

THE ARCHANGELS
Angelic Warfare
Angels and the Son of God
JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

The Archangels
November 8, 2020
Revision C

Gospel: Luke 10:16-21
Epistle: Hebrews 2:2-10
Gospel: Luke 8:41-56

Introduction: The Ranks of Angels

The word translated “angel” in Hebrew (*malak*) and Greek (*aggelos*) means messenger. Envoys and ambassadors from one country to another are thus called *malakim* (Isaiah 37:14, 18:2; Ezekiel 30:9, 23:40). However, the most extensive use of both *malak* and *aggelos* refers to the angels. They are described (Revelation 5:11) as numbering 10,000 times 10,000 (literally myriad’s of myriad’s, where “myriad” represented an inexact 10,000, and implied a very large number). Since people in the First Century did not work with very large numbers the way we do today (there was no Greek word to express “million”), myriad’s of myriad’s generally implies a countless number.

The bodiless powers of heaven (the angels) are the messengers of God. They are not the only messengers, however; on many occasions, the Son of God is referred to as The Angel of the Lord or The Messenger of the Lord as is the case in two of the readings for Vespers. Before proceeding, it would be helpful to get an overview of Scriptural references to different ranks of angels. From this, we can see that the ranks of angels are extensive, even from what little we know about them.

Cherubim

The Cherubim are referred to often in the Old Testament due to their presence in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle and the Temple. On top of the Ark of the Covenant were two cherubim made of pure gold facing each other. It was there between them that the Lord resided: “And there I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel” (Exodus 25:22). The Lord was also referred to as being “enthroned above the cherubim” (2 Samuel 6:2; 2 Kings 19:15; 1 Chronicles 13:6; Psalm 80:1, 99:1; Isaiah 37:16). In addition, cherubim were embroidered into the blue, purple and scarlet linen curtains of the Holy of Holies (Exodus 26:1, 31). Thus, cherubim were represented as surrounding the presence of God, with their wings spread upward (Exodus 37:7-9).

Solomon’s Temple had a similar presence of cherubim, only larger: 15 feet tall with 30

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feet wingspan (2 Chronicles 3:7-14, 1 Kings 6:23-27). The entrance to the Holy of Holies was made of olive wood with cherubim carved into the wood (1 Kings 7:32-35, Ezekiel 41:18-25).

Another place where the cherubim were prominent was at the East of the Garden of Eden after Adam was driven out, where the “flaming sword whirling about guarded the way to the Tree of Life” (Genesis 3:24). Since the Tree of Life would have enabled Adam to live forever (Genesis 3:22, Revelation 22:14), the cherubim were guarding the way into the Mysteries of God.

The cherubim are also probably the same as the “four living creatures” in John’s vision where one was like a lion, one like a calf, one like an eagle, and the fourth had the face of a man. (Revelation 4:6-11). This identification is based on Ezekiel’s vision where they are named as cherubim (Ezekiel 10:1) and in both John’s and Ezekiel’s visions: (1) there were four of them and (2) their appearance resembled the face of a man, a lion, a bull and an eagle (Ezekiel 10:1-12, 14, 21-22; 1:4-10). Ancient pagan cultures imitated the appearance of the cherubim by carving winged bulls, winged lions or griffins (a winged sphinx) to guard their temples (Unger, Bible Dictionary, pg. 192).

As a contrast to this, Satan was described as a fallen cherub: “The anointed cherub who overshadows or covers”. He was blameless until unrighteousness was found in him. He was lifted up and his wisdom was corrupted because of his beauty. He was filled with violence and was cast out as profane (Ezekiel 28:14-17). Satan was described by Ezekiel as having a position very similar to the cherubim over the Ark of the covenant surrounding the presence of God.

Seraphim

The Hebrew word *saraph* comes from the word meaning “to burn”. The only reference to seraphim in the Scriptures, however, is in Isaiah 6, where they are described as having six wings and are also present around the Throne of God. One of the seraphim touched Isaiah’s lips with a burning coal from the altar to forgive his sin.

Paul’s References to Celestial Beings

Paul had been granted the opportunity to be caught up to the third heaven where he heard inexpressible words which it is not lawful for a man to utter (2 Corinthians 12:2-4). Perhaps as a result of this experience, he referred to some ranks of celestial beings from time to time, for which we have little other descriptions. Paul referred to the following:

- Thrones (Greek: *thronos*, 2362)
- Lordships (Greek: *kuriotes*, 2963). This word comes from *kurios* meaning “Lord” as in Lord Jesus
 - Authorities (Greek: *exousia*, 1849)
 - Powers (Greek: *dunamis*, 1411). This word is also translated “miracles”
 - Principalities (Greek: *arche*, 746) a kind of ruler

Paul's references are as follows:

- Ephesians 1:21: "Christ is seated above all Principality, Authority, Power and Lordship in this age and in the age to come".
- Ephesians 3:10: "The Wisdom of God is being made known to the Principalities and Authorities in the heavenly places".
- Colossians 1:16: "By Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether Thrones, Lordships, Principalities, or Authorities".
- Colossians 2:10: "You are complete in Him who is the Head of all Principality and Authority".
- Romans 8:38: "Neither death nor life, nor angels nor Principalities, nor Powers...nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God..."
- Ephesians 6:12: We do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against Principalities, against Authorities, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places".
- Colossians 2:15: "Having disarmed Principalities and Authorities, He made a public spectacle of them".
- 1 Corinthians 15:24: ..."When He puts an end to all Principality and all Authority and Power".

Some of these references are clearly referring to angelic or demonic beings of various ranks. An interesting treatise on trying to understand the relationship between these ranks is Dionysius, The Celestial Hierarchy. The author, Dionysius, was said to be the convert of the Apostle Paul in Athens (Acts 17:34), but the document was likely edited or revised by others later on, and therefore is called "Pseudo-Dionysius".

If a comparison of Ezekiel 10 with Revelation 4 suggests that the four living creatures are cherubim, then perhaps the 24 elders who sit on 24 thrones are the angelic rank of thrones (Revelation 4:4, 11:16). The 24 elders are also sometimes interpreted as representing the Twelve Patriarchs (sons of Jacob) plus the Twelve Apostles (see Matthew 19:28).

Archangels

The term archangel (Greek: *archaggelos*) is only used twice in the New Testament and is not used at all in the Septuagint). The word *archaggelos* is a combination of arche (translated "Principalities") and aggelos (translated "angel"). As such, the word implies a leader of angels.

One place where *archaggelos* is used is Jude 1:9 where the Archangel Michael was disputing with the devil (Satan) over the body of Moses. Moses had not been allowed to enter the Promised Land, but died in the land of Moab and was buried in the Valley of the land of Moab opposite Beth-peor (near Jericho). Yet no one knew his burial place (Deuteronomy 34:5-6). John Chrysostom (4th Century) said that this was so that Moses was not worshipped instead of God (Homily V on Matthew 1). But yet Moses appeared transfigured with the Lord and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration c.1400 years later. The dispute between Michael and Satan would seem to involve the bodily assumption of Moses; this was described in the Old Testament pseudepigraphal book "The Assumption of Moses", but the section describing this is missing from the only existing manuscript.

Another place *archaggelos* is used is 1 Thessalonians 4:16 where the Lord's return is announced by an archangel: "The Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a word of command, with a voice of an archangel, and with a trumpet of God".

The Book of Revelation describes "seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets" (Revelation 8:2). Each will sound his trumpet in succession (Revelation 8:7, 8, 10, 12; 9:1, 13; 11:15), where the seventh will be "the last trumpet" (1 Corinthians 15:52). These seven angels also will pour out seven bowls of the wrath of God on the earth (Revelation 16).

According to tradition, these seven angels are the archangels, and each of the seven has a different role. Michael (Hebrew "who is like God") is referred to as God's General and the leader of the armies of heaven. It was he and his angels who fought with Satan and cast Satan out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9). He is also described as "the Great Prince who stands guard over the sons of your people Israel (Daniel 12:1). He also was described as directing the battle against other demons as another angel was bringing a message to Daniel in answer to Daniel's prayers (Daniel 10:13, 21). In the Old Testament Apocryphal book, The Ascension of Isaiah (9:19-23), Michael is said to be the scribe who records the deeds of all men in the books that are opened on Judgment Day (see Butler, Lives of the Saints, September 29).

Gabriel (Hebrew: "man of God") is also linked with the seven archangels. He was the one who announced the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah (Luke 1:19) and the birth of Christ to the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:26). In his announcement to Zechariah, Gabriel said, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the Presence of God." Gabriel was also sent to the Prophet Daniel to give Daniel an understanding of some visions that came in response to his prayers (Daniel 8:16, 9:21).

According to tradition, it was also Gabriel who:

- Appeared to Joseph in a dream (Matthew 1:20, 2:13)
 - Announced the Lord's birth to the shepherds (Luke 2:9)
 - Strengthened Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:43)
 - Appeared to the Myrrh-bearing Women at the tomb (Matthew 28:2, Mark 16:5)

In addition, tradition also states that Gabriel appeared to Moses to instruct him in writing Genesis, to Anna and Joachim regarding the birth of the Virgin Mary, and to the Virgin Mary as a child in the Temple. Thus Gabriel's role has been to announce salvation to mankind.

Another of the seven archangels is Raphael (Hebrew: "Healing of God"). He is mentioned in the Book of Tobit (Septuagint), saying "I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One" (Tobit 12:15 LXX). He also stated that God had sent him to heal Tobit and his daughter-in-law. According to tradition, it was Raphael who stirred up the waters of the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:4; Butler, Lives of the Saints, October 24). Thus, Raphael's role seems to center around healing and the prayers of the saints (Compare Revelation 8:3-4).

Uriel (Hebrew: "Flame of God") is also mentioned as being one of the seven archangels in the Old Testament Pseudepigraphal Book of Enoch. [The Apostle Jude quoted from the Book of Enoch in Jude 1:14-15; only fragments of the Book of Enoch exist today, however.] Uriel's role as described in the Book of Enoch is as the keeper of Hades and Tartarus, where some of the

angels who sinned against God are kept in Tartarus to await judgment (2 Peter 2:4, Jude 1:6; see also Revelation 9:1-4). Tartarus was regarded as the deepest or hottest part of Hades.

