



## DAY 18

Wednesday, December 19

(Candle of Joy)

### LUKE 2:10–14

*“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.’ 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.’”*

# Dynamic Duo

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Chris is combination half Canadian and half American (half Vancouverite, half Bostonian), half financial-software-engineer and half theological-dabbler, and fully Christian and fully sinner. Don't do the math on that last one.

I love things that allow me to knock out two birds with one stone.

One favorite winter memory as a kid: going around caroling, not understanding the significance of Christmas carols, but enjoying hospitality and the goodwill of neighbors who would put up with our joyful noise. I still love those Christmas carols. It was fun, and we were appreciated—what a combo!

As I grew older, I realized music can powerfully combine stirring the soul, encouraging and lifting our spirits, and also teaching and proclaiming core truths. I remember really struggling with hymns: whether I should focus on the words and meditate upon them and make them personal, or whether I should focus on the music, perhaps on singing well. My friend said either would be great! Well, with Christmas carols such as the following, we have the dynamic duo of great doctrine combined with great music, like the lyrics of Charles Wesley mixed with the musical genius of messianic Jew Felix Mendelssohn:

Hark the herald angels sing  
“Glory to the newborn King!  
Peace on earth and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled”  
Joyful, all ye nations rise  
Join the triumph of the skies  
With the angelic host proclaim:  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem”  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Christ by highest heav'n adored  
Christ the everlasting Lord!  
Late in time behold Him come

Offspring of a Virgin's womb  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see  
Hail the incarnate Deity  
Pleased as man with man to dwell  
Jesus, our Emmanuel  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

Hail the heav'n-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Son of Righteousness!  
Light and life to all He brings  
Ris'n with healing in His wings  
Mild He lays His glory by  
Born that man no more may die  
Born to raise the sons of earth  
Born to give them second birth  
Hark! The herald angels sing  
“Glory to the newborn King!”

*(Lyrics 1739, Charles Wesley; original tune by Felix Mendelssohn 1840; adapted by William H. Cummings.)*

#### RESPOND:

**DO:** Sing some Christmas hymns, and don't worry about whether you should focus more on the meaning of the words or the beauty of the music. Just enjoy them both as a dynamic duo!

**PRAY:** Look up or recall to mind the words of a Christmas carol, and let its message direct your prayers and songs today.