

## *A Little Child Shall Lead Them*

**Charlie Brown:** "Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?"

**Linus:** "Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about.

Lights, please ...

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men.

That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown."<sup>\*</sup>

I was a second grader in Santa Barbara when **A Charlie Brown Christmas** first aired. I'd waited for weeks. I was a very big fan. Charlie Brown is charged with directing the Christmas pageant, and with buying a Christmas tree for the group. Things do not go well, of course. Charlie Brown concludes that commercialism has ruined Christmas. The climax comes with his anguished cry about the forgotten meaning of Christmas. Linus steps into a single spotlight – clutching his blanket – and recites Luke's account of the birth of Jesus (Luke 2:8-14). All conflicts are then resolved. The story has a happy ending and everyone breaks into "Hark the Herald Angels Sing."

Charles M. Schulz made no apologies for his Christianity. I am glad. We didn't have a Bible in our house in 1965, but we had every collection of Peanuts cartoon strips then in print. At least once each year Linus reminded me of what Christmas celebrates. I finally read the Gospels for myself 20 years later. There was one part I knew pretty well.

We are reminded in the New and Old Testaments that the coming of the Messiah was foretold many, many years before the first Christmas in Isaiah 11:1-2, 6 and 10: "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots...The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and a little child shall lead them...On that day the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples; the nations shall inquire of him, and his dwelling shall be glorious."

**Prayer:** Father thank you for the gifts of your Son and of your Holy Spirit; for the gifts of thoughtfulness and kindness, of hope and of joy that seem more abundant during this time of year. Thank you for continually showing us how much you love us, and for reminding us to pass that love along. Amen.

*Judson H. Orrick*

**Additional Scripture Readings:** Romans 15:4-13, Matthew 3:1-12

<sup>\*</sup>*A Charlie Brown Christmas script taken from: Mendelson, L., Schulz, C. M., Melendez, B., Guaraldi, V., Gillis, R.T., Benoit, D., McCann, C., ... Warner Home Video (Firm). (2008). A Charlie Brown Christmas. Burbank, Calif: Warner Home Video.*