

A Totally New Order Begins, Part 3

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[0 : 00] In your bulletin, there's a printout sheet with Hebrews chapters 1 and 2 in it. Would you turn to it, please? Hebrews chapter 1 and chapter 2.

And we're going to do things a little different this morning in that we're going to begin with responsive reading of the first chapter, and we're going to conclude our service with responsive reading from the second chapter.

So, if you would please, let us stand as we honor the Word of God and look at your printed sheet with Hebrews chapter 1. I'll begin with verse 1, and you follow then with every other verse until we complete the chapter.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Be so much better than the angels, as he now by the inheritance obtained from the Lord. Amen. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.

[1 : 42] And again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son. And again, when he bringeth again the first God into the world, he saith, and let all the angels of God worship him.

And of the angels, he saith, who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire. Come unto the Son, he saith, my throne of God is forever and ever, a setter of righteousness, a setter of God's name.

Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

And thou, who heard in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens by the works of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou remainest, and they all shall wax old as doth a garment.

And as of the best children shalt thou hold them up, and they shall be changed, that thou art the same, and thy riches shall not fail. But unto which of the angels said he at any time, sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?

[3 : 06] Are they not all ministers and spirits sent forth to minister for them, who shall be there to salvation? Thank you. Be seated, please.

And if you would, turn to 1 Timothy, chapter 3. 1 Timothy, chapter 3. And I want to, once again, remind you we are engaging a rather brief series of just a few weeks where we are dealing with the subject, the secret of godliness.

And it isn't the secret of Christ's godliness or the secret of the Father's godliness. It's the secret of your godliness. Being godly simply means that you have the spirit of God dwelling within you, and that is what makes you a godly person positionally.

If you are in Christ, you are automatically godly. That is your position. Unfortunately, we all know, because we also have an element of flesh to contend with, our behavior, our attitude, and actions are not always godly, even though they ought to be, and even though provision is made for them to be, we still are indwelt as well by the flesh.

And sometimes the flesh dominates, in which case we're still godly, but we aren't behaving in a godly fashion. That's the difference between the spirit and the flesh. Our godliness is determined by our official position.

[4 : 42] It is a forensic declared position whereby we stand without spot and blemish before a righteous god. That is our position.

That is our official status of being godly. So many times, and we won't go there now, but we did in our last session, saw a number of places where individuals were referred to as ungodly.

And all that means is God is not in their life in a very real way, as he is in the life of those who are believers. So in 1 Timothy chapter 3, as Paul is concluding this first letter that he'll be writing to Timothy, he reminds him in verse 4, I'm sorry, verse 9 of chapter 3, and he talks about holding the mystery or the secret of the faith, because that's a better translation of the word mystery.

It's musterion, and it's a good word. Mystery is a good word, but so often we lose the actual meaning of it. And a biblical mystery has to do with information that can in no wise be understood or appreciated unless it is spelled out.

It's almost like, it's almost like a mystery is a code, and what you need is the key to break the code.

[6 : 10] Then you can get the message. That's also conveyed in the idea of a secret. It is something that is not known unless it is revealed.

And then when it's revealed, we say, the secret is out. It's no longer a secret. Everybody knows it. And that's exactly what is going to happen with the gospel.

And as a result of that gospel penetrating the individual and their response being a personal relationship with Christ, whereby they, as an act of their will, receive him as their savior.

They acknowledge their sin and that Christ died for their sins. They pass from spiritual death into spiritual life. That is called the gospel, the good news.

There was a time when it was a secret that was just revealed, and it was revealed through the apostle Paul.

[7 : 08] And prior to his revealing it, nobody knew it. Paul didn't know it either. It was a complete secret to him. And when God revealed this to him, this gospel, this good news about justification by faith, it changed absolutely everything.

Nothing has been the same. And that's the meaning of why we put what we did in the bulletin about everything changing. And to just refresh your mind about that, the totally new order begins, connecting the theme of the totally new order with what God has provided to bring it about.

