



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V25 N50 December 17, 2023

FROM THE REALMS OF GLORY

“Watching and Waiting”

1 Peter 1:10-12; 1 Corinthians 4:9; 1 Timothy 5:21; Hebrews 13:1-2

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Hope

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with him.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.”

1 Peter 1:3-5



What interests angels?

The story of redemption is a story of hope. It's a story that begins on earth and ends on earth not in heaven, the new earth unveiled in Revelation 21. Like all stories, the story of redemption has a *physical* setting—the earth as we know it, located in the solar system that orbits the center of the Milky Way galaxy in the universe of everything, namely, space and all the matter and energy that space contains. It also has a *spiritual* setting—the unseen world that is the habitation of the omnipresent God and the angels he created.

Like all stories, it has characters—God and his incarnate Son, of course, the protagonist and creator of the story's setting, as well as its other characters, namely, an innumerable host of angels, good and evil, and a multitude of fallen yet redeemable human beings. The story's plot actually revolves around their redemption. Some are major characters; others are minor characters; none are merely extras. Interestingly, all the characters in the story are eyewitnesses to the plot as it unfolds around them in their own time.

Finally, like all stories, it has a plot. In every story something happens (plot) to someone (characters), somewhere (setting). And like the plot in all stories, the plot of the story of redemption unfolds in seven discernable movements. 1) The opening *exposition* describes the setting and reveals the major characters. In the opening chapters of Genesis, after God sees that all he has made is very good (Ge 1:31), Adam and Eve are seen walking with him in the garden (Ge 1, 2; esp. 1:26-31; 2:25). 2) The *inciting incident* is the event that triggers the action that follows; without it there is no story to tell. In this story, the fall of Adam and Eve plunge humanity into sin (Ge 3:1-19), creating the need for redemption that is announced to the serpent (v. 15). 3) *Rising action* describes the complicating twists and turns that the plot takes as it moves toward the climax. In this story, the plan of God unfolds as revealed in the covenants to Abraham (Ge 12:1-4, 7; 15:4-21) and to David (2Sa 7:4-17; Ps 89:3-4, 20-37), and to Jeremiah in the New Covenant (Jer 31:31-34), all leading up to a number of angelic announcements made to Zechariah (Lk 1:11-17), to Mary (1:26-38), to Joseph (Mt 1:20-25), and to the shepherds (Lk 2L9-14) regarding the birth of

Jesus, the hero of the story. 4) The *climax* determines the outcome of the story and is its most exciting part. Following Jesus' extended ministry in Judea and Galilee, the threefold crucifixion (Mt 27:32-61; Mk 15:21-47; Lk 23:33-56; Jn 19:17-42), resurrection (Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-8; Lk 24:1-12; Jn 20:1-9), and pouring out of the Spirit (Ac 2:1-21) mark the climax of the story. The climax does not end the story, but it does indicate how the story will end—in this case, with the redemption of the creation and all who believe. 5) *Falling action* describes events resulting from the climax as the plot moves toward its resolution. The spread of the gospel throughout Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (Ac 1:8; see chaps. 2-28) is included in the story's falling action. 6) The *resolution* solves once and for all the problems created by the inciting incident and marks the beginning of the end of the story. The plot of the story of redemption is resolved by the return of Jesus to rule (Rev 11:15; 19:15; 20:1-6) along with the resurrections and judgments associated with it. 7) The *denouement* marks the end of the story by showing how the major characters are better off than at the beginning. In this case, the messianic kingdom is handed over to the Father in the end (1Co 15:23; Rev 21-22), and the story that begins on earth ends happily on *earth*, not in heaven.

