

Matthew 28

Read Matthew 28:1-9: Women in the middle east were not well educated. The illiteracy rate among women in that culture was over 95% in rural areas. Women had no voice or authority in that culture. These were basically uneducated country folk. They still receive the highest honor by seeing Jesus first after his resurrection. Jesus did more for women's rights than anyone. Compare women in Christina nations to Muslim or Buddhist nations. We can be very concerned about our doctrine or works, but Jesus puts his friends at the top of the invitation list. I need to spend time in intimate conversation with my requests every day.

How do you envision angels? Is it like the rendition of a baby with wings, holding a harp? Not even close. Seeing an angel is paralyzing and very scary. We are told of some of the rankings and positions of angels. There are cherubim, seraphim, archangel, messengers, guardian angels, etc... They are grouped like an army, with levels of authority. In fact, the heavenly host (army) is a reference to angels.

Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. ⁵¹ And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. ⁵² But Jesus said to him, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³ Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? (Matthew 26)

Here is just an example of what a cherubim looks like:

⁴ Then I looked, and behold, a whirlwind was coming out of the north, a great cloud with raging fire engulfing itself; and brightness was all around it and radiating out of its midst like the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire. ⁵ Also from within it came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance: they had the likeness of a man. ⁶ Each one had four faces, and each one had four wings. ⁷ Their legs were straight, and the soles of their feet were like the soles of calves' feet. They sparkled like the color of burnished bronze. ⁸ The hands of a man were under their wings on their four sides; and each of the four had faces and wings. ⁹ Their wings touched one another. The creatures did not turn when they went, but each one went straight forward. ¹⁰ As for the likeness of their faces, each had the face of a man; each of the four had the face of a lion on the right side, each of the four had the face of an ox on the left side, and each of the four had the face of an eagle. ¹¹ Thus were their faces. Their wings stretched upward; two wings of each one touched one another, and two covered their

bodies. ¹² And each one went straight forward; they went wherever the spirit wanted to go, and they did not turn when they went. ¹³ As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, like the appearance of torches going back and forth among the living creatures. The fire was bright, and out of the fire went lightning. ¹⁴ And the living creatures ran back and forth, in appearance like a flash of lightning. ¹⁵ Now as I looked at the living creatures, behold, a wheel was on the earth beside each living creature with its four faces. ¹⁶ The appearance of the wheels and their workings was like the color of beryl, and all four had the same likeness. The appearance of their workings was, as it were, a wheel in the middle of a wheel. ¹⁷ When they moved, they went toward any one of four directions; they did not turn aside when they went. ¹⁸ As for their rims, they were so high they were awesome; and their rims were full of eyes, all around the four of them. ¹⁹ When the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up. ²⁰ Wherever the spirit wanted to go, they went, because there the spirit went; and the wheels were lifted together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. ²¹ When those went, these went; when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up together with them, for the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. (Ezekiel 1)

Angels are too bright to look at, unless they tone it down for us. Angels are almost infinitely powerful:

³⁵ And it came to pass on a certain night that the^l angel of the Lord went out, and killed in the camp of the Assyrians one hundred and eighty-five thousand; and when people arose early in the morning, there were the corpses—all dead. (2 Kings 19)

²³ For the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you.....²⁹ And it came to pass at midnight that the Lord struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was^l in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of livestock. ³⁰ So Pharaoh rose in the night, he, all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt, for there was not a house where there was not one dead. (Exodus 12)

One big difference between angels and demons is that angels tell you not to be afraid. Demons try to scare you to death. Another translation for the same word

‘angel’ is messenger. There are places in the bible where it can be a judgement call if the writer is referring to a messenger or an angel.

The angel provides good direction and a trustworthy message.

⁷ For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)

He provides wholesome and helpful and healthy advice: Jesus is no longer in the grave. Go out and meet him!

¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? (Hebrews 1:14)

Read Matthew 28:10-14: If a Roman guard allowed a prisoner to escape he would be killed for dereliction of duty. The fact that the guards lost their composure and became incapacitated speaks for itself. Angels have that effect on people. It is overwhelming and a sensory overload. The fact that the priests offered a bribe to say that the disciples stole Jesus’s body is a reminder of the fraud and extreme intellectual dishonesty in our political culture today. Jesus makes you lie and change your route to get around him. He makes us violate our conscience to deny him. This is why he is called the stumbling stone. You cannot pretend that he is not there. You have to lie to yourself and lie to others to bypass him.

Read Matthew 28:16-20: The disciples returned to a designated mountain in Galilee as the prescribed mustering point.

³² But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.” (Matthew 26:32)

Jesus’ parting words were to make disciples worldwide. This is above evangelism, teaching, healing, physical and food ministries as well. Part of that process is to baptize them. I need to find someone to disciple ASAP!