

THE **crossing** **small groups**

Dave Cover | Luke 1: 26-27 Sermon Discussion Participants Guide

Purpose of Discussion: The existence of angels at the birth of Jesus speaks to the larger cosmic truth that with Jesus, God is bringing light into the dark world.

Icebreaker: What Christmas decoration, food, or tradition do you look forward to the most?

Discussion:

Transition: As the miraculous story of Jesus, penned by Luke continues, we notice consistent occurrences of angels, specifically Gabriel. As we seek to understand this story for our lives we have to gain further knowledge and wisdom about the role spiritual beings have played in God's story. The angel Gabriel has an important role in this narrative, and the presence of angels and a whole host of spiritual beings at the birth of Jesus should get us asking questions. Why are they there? What is the impact of Jesus' birth on spiritual beings? What else do we learn from this passage that applies to our heads, hearts, and hands? Let us discuss this further together.

Read:

[Luke 1: 26-33](#)

²⁶In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

1. What do you remember about Gabriel?

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2. What is Gabriel's role in this part of the story?

Dave mentioned in his sermon how the presence of Angels in the Advent narrative was strange. He highlights the fact that there are aspects of the story that challenge our culture, convictions, and beliefs.

3. What parts of the Advent story are challenging for you?
Or, what parts of the Advent story do you see as most challenging for our culture?

4. What parts of the advent story bring you joy?

Dave gave us insight into the significance of the angelic and spiritual beings concerning the Advent story. We looked at the book of Job, where God establishes that spiritual beings existed at the "foundations of the earth". We explored the earliest parts of the bible where spiritual beings existed and even communicated with Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Yet the fall of Eve and Adam changed everything. Sin and evil existed and corrupted both humans and spiritual beings.

5. Was there anything new you learned from this part of Dave's sermon?

6. How does the backstory of spiritual beings challenge or change your understanding of the angel's presence in the Advent story?

7. What did Dave say was the real "virus" or "disease" in our world?

8. Thinking about Patrick's sermon two weeks ago, how can we train ourselves to resist the "real virus" of this world during the Christmas season?

Read:

[Luke 1:38](#)

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³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

9. What does it look like to submit to God’s will in this season? How do you discern what God’s will is in your life?

10. How does the birth of the Savior of Nations, Jesus, give you hope?

Sharing and Prayer:

This season can be a time of joy and sorrow. Spend some time as a group reflecting on the good work that Jesus has done in your lives over this last semester. Allow space for people to share some of the challenges they faced as well. Read the prayer below aloud together, or have one person pray this over the group.

Community Prayer for Christmas season: *(Adapted from Every Moment Holy vol 1.)*

Lord,

As we prepare our house for the coming Christmas season,

We would also prepare our hearts for the returning of Christ.

You came once for your people O Lord, and you will come for us again.

Though there was no room at the inn to receive you upon your first arrival,

We would prepare you room here in our hearts and here in our home, Lord Christ.

As we decorate and celebrate, we do so to mark the memory of your redemptive movement into our broken world, O God.

Our glittering ornaments and Christmas trees,

Our festive carols, our sumptuous feasts—

By these small tokens we affirm that something amazing has happened in time and space—

That God, on a particular night, in a particular place, so many years ago, was born to us, an infant King, our Prince of Peace.

Our wreaths and ribbons and colored lights,

Our gifting of gifts, our parties with friends—

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These have never been ends in themselves.

They are but small ways in which we repeat that sounding joy first proclaimed by angels in the skies near Bethlehem.

In view of such great tidings of love announced to us, and to all people, how can we not be moved to praise and celebration in this Christmas season?

As we decorate our tree, and as we feast and laugh and sing together, we are rehearsing our coming joy!

We are making ready to receive the one who has already, with open arms, received us!

We would prepare you room here in our hearts and here in our home, Lord Christ.

Now we celebrate your first coming. Immanuel, even as we long for your return.

O Prince of Peace, our elder brother, return soon. We miss you so!

Amen.