

# The Angels' Song

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Preacher: Jon Hueni

[ 0 : 00 ] Listen to that old, familiar story, and this is a story that we should never get tired of hearing. In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to register. And so Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. And while they were there, the time came for the baby to be born.

And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

[ 1 : 21 ] But the angel said to them, do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you.

He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. And suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.

And so they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and the baby who was lying in a manger. And when they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.

And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

[ 2 : 32 ] The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

The birth of Christ is nothing less than heaven's intervention to save a fallen people and planet spiraling into eternal destruction.

Perhaps you've heard of interventions. Suppose a young lady moves away from here to Oregon to find herself, and she falls into many serious self-destructive behaviors, quickly spinning out of control and unable and unwilling to break free from them, in fact denying that she even has a problem, and so all efforts to convince her have failed.

And at their wits' ends, their parents gather together family members, her closest friends, people in her life that she respected, and together they plan a dramatic intervention.

And so just after finishing her supper one evening, the doorbell rings, and it's her parents from the Midwest. And she invites them in, and two minutes later, it rings again, and it's her brothers and sisters flown all the way to Oregon.

[ 4 : 01 ] And a couple minutes later, her best childhood friends from back home show up, and then her beloved aunts and uncles and respected teachers and so on. They just keep showing up with a united plan to rescue her, to intervene on her behalf.

She didn't ask for it. She didn't even want it. It was an intervention from outside herself to save her from certain destruction. And I think that's a picture for us of what God did in the sending of his Son. God coming to us in Jesus Christ, to this fallen planet of people lost in sin, the world in darkness, depraved, deceived, heading for eternal destruction.

And then in the baby Jesus, God showed up, showed up to intervene in a situation that was hopeless, and indeed to rescue and to save sinners.

We're considering during the month of December four songs surrounding the birth of the Lord Jesus to see what they teach us about Mary's son. And we've seen or heard the song of the Virgin Mary herself, then of Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist.

[ 5 : 22 ] We've learned that nothing is impossible with this God, that even a virgin can conceive and give birth to a son. We've learned that this baby is the Lord himself come to save us, that he's the fulfillment of the promises to Abraham, the promises to David and all the prophets.

He's given the name Jesus because he comes bringing a strong salvation. He is our strong horn of salvation, a salvation through the forgiveness of sins.

And so each song sheds more and more light from this rising sun who's come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

So today we come to the angel's song. It's a birth announcement of Mary's son. So five points this morning. The first is its recipients.

To whom was this birth announcement sent? Well, it was not sent to the religious elite, was it? It wasn't the Sanhedrin, all the Pharisees and Sadducees.

[ 6 : 31 ] It wasn't the chief priests and scribes or the rabbis or experts in the law of God. But it was a bunch of poor, hardworking shepherds. Blue-collar men, we would say.

Their job was anything but easy. Living outdoors, looking after sheep that loved to wander into all kinds of problems. And often they put up with scorching heat by day and the chilling cold by night. And theirs was a despised occupation. We see that in Egypt when Joseph's brothers came and the Egyptians despised shepherds.

But it was true here as well. Because just like the tax collectors, many shepherds were known for being thieves. And as a group, they had such a bad reputation that shepherds were not even allowed to be a witness in a court of law.

You just couldn't trust them. So here they are, uneducated, unimportant people, as far as the movers and shakers of the world are concerned.

[ 7 : 41 ] But isn't this just God's way? As Mary said, that God is mindful of the humble and he lifts up the lowly and he brings down the proud and mighty.

Paul asked us, 1 Corinthians 1, 26-29, Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards.

Not many were influential. Not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of this world to shame the wise. He chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong, the lowly things of the world, the despised things, and the things that are not to bring to nothing the things that are so that no one may boast before him.

And so God sends his announcement bypassing the palace, bypassing the socialites of Jerusalem and instead sends his announcement to these poor shepherds living out in the fields near Bethlehem keeping watch over their flocks by night.

James says, God has chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom that he's promised to those who love him. And judging by the response of these shepherds, they are some of those rich in faith, chosen to inherit a kingdom promised to those who love him.

[ 9 : 14 ] So that's who the announcement was made to, the recipients, a group of shepherds. Now, secondly, it's announcers, the ones making this announcement. Well, they're angels.

And to begin with, it was just one and then the one was joined by a great company of the heavenly army. Angels are spirit beings.

When they appear to men, they often take on the form of a man. I suppose you have lived all your lives without seeing an angel or at least being aware that you saw one.

