

Luke 2:8-14

December 24, 2009 – CHRISTMAS EVE

An Angel's View of Christmas

⌘ **All my longing (vv.8-10)**

⌘ **All my loving (vv.11-14)**

In the name of Jesus, God's Gift from above, dear children of the heavenly Father:

The Holy Spirit tells us through the Apostle Peter, *“Even angels long to look into these things.”* (1 Peter 1:12 NIV) We do know what the angels said that first Christmas Eve because the Holy Spirit recorded their words through Luke. And from Scripture we also know what they've been watching in ages past. Angels have looked into the things of God that led to that first Christmas Eve. Let's go to Bethlehem, not as inn keepers or even as the shepherds. Let's fly in the skies to see **An Angel's View of Christmas**. The speaker may be imaginary. But his Christmas message still rings true for us today.

⌘ **All my longing (vv.8-10)**

We were so excited that cold December night, like kids behind the curtain of their first play. “Shhh! Be quiet everyone! You might wake the sheep!” We all tried not to laugh. Michael is always cracking everyone up. He signaled a few more minutes, then it would be time for our angel chorus like none heard before. We could hardly wait. You see, we had been waiting centuries already.

In the darkness looking down on the shepherds and their flock with Bethlehem only a few football fields away, I had time to recall so much that led up to this holy night. Much of it was sadness, darkness and gloom; I almost forgot why we were there. It might have started raining from my tears. You know how joy and sadness can overflow your heart all at the same time.

We were there when God laid the earth's foundation, marking off dimensions and stretching a measuring line across it. He set it so solid the earth cannot be moved unless by the hand of its Creator. God will warm it up and cool it as He desires. And no one can stop God. You should have heard me *“while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy”!* (Job 38:4-7 NIV)

And you should have seen that lovely pair of creatures God made to tend His garden. He created us to care for them, for all of you. They were like watching the most beautiful love story, the kind that just melts your heart. But the tragedy that struck almost tore out the heart of every angel left in heaven.

You see, some angels rebelled. Satan led rebel forces against our Creator, the kind and loving God of heaven and earth. But Satan lost. God threw the devil and all the demons *“into gloomy dungeons to be held for judgment.”* (2 Peter 2:4) But they were like junkyard dogs on a chain, still able to do some serious damage. Satan tempted Adam and Eve. God is good and loving; He never does any wrong. We could not understand why God allowed this. We could only watch as their loving relationship with God and each other was shattered by sin. God drove them from Eden and set high ranking angels as cherubim to guard the gate to paradise. You can never have your heaven on earth. God has a better way.

We could see and hear God's way down below as Mary cried out giving birth to Jesus. She was a virgin. All of us angels can tell you that for sure. But the Holy Spirit gave Mary the Son of God inside her virgin womb. And we were about to see God's promise to Adam and Eve come true. Someday one of Eve's Descendants would crush the serpent's head. After all those years of waiting, **All my longing** for God to deliver all of you was finally coming true! And now it was time for...

⌘ **All my loving (vv.11-14)**

Silence for us just a little longer. But now God let one of us shine brightly across the sky down to the shepherds below. They thought it would be just another quiet night with their smelly sheep. I shook

my head in wonder while they tried to hide as if we would not see them behind a rock. That's what Adam and Eve tried to do! Hide! You cannot hide from God. His angels like me are always watching, especially the angels that guard the little children. ***"Their angels in heaven always behold the face of [the] Father in heaven."*** (Matthew 18:10) But God has a way to take your fear away.

His powerful Word does it every time. Just as He came to Adam and Eve in the Garden and spoke His Word of comfort and peace, so God gave our angel spokesman just the right words to take away the fear of the shepherds down below us. The angels said, ***"Do not be afraid."*** You could see them start to relax and really listen. They never saw anyone fly like that before! ***"I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."*** Do you think they were wondering, "Why us? We're just shepherds!" But they didn't have time to get afraid again. The angel continued: ***"Today in the town of David,"*** right close to where they were grazing their sheep, ***"a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."*** They knew ***"the Lord"*** as the Savior-God of the Old Testament. And they knew ***"the Christ"*** as the Deliverer God promised through the prophets of old like Isaiah in your Christmas Eve service tonight.

Remember what Isaiah said? ***"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this."*** (Isaiah 9:6-7 NIV)

That's why we love God so much. He really loves all of you! To make sure the shepherds would know their Savior, the angel said, ***"This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."*** That Baby is the greatest sign of all for you sons and daughters of Adam. The Baby shows you cannot undo your own rebellion against God. Look at how many times you've been impatient and unkind just these last few days. You want to be good at Christmastime, but everyone who is honest is disappointed in himself. And if you can only see the sins of others, you're even more of a disappointment to God. But He still sent us to tell this great and mighty wonder.

Now it was our turn! We all turned on our light. We don't need candles or batteries or nuclear reactors because we shine with the light of God. When He tells us to shine, we can burn a hole in your best sunglasses! It's a good thing the angel got the shepherds ready. To all our bright shining light we added a song you call, "Gloria in Excelsis Deo." At the top of our angelic voices we all sang: ***"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men."***

We can't stop praising God because He can do whatever He wants. That's His ***glory***. He can condemn the guilty and forgive the guilty as He desires. We were so glad to see how He threw Satan out of heaven and how this Baby Jesus grew up to shed His blood and wash away the sins of all you people down below. That's what He means, ***"a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."*** When you put your faith in the one true God, the faithful one who deserves our praises and yours, you have ***peace and good will*** in your heart that no one can take away.

Our job was done when we sang ***Gloria in Excelsis Deo***. We all had to go away into heaven and keep watching what would unfold below. But we cheered amongst ourselves when ***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."*** (Luke 2:15 NIV) Maybe you've had "shepherds" trying to tell you all this before. Well, remember what the first angel said, ***"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you."*** Don't wait until tomorrow to receive Him. Take Jesus in your arms today. Hold Him close to your heart tonight like a tiny baby that you love so dearly. That's the way I feel, the way all of us angels feel. ***All my loving*** is wrapped up in Jesus and what He did for all people. Now it's your turn to be a shepherd. Run with the Good News! ***"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men."*** Amen!