

## It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Lyrics by RA Gillmann

The carol "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear" is sometimes misstated with the title above ('a' instead of 'the'). I have chosen this title for a rewrite of the lyrics written in 1849 by Unitarian pastor Edmund Sears. While Sears' carol is associated with Christmas, in fact it is about angels and peace and does not mention Christ at all. The only allusion to the Gospels is the phrase "Peace on earth, goodwill to men." The carol mostly contrasts a sentimental view of angels with the noise and strife of mankind. My rewrite preserves a bit of the original but focuses instead on the birth of Christ as told in Luke's gospel.

It came upon a midnight clear,  
To shepherds long ago,  
The angel of the Lord appeared  
With bright and glorious show.  
"Fear not," he said to them, "Behold  
"I bring you tidings of joy.  
"For unto you is born this day  
"A Savior, Christ the Lord!"

"And this shall be a sign to you:  
"A babe in swaddling clothes,  
"Who's lying in a manger low,  
"With mother in repose."  
And suddenly a multitude,  
A heavenly host on high,  
Were praising God in one accord,  
Resounding round the sky.

"Glory be to God on high,  
"On earth let there be peace,  
"Among all those with whom the Lord  
"Is pleased," they said with glee.  
The shepherds were amazed and said,  
"Let's go to Bethlehem,  
"And see all that has happened,  
"As we were told by them."

The shepherds came in haste to find  
Joseph and Mary there,  
And with a babe in swaddling clothes  
Prone in a manger with care.  
The shepherds told them what they heard  
Concerning the child and sign.  
Young Mary kept them in her heart  
Through all the days of her life.