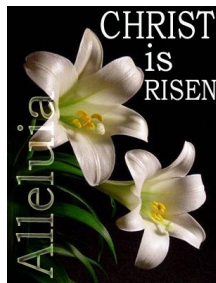


“The Joyful Easter Message of the Angel in the Tomb!”



And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.”

And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid. (Mark 16:5-8)

In proclaiming the glorious tidings of His good will toward men, God has at various times availed Himself of the care and support of angels. During this Easter-tide, I would remind you of but two notable communications made by angels to men. The first of these communications was heralded in that holy night on the plains of Bethlehem to the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks; the other is the one voiced by the angel from our Lord’s tomb on Easter day.

At Christmas the angels proclaimed, *“Be not afraid; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.”*

Early in the morning on Easter the angel said to the women, *“Be not afraid; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; He is not here; He is risen. Behold the place where they laid Him.”*

The Christmas announcement by the angels was delivered during the night; but this dark night was made brilliant by the glory of the Lord which shone round about the shepherds, symbolizing, as it were, the result that this proclamation should bring about – that of illuminating the dense night of spiritual darkness hovering over the whole world.

The Easter proclamation was voiced in a grave; and this grave, too, was rendered transcendent beyond description by the brightness of the visitors from above, making it apparent that now even that most dreaded abode, the grave, was divested of its terrors.

The Christmas message was proclaimed by the angels at the beginning of Christ’s earthly career, when He *“was made of a woman, made under the Law, that He might redeem them that were under the Law.”*

The Easter message given by the angel, on the other hand, was echoed when the work of redemption had been completed after Jesus had spoken the words on the cross, *“It is finished!”* and after the God the Father had affixed His divine seal of approval to the work of His Son.

Weighing these two angelic messages in the balance, which contains the greater, the more important, the more joyful news? A redundant question! For, both are fraught with joyful news too deep for us to fathom.

These two angelic messages are like beautiful, brilliant gems lying side by side. It is very hard to give preference to either. So, then, as during Christmas we considered the Song of the Angels – so let us now, in this joyous Easter-tide, both hear and proclaim the joyful Easter Message of the angel in the tomb of our Lord, which first of all contains the admonition, *“Do not be afraid!”*— no matter what the devil, the world, and our own flesh my attempt to frighten us with. That secondly, announces that *“Our Lord has risen! That, He has risen indeed!”* – which is the guarantee that we too will one day rise from the grave and forever be with Jesus. And thirdly, heed the command *“to go and tell others!”* – which is the incentive for us to share the *“Good News”* that we know and cherish, that others too, might know the wonderful news of how much our Lord really does love us, in that He took our place by dying on the cross for our sins and rose again from the dead that we *“may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom, and continue to serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness.”*

May God’s blessings rest upon you during this Holy Week and Easter Season!!

In Christ, *Rev. Paul Zabel*