

ADVENT: WEEK THREE

day 15

Open Up Your Eyes (Angels)

Matthew 1:18–25; Matthew 2:13–15;

Luke 1:5–20; Luke 1:26–38; Luke 2:8–15



One of the most enduring revelations of the Advent story is that God clearly intended it to serve as a template for His ongoing work among His people. We have already seen that regarding things like prophecy, but does that idea of Advent as a template hold true for angelic activity? After all, the Christmas story is replete with angelic encounters, so does that mean our lives should be, as well? I think so, and the Word of God supports this idea. Listen to what God says about angels in Hebrews 1:14: “What role then, do the angels have? The angels are spirit-messengers sent by God to serve those who are going to be saved.” And this is just a reaffirmation of the vision of angels moving back and forth between heaven and earth that God showed Jacob way back in Genesis. The story of the first Advent is an illustration of this amazing truth: Angels are continually carrying out heavenly work in our earthly lives.

So, what does that look like? Well, in the Christmas story, angels performed four specific functions. First, they made announcements. Whether it’s the story of Zechariah, Mary, or the shepherds, we see that God uses angels to inform us of things He is bringing into our lives.

Second, angels delivered promises. Both Zechariah and Mary received beautiful promises about their futures, and they received them from the lips of angels.

Third, angels offer guidance. Joseph received specific guidance about crucial life decisions from angels. The wise men were given detailed directions about next steps by angels. If the angels had not been in the mix, those men would not have had the wisdom to make decisions that literally protected the life of Jesus.

Fourth, angels provide protection for the people of God. Along with noting that angels worked directly in the lives of Joseph and the wise men to protect Jesus from Herod, we shouldn’t overlook the fact that God had hosts of angels (probably millions) in the region of a little Judean village the night Jesus was born. Why? Not simply to announce His birth to the shepherds, but to defend the baby from Satan. Revelation 12 tells us that Satan was poised to kill Jesus that very night, but he was defeated in that attempt - in part by the presence of angelic hosts.

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And the good news is that angels are still very much at work performing all of these functions for us today. In fact, Hebrews 13:2 says that sometimes we interact with angels in physical form without ever knowing it! You can rest assured that you are continually in the presence of angelic beings who are bringing into your life the thoughts, promises, guidance, and protection of God. Just as the cast of characters in the first Christmas story felt overwhelmed and alone at times, so it is with us as we seek to honor God with our lives. But just as God had sent powerful agents of support into their lives, so has He done for our lives, too. The Christmas angels are still at work in those who are committed to offering themselves as conduits for the presence of Jesus to enter this world!

prayer:



Father God, thank You for surrounding my life with angelic hosts intent on aiding me in my journey here on earth. Please help me live with a greater awareness of this beautiful provision You have made for me. And please help me hear and respond to their direction as Mary and Joseph did. In Jesus' name, amen.

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