It focuses on the Christ child, who would be Israel's Messiah and the savior of the world. Today's message for Christmas Sunday is the phrase, beheld by angels, as part of the ancient hymn found in 1 Timothy 3.16.

The interaction of angels with Christ is a fascinating and revealing issue. Merry Christmas. And here in 1 Timothy 3, Paul is reminding Timothy of his responsibility, and he says in verse 14, And I cannot resist the temptation, so I won't resist it.

I want you to look also at another insert in your bulletin for today. And it is a contribution from two minutes with the Bible, and it is from the pen of C.R. Stam, and he is now with the Lord.

[9 : 12] But I want you to look at this phrase for December 17, buy the truth and sell it not. And I cannot tell you how precious is this commodity, this thing called truth, because what is true is that which represents reality, corresponds to reality.

Everything that doesn't correspond to reality is false, sometimes called the lie. Buy the truth and sell it not. Now, every true Christian should understand that the truth costs.

If you don't think so, make it your own, value it, defend it, stand for it, and see if it doesn't cost.

Before you are through, it may cost you far more than you had thought. Hours of ease and pleasure, friends and money. Yes, the truth costs.

Salvation is gloriously free, but the truth costs, that is, if you want it for yourself. Many who know the truth won't buy it.

[10 : 31] They won't pay what it costs to say, this is what I believe. This is my conviction. The truth isn't worth that much to them.

But in Proverbs 23, 23, God's word urges us, buy the truth, not buy it if you can get it at a bargain, if the price is not too great.

No. Buy the truth. Buy it at any price. It is worth far more than anything you can give in exchange for it. And when you have bought it, sell it not.

How many, alas, have bought the truth only to sell out again? For a while, they valued and defended some God-given light from his word, but presently, they sold it again for something that seemed more valuable.

Perhaps it was peace with others, or position, or popularity, or some other temporal gain.

[11 : 41] They still gave mental assent to it, but it formed no part of them. It was no longer a conviction.

Such should be read again, the Spirit's counsel, buy the truth and sell it not. He does not say, don't sell it, unless you can get a very good price for it.

He says, sell it not. Sell it not at any price. Buy it, no matter what it costs, and when it is yours, do not sell it for any price, or under any consideration.

It is because the truth is so little valued in this indifferent age that many of God's people have become so spiritually powerless.

They hold opinions instead of convictions because they have given the infallible, unchangeable word of God little place in their lives.

[12 : 44] God blesses and uses those who buy the truth and sell it not. And when Paul is writing to Timothy, he is telling him, it is important that they know how to conduct themselves in attitude and actions.

They're in the assemblies, in the church, which is the local representation of the body of Christ. And then it is as though he is saying, and Timothy, what do you think it was that provided that truth for you?

To what extent did God have to go in order to make this truth available to you so that you would be able to conduct yourself in a godly way in the assembly of believers?

Actually, what it started with is that God himself, who is the depository of truth, had to become one of us in order to bring that about.

That's the meaning of the first one that we considered in that God in the flesh. And that is found at the beginning of that great hymn in verse 16, by common confession, great is the mystery or the secret of godliness.

[14 : 12] It started with God who was revealed in flesh. That's the incarnation. And then, we looked at the second.

He was vindicated in the spirit. And this morning, we are going to consider the third. And that refers to his being beheld by angels. angels. And this is such a beautiful thing, the angelic involvement and connection with the birth of our Lord.

And it starts in Luke's Gospel, chapter 2, and verse 1. May we go there, please? Luke's Gospel, chapter 2, and beginning with verse 1.

It came about in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that a census should be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

And all were proceeding to register for the census, everyone to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him and was with child.

[15 : 30] And it came about that while they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in cloths, laid him in a manger.

There was no room for them in the inn. And in the same region, there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And here, the first angel makes his entrance.

The angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone round them, and they were terribly frightened.