Much less is known about the remaining three archangels. According to tradition, their names are referred to in various places as:

- Selathiel (Hebrew: “Request of God”)
 - Jegudiel (Hebrew:
 - Berachiel (Hebrew: “Blessing of God”)
 - Phanuel (Hebrew: “Face of God”)

Angels in General

Sometimes they appear in human form, as young men usually. Some examples are:

- The visit to Abraham (Genesis 18:1-6ff). The Lord and two angels visited Abraham and ate dinner with him. Abraham seemed to know who they were.
- The same two angels visited Lot (Genesis 19:1-8ff). Lot seemed to know who the angels were also. But the men of Sodom wanted to rape the two angels in the street. Lot offered to send out his two virgin daughters, but the men didn’t want them.
- People sometimes entertain angels (Hebrews 13:1-2, Tobit 12:15). We are sometimes unaware of who they are, thinking they are just strangers here for a visit.
- Guardian angels sometimes look like the person they guard (Acts 12:13-16). The people in the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark thought the person knocking on the door was Peter’s guardian angel, since Peter was in prison.
- Angels are very curious (1 Peter 1:10-12). They long to look into the working out of our salvation.
 - In icons, angels are pictured in the human form that they took.
- Demons can take human form also. In Prochorus’ account of the Missionary Journeys of the Apostle John, this occurred often. (See Appendix A)

At other times angels take on an awesome appearance. Some examples are:

- Elisha opened his servant’s eyes (2 Kings 6:15-17).
 - The city of Dothan was surrounded by the army of Aram.
 - Elisha calmly stated that “those who are with us are more than those who are with them”.
 - When Elisha prayed for his servant’s eyes to be opened, the servant saw the mountains above Dothan full of angels in chariots of fire.
 - The peak of the mountain range above Dothan was about 8 miles away. In order for Elisha’s servant (with 20/20 vision) to make out what was there on the mountain, the angels had to be at least 180 feet tall if he squinted to see them 8 miles away. The text makes no indication that he had trouble seeing them though, implying that they were much taller than 180 feet.
- Compare John’s vision of the Son of God to Daniel’s visit by an angel (Revelation 1:13-15, 2:18, Daniel 10:5-6). They both have similar appearances:
 - Face like lightning
 - Golden belt around chest
 - Eyes like a flame of fire
 - Feet glowing like molten brass
 - Voice like a thundering waterfall

- John saw a strong angel that was very tall (Revelation 10:1-3). He stood with his right foot on the sea and his left foot on the land. His appearance was similar to the angel in Daniel's visit and he had to be at least 300 feet tall.
- Ezekiel's vision of the Cherubim and the Throne of God (Ezekiel 1, 10, 11). Wheels within wheels spinning, lightning, full of eyes, clothed in fire, huge and awesome, lights flashing back and forth.
- Cherubim outside Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:24). Whirling about itself was the sword of the flame to guard the way back to the Tree of Life.
 - Human reaction to angels in their glory:
 - Prophet Daniel passed out (Daniel 10:7-9)
 - Apostle John's reaction to risen Christ on Patmos: passed out (Revelation 1:13-15)
 - Peter, James and John on the Mount of Transfiguration almost passed out when they saw Jesus, Moses and Elijah transfigured (Luke 9:32)
 - Soldiers at the tomb did too (Matthew 28:2-4)
 - When the Myrrh-bearing women saw the angels, the angels had taken human form (Mark 16:5, Luke 24:4). They have to do this so that their natural appearance (which reflects the Glory of God) doesn't blow us away.

When confronted with extreme fear, the human body often goes into an involuntary state like a catatonic shock. This is an understandable reaction to being suddenly confronted with a 300 foot tall creature who is clothed in fire and who speaks with a voice like a thundering waterfall.

In iconography, the Archangel Michael is "written" (Icons are written, not painted!) with a sword at his side. Yet angels are non-physical beings. The sword, then, is not representative of a piece of steel he carries, but of his execution of the Power of God. From this point of view, Michael's "sword" makes star wars weapons look like Tinker Toys!!

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November 8, 2018
Revision C

Gospel: Luke 10:16-21

The Gospel Lesson for the Feast Day of the Apostle Barnabas is also used in the Orthodox Church for the Feast Days of the Apostles Nathanael (Bartholomew), James the Son of Alphaeus, Luke and Tryphon. It is also used for the Feast Day of the Archangels (November 8) and for some of the Unmercenary Healers. In the West, this Gospel Lesson is often used in July for the 9th Sunday after Pentecost.

Men and Angels Serve as Apostles

The word translated “Apostle” (Greek: *apostolos*) refers to someone who is sent, and is often used for ambassadors. Both men and angels fit the sense of this word and there are a number of facets to it.

Messengers of the Word

The Seventy were sent out as messengers, or “angels”, ahead of the Lord (Luke 10:1). There are a number of other places where men are referred to as messengers or “angels” from God; some examples:

- King David: 1 Samuel 29:9, 2 Samuel 14:17-20, 19:27
 - Prophet Haggai: Haggai 1:13
 - The Prophets: 2 Chronicles 36:15, 16
 - The Priests: Malachi 2:7
 - John the Baptist: Malachi 3:1, Matthew 11:10, Mark 1:2, Luke 7:27
 - Apostle Paul: Galatians 4:14
 - Paul’s fellow Apostles: 2 Corinthians 8:23
 - The Book of Malachi: “Malachi” means “My angel”

The Gospel lesson makes this statement: “He who hears you (the Seventy) hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me” (Luke 10:16). Cyril of Alexandria comments¹ on this,

“He entrusts to them His Words, that they may be condemned who in anything resist or venture to reject them. When they are rejected, He assumes then that it is He who suffers this; and then again He shows that the guilt of this wickedness, as being committed against Him, mounts up to God the Father. See, therefore, with the eyes of the mind, to how vast a height He raises the sin committed by men in rejecting the saints! What a wall He builds around them! How great security He establishes for them! He makes them such as must be feared, and in every way plainly provides for their being uninjured.

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¹ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 63, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 270

If such words apply to the Seventy (lesser) Apostles acting as messengers of God, how much more does it apply to angels and archangels! Yet Deacon Stephen accused the Sanhedrin of doing just that: “Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One (i.e. Jesus), of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers; you who have received the Law in ordinances of angels and have not kept it” (Acts 7:52, 53). Paul mentioned the same thing: “Why therefore the Law? It was added until the Seed should come to Whom it has been promised, being ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 3:19, see also Hebrews 2:2).

Basil the Great commenting² on this, interpreted the mediator referred to here as Moses (from Exodus 20:19), since the people asked Moses to speak to God rather than have God speak directly with them. This implies that the angelic involvement in the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai was the very loud trumpet sound that grew louder and louder leading up to the voice of the Lord, speaking with thunder (Exodus 19:16-19). The lightning and some of the thunder may have also been the angels that surround the Lord wherever He goes. Thus, to set aside the Law, when it had been ordained by angels and given by God is a very serious matter.

Another very serious matter is alluded to in the Gospel lesson for Matins of this Feast Day (Matthew 18:10-20). In this passage, the Lord had just mentioned the angels’ role regarding children, using the illustration of a shepherd and concluding that He does not wish them to perish (Matthew 18:10-14). Then He went on to speak of a brother sinning against a brother, and instructing them to confirm every disagreement with two or three witnesses. If the brother who sinned refuses to hear them, the Church was to consider the sinning brother as a heathen and a tax collector. This will be bound in heaven as it was on earth (Matthew 18:15-18). While the Lord was talking here of human witnesses, there are also the angelic witnesses who will confirm everything in heaven. And the books in heaven that record the deeds of all men will record these also.

The Word Goes Out

As the Seventy went about their mission, angelic activity accompanied them. They had been given the power to heal the sick (Luke 10:9), which included casting out demons (Luke 10:17). Since all sickness has something to do with demons³, they encountered demonic activity everywhere they went. [For more discussion on the relation between demons and sickness, see the Gospel lesson for the 6th Sunday of Luke.] They returned with joy that the demons were subject to them in Christ’s Name (Luke 10:7). The Lord responded, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18).

Paul referred to Satan as “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2). For Satan to fall from “heaven” does not necessarily mean that he fell from the abode of God. The First Century concept of heaven placed God in the “third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2), where the atmosphere, clouds, sun, etc., represent the first and second heaven. For example “the heaven gave rain” (James

² Basil the Great, *On the Spirit*, 14.

³ For more discussion on the relation between demons and sickness, see the Gospel lesson for the 6th Sunday of Luke.

5:18), refers to the first or second heaven. In our Gospel lesson, Satan fell from the first or second heaven, not from the third heaven.

As the Seventy returned with joy and told the Lord that the demons were subject to them, He responded that He was aware of that. He then summarized their mission by saying that He had given them “the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy” (Luke 10:19). Cyril commented⁴ that Christ said this in order that they might not be carried away with the ignorance of the Jewish leaders who, not understanding the mystery of the Incarnation, approached Him as a mere man.

Cyril confirmed⁵ that for Satan to fall like lightning means that something has changed drastically on earth. He has been overthrown and is put under the feet of the Christians.

“For Satan to fall like lightning means that he was cast down from on high to earth; from overwhelming pride to humiliation; from glory to contempt; from great power to utter weakness. Before the coming of Christ, he possessed the world; all was subject to him, and there was no man able to escape the meshes of his overwhelming might. He was worshipped by everyone; everywhere he had temples and altars for sacrifice, and an innumerable multitude of worshippers. But because the Only-Begotten Word of God has come down from heaven, he has fallen like lightning. For he who of old was bold and haughty, and who vied with the glory of Deity; he who had as worshippers all that were in error, is put under the feet of those that worshipped Him. He has suffered a great and terrible overthrow”.

