

**Advent Week 3**  
*The Announcement*

# WEEK 3

## *Personal Study*

Luke 2:8–20 (ESV)

*And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

*When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.*

Romans 10:14–15 (ESV)

*How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"*

## **Focus**

What is being signaled about the purpose of God's rescue mission in this announcement? Who is the first person you would contact if you experienced something really good?

### ***Spread the Good News***

We love hearing good news, and we love telling good news. With just a few taps on our computer or phone, we can spread the good news out into the world. We tweet, we hashtag, we group text, we post on Facebook. For those closest to us we may give them a call, because we are so excited to hear their reaction.

Joseph and Mary had no means to communicate this good news. In their day when something important happened, like the birth of a royal child, heralds were sent out to spread the news to the mass population. If you were an important family in a village, you could even hire someone to go and tell people about the birth of your child. But Joseph and Mary were among the poorest people on earth. Their child was born in an animal stall, and wrapped with dirty pieces of cloth. But God Himself took care of the announcement strategy by sending out legions of heavenly angels to proclaim the birth of His Son. This was not Joseph and Mary's baby, this was God's Son.

But now imagine this scene in heaven. God tells His angels that He was sending His Son...The Wisdom of God, The Word of God, to earth in the form of a baby. He would need them to go and announce this birth to the humans who exist on that little green and blue ball. What a fun charge for an angel! The greatest treasure and the greatest news the earth has ever known, and the angels get to share the news.

I wonder how the angels must have felt as they followed God's direction, and burst through the prism separating heaven and earth, to a place where they find a few shepherds tending their flocks late at night. In Jesus' day shepherds were regarded as liars and thieves. They moved around late at night and never settled down into a community of accountability.

Why would God send a MULTITUDE of heavenly angels to announce the birth to a few insignificant humans with no earthly influence, power or prestige? Where were all the earthly kings, religious leaders, politicians and military figures to hear this announcement?

The shepherds were immediately compelled with passion for action. They did something no shepherd would do; they left their flocks. They found Joseph and Mary, and the new baby King in Bethlehem. And then they traveled through the countryside telling everyone else of the birth of this new Rescuer, even though few would have believed their story.

### ***Reflection***

How did you first hear the Gospel? Who told you, and to what degree did the credibility of the news depend on the character of the communicator?

Do you think sharing the good news of Jesus' birth would have felt more like a burden, duty or an embarrassment...or like a spontaneous reaction to joy and amazement?

Today in our culture, for the first time in our history, more Christians than not think that it is wrong to share our faith with others. Why do you think that is?

What do you think God was sharing about Himself when He sent a multitude of heavenly angels to sing over a few meaningless shepherds?

### ***Closing Response***

Write a real letter to someone in your life who has been instrumental in bringing the Gospel consistently in your life. Put that letter in the mail and send it to them.

In prayer, ask God to forgive your half-hearted response to the best news the earth has ever known. Ask Him to fill your heart with joy for the news that rescues us through any and every situation.



### **Songs for Advent Week 3**

- [Hark! The Herald Angels Sing](#)
- [Angels We Have Heard on High](#)
- [Joy to The World!](#)



*All resources with this icon can be found by going to the web page.*

# WEEK 3

## *Family Discipleship Time*

**Set aside 30 minutes one night this week to read scriptures together and reflect upon and discuss the material together. If you have Advent Candles, please designate someone to light the 1st, 2nd and 3rd candles before beginning.**

### ***Scripture Reading***

**(Have a family member read out loud, consider providing a candy cane for each child to enjoy during this devotion, and point out that it looks like a shepherd's staff)**

Luke 2:8–12 (ESV)

*And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."*

*Behind the angel they saw a strange glowing cloud—except it wasn't a cloud, it was angels... troops and troops of angels, armed with light! And they were singing a beautiful song: "Glory to God! To God be Fame and Honor and all our Hoorays!"*

### **THE JESUS STORYBOOK BIBLE**

Luke 2:15–17 (ESV)

*When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.*

## Focus

If you had the best news in the world to share, how would you get the word out? Who would you tell first, and why?

### **Story Telling (Read the commentary below)**

As Joseph and Mary held their little baby on that long, anxious night in Bethlehem, God began to spread the wonderful news of His birth. He announced the birth of Jesus to an interesting group of people.

