

LIFE Groups - Advent 2024

Advent Week #3

Peace on Earth now...and Great Victory to come!

In Luke 2, the angelic host announced “peace on earth”, and this same choir will sing again at Christ’s 2nd Advent. They will then proclaim God’s ultimate victory - and we get to join them!

1 - Peace in chaos- *Shalom, the Hebrew word for peace, does not mean an absence of chaos or conflict. Rather, it indicates a person who is at rest because “everything is in order” between them and God, and with them and other people, in every circumstance! How does this speak to you as we consider the angel’s declaration of “peace on Earth”? This peace is described in Romans 5:1-5!*

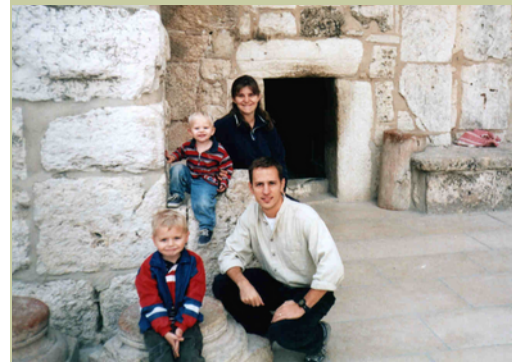
2 - Watch the Video for Advent Week #3 with Pastor Scott

3 - Read & Discuss the background of the angelic declaration -

- **Read Luke 2:8-15** - “An angel of the Lord” appears to shepherds, but, unlike Gabriel’s appearance to Mary in Luke 1, this angel is not named. The “host of Heaven” (Hebrew = *t’sevaot*) gives us some clues!
- **Read Daniel 12:1-3** - The angel Michael is here named as “the great Prince” who watches over Israel and will appear at the resurrection that will occur at Jesus’ return (His 2nd Advent).
- **Now read Revelation 12:7-8** - Michael is the angel that leads the Army (or Host) of Heaven (*t’sevaot*) against Satan.
- **Now read Revelation 19:3-16** - In this incredible vision, John sees God’s Final Victory! The angels and saints of God (*that’s us!*) sing praises as Jesus comes on a white horse as the King of Kings - no longer the infant in a manger! He is joined by the Army/Host of Heaven - the one that sang over Bethlehem at His **1st Advent** - but this time they announce His **2nd Advent** as He returns in power to defeat the enemies of God by the Word from His mouth.

*So, Advent is a time to **look back** and remember Jesus’ 1st Advent...
A time to celebrate **the present** that Emmanuel, Christ is with us...
AND a time to **look forward** to His Return and 2nd Advent!*

- **“Joy to the World”-** *Have someone in your group look up and be ready to read the lyrics. We know this as a Christmas carol, but Isaac Watts originally wrote this as poem to celebrate Jesus’ Return! How do the words resonate a little differently with that knowledge?*
- **Pray for one another! How do these readings inspire you to think, pray, and live into God’s promise of peace in this season?**



Pastor Scott, Kelli, Caleb & Josiah in front of The Church of The Nativity in Bethlehem, Christmas Eve 1999



Decorations in Bethlehem for the Christmas Eve 2000 Choral Festival



A Palestinian bagpipe band plays carols for Christmas Eve 2000 celebrations in Bethlehem's Manger Square



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