

THE ANGELS NEVER SAID
A Christmas Thought
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There are so many who claim to speak for God these days. I've been guilty of it myself. But so many conflicting messages can't possibly come from one Author who never lies. So who does speak for God?

We have some direction from God on whom to believe. In the Old Testament, God spoke to His people directly, through divine messengers called angels. He also communicated through prophets, even sometimes through nature. In the New Testament, His church was given the five-fold ministry. But in the transition between the New and the Old, at the change between Grace and Law, at the turning point of time, God sent divine messengers again. Resounding down through countless celebrations of the birth of a Savior are the messages from the angels.

Listen closely to what they never said.

Listen while they speak to Mary in the first chapter of Luke. The joyous news is proclaimed of her selection to be the mother of Jesus. She has found favor and will give birth to an eternal King. The Holy Ghost itself will overshadow and impregnate her. And all of this will happen, though she has never known a man.

But the angels never said, having God inside her would be easy. They just said delivering salvation, to a lost and dying world, would bring her blessings. They never said what was inside her would be well received. They never warned her that her heart would be bound to what she delivered. It would be broken, as what she had to give was ultimately spit upon, trampled underfoot, and mocked. When she risked her life to bring salvation, the angels never told her the vast majority wouldn't care. Make no mistake, she did risk her life.

In Mary's time, being espoused to one man but giving birth to another's child was a probable death sentence. So hear what the angels say to her wronged fiancé. Listen as they tell Joseph, in the first chapter of Matthew, that God Himself had usurped him. He was not to fear taking Mary as his wife. She was faithful, and had always been so. There was just one thing. Contrary to Jewish custom, the son to be born was not to bear Joseph's name. It was not his child.

The angels never told Joseph, that any other name would suffice. If he wanted to speak to God, regardless of God's age, he'd have to do so using the name of Jesus. If he needed help, He could ask Jesus. If He wanted to know what would happen in time to come, he would need to speak to Jesus. He never really had a right to claim the boy as his son. But he was given the right to call him his Salvation.

To the shepherds awake in the night, came a heavenly host. Listen as they speak to guardians of the flock in the second chapter of Luke. These were the first to hear of a possible end to sorrow. They were told where to find God and how to identify him. To them, it was revealed that a manger filled with hay would be the first king sized bed.

But the angels never told shepherds, they had brought them great joy. No indeed! They came only with tidings of where and how great joy could be found. The end to sorrow had been forever made available that night. But the shepherds had to leave their comfortable surroundings, surrender their sleepless nights, and go find it. They had to

leave behind what gave them their identity and get themselves into the presence of God. The great joy was not found where they normally existed.

Sin within us, always has and always will, cause us to fear what is holy. The prophet prostrated himself before God to cry, “Woe is me, for I am a man of unclean lips.” We identify, for we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. So men of old came trembling, as we come trembling, to extend the wreckage of our lives as an offering to a pure God. We know our lives are unfit to offer a King, but it’s all we have.

So a lonely God came to our world to reconcile us to Himself. He came to create a cover for what offends His holiness. He offers to cover our nakedness with righteous blood. Since He came, we can now ask. Now that He’s been here, He can now be faithful and just to forgive us our sins. All that hope, and all that blessing, was contained in words His messengers failed to utter long ago.

You see, the angels never told anyone, they would ever need to fear God again. Because of that night, we can now come boldly before the throne of grace. If we listen close, we can hear the angels’ words once more.

“Fear not!”