The angels of God also have a hand in this overthrow. David had said, “Bless the Lord, you His angels, mighty in strength, who perform His word, obeying the Voice of His Word! Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, you who serve Him, doing His will” (Psalm 103:20). “He makes winds (or spirits) His angels; flaming fire His ministers” (Psalm 104:4). The word translated “ministers” (Hebrew: *sharath* = to serve in the Temple) implies a liturgical worship. Paul had elaborated on this also in Hebrews, quoting both Psalm 103 and Psalm 110: “But to which of the angels has He ever said, ‘sit at My Right Hand till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth for service for those who will inherit salvation?” (Hebrews 1:13, 14). The word “ministering” (Greek: *leitourgikos* = to serve in the Temple) also implies a liturgical worship.

The angels see themselves as our fellow servants. After the Apostle John had seen a series of incredible visions, his inclination was to fall down and worship the angel who had shown him all these things. The angel (perhaps Gabriel) corrected him saying, “See that you do not do that. I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren the prophets and of those who keep the words of this book. Worship God!” (Revelation 22:9, 19:10).

The angels are constantly involved in the battle as the Word goes out. Some are involved in disputes with Satan (Jude 1:9). Others have the duty of the care and oversight of children. The Matins Gospel for the Feast Day of the Archangels is Matthew 18:10-20, quoted earlier. Jesus said, “Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones; for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father Who is in heaven” (Matthew 18:10). Anyone

⁴ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 64, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 275.

⁵ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 64, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 274.

disrupting the Word being planted in a child would be better off if a millstone was hung around his neck and he were drowned in the depth of the sea (Matthew 18:6). He said that “it is not the Will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish” (Matthew 18:14). Thus, the angels have a job to do to encourage each person to seek the Lord.

Mixed in with the statement of angels guarding children, the Lord used an illustration that describes the angels’ role well: that of a shepherd. “What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly I say to you, he rejoices more over that one sheep than over the ninety nine that did not go astray” (Matthew 18:12-13, Luke 15:3-7). Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd (John 10:1-15). In the battle for men’s souls, the angels have a significant role to play in following the Good Shepherd’s orders to see to it that we are not tempted beyond what we are able to resist, and with the temptation, also making a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Courage

Because the angels see God all the time, they have an advantage over us. Because they see, it is easy for them to believe and obey. For us, it is more difficult because we are asked to believe without having seen. This is why Jesus gave His famous admonition: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29). When the Seventy returned with joy at having the demons subject to them, it was easy to believe. What required faith for them was to take up their crosses as the Lord took up His.

Basil the Great wrote⁶ about how the angels are very much like us as pertains to free will. “The powers of heaven are not holy by nature; were it so, there would in this respect be no difference between them and the Holy Spirit. It is in proportion to their relative excellence that they have their gift of holiness from the Holy Spirit. Their substance is an aerial spirit, or an immaterial fire, as it is written, ‘Who makes his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire’ (Psalm 104:4). Therefore they exist in space and become visible, and appear in their proper bodily form to those that are worthy. But their sanctification, being external to their substance, induces their perfection through the communion of the Holy Spirit. They keep their rank by their abiding in the good and true, and while they retain their freedom of will, never fall away from their patient attendance on Him who is truly good. The results is that, if you do away with the Holy Spirit, the hosts of the angels are disbanded, the dominions of archangels are destroyed, all is thrown into confusion, and their life loses law, order, and distinctness. For how are angels to cry ‘Glory to God in the highest’ (Luke 2:14) without being empowered by the Holy Spirit? For ‘No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Spirit, and no man speaking by the Holy Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed’ (1 Corinthians 12:3); as might be said by wicked and hostile spirits, whose fall establishes our statement of the freedom of the will of the invisible powers. I indeed maintain that even Gabriel (Luke 1:11-20) in no other way foretells events to come than by the foreknowledge of the Holy Spirit, by reason of the fact that one of the blessings distributed by the Holy Spirit is prophecy. How did he, who was ordained to announce the mysteries of the vision, derive the wisdom whereby he was enabled to teach hidden things, if not from the Holy Spirit? The revelation of mysteries is indeed the peculiar function of the Spirit, as it is written, ‘God has

⁶ Basil the Great, On the Spirit, 16.

revealed them to us by His Spirit' (1 Corinthians 2:10). And how could 'thrones, dominions, principalities and powers' (Colossians 1:16) live their blessed life, if they did not 'behold the face of the Father which is in heaven'? (Matthew 18:10). To behold it is impossible without the Holy Spirit!"

As a consequence, the angels exhibit a great deal of courage. Likewise the Seventy and the Twelve did, so long as they maintained their faith. At the time of the Crucifixion, they lost it and were scattered as sheep without a Shepherd as was predicted by Zechariah (Zechariah 13:7, Mark 14:27). But they regained their senses after the Resurrection. We note especially the Lord's prayers for His disciples, that their faith should not fail, and when they had returned to Him, that they would strengthen their brethren (Luke 22:32). Having had the experience of trampling on demons (serpents and scorpions - Luke 10:19), courage was easier to come by. Cyril quoted⁷ David's experience to describe this: "They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy Countenance. And in Thy Name shall they rejoice all the day; and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted (Psalm 89:15-16 LXX).

The Lord put all this in perspective by saying, "Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20). The real glory is having one's name written in the Book of Life (Revelation 20:12, Psalm 69:28). Other books exist that record the deeds or works of all men (Revelation 20:12, Daniel 7:10). If each child (Matthew 18:10) and each adult (Peter in Acts 12:14-16) have their own guardian angel, then there is a witness to everyone's deeds spanning his entire life.

Not everyone, who was allowed to work miracles, has their name written in heaven, however. The Lord said, "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your Name, cast out demons in Your Name, and done many wonders in Your Name?' and then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:22-23).

Cyril gives⁸ some perspective on this: "To rejoice solely in the fact that they were able to work miracles, and crush the heads of demons, was likely to produce in them possibly the desire also of vainglory - and the neighbor of this passion constantly is pride. Most usefully, therefore, does Christ rebuke the first boasting, and quickly cuts away the root that had sprung up in them of the love of glory. Thus He imitates a good sower who, immediately when he sees a thorn springing up in his garden, tears it up with a hoe before it strikes its root deep".

Humility

The Gospel lesson concludes with Jesus' words to His Father, "In that hour, Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight'" (Luke 10:21).

⁷ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 64, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 275.

⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 64, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 275.

By rejoicing in the Holy Spirit, Jesus was rejoicing in the works and miracles that were performed by means of the Holy Spirit. Cyril said⁹ of this the Seventy were truly enlightened by their experience.

“Knowing that those who had been sent by Him had benefited a great deal, and that they had themselves learned His glory by experience, He was full of joy, or rather of exultation. Being good and loving to man, and wishing that all should be saved, He found the cause of His rejoicing (1) in the conversion of those that were in error, (2) in the enlightenment of those that were in darkness, and (3) in the answer of the understanding to the acknowledgment of His Glory for those who had been without knowledge and without instruction”.

When the Lord said that the Father had revealed these things to babes, He did not mean to imply that the Seventy were infants, but, in Cyril’s words¹⁰, they were “of an innocent and guileless mind and simple as a child regarding wickedness”.

Paul said that “He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure” (Ephesians 1:9). He said this was “the unsearchable riches of Christ which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:8, 9). “This mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations has now been revealed to His saints, where the mystery is Christ in us, the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:26, 27).

This is foolishness to the wise of this world (1 Corinthians 1:18-21) because the recipients of the mystery take up their crosses and die like their Master did. For more discussion on taking up one’s cross, see the Feast Day of the Exaltation of the Cross and the Sundays before and after.

To the angels, all this is fascinating, and they are always desiring to look into human affairs (1 Peter 1:12). There is joy among the angels when one sinner repents (Luke 15:10). Paul wrote to the Hebrews, “Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing, some have unwittingly entertained angels” (Hebrews 13:2). This statement does not fit very well with the story of the Lord’s visit to Abraham, where the Lord and two others (angels) ate dinner with Abraham (Genesis 18). However, it describes the visit of the Archangel Raphael to Tobit and Tobias quite well (Tobit 3:16 - 12:22 LXX).

Yet the angels are not completely informed of the Lord’s plans. While they carry the souls of the righteous to Paradise (Luke 16:22) and they will gather together the elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven (Mark 13:27), yet they don’t know the day or the hour when they will need to do so (Matthew 24:36). Even Satan, with all his wisdom, did not understand the wisdom of God in a mystery; if he had understood, he wouldn’t have crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Corinthians 2:7, 8).

⁹ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 65, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 277.

¹⁰ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 65, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 279.

Angels and the Son of God

November 8, 2018
Revision C

Epistle: Hebrews 2:2-10

The Epistle lesson begins with: “For if the Word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?” (v.2). “Transgression”, “disobedience”, “just reward” sound like aspects of the Mosaic Law, and “spoken through angels” refers to the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai and the counseling of Moses by Gabriel regarding the Law.

But this is not the only time angels brought the Word of God to man. One of the readings for Vespers of this Feast Day describes another visit of angels to man delivering the Word of God:

Daniel’s Visit by Michael and His Angels: Daniel 10.

The Prophet Daniel had been brought to Babylon during Nebuchadnezzar’s conquest and was raised for serving in the king’s court. However, he and his three friends Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego maintained an Orthodox fast for their entire life in Babylon. [A strict Orthodox fast today is a vegetarian diet with no meat, fish, dairy products, oil or wine.] Under this fast, they were healthier than the other captives that ate the king’s choice food (Daniel 1:8-16).

At this time, Nebuchadnezzar had a disturbing dream and his wise men, (magicians, conjurers, sorcerers and Chaldeans) could not help him. He asked them first to tell him what he dreamed - so that he knew that they were genuine - and then interpret what the dream meant (Daniel 2:5). They replied that there is no one who could do that except the gods (2:11). So the king gave orders to execute all the wise men (2:11). When Daniel found out about this, he and his three friends asked for an audience with the king, told him his dream and then interpreted it. The king was so impressed that he bowed down to Daniel - which kings never do to anyone (2:15-46).

