

Glory to God in the Highest

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[0 : 0 0] A warm welcome to our service this morning, and a special welcome to any of you who may be visiting with us.

As we gather together in God's name, we pray that this word to us would be blessed. We're going to begin our service singing from Psalm 34.

Psalm 34, and from the beginning, four stanzas, which is one to seven. Psalm 34, one to seven.

God will I bless all times, his praise my mouth shall still express. My soul shall boast in God, the meek shall hear with joyfulness.

Exalt the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, he heard, and did me from all fears deliver. They looked to him and lightened were, not shamed were their faces.

[1 : 0 1] This poor man cried, God heard, and saved him from all his distresses. The angel of the Lord encamps, and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear, and them delivereth.

These verses from the beginning of Psalm 34. God will I bless all times, his praise my mouth shall still express. God will I bless all times, his praise my mouth shall still express.

God will I bless all times, his praise my mouth shall express. God will I bless all times, his praise my mouth shall hear with joyfulness.

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God will I bless all times, his praise my mouth shall express.

[2 : 5 7] God will I bless all times, his praise my mouth shall express.

Mensch, let us true hum■, let us bring ye Dak, let us pray.

God just round together in prayer that we will. Gracious God as we call upon your name may your glory be something that we would seek that we would ascribe to your glory as those who worship you ascribe to your glory you are the all glorious God who is God over all you are eternal unchangeable in your being you have no beginning and you have no end the question is asked by some who would seek to display their own knowledge who created God where did God come from and the very truth reminds us that you are God from all eternity without beginning and without end you are immeasurable as to the elements that belong to your character when you we talk of greatness who can measure the greatness of God when we talk of wisdom who can fathom the wisdom of God we can add to these thoughts and we will find ourselves researching a never ending pull of truth we pray that you would remind us of of the fact that you are

God and there is none other and our worship is consistent with our existence here in this world as creatures created by you for your own glory we pray for a measure of understanding of what that entails we seldom take time to take stock of our purpose in living here in this world sometimes we are so involved in the world or certain aspects of the world and our worldliness makes us believe that that is all there is to it even those who have a great mission to ensure that there is world peace and this is the reason for living that they would seek to bring peace into a world that is in a constant state of dis-peace not only do we see that in the lives of individuals who are restless and who are constantly seeking to find rest for their soul outside of

God and their restlessness will follow them all the days of their life there are others and they thankfully seek to bring peace between factors or people that are in dispute whether it is within families or within localities or within the world in which we live at an international level and we give thanks for the peacemakers and we give thanks for their endeavours future but we see the futility of what they're engaged in such as the sinful condition of fallen man that they demonstrate repeatedly the enmity that is so close to our heart that doesn't require much to stir it up so that such a spirit overtakes us and overwhelms us but nevertheless we give thanks to our God who is the

[8 : 17] God of peace and the God of all peace that we can pray and petition the heavens that you may demonstrate to us how all things are in your hands that you can show that to us even in the gospel how man by nature had fallen out with God had made himself an enemy of God and yet in your grace and in your goodness you made provision for us that we could make peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ and that you have opened such a way to us through the gospel so bless us today in the Lord Jesus Christ name bless us so that we may seek him out as our own saviour and that as we know him that we may love him and that he may demonstrate in us and to us that love that he has for us we pray for those who have yet to be reconciled to God and to live in a state of dispeace with God that they may understand the fragility of their humanity when they live here in this world whether they are at peace with their fellows or not that it is a terrible situation to be in to be in a state of dispeace with their

God and creator so hear our prayers on behalf of your people that their peace may be enriched and encouraged and that they may learn the injunction of your word which is to follow peace with all men that they through their witness and their testimony may direct others to the truth that they have discovered for themselves that the Lord Jesus Christ is the alone saviour of sinners and having discovered that truth the desire is to encourage others to seek him and to seek him early we pray for all the homes and families represented here today within the community and outside the confines of the community and its extended island the borders we pray

