

# Keep Calm: its Christmas!

## Opening text: Luke 2:1-14

**10-12:** *Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. 11 For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

“Do not be afraid”, said the angel to the shepherds. I think of the second world war posters that said “Keep Calm and Carry On”. That is why I called this message: “Keep calm, its Christmas”.

The sight of angels appearing suddenly in the middle of the night must have been terrifying. Having the quietness of that night interrupted by words from another world, by glorious beings from another realm, must have been scary to say the least.

“Don’t be afraid”! – What was to follow that statement would be reason for great joy, but first the angels had to deal with the fear.

The angels faced a type of fear. At that time, Israel as a nation also faced fears.

Let us look again at verse 1:

*“And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered”*

### ***“In those days”***

Those were historical days. Nothing like that had ever happened. The whole known world was going to experience the impact of a decree from the then ‘ruler of the whole world’. Can you imagine the implications of such decree?

It meant the movement of huge amounts of people to their ancestral places, where records were kept. Can you imagine the logistical effort of such move, the inconvenience it posed?

It also meant control: because of the census, the empire now knew each name, occupation and financial status of every person in the empire. It meant in a very real way that every person was now known to the empire and therefore personally bound to that same empire. It also meant that everyone had to pay taxes to Rome.

It was part of what was known as *pax romana* – Roman peace. You were at peace with Rome provided you obeyed Rome.

In those days...

These were by no means days of peace but rather days of fear, days when the weight of Rome’s sword was made even more tangible on their necks.

## **1. God works in “those days”!**

Those were days of fear and instability but God was at work in those days.

Man plans his ways but God keeps His finger on history. Those were unparalleled and historical days but what made those days unparalleled was the fact that Jesus was born in those days! God uses history and God is in charge of time:

**Galatians 4:4** - *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law.*

God was in charge of time and the decree of Caesar only served the fulfilment of prophecy.

## **2. God brings peace in “those days”**

The angels said: “*do not be afraid*”. Caesar may have brought fear but Jesus was born and He is the Prince of peace and His Gospel is the Gospel of peace.

**John 14:27**: *Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

**Isaiah 9:7 New Living Translation (NLT)** - *His government and its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the Lord of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen!*

## **3. God speaks in “those days”**

V. 1 says that a decree went out into the whole world from the most powerful man in the world: Caesar. In those same days, Heaven also sent out a decree. The throne of the universe had something to say.

The silence of that night was interrupted with a decree from the God of the universe. It was a different decree, it was ‘*good tidings of great joy*’.

Keep calm: its Christmas – God made a decree that surpasses every other human decree. He has sent us Jesus and a Kingdom that is from above.

Hold on to His decrees over your life. It is what He said that matters.

## **Conclusion:**

Keep calm, its Christmas.

As believers in Jesus, Christmas is our party. We celebrate the birth of our Saviour. However, the world has been crashing our party and making it something that isn’t. No wonder then that, to so many, it is a time of stress, fear and anxiety. The world has hijacked the meaning of this season. No wonder people are stressed out – because this season should really be all about peace.

**V.14** “*Glory to God is the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men*”

Another reason people stress has to do with what's coming out of the governments of this world. Then there are wars and rumours of wars everywhere. Another thing that is happening in our time is a huge movement of people around the world through migration but also of refugees. The current displacement of peoples is a problem for which there will no immediate solution.

In many ways, our world isn't that different from those days when Jesus was born.

Let us remember that in these days, like in those when Jesus was born, God is working, God is still offering peace through the Prince of Peace and God is still speaking, God is still decreeing His word over our lives.

Ultimately, history will only serve prophecy and what God said will come to pass.

On earth peace, on your life peace. Keep Calm: its Christmas!