

Luke 2:1–20

“God Is Here!”

1. I grew up watching old movies on TV in Mexico
 - a. They’d show us black and white films from the 1940s and 1950s, the golden age of Mexican film.
 - b. They’d also show dubbed old black and white American films, maybe Westerns, or dramas with gangsters, etc.
 - c. As a kid, you soak up all the details, even believing that this is how life really was back then.
 - d. One thing that I remember noticing, in particular, was the use of telegrams.
 - i. It seemed so special, even glamorous, and always so timely.
 - ii. The film stars would be involved in an important conversation, then they would hear the doorbell.
 - iii. And there, at the door, was a messenger who would announce they had a telegram for a certain individual.
 - iv. The message was on a small piece of paper, and the contents were curt and to the point, and perfectly timed to keep the drama going.
 - v. Things like “Arrived safely [Stop] Proceed as planned [Stop]”. You get the idea.
 - e. The person who brought the telegram was a messenger.
 - i. They were sent to an address, they delivered the message, they returned to their office.
 - ii. Well, as it happens, we have one of those in our story tonight.
 - iii. No, not one carrying a telegram, but still the messenger delivers very good news.
 - iv. The word for angel in Greek means “a messenger, envoy, one who is sent, an angel, a messenger from God” <https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g32/kjv/tr/0-1/> .
 - v. So whenever you read of an angel being mentioned in the Bible, they are messengers who are bringing news to humans.
2. There are several angels bringing messages in the Gospel of Luke
 - a. In Luke’s story angels are carrying messages, as we saw this morning and tonight: there is announcement to Mary that she would conceive the child and then the message to the shepherds of the birth of Jesus
 - b. We’ve heard these stories before.
 - c. And we may have romanticized the moment a bit.
 - d. After all, we’ve seen them depicted in paintings from the Renaissance or we’ve imagined them as our children acted out the biblical scene right here at church.
 - e. But I think three things are important to highlight about angels / messengers.
 - i. It was scary (or at least shocking) to have one of these messengers appear at your doorstep (even before they shared the news).
 1. We don’t expect to hear from God so directly.

- ii. Second, the world-changing news to the shepherds were being delivered to a very lowly group of people – not to royalty or learned elites.
 - 1. The message was meant for simple, real folk to hear first.
 - 2. And more than that, it was clear that they felt included in the message “To you is born this day in the city of David a savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord”
 - 3. TO YOU! The wait was finally over, they realized.
 - 4. They had long anticipated the arrival of the Messiah, (that’s a Hebrew words that means the anointed of God; the Greek translation is where we get the word Christ). This person would bring freedom to the people.
- iii. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the shepherds themselves become angels.
 - 1. That is, they become messengers themselves.
 - 2. They go find out for themselves and then they share the message they had heard. And all who heard it were amazed.
- 3. A fraternity brother of mine has started sending me texts every morning.
 - a. He sends me a little daily Bible verse, which is overlaid on pictures of nature which he or his wife have taken.
 - i. His selection of verses usually praise God and speak of our dependence on God.
 - ii. They’re lovely little reminders of God’s presence with us.
 - iii. My friend is then, in a way, being an angel to me, a messenger, who is reminding me that God is here.
 - b. You and I get to be angels to one another. In fact, we are called to be angels/messengers!
 - i. As we are experiencing God’s love, as we are understanding the message of God for our lives, it is then our task to share that in word and actions with others.
 - ii. We are being like the shepherds, because consider what a different story it would have been if they had gone to Bethlehem, seen the baby, and left without sharing the news the angel had shared!
 - iii. Our task isn’t to give a message of escaping the reality or difficulties of life, but to face them with the knowledge that God is here with us, to guide us, to challenge us, to bring us through it.
- 4. Throughout Advent, our focus has been “God is Near” and now, tonight, we celebrate that “God is Here!” That is a message worth shouting from the mountaintop! Merry Christmas!

<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/christmas-day-nativity-of-our-lord-ii/commentary-on-luke-21-7-8-20-11>

<https://www.biblicalarchaeology.org/daily/biblical-topics/bible-interpretation/were-mary-and-joseph-married-or-engaged-at-jesus-birth/>

