

One of God's ways of communicating his message straight from heaven to his people is by that of an angel. Angels are God's messengers. Hebrews 1:14(NLT) "Therefore, angels are only servants - spirits sent to care for people who will inherit salvation." God's angels are all around us but seldom, if ever, does God allow us to see them. When the Bible speaks of angels, the authors are not high on cocaine or marijuana, mentally imbalanced, or drunk. Angels are real beings that serve the Lord God Almighty and carry out God's orders. I have been taught to pray for God's angels that God would strengthen them to protect us. There are spiritual battles going on in a realm that we are not privy to nor can we see, but sometimes in our own spirit we sense intense battles in the spiritual realm. When you read the book of Revelation and listen to what John describes, sometimes in your spirit you can say Amen because you have sensed inwardly what John describes outwardly.

Angels are very real and play an exceedingly important role in the birth narrative of our Lord Jesus Christ. If it were not for the message of the angels we would not have known who the long-awaited Messiah actually was and is. It is the angel that spoke to Mary and Joseph God's Holy message telling them what was happening to them was of God and that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah. God did not send a text message or leave a sticky note. He sent angels to proclaim the coming birth of Jesus. It was also angels that pronounced Jesus arisen from the dead after the resurrection.

If you are a parent with children still in your home, I strongly encourage you to pray to God for God's holy angels 10 times stronger than any of the work of the enemy to protect your children and the same for grandchildren. One day we will have eyes to see the spirit world and see the angels that have been around us all along; I look forward to that day. We are not to worship angels nor are we to pray to angels. Only God deserves our worship. Billy Graham has written one of the best books on angels that I have ever read, and I have several copies in my office. It is thrilling to read.

Martin Luther greatly enjoyed this particular text we are looking at. He quotes in his sermon on this text the words of Saint Bernard, the godly French monk who lived in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Luther, quoting Bernard, finds three miracles in this story: (1) 'that God and man should be joined in this child,' (2) 'that a mother should remain a virgin,' and (3) 'that Mary should have such faith as to believe that this mystery would be accomplished in her'.

1) That God should become man. In the announcement Mary was told that Jesus would be 'great', 'Son of the Most High', he would be 'holy' that is without sin, and that he would 'reign over the house of Jacob' on the throne of David forever. The greatest part of this announcement is that the one being born is the Son of God (James Boice, "The King is Coming" pg. 65).

Many people struggle with accepting the fact that God took on human form. How can you explain this scientifically in a way an engineer type can accept? After all, in order for me to accept this I must be able to understand it or so we might think. To understand the biology of the incarnation, God and man in one body is truly a mystery. Deuteronomy 29:29(ESV) "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law. I personally do not struggle with believing God's Word on this because God is all powerful and all-knowing and is capable of doing great things which we simply do not understand. Our minds have limitations and are finite. God is infinite and his mind has no limitations. Therefore, I accept at face value what God has said is actually true. Human reason has its limitations because our minds cannot comprehend all of God and all of Gods ways. Mystery is a reality and that is just the way it is. That God should become man is a great gift. When someone hands me a gift I greatly accept it and do not question the giver. Thank you God for becoming man. We accept this by faith because God is who he says he is, and His Word is truth.

Friends, if God did not become man we could not go and be with God after we die. If God did not become man we could not be saved. Sin, our sins had to be punished. God must punish sin because God is holy and cannot overlook sin. The wages of sin is death. By Jesus becoming man and dying for us, he achieved salvation for us. The perfect one had to die for the imperfect so we could be accepted by the Father. 2 Corinthians 5:21(ESV) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 2 Corinthians 5:21(NLT) For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.

Everything Jesus ever did he did to save us, and this includes everything about his birth. God became a man, God's gift from heaven the incarnation.

The second miracle of Christmas announced by the angel Gabriel is the Virgin Birth. This is one of those things an awful lot of people struggle believing. How could a woman who never had any relations with a man become pregnant? She must be lying, or we are not all that smart to believe what the angel said to her. Dr Boice writes, "J Gresham Machen [a champion new testament scholar] showed the idea of the Virgin Birth was not something added to Christianity at some later time through error, deceit, or superstition but that it was present in Christianity from the earliest possible moment, is preserved in the earliest portions of the New Testament sources and is probably to be traced to the earliest possible witness to the Virgin Birth, namely Mary herself. Dr Boice continues, "So exhaustive and brilliant was Machen's book that no one, not even the most articulate or militant of the liberal scholars, answered it. They could not, because the doctrine is true, and Machen's points were unassailable"(Boice. Pg 68).

The gift of the virgin conceiving is a miracle. The Holy Spirit overshadowed Mary and she was pregnant by the all-powerful God who can make something ex nihilo, out of nothing. God spoke and Mary was pregnant; what a gift. Jesus has a fully divine and human nature.

This is why he was sinless, and he had to be sinless for his sacrifice to be accepted by the Father that atoned our sins.

The third miracle and some think the greatest of all is that Mary should believe the angel's message. Luther writes, "The Virgin Birth is a mere trifle for God; that God should become a man is a greater miracle; but most amazing of all is that this maiden should credit [that is believe] the announcement" (Boice pg. 69).

When the angel spoke to Zachariah about the late in life baby, John the Baptist, to be born to him Elizabeth, Zechariah did not believe the word of the angel and because of his disbelief he could not speak until after the John was born. Because of his unbelief the angel said to him, "You will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words, which will come true at their proper time. He was struck dumb; unbelief has its consequences to this day.

Friends, you and I come to faith in Jesus Christ, we are born anew in the same way Jesus came to live within the womb of Mary. The Holy Spirit comes upon us and conceives faith inside of us and the Spirit of Jesus moves in. A new birth takes place in the inside and it is all God's doing.

God's Holy Spirit overwhelmed Mary. She experienced the power of the Holy Spirit so powerfully and supernaturally that she could not help but believe. She became a new creature. Today we believe by the help of the Holy Spirit and we are made new.

None of us understands miracles but if these miracles were not true, there would be no Christianity, no Christmas, no Savior, no hope, no gospel, no salvation at all, unless these miracles truly happened (Boice pg. 72).

The miracle today is when Jesus is born in you by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a miracle when you believe and are made new in Jesus Christ. When Mary was pregnant with Jesus, did she ever show. Do you show Jesus inside of you? Christmas is meaningless until

you have Christmas in your heart. Is there room in your heart for Jesus. He is waiting for you to say yes. Please let him in before it is too late. Amen and Amen.