

Joy to the World – Part 2: The Diary of Angels

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Intro:

Welcome back. I don't know about you but every other year I go through these cycles of humbug and giddy child.

The story of the ages. The greatest story ever told!

J.R. Tolkein said, "it's too good not to be true." Every other great story is an echo of the greatest story, the longing of the human heart to be reconnected to the divine in such a way.

Today we are continuing our eyewitness account of the Incarnation. The angels had the unique clarity of watching the Eternal God Jesus before he wrapped himself in flesh, and after he resurrected from death.

Turn to Luke 2:1-20

If we could read an angel's diary, what would it say?

- *Ill: Hark to Harold*
- *Ill: God's Rusty Merry Gentlemen*

Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

(scene change)

Luke 2:8-9

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night (protecting their valuables against anything that comes out of the darkness.) An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

- One angel. That's all it took. When was the last time you were terrified?
- When God actually shows up with his glory, it often exposes us.
- We've lived so long in the comforting ambiguity of the darkness that the glaring truth of God's perfection can expose us. It's so angular and sharp and bright that it's painful.
- The further our nation slides into darkness the more they hate the light and hate the children of the light because it's a rebuke to their freedom.
- It can be terrifying to truly see ourselves have the brilliant floodlights of heaven reveal us...
- But that humility is both painful and liberating.
- This is good news for people that love life, the light, love the goodness, love justice, love honor, and true beauty.

1 Thessalonians 5:5

For you are all children of light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or the darkness.

- This is the beauty of Christmas. The King of Light has come back to take earth's throne after the sons of men have fumbled it.
- Maybe at this particular moment you feel like a sojourner deep in the foreign lands of tragedy and evil, maybe the wild things are collecting around you, (people doing evil)!
- I just want to remind you the darkness is terrified at the coming invasion of your King. They're terrified at the King whose eyes are like blazing with fire. They're terrified at his hard justice. They're terrified at losing their power and control. His truth and courage.
- But the children of the light are used to living under the intense gaze of his truth.
- "He cuts off every branch that doesn't bear fruit." Not to destroy us but to lead us into deeper communion with himself.
- His Majesty of Heaven. He has no rival. No one can stand in his presence. And no one can accuse him of doing them wrong. His judgment is perfect and unclouded. He is not mocked. He is not deceived. His ways are patient and unwavering.
- 400 years after the last prophet Zechariah spoke, 400 years of cold silence from heaven, and barren hopes, and godless rulers crushing -- God what's taking so long? -- 400 years of exile...Finally, the penetrating light of heaven bursts through heaven's firmament.

Luke 2:10-11

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy (party, get footloose, let it rip) for all the people (people groups / tribes)

- Not a white man's religion
- In 2010 Pew Research showed 60% of global Christianity is embraced in the global south
- And in the global North Christianity is growing fastest among non-whites like China, Iran and India and all of which are openly hostile to Christianity
- Even today the light is still breaking through...the hope of heaven, His Majesty of Heaven is still punching holes in the darkness.

Today in the town of David (telegraphing Biblical prophecy) a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. (Ruler) This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

- Heaven is breaking in to authenticate this particular child’s birth. The ruler of ages.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God

- The Bible continually refers to God as the Lord of Hosts! Extensive entourage. This makes him a really important person.
- You wouldn’t expect to see the president of Tyson chicken out on the factory floor pulling levers on a machine.
- He doesn’t need to do the work.
- The President of the United States has an extensive repertoire of resources to aid him... legal aids, military generals, couriers, deputies, press secretaries
- Majesty of Heaven. His musical aids.
- Heaven’s praise team is spilling across the banister saying “you have no idea...”
- Like Jimmy Fallon’s backup band—The Roots. The musicians set the vibe.
- The inauguration of a new era. We got new music.
- They bring the culture! God’s bringing the Uptown Funk.
- This is a celebration of the King and his indescribable beauty.

and saying,¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

- Wake up people! This is pretty awesome! There was no subtlety to it.
- Nothing in this message is indicating that this baby is the Eternal God! Though there were premonitions of it. Isaiah, David, Daniel
- **Slide: Isaiah 9:6-7; Psalm 16:10; Psalm 89; Daniel 9:13-14**
- **Two novelties** to this; two things have never happened before.
- **1)** When do you ever see **an entire choir of angels** show up in the OT? We almost always see angels by onesies and two sees. When do we ever see a platoon of angels on earth? The fanfare is peculiar.
- **2)** embedded in the message, **A “Savior”** has been born
- **Isaiah 43:11** I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no savior.
- The Angels watch eternal God take off His Majesty coat and put on his waders and step down into humanity.
- **John 1:1,3,**
In the beginning was the (Logos), and the (Logos) was with God, and the (Logos) was God...Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made...The (Logos) became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his

glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, **they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child**, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

Most of this morning I’ve just been retelling the story of the Incarnation: The story of the ages. The greatest story ever told! Wrap up with...

A couple thoughts from an angel’s diary: (Rusty & Harold’s diary)

- 1. Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor! He is wise beyond your comprehension!**
If you feel confused or lost this morning. His infinite mind is your guide, and he is your ever-present companion. Your helper and advocate. The angels could tell you...
- 2. Jesus is called the Mighty God! He has no rival.**
If you feel overpowered by grief, accusation, devouring evil. Call out to him. And he will answer you. His justice is sure to come. It spans the ages of human history. It leaps across the threshold of time. But he will surely come with all his incredible light—your enemies will melt in the heat of his eternal love. And nothing will again separate you from the goodness of his rulership. The angels could tell you...
- 3. Jesus is one with the Everlasting Father. His love is without end.** *“I and my father are one”* Jesus is the perfect expression of the Father’s love for you. If you feel a longing for deeper connection with God, his greatest gift is to be with you. That’s what Christmas is. Incarnation. Not tinsel and trinkets. He loves his children. You never age out of being loved by Daddy! The angels will tell you...
- 4. Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He brings all things into order.**
Imagine the turmoil of an orchestra tuning their instruments. They are in discord. They are all playing their own thing. But when they all follow the direction of the Orchestral conductor, they synchronize. God’s inviting you to stop playing your own music...

Ministry Song: All Hail King Jesus