**Ask:** *How did God announce the birth? If you had been God, to whom would you have announced the coming of the Great Rescuer?*

The people with the most power and influence in Jesus' day would have been kings, politicians, religious and military leaders. What you may not know is that shepherds were not only unimportant, many people looked down upon them because they didn't have "real" jobs or live in "real" homes. Many of them were just young people, pre-teens and teens. And God chose to tell some shepherds about the greatest news that had ever come to earth!

**Ask:** *Why do you think God chose to tell shepherds, and didn't tell the ones they would have thought of as really "important" people?*

While the shepherds were taking care of their sheep at night the sky above them filled with angelic beings! The Bible tells us that the shepherds were very afraid. Angels look much like you and I do, but bigger and stronger. They would have looked like huge warriors shining from the expanse above. The angels simply appeared as if they had been there all along but couldn't be seen until they wanted to be seen. Isn't that amazing! It's as if God peeled back an invisible cover so the shepherds could see the multitude of angels.

**Ask:** *Why do you think the shepherds were so afraid of all these angels? How do you think you would have felt to see the angels?*

The angel who shared the good news had to calm the shepherds and tell them not to be afraid. He did not come to harm them, but to give them great news. God's glory had been revealed through a baby who had come to earth. The Rescuer had come to deliver everyone from a world of conflict to a place of peace. The shepherds were so excited, they left their animals and quickly went to Bethlehem to find the baby who would become their King.

**Ask:** *What do you think that word "peace" means? Why do you think the shepherds were so excited?*

### **Poem to Read**

Outside of the town, 'round a fire so bright  
Some shepherds were watching their sheep in the night.  
The night had been quiet and silent and still.  
The sheep had been starting to doze off until

When all of a sudden a radiant light  
Surprised all the shepherds and gave them a fright!  
An angel appeared and said not to fear  
For the Savior was born – The Messiah was here!

He'd be wrapped up in cloth and placed in a manger.  
Go see for yourself – He's a total game changer!  
He brings joy to the world. He's good news for men.  
The angel said this to the shepherds and then...

A thousand more angels appeared in the sky!  
They sang praises to God in the heavens so high!  
What a huge celebration of joy to the earth  
As the shepherds were told of their dear Savior's birth.

When the angels had left them alone with their sheep  
There was no way those shepherds would fall back asleep!

"Let's go to the town," the shepherds all said,  
"And see if a manger is really the bed

Of this new little king who was born here tonight."  
So the shepherds all ran to the town with delight.  
They arrived in the village and looked all around –  
It didn't take long 'till the baby was found.

It was just as the angel had told them before,  
They found Mary & Joseph and Jesus – what's more...  
Jesus lay in a manger – The story was true!  
The Savior had come – so what did they do?

Those shepherds went out and they told the whole town.  
They told them how God, as a baby, came down  
Was born in that barn – and yet was the King  
The Savior from Heaven as the angels did sing.  
(Author Unknown)



### Song

Sing this song together as a family  
[Hark! The Herald Angels Sing](#)

### Prayer

Discuss what you should pray about, and which family member should pray.



*All resources with this icon can be found by going to the web page.*

## ***Family Activities***

**Make:** Draw or paint what you think a night sky might have looked like when the angels appeared to the shepherds.

- Black paper with Q-tip & white paint or chalk
- Watercolor
- Oil pastels on dark paper

Put them on the refrigerator or a prominent place in the home.

**Drama:** Spend time imagining what it must have been like for the shepherds to have a multitude of angels shining down at them from the night sky. Turn off all the lights and have all the family members shine flashlights at one member of the family. Take turns playing the shepherd role.

**Action:** Discuss a way each family member could share the good news of Jesus coming as our Rescuer over the next week of Advent. There are so many more ways to do that today!

- Go caroling as a family
- Write a note to someone and give it to them
- Wear a sticker or put a pin on your backpack
- Invite someone to the Christmas Eve service
- Choose a verse, as a family, to add to your Christmas card you mail out
- Create sidewalk chalk art or messages around your neighborhood

We have the best news the world has ever known, and some people don't even know about it.