

The Angels = Light

How Christmas Can Light Your Way

Matthew 1:18-25

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Bethany Church

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Years ago my father showed me a piece of wood and he said, "Lad, what do you see?" "I see a stick," I told my father. He shook his head and said, "No, son, this is people's lives. Others see a stick, but you see more. You see life." My father said, "Only God can grow this wood; but you son, God gives you the ability to shape it. You can shape this wood; you can carve this wood; you can make this wood bless people. For one it can be a roof, for another a floor; for one a tower, for another a well; for one a spoon, for another a bowl. This wood can harm people or charm people; it can spear them or cheer them. This wood can serve people, maybe even save them. It can help them feed their families. As a vat it holds their grapes or feeds their livestock. Son, tell

me now what you see in my hand.@ I told my father, AI see wood, I see people's lives, and I see my work.@ My father said, "Joseph, only now have you opened your eyes."

My father taught me to see things few do. When you see wood, you see wood. When I see wood, I see life. However, there were many things I still did not see. I remember when I first laid eyes on Mary. I saw a young, beautiful girl with flowing brown hair. I saw a tender-heart. I saw joy. I saw someone I wanted to be with. I saw someone I wanted as a companion. I saw someone I wanted to share my life with. I saw someone I hoped would admire and love me. But what did Mary see when she looked at me? Did she see a man she could love? Did she see a man worthy of her? Did she see a man for whom she would surrender all other loves? I hoped, but then I thought not. For when her womb held this baby, I was angry. I felt betrayed. I loved her, but could not trust her. I believed she would bring me ill. Yet, she had such charm, even an innocence. I despised what I thought she had done to me and decided we could not be married. I was about to draft papers that would break off our engagement. But I was too tired. I went to bed. While asleep, I began to dream. Have you had dreams? I've had funny ones, and I've had scary ones. I've had nightmares, and I've had silly, silly dreams that make no sense. This dream, however, was different. It was similar to a dream my family had discussed much in my home, and in the synagogue where my family attended. We had talked about a dream that the father of my people, Jacob, had. Angels had visited him in his dream, and an angel came to me in mine. The angel reminded me that I was related to King David. He told me that the child in Mary was a gift of the Holy Spirit, that Mary had been faithful and that she would be. He told me that the child would grow to be a savior. When the dream was over, I found myself believing Mary. Then shortly after

this child was born. Shepherds visited us. They told us that an angel sent them. The angel told them the same thing. This child, Jesus, is our savior. He is the one God has sent to save us from everything that would destroy us.

It took a carpenter to open my eyes to see this wood. It took angels to open my eyes and help me see my wife, this child and my life. I needed the light of angels to see. We need the light of angels to see. God has given us that light to see. Will you let the angels open your eyes? Will you let God help you see?