



Sunday, December 16, 2012

The Angel's Perspective: Peace and Glory

Speaker: Joe Boot

Scripture: Luke 2:1-20

Sermon Notes:

1. Increasingly in Canada all truth claims of spiritual beliefs are given equal status, essentially reducing Christ's nativity to a myth.
2. The nativity marked the greatest incursion of divine truth, glory, power, and peace into this world.
3. In Luke 2, the glory of God breaks into history, making known the blessing that Christ's birth inaugurated.
4. The angels make known God's perspective as His messengers, revealing the real meaning of history.
5. Periodically, at significant moments of God's activity, angelic witness reveals the purposes of God to man (cf. Dan. 8; Heb. 8).
6. The announcement of peace and glory is made by angels, engendering different reactions.
7. There are two reactions to the issue of angelic witness in our time: the first reaction is one of skepticism – only physical and material things are real.
8. For most of our history we have recognized that the world is created by God and governed by His Providence.
9. But now angels don't fit into our materialistic worldview, which attributes thought to mindless matter and chance.
10. The second reaction is unhealthy interest in spiritual powers, angels and demons as part of an unseen world of chaotic forces to be manipulated by man. In contrast to both views, the biblical worldview teaches that God governs history; we cannot manipulate things by occultic power, nor does blind chance rule the world.
11. God offers salvation and peace, despite our rebellion and despite our hostility to God and His Law.
12. Angels are part of the structure of God's created reality: assumed in Scripture is the view that they are part of God's court; they can present themselves in human form; they converse with human beings—Mary, Zachariah, Cornelius.
13. God acts with wisdom which is not the wisdom of men; He announces Christ's birth to a few poor shepherds.
14. The angels reflect the glory of God; the shepherds are frightened when a whole army (hosts) of angels appears.
15. The angels announce the Saviour who is the Lord and who will make peace possible between men and God.
16. The good news is for all people; all need a Saviour.
17. Biblical equality is that all are created by God, accountable to God, and justly condemned as sinners; therefore God's salvation is freely offered to all persons, Jew and Gentile.
18. Peace is preached to those far off and to those near.
19. The sign of the King and Saviour's birth was that the babe will be wrapped in bands in a cattle trough.
20. The signs God has given are not always glorious; the sign of the faith is the cross; the sign of His covenant grace is a sip of wine and a piece of bread.
21. We are to receive and obey God's signs; we are the property of God, and we dwell on His earth at His pleasure.
22. The angels sing about the redemptive incursion of God into history; after the coming of the Spirit, angels no longer publish the message of the gospel.
23. Wherever the gospel message is declared today, God's angels (*angelos* = messengers) speak.

Application Questions:

1. How do current views of spirituality diminish the history of God's entrance into human history in the nativity?
2. What are the roles of angels in Scripture?
3. What does Luke 2 reveal about the meaning of history?
4. What are some responses to those who reject the angels' message because of materialistic assumptions?
5. Why is the angel's message joyful news to all people?
6. Biblically, where is the point of equality among all people?
7. How is the wisdom of God in the birth of Christ counterintuitive?
8. How is God just in condemning all as sinners?
9. How is God's salvation message announced today?