But they're everywhere. They're ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation, Hebrews 1.14 says. Now, the sightings of an angel were just about as rare in the New Testament as they were in the Old Testament.

It was somewhat similar. When they appeared, it was usually when God was about to do something for the deliverance of his people or at an important development in his overall plan of salvation.

[10:27] But nearly all people, with very few exceptions, have lived and died without ever seeing an angel. And that's why whenever they appear to people, almost always the first thing out of their mouth is what?

Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. Indeed, one of the first lessons in Angel Academy was to learn to put people at ease and they needed to learn it in all languages.

Whoever they were appearing to, they all had the same response of fear. Why? Because seeing them, people were terrified. No one said, Oh, isn't this nice?

An angel visitant. Wonder what they have to say. No, it was always fear. And it was that way with Mary. It was that way with Zechariah in the temple.

And now, even these rugged shepherds are terrified. Sore afraid. Well, they're as terrified as you would be if tonight, kids, you sat there or lie there on your bed and suddenly in the darkness of your room is this angel shining with the glory of God.

[11:37] You'd be scared out of your bed. These angels run on God's errands and as the angel said to Zechariah, I'm Gabriel and I stand in the presence of God and I've been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news.

Coming from the presence of God, lit up with the glory of God, perhaps something like Moses' face was after he met with the living God. So these shepherds with their sheep around them perhaps huddled around a campfire keeping warm, entertaining one another with chit-chat and stories, who knows what else when all at once there he was, an angel.

An angel of the Lord lit up with the glory of the Lord shining around them and seeing the terror in their eyes, the angel said, do not be afraid, stop fearing.

And the announcement follows. This is a great development in God's plan of salvation, isn't it? This is the fulfillment of all that he had announced beforehand and suitable to the occasion.

God sends an angel from the very presence of his glory to announce what he has done, the very intervention of God, the Savior, as he's come into the world on a rescue mission.

[13:02] So we've seen those to whom the announcement is given, those who are making the announcement, let's look closer at the announcement itself. I bring you good news of great joy.

There's a pile of words there. It's not just good news. It's not just good news about joy. It's good news of great joy. And so into this dark, depraved world of gloom comes the cheering announcement of good news of great joy.

Now we don't get too much of that kind of news in our day, do we? And neither should we expect to. We are, after all, a world in rebellion against God.

The nations are combined. They're all in on it. Psalm 2. Fighting against the Lord and his Christ. Against his laws. His commandments.

Living in the shadow of death with God against us. Under his curse. His wrath hanging over us. And at any moment we could be summoned into his presence for judgment and then eternity.

[14:14] And yet, in matchless grace, this God against whom the world has rebelled sends this important announcement of good news. Of great joy.

I wonder, does the gospel still bring great joy to you? Is it still good news to you? Does the wonder of the incarnation still produce wonder, awe, love, praise in your heart?

Should we not be more amazed that this holy God of heaven has anything good to say to this sinful world? Here it is. An announcement of good news of great joy.

And it concerns every one of us. It's good news of great joy for all the people. For sinners great and small, young and old, white and black, rich and poor, moral and immoral, Jew and Gentile, for all the people.

That is all who believe and receive it. It's not for those who reject it, but it's offered to all, you see, this good news. And precisely, what is this good news of great joy?

[15:25] Well, it's this, verse 11. Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. Let's unpack that good news.

First of all, today has been born a Savior. A Savior for sinners. This is a trustworthy saying, worthy of everyone's acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

That's the good news of great joy. This is the earth-shattering news. The great intervention has come. God showing up in our world, uninvited, on a saving mission to rescue sinners.

And yet, so often it's met with a yawn. A yawn. John, why does this good news of great joy of a Savior produce so little of this great joy?

Could it be that there's little awareness of our need of a Savior? If you came to me three years ago and said, John, I've got good news of great joy for you.

[16:41] I just developed a cure for COVID-19. Well, three years ago, the first thing I'd say was, never heard of it. Don't have it.

And I'd yawn and say, big deal. Not interested. But if three years later, I've got COVID and I'm in trouble. I'm in the hospital and I'm fighting for breath.

And suddenly, your announcement has become good news of great joy. And what made the difference? Well, now you're offering me something I desperately need.

Now you've got something to save my life and I see that I need saving. But our world doesn't know they need saving and they have little stomach for the bad news that tells them why they need the good news.

The bad news about our sin and about God's judgment for it. They want their ears tickled. They want to go away feeling better about themselves.

[17:48] Well, you see, any bad news is off limits then for that. But the good news will only produce great joy in the hearts of those who know the bad news.