Lord that you would pour out your spirit upon us as a people remembering the nation of which we are part and all the nations that we form part of in this world we remember to you the royal household of kings queens and families we pray for your blessing to be imparted to them and that above all else whatever they see themselves to be that they may understand that while others may serve them that they are to serve you and that they are appointed vassals to that end we pray for the parliaments that govern in their name and we ask Lord for the parliament in Holyrood and in Westminster that those who are members of these parliaments that they would know the wisdom of looking outside of their own human resources to the measurable resources that are at their disposal in Christ which requires of them nothing other than to submit to him and be led by his truth and that that truth is the very thing that makes the people free we pray for the nations of the earth that are troubled at this time where there is war where there is all manner of conflict we pray for them remember those who are embroiled in it and ask that the peacemakers would as we prayed already would have power given to them to ensure that good may come of their endeavours pray for the parts of the world assailed by the elements some struggling because of lack of waters and under the power of flood pray for those who are starving those who are destitute the many millions of this world who are but one meal away from death think of the poor children who are born into such a world who suffer from malnutrition and ailments that our own western society has been able to contain many many years shall go and yet they succumb to these ailments daily we pray for forgiveness for the misuse of resources that is so prevalent in our day and generation the imbalance that is so obvious to the eye of any would choose to see it some have much disposable resources and income and they misuse and abuse the privilege that they have others they direct their resources to increase their machines of war they suppress the liberties of the peoples so that the knowledge of truth is denied them even the knowledge of the gospel there are close borders to the grace of christ in the sense that it is not permitted to be freely disseminated amongst the peoples and yet christ alone is able to give liberty so we pray for the resources that are necessary to disseminate the truth by means that are not thwarted by the machinations of the wicked that they would hear the news of christ jesus and believe in him to the saving of their soul

so remember us now as we gather in worship remember our children as they meet in sunday school we pray for them and ask your blessing to be accompanying your word to them remembering those who cannot be with us because of their own personal circumstances those who are suffering ill health we know at this time of the year there are many illnesses that are prevalent throughout our community we pray lord that you would encircle all such with a sense of your presence and grant to them the power of recovery pray for the grieving and the sorrowful as death makes inroads amongst us from time to time it is not just a voice that is fleeting and it is heard in passing the ramifications of what follows it remains with us for sometimes an immeasurable portion of time so we pray for healing for the hurt of those who are sorrowing watch over us we pray cleanse all sin in

Jesus name amen our boys and girls we're going to be looking today in the Sunday school at the account that we have in Luke's gospel of the birth of Jesus Christ we're going to be looking at that in our service today as well have you ever met an angel have you ever met an angel I'm sure if you did you would think that you would recognize an angel if you met it but the bible tells us that there are some times when we when we meet an angel or angels without us recognizing that they are angels and Jesus tells us that that is quite possible but whether we have such an experience or not whether we've met an angel unknowingly and we've not met an angel knowingly that is recognizing an angel then that doesn't mean that that there are no angels just because we've never met one or that we don't know if we've met one doesn't mean that angels don't exist or that they are not working in this world

[17 : 52] Jesus tells us that he has given them to the world to be an assistance to his people to minister to them to support them to speak to them in time of need and we believe that still is the case however it happens but most occasions that we find in the Bible where angels made themselves known one thing that was obvious was that those who met these angels were afraid they were afraid I wonder why that is I think possibly they're extraordinary beings God created them and there are different kinds of angels but they are messengers sent by God

I think that's probably the very thing that makes them stand out that the person who meets an angel knows that this is not an ordinary person an ordinary being and in the gospel account that we're looking at today an angel beginning at the first chapter there are a number of encounters a number of occasions that are spoken of when an angel comes and this chapter we're looking at chapter 2 in Luke an angel came to speak to shepherds and what the shepherd felt was feared what they felt was fear and the angel knew that they were afraid and yet every time that happened the angel didn't ignore their fear what he said was don't be afraid fear not don't be afraid the angel came to speak to

Zacharias came to speak to Joseph came to speak to Mary came to speak to the shepherds and each time this was the message don't be afraid and God even in that simple statement tells us he knows us he understands how terribly sensitive we are to things that are strange to us these angels live in God's presence and they come into the world at God's request God's instruction and they are familiar with God in a way that none of us are and yet they bow in his presence they are afraid of him in the sense that they worship him they revere him and they bow before him and then when an angel comes that's not

