

1. Let's begin by looking into heaven just after the Rapture. As Church Age believers we find ourselves in the throne room face to face with God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. A vision is provided to John who pens a message to us.

Expanded Translation

Rev 4:6 And before the throne there was a glassy sea representing peace and stability, the personification of "still waters," that only an omnipotent God can bring. And in the midst of the thrones were four angels, full of eyes in front and in back.

Rev 4:7 The first angel was like a lion, and the second like a calf, and the third had a face like that of a man. The creatures represented the ministering angels who watched over God's beloved Son and His family.

Rev 4:8 The fourth angel was like an eagle. And each of the angels had six wings, and even their wings were full of eyes. And they rested neither day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, blessed is the Christ Who was and Who is, and Who is coming.

2. The four angels represent the four portraits of Christ that we find in the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

2.1 The "Lion," king of the beasts, pictures Christ as the King of the Jews. This is especially emphasized in the Gospel of Matthew.

2.2 The hard-working Ox pictures Christ as the fully obedient servant of His Father. This quality is highlighted in the Gospel of Mark. Mark, surprisingly, tells us nothing about the birth of Christ.

2.3 The Living Being with the face of a man represents Christ as the ideal and perfect man, as vividly portrayed in the Gospel of Luke.

2.4 The Flying Eagle suggests Christ's heavenly origin, i.e., His complete oneness with our Father God. This is the special message of the Gospel of John.

3. It is my view the creatures are: "ministering angels who watched over God's beloved Son and His forever family." Their continual songs of praise, Holy, holy, holy is perhaps also to remind us night and day of the sublime nature and work of the Lord Jesus Christ while He was on earth.

Expanded Translation

Rev 4:9 And whenever the seraphim gave glory and honor and thanksgiving to the Christ Who lives forever,

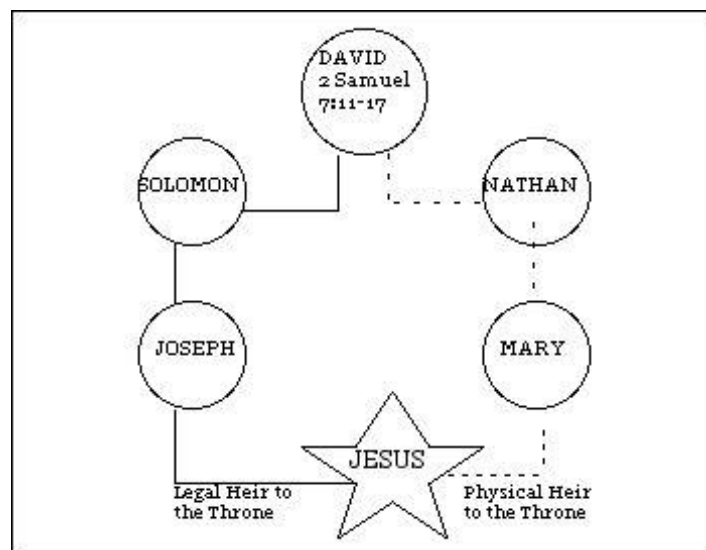
Rev 4:10 the raptured believers represented by the 24 elders would fall down before the throne and cast their crowns before Him saying:

Rev 4:11 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for Thou hast created all things, and all for Your pleasure and purpose were they created.

1. Whenever the four living beings begin to praise the Lord, it's the cue for the twenty-four elders, representing the raptured Church Age believers, to fall down before the throne and worship God. As a part of their worship, the elders throw their crowns at His feet; for after all, the source of all divine good is and always will be the mind of Christ.

2. Let's prepare for the Christmas story by using 1Jo 1:9 as may be necessary.

The Gospel of Matthew-Matthew provides a portrait of Christ as the King of the Jews.



Mat 1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

Mat 1:19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

Mat 1:20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Mat 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Mat 1:22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

Mat 1:23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" -- which means, "God with us."

Mat 1:24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Mat 1:25 But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Mat 2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem

Mat 2:2 and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him."

Mat 2:3 When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him.

Mat 2:4 When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born.

Mat 2:5 "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

Mat 2:6 ""But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.""

Mat 2:7 Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.

Mat 2:8 He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

Mat 2:9 After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

Mat 2:10 When they saw the star, they were overjoyed.

Mat 2:11 On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh.