That our sins have separated us from God and made us God's enemy. His anger and wrath is upon us and we're just storing up wrath for the day of wrath.

That's what we do every day outside of Christ. Just putting it in the bank. More wrath for the day of wrath and one day that day of wrath will come but the world does not feel their need for a savior.

Yawn. No thanks. No need for a cure. Not interested. Doing just fine without him. Oh, but once I realize I've got a hell to pay for my sins and I couldn't do the first thing to fix the problem and to make it right with God to be at peace with him and I hear that God himself came into the world in the person of Jesus of Nazareth to rescue sinners.

Now that is the best news I have ever heard and ever could hear because I'm the sinner that needs to be saved. Do you know that this morning?

[19:18] Many of you do. Many of you have found him to be just that to you. And notice this savior is none other than Christ the Lord.

That word means the anointed one. In the New Testament it's Christ. In the Old Testament it's Messiah. In other words this this savior that's born is the promised Messiah and those hundreds of passages that were written about the coming Messiah this is him this is the savior the fulfillment of the prophets the one from of whom the prophets said for centuries he's coming he's coming and in that day when he comes here's what he'll do but now the angel announces today he's been born to you this savior this Christ this Messiah not in that day but today he's here and he's Christ the Lord the Lord that's the name for God in the Old Testament and that's who's in the manger the eternal uncreated creator

God Emmanuel God with us veiled in flesh to be sure that's why men didn't think he was God but God no less the word made flesh he is Christ the Lord you see God himself has come on this intervention the only one who can do the work has shown up and he's been born today well there's more to the message in a moment but let's just break for a breather and come to the fourth point and it's the sign that is given of the birth and it's in this announcement the sign that's given signs were something that God sometimes gave to encourage faith in his word he doesn't owe us signs we should believe everything that God says just because he says it he's the true and faithful one Jesus is the truth and he cannot lie so

God doesn't need to give signs but he often does and when he does it's God stooping to our weakness the weakness of our faith the strength of our unbelief to overcome that unbelief and so by their very nature then signs were uncommon events if not miraculous and many of them were at least they were always out of the ordinary so like Gideon's fleece and the way it was changed the dew on the ground but not the fleece and then on the fleece but not the ground that's not common is it or like the sun going backwards ten steps on the dial that doesn't happen very often does it it's a sign it's something staggering to show us that with God all things are possible or how about this the Lord himself will give you a sign a virgin will conceive and bear a son and you'll call him Emmanuel God with us that doesn't happen a virgin giving birth

Zechariah suddenly unable to speak for nine months and then suddenly able to speak again Mary's relative Elizabeth old and barren yet six months pregnant these were signs to encourage faith and so a sign is here given to the shepherds that they might know this savior Christ the Lord has been born this very day but also that they might be able to identify him when they go looking for him

among the possible other newborns in Bethlehem so verse 12 this will be a sign to you you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger now a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes is common enough but a baby lying in a manger where filthy animals lick up the grain with their long wet tongues how many of you have seen a newborn baby lying in a manger

[ 24 : 01 ] I want to assure you that it was as rare in that day as it is in this day nobody saw a baby in a manger but that's the sign you see uncommon unusual something that we would never expect to see and that becomes a sign to strengthen the faith of these shepherds and to enable them to know which one in Bethlehem is this savior well that's the sign let's come back then to the rest of the announcement because that was part of the announcement was the sign that so far it's just been one solitary angel perhaps Gabriel we're not told it was Gabriel that came to Zechariah and Gabriel that came to Mary but it's just been one and then suddenly a great company of the heavenly army appeared with the angels praising God and saying glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests this scene of one and then all of them joining in reminds me of something that I saw when worshiping with the church in Turbana

Columbia this summer you know those folks love to sing and they sang with all their hearts as they made their way through the verses but something happened every time they got to the chorus it's like they hit another gear in their volume and in the joy and in the praise that they lifted up to God you couldn't help but see it maybe it's that the kids didn't know the words and know how to read or something on the verses but they'd heard the chorus but everybody lifted the roof on the chorus it's kind of like that here single angel pronouncing this birth of the baby when they come to the chorus glory to God in the highest the whole heavens are lit up with this heavenly host of angels and singing glory to God and peace to man on earth what does this great climax of the message mean well just this that through this savior born today glory will come to God in the highest and peace will come to man on earth to those on whom his favor rests you see the two directions glory to God in the highest peace to men on earth so this rescue this salvation from sin this salvation from death and hell and Satan brought by this newborn savior will bring great glory to God we fast forward 33 years and it's the night of his arrest and Jesus is pouring his heart out to his heavenly father in John 17 4 and he says to his father