Daniel and his three friends went on from there to survive the blazing furnace (Daniel 3), the lions’ den (Daniel 6), and changes in kings to Belshazzar and then to Darius. Darius was so impressed with Daniel that he made Judaism the state religion (Daniel 6:26). Meanwhile, Daniel kept having visions from the Lord. The archangel Gabriel was sent to help Daniel understand the visions on at least two separate occasions (Daniel 8:16, 9:21).

In the reading for Vespers, Daniel was involved in one of his customary fasts for three weeks waiting for an answer to his prayers (Daniel 10:2, 3). As he was by the bank of the Tigris River, he suddenly saw a man clothed in fire who spoke with the voice of a roaring multitude.

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Everyone with Daniel ran away to hide (vv.4-7). The man Daniel saw was one of the angels that was standing against the kingdom of Persia (and its demons) and the Archangel Michael had come to help him out (vv.13, 21).

The appearance of this angel exhibited noteworthy similarities to the appearance of the Risen Christ in His appearance to the Apostle John:

ANGEL IN DANIEL 10:5-6	CHRIST IN REVELATION 1:13-16
-----	hair & head white as snow
eyes like flaming torches	eyes like flame of fire
face like lightning	face like noonday sun
voice like roaring multitude	voice like sound of many waters
dressed in linen	dressed in foot-length garment
golden belt	golden belt
feet & arms like polished bronze	feet like polished bronze

In addition to the above, Daniel described the body of the angel as like one of the twelve gem stones worn on the breast piece of the high priest (Exodus 28:20, 39:13). It is uncertain which gem stone the Hebrew word *tarshish* refers to however. Obviously the angel's close association with the Son of God caused him to take on a similar appearance to the Son of God.

The angel referred to Daniel as “a man greatly beloved” (v.11). The Apostle John similarly referred to himself as “the disciple Jesus loved” (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, 20). Yet both Daniel and John had difficulty maintaining consciousness (they both passed out!) and had to be helped. In both Daniel 10 and Revelation 1, the Word of God came to men in a very special way showing them what the future would bring, but yet they were overpowered by the awesome presence of the messenger.

The Son of God as The Angel of God

On a number of occasions, the Son of God is referred to as the Angel of God. Two of these occasions are read for Vespers of the Feast Day of the Archangels.

Joshua Meets the Captain of the Lord's Host: Joshua 5:13-15 After crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land, but before getting to Jericho, Joshua met a man standing opposite him with a drawn sword in His hand. Not recognizing the man, Joshua asked if He were for them or against them. The Man replied “No, rather I indeed come now as Captain of the host of the Lord” (v.14). Joshua fell on his face and bowed down and said, “What has My Lord to say to His servant?” The Captain of the Lord's host said, “Remove your sandals from your feet for the place where you are standing is holy. And Joshua did so.”

Some might say that the Captain of the Lord's host is the archangel Michael, since Michael is “the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people Israel” (Daniel 12:1). But yet the archangels don't ask to be worshipped; and even go out of their way to prevent people from worshipping them, as did the angel who revealed Revelation to the Apostle John (Revelation

19:10, 22:9). There John fell down to worship the angel, but the angel said “see that you do not do that. For I am your fellow servant and of your brethren the prophets... Worship God”. Early Christian writers also taught that this account in Joshua 5 refers to the Son of God and not an angel; for example Justin Martyr (Dialog with Trypho, Lxii), Cyprian (Treatises, xii, II, 19), etc.

Gideon Commissioned as a Judge: Judges 6:2, 7, 11-24 The previous reading from Joshua does not actually call the Son of God “the Angel of the Lord”. In this reading the text does refer to Him as such. When the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, He told Gideon that “the Lord is with you” (v.12) and “Go in this your strength and deliver Israel from the hand of Midian” (v.14). Gideon was uncertain about this since his family was the least among the tribe of Manassah and he was the youngest in the family (v.15). As a sign that this was really the Lord speaking to him, Gideon asked that he be allowed to present his offering to Him. The Angel of the Lord waited while Gideon prepared a kid (young goat), unleavened bread and broth. When Gideon had finished, the Angel of the Lord told Gideon to place the meat and the unleavened bread on a rock, and to pour the broth out on top. The Angel of the Lord then touched the meat and bread with the end of His staff and fire sprang up from the rock and consumed them. Then the Angel of the Lord disappeared.

To interpret this account as referring to anyone other than the Son of God would imply that it is okay to offer sacrifices to angels, which is not the case. In fact, the worship of angels was part of a First Century Gnostic heresy that the Apostle Paul denounced (Colossians 2:18).

Other examples where the Son of God is referred to as “the Angel of the Lord” are:

- Seeking out Hagar (Genesis 16:7-13, 21:17-19)
- Abraham offering Isaac (Genesis 22:11-15)
- Jacob’s dream about speckled sheep (Genesis 31:11)
- Moses at the burning bush (Exodus 3:2)
- Leading Israel out of Egypt (Exodus 14:19)
- Restraining Balaam’s donkey (Numbers 22:22-35)
- Speaking to the people of Israel (Judges 2:1-4)
- Announcing the birth of Samson (Judges 13:3-21)

All these references are clearly referring to the Son of God either because He said He was God or because people worshipped Him.

But why, one might ask, should the Son of God be referred to as a messenger? Referring to His coming in the flesh, Paul said He “made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond servant, and coming in the likeness of men”; and this even though He was equal with God (Philippians 2:6, 7). The Lord Himself, speaking to the Father, said, “I have finished the work which You have given Me to do” (John 17:4). I have manifested Your Name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world” (v.6). “I have given to them the Words which You have given Me” (v.8). From this perspective, one of the purposes of the Son of God becoming Incarnate was as a messenger from the Father. (This was not His only purpose as we will see later). Therefore, one should not find it strange for Him to be called a messenger (angel) in the Old Testament.

The Son of God Compared to Angels

The worship of angels was fairly common among First Century Gnostic heretics (Colossians 2:18), and one of the themes of the Epistle to the Hebrews was to show the superiority of Christ over the angels.

Hebrews begins with Paul stating that the Son

- Was appointed heir of all things (Hebrews 1:2)
 - Was the One through whom the world was made (v.2)
 - Is the brightness of the Father's Glory (v.3)
 - Is the express image of His Person (v.3)
 - Upholds all things by the Word of His power (v.3)
 - Sits at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High (v.3).

Thus He has "become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they" (v.4).

John Chrysostom argues that the Name Son declares a true relationship (with the Father). For if He were not a true Son, and were a son only by Grace (as some heretics claimed), then He is not only not 'more excellent than the angels' but is even less than they. Because righteous men also were called sons (Homily ii on Hebrews 1).

Paul went on to point out some differences between creatures and their maker: "For to which of the angels did He ever say:

'You are My Son, today I have begotten You' (Psalm 2:7)

And again:

'I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son' (2 Samuel 7:14)

But when He again brings the Firstborn into the world He says:

'Let all the angels of God worship Him' (Deuteronomy 32:43 LXX)

And of the angels, He says:

'Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire' (Psalm 104:4)

But to the Son He says:

'Your throne, O God, is forever and ever' (Psalm 45:6)

And

'You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remains; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same and Your years will not fail' (Psalm 102:25-27 LXX).

But to which of the angels has He ever said:

'Sit at My Right Hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool' (Psalm 110:1 LXX).

Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?" (vv.5-14).

John Chrysostom stated that the "today I have begotten You" and the "I will be to Him a Father" refer to the Son of God taking on flesh and not to His Deity (Ibid). This is the "bringing the Firstborn into the world" (v.6). We note that Paul's quote from 2 Samuel 7:14 was directed

there at Solomon as the son of the king who would build the Lord's house, but it prophesied also concerning Christ, who would also build the Lord's house.

The quote from Deuteronomy 32:43 is lifted verbatim from the Septuagint, but is missing from the Hebrew text that exists today; in fact all of these quotes are lifted word for word from the Septuagint.

The contrast here is that while "He makes His angels" (that is, He creates them), the Son does the creating. In the quote from Psalm 45, the Father was speaking to the Son about the Son's throne being forever. Similarly in Psalm 102, the Father was speaking to the Son "You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth". The angels are the created beings; the Son is eternally begotten; and they are not the same at all.

Chrysostom pointed out that in the quote from Psalm 102, the Psalmist and Paul have applied to the Son the things which relate to the Father since they are of one nature. And they have also addressed another thing, greater even than this; that is, the transfiguration of the world: "They will be changed like a garment". Thus the Son created it the first time; and then He's going to do it again!

How does this relate to us? Paul builds his case with these Old Testament quotes and then concludes with the statement that the angels, who are above us in this service, are assigned to us on our behalf. Chrysostom said it this way, "For this purpose He employs them; this is the office of angels: to minister to God for our salvation. So that it is an angelic work to do all for the salvation of the brethren; or rather it is the work of Christ Himself, for He indeed saves as Lord, but they as servants. They are servants of the Son of God, and are sent many ways for our sakes, and so they are partners in service with us" (Homily iii on Hebrews 1).

Neglect is a Serious Matter

The Epistle text begins with: "For if the Word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" (vv.2-3). Chrysostom noted that he said "the Word spoken through angels" and not just the Law. Stephen had testified that "the Law had been received at the direction of angels" (Acts 7:53); Paul testified that the Law was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator (Galatians 3:19). Both of these references refer to the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai accompanied by the angelic trumpets, thunder, lightning, etc. (Exodus 19:16-19). There was probably some contact afterward between Moses and various angels as they explained the meaning of the Law and clarified its details. There was probably also some angelic assistance given to Betsalel and Aholiav as they fabricated the furnishings of the Tabernacle to the exact specifications given to Moses. (Compare Exodus 31:1-11; 35:30-35; 36:1-4; 25:9, 40; 26:30; Numbers 8:4).