That, of course, is a common response. They are witnessing something unlike anything they had ever seen in their entire life. And it must have been super scary.

In fact, downright frightening because this angel just seemed to appear out of nowhere. And he had a countenance about him that in some ways made him look like a human, but in other ways made him look like something really extraordinary, different from anything they'd ever seen in their entire life.

[16 : 41] And naturally, they were scared to death. And well, they should be. First words the angel says to him, Do not be afraid or fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which shall be for all the people.

For today, in the city of David, there has been born for you a Savior who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you. You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.

And suddenly, there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts praising God and saying, And I can just visualize these poor shepherds.

We don't know how many there were, but they're witnessing this event unfolding before them. All of these other beings added to this angel and the voices that they are saying.

And these angels, these poor, ordinary, everyday shepherds, which, by the way, occupied about the lowest spot on the totem pole in the society and culture of Israel.

[17 : 52] I mean, these guys were at the bottom of the social structure. And here, this angel and all the other beings are appearing at the same time. They are terrified.

They've been told not to be afraid. Yeah? But that's easy for you to say. They've never seen anything like this. And what this host of angels consists of, we don't know, but it was so spellbinding.

They are just transfixed. And they stand there with their eyes this big and their mouths wide open, and the angel is relating this information to them.

And when it's all over and the angels are gone, they look at each other in amazement and say, did you just see what I saw?

Wasn't that something? And they are stunned. And as they look to one another, when the angels had gone away, the shepherds began saying to one, let us go straight to Bethlehem then and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.

[19 : 02] And they came in haste and found their way to Mary and Joseph and the baby as he lay in the manger. And when they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this child.

It's a wonderful thing that it isn't just a shepherd, but it's multiple shepherds. We aren't told how many, but there are more than one. And in Jewish law, a thing in order to be confirmed by the law of Moses had to be witnessed by more than one person, had to be established in the mouth of two or three witnesses.

We don't know how many there were, but there were multiple witnesses. And they made it known and all of these shepherds, in the first place, they have no reason to lie. And they're telling everyone that they came in contact with what they had seen.

And when one would say something, the other would chime in and say something. And one would turn to another and say, we were there and we saw and I'm telling you it really happened and we didn't know what to make and we were scared to death and this is what the angels said.

And these people are just looking at each other and saying, what? What is this? Are you hearing what these guys, what is this? And all wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds.

[20 : 23] But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And I submit that nobody could do that like a mother.

A mother will remember every fine point and detail about this. And every time something happens to remind her of it, she will replay it again and wonder about the significance of it all.

The shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen just as had been told them. Now let's come to another account and it's in Matthew chapter 1.

Matthew's gospel chapter 1. If you would look at verse 18, we'll read through verses 18 through 25.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

[21 : 43] And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, not wanting to disgrace her, desired to put her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord.

By the way, the word angel literally means messenger. And that's the principal role they fulfilled. But angels are beings the likes of which we have very little understanding.

We know that they were created before Genesis 1-1, before the heavens and the earth were created. We know that a great number of angels were created, but we are not told how many.

We know that there is a ranking order in angels in that there are cherubim and seraphim. And there is one particular angel that seems to have been outstanding among all of the angels made.

His name was Lucifer. He was the one who chose to rebel against his creator, and he recruited a third of the created angels to join with him in their efforts.

[23 : 01] And so far as we know, although I don't know of any passage that specifically states this, but it is inconceivable that God could be involved in the creation of evil at all.

But we do have to assign to God the creation of that which had the potential of becoming evil. He created angels as volitional beings who had the ability to comply and the ability to defy their maker.

One-third of them apparently defied, and so far as we can determine, they appear to have become the demonic beings that are later referred to in the scriptures, and particularly during the ministry of our Lord Jesus.

Jesus. So, Jesus was confronted by Satan himself in the temptation, and he was also privy to the activity of demons, and he cast demons out of a number of people, and as far as we can determine, those were originally unfallen angels who chose to follow Lucifer, and as a result, they had a fall of their own, only they fell individually.