SONG: WE THREE KINGS (See next page for Music)



COMING OF THE WISE MEN

113 We Three Kings of Orient Are

When Jesus was born ... there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem — Matthew 2:1 KJV

1. We three kings of Or - i - ent are: Bear - ing gifts we trav - erse a - far—
2. Born a King on Beth - le - hem's plain: Gold I bring to crown Him a - gain,
3. Frank - in - cense to of - fer have I, In - cense owns a De - i - ty nigh;
4. Myrrh is mine, its bit - ter per - fume Breathes a life of gath - er - ing gloom—
5. Glo - rious now be - hold Him a - rise: King and God and Sac - ri - fice;

Field and foun - tain, moor and moun - tain—Fol - low - ing yon - der star.
King for - ev - er, ceas - ing nev - er, O - ver us all to reign.
Prayer and prais - ing, all men rais - ing, Wor - ship Him, God on high.
Sor - r'wing, sigh - ing, bleed - ing, dy - ing, Sealed in the stone - cold tomb.
Al - le - lu - ia, Al - le - lu - ia! Earth to heav'n re - plies.

O star of won - der, star of night, Star with roy - al beau - ty bright,

West - ward lead - ing, still pro - ceed - ing, Guide us to thy per - fect light.

WORDS: John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891
MUSIC: John Henry Hopkins, Jr., 1820-1891

KINGS OF ORIENT
Irregular

Gospel of Luke-Luke provides a portrait of Christ as the ideal and perfect Godman.

Luk 2:1 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

Luk 2:2 (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.)

Luk 2:3 And everyone went to his own town to register.

Luk 2:4 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.

Luk 2:5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child.

Luk 2:6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,

Luk 2:7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloth and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Luk 2:8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

Luk 2:9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

Luk 2:10 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.

Luk 2:11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.

Luk 2:12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloth and lying in a manger."

Luk 2:13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

Luk 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests."

Luk 2:15 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."

Luk 2:16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger.

Luk 2:17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child,

Luk 2:18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.

Luk 2:19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Luk 2:20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

SONG: ANGELS WE HAVE HEARD ON HIGH (See next page for Music)



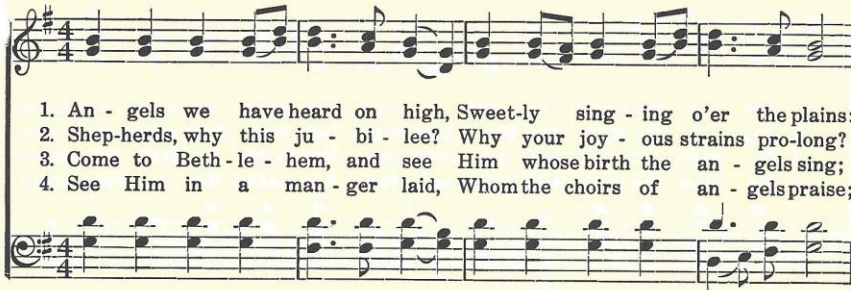
Angels We Have Heard on High 64

HIS BIRTH

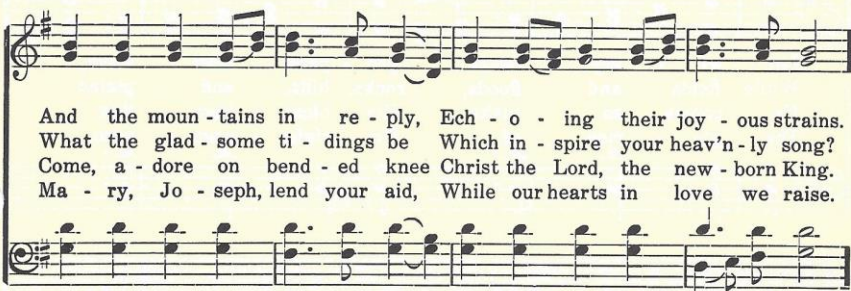
GLORIA. 7. 7. 7. 7. with Refrain

Traditional

Old French Carol
Arr. by WARREN M. ANGELL, 1907-



1. An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet-ly sing - ing o'er the plains:
2. Shep-herds, why this ju - bi - lee? Why your joy - ous strains pro-long?
3. Come to Beth - le - hem, and see Him whose birth the an - gels sing;
4. See Him in a man - ger laid, Whom the choirs of an - gels praise;



And the moun - tains in re - ply, Ech - o - ing their joy - ous strains.
What the glad - some ti - dings be Which in - spire your heav'n - ly song?
Come, a - dore on bend - ed knee Christ the Lord, the new - born King.
Ma - ry, Jo - seph, lend your aid, While our hearts in love we raise.

REFRAIN



Glo - - - - - ri - a in ex-cel-sis De - o!



Glo - - - - - ri - a in ex-cel-sis De - o!

Gospel of John-The book of John is a portrait of a heavenly Christ in complete oneness with our Father God.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 He was with God in the beginning.

Joh 1:3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Joh 1:4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

Joh 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Joh 1:6 There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John.