But all of the above, including the Tabernacle and its furnishings, were part of the Mosaic Law. The Word spoken through angels also includes:

- Understanding for Daniel (Daniel 8:16; 9:21, 22; 10:11)
 - Protection during the Exodus and Conquest (Exodus 23:20-23, 32:34)
 - Discipline for David (2 Samuel 24:15-17)

- Feeding of Elijah (1 Kings 19:5-7)
- Understanding for Zechariah (Zechariah 1:9ff)
- Deliverance for Lot (Genesis 19:1-15)
- Meeting with Jacob (Genesis 32:1)

After all this angelic effort throughout the ages, if we fall away and neglect all that the Lord has done through the ministry of the angels (and Himself), we have no hope of escaping judgment.

Paul brought this topic up again later in the Epistle: “Therefore leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of

- Repentance from dead works
- Faith toward God
- Teaching of baptism
- Laying on of hands
- Resurrection of the dead
- Eternal judgment

For if it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame” (Hebrews 6:1-6). By lapsing back into Judaism, the Hebrews were truly neglecting so great a salvation.

In this context, John Chrysostom defined “the heavenly gift” as forgiveness, “tasting the good Word of God” as receiving Apostolic teaching and “the powers of the age to come” as the working of miracles and the down payment of the Spirit from 2 Corinthians 1:22 (Homily ix on Hebrews 6). Paul mentioned these things also in the Epistle text (vv.3-4): At the first these things were spoken by the Lord; then:

- They were confirmed by those who heard Him (the Apostles)
 - God bore witness with signs, wonders and miracles
 - He distributed the Holy Spirit (the down payment).

The crucifying again of the Son of God refers to a second baptism. For if “our old man was crucified with Him” (Romans 6:6) and “we have been united in His death,” (Romans 6:5) and “we were buried through baptism into death” (Romans 6:4), and “death no longer has dominion over Him” (Romans 6:9), what does a second baptism mean? It means Christ’s death was purposeless, and is a fable and a mockery, which puts Him to open shame.

Man and Angels in the Age to Come

After going into a lot of reasons why we should not neglect so great a salvation, Paul then goes into some reasons why we should be motivated to pay close attention. “For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels” (v.5).

Following this statement, he again quotes word for word from the Septuagint:

“What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, and set

him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet” (Psalm 8:4-6).

From the context of Psalm 8, this would seem to be speaking of men in general. For example, Psalm 8:7 lists some of the “all things in subjection”: sheep, oxen, birds and fish. Yet Paul uses this quote from Psalm 8 to refer to Christ. He calls the man Jesus Christ the Captain of our salvation, Who is in the process of bringing many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10).

So then, Psalm 8 **does** refer to men in general, but specifically those men who are related by the second birth to their Older Brother. He is the Firstborn of many brethren (Romans 8:29) and He is not ashamed to call us His brothers (Hebrews 2:11).

Paul then brought in a little reality check: “But now we do not yet see all things put under Him” (v.8). Instead we see Christ, made (in His flesh) a little lower than the angels and suffering death that He might taste death for everyone. As a result He was crowned with glory and honor (v.9) and sits at the Right Hand of God (Hebrews 10:12, Mark 14:62, Luke 22:69). When He returns, God the Father will put all things in subjection under Him and leave nothing that is not put under Him (v.8). It was the Father’s plan that all things are for Christ and all things are by Christ (v.10). And as He has been exalted and glorified, so shall we be when He returns. Thus, just as Christ was made a little lower than the angels in His humanity, so we are now. But by being united with Him in the Body of Christ, just as He was exalted to His previous glory (prior to the Incarnation), and ruling over the angels, so shall we be as He “brings many sons to glory”.

This does not necessarily imply that we will rule angels as He does. The Lord said that, in the Resurrection, we will be equal to angels (Luke 20:36). We will judge angels, i.e. those that had fallen (1 Corinthians 6:3), as the Twelve will judge the Twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:28). But the angels refer to themselves as our fellow servants (Revelation 19:10, 22:9), and they are referred to as “sons of God” also (compare Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7; Luke 20:36; Romans 8:14). “Equal to angels” however, does not imply being identical to angels, since they are non-physical beings.

Paul mentioned this again in Hebrews 2:16: “For indeed, He does not latch onto (or grasp) angels, but He does latch onto (or grasp) the seed of Abraham”. Chrysostom stated, “He did not take on an angel’s nature, but a man’s. He did not grasp that nature which belongs to angels, but ours. This expression “grasp”, or “latch onto” (Greek *epilambano*) is derived from the figure of persons pursuing those who turn away from them, and doing everything to overtake them as they flee, and to take hold of them as they are bounding away. For when human nature was fleeing from Him, and fleeing far away (Ephesians 2:13), He pursued after and overtook us. For it is a great and wonderful thing, and full of amazement, that our flesh should sit on high and be adored by angels and archangels, by Cherubim and Seraphim. For God has great zeal on behalf of our nature.”

“Moreover, he said not simply ‘of men He latches onto’ but of the ‘seed of Abraham’ (v.16) thus showing that their race is great and honorable. Therefore in all things, He had to be made like His brethren’ (v.17). This goes both ways also. Just as He was made like us in the Incarnation, so we will be made like Him in the Resurrection. He did not lose His deity in taking on humanity; just so, we will not lose our humanity when we take on immortality. But “the righteous will shine

forth like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father” (Matthew 13:43, Daniel 12:3). Moses and Elijah have already tasted of this in the Transfiguration; we will join them at the Resurrection. This is a great salvation that is foolish to neglect by drifting away. Instead, it is something worth paying attention to every minute of every day. As Chrysostom said, “If He who is worshipped by angels, for our sake endured to have a little less than the angels, much more ought we, who are inferior to angels, to bear everything for His sake” (Homily iv on Hebrews 2).

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

Healing of St. Veronica

November 8, 2020
7th Sunday of Luke
Revision E

Gospel: Luke 8:41-56

In the West, today's Gospel lesson is read from either Matthew at this same time in the church year, or from Mark in mid-July.

Understanding the role of the Twelve Apostles is crucial to understanding the Church. Their names are on the foundations of the gates of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:10-14) and they will sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matthew 19:22-30). But yet, they did not just fall out of the sky on Pentecost ready to evangelize the earth. And the Holy Spirit at Pentecost was not just a magic elixir that enabled them to do anything. Rather, they had some struggles of their own that they needed to go through. And the Lord spent time with them to train them in what they should do. And the Holy Spirit then enabled them to do that. Today, we will look at some of the training the Lord used to prepare them for Pentecost.

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Background for the Gospel Lesson

On the 7th Sunday of Luke, the Gospel lesson was about the Gadarene demoniacs who lived in the tombs, broke their chains and cried out day and night after cutting themselves with stones. Jesus and the Twelve rowed across the Sea of Galilee to heal these poor guys, then rowed right back. On the way over to Gadara, they were rowing into a fierce storm and Jesus calmed the storm. The Twelve reacted, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?" (Mark 4:41).

Upon their arrival back in Capernaum (which is today's Gospel lesson), Jesus raised Jairus' daughter from the dead. Right after that, He sent the Twelve out two by two to heal the sick, cast out demons and raise the dead all by themselves (Matthew 10:8). Today's Gospel lesson, then, is part of the training program. In just two years, Jesus would be sending the Twelve out to evangelize the earth, but at this point they're struggling to figure out who He is!

There are (at least) three stages of recognition that the Twelve experienced:

1. As Messiah when they were called and shortly thereafter (John 1:41). This alone is not sufficient. “Messiah” means “the anointed one”; King David and Aaron the High Priest were also anointed.
2. As the Son of God following some of these incredible miracles (Matthew 14:33). This is a crucial recognition! Satan also recognized this and trembles at it (James 2:19).
3. As I AM in terms of the Word of the Cross where they take up their cross also (John 8:38). Satan doesn’t do this!

Gospel: Luke 8:40-56 (Matthew 9:18-26, Mark 5:21-43)

When Jesus arrived back in Galilee after healing the Gadarene demoniacs, he was met by a crowd that included the ruler of the local Synagogue (probably Capernaum). The ruler asked Jesus to come to his house to heal his daughter. On the way, a woman touched the hem of Jesus’ garment and was instantly healed of a flow of blood (or hemorrhage).

History of the Synagogue:

The traditions of the synagogue go back to Moses (Acts 15:21). However, as an institution, it probably originated with Ezra and the return from captivity in Babylon (see Ezra 7:9-10). There was a formal service at the synagogue on the Sabbath, but it wasn’t the same as at the Temple in Jerusalem since no animal sacrifice was done at the synagogues. Focus was on the reading – probably by chanting – of the Scriptures, where certain parts of the Scriptures were required to be read at certain times of the year. [For example, Exodus 12:24-27]. The music was probably a little different also since the “instruments of David” were only used at the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Chronicles 23:5, 1 Chronicles 25:1-7, 2 Chronicles 29:25-28).

Synagogues were located throughout the world wherever there was a Jewish community. On Paul’s missionary journeys, it was his common practice to stop at the synagogue on the Sabbath. Some synagogues received him, while others didn’t (compare Berea to Thessalonica in Acts 17:1-13).

The ruler of the synagogue had a role similar to pastors in churches today. He conducted the public worship, appointed who should read the Scriptures and prayers, selected someone to preach (if he didn’t preach himself), and supervised care of the building and property. Most synagogues also had elders and attendants. The elders formed a council for judgment in civil and religious matters and the attendant had the care of the scrolls as well as the job of executing the punishment of scourging and teaching the children to read.

Later on, after Pentecost, many priests became obedient to the Faith (Acts 6:7) and so did some synagogue rulers such as Crispus (Acts 18:8) and Sosthenes (Acts 18:17) in Corinth.

A Little Faith Goes a Long Way:

Both Jairus and Veronica, the woman with a hemorrhage, exhibited a little faith – they came to Jesus convinced He could help. Both also had their faith tested a little also. Jairus had to

stretch his faith from believing Jesus could heal sickness to believing He could raise the dead. Jesus also encouraged Jairus to do so. Jairus' faith was further tested with the public ridicule from the mourners.