But humanity, when we fell, we fell corporately. We fell as a human race in our first parents.

[24 : 45] The seed of the old nature was sown in our first parents' life. Consequently, there could be a redemptive effort completed for the whole of corporate humanity.

That's the whole human race. And that's the meaning that is given in 2 Corinthians 5 when it says God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.

and that means all of humanity. But there is no corporate redemption for angels because angels fell individually.

Angels did not multiply and have little angels whereby they are a corporate entity and could be tended to in a corporate way.

This is why, so far as we can determine. This is why there is no redemption for angels as there is redemption for the human race because we fell corporately and we are redeemed corporately in Christ according to 2 Corinthians.

[26 : 00] So in verse 20, when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord, messenger of the Lord, appeared to him in a dream saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for that which has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit and she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for it is he who will save his people from their sins.

Now all this took place that what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet might be fulfilled saying, behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being translated is God with us.

Joseph arose from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took her as his wife and kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son and he called his name Jesus.

Now in chapter 2, if you'll look at verse 13, just over a page or so, when they had departed, this is the flight to Egypt, an angel of the Lord, here the messenger active again, appeared to Joseph in a dream saying, arise, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.

And he arose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. And then in verse 19, we are told, when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord, there's this messenger again, appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt saying, rise and take the child and his mother and go into the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.

[28 : 04] Nothing more is told regarding Jesus or angels for another 12 years. And that's the time when Jesus appears with the learned men in the temple when his family took him there to observe one of the feast days.

And he literally dazzled those who were in positions of authority there in Jerusalem. And his parents lost track of him when they found him they kind of rebuked him for putting them through all the grief and his being lost.

And he says, why were you concerned? Know you not that I must be about my father's business? We know nothing else regarding the childhood of Jesus for those first 12 years.

And we know absolutely nothing in scripture as to what happened for the next 18 years. because from the time Jesus was 12 until the time he is 30, the Bible is silent about his activities, about where he was, although we may assume that he was reared in Nazareth where his biological mother was and his adopted father headed the household.

But we are told no other details regarding that. And then when he achieves the age of 30, he is to be inducted into the priesthood.

[29 : 37] And the priesthood did not become available to anyone unless he was of the tribe of Levi. He had to be a direct descendant of Levi the priest.

And when he was, then he was 30 years of age and he was at that time inducted into the Jewish priesthood after the order of Levi and Aaron.

Jesus is 30 years of age and he too is going to be inducted into the priesthood, but it will not be the usual priesthood because he did not qualify for that.

It is evident, the writer of Hebrews says, that our Lord sprang out of Judah. That means he came forth from the tribe of Judah, not from the tribe of Levi.

So he had a very specific and special kind of priesthood that was going to be associated with none other than Melchizedek, this strange individual found in the book of Genesis, who is a priest of the Most High God.

[30 : 44] So Jesus is going to be instituted as a priest, but not after the order of Levi or Aaron, will be after the order of Melchizedek.

He has already been born king of the Jews in that he is from the tribe of Judah, and the tribe of Judah is the royal line. So he is born king, and he is born destined for the priesthood as well.

So, in the scriptures, angels are very important, and we note in Matthew, while we're in the neighborhood, look at Matthew chapter 4, and verse 11.

This is right after the temptation. In verse 10, Jesus gives his response to Satan's temptations. Each and every one of them, he answers with the word of God. It is written, you shall worship the Lord your God and serve him only.

Then, verse 11 says, then the devil, Satan, left him. And behold, angels came and began to minister to him.

[31 : 56] I've often wondered, what did that ministering consist of? We know that he had gone without food for 40 days.

He had to have been absolutely famished. One of the temptations that he confronted was the temptation of changing the stones that were there all around him into bread, which he could easily do.

And he certainly had a very legitimate hunger to satisfy, but he would rather go without food than to satisfy hunger in a way that was contrary to the will of God.

