

## Lutheran Service Book 358

## From Heaven Above to Earth I Come

Tuesday, December 24 at 6 PM

The Nativity of our Lord – 2013

Join us on Christmas Day at 10 AM, 12/29 at 10 AM, 12/31 at 7 PM

## RESPONSIVE READINGS and HYMN VERSES

This hymn was written by Martin Luther for his family's Christmas Eve devotions. Luther intended that stanzas 1-7 be sung by a man dressed as an angel and stanzas 8-15 by children.

P: The fall into sin was followed by the LORD's promise of the Savior: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring;

C: **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."** (Gen 3:15 ESV)

P: The LORD told Abram that one of his descendants would be the promised Savior:

C: **"...in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."** (Gen 12:3 ESV)

P: The LORD spoke through Jacob (Israel) to show us the path to Jesus (Gen 49:9 AAT):

C: **"Judah is a young lion" – pointing to the Savior coming from the descendants of Judah.**

P: **"You have come up from eating the prey, my son" – pointing to David, a descendant of Judah, whom the LORD used to defeat all of the enemies of Israel.**

C: **"He crouches and stretches out like a lion" – pointing to the peace enjoyed under Solomon.**

P: **"As a mature lion, who will rouse him?" – pointing to Jesus, who defeated sin and death!**

Sing as Follows → **Stanzas 1 & 2 – CHOIR; Stanza 3 – ALL**

**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.

P: Even before the Savior Came the LORD told us of the miraculous way in which He would come and exactly who He would be: *God with us!*

C: **"...the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."** (Isa 7:14 ESV)

P: Most children are born to *their parents*, but, since we are all sinners, the Savior was born "to us."

C: **"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given..."** (Isa 9:6 ESV)

P: The Savior has four compound names:

C: **"...his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."** (Isa 9:6 ESV)

P: Within each compound name are a *Divine characteristic* and an *earthly characteristic*. The following names are the *literal translations*, which also maintain the *original word order*:

(Divine) (Earthly)

C: **Wonderful Counselor – Jesus' teaching is wonderful!**

P: **God Hero – Jesus is the winner over sin and death!**

C: **Father Forever – Jesus is like a father by protecting, providing, and saving!**

P: **Prince of Peace – Jesus' saving work made peace between God and people!**

Sing as Follows → **Stanza 4 – CHOIR; Stanza 5 – WOMEN; Stanza 6 – MEN; Stanza 7 – ALL**

**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.

P: Lowly shepherds heard the angel make this wonderful announcement  
(Luke 2:10-14 ESV):

C: **"Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."**

P: The angel also told the shepherds how to identify the Savior:

C: **"...this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."**

P: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying:

C: **"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"**

Sing as Follows → Stanzas 8 & 9 – ALL; Stanzas 10 & 11 – CHOIR; Stanza 12 – ALL

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.

P: The shepherds, *wanting to see for themselves*, said to each other (Luke 2:15-20 ESV):

C: **"Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."**

P: Then, traveling quickly into Bethlehem, they *"found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger."* Then, having heard the message and seen the baby:

C: **"...they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child."**

P: *"And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them."*

C: **"But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart."**

P: Even *this Christmas* may the LORD enable us to ponder the reality of *our sin* and *the good news of our Savior*; then, *sorry for our sins* and *believing in Jesus as our Savior*, let us be like the shepherds:

C: **"...glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen..."**

Sing as Follows → Stanza 13 – CHOIR; Stanzas 14 & 15 – ALL

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.

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