

Theme: The song of the angelic choir announced that Christ had come to bring glory to God and peace to the people of earth.

## I. Intro - Precious Moments Angels?

- A. Precious Moments figurines of angels
- B. Precious Moments Chapel in Carthage Missouri
- C. Ponte Sant'Angelo in Rome - originally built by Hadrian, in 134AD, but decorated with angel statues in the 17<sup>th</sup> century
- D. These are no Precious Moments angels!
- E. What are angels? What does their song teach us?

## II. The Setting: Angels and the First Christmas

- A. Angels are key messengers the first Christmas
  - 1. Gabriel told Zechariah that John the Baptist would be born and be the prophet to prepare the way for the Lord (Luke 1:5-20)
  - 2. Gabriel told the Virgin Mary she would conceive and give birth to Jesus, the Son of God (Luke 1:26-38)
  - 3. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream and told him not to put away Mary because her Child was conceived by the Spirit and would save people from sin (Matthew 1:18-25)
  - 4. Angels are God's mighty heavenly messengers
    - a. The word for 'angel' in Greek and Hebrew means 'messenger'
    - b. It can also refer to human messengers, but the events around the first Christmas always refer to mighty heavenly beings who bring a message from God or come to execute His will.

## B. The angels announce Christ's birth

An **angel of the Lord** appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.  
<sup>10</sup>But **the angel said to them**, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people... <sup>13</sup> Suddenly **a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel**, praising God and saying, Luke 2:9-10, 13

- 1. An unnamed angel appears and announces the birth of Jesus!
- 2. The angel is joined by a large choir from the army of heavenly angels to announce the meaning of the birth of Jesus!
- 3. We can learn about the meaning of Jesus' birth from the song of this heavenly choir.

## III. The Angels' Song - A Gospel Bridge

- A. The angels' song is full of vivid contrasting pairs  
Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.  
Luke 2:14  
**Glory to God in the highest,**  
and **on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.**  
Luke 2:14
  - 1. The pair of glory and peace - often God's glory would mean destruction for sinful men (this is why the shepherds were afraid)
  - 2. The pair of God and men (on whom God's favor rests)
  - 3. The pair of heaven (the highest) and earth
    - a. This one forms a chiasm in the middle - heaven, earth

b. This links the realm of God (heaven) with that of humanity (earth)

B. Two locations, two subjects, two results

1. Location - heaven and earth
2. Subjects - God and humanity
3. Results - glory and peace

C. The birth of Jesus is a Gospel bridge, for He brings together glory to God and peace to men, joins heaven and earth, and unites God and humanity in Himself!

#### IV. The Angels' Song - Glory To God in Heaven

A. The primary focus in the song is glory to God in heaven "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:14

1. The first concern in the angel song is God receiving the glory He is due.
2. The primary thing Jesus comes to do is to bring glory to God.

B. It should not surprise us that God is the primary focus in the angels' song!

1. We have seen that God and His work have been primary in every one of these songs!
2. Before we can look at what the coming of Jesus means for us, we must recognize that the primary cause is to bring glory to God!
3. John Calvin's quote on the angels' song

The angels begin with thanksgiving, or with the praises of God; for Scripture, too, everywhere reminds us, that we were redeemed from death for this purpose, that we might testify with the tongue, as well as by the actions of the life, our gratitude to God. Let us remember, then, the final cause, why God reconciled us to himself through his Only Begotten Son. It was that he might glorify his name, by revealing the riches of his grace, and of his boundless mercy. (Calvin, Commentary)

4. Because God is the Supreme and Central Being over all creation, the only path to healing our sin-soaked world begins with God receiving the glory He is due.

#### V. The Angels' Song - Peace To Humans On Earth

A. The amazing result - peace to us!

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:14

1. The song begins with glory to God but it does not end there, for it moves to peace to humanity!
2. This is a key aspect of the Gospel bridge we saw above - Christ unites heaven and earth, God and humanity, glory to God and peace to us!
3. This is good news for us!

B. Peace between whom? Humans, or mankind and God?

1. Primary reference is peace between us and God
  - a. God is the focus of the song - peace is with Him
  - b. Shalom - all is right - flows from a right relationship with God

c. Peace with God is primary - peace between humans flows from this

2. We saw this in Zechariah's song - Jesus comes to shine on excites in the dark to guide them to peace  
And you, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High; for you will go on before the Lord to prepare the way for him, <sup>77</sup> to give his people the knowledge of salvation through the forgiveness of their sins, <sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God, by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven <sup>79</sup> **to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace.**" Luke 1:76-79
3. This should lead to peace between humans as well - but sadly often has not!
4. But if there is ever to be peace between humans, they must first be at peace with God.

C. The basis - God's favor rests on us

"Glory to God in the highest, and **on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.**" Luke 2:14

1. Jerome had peace to men of good will - but this is not what the text says.
2. Some translations have "with whom He is pleased" - but the pleasure comes from God, not our works.
3. The idea is God's good pleasure, not anything is us  
At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was **your good pleasure.**" Luke 10:21

he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with **his pleasure** and will — Ephesians 1:5

- a. God revealed Jesus to those the world overlooked - for this was His please.
  - b. We are adopted by God not by our worthiness or our choice but because of God's good pleasure and will!
4. Our hope for the peace, love, and joy in Advent is based on God's pleasure, God's character, and God's work, not our own! If it was left to us there would be no hope, no peace, no joy, and no joy!

## VI. Applying the Word

A. Do I see that the glory of God is always primary?

1. Every one of these songs puts God & His glory first!
2. Our catechism question 1: we are created to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!
3. This is not egoism on God's part - it is the nature of reality! Not created beings or things can even remotely sustain being the center, and to put anything else as primary will inevitably destroy it.
4. Advent reminds us that God is first, He is central, and He is the end of all things!
5. Salvation can only come to those who are willing to embrace this reality!

B. Do I see that God's glory is the path to my peace?

1. Those who embrace the glory of God find peace for themselves!
2. Our catechism question 1: we are created to glorify God **and enjoy Him forever!**

3. If we embrace the glory of God as our primary desire and pursuit we will find joy, peace, and everlasting meaning and fulfillment!
4. Jesus came to bring glory to God - and to bring us into the path of peace! He is the Bridge joining heaven and earth, glory and peace, and God and man!
5. Let the Spirit stir up your hunger for the glory of God - and fill you with peace no matter your circumstances!

#### C. The Table of Glory and Peace

1. This Table reminds us of the glory of God, and also how Christ has made peace between us and God!
2. Colossians 1:15-20 corporate reading
3. Come and taste the glory of God and find peace!

### The Angels' Song of Glory and Peace (Gloria et Pax)

Luke 2:8-14

December 22, 2024

Communion

2 Thessalonians 3:16

Teaching keywords: Christology; God's glory; Kingdom of God; Law and Gospel; prophets; second coming

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you. 2 Thessalonians 3:16

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. <sup>9</sup> An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. <sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup>"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:8-14