God and that's a creature not the creator but the creature is a holy creature a messenger from God and we're afraid of that messenger so I wonder what that says to you what it says to me that if the creature if the angel that is holy and speaking the words of God to us makes us feel afraid makes us fearful how much we should understand how a holy God is how wonderfully awesome that God is beyond our understanding somebody counted the words don't be afraid and they say there's one of these words for every day of the year I don't think that's quite true unless you include other constructions of the same truth but

God doesn't mean us to be afraid of him fear and being afraid are not the same thing fear has in it respect fear has in it homage acknowledgement understanding of things that are beyond our ability to appreciate but to be afraid has in it the element of of a slavishness a terror if you like of the unknown and God doesn't want us to be in the grip of that he wants us to know him and to understand him and to appreciate him and yet at the same time to honour him so that we recognise when he sends his messenger that is part of what he wishes us to appreciate well

[23 : 20] I hope that his word to you today will help you understand the privilege that we have when he sent to us his servants to tell us of one who came to save and to save us from our sins we're going to sing some verses from the psalm psalm 8 we're singing the whole psalm psalm 8 and we're going to sing the whole psalm how excellent in all the earth lord o lord is thy name who has thy glory far advanced above the starry frame from infants and from suckling's mouth thou did this strength ordain for thy force cause that so thou mightst the avenging fall restrain when I look up into the heavens which thine own fingers framed and to the moon and to the stars which were by thee ordained then say I what is man that he remembered this by thee or what the son of man that thou so kind to him should be for thou a little lower hast and than the angels made with glory and with dignity thou crown it hast his head we

Lord our Lord is thy name who excellent in only earth order Lord is thy name who has thy glory far advanced above the star we pray from from infants and from cyclings might thy greatest strength are gain for thy foes cause love soul and might the avenging full free strain when

I look up unto an end with thine own finger frame unto the moon and to his heart with
synth■ said hath ve■ sae vi ham sae hae thee dumping season fire for What the son of
man that I so kind to him should be.

For thou art a little, Lord, hast him than he was made.

With glory and with dignity, the crown it has is hate.

[27 : 14] Of thy hands works, and wisdom, Lord, all under speed to slay.

All sheep and oxen, yea, and bees, that in the field do stray.

Fouls of the air, face of the sea, all that pass through the same.

How excellent in all the air, Lord, our Lord is thy name.

Amen.

[28 : 44] A decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed. And this taxing was
first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.

And all went to be taxed, everyone into his own city. And Joseph also went up from
Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, and to the city of David, which is called
Bethlehem.

And so it was, Lord, of the house and the house and lineage of David. And so it was, that
while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid
him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over
their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the
Lord shone round about them.

[30 : 04] And they were sore afraid.

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, goodwill toward men.

And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds
said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is
come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger.
And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them
concerning this child.

And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the
shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

[31 : 38] And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had
heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

And so on. May the Lord add his blessing to his reading of his word, and to his name be
the praise. We're going to sing from Psalm 89.

Psalm 89, verse 13. Psalm 89, verse 13.

Thou hast an arm that's full of power. Thy hand is great in might, and thy right hand
exceedingly exalted as in height.

Justice and judgment of thy throne are made the dwelling place. Mercy accompanied with
truth shall go before thy face. O greatly blessed the people are, the joyful sound that
know.

[32 : 43] In brightness of thy face, O Lord, they ever on shall go. They in thy name shall all the day
rejoice exceedingly. And in thy righteousness shall they exalted be on high.

Because the glory of their strength doth only stand in thee. And in thy favour shall our horn and power exalted be.

For God is our defence, and he to us doth safety bring. The Holy One of Israel is our almighty King. These verses of Psalm 89.

Thou hast an arm that's full of power. Thy hand is great in might. Thou hast an arm that's full of power.

Thy hand is great in might. And thy right hand exceedingly exalted is in height.

[33 : 59] Justice and judgment of thy throne are made the dwelling place.

Many Lord. både O foartelar n bank etc. O God is your sovereign west the ile collectors of the miserable earth.

