

Sermon – 3rd Advent
Luke 2:8-14
December 17, 2017
"And the Angel Said...."

"Why is he going down there...why is he leaving his throne to lay in a manger of all things? They'll never understand him...they wouldn't recognize holiness down there if it hit em in the nose much less when it's born right under their noses. Ever since Eden they've wanted it their way. The Holy One gave them one simple command to stay away from one tree and even that was too restrictive for them. The first excuse to shun him was a dandy – "oh the serpent deceived me and I ate – it wasn't my idea" My arms still ache from the guard duty outside the garden He sent us down for – flaming swords held high at all times lest the man and his wife get the idea they could re-enter paradise.

It wasn't long and their descendants "wanted to erect a tower to the heavens, and make a name for themselves" - at Babel, right in the middle of the desert. The things they think the Holy One won't notice I'll never understand. He took care of that episode himself and scrambled their language to end that ego building project - but it sure hasn't stopped them from trying new ones has it? I admit he got their attention for a time when He got them out of Egypt and met them at that other desert rendezvous - the one at Mount Sinai. Can you ever forget what they said that time - "all that the Lord has commanded we will do" they shouted. Till desert water started getting scarce and their taste buds tired of manna... they did what he commanded!

I don't think he should go. Personally I think He should try a few more prophets. I know they made a mockery out of the first batch He sent them...Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Micah, Malachi, good men every last one of them. Say, do any of you remember when He had us go down there and sit with Daniel in that Lion's Den...that was fun...I wish he'd try something like that again – miracles get noticed in my humble opinion and I don't know why He doesn't do more of them. I'd give anything to see the look on that Persian King Darius' face again - when he saw Daniel sleeping with underfed carnivores curled up all around him like throw pillows.

Send some of us down to visit old King Herod or the current Roman bigshot Quirinius one night and we'd make them take notice I'll guarantee it...we have a way with kings! They understand power. Or else I say send more prophets...He hasn't tried that in what, 400 years? Can't hurt – maybe with all the new mass communication tools out there these days they could get the word out on paper and ink instead of running around giving fiery speeches – let this current generation of Jews form some small group studies – it might work.

Look, there He goes...he's really going down to them this time, to live there as a baby of all things. I'll tell you this...sooner than you and I can say Michaelangelo he'll be this lily white kid with blond curly hair posing like a poet from his manger, and we'll all become rosy cheeked, overfed cherubs with little white wings and golden halos floating in the air with tiny bow and arrow sets. That's what they do you know...they popularize their religion...so they can tame it. They'll make him a philosopher or something. He'll come and intrigue them with his wisdom, impress them with his compassion, but then like always they'll have second thoughts about craving His will.

But if that's what he wants...He's the omnipotent one. I doubt they'll recognize Him. Even if a few of them do, I doubt they'll receive him once he grows up. But we can't worry about that now. Look at Him...just lying there...helpless...the Creator of everyone and everything and he's become just like any of them - Mary's boy child Jesus Christ. If only he knew what they'll do to him. Then again maybe that's it...maybe He knows very well what they'll do to him. No flaming swords, no floods of judgement, no law on stone – he's going to try to change them this time. That's what he's going to do isn't it? He's going down to change them and save them...from themselves. That must be the plan. Be their God by being their servant. Put his law within them...you know, like Jeremiah talked about...a new way...a new covenant...I'm pretty sure he said that one day He'd write it on their hearts. He must love them something fierce huh?

We'll, no sense missing our chance....we won't get an assignment like this for a long, long time I suspect. Everybody up, clear your voices – we're going to sing our way down - we've got good news this time. But let's not make too much of a scene...He's the real star in this story after all. Listen, I know He was always rather fond of David – so let's start with those shepherds and see if we get anywhere with them! I'll go down first and set this up – you know give the rest of you a nice intro. “Excuse me gentlemen, I know you're working real hard but...today in Bethlehem a Savior has been born for you...your long awaited Messiah. But we weren't sure you'd recognize him because, well, he's lying in a manger.” Then you all come and well do one of our "gloria in excelsis deo" numbers – I like the old hymns best anyway! You know...this just might work.

Do you think? Our hymn is “Wake, Awake for Night is Flying” - #31...Please rise.