

12-4-2024 – Angels of Christmas

We see a lot of angels at Christmas. Many atop the C-mas tree. Why?

They're a large part of the Christmas story. 8 angel moments. Luke & Matthew.

Luke 1- Zechariah (priest) & Elizabeth (descendant of Aaron). Very Old, barren.

“By lot” – his turn – go into temple & burn incense.

- Luke begins truly in the **beginning**: John, preparing the way for Jesus.

Luke 1: ¹¹ While Zechariah was in the sanctuary, an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the incense altar. ¹² Zechariah was shaken and overwhelmed with fear when he saw him. ¹³ But the angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayer. Your wife, Elizabeth, will give you a son, and you are to name him John. ¹⁴ You will have great joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵ for he will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or other alcoholic drinks. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. ¹⁶ And he will turn many Israelites to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah. He will prepare the people for the coming of the Lord.”

- Angels communicate w/people . . . they are **messengers of God**.
 - o But, sometimes, **conversations** happen too:
 - Angel/ **Gideon** - “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” **Judges 6**
 - **Lot** w/angels ... **Abraham** ... **Gen. 18 & 19**
 - o **Notice:** God hears our prayers... what matters to us matters to Him.

¹⁸ Zechariah said to the angel, “How can I be sure this will happen? I’m an old man now, and my wife is also well along in years.” ¹⁹ Then the angel said, “I am **Gabriel**! I stand in the very presence of God. It was he who sent me to bring you this good news! ²⁰ But now, since you didn’t believe what I said, you will be silent and unable to speak until the child is born. For my words will certainly be fulfilled at the proper time.

- Few times angel is **named**. **Gabriel**, named in O.T., **Daniel**. 620-538 B.C.
- Angels **Stand** w/God, **Send** His messages, **Speak** for Him, to us.
 - o Angels come to give us hope, understanding, prepare for future ... joy.
- Jesus, **Matt. 18:10** - “See that U do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell U that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven.”
- We may not believe... doesn’t stop God’s plan. Angels: will be **fulfilled**.
 - o Might go thru difficulties for unbelief... ran... but blessings will come!
 - o **Don’t doubt** what God can do thru U... it’s His power @ work.

Luke 1: ²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

- **Notice: God sends Angels.** They act at His command, His authority.

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.

³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. . .

- **Fear.** Common Reaction. **Get past fear to hear the message.**
- **Gabriel** brings **news** of the future: God's plan includes her destiny. **Us 2.**
 - **Mary** had favor w/God. Know nothing of her past, just willingness.
 - **Our past** doesn't define us... willing heart matters.
 - **"The Lord is with you."** We may not always see Him, feel Him... here.

Matthew 1:20 – "But 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."

- More typical - unnamed Angel, but still a messenger.
- The Holy Spirit conceived Jesus: *Emmanuel* (God w/us). **H.S. still at work.**
 - H.S. gives truth, wisdom, clarity, vision, teaches us . . . prepares us
 - **John 16:13** – "when the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all truth. For He will not speak on His own, but He will speak what He hears, and He will *declare to you what is to come.*"
 - What is the **H.S. conceiving** in your life?

Matt. 1:24 - ²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife."

- Joseph didn't take God's communication as a **suggestion**. Command.
- **Angel messages are meaningless** if we don't follow thru.
 - We have to get on board, get busy . . . obey. Be willing!

Luke 2 – Big angel moment!

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

¹³ Suddenly 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 make Greatest announcement ... it changes everything!
 - o Jesus was with them in Heaven, now will be here as the Messiah.
 - o If anyone knew what **good news** this was... the Angels did.
- The Angels begin doing what we're going to do in heaven – praise God!
 - o You can't be in presence of Jesus and not celebrate!
 - o Angels didn't sing then... but Rev. shows us – singing in heaven.

Matt. 2 – 2 more dreams, 1 more angel.

After the Magi “opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh” - **verse** ¹² – “And having been **warned in a dream** not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.” Likely another angel.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³ When they 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.”

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where he stayed until the death of Herod.”

- Notice: Joseph acted immediately... “during the night” ... didn't wait.
- Procrastinators - like me - pay attention.

Matt. 2 - The Return to Nazareth

- 2 more dreams, likely 2 more angels although only 1 mentioned.

¹⁹ After Herod died, an **angel of the Lord** appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead.” ²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having **been warned in a dream**, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.”

- Angels involved greatly in Christmas story... including protecting Jesus.
- And they protect us - [Psalm 91:11](#): “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.”
- **Daniel 6:22**: “My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths.”
 - o We have guardian angels. Some busier than others! lol

Final thoughts –

Angels are not people; people don't become angels.

- **Psalm 8:5** – Mankind is *“a little lower than the angels”* (also Heb. 2:7)

They're eternal beings in heaven who don't marry, never die. **Luke 20:34-36**

Don't worship angels.

- John tried to worship an angel of the Lord, the angel scolded him for doing so: “No, don't worship me. I am a servant of God, just like you and your brothers the prophets, as well as all who obey what is written in this book. Worship only God!” ([Rev. 22:9](#)).
- Pray to God, not angels.

Angels aren't just winged creatures, floating on clouds, playing harps.

- Michael, archangel, is a **warrior**. Threw Satan & his angels out of heaven
- They're **protectors**, standing in the fire w/ Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego
- May **look** like other **humans**. **Heb. 13:2** – “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.” (The angels who spoke to Lot & Abraham)

The presence of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life lessons the need for Angels.

- H.S. does for us what angels did in the C-mas story.
 - o But, they are still around. Still serving God. Still hear stories