

Angels Everywhere

“In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock at night.

And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood near them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

And so the angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people...’”

Luke 2:8-10 (NASB)

“ Do not neglect hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.”

Hebrews 13:2 (NASB)

As a child, my notion of angels was of beings in heaven who were dressed in white sheets, glowing faces, halos above their heads, with large wings on their backs, singing all day long as they strummed on harps. After decades of studying the Bible, I have learned they do much more than sing.

Nowhere in the Bible are angels depicted as having wings, harps, white robes, or glowing faces. In fact, when they appear on earth, they look human in every sense (Hebrews 13:2).

Yet, when we put out our nativity scenes, they almost always include angels in white robes, halos above their heads, located in the stable—when the Bible tells us they were out in the fields with the sheep and the shepherds. So, on our inaccurate depictions of the nativity scene goes.

Getting to our text in Luke 2:8-10, we are inspired by the fact

that the first group of people to whom the Lord declared the news of the arrival of Messiah were the lowly shepherds. Only Luke tells of the angelic annunciation to the shepherds. Typical of Luke, as he tells many stories of lower class people encountering Jesus during His 3 ½ years of ministry.

We are told that during His ministry the common people heard Him gladly (Mark 12:37). Even in death the repentant thief is made a member of Jesus’ kingdom. So, it is not surprising that the first eyes to see the King of Kings and Lord of Lords belong to the shepherds.

Today it is the same. Our churches are not filled with the rich and famous. Rather, the sheep of the Good Shepherd are mostly from the middle and lower classes of society. Yet, we must keep in mind what the hymn writer Joseph Hart penned:

“None are excluded thus but

those, who do themselves exclude.”

All individuals of every class or station in life are welcome. Yet the simple fact remains that it is usually the poorer you are, the more likely it is that you will come to the child of Bethlehem and receive the gift of eternal life.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray;
cast out our sin and enter in;
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels,
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Emmanuel!

- Phillips Brooks

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