

# Why Angels Do Not Sing!

by Dr. J. Vernon McGee



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Scripture references are from the *American Standard Version*.

I want to invite your attention to two verses of Scripture found in the Gospel of Luke, the second chapter:

***And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying [not singing], Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.*** (Luke 2:13, 14)

Now when I was a little fellow in Sunday school – and believe me, that goes back to old-fashioned days, they taught us a song that said, “I want to be an angel and with the angels sing.” Well, to begin with I didn’t at that time want to sing. And in the second place I did not want to be an angel – and I was far from being one, you may be sure of that. And I’m happy to report to you, if you had the same feeling I had, you will never be an angel.

I’ve been very much dissatisfied with Vernon McGee, but I’m very glad I’ll never lose my identity throughout eternity. I will always be Vernon McGee, though with a new body. I’ll get rid of my old nature, which is going to be a glorious, wonderful thing, but I’ll not be an angel. Not one of us will be an angel.

Two boys in my Southland had not seen each other in a long time, and they met one day on the street. In the meantime both of them had gotten married. One said to the other – he was having trouble with his wife – “What kind of a woman did you marry?” He replied, “I married an angel.” The first one said, “Boy, are you lucky. Mine’s still alive.” You know, many people think today that when you die you become an angel. Well, my beloved, nowhere in the Word of God does it indicate that we are going to be angels, never throughout the endless ages of eternity.

Now I believe that one of the neglected subjects of Scripture has to do with the angels. Actually not much is written in the Word of God concerning them. Most of what people believe about angels today does not come from the Word of God but comes from the Middle Ages with no scriptural foundation whatever.

And we have the Christmas carol, “Hark, the Herald Angels Sing.” Well, hark, the herald angels *don’t* sing! This Christmas carol that they sing has no scriptural proof at all. We can do something which angels cannot do, and that is sing.

It’s interesting to note that angels as we know them today have been sent forth as ministering spirits (see Hebrews 1:5-14). We know so little about them, as I’ve indicated, and the little that we do know is the contact they’ve made with earth. And I do not think they are the creatures that are mentioned in Job where God speaks of the fact, “When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job 38:7). Did you know that God has infinitely more creatures than you and I have ever dreamed of? If you think that somehow man on this earth constitutes just about all that God has created except a few angels to run errands for Him and that is the extent of heaven, you’re wrong. God has created intelligences, they’re called here “sons of God.” And we’re told here that the “morning stars sang together.” I’m of the opinion that Job was talking about this physical universe. Shakespeare understood it that way, as he wrote,

There’s not the smallest orb which thou behold’st  
But in his motion like an angel sings,  
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

I cannot prove it but I believe that this physical universe that we are living in, with its millions and literally billions of planets, is making music for God today. And the only one that's out of tune is this little earth, our little orb on which we live. We're out of tune. Man sins. And when man "who had been made a little lower than the angels" sinned he lost his song.

It's interesting today that you find creation is not singing at all. Romans 8:22 says, "... the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now." When you go down and stand by the seaside, you hear the sob of the surf. You go to the mountaintop and you hear the wind howling through the tops of the pine trees. I can't imagine anything more mournful than that. I know of nothing that will put me to sleep at night like listening to the wind when I'm in the mountains during the summertime. And the storms blowing across our deserts and across the plains of the Midwest are sobbing out a song, not at all singing in the major key. Nature is in a minor key today everywhere you find it. Why? Because man has brought and is bringing down upon his own head the consequences of his fall. That's why nature has lost its song today.

The angels that we know of are called angels because they're messengers. We read in the Book of Malachi that Malachi's own name means Messenger. We may not know much about the man Malachi but we do know that he was a messenger. He called himself a messenger (a Western Union boy). And all the angels that we know anything about in Scripture were Western Union boys – messengers come from heaven. They brought messages from God to earth. The angel Gabriel brought messages to Daniel. And Gabriel is the one who in the New Testament breaks through the silence and comes with a message from heaven, but he doesn't come with a song. We find nowhere that the angels are singing.

They tell me the Western Union boys sometimes sing their message. Some friends told me once they got a singing message from one of these boys and they wished it hadn't been a singing message. The boy was not very good at singing, and they had just as soon he'd delivered it in an envelope rather than sing it to them. Well, the angels have never brought a singing message to man. The message they've brought has definitely been a message from heaven, one that on many occasions has brought great joy to man but never, as far as we know, have the angels sung it.

Now why is it that angels do not sing? If there ever was a time when angels should have been singing, it was here in the Gospel of Luke when that angel made the announcement of the birth of Christ.

***And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying [not singing], Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased. (Luke 2:9-14)***

They should have been singing. And the only place they seem to be singing is on the Christmas cards that I get. But they don't sing in the Word of God. You notice this again: "Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying

[not singing], Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.”

Now we find also that the angels apparently manifest nothing like joy. Here’s what I mean. You remember Dr. Luke gives us the parable in which he says, “. . .there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth” (Luke 15:10). As far as the angels are concerned, they seem to express no emotion at all. God the Father is the one who is expressing joy because one sinner has repented and turned to Him. The angels seem incapable of expressing emotion.

Why does that seem to be true from the Word of God? I’ll tell you why. *The angels have never been redeemed.* They do not know what it is to sing for the very simple reason that they were never lost sinners and were never redeemed.

