

Good evening. My name is Gabriel. I am one of the angels of the Lord. I thought I would begin by telling you a few things you may already know about angels. We were created on one of the six days of creation week. God did not tell you which day in His Word, but trust me, it was during creation week. We angels were originally all created good. Our purpose was to glorify God, carry out his will, and watch over Christians. There are different ranks of angels. There are the seraphims. They basically sing praises before God's throne. Then there are the cherubims. They are the protectors. They were the ones that told Adam and Eve that they couldn't come back into the Garden of Eden once they sinned. There was a statue of two of them over the ark of the covenant. They were keeping an eye on that box with the 10 commandments, Aaron's staff, and a jar of manna. There are other ranks of Angels as well. You have seen artists with pictures of us with wings and halos. Actually in our natural makeup we are spirits so we don't have wings or halos. Those two items just tell you something about us. We can travel quickly and are holy. Today, we basically watch over and protect Christians. Remember, the bible says, "He will give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. The last blessed service we do is to take the souls of Christians to heaven. Do you remember the story of the beggar Lazarus and how it says he died and the angels took him to be with Abraham? Anyway, since the word "Angel" means messenger, I have a message to bring to you tonight on this 3 Advent Service. I am going to sing a Christmas carol for you along with a large choir of angels. It goes like this, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Now that you have heard the song, I need to explain it to you. There are a lot of things I know, that I want to make sure you know this night. First off, I want to tell you that God's reputation was in danger, 2000 years ago. It appeared that God was letting so many things slide. Through at least 4000 years it seemed people were getting away with murder-not to mention adultery, theft, robbery, idolatry and all other crimes. Oh, once in a while God clamped down on people. There was the flood in Noah's day, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the exile of God's people into Assyria and Babylon. But for the most part it often seemed that the bad people got the best breaks, and God's punishments were pretty sporadic. But I knew that at Christmas, our God would have his honor restored. You see by sending his son to earth, God was going to get the obedience he demanded. This child was going to live a perfect life for his Heavenly Father. This child was going to die for all the disobedience that God had seemed to overlook. God's justice and holiness and mercy was going to be vindicated. And in this way, God would receive glory-glory in the highest, glory in heaven. At Christmas God's honor was restored.

Another item I know. I have seen the misery over the years that sin has brought on this world. As you know I've been around since the time of creation. I have seen Satan and other angels rebel and get cast out of heaven. I have seen Adam and Eve tempted and fallen into sin. I saw Adam and Eve hide from God, making clothing out of fig leaves. Why? Because they did not feel at peace in his presence. I have seen 4000 plus years of human history that could be defined by wars and interpersonal problems, not to mention rebellion against God. I knew that

any peace was temporary and fleeting. Not only did I know this, but even the heathen philosophers did. Jesus was born during a time called the Pax Romana. The doors of the temple of Janus, god of war, had even been locked, because the emperor boasted that he had brought such peace to the earth that they didn't need to call on their war god any more. But even the heathen philosophers pointed out that, though the emperor could provide peace from outward war, he could not give his subjects the true peace that they needed-inner peace, peace of mind and heart and conscience, freedom from worry. But I sang, on earth peace. I knew that the birth of Jesus would bring the true inner peace that people need. By having Jesus born in Bethlehem, God was extending his peace to the entire world, God was declaring an end of the war that had been going on between him and his creation. I knew as the Bible later said that through Jesus, God was going to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood shed on the cross.

