



**Empowering People to Change the World**

**Angels and Shepherds:  
Extraordinary Invades the Ordinary**

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## **Angels and Shepherds: Extraordinary Invades the Ordinary**

### **The Third Sunday of Advent 2020**

#### **Road Declaration...**

**Probably the MOST exciting thing about Christmas is how the extraordinary invaded the ordinary! Everything about Christmas is this theme:**

- **There are 465 prophecies about the Messiah Jesus coming to the earth—the extraordinary prophesied thousands of years before. The chance of just eight of those prophecies coming true in any one person is  $10^{21}$  power!**
- **God loves ordinary people. He doesn't call the qualified, but rather qualifies the called.**
- **God choosing an ordinary poor peasant virgin teenager to bear the Man who would Redeem the world is the extraordinary invading the ordinary.**
- **Today I want to talk about one of the most overlooked aspects of the Christmas story, and it is another story of the extraordinary invading the ordinary.**
  - **Angels and shepherds! Talk about a contrast!**
  - **Angels are extraordinary, amazing, and even frightening.**
  - **Shepherds are about as ordinary as you could be.**
  - **Angels invade our Christmas story...**
- **The Archangel Gabriel has appeared and has spoken to Zacharias in the temple, speaking of a forerunner that will come through his wife, Elizabeth.**
- **Last week we looked at this passage...**

## **Luke 1:26-28**

**Angels are messengers from God.**

- **Angel, “angelos,” means “messenger of God.”**
- **It’s Gabriel again. Gabriel means “mighty man of God” and is an Archangel of the Lord.**
- **Only two angels are named in the Bible—Michael and Gabriel.**
- **Gabriel is identified as one “who stands before the Lord.”**

## **The Nature of Angels**

- **Much of what we know about angels is a mystery. But we do know a few things:**
  - **Angels are created beings; but unlike us, they are not restricted by a time and space continuum.**
  - **They are physical but not confined by the laws of physics.**
  - **They seemed to have been present in the creation of the universe.**
  - **It seems that some angels - even fallen angels, demons - rule over nations.**
  - **Angels and demons battle in the fourth dimension. The angel that appears to Joshua identifies himself as “the commander of the Lord.”**
  - **Angels are always masculine. (They do not have wings. Now Seraphim and Cherubim do.)**
  - **They have a free will for we know that 1/3 of them chose to rebel with Lucifer.**
  - **They have supernatural wisdom, discernment, and strength.**
  - **They have the capacity to manifest themselves in human form.**
- **Humans and angels are the only superior beings in creation with intellect and a moral component.**

- Angels are not made “in the image of God,” and thus, we are more like God than angels. But God uses angels as His messengers to us.
- The Bible says that we are “a little lower than the angels” now, but later it says that we will rule over the angels.
- Fallen angels, or demons, have left their heavenly domain. They are sent out by Satan and also without Satan’s commands, for they are completely liars, cheaters, and rebellious, to frustrate God’s perfect plan.

### **Verses 28-31**

**Angels show the greatness and power of God’s love for us.**

- Let’s see again what Gabriel says to Mary...
- Angels, on assignment, communicate God’s message to us.

**In Luke 2, we see the interaction of angels with the shepherds.**

### **Luke 2:8**

- Based on Aristotle, many have believed that the shepherds were outcasts in society, but it doesn’t seem to line up with Scripture.
- Shepherds had a rich history in Israel’s history: Abraham and Moses were shepherds; David was a shepherd.
- Even the God of Israel is portrayed as the “Shepherd of Israel.”

**The prophecy of the Messiah quoted in Matthew:**

**“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
Are not the least among the rulers of Judah;  
For out of you shall come a Ruler  
Who will shepherd My people Israel.”**

**Shepherds were ordinary laboring class people.**

- But shepherds, by the time of Christ, were considered hardworking blue collar workers. They were ordinary.

- The rich history of shepherds who became leaders in Israel was still a part of the culture.
  - We have a theme emerging with Joseph and Mary.
  - Christmas is a story of the extraordinary invading the ordinary.
  - God must love the ordinary!

## **Verse 9**

### **Angels often come with God's glory.**

- Hebrews describes angels as "spirits and flames of fire."
- The glory of God often accompanies angelic appearances and creates fear in those who see them.
- They are considered supernatural spirit beings, and often their appearance is so glorifying as to strike fear into humans.

## **Daniel 10:4-9**

**Now on the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was by the side of the great river, that is, the Tigris, I lifted my eyes and looked, and behold, a certain man clothed in linen, whose waist was girded with gold of Uphaz! His body was like beryl, his face like the appearance of lightning, his eyes like torches of fire, his arms and feet like burnished bronze in color, and the sound of his words like the voice of a multitude.**

**And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great terror fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves. Therefore I was left alone when I saw this great vision, and no strength remained in me; for my vigor was turned to frailty in me, and I retained no strength. Yet I heard the sound of his words; and while I heard the sound of his words I was in a deep sleep on my face, with my face to the ground.**

- So, Daniel is so overwhelmed by this angelic appearance that all his strength just evaporates and he falls asleep.
- So, the glory of God often accompanies angelic visitations.

## **Verses 10-14**

**One of the principle functions of angels is to be ever praising God.**

- One of their main functions is to worship and praise God.

## **Psalm 148:2**

**Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!**

## **Psalm 103:21**

**Bless the Lord, all you His hosts,  
You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.**

- These ordinary men have been invaded by the supernatural!
- This is good news! They SEE the angels in heaven worshipping! Imagine that!

## **Verses 15-16**

**Why the shepherds? The shepherds were humble enough to recognize God speaking.**

- This is a key point this morning. Why didn't the angels appear to Herod? To the Roman emperor? To a governor?
- The reason is because they would not have recognized it was God.
- The shepherds may have been ordinary in their appearance, but they were not ordinary—they were humble, and their hearts could receive what God was doing.
  - Joseph and Mary were ordinary and humble enough to respond to God's leading.
  - The shepherds were ordinary and humble enough to recognize God's leading.

**God's MO: God is doing the same thing in our time: ordinary humble people to do extraordinary supernatural works!**

- **Are you like a shepherd? Can you let God speak to you this Christmas?**
- **Maybe He has a special plan, a special word for you. But are you open to hear it?**
- **Will you obey? Mary did, Joseph did, the shepherds did.**

**God's plan is never easy, but it is always satisfying.**

- **The plans of God aren't easy street!**
- **Mary was treated as an outcast, as an unwed mother.**
- **Joseph had the stigma of marrying what appeared to be an unfaithful woman—a scandal.**
- **Joseph and Mary left their home and had to travel for two weeks to Bethlehem.**

**Will you let God speak to you this Christmas?**