It is to the redeemed that God has given a song. It’s interesting, my friend, that wherever the gospel has gone it has lifted man not only to a higher level as far as civilization and culture is concerned, but it’s always lifted man to the place where he can sing joyfully. Go today and listen to the tribes of the earth untouched by the gospel of Christ. Everything that I hear from them sounds like a funeral dirge. The fact that man brought sin into the world caused him to lose his song. And God says that the redeemed are the ones who can sing. “Oh give thanks unto Jehovah; for he is good. . . . Let the redeemed of Jehovah say so . . .” (Psalm 107:1, 2). They are the only ones today who can truly sing praises to God.

Have you ever noted that those who are not redeemed do not sing praises to God at all? What is the popular music of today? Country/Western Blues, isn’t it? I met a man at a luncheon, and he said he was going that evening to the nightclub. I asked him why was he going.

“Well,” he said, “I’m just going to have a good time.”

I said, “I’ve never been in a nightclub. What do they do?”

“Well, they sing the blues.” I became a little more inquisitive and asked what specifically?

“Well, the entertainer’s going to sing about having lost her man and she’s crying about it.”

And I said, “You mean to tell me that is having a good time?” I don’t know about you, but I personally don’t care about listening to some man or some woman singing about the fact they lost somebody. To me that’s not joyful at all. That’s the blues. But that seems to be the best the world can do today. And that’s exactly what they sing.

You may remember that when the people of Israel were yonder at the Red Sea they murmured against Moses. They had groaned down in the land of Egypt. And when they were freed from bondage and came to the Red Sea they wanted to turn back. These people, not yet redeemed by crossing the Red Sea in power, wanted to turn back to the brickyards of Egypt! What happened? Moses, following God’s instructions, went down and smote the Red Sea. They were redeemed by power. And when they had crossed over, for the first time you read, “They sang the song of Moses.” Redeemed people were able to sing, *really* sing, for the first time. And wherever the gospel has gone it has caused man to quit singing in a minor key and sing in a joyful major key, my beloved. It’s the gospel that has brought that about.

Do you know there’s nothing that will take away the song of a saved person except this matter of sin in your life? Do you remember the people of Israel down in the land of Babylon? They had been noted for their singing. In fact, they had made a great reputation as singers. And if you want to look at something interesting, look at the number of famous musicians in this world who have been Jews. That’s no accident. These people were great musicians. David, called

the sweet psalmist of Israel, gave us most of the Psalms, Israel's hymnbook. My, how the Jews could sing!

Tradition says that probably a half million to a million people gathered in the Temple area at the time of the Feasts. And the people of Israel would sing these psalms accompanied by orchestral music. Can you imagine what that would have been like? It was so impressive that its reputation spread throughout the world to such an extent that all heard about it. Even the Queen of Sheba came "from the ends of the earth" because of the reputation that had been made at that Temple. And one of the main attractions was the music that was there.

However, there came a day when the people of Israel had sinned away their days of grace, and God let them go into captivity and they were transported to Babylon. Even Babylon had heard about them, and the sightseeing bus company ran a tour out to where they were by the canals. The tourists went out and looked at these Jews, there now as disconsolate slaves, and they said to them, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion. We've been hearing about your music, we'd like you to sing for us." Do you know what the Jews said? With a note of sadness they said, "We hung our harps upon the willows. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?" They had lost their song because of the sin in their lives. And there's nothing today that will take the song out of the heart like sin.

Now maybe you're like I am today – you can't sing. I mean your voice is fair but you're not a candidate for the choir. I never listen to singers but what I don't really envy them. If I could sing, I'd give up preaching and sing. I think that may be one reason the Lord never let me have a beautiful voice. But, oh, how I'd love to sing! The late Dr. Trowbridge used to be music director at the church I served in Los Angeles. He was also our music director out at Pasadena when I was pastor there. He made a statement one night that I challenged. He said, "I've never met a person in my life who couldn't be taught to sing." He said, "*Anybody* can learn to sing." I stood right up and said, "I accept your challenge." And he said, "All right." He was meeting every Thursday afternoon with those people who said they could not sing. I met with him three times. He'd go to the piano and he'd play a note and say, "Now, you sing it." I never could hit the note. He said that I never did get it. After the third lesson, he said to me, "Well, I'm going to have to qualify my statement. I think everybody can learn to sing except one, and there's one fellow who cannot learn to sing." Although I cannot sing, I want to say to you at this Christmastime, I'm glad David put it as he did: "Make a joyful *noise* unto the Lord."

Now my wife and daughter won't even let me sing in the car or at home in the shower. They come in and want to know if there's something wrong with me. But the thing I do when I'm by myself in the car is sing for my own amazement.

But as we come to this Christmas season it's good to hear all this beautiful music about the birth of the Lord Jesus. And the important question is, do you have a song in your heart?

When man sinned in the Garden of Eden he lost his song. But then God brought redemption because Christ came into the world, and now there is music. The angels just have to stand aside, but Peter says they desire to look into these things (see 1 Peter 1:12). And I have a notion that many an angel wishes he could sing. I really wish I could sing, but God has put a song in the heart of all of us who have been redeemed, and the psalmist says, "The Lord is good...let the redeemed of the Lord *say* so." David wrote in Psalm 40,

***He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay; and he set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. . . . (Psalm 40:2, 3)***

And when Christmas comes, my friend, you and I can say, “The Lord is good, He’s good, He’s redeemed us, He’s put a new song in my mouth.” And we ought to tell others about it also. “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.” Maybe you can’t sing it but you can say it. Maybe you can’t even say it, but you can pass it on some way. You can have part today in getting out a message that has brought a song to this world. When Jesus Christ came about two thousand years ago He brought a new song to the human family, and He uses men and women who have been redeemed to spread the good news today – not angels!