Cyril of Alexandria stated¹¹ that Veronica had given up all hope of being healed by men and conceived a wise plan to seek the Physician from above. She may have taken courage by seeing Jairus leading Jesus to his house to prevent his daughter from dying. However, she touched Jesus secretly in order to avoid being punished for touching a holy man while she was unclean. Jesus perceived power going out from Him and did not let the woman remain concealed. By revealing Veronica's faith, Jesus benefitted us all, and also encouraged Jairus to trust in His grace.

“Veronica was a woman afflicted with an issue of blood, the prey of a severe and violent malady, which refused to yield to the skill of physicians, and set at naught all the appliances of human remedies. For she could not be healed by any, even though she had unsparingly lavished all her substance upon those who promised to deliver her from her disease. When, therefore, the unhappy woman had given up all hope from men, and now survived only for utter misery, she conceived in her a wise plan. For she had recourse to the Physician Who is from above, from heaven, as One Who is able readily and without effort to affect those things that are beyond our power, and Whose decrees, whatever it be He would accomplish, nothing can oppose.”

“Her faith in this was perhaps occasioned by seeing Jairus leading Jesus to his house, to prove Himself mightier than death, to prevent his daughter from dying. For she thought perchance within herself, that if He was mightier than death, and the destroyer of corruption, how much more can He also alleviate the malady that afflicts her, staunching by ineffable power the fountains of her issue of blood! She drew near, therefore, and touched the hem of His garment; but secretly and not openly; for she hoped to be able to escape notice, and, as it were, to steal healing from One Who knew not of it. But why, tell me, was the woman careful to escape notice? For why, should she not draw near to Christ with more boldness than that leper (Luke 5:12), and ask for the remission of her incurable pain? For he said, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean’. Why should not she act like those blind men, who when Christ passed by called out and said, ‘Have mercy upon us, O Lord, Son of David’? (Matt. 20:30). What then was it that made that the sick woman wish to remain hidden? It was because the Law of the all wise Moses imputed impurity to any woman who was suffering from an issue of blood, and everywhere called her unclean; and whoever was unclean, might neither touch anything that was holy, nor approach a holy man. For this reason, the woman was careful to remain concealed, lest as having transgressed the Law, she should have to bear the punishment which it imposed. And when she touched, she was healed immediately and without delay.”

“But the miracle did not remain hidden; for the Savior, though knowing all things, asked as if He knew it not, saying, ‘Who touched Me?’ (Luke 8:45). The holy apostles with good reason said, ‘The multitudes throng You and press You’. He set before them what had been done, saying, ‘Somebody touched Me; for I perceived power going out from Me’ (Luke 8:46). Was it then for love of glory

¹¹ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 45, Studion Publishers, 1983, pp. 198-199.

that the Lord did not allow this instance of His godlike working, the miracle, I mean, that had happened to the woman to remain concealed? By no means do we say this, but rather, that it was because He always keeps in view the benefit of those who are called to grace through faith. The concealment of the miracle, then, would have been injurious to many, but being made known, it benefited them in no slight degree; and especially the ruler of the synagogue himself. For it gave security to the hope to which he looked forward and made him firmly trust that Christ would deliver his daughter from the bonds of death.”

From the healing of the woman’s hemorrhage, we have an example of the use of physical objects for spiritual purposes. Jesus taught that one thing sanctifies another. Here power went out from Him (Luke 8:46) via a touch of the hem of His garment. The Master sanctified the garment and the garment sanctified the hem. Jesus had criticized the scribes and Pharisees for saying that whoever swears by the Temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the Temple, he is obliged to perform it. Jesus pointed out: Which is greater, the gold or the Temple that sanctified it? (Matthew 23:16-17). Thus, one thing sanctifies another. This is also the case with icons, holy water, holy oil and many instances of relics of the saints.

We in the West are unaccustomed to dealing with holy relics. In 2 Kings 13:20-21 is an account of a man being raised from the dead by touching the bones of Elisha. And in this account, it was completely unintentional; no faith at all existed on the part of the burial crew. The relics of Elisha had been sanctified by the power behind the life of Elisha. Similarly, during the two years that Paul was in Ephesus on his Third Missionary Journey, handkerchiefs and aprons that touched Paul’s body were used to heal diseases and cast out evil spirits (Acts 19:12). Again, one thing sanctified another.

When Jesus stopped and said, “Who touched me?” (Luke 8:45-46), the woman was petrified. She had made the Teacher unclean and He had caught her doing so! Anyone with a bodily discharge was unclean, and so was anyone who touched them (Leviticus 15:1-7). But the Son of God cannot be made unclean unless He so permits, as He did on the Cross (2 Corinthians 5:21). Therefore, uncleanness touching the Clean One became clean also. After she fell at His feet and confessed, He said, “Be of good cheer, your faith has made you well!” (Luke 8:48)

John Chrysostom compared¹² the woman to the synagogue ruler. Besides the synagogue ruler being a well-known public figure and the woman being an outcast, Chrysostom said:

“Do you see the superiority of the woman to the ruler of the synagogue? She did not detain Him, but he required His presence; she took no hold of Him, but only touched Him, but he required the laying on of His hand (Matthew 9:18). Even though she came later, she was the first to go away healed”.

Chrysostom also pointed out¹³ that Veronica did not approach Jesus boldly since she was ashamed of her affliction and considered herself unclean. Under the Law, her affliction was considered a “great uncleanness”. According to the Mosaic Law, she was unclean for the entire twelve years of her flow of blood (Leviticus 15:25). Likewise, anyone touching her bed or

¹² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 2.

¹³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 2.

anything she sat on was also unclean (Leviticus 15:26-27), as was anyone touching her (Leviticus 15:7). Being unclean, she was equivalent to a leper and couldn't participate in the worship or sacrifices of Israel. Since by touching Jesus, she would make Him unclean also, this may be why she touched only the hem of His garment (Luke 8:44), as if that would make a difference to the Pharisees.

John Chrysostom further pointed out¹⁴ that Jesus did not allow Veronica to be hidden, even though she was "unclean". This accomplished four things: 1) It put an end to the woman's fear that she had stolen the gift and remain in agony of conscience. 2) He set her right knowing that He knew what she was doing. 3) He exhibited her faith to everyone such that everyone should emulate her. 4) He encouraged Jairus, the synagogue ruler, who was about to lose his faith that Jesus could help him.

In speaking to the crowd, "Jesus said, 'Who touched Me?' When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, 'Master, the multitudes throng and press'¹⁵ You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" But Jesus said, 'Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me'. Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And Jesus said to her, 'Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace'" (Luke 8:45-48).

Cyril of Alexandria stated¹⁶ that this event demonstrated that Jesus was God. There was the miraculous event, but there was also what Jesus spoke, "I perceived power going out from Me". All created beings possess power as a gift of God, not of itself. As God, Jesus could perceive power going out from Him.

"This is a fit subject for our admiration. Veronica was delivered, being saved from a state of suffering that was bitter and incurable; and thereby we again obtain the firm assurance, that the Emmanuel is truly God. How and in what manner? Both from the miraculous event itself, and from the words where He spoke with divine dignity. For He said, 'I perceived power going out from Me' (Luke 8:46). But it is above our pay grade, and probably that even of the angels, to send forth any power, and that of their own nature, as something that is of themselves. Such an act is an attribute appropriate solely to the Nature That is above all, and supreme. For every created being whatever that is endued with power, whether of healing, or the like, possess it not of itself, but as a thing given it by God. To the creature all things are given, and done in it, and of itself it can do nothing. As God, therefore, He said I knew that power has gone out from Me."

"Veronica now made confession; and inasmuch as with her malady, with the disease, I mean, which had afflicted her, she had put off the fear, which made her wish to remain concealed. She proclaimed the divine miracle; and therefore, was very fitly deemed worthy of His tranquillizing words, and received security that she should suffer from her malady no more. For our Savior Christ said to her,

¹⁴ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 2.

¹⁵ That is, everyone close to Jesus was touching Him due to the crowd.

¹⁶ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 45, Studion Publishers, 1983, pp. 199.

‘Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace’” (Luke 8:48).

Jesus met Veronica in late 28 AD, and word of what happened spread around rapidly. By the Spring of 29 AD, John the Baptist had just been beheaded by Herod, the Twelve Apostles had been sent out to heal the sick and raise the dead and Jesus had just fed the 5000 and returned to Galilee. Along the way back to Galilee, Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee. When He got out of the boat, many thousands of people met Him, where everyone now wanted to touch the hem of His garment to be healed. Veronica had started a new trend!

“Then those who were in the boat (the Twelve Apostles) came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God’ (due to the miracle of calming the storm). When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Him, they sent out into all that surrounding region, brought to Him all who were sick, and begged Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment. And as many as touched *it* were made perfectly well” (Matthew 14:33-36).

John Chrysostom stated¹⁷ that we not only touch the hem of Christ’s garment but we also touch His whole body at every Liturgy when we partake of the Eucharist. It is not the priest’s hand stretched out to us, but the hand of Christ Himself.

“Let us also then touch the hem of His garment, or rather, if we be willing, we have Him entire. For indeed His body is set before us now, not His garment only, but even His body; not for us to touch it only, but also to eat, and be filled. Let us now then draw near with faith, every one that has an infirmity. For if they that touched the hem of His garment drew from Him so much virtue, how much more they that possess Him entire? Now to draw near with faith is not only to receive the offering, but also with a pure heart to touch it; to be so minded, as approaching Christ Himself. For what, if you hear no voice? Yet you see Him laid out; or rather you do also hear His voice, while He is speaking by the evangelists.”

“Believe, therefore, that even now it is that supper, at which He Himself sat down. For this is in no respect different from that. For neither does man make this and Himself the other; but both this and that is His own work. When therefore you see the priest delivering it to you, account not that it is the priest that does so, but that it is Christ’s hand that is stretched out.”

Athanasius of Alexandria stated¹⁸ that, unlike the heathen and the Arians, we worship Christ Who is both God and man. We don’t divide the body from the Word, like the Arians; nor do we question Christ declaring Himself God. Veronica believed and recognized this.