So he responded by saying, it is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. And when the angel came and ministered to him, we are not told, in fact it is a plural, angels came and began to minister to him.

What did they do? What did they say? The word minister, as it's so often used, diakonos in the scriptures, simply means servant, one who serves.

[33 : 08] That's what a minister is supposed to be more than anything else. you minister to people, you meet the needs of people, you serve them. It is a servant, and it is a concept that is lost on society in general, because we put servants at the bottom of the totem pole.

You're a servant when you're not smart enough or well connected enough to be something else than you can serve those who are. And we all know what an attitude that tends to produce.

Jesus, when he confronted the subject and his apostles with that issue, said, you know how it is that those in positions of authority exercise their authority and their lordship over those under them?

And all the guys are saying, yeah, we understand, that's the way it works. Them that has, gets, you know, that's the way the world works. And then he said, but it shall not be so among you.

You men are to merge to an entirely different drummer. You're not to be caught up in the world system. It shall not be so among you.

[34 : 31] He who would be greatest among you, you know what he needs to do? He needs to be the servant of all. And they look at each other and say, what is this?

The greatest becomes a servant? That doesn't make any sense. And you know, it's just one more item in the scriptures where the thinking and the philosophy of humanity is completely contrary to the way God sees things and evaluates things.

The difference between human thinking and divine thinking is day and night. And it is so natural for us to get caught up in the human way of thinking.

After all, what else do we have? We are humans, aren't we? After all, yes, we are. And if you're willing to settle for the level of a mere human, I guess that's what you can do.

And that's what most people do. But we are called to a higher order. We are not called to the natural order of humanity. We are called to a supernatural order.

[35 : 49] And the difference is day and night. He who would be chiefest among you, let him be servant of all. well.

Something to think about, isn't it? How do you put yourself in a position of being a servant? You do it with your will.

You determine to do it. You make a deliberate decision that you are going to place yourself at the disposal of others.

Now there's a certain area and certain ways in which many people do that kind of automatic. I cannot think of anyone offhand automatically, and I'm talking about apart from the supernatural, who puts herself more in a position of a servant than anybody else.

And that's mama. mothers, if she is, as the scripture says, a woman with natural affections, she will put herself at the disposal of her young, often at great inconvenience and sometimes even at the cost of her own life.

[37 : 22] That's what mothering is like. The scriptures also talk about in the last days, there will be people without natural affection.

What does that mean? Without natural affection. There is just an assumed given for a mother to tend to the needs of her young, to pay whatever prices involved just to meet the needs of the young, and she will meet their needs before she even thinks about meeting her needs.

That's natural. That's motherhood. That's the way it is made. But there can be the injection of dynamics into a culture that overrides that.

And they can find themselves succumbing to a kind of public cultural atmosphere that weans mothers away from babies in an opposite way that babies are weaned away from mothers, and it involves itself in just a withdrawal of that caring, giving, loving, parenting thing so that the natural affection just isn't there.

Now, it doesn't address the issue of affection with fathers, but I think we all know that motherhood, no doubt because she is the one who actually gives the life and carries that baby from conception to delivery.

[39 : 15] She's got an emotional kind of vested interest in that offspring that the father appreciates but doesn't have in the same way.

That's the natural affection of the mother. And I do not think that at least in the United States of America, America, there has never been such a wholesale abandonment of motherhood.

Oh, we still have, thank God, many mothers who are fully committed and given over to the care and the nurturing and the protection of the young, and thank God for every one of them.

but there is an increasing number of whom that is not true. And one of the greatest contributors to that is the drug culture that is inculcating our whole culture today on the level that was never before imagined.

And I do not know of any single thing that can so radically interrupt and disrupt and discombobulate humanity's thinking and living and being and doing and agenda and everything else.

[40 : 36] More the insertion of drugs into the life of the individual. Absolutely devastating. Absolutely devastating.

And motherhood is one of the chief things that suffers from that. And along with that, of course, the babies. So we still haven't given an answer to what the angels did when they ministered to him.

