

Christmas Eve

“Good tidings of great joy to all people!”

Luke 2:9-10

December 24, 2025

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Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, our text for this Christmas Eve is from our Gospel reading Luke 2:9-10.

**“9 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.”**

So far the text:

We usually don't think of fear when we think of Christmas, but those are the first words that the angel says to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid”.

For some children, being forced to sit on Santa's lap is a fearful experience. They even have a term for that – Santaphobia. Some people have been diagnosed with a fear of ornaments – sparklaphobia – the fear of glitter. I'm pretty sure my daughter doesn't have that phobia. Well, I'm not sure how real these phobias are. But for these shepherds in the countryside, the arrival of the first Christmas started out as a real fearful experience.

Why was that? Well it was certainly out of the ordinary. There wasn't a page in the shepherd's manual telling what to do if an angel appeared all of a sudden. They were greatly afraid. The Greek says “megan phobon” – a mega phobia!

We know words that start with mega, right? Megaton, megahit, megabyte, megaphone... What caused their mega fright? The glory of the Lord shone around them. Heaven broke into their earthly space. Being the sinful creatures that we are, our first reaction is “uh oh, what did I do?” Was it that lost sheep that I couldn't find last week? Or was it because I was sleeping on the job when the predator came? Was it that disagreement that turned into cross words that I had with my friend?

Whenever the holy meets the unholy on this holiest of nights, there is always initial fear. We've heard it in the stories leading up to this night whenever an angel, God's messenger, came to visit one of God's people.

### **Luke 1:13**

**But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.**

### **Luke 1:30**

**Then the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.**

### **Matthew 1:20**

**But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.**

Do not be afraid. It doesn't take a sudden appearance of an angel to remind us of our daily fears. It's the world in which we live as Isaiah described it in our Old Testament reading:

**“those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.”**

This is our land, where sin and evil and the shadow of death darkens. As Psalm 130 reminds us **“If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?”**  
*“Far as the curse is found. Far as the curse is found.”*

Yes, the curse is found upon Adam and Eve, Zacharias, Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and upon us. And we would be left only in fear if not for the good tidings of great joy, mega joy, that the angel brought to the shepherds and the world.

**“Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”**

Take note of the word “all”. For that means this message of great joy is for you and me also. What is the heart of the message? The Savior is born! Your Savior has come! Upon

Him all our fears and doubts are cast. For He came to remove the curse of sin by becoming sin on the cross.

No longer does God mark your iniquities because they were marked upon Jesus, whose very name means “He saves His people from their sins.” That’s what Joseph heard from the angel and it took away his fear.

Jesus is His name, the angel Gabriel told Mary, and **“And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”**

He reigns today with us! Go to Bethlehem to see the King of Kings, a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths. Go see for yourselves, the great joy of the world!

And at once their fear no longer paralyzed them and they came with haste to see Jesus, the Savior! When fear is removed God’s people move with speed! After Mary heard the good news that she was going to be the mother of the Savior of the world, she immediately left to go to visit Elizabeth and Zacharias.

It is the same for you and me. We move freely with great joy in our hearts despite all the fears that the devil and the world and our sinful flesh throw at us. For the message of the angels from God to us is peace on earth and God’s good will to us through His Son Jesus.

Psalm 130 tells us how we can stand without fear.

**“If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?  
4 But there is forgiveness with You,”** in Jesus!

**Psalm 27:1**

**The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid?**

**Luke 12:32**

**“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”**

It is God's good will to give you this most precious Christmas gift – that you have been called by faith to receive His kingdom of grace, ever looking forward to its completion in His kingdom of glory!

The angels' message is for you today! As the shepherds came and saw, so you have come and seen with eyes of faith the glorious truth of Christmas. The shepherds returned to their sheep praising God and telling everyone the good news.

We have the full story of how Jesus accomplished our salvation to tell. We know how Jesus rode into Jerusalem to make peace by His death on the cross.

**John 12:15**

**“Fear not, daughter of Zion; Behold, your King is coming, Sitting on a donkey’s colt.”**

We know of how He rose victoriously on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day to show the world that God's good will indeed was done!

**Matthew 28:5-6**

**“the angel answered and said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here; for He is risen, as He said.”**

And with all authority, Jesus ascended into heaven promising us that He is with us always! There's no need to fear ever as we await the final coming of the angels with our exalted Lord Jesus on the last day! While we wait, go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born! Amen.

**And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” Amen. (Philippians 4:7)**