What else did I know? I know that the greatest human need is for God's approval. Oh, we also have a great need for people's approval as well. Children get really messed up if they think one or both parents disapprove of them. Employees get frustrated, and spouses get really frustrated, when they think their spouse or employer disapproves of them. But to think that God disapproves of people-what a terrible thought. Yet that thought has driven about every single religion that has ever developed on earth. To get God's approval people have done ridiculous things. They have offered chickens and lambs and bulls and goats on altars. They have offered human sacrifices, and even their own children. They have inflicted pain on themselves, starved themselves, and denied themselves any kind of pleasure, hoping God would approve of them. I knew that all of this was folly. It didn't work. Human shortcomings could not be washed away by any of these methods. But I knew that the baby born in Bethlehem was the supreme evidence of God's approval. The fact that God sent His Son in human flesh was the surest sign that he had not given up on the human race. 30 years later when Jesus was baptized, God the Father said, You are my son, whom I love, with you I am well pleased. God the Father expressed his approval on his Son, and through Him, His approval on the human race. By having Jesus born in Bethlehem, God became every man's friend. Then on the cross, Jesus suffered his Father's disapproval, so that we might have his approval, have his favor rest on us. That's why I sang, To men on whom his favor now rests. People now are objects of God's approval, people in whom God is now well pleased, not because anything they have done, but because of what Christ has done.

As I look upon this baby, the son of God I stand in awe. True He looked like any other baby. He had no halo around His head. But he wasn't just the Son of Mary. He was also the Son of God, conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit. He is the one of whom the Father declared: "You are my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The one of whom Peter confessed: "You are the Christ the Son of the living God". The one who John said was "the first and the last, that was dead, but is alive and will live forever. He is both God and man, the God-man Christ Jesus. There was no one like him before or will be hereafter. He is special.

He Is not only special in his makeup, but very practical and useful in what He can do for you. There is no need which He cannot meet. He cleansed the lepers, healed the blind man, cured the man sick of palsy, gave hearing to the deaf and speech to the dumb, and fed thousands with 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish.

Further, there was no sin He couldn't forgive. To Zacchaeus in the sycamore tree, a crooked tax-collector, he promised salvation and assured him that the Son of man came to seek and save the lost. To the woman caught in the adultery, condemned to death by her own people, He declared when He saw her repentant hear: Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more. To sinners in every age, he say, "Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. "I am the door, by me if any man enter, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

There is no enemy of God He cannot defeat. To the young man at Nain, carried out of the city gate to be buried, He said, "Arise, and he arose. To Lazarus who had been dead 4 days He said: "Come out of that grave and he came out. To be sure they crucified Christ, pierced his side and heart, laid Him in a grave, put a seal on the tomb and surrounded him with soldiers. Yet when the angel rolled that stone away, Christ who had been crucified was already back to life, risen, and alive forevermore. He is alive today, working, blessing, healing, helping ,ruling, giving us daily bread, and forgiving us whenever we sin. Do you see why I am so upbeat as he comes into the world. I am supposed to watch over you. And his whole mission was to do the same for you. Now God's favor rests on you. If God hadn't known that you needed Him to come to earth and die for you He wouldn't have done it. If you didn't need what Jesus Christ had to offer He wouldn't have wasted the effort. You are the reason for the season.

Our society hasn't got the slightest idea what genuine real peace is all about -- peace of mind. For many, peace of mind means drinking enough until I'm so drunk that I'm numb and I no longer feel the pain anymore and I'm at peace. For other people it means hopping from one relationship to the next to the next, hoping that somebody will fill the void in my life. And they don't. They never do. For some it means being busy and staying busy all the time so at night I kind of collapse into bed so I don't have to think because any time I'm quiet, those haunting thoughts, and fears and sense of loneliness comes caving in on me and I don't like that feeling. For other people it means working and working, becoming a workaholic and overachieving so I can get all these attributes of success to prove to the world, "I'm somebody!" But inside I'm thinking, "I don't really feel like somebody." That's not peace of mind. Real peace of mind is knowing that God is your friend again, because of the work Jesus Christ would do for us on the cross of Calvary. Real peace is knowing that no matter what I do, God will never stop loving me. Real peace is knowing that no matter what happens, God will never leave me alone by myself. He'll always be with me. Real peace means no matter what happens, I know that God is going to give me the strength to handle it. Not an outward peace, but a peace of mind and conscience. Do you see why I am so happy tonight!

Join me now with the rest of the heavenly host in singing my Gloria in Excelsis! Amen.