“We do not worship a creature. Far be the thought. For such an error belongs to heathen and Arians. But we worship the Lord of Creation, Incarnate, the Word of God. For if the flesh also is in itself a part of the created world, yet it has become God’s body. We neither divide the body, being such, from the Word, and worship it by itself, nor when we wish to worship the Word do we set Him far apart from the Flesh. But knowing that ‘the Word was made flesh,’ we recognize

¹⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, L, 3.

¹⁸ Athanasius of Alexandria, Personal Letter to Adelphius, LX, 3.

Him as God also, after having come in the flesh. Who, accordingly, is so senseless as to say to the Lord: ‘Leave the Body that I may worship You’? Or who is so impious as to join the senseless Jews in saying, on account of the Body, ‘Why do You, being a man, make Yourself God?’ (John 10:33). But the leper was not one of this sort, for he worshipped God in the Body, and recognized that He was God, saying, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean’ (Matthew 8:2). Neither by reason of the Flesh did he think the Word of God a creature; nor because the Word was the maker of all creation did he despise the Flesh which He had put on. But he worshipped the Creator of the universe as dwelling in a created temple and was cleansed. So also, the woman with an issue of blood, who believed, and only touched the hem of His garment (Matthew 9:20), was healed. Also, the sea with its foaming waves heard the incarnate Word, and ceased its storm (Matthew 8:26), while the man blind from birth was healed by the fleshly spitting of the Word (John 9:6). What is greater and more startling, even when the Lord was hanging on the actual cross for it was His Body and the Word was in it, the sun was darkened and the earth shook, the rocks were split. And the vail of the temple rent, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose; for perhaps this even offended those most impious men.”

Hilary of Poitiers stated¹⁹ that Jesus may have appeared ignorant of who had touched His hem, but He also reads the thoughts of everyone. He may ask and appear ignorant, but He is just expressing His humanity. He does not know that which it is not yet time to declare, or which is not deserving of His recognition.

“The Lord Jesus Christ, then, Who searches the heart and the minds (Revelation 2:23), has no weakness in His nature, that He should not know. As we perceive, even the fact of His ignorance proceeds from the omniscience of His nature. Yet if any there be, who impute to Him ignorance, let them tremble, lest He Who knows their thoughts should say to them, why do you think evil in your hearts? (Matthew 9:4). The All-knowing, though not ignorant of thoughts and deeds, sometimes enquires as if He were, as for instance when He asks the woman who it was that touched the hem of His garment (Luke 8:45). Or the Apostles, why they quarreled among themselves (Mark 10:35-41), or the mourners, where the sepulcher of Lazarus was (John 11:34); but His ignorance was not ignorance, except in words. It is against reason that He should know from afar the death and burial of Lazarus (John 11:11-15), but not the place of his sepulcher. Or that He should read the thoughts of the mind (Mark 2:8-12), and not recognize the faith of the woman (Luke 8:46-47); or that He should not need to ask concerning anything (John 16:30) yet be ignorant of the dissension of the Apostles (Mark 10:41). But He, Who knows all things, sometimes by a practice of economy professes ignorance, even though He is not ignorant. Thus, in the case of Abraham, God concealed His knowledge for a time (Genesis 18:17-18); in that of the foolish virgins, He refused to recognize the unworthy (Matthew 25:6-12). In the mystery of the Son of Man, His asking, as if ignorant, expressed His humanity. He accommodated Himself to the reality of His birth in the flesh in everything to which

¹⁹ Hilary of Poitiers, On the Trinity, IX, 66.

the weakness of our nature is subject, not in such wise that He became weak in His divine nature. But God, born man, assumed the weaknesses of humanity, yet without thereby reducing His unchangeable nature to a weak nature, for the unchangeable nature was that wherein He mysteriously assumed flesh. He, Who was God is man, but, being man, has not ceased to remain God. Conducting Himself then as one born man, and proving Himself such, though remaining God the Word, He often uses the language of man (though God, speaking as God, makes frequent use of human terms). He does not know that which it is not yet time to declare, or which is not deserving of His recognition.”

Death Becomes Merely a Sleep:

As soon as Jesus had finished speaking with Veronica, some people came from the synagogue ruler’s house: “Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher” (Luke 8:49). Chrysostom stated²⁰ that Jesus anticipated this and both walked more leisurely and spoke with Veronica longer in order to give Jairus’ daughter time to die. Jesus’ response to news of the death of Jairus’ daughter was immediately, “But when Jesus heard *it*, He answered him (Jairus), saying, ‘Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well’” (Luke 8:50).

Cyril of Alexandria noted²¹ that Jairus approached Christ asking Him to do something that only God can do, expecting that He was able to accomplish his request.

“Let us ask Jairus to tell us in what light he regards Him to Whom he offers his request. For if you draw near regarding Him as a mere man, and like one of us; as one, that is, who possess no power superior to ourselves, you miss your mark, and have wandered from the right road, in asking of a man that which requires the power of God. The supreme nature alone is able to give life to the dead. It alone has immortality; and from It everything that is called into being borrows its life and motion. Ask, therefore, of men the things that belong to men, and of God the things that belong to God. Moreover, you worship Him as the Almighty God; and do so, as certainly knowing and testifying that He is able to give you the accomplishment of your requests.”

By the time Jesus arrived at the synagogue ruler’s house, He was greeted by the tumult of the weeping and wailing of the mourners (Mark 5:38). Jesus’ response was to tell them all that the child was not dead but sleeping. And they all ridiculed Him (Luke 8:52-53). Jesus said the same thing later on regarding Lazarus (John 11:11). Chrysostom comments²²:

“He is teaching us not to fear death: for it is no longer death but has now become a sleep. Since He, Himself was to die, He uses the persons of others to prepare His disciples beforehand to be of good courage and to bear the end meekly. Since in truth, when He had come, death was from that time forward a sleep”. This was not so apparent, however, until after Christ’s Resurrection.

²⁰ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 2.

²¹ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 45, Studion Publishers, 1983, pp. 195-196.

²² John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 3.

We note that Jesus did not rebuke the mourners or criticize them for ridiculing Him. Chrysostom said²³ that the flute players and the noisy wailers (Matthew 9:23) and the tumult (Mark 5:38) served a useful purpose. All this testified that the child was for sure dead and they even ridiculed Jesus for stating otherwise. Thus, the wailers served as proof that the miracle occurred; but they were declared unworthy to witness the event. This is why He put them all out of the house and brought only Jairus, his wife, plus Peter, James and John into the room when He raised the child (Luke 8:51). Later, Peter did the same thing when he raised Tabitha (Acts 9:39-41).

Cyril of Alexandria stated²⁴ that sometimes people need to be led to God with what seems to be bit and bridle due to the force of circumstances. This is similar to the Lord's statement to His servants to go into the highways and hedges and compel people to come to His banquet. The circumstances of the illness of Jairus' daughter seemed to compel her father to seek Jesus. If Jesus had not gone to Jairus' house, the Jews at the synagogue would have said that He didn't have the power to do that and that He just pretended unhappiness with Jairus as a pretext. Jesus went anyway so that they all would be without excuse and to implant in them the hope of the resurrection from the dead.

“But the fate of the damsel was not without profit to her father. For just as sometimes the violence of the reins brings the spirited steed that has bounded away from the road back to its proper course, so also trouble often compels the soul of man to yield obedience to those things which are for its good and are commanded. To this effect we find the blessed David also addressing God over all, concerning those men who, not being as yet willing to walk uprightly, were led on, so to speak, by the disorderly impulses of their mind to the pit of destruction. ‘Do not be like the horse *or* like the mule, *which* have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, or else they will not come near you’ (Psalm 32:9). For the force of circumstances brings men even against their wills to the necessity of bowing their neck to God, as we may see indirectly shown in the Gospel parables. For Christ somewhere said, that when the banquet was ready, a servant was sent to call them to the supper, and gather those that were bidden; but they, employing fictitious excuses of various kinds, would not come. Then the Lord, it says, spoke to that servant: ‘Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel *them* to come in, that my house may be filled’ (Luke 14:23). What then is the meaning of men being invited from the hedges — and that as it were by force — if it be not what is here referred to? For sometimes misfortunes beyond the power of endurance hedge men into extreme misery; and meeting, it may be, with care and assistance from those who fear Christ, they are thus led on unto faith in Him and love. Being weaned from their former error they received by tradition from their fathers, they accept the saving word of the Gospel. And such we may well affirm to be those who are called from the hedges.”

“Jairus then drew near; but we deny that his coming was the fruit of freewill; rather it was the fear of death which made him thus act against his will; for it had already, so to speak, assailed his daughter; and she was his only one.”

²³ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 3.

See also Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 46, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 201.

²⁴ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 45, Studion Publishers, 1983, pp. 196-198.

“But there was also a sort of wise management in what was done. For had Christ not yielded to Jairus’ request for grace, both himself and whoever else suffered under the same ignorance, or rather, lack of common sense, would have said that He was not able to raise the damsel, nor drive death away from her, even if He had gone to the house. They would have said 1) that He was without power, and unequal to the accomplishment of the divine miracle; and 2) that He made His displeasure at Jairus a pretext for keeping away. To put a stop therefore to the impure and unbridled false accusations of the Jews and restrain the tongues of the numerous persons ever ready for faultfinding, Jesus consents immediately, and promises to raise up her who was in danger. And the promises were followed by the fulfillment, in order that disbelief on their part might be without excuse, and that this miracle, like the rest, might be for their condemnation. For Christ also said of them, ‘If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and also hated both Me and My Father’ (John 15:24). The Savior then went to raise the damsel, and to implant in the dwellers upon earth the sure hope of the resurrection of the dead.”

Cyril of Alexandria also pointed out²⁵ that Jairus had a conflict of interest: faith in Christ versus his responsibilities to the Mosaic Law as synagogue ruler. Since Faith came first to Abraham, all nations are blessed in him by imitation of his Faith. The Law came 430 years later by the ministry of angels to confirm the Faith that we have in Christ. Faith is the cause of life and slays sin, which is the mother and nurse of death. Jesus told Jairus, “Only believe, and she will be made well”, and Jairus did so.