I have brought you glory on earth by completing the task you gave me to do so how does this baby of Mary his birth his salvation glorify God because the salvation that he brings is of God from beginning to end it begins with God it continues with God and it's concluded with God it's his work and so whenever salvation comes to any poor sinner in this earth it brings great glory to God in the highest and it brings glory because of people who love him and please him with a holy life are an honor to him who are those people oh they're they're the people of God and they're an honor to God they do not bring disrepute to God they don't say oh who are those people no they want to know they've seen something of the quality of holiness of Christ likeness and that's an honor to God he's glorified by his saved people and then he's glorified because this salvation that he brings puts God's justice on display doesn't it

God's justice the glory of God's justice justice it's seen just how far God will go to uphold his justice and it makes people stand in awe of God's justice that glorifies him that even when our sins were laid on his own son his one and only son he didn't go light on him but he poured out on him the full punishment of his infinite wrath that we deserved that we might be forgiven that he might be just and the justifier of those who believe in Jesus he didn't compromise his justice no this son will magnify the justice of God and bring glory to God for his justice and how can we miss the fact that this son will magnify the glory of God for his love that he so loved this rotten world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believed in him might not perish but have everlasting life behold what kind of love is this that God would give up heaven's treasure to save his rebel enemies and he glorified God for his great faithfulness as this is what his messengers had been promising for thousands of years and sure enough it all happened just as he said it would and so this son will bring great glory to God in the highest for his faithfulness he didn't forget he doesn't forget he doesn't forget you doesn't forget or go back on his promises and glorify

God for his grace because everything about this salvation brought by Mary's son underscores that it's all of grace from first to last we didn't ask for the intervention we didn't want to be saved from our sins we want to be saved from sins like the dog wants to be saved from his steak bone no not at all and yet he came to save us from our sins you see that's grace I'm going to give you what you don't even want but what you desperately need the forgiveness of your sins that's grace you don't work it

off no you're forgiven it and I God assume the payment for it it comes to you free and so can you see how this son of Mary will bring great glory to God for his attributes for his great salvation but that's not where the song ends the chorus ends does it it also says but he will also bring peace to men on earth on whom his favor rests notice this peace though offered to all is not given to all it's only to those on whom

[ 31 : 29 ] God's favor rests only those given by the father to the son only those who come to this savior out of a sense of their need and ask him trust him to save them from their sins yes upon them this favor this grace is poured out they're accepted in the beloved one they're accepted in the accepted one this is my son in whom I well pleased and anyone who is in that well pleasing son is also shown favor grace everlasting life Romans 5 1 being justified by faith we have peace with God how does this peace come to sinners being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ so when our faith is in

Christ God is no longer opposing us he's no longer our enemy we're reconciled I'm now his his friend not only can I call him my friend but he calls me his friend and he makes me his son I'm accepted in Christ at peace with God and when I'm at peace with God I have that inner calm of the peace of God that transcends all understanding and guards my heart and soul in Christ Jesus but you see there can be no peace says my God for the wicked it's only in Christ that we have peace with God and only when we know that we're saved and belong to him can we have that sense of settled calm in our hearts that it is well with my soul I'm ready tonight I'm ready today I'm ready now to go and meet my judge because I am in Christ he is my salvation yes great glory to God but this great peacemaker he who is the prince of peace brings peace to men on earth men on whom his favor rest have you been reconciled to God are you at peace with God every day that you live the day that you die the day you face him in judgment the peace of God that's what this son of Mary has brought to sinners come from heaven to give and what what's good for God's glory is also good for man's peace isn't that amazing that the salvation of sinners glorifies God and brings us peace with God that God marries our peace to his glory in Jesus Christ Christ is just the outflowing of God's loving heart and good will toward men who deserve nothing but hell glory to God in the highest peace to men on earth on whom his favor rests well that's the message that's the announcement of this birth of this birth now let's look lastly at its impact upon the shepherds what they do about this announcement when the angels had left them and gone into heaven the angels said to one another let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened you see their faith let's go see this thing that has happened not let's go see if it has happened no let's go see this thing that has happened which the Lord has told us about in other words the messengers! so they receive it as it is in truth the word of the Lord God himself let's go see this thing that he's told us about and they hurried off the response shows how highly they valued a savior from heaven this was indeed good news of great joy to them this was not back burner!