And I'm not giving you an answer because they don't have one to give. But I'm satisfied that they didn't serve him with a big plate of food, although I suppose that's a possibility. You know, he was certainly hungry after 40 days.

But it appears that the ministering, that the caring, the serving that they did, in my humble opinion, take it or leave it, was one of encouragement and appreciation because after all, Jesus had just undergone a test, the depths of which, the length of which, none of us can identify.

And he stood the test, passed with flying colors. And really, for biblical exegetes, I think they see it as being no contest.

[41 : 57] This was something that did not occur to see whether or not Jesus was strong enough to hold out. I think the test occurred to demonstrate that there was no question that he would not submit.

It's called, scholars call this the impeccability of Christ. That is, his inability to succumb to temptation, anything contrary to the will of the Father.

And I happen to be of that school, and I firmly believe in the impeccability of Christ. He was not tested to see whether or not he would sin. He was tested to prove that he could not and would not sin, and that, that is what qualified him for the role of Messiah.

No mistake that he was tested early on in his ministry, before he actually began a public ministry, and that too, I think, is very critical.

So the angels ministered to him, and then when Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, in Matthew chapter 26, verses 52 and 53, when the soldiers came, the soldiers from the temple, these were not Roman soldiers, but they had come to arrest Jesus when it was still dark and their lanterns and torches were flickering in the light when they got there, and Jesus said, whom seek ye?

- [43 : 25] And he identified himself, and they stepped forward to take him, and Peter, standing there beside Jesus, took out his fisherman's knife, or long, long knife, and sliced the ear of Malchus' servant, just cut his ear, right?

My thinking is that he saw this knife coming and he ducked like that, and the knife just sliced his ear off, and then Jesus told Peter, put away your sword, put away your weapon.

Those who live by the sword will die by the sword. Put away your sword. And then he makes this statement that it was for this moment that he came into the world.

You see, they came to take Jesus, and Peter and the twelve were convinced that they were not going to allow Jesus to be taken. Simple as that.

They were going to put up a fight, and Jesus made it quite clear, suffer it now to be so, this is why I came. This is the Father's will.

- [44 : 41] And it was not a combat to be entered into right then and there with Jesus' disciples fighting off the soldiers from the temple. Jesus would have none of it.

And then, because he refused to put up a fight and wouldn't allow Peter to defend themselves, the rest of them were absolutely in a fog.

They were confused, panicked, didn't know what to do. So they all headed for the tall grass and scattered in different ways. And as they all separated, one of them was running away, thinking of what he had done.

Peter, why did he do that? Why did Jesus, why did Jesus, I saw, he put that man's ear back on.

And he wouldn't allow us to defend him. What's going on? He didn't have a clue. And the more he got to thinking about it, he asked himself the question, what's he going to do now?

- [45 : 43] Where are they taking him? What's going to happen? And he circles around and finds the crowd from which he earlier fled, and they've come down from the Mount of Olives, and they are walking over the Kidron Valley, and they're going toward the city, and Peter starts following them to see where they're going and what's going to happen.

He's collecting his thoughts and trying to rethink and make some sense of all of this, and he can't understand what's Jesus up to? Why did he allow us to?

We could have probably taken those guys, and Jesus with his power and his miracles, why didn't he? What's going on? And he's having all kinds of doubts and questions as he follows.

Jesus. Now, in Matthew chapter 28, and while we're in that same book, let us turn to it, if we may, and we'll see one of the final appearances of an angel.

Matthew chapter 28. This is after the resurrection, or in connection with the resurrection, and we're told in Matthew 28, after the Sabbath, as it was began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave, and behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, heard, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it.

- [47 : 30] Boy. Wouldn't there have been something for somebody with a phone, with a camera, to catch that?

Wouldn't that have been something? Can you just imagine what this must have been like? This big old stone, and we don't know for sure, because we don't have anything in writing about it, but suffice it to say, most of the tombs that were cut out, and they were cut right out of solid rock, because this rock was of, it wasn't, most, a lot of it wasn't even limestone.

