

Sermon or Lesson: Why Involve The Angels? (NIV based)

[Lesson Questions included]

PASSAGE: Luke 2:1-20

INTRO: Typically when we hear messages on the Christmas Story, we focus on the human characters and their actions. Because we all probably know this story very well, it might be useful, fun, and enlightening to concentrate on an aspect that we may tend to somewhat overlook or take for granted. Let's focus on and examine the activities of the angels to see why they are involved.

READ: Luke 2:1-20

[Lesson Question: What three primary functions did the angels fulfill?]

SECTION POINT: God intentionally involved and assigned angels to make contact with nearby shepherds, in order to announce this extraordinary supernatural event with emphases on its importance and on an urgency of timing.

Why involve the angels?

1. The angels were involved to announce the occurrence of an extraordinary supernatural event.

- - An angel speaks to the shepherds and announces the arrival of the "Christ" as "Savior" "for all the people". (vv.10-11)

2. The angels were involved to accentuate the importance of the supernatural event.

- - Shepherds were nearby, at night, in the pitch dark. (v.8)

- - First one angel appears, with a flood of surrounding light, which initially terrifies the shepherds. (v.9)

- - After a short announcement, "suddenly a great company" of other angels appears, presumably also with a flood of surrounding light compounded. (v.13)

- - These angels give the credit and praise to God, that He, the "supreme" or "highest" being in all of existence, is directly doing these supernatural things. (v.13; Strong's #5310 - v.14)

- - The angels also highlight the importance that this supernatural event brings peace to the humans "on whom His favor rests". (v.14)

3. The angels were involved to convey the urgency of timing.

- - "Today" this event happened, accompanied with specific details of where and what occurred. (v.11)

- - Right now "you will find", accompanied with specific details that are unique - a just-born baby lying in a feed trough (manger) for livestock. (v.12)

- - NOTE: Certainly, the shepherds would have known where this feed trough was and would not have spent any extra time trying to find it, thus arriving on the scene on time and in time to witness and verify the event.

[Lesson Question: What two main results did the activities of the angels produce in the shepherds they had made contact with?]

SECTION POINT: God used the activities of the angels to recruit the shepherds as eyewitnesses and as heralds of this extraordinary supernatural event.

Accomplished results of why involve the angels:

1. The involvement of the angels produced the personal immediate recruiting of the shepherds as **eyewitnesses** of this supernatural historic event.

- - The shepherds witnessed the angels appearing to them in glory. (vv.9,13)
- - The shepherds witnessed and verified the angel's account of a baby in a feed trough (manger) in Bethlehem (v.16) as being "just as they had been told" by the angel (v.20).

2. The involvement of the angels produced the personal immediate recruiting of the shepherds as **heralds** of this supernatural historic event.

- - After their initial "terror" (v.9), the shepherds willingly participated in being recruited as heralds - "let's go..." (v.15) and "so they hurried off" (v.16), "spread[ing] the word concerning what had been told them about this child" (v.17).

- - The participation of the shepherds generated within themselves an attitude of "glorifying and praising God" (v.20), and probably awe, wonder, amazement, boldness, joy, and excitement.

- - The participation of the shepherds generated from others a reaction of amazement. (v.18)

- - By implication, the participation of the shepherds served God's plan because the shepherds functioned legally as third party actual eyewitnesses to verify, authenticate, and immediately publish or verbalize their findings of the occurrence of this extraordinary supernatural historic event.

- - If this legal authentication was not an important part of God's plan, then He could have bypassed contacting the shepherds altogether. Instead, the angels could have appeared and made the announcement in the town square in Bethlehem or Jerusalem to the people there, who may not have responded as authenticating eyewitnesses and heralds like the shepherds did.

BIG IDEA: A main reason God involved the angels was to recruit the shepherds as eyewitnesses and heralds to legally authenticate the occurrence of this historic extraordinary supernatural event.

IMPLICATIONS AND APPLICATIONS:

What is your response to this extraordinary supernatural event?

- - Are you responding with unbelief, perhaps due to “hesitation, uncertainty, indecisiveness” - i.e. ‘ambivalence’? (AHD)
- - Can you imagine how this event would have unfolded if the shepherds had responded with unbelief? *“We’re not sure about this. We need more information. We’ll have to think about this and get back to you angels maybe tomorrow or next week.”*
- - Or maybe you are responding with belief without action, perhaps due to “lack of interest or concern” - i.e. ‘apathy’? (AHD)
- - What if the shepherds had responded with belief but inaction? *“We’re busy right now. And we have a responsibility to “keep watch over [our] flocks” (v.8). We don’t know if we can fit this excursion to Bethlehem into our schedules. Besides, we’ve seen newborn babies before, so this is no big deal. We’re not sure this is worth our time and effort. After our shift is over, if we’re not too tired, maybe we’ll have a meeting to discuss doing this. Next year would be better though, or when we’re on vacation in three months.”*
- - Why not have belief with action, which certainly is the response choice intended by God?
- - If you respond in belief with action, other people will be impacted and perhaps even amazed like they were by the shepherds. (vv.18,20)
- - Which of these is your response?
- - Maybe God wants to personally and immediately recruit you this very moment right now as His active witness and herald!

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File name: WhyInvolveTheAngels-SermonOrLesson.____ (.htm, .doc, .pdf)
 Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within the lesson
 Source: www.BelieverAssist.com
 Updated: August 15, 2016