[ 35 : 53 ] stuff well what are we going to do with the sheep I don't know what they did with the sheep all I know is they hurried off there is something more important than sheep here more important than money and business it's this savior that's been born tonight and so off they went now Bethlehem wasn't that big of a town we sing old little town of Bethlehem because that's what Micah chapter five calls it it's a small town it's an insignificant town weren't looking for hospitals to find newborns and they weren't even looking for inns or houses no they're looking for cattle stalls because they were told he would be in a manger and sure enough they found Mary and Joseph and the baby who was lying in a manger never seen it before never saw it after but they knew at once it's him heavens

Savior, Christ the Lord. How should a king come? Here he is, long foretold Messiah King, born not in a palace, not in some mansion in Jerusalem, but a stable and laid in a manger in the little town of Bethlehem to a lowly virgin betrothed to a poor village carpenter from Nowheresville, Nazareth. But isn't that just like this baby who later will tell us what he's like? I'm gentle and lowly in heart. Doesn't it fit? The way he comes fits the mission on which he comes. He comes lowly. He comes humble. It's just like him. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich yet for your sakes, he became poor.

[ 38 : 05 ] That you through his poverty might become rich. So this is the Lord of glory stooping to a lowly manger to lift us up to his lofty throne.

And you know, and we'll hear about it in Simeon's song next week that he will stoop yet lower, won't he? He'll stoop to the hellish cross of Calvary to lift us to his holy heaven.

This is the king and he's in a manger. And once the shepherds saw him, it says they spread the word that the angels had told them about this child. I'm sure first to Mary and Joseph, right? They were the first audience there with the baby Jesus. But the news was too good to keep there and they spread it abroad. Now, they were the first to hear of his birth and now they become the first to proclaim it.

What they heard, they told. They told everything that they had heard, that they had seen. And oh, what they had heard and oh, what they had seen.

[ 39 : 23 ] And though their testimony would not be allowed in a court of law, the scriptures tell us that everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds said.

There is a ring of truth to this. That even though they're shepherds, I find this amazing. This is amazing.

Now, brothers and sisters, we have good news of great joy for everyone we meet in life. You know, you can walk up to anyone and say, I have good news for you, my friend. They don't know that you have the best news that they desperately need, but you know.

And so, go tell it. Go tell it. Tell it on the mountains that Jesus Christ is born. Tell him why he was born. Tell him what he's done for you.

Those who have tasted the great joy of the good news make the best witnesses of it. And oh, the joy that beamed from the faces of these shepherds.

[ 40 : 29 ] No wonder they believe them. These men were lit up with joy as they told of what they'd seen and heard. But Mary, she treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Perhaps some of you new mothers have started a baby book. You put all the interesting things that your baby will do at each marker point.

Mary's heart was her baby book. And Jesus is not a day old and she's got it half full of all the things that she has heard.

All that Gabriel said to her, the angel. All that Gabriel said to Joseph. All that Elizabeth said.

All that Zechariah said. All that the angels said as reported to her by the shepherds. You talk about being overwhelmed with information about this little baby that she's just given birth to.

[ 41 : 47 ] But you know there's more coming, isn't there? As we gather next week, Lord willing, we'll see that she's given more information about her son.

It's all been pretty good news up to this point. But she'll be staggered and stopped with the message that will be brought to her.

But she treasured it. It was precious to her. How do you know well it says that? But because what's precious to you, you think about a lot.

And so she treasured it and she showed she treasured it by pondering it in her heart. She couldn't stop thinking about it. What Gabriel said, what the shepherd said.

How does this fit together? What is this child? What will he do? How will this be? Do you treasure the word from heaven?

[ 42 : 49 ] Do you treasure the good news of great joy? Do you ponder it? Do you think about this amazing mystery of God in the flesh? Two natures, one fully God, fully man, but one person?

It's a mystery and it makes us worship and stand in awe of it. Do you ponder it? Does your mind keep coming back to these things, the things that God has said? Oh, Mary pondered them in her heart.

And then the shepherds, what did they do? Well, we're looking at their reaction. They not only spread the news abroad, but it says, then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen which were just as they had been told.

I love that phrase. We find it in a lot of places, several places in Scripture. so this is what we heard the angels say, and this is what we saw when we arrived in Bethlehem at the manger.

And they matched perfectly. Everything was just as we had been told. Jesus will say something similar to that when he speaks to two of his disciples on Palm Sunday, or a little later after Palm Sunday, when he says, go into the next village, or no, it was leading up to Palm Sunday, go into the next village, and as you enter it, you'll see a colt there in which no one's ever been, never ridden, and just untie it and bring it, and if anyone asks you, what are you doing?

