

Luke 2:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Analysis

Suddenly 'a multitude of the heavenly host' joins the angel, praising God. The term 'heavenly host' (Greek 'plēthos stratias ouraniou,' πλῆθος στρατιᾶς οὐρανίου) literally means 'multitude of heaven's army'—myriads of angels constituting God's forces. Their sudden appearance magnifies the birth's significance—all heaven celebrates this moment. The military imagery of 'host/army' contrasts with their peaceful message, suggesting that Christ's birth initiates spiritual warfare's decisive battle, where Prince of Peace conquers through suffering rather than military might.

Historical Context

Old Testament theophanies often featured angelic hosts (Jacob's ladder, Joshua meeting the commander of the LORD's army, Elisha's vision of chariots of fire). The term 'host' applied to both earthly armies and angelic forces, emphasizing God's sovereignty over all powers. That this multitude appears to announce Christ's birth demonstrates heaven's unified witness to incarnation's significance. Later revelation shows these angelic armies accompanying Christ's second coming (Revelation 19:14), but here they herald His first coming with praise rather than judgment.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Study Questions

1. What does the appearance of heaven's armies at Christ's birth reveal about the incarnation's cosmic significance?
2. How does the contrast between military imagery (hosts/armies) and peaceful message (glory to God, peace on earth) characterize Christ's kingdom?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	ἐξαίφνης	ἐγένετο	σὺν	τῷ	ἀγγέλῳ	πλῆθος	στρατιᾶς
And	suddenly	there was	with	G3588	the angel	a multitude	host
G2532	G1810	G1096	G4862		G32	G4128	G4756
οὐρανόυ	αἰνούντων	τὸν	θεόν	καὶ	λεγόντων		
of the heavenly	praising	G3588	God	And	saying		
G3770	G134		G2316	G2532	G3004		

Additional Cross-References

Revelation 5:11 (Parallel theme): And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders: and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands;

1 Kings 22:19 (Parallel theme): And he said, Hear thou therefore the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left.

Hebrews 1:14 (Parallel theme): Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

Psalms 148:2 (Parallel theme): Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.

Daniel 7:10 (Parallel theme): A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.

Job 38:7 (References God): When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

Luke 15:10 (Sin): Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

Psalms 68:17 (Sin): The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place.

Ephesians 3:10 (References God): To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God,

Genesis 28:12 (References God): And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.