

**THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD IS IMMANUEL OUR PEACE
(MATTHEW 1:18-25; LUKE 1:26-38; LUKE 2:1-20)**

We have two accounts of visitations by angels of the Lord, to Mary, whom would shortly become the mother of Jesus, and to Joseph, of whom would become Jesus' step-father. Both of those encounters are very much important for us in understanding what Jesus was talking about later, in His ministry, with a ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus. Jesus said, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) After explaining to Nicodemus that must be born-again, born of the Holy Spirit, He went on to say, "For God so loved the world that [here it is] **He gave His only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.** He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the **light has come into the world**, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth **comes to the light**, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done **in God.**" (John 3:16-21) The Christmas story, that is, the birth of Christ, and then later His ministry, and death on a cross and resurrection, doesn't really make any sense unless we understand, as Mary and Joseph had to learn, that God Himself, the one and only true God, Creator of all things, sent His only begotten Son, of whom would be called Jesus, which is the English transliteration of Iesus, to this world in which we live, to be the Great Light, the Light of the World so that we may not only find our way unto eternal life, in Christ Jesus, but also that HE IS Immanuel & our Peace! That is the will of God for each of us! First of all, we have Mary's encounter with an angel of the Lord.

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Luke 1:26-38 "Now in the sixth month [of Elizabeth's pregnancy, she was a relative of Mary, who was with child, John the Baptist] the angel Gabriel was sent **by God** to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "**Do not be afraid**, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall **call His name Jesus**. He will be great, and will be called the **Son of the Highest**; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" And the

angel answered and said to her, **"The Holy Spirit will come upon you,** and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the **Son of God** [Huios Theou]. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For **with God nothing will be impossible.**" Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Through this whole message, may we keep at the forefront of our minds, and believing in our hearts, as it is the Word of God that says, **"with God nothing will be impossible."** I'm speaking about our own personal lives and that nothing is impossible for what God can do for us! Ok, so now Mary had been told, yet that plan wouldn't have gone well if Joseph had to just take Mary's word for it. As we can read in the gospel of Matthew's account:

Matthew 1:18-25 "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph [they were engaged], before they came together [consumated their marriage], she was found with child **of the Holy Spirit**. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example ["love will cover a multitude of sins"-1 Peter 4:8, at least what Joseph was thinking], was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, **do not be afraid** to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is **of the Holy Spirit**. And she will bring forth a Son, and **you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.**" So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and **they shall call His name Immanuel,**" [And Son of God, Son of the Highest; **Isaiah 7:14**] which is translated, "God with us." Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus."

Joseph was told, as we just read, "you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." God's people now, as we are told by the Apostle John, are those who believe on Jesus being the Christ/Messiah, the Anointed One of God, of whom died on a cross for our sins, taking our sins upon Himself to the grave. And then He rose from the dead on the third day, thereby completely, definitively conquering death, sin and evil, as He is far superior to all of that. And then too, WE also will overcome death, sin and evil and have eternal life in and through Him, that is, of course, to all those who will go to that Great Light, Christ Jesus, believing on Him AND

receiving Him, receiving the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit into our hearts of which we are then children of God! **John 1:12-13**, "as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Now Joseph was also told, that Mary would "bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us". That is just one of the many attributes given to Christ Jesus, of Whom He is, what He means to us, and is for us. Jesus declared, "I AM the Light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (**John 8:12**) Jesus also clearly stated, "I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." The Apostle John then follows that up for us by saying, the "Truth which abides in us will be with us forever." (**2 John 1:2**) Isaiah the prophet spoke of Christ Jesus and many of His attributes in prophesying around 700 years before Christ by saying, "For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (**Isaiah 9:6**) Isaiah was speaking to the divinity of Christ, that He would be God incarnate. And that word peace (Prince of Peace) comes from Hebrew word "shalom". Strong's Lexicon says about that word shalom, "Shalom is a multifaceted Hebrew word that encompasses a range of meanings related to **peace and completeness**. It signifies not only the absence of conflict but also the presence of positive blessings such as health, safety, and prosperity. **Shalom is used to describe harmonious relationships between individuals, nations, and between God and humanity**. There is only ONE WAY that we will truly have peace, that is, the peace of God, within ourselves, with others, and with God—through Christ Jesus, the Prince of Peace. When we speak shalom to one another that also conveys a hope of wholeness and well-being, both physically and spiritually."¹ Jesus spoke of that "peace" to His disciples just before He was to leave them. He said, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (**John 14:27**) Very similar to the Hebrew word "shalom" then is that Greek word "eirene" (ay-ray-nay) used by Jesus. Its root is "eiro" which means "to join" or "to tie together into a whole"², which is the wholeness we have in Christ Jesus, similar to shalom, which can mean individually, or with others, and with God. Speaking shalom/eirene/peace to someone, may be in one's mind to just be saying, "peace, brother", like, just a greeting. Yet with a better understanding of that word, or I should say the Word, one may be really saying to someone, hopefully, "may you have wholeness, completeness, within yourself, with others and with God". As Jesus spoke the beatitude, the divine blessing saying, "**Blessed are the**

1 <https://biblehub.com/hebrew/7965.htm>

2 <https://biblehub.com/greek/1515.htm>

peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matthew 5:9), that coincides with Jesus saying "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." One more part of the Christmas story I'd like to share is in:

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Luke 2:1-20 "And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, "**Do not be afraid**, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger." 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!" [peace=eirene] So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us." And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

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Once again, as Jesus said to His disciples, He is then saying to us, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." So, through Christ Jesus our Savior and Lord, may God's mercies and grace and the peace of God, in wholeness and well-being, both physically (Lord willing in this lifetime) and spiritually be in you and upon you, to the praise and glory of God; as God is with us and nothing is impossible with God if we will just go to Him and trust Him that He will light our way in peace!