Amen. The Chelsea is now as rich as planned Tuner alleol autism. Most Blessed all the SQL are among the employers of the Dear Christian pastor. grateful össence of the Samuel restrictions and journal . Lead with whom thus ardesse shall go before my Villaheim. Allah the believes node in Mhm.

Wonderful Mother of this Day Israel. A joyful sound that know In brightness of thy face, O Lord, The ever-on shall go.

Then in thy name shall all the day Rejoice exceedingly, And in thy righteousness shall they Exalted beyond high.

[35 : 36] Because the glory of their strength Does only stand in thee, And in thy faith shall our born Unperfected be.

For God is our defense, And in thy grace shall the city bring, The Holy One of Israel, Is our almighty King.

Amen. We turn back to Luke chapter 2, And we read again verse 14.

Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, Goodwill toward men.

When I was going to school, Many of these passages from the New Testament That spoke of the birth of Jesus Were frequently brought to our attention.

[37 : 30] And they are words that speak to us Of the awesome wonder that belongs To the incarnation, To the birth of the Son of God Into the world.

When you look at the Gospels, You would think that each one of them Would share the same amount of detail Concerning the birth of Jesus.

But strangely, Only Matthew and Luke Have the most information Concerning the birth of Jesus.

That doesn't mean that the others, That Mark and John are not concerned With this as a fact.

Clearly, It is a fact upon which they build. That the key thing for them Is that came a point When in the fullness of time, When God's promise would be realized.

[38 : 42] The promise of the Messiah, The promise of the Saviour, And that that Saviour would be divine, That he would be one with God.

Essentially, the key truth is shared between them, And that is, We find it in chapter 1, Where the angel again tells The mother of the Lord Jesus What was true About the child that she was going to Give birth to.

Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, And bring forth a son, And thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, And shall be called The son of the highest, And the Lord God shall give unto him The throne of his father David.

And he shall reign over the house of Jacob Forever, And of his kingdom There shall be no end. You can't really Put yourselves in the shoes of Mary, Because the truth that the angel shares with her Is of such great significance, That how could it be true of her, That she was going to bring forth a son, Who was a king, And that there would be no end to his days.

How can you possibly understand The context of that promise That was declared to her.

[40 : 46] And yet that is the very information That was shared with her By God through the angel. And when we come to John's gospel, He begins his gospel With that truth, Which lies at the heart of the declaration Made by the angel Concerning the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And although John does not describe The birth of Jesus, He clearly teaches that the child that was born Was one who existed Before he was born.

That he experienced life In a measure that we can't fully comprehend, That did not begin in the ordinary way.

Life begins when a child is born into the world, As far as the experience of life, And conception itself is a mystery In many respects, But the child conceived, We believe, Begins to experience life At conception.

And from that point on, It's not for man to determine The point at which they say The conception Is considered life After a few hours, Or a few days, Or a few weeks, Down the line.

[42 : 26] Jesus was conceived By the power of the Holy Ghost. And there is no question In the mind of the angel That discloses that to Mary.

That life began, As far as Jesus was concerned, In his human existence At conception.

And that's something to remember. But, John tells us, The world was made flesh And dwelt among us.

This world was from the beginning. He was with God From the beginning. And he was God From the beginning. That's John's understanding of it As led by the Holy Ghost.

Jesus Is God And as God, He has no beginning. As God, He is always with God And is God.

[43 : 37] And yet, In the humanity That he Was to be Endowed with. That began With conception In the womb Of the Virgin By the power Of the Holy Ghost.

Now there's much To think about There And it's not Our purpose today To delve into Mysteries that Are Not easily Digested They're true There's some things That we need to Reflect on And understand People say If I don't understand God If I don't understand The being of God If I don't understand All that there is To be understood About God Then I can dismiss that From My thinking How Utterly Outrageous Is such thinking It's outrageous Because At that moment You determine Yourself To be the one Who decides Whether With your Limited capacity There are things That Are beyond The range Of your Understanding And if they lie

