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# First Baptist Dyersburg • Sermon Notes

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## Shepherds Quake at the Sight!

Message #2 in the sermon series

***Silent Night, Holy Night***

Sunday, December 7, 2025

Mike Hickman, Senior Pastor

**Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight;  
Glories stream from heaven afar,  
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia!  
Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born!**

<sup>8</sup> That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. <sup>9</sup> Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, <sup>10</sup> but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. <sup>11</sup> The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! <sup>12</sup> And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

<sup>13</sup> Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,

<sup>14</sup> "Glory to God in highest heaven,  
and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

<sup>15</sup> When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

<sup>16</sup> They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. <sup>17</sup> After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. <sup>18</sup> All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, <sup>19</sup> but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. <sup>20</sup> The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them. (Luke 2:8-20, NLT)

**What an incredible scene this must have been for the shepherds to see this angel with the glory of God surrounding him. The words of the angel and the hosts joining him were to point all the attention away from themselves and put it completely on Jesus, the Son of God. We can see the reason for this in Hebrews.**

Long ago God spoke many times and in many ways to our ancestors through the prophets. <sup>2</sup> And now in these final days, he has spoken to us through his Son. God promised everything to the Son as an inheritance, and through the Son he created the universe. <sup>3</sup> The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. When he had cleansed us from our sins, he sat down in the place of honor at the right hand of the majestic God in heaven. <sup>4</sup> This shows that the Son is far greater than the angels, just as the name God gave him is greater than their names.

### *The Son Is Greater Than the Angels*

<sup>5</sup> For God never said to any angel what he said to Jesus:

“You are my Son.  
Today I have become your Father.”

God also said,

“I will be his Father,  
and he will be my Son.”

<sup>6</sup> And when he brought his supreme Son into the world, God said,

“Let all of God's angels worship him.”

<sup>7</sup> Regarding the angels, he says,

“He sends his angels like the winds,  
his servants like flames of fire.”

<sup>8</sup> But to the Son he says,

“Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever.  
You rule with a scepter of justice.

<sup>9</sup> You love justice and hate evil.

Therefore, O God, your God has anointed you,  
pouring out the oil of joy on you more than on anyone else.”

<sup>10</sup> He also says to the Son,

“In the beginning, Lord, you laid the foundation of the earth  
and made the heavens with your hands.

<sup>11</sup> They will perish, but you remain forever.  
They will wear out like old clothing.

<sup>12</sup> You will fold them up like a cloak  
and discard them like old clothing.

But you are always the same;  
you will live forever.”

<sup>13</sup> And God never said to any of the angels,

“Sit in the place of honor at my right hand  
until I humble your enemies,  
making them a footstool under your feet.”

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, angels are only servants—spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation. (Hebrews 1:1-14, NLT)

The preacher marshals these Old Testament quotations to provide a clear picture of the status of the angels relative to the Son. The Son sits at the preeminent position in the universe, with the angels in an inferior position as the servants who worship Him. The Son has an eternal throne, from which the angels are sent to minister. God has never spoken such proclamations as found in 1:5, 8-13 to the angels. Rather, His proclamations concerning them (1:6-7) show the angels' inferiority. The Son alone is the favored object of divine decrees expressing royalty. By the end of this string of texts, no one in the author's audience can doubt the superiority of the Son over the angels. (George Guthrie, *Hebrews: The NIV Application Commentary*, page 71)

### **Let's go back to the scene in the fields outside of Bethlehem between the angels and shepherds:**

<sup>9</sup> Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, <sup>10</sup> but the angel reassured them. “Don't be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. <sup>11</sup> The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!

**What is the reaction of the shepherds to the angels? Our focus carol this season summarizes the scene like this: shepherds quake at the sight; Glories stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing alleluia!**

**The shepherds are indeed seeing angels who are created spiritual beings from heaven. But more importantly, they are also seeing the glory of God streaming down from heaven as well.**

<sup>9</sup> And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. (Luke 2:9, ESV)

This glory of God is frequently mentioned in the Old Testament. It is mentioned again in the New Testament in connection with the annunciation of Jesus' birth to the shepherds: "And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear" (Luke 2:9). God's glory was also evident at the transfiguration of Christ (Matthew 17:2), and we find in the heavenly city yet to come that "the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb" (Revelation 21:23).

It is very appropriate that God's revelation of Himself should be accompanied by such splendor and brightness, for this glory of God is the visible manifestation of the excellence of God's character. The greatness of God's being, the perfection of all His attributes, is something that we can never fully comprehend, but before which we can only stand in awe and worship. Thus, it is appropriate indeed that the visible manifestation of God be such that we would be unable to gaze fully upon it, and that it would be so bright that it would call forth both great delight and deep awe from us when we behold only part of it.

Quite amazingly, God made us to reflect His glory. Paul tells us that even now in our Christian lives we all are being "changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another" (2 Cor. 3:18; Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:15). Though we do not now find ourselves surrounded by a visible light, there is a brightness, a splendor, or a beauty about the manner of life of a person who deeply loves God, and it is often evident to those around such a person. In the life to come, such brightness will be intensified, so that as we reign with Christ, it seems that we also will receive an outward appearance that is appropriate to that reign and to our status as image bearers of God and servant of the Lord Jesus Christ (Prov. 4:18; Dan. 12:3; Matt. 13:43; 1 Cor. 15:43). (Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine*, page 221)