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Angels

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Angels

Abstract

"After watching and listening to the heavenly host, the shepherds did what any spectator at an amazing event should be moved to do: they turned and ran to Christ."

Posting about the spectacular show that occurred at Jesus' birth from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/angels/>

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 [inallthings.org/angels/](https://allthings.org/angels/)

Josh Matthews

Luke 2:13-14: “And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”

Modern culture is the era of the massive spectacle. Each promises to amaze us, to be bigger, better, more awesome than anything seen before. People flock to watch the most spectacular events they can find—dazzling Fourth of July fireworks shows, special-effects superhero blockbusters, music festivals with tens of thousands of fans singing together in exultation, multi-million dollar Olympic openings perfectly choreographed and extravagantly executed.

All pale in comparison to the heavenly host that appeared at our Lord’s birth.

This astounding show appeared unannounced—no marketing, no PR strategizing, no ticket sales. Unlike today’s heavily promoted shows, there was an abundance of performers and only a few viewers, none of whom were cultured aesthetes. And yet it was one of the greatest spectacles in history, fantastical in appearance, operatic in emotional effect, astounding in its visual and aural magnitude.

Luke’s text makes us wonder about the scene. How many angels appeared in that multitude? What did it sound like? What did it look like? The best we can do is summon forth the most powerful visuals we’ve seen at science-fiction films and the most overwhelming emotions we’ve experienced at rock, jazz, or classical-music concerts. These, however, barely approximate what the shepherds experienced.

It’s fitting, then, that the theme of their awesome show was hope. The heavens and the earth, the angels say, are united under God’s sovereignty. The earth, as a result, will be a place of peace and “good will,” thanks to the work of Christ our Savior, the God now incarnate as a man.

Our own modern spectacles make similar kinds of promises—some even explicitly depict or sing of a utopian peace—but these promises are cheap and sterile compared to what the angels announce in Luke’s gospel. These spectacles, fun and fantastic though they are, tell us that we are very wealthy because we can afford expensive visual or pyrotechnic displays. They tell us that we can put our hope in technological advancement. They tell us, as with the Olympics, that the world is a joyful, global village. And when they are over, the good feelings that accompany them go away and we again realize that the world isn’t so great, so we long for the next spectacle.

The angels, by contrast, announce an everlasting hope. They gave the poor shepherds the spectacle of the ages, a hint at the aesthetic possibilities and glorious wonder of the new heavens and the new earth. Imagine being in that spectacle, praising God endlessly, experiencing what “peace” and “good will” mean forever. After watching and listening to the heavenly host, the shepherds did what any spectator at an amazing event should be moved to do: they turned and ran to Christ.

This is the hope to which Christmas, and the angels, point us.