Beyond the range Of your understanding Then it must be The case That you can Dismiss them From sight You don't deal With other issues In life like that I'm sure There are many Mysteries In your General Living day to Day That confront You And you don't Sit down and say Well if I don't Understand The mechanism Of the modern Motor car If I don't Understand The way The engine Works The The The electrical Parts of the Engine Work Then I refuse To believe That it's a Motor car I refuse To drive it I refuse To acknowledge To acknowledge It for what It is And yet People have That attitude To God That wherever The mystery Of the divine Being is presented To them They say Oh How can that Possibly be Why Why should I Believe That such a God exists

God Is infinite Eternal Unchangeable In his being Wisdom Power Holiness Justice Goodness And truth And there Are many Aspects Of his Being that We've always Skated around The edges Of it And when it Comes to The announcement Given by way Of the angels That the Son of the Most High God is to Be born Into the World And he Is to be Born in This way That there Is a mystery There is an Awesome Strangeness About it And yet Because God Has been Pleased to Reveal it Then we Must identify It as God's Doing The Lord Jesus Christ Is God Always was God Ever will Be God But the Awesome

Truth is He became Man He became Man And he Continues to Be God And man And the Lord's People One thing That fills Them with Amazement Is that In heaven The three Persons of The God Are found Father Son And Holy Spirit The God Who is Spirit The Holy Spirit Who is Spirit And the Second Person Of the Trinity Who sits At the Right hand Of his Father In heaven But in All nature So that We see This God Who became Man And he is Discernably Man Identifiably Man A glorified Man No doubt And a Glorious

[47 : 55] Man But that Is what He is But I Want us To To Consider First of All The role That is Given to The angels Here in This passage From the Beginning Secondly I want us To think Of the Declaration That is Made About The glory Of God And this Is what God has Given to Them To do This is The ministry That has Been Interested To the Angels At this Particular Juncture That they Are to Declare God's Glory And The third Thing Which is Slightly More complex The What the Birth Of the Lord Jesus Is said To Fulfill The Ministry Of Angels The role

That they Have here Suppose There are Two errors Maybe Probably There's Countless Errors That Enter Into Our Thinking About Angels But Two of Them Stand Out And the First of These Is That we Dismiss Angels Altogether We Suggest Or we Believe That there Is no Such a Thing As an Angelic Being And the Second of That is Probably The other Extreme That we See the Ministry of The angels In the World Where they Are not Meant to Be seen Where it Is not Meant to Be Understood I think

Just to Suggest To you That there Are countless Books I mentioned This before That have Been written About Angelic Encounters And People Who Believe Themselves To Have Had Encounters With angels But to Assess The The Nature of That encounter On the Basis of What they Say that Encounter Resulted In Would Suggest That Whatever They Encountered Whatever They met Whatever They Experienced It has Nothing At all To do With angels As god Speaks Of them In his Word Because The lord God Has told Us In his Word That The Particular Ministry That Belongs To Angels Are For The Good Of his

Church For The Good Of his People For Their Encouragement For Their Building And For Their Instruction At His Behest Anything Beyond That Is Not Something That An Angel Is Responsible For But You Have To Remember That There Are Also Angels That Present Themselves As Angels Who Are Not Doing God's Bidding Because You Have To Teach Yourself This That What The Bible Teaches Us Is That At One Point There Were Angels Who Who Who Served God And They Chose Not To And They Were Dismissed From The Presence Of God And They Were Sent Into A Lost Eternity And They Are No Longer Ministering Spirits But They Present Themselves As Angels Of Light Doing God's Work But Not Really Doing Anything But The

The Bidding Of The Prince Of This World But That's Something Else Looking At The Beginning Of The Gospel Of Luke We Know That An Angel We Mentioned It To The People Appear To Zacharias And The Angel Identifies Itself To Him And It Gives Zacharias The Message From God A Message That Was Clearly Understood Although Quite Clearly Awesome The Angel Answering Said Unto Him I Am Gabriel That Stand In The Presence Of God And I'm Sent To Speak Unto Thee And To Show Thee These Glad Tidings Not Only Did The Angel Give Its Name As

