angel is saying: Don't fear. Look! Don't be afraid. Pay attention!

- Through the angel, the Lord is turning our attention away from fear and to what He is accomplishing through the arrival of Jesus

- Here's why there is no need for the shepherds to fear: Luke 2:10

- Good news – same word we get the word 'gospel' from; "I bring you a gospel of great joy!"

- In the ancient world, a gospel was often the announcement of a new government. When a new king took over a country, messengers would spread around the kingdom proclaiming the gospel of a new King, the good news of a new ruler.

- Exactly what the angel describes: Luke 2:11 – this is the good news God sends to the shepherds through the angel

- 3 key words: Savior, Christ/Messiah, Lord

- Savior is what Jesus came *to do*, Christ/Messiah the Lord is *who He is*. As we've seen the past 2 weeks, this moment was all the promises of God through the ages finally coming true!

- But how can the shepherds know this long-awaited day is finally here? A sign! Luke 2:12

- If you're familiar with these verses, this might not hit you as an unexpected sign, but it is. God's people have been waiting for centuries for the Savior/Messiah to arrive, and now he's here and the way you know he's here is when you see...a baby; this sign doesn't shout King/Savior/Lord!

- Angel of *the Lord*...glory of *the Lord*...now this baby is announced as Christ *the Lord*

- Salvation they didn't expect announced in a way they didn't expect to a group of people they didn't expect, yet all this is why fear no longer has power in our lives and in this world! Fear not...behold

- His reign will defeat the source of all fears: sin/evil. We don't have to fear rejection/future/people/death anymore – King has arrived, Savior is here, the Lord has come!

- God is not only inviting the shepherds to behold/look; He is inviting you and I as well! Look away from your fears and look to Jesus, from your worries and look to Jesus, from your sin to Jesus...peace

## 6MIN

### "PEACE"

- After the angel announces the good news (the greatest news!), a whole choir of angels joins in with a joyful response to this message: **Luke 2:13-14**
  - As if the shepherds' night wasn't already incredible, it now gets even better!
  - They are surrounded by a heavenly choir singing out in praise to God for who He is and how He has acted to rescue His people.
- The angels sing about 2 truths in 2 different places: in heaven and on earth
- Heaven: "*Glory to God in the highest*" – to give glory to someone means to give them the honor their reputation deserves; what the angels are doing and calling us to do
  - The angels praise God because Jesus' birth reveals God's love, holiness, mercy, and power!
- Earth: "*...and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased.*"
  - In this phrase the angels are declaring that those who receive the salvation this newborn King will bring also receive peace with God.
- In the Bible, peace is not about a worry-free life or a calm life, but peace between God and people
  - This boy that was born will be the Mediator between us and God. He would go on to live, die, and rise again so that we can enjoy peace with God.
  - **Isaiah 9:6** – prince of peace, **Micah 5:5a** – He shall be their peace, **Romans 5:1** – we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
  - "God and sinner reconciled"
- Why it's true that **Jesus came to secure our peace**. Real peace. True peace. Eternal peace.
  - We can try to find peace in other places, but it will never last. We can try to find peace through having a lot of money or a relationship with another person. We can try to find peace through good deeds or religious activity. We can try to find peace through pleasure or a passion. But only God can give us peace.
  - When the eternal One stepped into time, when the Creator stepped into creation, when the holy One stepped into our brokenness, our peace was secured.
- Christmas means that because of Jesus peace with God is available; you simply have to come to Him.

## 2MIN

- Not meant to sound like an equation or formula, but the song of the angels leads us along a path: fear not – behold – peace.

- Even Linus' well-known speech in "A Charlie Brown Christmas" leads us along this path

- Not original to me, but when Linus is quoting Luke 2 to tell Charlie Brown what Christmas is all about, something interesting happens. The boy who is known for always having his security blanket, when he gets to the angels' words, "Fear not", he drops the blanket.

- **Linus Pic 2** – Charles Schultz drew it this way on purpose. So simple but so powerful. Shows us that Jesus came to save us from our fear, to save us from all the dead-end paths we've walked down to try to find peace, and to lead us to trust Him, cling to Him.

- You can't go from fear not to peace on your own; you have to behold the Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

### *Transition to Lord's Supper*

- Why shepherds? I think it is to serve as a reminder of who the OT promised the Messiah would be.

- **Micah 5:2,4-5**

- Would come to shepherd His people, find the lost sheep (sinners like us) and lead us home

- How? Jesus in John 10: I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd *lays down His life* for His sheep.

- **Colossians 1:19-20** – '...making peace by the blood of His cross.'

- For those who have turned from pursuing peace other places and trusted Christ, baptism

- You will never find peace by looking in your own hands; only His hands – hands that, as a baby, reached for his mother's nose when she put her face close to his, hands that, as a boy, handled wood and tools as he helped his dad in his workshop, hands that, as a man, touched a man with leprosy and healed him, hands that put mud over a blind man's eyes and restored his sight, hands that were stretched out on the cross with nails driven into them.

- Let's enjoy His peace as we celebrate the supper. Glory to God in the highest!

### *Behold The Lamb*

## CUP & BREAD

### *Hark the Herald + Sending: Cam (Gather and Go)*

- *Instructions for Vote*

*CUT OUT:*

- Shepherds: This connection may bring Jesus's identity as the long-awaited Davidic heir to the forefront. Recall that David was a shepherd from Bethlehem and shepherding is often associated with the Messiah and the Old Testament

- The angels rejoiced and sang because the incarnation reveals God's glory, his love, His Holiness.

- The angels knew though this was something. All of human history funneled toward this moment. A baby was born in a cave in the nearby village and few knew. Few cared. Babies are born every minute of every day around the world. But the same creator who breathed life into humans would breathe his first breath and subjection to the world he made. This was not Jesus pretending to be a baby.

- Perhaps this is why Christmas feels less threatening to us than Good Friday and Easter; for the one at the center of the story is so sweet. I can look down on him. Or can I?

- Begg: not being able to understand how God became one of us is not proof that he did not become one of us. He would not be much of a god if our limited minds could reason out everything about

- Glory is the outward shining of God's inward being; It is when that his invisible weighty majesty becomes somehow visible and tangible to his creatures

- So when the angels declare glory to God in the highest they proclaim that with the birth of this boy who is the eternal son of God the invisible God has made himself visible

- Jesus' ministry, from beginning to end, is the pursuit of end time cosmic peace

- To us 21 centuries later it's a word that this broken seemingly intractable world is not all there is

- Hughes: But actually, though the choir in heaven played a major role, we on earth have the best part because we are the ones who receive god's grace. God became a man not an angel. God redeemed us, not angels. Ours is the best part and we will praise God for it for all eternity.

- Keller: Christmas means that, through the grace of God and the birth of Jesus, peace with God is available; and if you make peace with God, then you can go out and make peace with everybody else.