



1st Christmas Carol

Luke 2: 6-15

1 Peter 1: 10-12

Christmas Carol

- ▶ song or hymn celebrating birthday of Jesus Christ
- ▶ traditionally sung at Christmas or the surrounding Christmas holiday season

Occasion for 1st Christmas Carol

▶ Luke 2: 1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. ² (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ And everyone went to their own town to register.





⁴ So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. ⁵ He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

Occasion for 1st Christmas Carol

- ▶ Expecting couple travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem to pay taxes
- ▶ Baby arrived while they were in Bethlehem

What happened then?

⁸ And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹ An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Lk 2: 8-12)

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- ▶ Angel (of the Lord) appeared to shepherds
 - ▶ ... and said, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people” (v.10)
 - ▶ What is this good and joyous news?
 - ▶ “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” (v. 11)

... the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7: 14)

⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and

she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them. (Luke 2: 7-8)

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
are only a small village among all the people of
Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in
the distant past, will come from you
on my behalf. (Micah 5:2; NLT)

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placed him in a manger, because there was no
guest room available for them. (Luke 2: 7-8)

Good and joyous news!

- ▶ Today, your Savior has arrived
- ▶ Newborn baby is the Messiah
- ▶ He is the Lord

3 descriptions

- ▶ a Savior – person who saves someone from danger
- ▶ the Messiah מֹשֶׁחַ (Christ – Χριστός) – “the anointed one” or “the chosen one”
- ▶ prophets, priests, and kings anointed by oil, a sign God had chosen them for this special work
- ▶ the Lord (Κυριος) – supreme, eternal being, ruler of the heavens and the earth; usual Greek term for God’s personal name (Yahweh יהוה)

The 1st Christmas Carol

¹³ Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,
¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”
(Lk. 2: 13-14)

- ▶ “Gloria in excelsis Deo”
- ▶ 1st time humans saw and heard angels in their glory directly (not through dream or vision)

Angel talk / song – precise & concise

- ▶ “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” (v. 11)
- ▶ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” (Lk. 2: 14; NIV)
- ▶ “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.” (NLT)
- ▶ “Glory to God in the heavenly heights,
Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.” (MSG)

The birth of Jesus

- ▶ Foretold (predicted) by prophets
- ▶ Announced by angel and angelic host

Prophets ...

- ▶ People chosen by God to be His spokesperson on earth
- ▶ Two primary jobs:
 - ▶ To proclaim God's Word
 - ▶ To predict future events

Angels ...

- ▶ Messengers sent by God
- ▶ *angelos* = messenger
- ▶ Two primary jobs:
 - ▶ Stand in God's presence and worship Him (Rev. 5:11; Hebrews 1: 6)
 - ▶ Help, protect, deliver & guide God's people (e.g., Acts 5:19; 12:7)

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1: 14)

Only place in Scripture where angels & prophets mentioned together

¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

(1 Peter 1: 10-12)

Prophets ...

- ▶ Proclaim God's Word (forth telling)
- ▶ Predicted future events (fore-telling)

1 Peter 1: 10-12





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The prophets

- ▶ > 300 separate prophecies over 1,500-year period relating to the coming of Christ
- ▶ Though they predicted the coming of Christ, did not understand all that they predicted
- ▶ Like archers who shot “arrows of truth” with no idea of “when”, “where”, and “how” these arrows would land

4 things about the prophets (and their prophecies)

- ▶ Predicted the coming of Christ
- ▶ Spoke of the suffering and glory of Christ
- ▶ Did not understand much of what they predicted
- ▶ Tried to understand the “time” and “circumstances” of these prophecies

Christ would be born of a virgin

Isaiah 7: 14

... the Lord himself will give you the sign. Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel (which means 'God is with us').

Christ would be born in Bethlehem

Micah 5: 2 (NLT)

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
are only a small village among all the
people of Judah.

Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the
distant past,
will come from you on my behalf.

**Would be wounded and bruised,
and crucified with thieves**

Isaiah 53: 5, 12

But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
... he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.

Would be raised from the dead

Psalm 16: 10

... you will not abandon me to the
realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

The prophets and their prophecies

- ▶ As prophets looked into the future, knew God was up to something, but didn't know exactly what it was

How about the angels?

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(1 Peter 1: 10-11)

Concerning this salvation ...

- ▶ Prophets predicted the coming of Christ
- ▶ (Christ came: birth, life, death, resurrection)
- ▶ Apostles preached Christ to everyone
- ▶ (Many believed the message; church was formed)
- ▶ Angels long to understand it
- ▶ We now know what prophets never knew, and experience what angels wish they knew

Angels – curious about our salvation

- ▶ *Even angels long to look into these things. (NIV)*
- ▶ *It is all so wonderful that even the angels are eagerly watching these things happen. (NLT)*
- ▶ *Do you realize how fortunate you are? Angels would have given anything to be in on this! (MSG)*
- ▶ 2 Greek words used: to stand on tiptoe; to stoop down
- ▶ “It is so great that even the angels are looking down to gain a view, like wedding attendees attempting to steal a glance at the bride before her appearance.” – Scot McKnight, NIV Application Commentary on 1 Peter

The Last Supper by da Vinci (1495-1498)



The Last Supper by Tintoretto (1592-1594)



Why so curious about our salvation ?

- ▶ No “saved” angels
- ▶ Jesus died on the cross to redeem fallen sinful men and women, not the angels
- ▶ Only humans can experience the wonders of God’s saving grace
- ▶ Angels very curious about the mysteries of something they do not share with us

News Flash & 1st Christmas Carol

- ▶ “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Lk. 2: 11)
- ▶ “Glory to God in the heavenly heights,
Peace to all men and women on earth who please him.”
(Luke 2: 14; MSG)

Closing Questions

- ▶ More curious about angels than the angels are about our salvation?
- ▶ Do I realize how “privileged” I am to receive God’s gift of salvation?
- ▶ Does the way I live my life please God?
- ▶ Does such great privilege motivate me to share Jesus with others

Why not share the gospel through Christmas carols?

- ▶ *O Holy Night* reminds us that the world was “in sin and error pining,” wasting away until our dear Savior “appeared and the soul felt [the] worth” of His salvation
- ▶ *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*: only through “the newborn King” can “God and sinners [be] reconciled.”
Jesus, being God, took on human flesh. “Christ, by highest heaven adored; Christ the everlasting Lord; . . . Veiled in flesh the Godhead see, Hail the incarnate Deity.”