[52 : 59] Gabriel But Also The Exclusive Position That Was The Angels In The Presence Of God And It Adds To The Information Behold Thou Shalt Be Dumb And Not Able To Speak Until The Day That These Things Shalt Be Performed Because Thou Believed Not By Words And So On He Told Zacharias What Was To Be True Of Him We Are Also Told That The Same Angel Came To Minister To Mary In Verse Chapter 1 Verse 26 The Six Monthly Angel Gabriel Was Sent From God Into A City Of Galilee Named Nazareth To A Virgin Spouse To A Man Whose Name Was Joseph Of The House Of David And The Virgin's Name Was Mary And The Angel Came In Unto

Her And Said Hail Thou That Art Highly Favoured The Lord Is With thee Blessed Art Thou Among Women And When She Saw Him She Was That Is Saying And Cast In Mind What Manner Of Salutation This Should Be And The Angel Said Unto Fear Not Mary For Thou Hast Favour With God And So On The Appearances That They Experienced And That Were Followed In The Experience Of Others Joseph Joseph Joseph Was Met By An Angel And He Was Told Of The Place That His Spoused Wife Mary Was To Have In Bringing The Son Of The Most High God Into The World The

Angel Made Known God's Purposes In Different Ways And Different Occasions But You know You have To Understand That This New Testament Encounter With Angelic Beings Was Not A New Experience As Far As The Church Of God Was Concerned Because Going Right Back To The Book Of Genesis You Find Abraham And Jacob Encountering Angels You'll Find Elijah And Moses Encountering Angels Different Occasions And Different Needs Presented And The Need Being Met At God's In Instance By An Angelic Encounter With God And The The Role That The Angel Plays Or These Angels Play Have To Be Recognized

By Us Because They Are Not Just Random Occurrences They Are Not Things That Belong To To Mysticism Or To The Realms Of Fiction They Are Genuine Encounters With The Glory Of God With The Purposes Of God Fulfilled By Them If You Go To The Book Of Hebrews The Writer To The Hebrews Tells Us That It Is God Who Makes His Angels Spirits And His Ministers A Flame Of Fire And Then He Says Are They Not All Ministering Spirits Sent For To Minister For Them Who Shall Be Heirs Of Salvation And That's What You've Got To Keep In Mind The Purpose Of The Coming Of The Angels Is Quite Specific

It It Is For The Good Of Those Who Shall Be Heirs Of Salvation And God Means His People To Be Encouraged By It So It Is Not An Insignificant Occurrence And Not Only Is The Message Of The Atmost Import The Messenger Fills Them With Dread Fear And We Know That The Recipients Of The Messengers Are In awe Of The Messenger Which Is As You Would Expect I Would Hope The Shepherds That Were Encountered By The Angel Of God Were Afraid The Glory Of The Lord Shone Round About Them And They Were So Afraid What A Powerful Message That He Delivered To Them And

[58 : 01] Well One Wonders What Capacity They Had To To Understand What They Were Being Told What They Understood By The Message That Was Delivered To Them It Is Not Something That Is Easily Digestible By Any One Of Us If God Speaks To Us In A Particular Way And It Is Of Course Clear That These Shepherds Were Not Theologians And It Is A Question That Can't Be Answered How Fixed Were Their Minds On God's Word By Way Of Promise So That When The Promise Was Fulfilled In The Words Of The Angel How Could

They Process That For Themselves If They Had No Knowledge Of The Promises Of God Or Little Understanding Of What God's Word Was Saying Remember God Had Promised That The Son Would Be Given He Had Promised Through Various Prophecies That There Would Come A Time In The Fullness Of God's Time When There Would Be A Virgin Birth When There Would Be The Disclosure On The Scene Of Time Of The Glory Of God In The Birth Of One Who Would Be Virgin Born And Yet It Is Not To The Theologians He Goes It Is Not To The Schools Of Theology He Goes Not To The Colleges Not To The Wise And The Powerful Of The Land He Sends The Angel Shepherds And How How Exorcised They Were In Being Able To Understand This Is

Something That We Need To Remind Ourselves Of When God Speaks To Us You Have To Dismiss From Your Thinking That If His Word Comes To Us Whatever The Word Is By Whichever Means That However Complicated It May Seem To Us However Mysterious It May Seem To Us That We Should Not If We Understand It To Be A Word From God Dismiss As To To To To To To To To To To This Was What Was Meant To To Be As Far As The Shepherds Are Concerned Sometimes The work Of Angels was mysterious when an angel met with Hagar when an angel met with with God's people and their circumstances were very borderline atheistic and yet they were presented with God's truth and they were encouraged to believe what God had to say

