

## Christmas Day -

Luke 2:13-14 - Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest.

In the name of babe of Bethlehem, the Lord and Creator of all mankind, yet only a helpless infant, DFR:

On the very first Christmas, something so wonderful and so exciting had happened that even the angels of heaven wanted to see for themselves. And what happened left them saying the now familiar words: **Glory to God in the highest.**

Have you ever really thought about what those words of the angels – spoken on the first Christmas – really say? That because of this baby's birth, this ordinary looking baby, born far from home, a baby so seemingly unimportant that room couldn't even be found for them in Bethlehem, was so unbelievably fantastic that the very angels of heavens couldn't help but break out in giving praise to God.

But not just ordinary praise, because this wasn't an ordinary event. What had happened at Bethlehem left them saying that God deserved their highest, their greatest, their very best and most superb praise. Because of this little baby's birth, the birth of Jesus Christ the Son of God A gift from God that was so beyond comprehension that all we can do is shake our heads in wonder and say: **how much God loved me that he was do this for me.**

We try pick out great gifts for people. Something very thoughtful, very useful, something they really wanted. Yet even so, the gifts that we give aren't always perfect. Maybe they arrive broken in the mail, or it doesn't fit, it's the wrong color, or the person already has one - or despite our "expert" opinion - they don't want one. And that's why for the next few days millions of Americans are going be to trying to return some Christmas presents.

But God's gift of his only Son, the gift of the baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes was perfect in every way. It isn't the wrong size or the wrong color. We didn't have a Savior. It was what was truly, really needed.

Do you remember the O'Henry's story of a young married couple who wanted to give each other a very special Christmas present? A young married couple didn't have much. But she had long beautiful hair, and he had a handsome watch that had belonged to grandfather and then to his father. Yet to buy his wife some lovely combs for her hair, he sold his watch. And to buy him a chain for his watch she cut her lovely hair and sold it. What generous gifts - and how much each gave up to give them! Wouldn't a gift like these gifts, a gift that came from the heart, that sacrificed and gave up so much to give to one they loved, wouldn't that gift be worthy of praise, of the greatest praise? Of course it would!

And now look at the gift of God of his one and only Son. Like the young husband and wife of O'Henry's story, God has given to us his most precious possession, a gift of great price. But there were no foolish mistakes with God's gift. He knew exactly what he was giving and exactly the cost.

What did God give *us* for Christmas? Not a new tie, not a new tool set or diamond earrings, new toys or a new blouse. He gave us his only Son. He gave him to us knowing he would die for us, but knowing that by his death, he was also removing our sins.

God's gift was **perfect** and so we give him the greatest praise, the glory, praise and honor that is above all other praise and honor for his wonderful and most precious gift of his only Son.

Glory to God in the highest, or as one well-known hymn quotes it in the Latin, Gloria in excelsis deo: the greatest, the highest, the very best praise and worship that we can offer is what we offer and give to God.

Today as we the undeserved gift of love and grace that God gives us in his one and only son, you and I can only join the angels the night of our Savior's birth and join in praising God and speaking his praises. Amen.