

The Wonder of Christmas: The Wonder of the Angels

Study Guide for Small Group Discussion and Personal Application

Lynn Haven UMC – December 8, 2019 – Pastor Craig Carter

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Introduction:

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger." Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." (Luke 2:8-14 NLT)

It's safe to say that the appearance of angels made this a wonderful and wonder-filled experience. This was certainly not an everyday occurrence!

That's because angels are "out of this world" sort of creatures – spiritual beings that act as agents or messengers of God. Angels played a very prominent role in the Christmas story. First, angels announced the coming of the Messiah to Joseph and Mary, then they proclaimed His birth to shepherds, and later, they warned the Holy Family to escape Herod's wrath and flee to Egypt. Let's look at how they add to the wonder of Christmas.

Digging Deeper

In Scripture, whenever humans become aware of angels' presence, they sense a higher power and thus normally respond in fear and reverence. It's why the first thing out of angels' mouths is usually, "Do not be afraid."

Angels are not figments of our imagination or fictional characters. Scripture mentions them nearly 300 times and they are as real as you are. They enjoy special access to heaven and the things of God. **The angels show us the wonder of Christmas because they know the One of whom they speak and speak of the One they know.**

Discuss/Share:

- Discuss the difference between “knowing about” someone and “truly knowing” someone.
- The Apostle Paul wrote: *I think of everything else as worth nothing. It is so much better to know Christ Jesus my Lord...I was made right with God by faith in Christ. I want to know Him better. I want to have the same power in my life that raised Jesus from the dead.* (Philippians 3:8-10 NLV) In what ways can you know Christ better? Re-read Luke 2:8-14 above. What can you learn from the angels about Jesus in this passage?
- The angels told others who Jesus was (Savior, Messiah, Lord) and they said where He could be found (in a manger in Bethlehem). Once we come to know Jesus, we will want to tell others about Him – who He is and how they can experience Him – just like the angels did. Are you regularly telling others about Jesus and what He has done in your life? If not, why not? If so, what has resulted from sharing Jesus with others?
- Why were the angels overjoyed to proclaim the news that Jesus had been born? What “good news” do you have to share with others about what Christ has done for you?

Conclusion:

The angels don't need a Savior, but you and I do...and so does everyone else. We can help others discover the wonder of Christmas when, like the angels do, we speak of the One we know and tell folks about Him.

Don't make it more difficult than it needs to be, simply talk about the One you've come to know and love – Jesus Christ our Lord.

Just tell folks what He has done for you (i.e. brag on Him). Share with them where they can find Him (i.e. invite them to worship with us). Know that the angels stand ready to assist you and to rejoice in your victories.

Pray this prayer as you celebrate the wonder of the angels in the story of our Savior's birth:

Jesus, you are just who the angels proclaimed you to be – Savior, Messiah, and Lord. We stand in awe of the fact that we can know you in a personal way. By faith, help us to know you better. By the power of the Holy Spirit, enable us to tell others the good news. May the wonder of the angels capture our hearts and fill us with joy this Christmas and always. In your precious name we pray. Amen.