It was a less dense rock than limestone, and what could easily be cut, and carved, and cut into, and so on, and there's so much of this in Israel.

And this stone was probably about six to eight inches thick. And most of those stones from that time that have been preserved, we can see, most of them are about four feet in diameter, round, and about eight to twelve inches thick, easily chiseled out because of the softness of the stone.

Can you imagine what that thing weighed? And in the stone, or in the tomb, most of the tombs were not cut high, like five feet high, most of them were like maybe four feet, so that when you came to the tomb, you had to stoop down and get inside, and then you could stand up.

[49 : 16] So the opening was rather small because the bigger the opening, the bigger the stone you had to have to cover it. So usually they were about three or four feet high, and the stone was placed in a trough, and the trough was cut out, and it had an angle on it, so it was kind of like uphill.

And you would roll the stone away from the tomb, roll it up this path that was created for it, and there you would put a chalk or something under it to hold it there so it wouldn't roll back down.

And then when the time came that you wanted to close the tomb, you would simply remove the chalk and let the stone roll right back down over the face of the tomb again so it would completely close it, and it wasn't airtight or anything, but there may be a crack of an inch or so around, but so much so that no angel, I mean no angel, no person and no animal could get in there to desecrate the body.

So that was common fare, and this was a brand new tomb. Nobody had ever been placed in this tomb. It was owned by Joseph of Arimathea, and he had it cut out, and he had volunteered it and donated it for the burial of Jesus.

When he was taken down from the cross, it was probably, and we can't say this for sure, but it was probably somewhere in the area of five to six o'clock in the afternoon, and the concern was to get the body down off the cross and in the grave before sundown, because that sundown was the Sabbath, and no work could be done.

[51 : 03] So when they got the body down, Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus went to Pilate and requested the body, and Pilate says, he's dead already? Actually, he hadn't been on the cross that long, and he really wasn't, probably about six hours, but you have to account for the fact that Jesus had a body that was completely emaciated before he was ever placed on the cross.

Not only that, but he had already suffered a significant blood loss from the beatings and the stripes that they had given and laid his back open and wounded and everything. So little wonder that he didn't last any longer than he did.

So when they took the body down, there wasn't time to prepare it for burial because of the Sabbath, and preparing a body for burial and the Sabbath would be work just as would be much as any other kind of work.

So they had to hurriedly get the body and take it to the tomb, place it in the tomb, close the tomb up with the rock, and then they would go away and wait until the Sabbath was over, which would mean, of course, approximately 30 hours later they would be able to come back and finish the job.

That's what the women were going to do. That's why when they arrived there very early in the morning, we're told that it was still dark, on the way there, one of them turns to the other and stops and says, wait a minute.

[52 : 29] When we get there, they're carrying all of these aloes and salves and ointments with which to anoint the body, and all at once it occurs to them, the stone.

Who's going to roll? We can't roll away that stone. What are we going, how are we going to get to the body? And when they arrive there, it's already taken care of them.

An angel appeared. The angel could have rolled that stone away with his pinky. And when they get there, an angel is sitting there, rolled away the stone, and parked upon it.

It's like so. And the women have no idea what's taking place. The account is given here in Matthew. Angel of the Lord descended from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it.

I love that. And his appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men, transfixed, stunned.

[53 : 46] And the angel answered and said to the women, don't be afraid. I know that you're looking for Jesus who's been crucified.

He's not here. He is risen just as he said. Come, see the place where he was lying. See for yourself.

Go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead. And behold, he's going before you in the Galilee, and there you will see him. Behold, I have told you.

They departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy. Think of that. Think of the commingling these emotions.

On the one hand, fear, scared to death, trying to assess what they've actually heard.

[54 : 41] Where is Jesus? He's not there. He is risen. What does that mean? How can that be? And then the fear is coupled with great joy.