“These are the fruits of faith, for the sake of which the Law also was given to those of old time by the hand of Moses. Paul witnesses to this, where he writes: ‘Without faith, *it is* impossible to please *Him*’ (Heb. 11:16). It is necessary, therefore, for us to explain in what sense we say that the Law was given because of faith. Abraham was justified by obedience and faith. For it is written: ‘Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. And he was called the friend of God’ (James 2:23). And God promised him both that he should be the father of many nations, and that all nations should be blessed in him; that is to say, by the imitation of his faith. One can see, therefore, that the grace that is by faith is prior to the ceremonial enjoined by the Law, in that Abraham attained to it while still uncircumcised. And afterwards, in process of time, the Law entered by the hand of Moses. Did it then thrust away the justification that is by faith — that I mean which God promised to those who follow the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had while still uncircumcised? How can this be true? Paul, therefore, writes: ‘This I say, *that* the Law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect’ (Gal. 3:17). And again: ‘*Is* the Law then against the promises of God? Certainly not!’ (Gal. 3:21). And the same Paul further teaches us the reasons for which the Law at length entered by the ministration of angels, and the manner in which it confirms the faith in Christ, by having been brought in before the time of the incarnation of the Only-begotten, saying at one time, that ‘the Law entered that the offense might abound. But where

²⁵ Cyril of Alexandria, Commentary on the Gospel of Luke, Homily 46, Studion Publishers, 1983, p. 201-202.

sin abounded, grace abounded much more' (Rom. 5:20); and at another again, 'that the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe' (Gal. 3:22): and again, 'The Law was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made'" (Gal. 3:19).

"Faith, then, in every way, is the cause of life, as that which slays sin, the mother and nurse of death. Excellently, therefore, said Christ to the ruler of the synagogue of the Jews, when his daughter was dead; 'Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well' (Luke 8:50). For Christ makes those alive who approach Him by faith, in that He is life; for in Him we live and move and have our being' (Acts 17:28). And He will raise the dead 'suddenly, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet' (1 Corinthians 15:52), as it is written. And having this hope in Him, we shall both attain to the city that is above, and reign as kings with Him."

Irenaeus of Lyons pointed out²⁶ that the people that Christ raised from the dead rose in the same bodies in which they had died, and each of these people eventually died again. This contrasts the resurrection at the Second Coming of Christ, where we will never die again.

"Let our opponents — that is, they who speak against their own salvation — inform us as to this point: The deceased daughter of the synagogue ruler (Mark 5:22-42); the widow's dead son, who was being carried out to burial near the gate of the city (Luke 7:12); and Lazarus, who had lain four days in the tomb (John 11:38-44), — in what bodies did they rise again? In those same, no doubt, in which they had also died. For if it were not in the very same, then certainly those same individuals who had died did not rise again. For the Scripture says, 'The Lord touched the open coffin, and those who carried *him* stood still. Jesus said to him, "Young man, I say unto you, arise". So, he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother' (Luke 7:14-15). Again, He called Lazarus 'with a loud voice, saying, Lazarus, come forth; and he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth' (John 11:43-44). This was symbolical of that man who had been bound in sins. Therefore, the Lord said, 'Loose him, and let him go' (John 11:44). Those who were healed were made whole in those members which had in times past been afflicted. The dead rose in the identical bodies, their limbs and bodies receiving health, and that life which was granted by the Lord, who prefigures eternal things by temporal. He shows that it is He who is Himself able to extend both healing and life to His handiwork, that His words concerning its future resurrection may also be believed. So also, at the end, when the Lord utters His voice 'by the last trumpet' (1 Corinthians 15:52), the dead shall be raised, as He Himself declares: 'The hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation'" (John 5:28).

Why Do People Mourn at the Death of a Friend?

²⁶ Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, V, xiii, 1.

Chrysostom went on to apply²⁷ the Gospel lesson to life in his day. Why, he asked, do people mourn and weep at the funeral of a Christian? Doing so testifies that the resurrection is a fable, and that the deceased is gone and has no hope. By doing so, “How will you be able to persuade the Greek that you believe otherwise?”

“Let no man therefore beat himself any more, nor wail, neither disparage Christ’s achievement. For He overcame death! Why then do you wail for nothing? Death has become a sleep. Why lament and weep? If Gentiles did this, they would be laughed to scorn; but when the believer behaves himself unfittingly in these things, what plea does he have? What excuse will there be for those that are guilty of such folly, and this, after so long a time, and so clear proof of the resurrection? But you, as though laboring to add to the charge against you, also bring in heathen women singing dirges, to kindle your feelings, and to stir up the furnace thoroughly. You don’t listen to Paul, saying, ‘What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever?’” (2 Corinthians 6:15)

“The children of the heathen, who know nothing of resurrection, find words of consolation, saying, ‘Bear it manfully, for it is not possible to undo what has taken place, nor to amend it by lamentations’. Are not you, who hear sayings wiser and better than these, ashamed to behave more unfittingly than they? For we do not say, ‘Bear it manfully, because it is not possible to undo what has taken place’, but, ‘Bear it manfully, because he will surely rise again’. The child sleeps and is not dead; he is at rest and has not perished. For resurrection will be his final lot, and eternal life, immortality and an angel’s portion. Listen to the Psalm, ‘Return to your rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you?’ (Psalm 116:7). God calls it ‘bountiful dealing’, and do you make lamentation?”

“What more could we have done, if you were a foe and an enemy of the dead? If there must be mourning, it is the devil that ought to mourn. He may beat himself, he may wail, at our journeying to greater blessings. This lamentation is appropriate to his wickedness, not to us, who are going to be crowned and to rest. For death is a fair haven. Consider, at any rate, with how many evils our present life is filled; reflect how often we have cursed our present life. For indeed things go from bad to worse, and from the very beginning we were involved in no small condemnation. For, saith He, ‘In pain you shall bring forth children’; and, ‘In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread’ (Genesis 3:16, 19); and, ‘In the world you will have tribulation’” (John 16:33).

“But of our state there, no such word at all is spoken, but all the contrary; ‘the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with singing, with everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away’ (Isaiah 35:10). And that ‘many will come from east and west and shall recline (in the bosoms) of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven’ (Matthew 8:11). And that the region there is a spiritual bride-chamber, and bright lamps, and a translation to Heaven.”

“Why then disgrace the departed? Why encourage the rest to fear and tremble at death? Why cause many to accuse God, as though He had done very dreadful things? Or rather, why after this invite poor persons, and ask priests to pray for the departed? ‘In order that the dead may depart into rest; that he may find

²⁷ John Chrysostom, Homilies on Matthew, XXXI, 4-6.

the Judge propitious'. For these things then are we mourning and wailing? We are therefore fighting and warring with ourselves: exciting a storm against ourselves on account of the departed having entered into harbor.”

“If indeed he departed a sinner, his wickedness has stopped; for certainly, had God known that he was being converted, He would not have snatched him away before his repentance. But if he ended his life righteous, he now possesses all good in safety. From this, it is clear that your tears are not of kindly affection, but of unreasoning passion. For if you loved the departed, you should rejoice and be glad that he is delivered from the present waves”.

Jairus' Relationship with Pontius Pilate

Something else occurred at the raising of Jairus' daughter that would come to have significance over a year later. The wife of Pontius Pilate and her 12-year old son were also present at the house of Jairus at that time. And Jesus healed Pilate's son of some form of lameness in addition to raising the daughter of Jairus.

Later according to tradition²⁸, during Jesus' trial before Pilate, when word was brought to Pilate regarding his wife's dreams (Matthew 27:19), he said to the Jewish leaders, “You know that my wife is a worshipper of God and prefers to adhere to the Jewish religion along with you”. They said to him, “Yes; we know”. Pilate then mentioned what his wife said. The Jews answered Pilate, “Did we not tell you that He was a sorcerer? Behold, he has sent a dream to your wife”.

Also according to tradition²⁹, Claudia Procula, Pilate's wife, was a granddaughter of Augustus Caesar, and she was also a good friend of Fulvia, the wife of Jairus, the Synagogue Ruler. Pontius Pilate used to love to engage in intellectual and philosophical arguments with Jairus. Claudia Procula was present at Jairus' house when Jesus raised Jairus' 12-year old daughter from the dead (Mark 5:41-43), and her own 12-year old son was healed of lameness at the same time. She had tried to influence her husband in favor of Christ, but to no avail. Pilate had been concentrating on his political career, desiring a higher position in Egypt. Hindering Pilate was none other than Herod, where the two supposedly became friends over Jesus' trial (Luke 23:6-13). Herod wanted to install a cousin in place of Pontius Pilate, and this had created a rivalry between them.

After Herod saw Jesus and became friendly with Pilate, Herod pressed Pilate to get Jesus' trial over with quickly so that the two of them could embark on a fishing trip. Herod later double-crossed Pilate and spoke secretly against him to Caesar. Pilate's young son, on hearing that his father had allowed the execution of Jesus, the One who had healed him, could not bear it and suddenly dropped dead.

Pilate never got the promotion he was looking for. A few years after Pentecost, he was called to appear before the Emperor in Rome regarding why he released Barabbas, an

²⁸ Roberts and Donaldson, “Part I, The Acts of Pilate”, Chapter 2, First Greek Form, Apocrypha of the New Testament, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume 7, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 1994.

²⁹ Catherine van Dyke, tr., “The Letters of Pontius Pilate and Claudia Procula”, Relics of Repentance, 1st Edition, Issana Press, Lincoln, NE 68503, 1990.

insurrectionist and a murderer. By the time Pilate got to Rome, Claudius was dead and Caligula was on the throne. Pilate was not able to defend himself and was exiled to Gaul. Claudia went with him to help, but Pilate committed suicide there. Claudia returned to Jerusalem and spent the rest of her life in prayer and fasting with the Myrrh-Bearing Women.