

Week 6

From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

Oct. 31

Luke 2:10–20

(Lutheran Service Book 358)

The first five stanzas declare the joyful words of the angel proclaiming the wondrous news of Jesus' birth. The remaining stanzas declare the response of the shepherds and the meaning of the Savior's birth for all the world.

1. "From heav'n above to earth I come
To bear good news to ev'ry home;
Glad tidings of great joy I bring,
Whereof I now will say and sing:

2. "To you this night is born a child
Of Mary, chosen virgin mild;
This little child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth.

3. "This is the Christ, our God Most High,
Who hears your sad and bitter cry;
He will Himself your Savior be
From all your sins to set you free.

4. "He will on you the gifts bestow
Prepared by God for all below,
That in His kingdom, bright and fair,
You may with us His glory share.

5. "These are the signs that you shall mark:
The swaddling clothes and manger dark.
There you will find the infant laid
By whom the heav'ns and earth were made."

6. How glad we'll be to find it so!
Then with the shepherds let us go
To see what God for us has done
In sending us His own dear Son.

7. Come here, my friends, lift up your eyes,
And see what in the manger lies.
Who is this child, so young and fair?
It is the Christ Child lying there.

8. Welcome to earth, O noble Guest,
Through whom the sinful world is blest!
You came to share my misery
That You might share Your joy with me.

9. Ah, Lord, though You created all,
How weak You are, so poor and small,
That You should choose to lay Your head
Where lowly cattle lately fed!

10. Were earth a thousand times as fair
And set with gold and jewels rare,
It would be far too poor and small
A cradle for the Lord of all.

11. Instead of soft and silken stuff
You have but hay and straw so rough
On which as King, so rich and great,
To be enthroned in royal state.

12. And so it pleases You to see
This simple truth revealed to me:
That worldly honor, wealth, and might
Are weak and worthless in Your sight.

13. Ah, dearest Jesus, holy Child,
Prepare a bed, soft, undefiled,
A quiet chamber set apart
For You to dwell within my heart.

14. My heart for very joy must leap;
My lips no more can silence keep.
I, too, must sing with joyful tongue
That sweetest ancient cradlesong:

15. Glory to God in highest heav'n,
Who unto us His Son has giv'n!
While angels sing with pious mirth
A glad new year to all the earth.

1. The first five stanzas of Luther's popular Christmas hymn repeat the angel's words to the shepherds; the next ten focus on their response and the meaning of our Savior's birth. Read Luke 2:8–14 and Matthew 1:21. What will the Christ Child, the Messiah, do that brings such joy?
2. Jesus came specifically to fulfill God's promise to the Jews of a Savior. What does the angel say that shows Gentiles also are included in the salvation Jesus brings (v. 10)?
3. Princes are born in palaces, but the Son of God in a stable (v. 12). Why did He humble Himself in this way? See Philippians 2:5–8.
4. The multitude of angels that joined the herald angel sang of a peace brought to earth for those "with whom (God) is pleased" (v. 14). What is this peace?
5. Read Luke 2:15–20. When Mary and the shepherds experienced the events surrounding Jesus' birth, what did they do (vv. 19–20)?

Answers:

1. Jesus, the Messiah, "will save His people from their sins." (This is Luther's last phrase in stanza 3.)
2. The angel brought "good news of great joy that will be for all people." (Luther carries through with this in stanzas 1 and 2.)
3. See Philippians 2:5–8. God's Son humbled Himself so that, as a man, He could die on the cross to pay for our sins.
4. It is the peace that God, in His unfathomable way, gives to those whom He chose to come to faith in His Son (Ephesians 1:4). Because we are sinners, we are at war with God. But through our faith in Jesus and what He did for us, we have a peaceful relationship with the Father. We become His children.
5. "Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart." The shepherds glorified and praised God. What marvelous examples for us! May we, too, seriously and joyfully think about these profound truths, thanking and praising God and sharing the "good news."