

THE ANGELS OF ADVENT

LUKE 2:8-14

SINGING ANGELS



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

Do you want to be happier? Sing more! Happiness makes us sing; but research has found that singing also makes us happy. How so?

Studies like [this one](#) have discovered that the deep breathing in singing brings more oxygen into the blood, just like aerobic exercise does. Second, it releases endorphins, the feel-good chemicals, in the brain. Third, the concentration required in singing distracts us from our problems and therefore reduces our stress. Fourth, learning new songs keeps our brains active and fends off depression. Fifth, singing in a choir gives a lift from social connection and working together with others. It also boosts confidence when singing in front of a crowd. One study put it like this:

“On average, choral singers rated their satisfaction with life higher than the public—even when the actual problems faced by those singers were more substantial than those faced by the general public...Also, the support system of being part of a group, and the commitment to that group that gets people out of the house and into the chorus every week...These benefits are a big component of why choral singers tend to be happier than the rest of us.”

If that's what a choir of humans can do for us, think what a choir of angels can do for us! In Luke 2:8-14 we meet singing angels. They are the best ever choir, singing the best ever lyrics, of the best ever song, in the best ever way. Let's hear them and join them and experience how singing makes us happy. **Lift up praise songs to lift up God and to lift up your spirit.**

CONTEXT

A group of shepherds were watching their flock in a field near Bethlehem when an angel appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone all around them (8-9). Although they were initially afraid, the angel told them, **“Fear not, behold I bring you good news of great joy for all the people”** (10).

- **The good news gives great joy (10)**
- **The good news is a great Savior (11)**
- **The good news is a great surprise (12)**
- **The good news starts a great choir (13-14)**

This angel's announcement set the stage for the angel choir. Let's join this great choir in their great song (13-14).



Who is the conductor of this choir?



1. GOD IS OUR SONG-LEADER

Angels serve Christians

Although angels are awesome heavenly beings, God uses them to serve his lowly people on earth. **[Angels are] all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation** (Hebrew 1:14). They don't act on their own initiative, but await God's commands. As the Psalmist sang, **Bless the Lord, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! Bless the Lord, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will!** (Ps. 103:20-21).

If we could see into heaven today, we'd see innumerable angels waiting for their next mission to earth. We'd see other angels descending on mission and returning from mission. God is sending them on secret missions to his beloved people: speaking, guarding, directing, providing, encouraging, and carrying them. I have no doubt that angels are present here today in God's worship.

Angels serve Christ

But angels aren't just involved in the general work of serving God's people. They were especially involved at every stage of Christ coming into the world. We've seen that in recent weeks with the teaching angel sent to Mary and the encouraging angel sent to Joseph. This week, we're listening to the singing angels at Christ's birth.

Hebrews 1 gives more specific information about this event: **When [God] brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him"** (Heb. 1:6). When God brought his son into the world, he told every angel to stop what they were doing and devote their whole beings to the worship of Jesus. Wherever you are, heaven, earth, the stable, "All stop and all worship him with all that you are."

CHANGE YOUR SONG WITH GOD'S SONG

Thank God for angels. Although we do not pray to angels, we can thank God for them. They have served us more than we can ever imagine or calculate. They have brought glory to God and peace to us many, many times in and through our lives.

Obey God's call to worship. If the angels stopped everything whenever God called them to worship, how much more should we? It's not just Pastor David or Jordan calling us to worship or leading us in worship. God is.

WHEN GOD SAYS "WORSHIP"
WE DON'T SAY "WAIT"



Who wrote this song?



2. GOD IS OUR SONG-WRITER

If God were to write a song, what would it sound like? We don't need to ask. We know. We know it was sung in divine stereo, with one speaker pointed towards God in heaven and one toward people on earth.

Glory to God

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest" (13-14).

The angels had praised God many times, but never like this, never so many at once, never so many at such volume, because never had they so much reason to praise.