Joh 1:7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.

Joh 1:8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

Joh 1:9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

Joh 1:10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

Joh 1:11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

Joh 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God –

Joh 1:13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

Joh 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

SONG: WORD OF GOD ACROSS THE AGES (See next page for Music)

NAME	DEBITS		CREDITS	BALANCE
	SINS	GOOD WORKS		
DAVID J. (Unbeliever)	1,234,567	12,345	None	Condemnation
DAVID J. (Believer)	1,234,567	12,345	+R	SALVATION
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DAVID J. (Believer)	1,234,567	12,345	+R	SALVATION

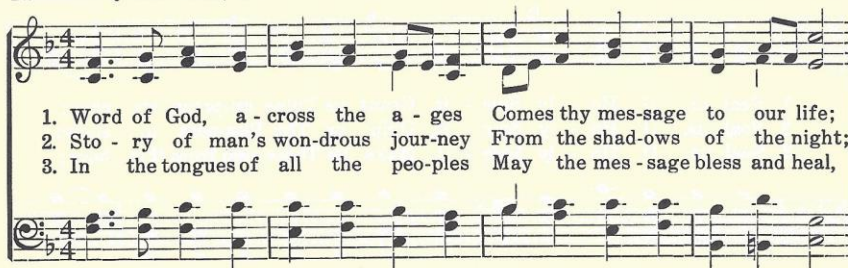
THE WORD OF GOD

176 Word of God, Across the Ages

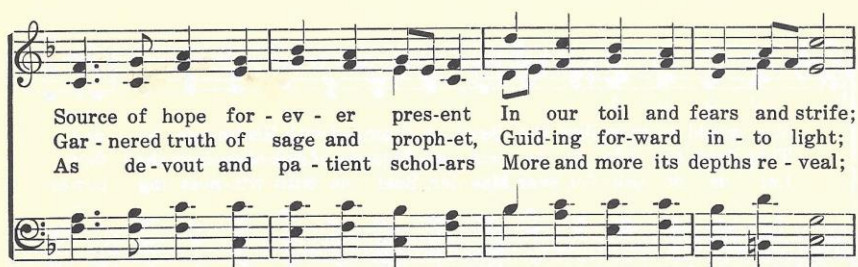
AUSTRIAN HYMN. 8. 7. 8. 7. D.

FERDINAND Q. BLANCHARD, 1872-

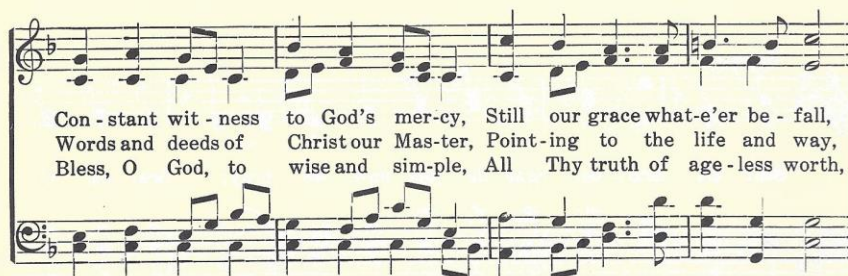
FRANZ J. HAYDN, 1732-1809



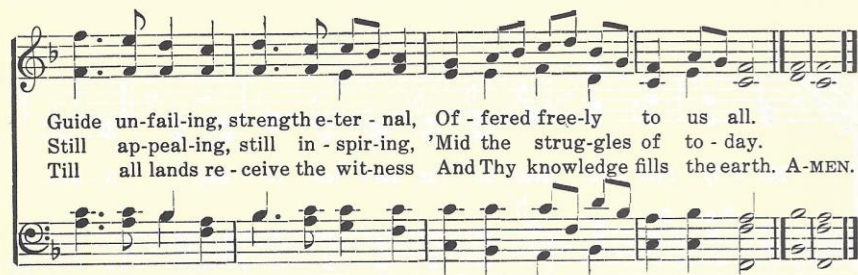
1. Word of God, a - cross the a - ges Comes thy mes - sage to our life;
2. Sto - ry of man's won - drous jour - ney From the shad - ows of the night;
3. In the tongues of all the peo - ples May the mes - sage bless and heal,



Source of hope for - ev - er pres - ent In our toil and fears and strife;
Gar - nered truth of sage and proph - et, Guid - ing for - ward in - to light;
As de - vout and pa - tient schol - ars More and more its depths re - veal;



Con - stant wit - ness to God's mer - cy, Still our grace what - e'er be - fall,
Words and deeds of Christ our Mas - ter, Point - ing to the life and way,
Bless, O God, to wise and sim - ple, All Thy truth of age - less worth,



Guide un - fail - ing, strength e - ter - nal, Of - fered free - ly to us all.
Still ap - peal - ing, still in - spir - ing, 'Mid the strug - gles of to - day.
Till all lands re - ceive the wit - ness And Thy knowledge fills the earth. A - MEN.

