



The Best is yet to Come



We've come now to the part of our story where the hero makes his entrance. There was no fanfare. No band marched in with trumpets bellowing out brassy notes. No drum line beat in time to call attention to the moment. There was no assembly of onlookers. There was no spotlight, no man on a megaphone shouting to the passing crowds. There were no signs done up in garish colors to attract an audience. There was only Joseph, Mary, and the pains of labor. Then came the water and the blood, then came the Savior, by the light of an oil lamp.

Mary held the tiny hands, not yet knowing they were destined to be pierced. She kissed the tiny toes, not yet knowing that these feet would be nailed to a cross. Her tears fell on the forehead that would wear the crown of thorns. She hugged him tightly and felt the heart beating within his chest, the very one that would be pierced by a spear. She wrapped him here in swaddling cloths, not yet anticipating the burial cloths he'd be wrapped in. Born in a borrowed stable room to be buried in a borrowed tomb. Born here in the darkness of night, destined to die on the cross in the unusual darkness of day. Born here in private, to be crucified in public. A cry pierced the night air, the breath filling the tiny lungs. His first cry! His first sound! And here it began. One day, he would lift his voice to heaven, shout out, "It is FINISHED," and, with a loud cry, give up his spirit.

This was the beginning, but it forecast the end.

On a hillside at the edge of the little town of Bethlehem, shepherds were keeping watch over the flocks by night.

Suddenly, an angel of God appeared to them, and the glory of God broke through the darkness and shone all around them. They trembled at this apparition, but the angel spoke to them, "Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

In a flash, the singular angel was joined by a great multitude of all the heavenly hosts. Heaven was opened. The blinders were removed. The curtain pulled back. And the shepherds saw an angelic choir praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

As quickly as they had shown up, the hosts of heaven were gone. The shepherds hurried themselves to Bethlehem and searched until they found the child. Along the way there and all the way back, they told everyone who would listen what the angels had said, all they had seen and heard. The people marveled at these great things and wondered what they could mean, but Mary treasured these words in her heart.

And that was it for that first night. A weary mother. A proud father. A tiny Savior. A few shepherd visitors. And nothing more.

But the heavens rejoiced. The hosts of heaven celebrated. The prophets of old clapped their hands at the coming of the Righteous One. And all of creation let out a sigh of relief, for Salvation had arrived.

And though it might seem like our story should end here, and that our time together has come to a close, I get to say to you a few more times...

Don't worry.

The best is yet to come.