

# **LIGHTS, PLEASE**

(Sunday, December 12, 2021)

- I. Introduction
  - A. Shepherds Advent Video
  - B. Yell = “Isn’t there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about? **(Slide 1)**
  - C. Growing up = Looked forward to all the Christmas Specials **(Slide 2)**
    1. Rudolph (She thinks I’m cute..., Cornelius, Island of Misfit toys)
    2. Frosty the Snowman
    3. Santa Claus is Coming to Town
    4. Twas the Night Before Christmas
    5. Top 3 = How the Grinch Stole Christmas (dog, song, & big heart); The Year Without a Santa Claus (Heat Miser vs. Snow Miser)
    6. #1 = Charlie Brown Christmas – Why? It presents the Gospel
  - D. After Charlie Brown gets frustrated and yells – Linus responds = “Sure, Charlie Brown. I can tell you what Christmas is all about.”
    1. Doesn’t say it there - Walks across the stage
    2. Says, **“LIGHTS, PLEASE” (Slide 3)**
    3. And quotes Luke 2: 8-14
    4. Walks back to Charlie; that’s what Christmas is all about; changes everything
  - E. Why **“LIGHTS, PLEASE”** – always wondered
    1. In a play, the spotlight is on the person who is about to say or do the most important thing at that time.
    2. Just watched my son, Gabe, in the Hobbit as Bilbo Baggins – lots of spotlight
    3. I’ve watched Elijah in plays – spotlight
    4. Charles Schultz wanted to spotlight this very important message
  - F. This fall, Andre has been taking us through the new mission, vision, & values for Wintonbury – last week were the last 2 = Whole World & Whole Gospel – kids’ pictures **(Slide 4)**
  - G. Now, it’s Christmas time - Let’s take a look further at this passage (Luke 2:1-20) that Linus shared with Charlie Brown to understand more of what Christmas is all about – Pray first

## II. Context of passage – Luke 1 – Prepare for the Messiah (Slide 5)

- A. Angel visits Zechariah (priest) – Do not be afraid – Have a son, call him John (the Baptist) – unbelief leads to being mute
- B. Angel visits Mary (young teenage girl) – Do not be afraid – have a son, Jesus, Son of the Most High – Virgin (prophecy) Isaiah 7:14 – trust & joy
- C. Mary visits her relative, Elizabeth, wife of Zechariah & son of John the Baptist – both miraculous pregnancies
- D. Leads Mary to praise & worship – song
- E. Elizabeth gives birth – Zechariah wrote his name on a tablet, John – could speak
- F. Leads Zechariah to praise & worship – song
- G. Remember, about 400 years since anyone has heard from God

## III. Luke 2:1-3 (Slide 6)

- A. Luke = used known historical figures that could be verified – some have tried to show his history to be false in his 2 books but their investigations only proved he was a great historian
- B. Caesar Augustus = Emperor of Rome
  - 1. Octavian = Julius Caesar was his great uncle; got adopted by him
  - 2. Julius Caesar murdered around 44 BC – Octavian, Mark Antony, & Lepidus rule together = Triumvirate = wars, violence, corruption, etc
  - 3. Octavian & Antony pushed Lepidus out – Octavian was better strategist and defeated Antony & Cleopatra for total control
  - 4. Augustus = “exalted” and “sacred” – Wanted **the lights** focused on him
    - Pax Romana – political savior but that was not the saving that people needed
- C. Census – used to keep track of population for the size of the kingdom but also for tax purposes – people went back to their original towns where their families were from
- D. Jesus told Pilate in John 19:11 – **“You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above” (Slide 7)**

## IV. Luke 2:4-7 (Slide 8)

- A. 4 & 5 – Joseph’s house & line is of David from Bethlehem (80 miles from Nazareth) – long trek
  - 1. Mary didn’t have to go with him

2. Some reasons why she did = They knew she would give birth while Joseph was away & they wanted to be together; Knew the Messiah was prophesied to be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2); Controversial pregnancy with lots of gossip in Nazareth

**B. POINT 1 = DURING THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON, REMEMBER THAT, IN CHRIST, WE KNOW GOD IS SOVEREIGN & IN CONTROL EVEN WHEN THINGS SEEM CRAZY & OUT OF CONTROL (Slide 9)**

- C. 6 & 7 – They were already in Bethlehem when it was time for the birth (don't know the timeline completely)
1. She gave birth, wrapped him in swaddling cloths & placed in manger (Did she have any help? What a strong girl?)
  2. Strips of cloths used to give limbs strength & protection
  3. Manger – feeding trough for animals (**Slide 10**)
  4. Tradition says – in a cave near the inn; not private but very public
  5. No one realized the King & His Kingdom had arrived!