Talk about mixed emotions. Scared to death on the one hand because they don't understand all of this, and at the same time, they dare to think, he's alive.

He is alive. He's not in that. And they're trying to process all of this. It's absolutely stunning. The last account we find is in Acts chapter 1 and verse 10.

And there we are told that Jesus is with the disciples. They are on the Mount of Olives, and they are asking him a very logical question.

Is it now you're going to restore the kingdom to Israel? Israel has not had a king of their own to settle on the throne for hundreds of years, and it hasn't.

[55 : 42] We've never had a king on the throne. Herod, of course, he wasn't a Jew. He didn't even belong on the king. He was put there on the throne. He was put there by the Romans. And they thought that Jesus, when he went into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, when they were throwing the palm branches and then saying, Hosanna, blessed is he that comes, that he's going to establish.

We thought he was going to do it then, but there was no throne. There was a cross. And now the cross is behind us. It's behind him.

And now the resurrection is behind him. And 40 days later, they're on the Mount of Olives, and they ask the legitimate question, logical question, well, Lord, is it now?

Are you going to do it now? Restore the kingdom to Israel. And Jesus said, it's not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father's put in his hand. But I've got something else for you.

You will receive power, supernatural power, and you will take this message throughout all the world. And as he's standing there before them, all of a sudden, Jesus is seven feet tall.

[56 : 55] Then he's eight feet tall. Then he's ten feet tall. And they're looking and saying, what is this?

What, what, what is happening? And he is just ascending right before their very eyes. And they stand there dumbfounded. Dumbfounded.

And they watch his body become a mere speck in the atmosphere. And he's gone.

And with stunned silence, they look at each other and say, what, what? And they can't process this. And the last appearance we have of angels in the ministry of Jesus is when two men stand there and say, ye men of Galilee.

And they were all Galileans. The only one that wasn't was Judas. And he's gone. He's off the scene. You men of Galilee. What are you standing here for? Why are you standing here gazing up into heaven as if you expect him to return just the way you saw him leave?

[58 : 15] But this same Jesus shall so come again in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven. And you've got your marching orders. So why don't you get with it?

And they did. And they left and went into Jerusalem and started telling everybody what they had seen, what they had witnessed. The 500 that he appeared to that they saw him at one time.

All of this is just absolutely amazing. The involvement of angels is such a priceless thing. And they had a very special meaning in the life and ministry of our Lord.

Now, if you will take your scripture sheet again, let us conclude with reading Hebrews chapter 2. I don't know of any passage of scripture in all of the Bible that gives us so much information about the ministry and the person of Christ and his rightful role as does these first two chapters of Hebrews.

And it's just a beautiful thing. Sets forth not only his humanity, but his deity. And for a closing benediction, I'd like you to stand as we read responsibly chapter 2 from Hebrews.

[59 : 27] Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

For every word is beloved by the angels, what's said at pass? And if every hand, we're actually in disobedience, we see that the other separate men have suffered more.

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?

God also therein and with us, lo with signs and wonders, and with diversed miracles, and in this of the whole earth, according to Jesus' own will.

For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak, for the one who is certain places has testified, saying, what is man that thou art mindful of him?

[60 : 28] What is man that thou visit with him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels. Thou crownest him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of thy hands.

God has put all things in subjection under him. For in that he put all things in subjection under him. He never thought of him that is not by the hundred men.

And now he sees not death all things for a hundred men. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, and bringing him in the substance of the Lord, he may have an offense of a son, which perfect recounted.

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one. For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. And again, I will put my trust in him.

[61 : 47] And again, behold, I and the children which God hath given me. For as much the men as the children of the great years of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of his sin, that through death he might destroy him, that had the power of death, that has the death of him.

And deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verity he took a power on him and made sure of angels, and he was the one he has conceived of.

Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

For in that he is to help and have suffered being tempted, he is able to celebrate them that are tempted. And all the people said, Amen.

You are dismissed.