I remember it's I've said this I'm sure before but it doesn't matter that I repeat myself I find myself repeating myself often but I don't think that we have as much experience of angelic encounters in this day and generation I don't think I don't think I've spoken to many of you who have shared with me maybe you're too embarrassed to do that that you met an angel and that you were convinced that that person was an angel or that these beings were angelic beings maybe maybe you've all had these experiences I can't I can only speak for myself I haven't I've heard of people who who had clearly identifiable experiences that they attribute to angels being involved

I remember an elder over in Point Sandy Moore talking about his own experience of revivals angels and he was telling us on one occasion where they had been in a house meeting and he was making his whole way home and walking along the streets of the village in the early hours of the morning he came upon a house and he was made to stand in the middle of the street because he heard singing like he had never heard before and he listened out from where the singing was coming from and he recognised a house and he said the singing wasn't coming from the house but it was coming as it were from above the house and he understood there and then that it was angels who were singing and whether he understood it at the moment or afterwards the person who lived in that house was a believer a Christian and at that time she had left this world she had died and

[63 : 52] Sandy believed that this was the angels ushering her soul into glory he could tell a story but it was not a story that was a fiction it was his experience now angels are God's messenger and here they visited in the most unexpected place and to most unexpected people a message from on high to a people who would not be expected to understand what he had to say it was a declaration of God's glory and we spoke on Thursday evening in the prayer meeting about the salvation of God being God's doing salvation of any person is God's work and he insists that the glory of that salvation is his and he's jealously guarding that glory as his own and this message that we have here the significance of it is all encompassing the glory of God

God's angels spoke to the lowest of the low about the glory of the highest and the highest it's amazing is it not just read again glory to God in the highest I think I'm thirsty to mention that there are there is glory that belongs to God as God who is creator who is sustainer of his creation who ministers to all without exception who sustains life and provides for the good of all men everywhere under the sun and glory belongs to God because of that but as far as the salvation of sinners that is his glory that makes him most glorious the salvation of fallen men and women and here the angels speak to shepherds and they weren't just menially involved in a task that others wouldn't do the shepherds were not really engaged in a task that other people would do they were proverbially untrustworthy

R.C. Sproul just to give you an example when God chose to announce the Messiah to the worthy he didn't inform the rich and the powerful leaders of the day shepherds with respect with respect to the law courts shepherds were not permitted to give testimony because they were considered to be so unscrupulous and untrustworthy that their testimony was of little value I've never thought of them like that I've always because of my own interest in sheep I thought that it was quite a good job to have but no in the Middle East the role of the shepherd was not just a task that the poor would do most who were involved in it were notorious because of their dishonesty and some of the commentators suggest that where the shepherds were looking after the sheep the sheep that they were actually looking after were the sheep of the city that were destined to be taken into the city to be sacrificed they weren't their own sheep but they were just there and their job was to keep them until they were called upon to bring them into the city to be offered in the daily sacrifices now whether that is true or whether it can be substantiated from the scripture or not what God is insisting on and he's insisting on it to these men that God is to be glorified in the birth of his son and he is to be glorified for the reason of his birth if

Abraham heard these words remember when Abraham was taken to offer his sacrifice of his son Isaac he heard a voice from heaven say to him God will find a lamb for himself don't don't lay your hand on this your son he spared the sacrifice that he was to offer but the voice of God did not speak on his own behalf and the lamb that he had found for himself was not of any flock but his own it was his own son and it's often said by theologians they come to the foot of the cross and they look at the person who is crucified and slain on the cross nowhere is the glory of God more understood or more wondrously exhibited than it is in the giving of his own son as a sacrifice and a ransom for many and is that not the case he alone is the one who achieves this the glory is his it was his glory it was good as done when he promised that this was what would happen but the salvation of sinners by Christ is for the highest glory and it is to all men peace to all men without exception but remember through the