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Conclusion

1. I'm reminded of something Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Oh if you would lift me, you must be on higher ground." As I thought about his quotation (though I doubt that Waldo had our Lord in mind), I could not help but think of the truth of this profundity as it relates to the birth and life of our Lord.

2. Little did Emerson know how close he came to capturing the true meaning of Christmas and the coming of Christ. Only Deity could lift fallen man for He and He alone holds the higher ground. Christmas didn't begin in a manger in Bethlehem with the birth of baby Jesus. Christ wasn't just a baby born a King to bring peace; not just a baby who would so profoundly affect our history, but rather, Jesus was "uncontemplatable" Deity agreeing to be and to do the unthinkable; Deity shedding His divine essence, the Alpha and Omega becoming spatially and chronologically limited. Spatial to the extent that Jesus Christ the Son of God agreed to be in one place at one time, occupying a volume of ambient air, a spatial captive in an alien kingdom belonging to Satan himself. And so He was born uttering His last words as Deity in a tribute to the plan of God, totally in compliance with the Father's authority.

Heb 10:5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

Heb 10:6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

Heb 10:7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

3. Jesus agreed to deprive Himself of Deity and leave the indescribable perfect environment of the Third Heaven. Paul spoke of that deprivation in Phi 2:7.

Phil 2:7 But in contrast to an equality with the other members of the Trinity, He Himself became less than divine; in fact He robbed Himself of His rightful prerogatives taking the form of a slave in the likeness of humanity.

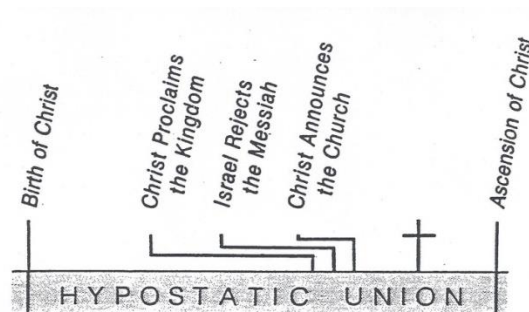
4. In the 2nd verse of the 12th Chapter of the Book of Hebrews we are commanded to look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who instead of the joy of the third heaven endured the cross, despising the shame, ..." The Godman took on the limitations of humanity in order that He might become the Savior and the source of our salvation.

5. For the very first time, Jesus agreed to become limited by physics - physics a body of science He invented in eternity past. The all-knowing Creator of all things agreed to learn, to hope, to anticipate and to wonder if all was well - truly a miracle in the making, Omniscience beginning to learn, Omnipresence occupying a volume of space and Omnipotence surrendering all power to God. By choice His very own historical influence became unknown to Omniscience.

Heb 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered;

6. The problem, given man in his sinful condition, was how could that which is higher lift that which is lower without hint of compromise or hypocrisy? Mankind must know that God truly understands, if there is to be, divine empathy. The Incarnate Christ understands - why? Because He became our point-man and led the way across the no-mans land of pain and suffering.

7. Edmund Burke said, "Example is the school of mankind, wisdom which lasts can be learned no other way." So Christ became our Divine Prototype taking on the limitations of mankind and thus was born the divine confluence when Deity met mankind on Planet Earth. We call this, in theological terms the Hypostatic Union. The Hypostatic Union when the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.



8. Because of his example and our encounter with Him we must cherish His words and if we be wise we will think on them forever. The Bengal Lancers had a tradition fitting to our context.

9. As they arrayed themselves in preparation for the charge, their officers with prim British propriety would step forward and turn to their loyal subalterns and say: "Want you join me?" want you join me?" and then to the drum role which has marked battlefields the world over a line of bright blue jackets and black britches striped with the red of the Union Jack would move to the conflict to claim another victory for God and King. So also does our Lord ask us "want you join me and follow the colors to the high ground."

10. The first Christmas was simply a step in the plan of redemption completed by the Creator of all things.

Col 1:16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:
Col 1:17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

Joh 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 The same was in the beginning with God ...

Joh 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

11. When God repeats a point, which He certainly has done in above five verses, there is a reason, and no doubt God wants us to know that Christ has always been, and even today is. Christ waits from Heaven where He serves as our ultimate mediator. Won't you accept Him today as your Savior?

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become Sons of God even to them who believe on His Name."

Let us pray.