

Message of the Messengers

Matthew 1 & Luke 1 & Luke 2

PW Emerson – 12/1/2019 – Ten:27 Ministries

We're going to look at angels – they were key in the Christmas events.

When angels have come, they have spoken to a patriarch in the door of his tent. They spoke to a distressed farmer threshing wheat under an oak tree. Angels spoke to a persecuted apostle in prison.

But, can you think of an instance of divine or angelic visitation to a king on his throne? To a noble in his palace? To a rich man surrounded with splendors? To a sage with amid his books?

An angel once came to a seer who was trusting to his own wisdom, going against what God said. But that angel came with a drawn sword to knock him down.

An angel once came to a king on his throne – but it was to smite him with worms, because he was leading people away from God.

Dr. Raleigh, *6000 Classic Sermon Illustrations*

What would an angel say or do if one came to you?

The Christmas events are filled with angels.

- An angel appears to Joseph
- An angel appears to Zechariah – Gabriel
- An angel appears to Mary – Gabriel
- Angels appear to the shepherds

This wasn't the first time angels appeared, nor was it the last. We see angels throughout the bible, throughout history.

But usually an angel appears, performs the task sent by God to do, then leaves.

- Judges 6:11-16 Angel appears to Gideon, saying that he is to free the Israelites from the Midianites
- Daniel 9:21-23 Angel Gabriel appears to Daniel to teach Daniel

In the Christmas story, 5 times angels make an appearance.

Of course, they were all to support the main event, the birth of Jesus.

But I couldn't help but wonder other message we should glean from God's messengers

Let's take a look

Matthew 1:18-21

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from

the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

Angel appeared to Joseph to tell him Mary’s baby is from God.

The angel gave God’s will, that Joseph should marry Mary

The angel gave reassurance

What does Joseph say in response? Nothing.

He heard and obeyed.

There’s a good interaction with an angel!

Again, an angel appeared to Joseph, after the birth of Jesus

Matthew 2:13

When they (the wisemen) had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “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.”

The angel is carrying a warning message, to save Joseph, Mary & Jesus.

The angel tells Joseph exactly where to go – Egypt, where they were safe.

The angel is sharing God’s will.

And again, Joseph says nothing in response. He was told and he acted.

Luke 1:11-20 Angel Gabriel appears to Zechariah, father of John the Baptist

¹¹Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. ¹³But the angel said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. ¹⁴He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. ¹⁶He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. ¹⁷And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

¹⁸Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is well along in years."

¹⁹The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. ²⁰And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their appointed time."

Gabriel tells Zechariah of his coming son, and of the great things John will do

Zechariah's response was to doubt – either the messenger, the message or both. Either way, Gabriel was NOT happy.

To make it clear that what Gabriel foretold was from God, Zechariah was made mute until the baby was born and Zechariah wrote down the name to give him, John, the name the angel had said.

Luke 1:26-38 Gabriel appears to Mary

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He 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, ³³and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on 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. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Gabriel appears to Mary to say to her, you, a virgin, will give birth.

Mary must have been confused but Gabriel explained everything to her.

Gabriel reassured Mary.

Mary's response – she happily serves God. God's will be done!

Good answer!

Luke 2:8-14 Angels appear to the shepherds

⁸And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. ¹¹Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹²This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

Angels appear to shepherds, telling them about the momentous event.

Joseph & Mary were key individuals in the Christmas story. They had to be clued in.

But the shepherds were not otherwise connected.

God sent the shepherds to be witnesses of the newborn baby, Jesus.

Since they were not otherwise connected, they could have come up with many excuses why it wasn't important.

But to make sure they understood the significance ...

¹³Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

¹⁴"Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

THAT got their attention.

They went into Bethlehem and saw the baby.

5 times one or more angels appears and has a role in the Christmas story

ANGELS ARE MESSENGERS

- Tell people about what is to come
- Telling people about God's will for them

Angels gave the message

- To Joseph, to Mary, to Zechariah
- An Angel was sent to Gideon – you will free God's people!

ANGELS ARE CONCERNED WITH GOD'S WILL; THEY SERVE GOD

- Gabriel to Zechariah – I stand in the presence of God and have been sent to you
- Angel to Joseph – take the child & mother to Egypt, to keep the mother safe
- An Angel was sent to Gideon – you will free God's people!

There was an angel, who is now referred to as satan or the devil, who stopped being concerned with God's will. He stopped serving God and sought God's seat in heaven.

God's response was to throw him out of heaven.

Angels came to Jesus after he had been tempted.

Matthew 4:11

Then the devil left him, and angels came and attended him.

Angels are concerned with God's will, with God's plan of salvation

ANGELS CARE ABOUT HUMAN AFFAIRS

Luke 15:10

There is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Angels care about people!

This makes sense.

If angels are faithful servants of God and God loves people more than anything, then it makes sense that the angels care about people.

Hebrews 1:14

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

That's referring to us!

WHAT DOES ALL THIS ABOUT ANGELS MEAN FOR US TODAY?

ANGELS ARE AROUND TODAY, CARING ABOUT US

Hebrews 1:14

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

Angels are ministering to us.

Hebrews 13:2

²Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Angels come on all shapes, sizes and forms.

It's very possible you've seen an angel and not realized it.

You could have been talking to an angel.

You could have sat right next to an angel!

Angels are around today!

The messages of the messengers are true for us today!

We see that angels are

- Servants of God
- Endeavoring to live our God's will
- Caring about God's people

Doesn't that hold true for us too?

In his book *70 X 7, The Freedom of Forgiveness*, David Ugsberger tells of General William Booth, the founder of the salvation Army, who had lost his eyesight. His son Bramwell was given the difficult task of telling his father there would be no recovery. "Do you mean that I am blind?" the General asked. "I hear we must contemplate that," his son replied. The father continued, "I shall never see your face again?" "No, probably not in this world." "Bramwell," said General Booth, "I have done what I could for God and for His people with my eyes. Now I shall do what I can for God without my eyes."

David Ugsberger, 70 X 7, *The Freedom of Forgiveness*.

Angels gave all they had and did all that they could.

Let's see if you and I can do as well!