

Week of January 13-19

ANGEL WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH

Scripture Reading: Read Revelation Chapter 14

Nope, it's not a misprint in the title. We're all familiar with the Christmas hymn, "Angels We Have Heard on High." In fact, as of the writing of this devotional, it was less than a month ago when stores were playing the song as shoppers flocked to buy their gifts or churches were singing it in their Christmas services. The song, of course, is all about the angels at Bethlehem announcing the good news of Christ's birth along with gloria in excelsis Deo.

In Revelation 14, we read of another angel, though, declaring good news and presenting the eternal gospel to the world. *"Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth--to every nation, tribe, language and people. He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water."* This new carol, "Angel We Have Heard on High," like the original Christmas carol, comes from on high (or at least in midair!) and calls people to give gloria in excelsis Deo to God the Creator. In the midst of judgments, a message of hope is offered.

Now, normally, the task of proclaiming the gospel rests with the church. We have been commissioned by Christ to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18-20). It is our mission to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. Yet, here we have an angelic evangelist preaching the eternal gospel to the world. So, what's going on? It is God, in his mercy, giving humanity one last chance to repent before the hour of judgment comes in its fullness (14:7) and the seven angels pour out the seven final plagues on a sinful world (Revelation 15-16). There was still a chance. The earlier judgments were partial. The bowls to follow will be complete as God's wrath will be poured out in fullness. In-between, though, there was hope, an opportunity given so that one more could make it in to the kingdom before it was too late. "Angel We Have Heard on High," then, is God's last carol to the world to acknowledge him as Creator and God rather than bow to the beast and the dragon, the power behind the beast. The beast may try to shut up the faithful by martyring the saints but he can't shut out the gospel from being proclaimed. God will make sure of it. In the end, no one will be able to complain that they haven't heard the good news. If ever there was evidence that God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance, this is it.

Action Step & Prayer Focus: Either listen to or sing the Christmas carol, "Angels We Have Heard on High." Let it serve as a reminder to you of the end time carol that will come to a world in sin when God will offer people one more chance to find his salvation. Then, offer yourself to the Lord in prayer to assist the angel's mission by sharing the gospel with someone this week. If you don't already know Christ, it's not too late yet. His wrath has not yet been poured out in its fullness. Repent and give your life to Christ. Give Gloria in excelsis Deo while there is still time.

Take-a-way: *There is still a chance for sinners to repent and give gloria in excelsis Deo.*