

An Angel Revisits Joseph

Matthew 2:13-21

Pastor Aaron Brown

December 31, 2017

I. Angels Speak for God

Luke 2:15, Revelation 22:8-9, Psalm 103:20, Colossians 2:18-19, 2 Corinthians 11:14

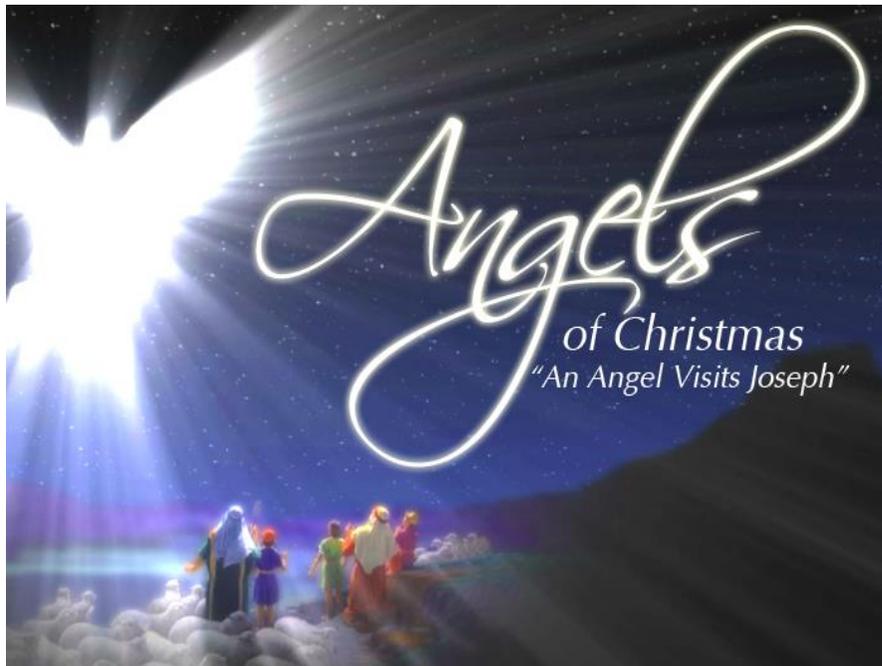
II. Joseph Obeys God's Voice

III. We Must Obey God's Voice

John 14:15, John 14:21-23, 1 John 5:3

Wesley Covenant Prayer

*I am no longer my own by yours.
Put me to what you will, rank me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,
Exalted for you or brought low for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and wholeheartedly yield all things
To your pleasure and disposal.
And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy
Spirit, You are mine and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in
heaven. Amen.*



**Printed Sermon
December 31, 2017**



OUR VISION

Introduction: It was a night they would treasure forever. Their first child was born and they gave him the name Jesus. That alone would make it one of the most memorable nights of their lives, but this was no ordinary child. An angel had spoken to each of them and spoken words of wonder about this child. To Mary the angel had said that He would be a king and he would be called the Son of God. To Joseph, the angel had said that He would save his people from their sins. And that night had been made even more special by the visit from the shepherds. They came to the baby Jesus with faces aglow. And they too had heard angels speak about their child. How they marveled at the shepherd's words...good news of great joy...this child is Christ the Lord. Yes, that night had been a night of wonder and joy. And the wonder of that night was refreshed when some time later, men of great wealth bowed down to their son and gave him expensive gifts.

It didn't take long for the magic to wear off, for shortly after this visit, Joseph had a visitor of another kind. An angel visited him again and brought him not good news, but clear instructions to avoid terrible news. Read Scripture.

"Get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

I. Angels Speak for God

- The "I tell you..." most likely refers to God for angels do not know the future unless God tells them. They speak for God. The shepherds made no distinction between the word of angels and the word of God.

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." Luke 2:15

- As beings who speak for God, they are not to be treated as God. An angel can so reflect God's glory that seems natural to bow before that angel. Even John experienced this.

I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. Worship God!" Revelation 22:8-9

- Angels will never let the focus be on themselves. They are only interested in doing God's will.

Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word. Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts, you his servants who do his will. Psalm 103:20

- Even at the first Christmas, the angels put all the focus on the one they called, "Christ the Lord." The Bible is clear that we should not worship angels or seek relationships with them.

Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head... Colossians 2:18-19

- Unfortunately, this can happen even in our day if our focus is taken off Jesus and placed on angels.

At a growing Brazilian church in Boston, a pastor told his congregation he was having regular conversations with an angel. The pastor eventually wrote a book containing messages he had supposedly received from the angel. The man's teachings became so bizarre that he was eventually removed from his denomination for promoting heresy. J Lee Grady The Holy Spirit is Not for Sale 140

- An angel of the Lord will never tell you something against the Word, but as we learned a couple weeks ago, not all angels are from the Lord.

Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. 2 Corinthians 11:14

- Even the words of an angel needs to be in line with Scripture. The angel's messages in Matthew was

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" --which means, "God with us." Matthew 1:22-23

And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

- Joseph didn't try to engage with the angel, he simply received his word as the word of God and obeyed.

II. Joseph Obeys God's Voice

- Joseph responds to the angel's warning with immediate and complete obedience. Twice an angel says, "get up" to Joseph and twice it says, "So he got up..."
- No debate or questions. He was probably aware of Herod's insane jealousy, but I suspect that he had no idea that Jesus was in danger. Can you imagine what it must feel like to learn that someone wants to kill your newborn baby?
- No wonder his obedience was immediate. "During the night" implies that he left right away. He woke Mary and told her, "We are leaving right now. Gather our few things and the baby and let's go."
- Joseph could get up immediately because he had already decided he would live a life of obedience. He had demonstrated it the first time the angel told him to do something. Joseph had already decided that God could be trusted...even when obedience meant hardship.
- Quite a hardship to travel to Egypt with a newborn. About 200 - 250 miles on foot! They would have to learn a new language, and new customs. It may be that the gifts of the wisemen were what funded their trip to Egypt.
- But Joseph would not compromise the clear instruction of the Lord...surely he could have found a place to hide in Israel. Mary is related to Zechariah the great priest...couldn't they find protection there? But the angel clearly said Egypt, so to Egypt they went. It didn't make

sense to Joseph, but in his obedience, the prophecy was fulfilled, “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

III. We Must Obey God’s Voice

- How do we respond when God calls us to “get up?” God may not speak through an angel, but he does call us. He used the written word to call me to get up. I remember the day in college when I was sitting in the prayer chapel reading Romans 10 and the words, “How can they hear without someone preaching to them?” And deep within, I knew God was calling me to preach. Like Joseph, I responded in obedience to get up. I have not looked back or regretted it.
- The old hymn writer had it right, “Trust and obey for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus but to trust and obey.”
- Our love for God is most clearly seen not in our worship, not in our giving, but in our obedience.

“If you love me, you will obey what I command.” John 14:15

“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me.” John 14:21

“If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.” John 14:23

This is love for God: to obey his commands. 1 John 5:3

- This is the time of year when we make New Year resolutions. Can you make a die cast decision that you are going to live a life of obedience? Are you willing to “get up” when God calls you this year?
- As 2017 comes to an end, let us prepare to get up and make 2018 a year of obedience. Let’s pray the prayer John Wesley prayed...

I am no longer my own by yours.

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Put me to doing, put me to suffering.

Let me be employed for you or laid aside for you,

Exalted for you or brought low for you.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

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And now, glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

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And the covenant now made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven.

Amen.