

## Glory to God

✧ for the lowest...in the highest

*How long will this take?* That's a question children ask when there are presents to open at home. Or teenagers when it seems the folks are visiting too long again at church. Or city officials and business leaders with agendas to fill and bottom lines to fill out. Or pastors and priests with busy churches.

*How long will this take?* was not a question for the shepherds staying out in the fields around Bethlehem. They were used to long nights guarding their sheep from predators and the storms that could scatter the flock in heartbeat. They had no presents at home to open, no keys for the car from their folks, no agendas, no budgets, no busy parishes to manage. What they had were hearts like ours weighed down with worry and care about what's coming on the world. Their conquered land made them hope for relief from a Messiah. Then as now our hopes and dreams are so earthbound, so shortsighted.

The hustle and bustle always wants to crowd out Christmas. Only a short walk away, Jerusalem thronged with souls all wrapped up in themselves. Maybe much like our cities today? Men who thought they were God's gift to women? Women feeling they're God's gift to men? Church people working so hard for God? Every heart then as now all wrapped up in glory for self and not for God.

Don't we prove this by our own frustrations? Problems at home, school or work, in family or relationships always find us asking first: "What will I do?" We're still so in need of Christmas.

Christmas came first, not to a city bursting with personal opinions, but to that tiny town of Bethlehem and the lowest of the low. Darkness was shattered by the brilliant glory of the Lord lighting up the night sky. None of the shepherds could ask, *How long will this take?* They were terrified! We startle at thunder. The appearance of that holy angel would smash the pride of any stout hearted soldier.

But listen to his winsome words. They heal the oldest heartache of humans after disobedience to God. Remember what Adam said? "***I was afraid.***" Rebellion against God will do that to us all. But the angel said to the humble hearted shepherds as to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph – literally: ***Stop being afraid. Do not be afraid. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy, which will be for all people: Today in the town of David, a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.***"

This ***good news*** is meant to take away all fear, calm all anxiety, settle every worried heart with God's greatest Gift of a Savior born for you. The high and mighty are brought low. The lowly are lifted up. God has come to do what we could not do for ourselves, to save us from our sins. And why ***a baby***? Well, who can run from a baby? Who doesn't want to hold that little one close to your heart?

The army of heaven couldn't wait. For centuries those angels who were created to serve God's people, had to watch the misery of humanity messing up their lives. Now God was finally keeping His promise to crush the serpent's head with the Seed of the woman. The virgin had God's Son. No time to ask, *How long?* ***Suddenly, there was with the angel a multitude from the heavenly army, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind."***

Hurting hearts want more peace over anxiety and assurance of God's love. We'll save that for Christmas morning and Sunday worship the day after tomorrow. But think of this now if anyone asks, *How long will this take?* It will take an eternity of praise and thanks to give **Glory to God**. Voices perfected in holiness will want to keep singing with all God's holy angels and humble, believing hearts who received God's Gift of mercy in the manger. **For the lowest in the highest – Glory to God!** Amen.