

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE **12.18.22**

Hark! The Herald Angels Sing | Luke 2:8-14

from the series, Sing We Now of Christmas

Unlike Matthew's gospel, Luke records the angelic birth announcement of Jesus. In this gospel account, his Lordship is in focus, stressing that he came not only for the least and lost but also for the left out and lonely. The herald angels were heard by, of all people, shepherds keeping watch in the fields at night.

MAIN IDEA: Christmas—the incarnation of Christ—brings good news.

1. The appearance of the angel (v.8-9)

The angel appeared to shepherds keeping their flock in fields—possibly the same fields that the shepherd (and later king) David would have known. These were lowly men doing lowly work—but they were the kind of men who were likely looking for the Lord. When they hear the message of the angel, their spiritual fire is lit, and they take the initiative to seek out this baby in Bethlehem. God is not a distant, removed deity, but a God who is intimately involved in the world he created and he uses the weak and lowly of the world to shame the strong and powerful. The shepherds responded with fear—a natural response to the recognition that God sees us—and it's the same reaction as Mary, Zechariah and others who experienced this kind of visitation. But, the angel says, "Fear not." That alone is good news, a demonstration of how God speaks to us in the gospels.

2. The announcement of the angel (v. 10-12)

The proclamation of the good news

There is a foreshadowing of Luke 19:10—The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost, not without exception, but as Luke's Gospel makes clear, without distinction. From the last to the least, there is global, gospel good news.

The person of the good news

This news is given "unto you," but it is about Christ. It is delivered to humanity, telling how God emptied himself and took on human form. We call this the hypostatic union of Christ, who retained his full deity, while becoming fully human at the same time. One day every knee will bow and tongue will confess him as Lord. (Phil. 2:9-11)

The proof of the good news

God did not have to give a sign, but he does. He is gracious to meet the shepherds in their desire to find this child, and thus find the savior who is the friend of sinners. (Luke 7:34)

JOY TO THE WORLD | Psalm 98

3. The anthem of the angels (v. 13-14)

The language of verse 13 indicates the multitude of angels here, a mirion of heavenly beings. And why were they there? Not merely to deliver a message to the shepherds. They were, in fact, addressing God, praising him. The shepherds were given a glimpse of what heaven was doing at the birth of Jesus. They were giving God the glory in the highest places of heaven.

The birth of Jesus signaled to the world that God keeps his promises. Heaven has praise and that praise brings peace. We can get in on what heaven is doing—missions exist because worship does not. Let us worship, praise, and give glory to God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is fear actually a natural and right-minded response to this kind of experience?

2. How does the proclamation of the angels connect us to the protoevangelium, Genesis 3:15?

3. How can we think missionally in light of the Christmas story?



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