Lord Jesus Christ so that is the final thing very briefly what is fulfilled as a consequence you know there's a slight difference in the translation that you find in some Bibles one Greek word is omitted from some but the implication of that omission is that the peace of God rests upon those alone whom God has chosen to be beneficiaries of his saving work in Christ Jesus you know read these words and they suggest to us that glory to God in the highest on earth peace goodwill toward men as if that is the extent of what the coming of Christ will secure the salvation of all men but some insist no that can't be so

[71 : 34] Christ has died for his own people and secured the salvation of those who put their trust in him the implication is that the peace of God rests on those whom he has chosen in accordance with his good pleasure of course this is something that doesn't well you could argue not on the basis of this text the extent of the salvation that Christ secures whether it is for all there are evidences throughout the scripture that we need to understand that those who come by faith to Christ are assured of salvation and those who do not will perish but for your attention today for my interest today for the understanding of what this passage reminds us of the shepherds believed the word of the angels you know it wasn't easy for them they were terrorized by the sight that confronted them just imagine hearing the heavenly hosts singing and being gripped with fear and yet what it resulted in was we find that they went it came to pass as the angels were gone away from them into heaven the shepherds said one to another let us now even go into

Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass which the Lord has made known to us they went to see for themselves what the angels said to them whether it was true they came hurriedly with haste urgently they didn't put it off this was something they had to find out for themselves the message of the gospel was well and truly shared by the angel to them and by them to those that they were able to speak of what they found when they went there everything was as the angel said there was the child wrapped in swaddling clothes resting in a in a trough designed for feeding the animals some say it wasn't really a steading it was a cave whether we're able to prove that from scripture or not what they saw they made known to others they shared with us the message was well and truly believed and shared to others now isn't that the thing one thing that frequently comes to my attention at this time of the year leading up to

Christmas time you'll hear of the angst and the grief that there is on the part of many if they lose their jobs at Christmas time if they suffer bereavement at Christmas time if they have to encounter deprivation of the privilege of sharing time with the family at Christmas time and yet at the heart of that thought is surely then the season of festivity should have at its heart the thought that it's all about what the angel declared to Christ about Christ to others and yet that seldom comes into the thinking of those who are grieved by what they have to endure while we have to say you can't find a passage in the scripture that tells you that

Jesus was born on the 25th of December that's not really a matter for the the the the the the Bible you'll find speculation that will discuss the possibility that was probably in September but again it's speculation based on evidence gleaned from the scripture but you can't ignore the elephant that's in the room and the elephant that's in the room is this that there was a time when Jesus Christ was born into this world and the angels who had ambassadors of God so fit to declare the importance of that time and that occurrence so that this would be shared with all others and that nothing like it has ever taken place before and nothing like it will ever take place again listen to what the angel said the glory of the

Lord shone round about them fear not for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people for unto you is born this day in the city of David a saviour which is Christ the Lord that that's that's the greatest loss that's the greatest sorrow of this time of joy that so many live on in their lives without ever taking time to think of who

[78 : 23] Christ is and what he came to do and what it cost him to do it well I hope that every one of you whatever else you have to enjoy in this time for family coming together and rejoicing that your joy will be in the Lord and that the voice of the angels will ring in your ears and that you will take time to think about what it would be like on an occasion where you would hear the heavens sing out glory to God on the highest on earth peace good will to all men may God bless this world let us pray O Lord we give thanks for your interest in fallen race of Adam that you chose in your good time to send into our midst a Saviour that is Christ the Lord we pray that his name would be magnified above and beyond all that this world holds dear and that we would look unto

Jesus the alone Saviour of sinners forgive us in his name Amen Concluding Psalm 89 Psalm 89 at verse 25 verse 25 will make will make and his throne shall stable be and sure these verses of Psalm 89 his hand and power shall reach afar whose whose hand and power shall reach upon have set it in the sea and his right hand be shall bless shall dile

He shall cry. Thou art my God alone.

And He shall say. Thou art the wrath of my salvation.

I'll make Him my firstborn more high.

[81 : 59] Than kings of every land. My love I'll ever keep for Him.

My covenant power shall stand. The seed by my power will make.

Forever to endure. And as the days of heaven is run.

Shall stable be and sure. Amen. Amen.

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Rest and abide with you all now and always. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[83 : 21] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.