

The Angels of Christmas: An Angel Visits Mary

Luke 1:26-38

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December 3, 2017

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OUR VISION

Introduction: This year our focus for Advent is the angels of Christmas. We see a lot of angels at Christmas...over 50 in our decorations in church. This is the only time of the year we sing songs about angels. Angels play an important part of the Christmas story. There is no other story in the Bible that has as much angelic involvement as the Christmas story. We are going to examine the words spoken by angels and see how they bear witness to the truth of Christmas. And we also hope to learn some truth about angels.

I. Angelic Myths

A. Angels are Mythical Creatures

- Angels are real beings. They are not myths like minotaurs or unicorns. They are mentioned over 300 times in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation.

B. Angels are Chubby Cherubs

- Often angels are depicted as cute chubby children with wings. Mary has never seen an angel before and she is “greatly troubled” and afraid. How fearful would she have been if she saw an angel like this? In Bible, this is most common reaction to seeing an angel is fear. The angel says to Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and Shepherds is “Do not be afraid.” Something awesome about seeing a being who has been in the presence of God and radiates glory!

C. Angels are Humans in Heaven

- Angels are a completely different type of creation than humans. People do NOT become angels when they die. We do not get our “wings.” It may be that not even all angels have wings...

D. Angels are All Alike

- There are different types of angels. We know that cherubim and seraphim have wings, but Revelation talks about 100 million angels around the throne. There is no mention of wings. There may be many times more. But only three angels mentioned by name: Gabriel, Michael and Lucifer. Names imply personality and uniqueness.

II. Angelic Ministry

Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation? Hebrews 1:14

A. Angels Are Spirits

- Angels are Spirit beings. They are created beings, but not with flesh and blood bodies. They must have some physical substance because they are portrayed holding physical objects such as trumpets, swords and bowls. Although they don't have physical bodies they can at times take the form of humans. Tell of “third man” walking with Lowell and I around VC

Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. Hebrews 13:2

B. Angels Are Sent

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said...

- God sends them to do his bidding. Consider the angelic visit in our story: Mary didn't ask for an angel to visit. God sent an angel for a very specific purpose
 - Specific time: the sixth month (Six months earlier, an angel appeared to Zechariah and tells of the coming birth of Jesus' cousin John the Baptist. Same angel who now appears to Mary.)
 - Specific angel: Gabriel
 - Specific place: Nazareth in Galilee
 - Specific woman: virgin, pledged to Joseph, Mary
 - Specific purpose: Announce the birth of Christ
- It is OK to ask God to send angels and I do so nearly every week.

C. Angels Are Servants

- Angels are not sons and daughters of God. They are servants who serve the King and his children. Angels serve us. I believe that people have encounters with angels today. (Picture) Often we don't talk about this because we are afraid people will think we are crazy.

III. Angelic Message

Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her...

A. God Favors Us

- In Gabriel's first words to Mary we discover the essence of Christmas. "*Greetings, you who are highly favored!*" The whole point of Jesus' birth is to show that God favors us. 9 months later...

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests. Luke 2:14

- God chose to come to a world that had rejected him. He did so because his favor rests on us. No matter who you are or what you have done, God's favor rests on you.

B. God is With Us

- God so favors us that he longs to be with us. Long before this angelic visit, the prophet explained that the Messiah would be called Emmanuel.

The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel" -- which means, "God with us." Isaiah 7:14

- At Christmas God came to be with us in body. He lived among us in flesh and blood. Although we can't go see him, God is still with us today. His promise is that he will never leave us.

C. God Has a Plan for Us

"Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

- Note the confidence of the message... "will" spoken 9 times by Gabriel! Imagine his excitement and enthusiasm in delivering message. He stands in the presence of God. And he knows at least some of God's plan. He announced it 6 months ago to Zechariah and he announced it 600 years ago to Daniel when he spoke of the "anointed one" who was to come.
- God's plan WILL come about. Three things about Mary.

*You will be with Child
Holy Spirit will come upon you
Power of Most High will overshadow you*

- Six things about Jesus.

*Will be great // Will be called the Son of Most High // Will be given throne of his father David
Will reign over house of Jacob // His kingdom will never end // Will be called the son of God*

- From the very beginning, there was no question as to the identity of this coming child. He was the Son of Most High (God) son of David (Humanity)
- How strange this must have sounded to Gabriel who has seen Jesus as King all along. How strange this must have sounded to Mary who knew there was one big obstacle to God's Plan.

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

- She was not pregnant and being a virgin did not foresee becoming pregnant any time soon. But note her response of faith. She doesn't say, "This can't be because..." Instead she says, "How will this be...?"
- If God can give a virgin a child, then what in your life could be impossible?
- Mary accepts that the impossible can be possible and in simple faith and obedience she answers, "I am the Lord's servant..." May we respond with such simple obedience and faith today.