Literary critics would say that the story of redemption has a *comedy* plot. One writes: “When speaking of comedy as a type of story, literary critics do not mean a humorous story but rather one with a certain shape of plot. Comedy is the story of the happy ending. It is usually a U-shaped story that begins in prosperity, descends into tragedy and rises again to end happily” (Leland Ryken, *How to Read the Bible as Literature*, 81-82)—as does the story of redemption, the story of hope. Living as we do during the time of *falling action* we are privileged to know what prophets of old tried to understand and what angels desired to look into (1Pe 1:10-12). They puzzled over the first advent even as we puzzle over the second. “The Christian generations are momentous times, for in them the consummation of God's long-prophesied plan for people is being fulfilled, and the whole universe is caught up in the denouement” (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 40).



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read 1 Peter 1:10-12

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, 11 trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

Read 1 Corinthians 4:9

9 For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like those condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to human beings.

Read 1 Timothy 5:21

21 I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

Read Hebrews 13:1-2

1 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. 2 Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

In 1 Peter 1:10-12

- Circle "this salvation" in v. 10.
- Underline "intently and with the greatest care" in v. 10.
- Underline "time and circumstances" in v. 11.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 12.
- Bracket "look into these things" in v. 12.

In 1 Corinthians 4:9

- Circle "procession" in v. 9.
- Box "like" indicating *comparison* in v. 9.
- Circle "spectacle" in v. 9.
- Underline "to angels" and "to human beings" in v. 9.

In 1 Timothy 5:21

- Circle "charge you" in v. 21.
- Circle "elect angels" in v. 21.
- Underline "to keep" and "to do" in v. 21.

In Hebrews 13:1-2

- Highlight v. 1.
- Circle "hospitality" in v. 2.
- Circle "strangers" and "angels" in v. 2.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1 Peter 1:10-12

1. Peter refers to “this salvation” (v. 10). What salvation is that?
2. Explain what the prophets were trying to find out.
3. “Even angels long to look into these things.” What do you infer about angels from this?

1 Corinthians 4:9

4. Explain the *comparison* Paul develops in verse 9.
5. How does the reference to “angels” contribute to the *comparison*?

1 Timothy 5:21

6. To what “instructions” is Paul referring in verse 21?
7. Paul charges Timothy “in the sight of . . . the elect angels.” What do you infer about angels from this?

Hebrews 13:1-2

8. *Who* is to show *what* to *whom*?
9. Explain *why*?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about how the thought that angels are following the unfolding plot of redemption affects you.

Commentary On The Text

The four passages addressed in this issue of *The Scrolls*, all from the New Testament, have but one thing in common—angels. Together 1 Peter 1:10-12, 1 Corinthians 4:9, 1 Timothy 5:21, and Hebrews 13:1-2 contribute to the development of a biblical theology of angels.

The *first*, 1 Peter 1:10-12, implies the *intelligence* and *curiosity* of angels, corresponding to that of the Old Testament prophets. According to Peter, the prophets, who spoke of the grace to be revealed through the salvation that Messiah would bring, were naturally curious as to his identity and the circumstances leading up to and surrounding his future sufferings and the glories that would follow. One commentator explains: “The focus of their eager interest was *what person or time* the Spirit within them was indicating. The translation of this phrase has been the subject of much discussion, but the RSV (and NASB) rendering *what person or time* is preferable to the NIV’s ‘the time and circumstances’ or the AV’s ‘what, or what manner of time’” (Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC, 74; see extended discussion, 74-75). They understood their prophecies but puzzled over the fulfillment of them in events surrounding Messiah’s first advent. Put differently, the prophets predicted both Messiah’s suffering and his glory, but could not understand how to fit the two together. In much the same way, believers today understand predictions regarding Jesus’ return but puzzle over their fulfillment in events surrounding his second advent. About the prophets’ bewilderment, another commentator writes: “At times they knew that they did not fully comprehend what they were communicating, so they ‘made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know’ (vv. 10-11) these things. At other times they probably thought that they understood what they communicated, but they did not completely see the full significance of it (cf. Dan. 9; 12:5-13; Hab. 2:1-4)” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Peter,” 2023 ed., 25, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf). In their search for clarity regarding these things, it was revealed to the prophets that they were serving future generations, namely, those who would hear the gospel preached to them, rather than themselves. And prophets aren’t the only curious ones. Peter concludes by pointing out that “even angels long to look into these things.”

