

The Message Viewers of 'A Charlie Brown Christmas' Can't Cancel

Read Time: 3 Minutes 5 Seconds

No matter what age you may be, the child in all of us comes out when "A Charlie Brown Christmas" is shown on television during the holiday season. It is a Christmas tradition, and the timeless classic and beloved holiday tradition made its television debut on this day in 1965—57 years ago.

Fox Lifestyle reporter Kerry J. Byrne recently wrote, "'A Charlie Brown Christmas' continues to warm the spirits of millions of people around the world each holiday season. ... Several surveys place it as America's favorite Christmas special."

The show continues its run and popularity in today's society, despite an ever-growing hatred for God and for the gospel of Christ. In a culture where many entertainment companies wouldn't think twice about censoring any message that has to do with Jesus, there is a segment of "A Charlie Brown Christmas" that continues to reach the public for Christ. It's a scene that, if edited out, would tarnish the entire program.

Charlie Brown, the main character, gets frustrated about the Christmas holiday, especially with his "so-called friends" extolling the virtues of commercialism. He finally gets fed up enough to exclaim, "Is there anyone who can tell me what Christmas is all about?"

His good friend, Linus, comes to the rescue. "Sure, Charlie Brown, I can tell you what Christmas is all about. Linus proceeds to tell the Christmas story found in the Gospel of Luke, and he quotes:

He takes the stage by himself, under a spotlight, and proceeds to quote verbatim the Christmas story as it appears in the King James Version of the Book of Luke: *"And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. . ."*

The rest of the Christmas story includes:

"And in the same area there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And then an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were very afraid. But the angel said to them, 'Listen! Do not fear. For I bring you good news of great joy, which will be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you: You will find the Baby wrapped in strips of cloth, lying in a manger. Suddenly there was with the angel a company of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men.'"

No Santa Claus, no department stores, no holiday trees, no want of real estate, no commercial racket, no shiny pink aluminum trees and no Eastern syndicate running the holiday (as Lucy reveals). Just the story of the birth of the Christ child and the shepherds rejoicing of this miracle.

And if you notice in that climactic scene, Linus, who is well known for the security blanket he carries, drops the blanket, which many believe is intentional. The most telling is the specific moment he drops it when he utters the words, "fear not."

Byrne wrote, "The genius of 'A Charlie Brown Christmas' was the way it channeled the looming sadness and anxiety that come with the holidays," Rolling Stone wrote in a 50th-anniversary retrospective of the Guaraldi recordings in 2015. Its timeless, best-selling soundtrack by the Vince Guaraldi Trio

tapped into that narrative seamlessly, with muted, melancholic jazz. The foundation of the program's popularity, however, is its open embrace of the birth of Christ—a fact curiously overlooked in most children's Christmastime specials about magical snowmen and flying reindeer."

Expectations for the CBS broadcast of the animated feature, produced by "Peanuts" creator Charles M. Schulz, were low for its success, with its somewhat "quirky animation, no laugh track and actual children—not trained voice actors—speaking for the characters.

But Byrne quoted Smithsonian Magazine about why Americans were drawn to "A Charlie Brown Christmas":

"On Thursday, Dec. 9, 1965, over 15 million households tuned in to judge for themselves. Nearly half of American television sets had watched what the network thought would be a flop."

Despite CBS' trepidations, the American public "absolutely adored 'A Charlie Brown Christmas' from the moment it reached their antennas.

And, the American public continues to embrace the holiday tradition, even with the Bible taking center stage. {eoa}

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