

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL 2011, Part 3:

The Angelic Conflict

The Christmas event in Luke 2 is filled with a plethora of truths that are often overlooked in modern celebrations of Christmas. We, in the West, tend to get *wrapped up* in the festivities—the parties, the drinking, the lights, and all of the holiday cheer. There certainly is nothing *inherently* wrong with these things, that is unless they become the substance rather than accident. The substance must be Christ, and the accidents are all of the overt expressions of gratitude for God's Grace instantiated in Jesus Christ, which certainly can include the enjoyment of the holiday festivities. It is very easy for Christmas to become Evil simply by making it *all* about the family and festivities. Evil is privation, the lack of what should be there, namely Jesus Christ and all of those grand truths related to the incarnation. If Christ is the Reason for the season, then there is nothing wrong with celebrating the finite goods and creature comforts as unto our Infinite God.

In the first Christmas essay I touched on the *Night Before Christmas* as recorded in Hebrews. This is on a totally different level than stockings, sugar-plums, and St. Nick with Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, and Vixen. In Hebrews we get the *Night Before Christmas* in Heaven where God the Son gives a "farewell" to the Father as He takes on a human body, "A body you have prepared for Me," Heb. 10:5. I will go into this in more detail in our Wednesday evening's Bible class. While there is nothing wrong with the festivities—especially, all of the goodies—of Christmas, there is everything wrong with them if they *replace* what really happened. It is Evil for Santa and company to *displace* Jesus Christ.

In the second Christmas essay I talked about volition and the saturation of negative volition around the original Christmas day in Luke 2. It is mindboggling how Evil can affect masses of people without them even realizing it. Consider the vast majority of Jews at "Christmas." Why didn't God give them the privilege of being part of the incarnation celebration? They, like the rest of society, were engulfed in Evil. Evil is the most difficult thing to detect and root out of one's life. Very very few even understand what evil is. Satan wants to keep it that way.

In this essay I want to briefly focus on a third element that is often lacking in modern views of Christmas: understanding of the angelic conflict. Right in the middle of the narrative in Luke 2 we have all of these angels who suddenly *appeared* to the shepherds out in the fields. There is no indication that these angels were hovering over them. I believe an innumerable company of angels suddenly appeared standing side by side with the shepherds and extending as far as they could see throughout the fields. What's more is that they are spoken of in military terms; the "host" in verse 13 is *stratia* (στρατιά), a military word. This is related to the angelic conflict. In fact, the whole Christmas "story" is directly related to the angelic conflict and God's promise concerning the seed of the woman in Genesis 3:15. The elect angels are absolutely ecstatic about the second person of the Trinity becoming man. They praise God for this marvelous sight. What a God! What Grace! What a unveiling of Satan's lie that God is not worthy to be worshipped! Look at what God is doing! He became man to save man! Furthermore, He did not come to the glorious Temple or to the throne of Caesar. He came to the humble and the outcasts. Why? Because they were positive to God. He was their Ultimate Good. They were the ones privileged to see and even participate, at least in thought, in the doxology of the angels.

Luke 2:10 And the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² "And this *will be* a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths, and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

In Christ,

Pastor Don