
Christmas Eve Sermon
Luke 2:1-20
December 24, 2018

"And the Angel Said...."

"Gabriel, for heaven sakes, you've been there – but only to deliver a message for him and then return. Why is he going down there...to live? Why is he leaving his throne to lie in a feed bunk? They won't understand him. They wouldn't recognize holiness down there if it hit em in the nose, much less when it's born right under their noses. Ever since Eden they've not understood him. A simple command to avoid one tree was all he asked, and that was too restrictive for them. Flaming swords in hand we had pull guard duty outside the garden for years to show them he was serious about holiness.

Then they "wanted to build a tower to the heavens, and make a name for themselves" at Babel. Did they really think he wouldn't notice if they played god in the desert instead of the garden? He scrambled their language to derail that ego building project, but it doesn't appear to have stopped them from their building fetishes – have you noticed what Herod is putting up these days around Jerusalem? He got their attention - for a time that is when He arranged that desert rendezvous at Mount Sinai. "All that the Lord has commanded we will do" they said then. Till the water and recipes for manna started running out they were obedient!

I don't think he should go down. Personally I think He should try a few more prophets. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos, Micah, Malachi, good men every last one of them. Say, do you guys remember when He had one of us go down there and sit with Daniel in that Lion's Den...I'd suggest that approach again. The look on King Darius' face when he saw Daniel sleeping on the belly of one of those carnivores was, if you don't mind, to die for. Send some of us down to visit old Herod one night, and we'd make him take notice I'll guarantee it...we have a way with kings! Or else try more prophets...maybe they could get through to this current batch of Jews...maybe then they'd brush up on their obedience to the Law...and be ready for their Messiah.

He's really going down to them this time, as a baby of all things. Sooner than you and I can say Michaelangelo he'll be this lily white kid with blond curly hair posing like a poet from his manger and we'll all become cute, overfed cherubs with little white wings and golden halos floating in the air with bow and arrow sets. That's what they do you know...they popularize their religion...so they can soften it up a bit. Or they'll make him a philosopher. He'll intrigue them with his wisdom, impress them with his compassion, but then like always they'll have second thoughts about this thing called "holiness."

But if that's what he wants...He's the omnipotent one. There he goes, but I doubt a one of them will recognize Him. Even if a few of them do, I doubt they'll receive him when he grows up. We

can't worry about that now – looks like we've got work tonight. Look at Him, the Alpha and the Omega, the Creator of the Universe...the everlasting word made flesh crying like a baby. If only he knew what they'll do to him.

Then again maybe that's it...maybe He knows very well what they'll do to them...and he wants to save them from it. Gabriel, what was that name you told Joseph to use – Yeshua – God saves right? That's what he's going to do isn't it? Change them from the inside, save them...from themselves. That must be the plan – the miracles don't seemed to have worked at all. He must really love them, eh everyone?

We'll, best not miss our entrance....I doubt we'll get an assignment like this for a long, long time. Everybody up, clear your voices...this is a singing gig if I ever saw one. Leave the flaming swords of judgement and lion lullabies behind boys and girls - we've got a gospel number to sing this time. But remember...this is His command performance not ours. He's the star in this story after all. See those shepherds on those hills? Let's start with them...I'll go first and try to ease them into this - then you come and we'll see if they play along – I mean, believe us. He's done well with Shepherd boys before. Everybody remember "gloria in excelsis deo." I like the Latin ones. Alright, let's go, it's time to send a birth announcement for the ages.

"And the angel said." We have the official transcript of what the angel said - "Fear not, for behold I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all people...for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah. And this will be a sign for you, you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" – a version of Luke 2:10-12 that may vary some depending on which kid gets the angel part in the annual Christmas pageant. Still, that's all the angel said. Heaven only knows what the angels might have been thinking –or saying in hushed voices so as not to be overheard for their irreverence, as to why God was dealing with Eden this way – by going down to earth, that confounded ____ forsaken earth, not clearing his throat and demanding to know of Adam "where are you"...but through angels telling the world "you'll find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

It was enough to make shepherds leave their flocks in the dead of night and go have a peek at a child some of them might one day hear call himself "the Good Shepherd" that would one day die for his. We'll, it was a start – someone "down there" doing what God told them to do. Faith as a mustard seed, the world was giving back the song it had heard as it were – good news for people – good news to heaven too. This is the way he wanted it. Well, what say you – shall we join them? "Lord, open our lips, that our mouths may declare thy praise." This is our night, our chance, to give back the song, which once the angels sang. AMEN