In 1 Peter 1:10-12, Peter tells us that it wasn't just the Old Testament prophets who wondered how their prophecies would be fulfilled; so did the angels. These were things "into which angels long to look" (12). That's literally "stood on tiptoes and strained their necks trying to see." Now what they longed to see has come, and they cannot stop singing. "Glory to God in the highest!" "Glory to God, Glory to God, Glory to God!" Higher! Higher! Higher!" Salvation gives God greater glory than anything else.

Peace to People

But they don't just sing to God, they sing to humanity. **"And on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" (14).** As Paul later taught, our singing is not just to God but to one another (Eph. 5:19). Glory up to God, peace down to people. Glory reaching higher than ever before, and peace reaching lower than ever before. God's glory is to give us peace, and our peace gives God glory. The word for 'peace' here is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew 'shalom' which is not simply an inner peace or an outer peace, but a holistic peace, a peace that makes everything whole, especially with God. . He gives this peace to **"those with whom he is pleased"** or **"those upon whom is favor rests"** [NIV]. This peace is only enjoyed by those to whom God in his mercy has been pleased to give this grace.

CHANGE YOUR SONG WITH GOD'S SONG

Our worship is primarily about glory to God. God's glory, not our feelings, must always come first in worship. We want to sing songs that emphasize his 'weightiness' (the literal meaning of 'glory'), and that lift him up higher and higher.

Ask God for his peace on earth. In a tumultuous earth, peace is found in and through Christ. 'Peace' can be a vague and nebulous concept. That's why God put human flesh on his peace. Christ is God's peace in flesh and blood.

GOD'S GLORY IS TO GIVE US PEACE
AND OUR PEACE GIVES HIM GLORY



Who is this song about?



3. GOD IS OUR SONG

God led the song, wrote the song, is the audience for the song, and the subject of the song. The angels were singing to him about him.

The angels were fueled with joy

The angels heard about the great joy, the great Savior, and the great surprise, and filled the heavens with a great song of praise. The happy news made them happy angels with a happy song that spread happiness to the world. **Hark the Herald angels sing, glory to the new-born king. Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled. Joyful all ye nations rise, Join the triumph of the skies. With the angelic host proclaim "Christ is born in Bethlehem."** If "there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents" (Luke 15:10), how much more joy over the birth of the one who gives repentance and makes it possible.

The shepherds were fueled with joy

The shepherds at the best seats at the best concert ever. Of all the people chosen to be in such an audience, God chose the lowest-ranked occupation. When the concert finished they decided they must find the one the angels were singing about. Angel songs ringing in their ears, they found Jesus, told Mary and Joseph and anyone who would listen about the concert, and then returned what they had heard, and **then returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them** (20). Angel songs produced shepherd songs.

CHANGE YOUR SONG WITH GOD'S SONG

Use worship to fuel your witnesses. When we have truly worshipped, we will truly witness. When our souls have been stirred, and mouths will be stirred. Our true gauge of whether we've worshipped in spirit and truth is whether we then witness to the truth by the Spirit.

Use worship to fuel your joy. The angels sang happily about salvation when they had no need of salvation. How much more should we, who need it and have it? Let these holy singing angels make you a holy singing person. Holy songs produce holy happiness, but unholy songs produce unholy happiness.

START SINGING
TO STOP SINNING



Hear > Change > Tell



CONCLUSION



PRAYER: Most high, most holy, and most happy God, we lift you high with holy and happy songs. Lift us high with holy and happy singing. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which psalms, hymns, or songs make you happiest?
2. Can you think of a time when you realized that angels were serving you? How often have you thanked God for the angels?
3. How does this change the way you hear calls to worship?
4. Think of two ways in which you can increase the stereo in your singing?
5. Describe ways you have experienced God's peace on earth?
6. In what ways did worship motivate you to witness this week?
7. How has singing to God stopped you sinning against God?

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