

## Daily Devotional, December 21, 2020 In Awe and Praise with the Angels

<sup>10</sup> But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. <sup>11</sup> Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. <sup>12</sup> This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." <sup>13</sup> Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, <sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:10-14 (NIV)

The greatest news ever spoken, the long-awaited fulfillment of the promise of the ages was about to be declared. When you think about it, the location is surprising. It was not in the temple courts or the palaces or Kings or Princes. It was not in a crowded stadium before hundreds of the wealthy or elite brain-trust of the day. It was on a starlit hillside that an angel, possibly Gabriel, appeared to a handful of simple shepherds loyally watching their flocks of sheep. It might be an odd thought until you remember that this is not unlike David or Moses before them. They too were shepherds that were called by heaven with news.

Gabriel hovered before them and the shepherds likely stood frozen or cowering in terror. When standing in the presence of a celestial being, sent by God with a purpose, I can only imagine how I would suddenly be reminded of my own sinfulness and unworthiness. The group stood cloaked in Heaven's glory as the angel spoke. To their shared relief his greeting was, "Do not be afraid...". And they were given a message of joy and wonder that had been awaited since Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Eden. The message was so long in coming that some doubted that it would ever come, but here it was.

The faithful messenger gave them a sign. The newborn Savior would be found wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in an animal's feeding trough. Before they could ask the obvious question of why a King would be found in such a place covered in such a way, the sky above and around them became instantly filled with countless angels. They were all singing praise to God and wishing peace to those with whom God is pleased-- those who love Him and yearned for His coming. It was as if Heaven could not contain the angels' praises. We are not told how long the show of praise lasted, but when the shepherds again found themselves alone, I'm sure they must have needed a pinch to see if they had been dreaming. They had been gifted with a glimpse of the glory of Heaven.

Today, Christians all over the world long for the return of their Lord and Savior. Someday we will stand in the presence of angels who will stand silent listening as we sing a song of praise for our salvation. We will joyously and faithfully praise Jesus as they did over Bethlehem centuries ago. Like the shepherds, they will sense our joy and not be able to fully understand it, for they have not been subjected to lives of sin and pain. Our praise will be for the completion of the plan to save humankind from sin. The angels cannot fully grasp this salvation because it is not available to them as Peter states in [1 Peter 1:12](#): <sup>12</sup> "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things."

Yet the angels seek to understand it as the shepherds sought the Messiah. And we will stand before and sit at the feet of the One Who humbled Himself by veiling His glory and power in our feeble flesh wrapped in swaddling bands. The Savior, Who humbled Himself at every turn all the way to the cross, will teach us about His mercy and grace. And He will listen as we and the angels once again sing His praises this Christmas

**Prayer: Lord Jesus - our ways are not Your ways. To us, Princes and Kings are born in palaces with the best doctors and many attendants. But You chose to be a constant example for us of humility and selflessness. You came to us as a servant. But there were countless legions of angels who heralded You the night of Your birth. And even then, you came to us common folk, not the aristocrats or most powerful. The angels have been faithful to carry out the plan that still amazes us. And we lift up prayers of thanks for loving us so deeply. Amen.**