**D. POINT 2 = DURING THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON, REMEMBER THAT, IN CHRIST, WE CAN ALWAYS TRUST THAT GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES (Slide 11)**

V. Luke 2:8-14 (**Slide 12**)

A. V. 8 - New main characters – The Shepherds – LINUS' Quote

1. Fields nearby – other versions say “same country”, “same region” – some believe they were within a mile from Bethlehem as they were watching over these animals for the sacrifices
2. Why shepherds?
  - a. Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd and we are His sheep (John 10:11)
  - b. For some, shepherds were considered outcasts, ceremonially unclean, humble & hardworking servants – Even as a baby, Jesus was all about the humble, lowly, & outcast instead of the self-righteous, prideful, & expected

B. V. 9 – Another angel with a message (Gabriel?) - 400 years = Nothing; now 3 appearances of an angel; **LIGHTS, PLEASE** – only response is fear

C. V. 10 – Angel calms fear again – RELAX – GOOD NEWS = GREAT JOY – For who? = ALL PEOPLE!

**D. POINT 3 = DURING THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON, REMEMBER THAT, IN CHRIST, WE NEVER HAVE TO BE AFRAID FOR HE IS GOD WITH US (Slide 13)**

- E. V. 11 – What’s the GOOD NEWS? = The SAVIOR has been born, the Messiah – many prophecies for the Messiah – this was not a reformer, a military or political king, rich or famous person – this was a SPIRITUAL SAVIOR, Save us from sin
  - F. V. 12 – How to notice him? – wrapped in cloths (YES); lying in a manger (WHAT?)
  - G. V. 13 & 14 – SUDDENLY – great company of angels - **LIGHTS, PLEASE** – Praise God – PEACE! – Not Caesar Augustus’ peace but God’s perfect peace
  - H. **POINT 4 = DURING THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON, REMEMBER THAT, IN CHRIST, WE CAN HAVE HIS PERFECT PEACE RESTING IN THIS GOOD NEWS (Slide 14)**
- VI. Luke 2:15-20 – The Response (**Slide 15**)
- A. V. 15 – **Step 1 = Urgently go and check it out/investigate (Slide 16)** – they didn’t see the angel show and then start counting sheep (Disney show/fireworks at end of night)
  - B. V. 16 – Ran to see the Baby Messiah – I’ve seen lots of great things in my life but I don’t know if much would compare to seeing the Savior enter the world as a baby – babies are cute and amazing but there was more to this child
  - C. V. 17 – **Step 2 = Spread the Word/Witness to what they experienced** – Evangelism, tell the world!
  - D. V. 18 & 19 – People’s response = amazement (not rejection or skepticism); Mary’s response = quiet contemplation and joyfulness (faithful young woman at the time)
  - E. V. 20 – **Step 3 = Returned to their lives, Praising, Glorifying, & Adoring God** – Their lives were completely changed which is crazy since they didn’t even know the end of the story
- VII. CONCLUSION
- A. 4 Points & 3 Steps Reminder (**Slide 17 & 18**)
  - B. Why should it be easier for us to apply these points & steps to our lives: we know the full story & why Jesus came – 12 Scriptures for Why Jesus Came (**Slide 19**)
  - C. I’ve been so blessed as I’ve studied for this sermon – I was reminded again of why Christmas is so awesome – IT’S

JESUS! THE MESSIAH, THE SAVIOR, THE PRINCE OF PEACE, THE WONDERFUL COUNSELOR!

D. 7 chapters after Luke 2 – Jesus asks Peter, “Who do you say I am?” Peter responds, “God’s Messiah” – Then Jesus challenges them that they can’t be His disciples unless they deny themselves, take up their cross daily, & follow

E. Let’s not make Christmas about me, me, me, this year!

F. Yes, you’ll shop, cook, bake, & get prepared for the holiday – But keep the spotlight on Jesus & His Good News and rest in all of it

G. Let’s join Joseph, Mary, the angels, the shepherds, & of course, Linus to say, “LIGHTS, PLEASE” on Jesus Christ & the Good News of our Savior’s Birth – That’s what it’s all about (**Slide 20**)