[ 44 : 35 ] Just say, the master needs it. And then these words, those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them.

Yep, sure enough, coming in, there was, and sure enough, when we untied it, they asked us, and when we told them what we were, they let us go, and just as they had been told.

A few days later, Jesus says to Peter and John, go find a place to prepare for the Passover together, and as you enter into the city of Jerusalem, a man carrying a jar of water on his head will be there, and just follow that man to the house where he enters, and say to the owner of that house, the teacher asks, where is the guest room where I may eat the Passover with my disciples, and he will show you a large upper room, all furnished, make preparations there.

I didn't count them, but I think there's probably at least seven or eight things there that he told them that they would find, and here's the next words, Peter and John left and found things just as Jesus had told them.

That's just exactly what the shepherds said. It was just as they had been told. Now, you and I have been told a few things as well, haven't we? We've been told everything that Mary and Joseph were told.

[ 46 : 00 ] We've read it. We've been meditating on it. I've been preaching it, and we've been told that this other things in the Bible, that this Jesus who came so humbly and lowly the first time is coming again, not humbly and lowly, but in power and great glory with all his angels with him.

You talk about fear in men's faces, knees knocking, calling for the rocks to fall on them to hide them from the face of him who sits on the throne.

He's coming, and he's coming in glory. He's coming far different than he came the first time with all his angels, with power and glory, and he's going to raise everyone.

He's going to give a shout that will wake everyone from the dead, and the dead will come forth from their graves, saved and lost, called to judgment, and then Jesus, this Jesus who was born so meek and mild in the little manger, he will sit upon his throne, and he will separate all that have ever lived as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.

To those who did not obey the gospel, and did not know God through Jesus Christ, he will say, depart from me, you evildoers, and they will go away into everlasting punishment.

[ 47 : 27 ] And then he will say to those on his right, come, you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world, and they will go away to everlasting pleasures at his right hand.

We've been told that, and for them it will be a new heavens and a new earth, the home of righteousness with everything put right, no curse, no death, no suffering, the world of perfect love, perfect fellowship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and all his redeemed people.

And when I bump into you, you will say to me, with excitement in your eyes, you know, John, it all happened just as he told us it would.

What are you doing with all that you've been told about this Jesus? You've heard how this Jesus, after perfectly obeying God's law, had the sins of his people laid on him and bore them to the cross where he suffered God's wrath and paid the price in full.

That he rose again bodily, ascended into heaven, is coming again to judge the dead, the living and the dead, and your eternal destiny depends on your relationship to this child of Mary, now the Lord of glory, Christ the Lord.

[ 49 : 11 ] You've heard about him, what have you done with him? It's all on that. What have you done? What will you do with him today? You don't have the promise of tomorrow. Have you received him as your savior, as your Lord, your king, to save you and to rule over you with his laws?

Have you come and bowed before him? Have you worshipped him? Do you have peace with God through faith in Jesus Christ? The offer of peace still stands. It's not the angels singing it.

No, now he sends his preachers into the world, his Christians into the world to say, I beseech you, I beg you, I implore you, I urge you, on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Make peace with him. The peace treaty is still good while the door of grace is still open. Sue for peace. Throw yourselves upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

He's come on this mission of intervention and rescue to say to him, God, I'm the sinner. That your word says I am. And I can't do the first thing about it to fix it.

[ 50 : 19 ] But I've heard of your Savior's promise that whoever believes on him will not perish but have eternal life. Have mercy on me for Jesus' sake. You know what? He promises that he turns none away.

And you know what you'll find? You'll find it all happen just as he said it would. What a Savior. Oh, trust in him today. I want us to stand and sing this song that the angels sang, glory to God in the highest.

We're going to sing it in Latin, but it just means that. Glory to God in the highest. So let's stand and sing it to God's praise. Let's pray. We glorify and praise your name, our Father, for the gift of such a Savior, your own Son.

We thank you that so many of us have found that very promised peace, peace with God through him. And we want others to know that peace, bring them to faith even today.

They've heard about the signs, they've seen them come true in Jesus. He said the greatest sign of all would be that after three days in the grave he would come forth. It has happened.

[ 51 : 34 ] Lord, bring them to trust in the Savior. And then send us with this song ringing in our hearts and joy in our mouths to spread it abroad to those who so desperately need to hear it.

All to the end that God would be praised through Jesus Christ. And we pray in his name. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.