The *second*, 1 Corinthians 4:9, indicates that angels as well as human beings are involved eyewitnesses to the unfolding plot of redemption’s story. Paul is writing to a church with an inflated view of itself (v. 8). One commentator explains: “At the heart of the boasting at Corinth was the conviction that they were really a very successful, lively, mature and effective church.

The Christians were satisfied with their spirituality, their leadership, and the general quality of their life together. They had settled down into the illusion that they had become the best they could be. They thought they had ‘arrived.’ Hence the irony in Paul’s double *Already* in verse 8: ‘you are filled . . . you are rich . . . you are kings’ — *already!*” (David Prior, *The Message of 1 Corinthians*, TBST, 65). So the apostle uses irony and sarcasm to get his readers to see how poor they really are because of their haughtiness and spiritual immaturity in comparison to the apostles, whose humiliating death in the arena is being witnessed not only by human beings but by angels as well.

The *third*, 1 Timothy 5:21, implies that angels are important *observers* of Christian ministry in particular and perhaps Christian conduct in general. After giving Timothy instructions on how to deal with accusations brought against elders, Paul directs him to carry out those instructions *without partiality* and *without showing favoritism*. What’s more, he solemnly charges Timothy “in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the *elect angels*,” to do so, which implies the *high status* of angels and suggests Timothy’s *accountability* to them regarding the charge.

The *fourth*, Hebrews 13:1-2, indicates that angels occasionally appear as *incognito* characters on the stage of human history. After encouraging his readers to “keep on loving one another” (v. 1) by showing hospitality to members of the Christian community that they did not know personally (v. 2)—hospitality being a corollary to brotherly love—the writer to the Hebrews incentivizes them to follow his instructions. He uses “for” to introduce the *reason* why they should be hospitable, “for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it,” tantalizing them with the prospect of having the rare privilege of entertaining angels without knowing it.

On the exhortation to Christian hospitality, one author writes: “This was a particularly appropriate exhortation for the original readers. Some of these people were Jews who had left Judaism for Christianity, but others of them had remained in Judaism, or perhaps returned to it. It was especially important, therefore, for these Hebrew Christians to continue to love their racial, as well as their spiritual, brethren. To apply this exhortation: it is important for all Christians to love their fellowmen as well as their fellow believers” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on Hebrews,” 2023 ed., 237, planobiblechurch.org/tcon/notes/pdf/Hebrews.pdf).

Word Studies/Notes

1 Peter 1:10-12

v. 10 *this salvation* “Verses 10 to 12 should be understood in connection with verse 9 because the first three Greek words in verse 10 mean ‘Concerning which salvation’ (that is, the ‘salvation’ mentioned in v. 9, *the progressive obtaining by believers of more and more of the full benefits of their salvation*)” (Wayne Grudem, *1 Peter*, TNTC, 67-68, italics added).

v. 10 *intently, greatest care* Cf., “searched and inquired carefully” (ESV). “Neither term [*searched, inquired*] means that they merely pondered or wondered—the words both imply active effort in looking to find something” (Grudem, 67-68). Salvation is the major concept that Peter discussed. He wanted his readers to remember that it included suffering as well as glory. The Old Testament prophets had predicted that Messiah would experience both suffering and glory (e.g., Isa. 61:1-3). *However they did not understand how His suffering and glory would fit together. It is possible to understand that mystery only after Jesus’ earthly ministry*” (Thomas L. Constable, “Notes on 1 Peter,” 2023 ed., 24, italics added, planobiblechapel.org/tcon/notes/pdf/1peter.pdf).

v. 11 *time and circumstances* Cf. “what person or time” (ESV, NET). “The OT prophets would certainly be keen to know the identity of the coming Messiah as well as the time of his appearance” (Norman Hillyer, *1 and 2 Peter, Jude*, NIBC, 42).

v. 12 *look into . . .* “God had fulfilled the prophecies about Messiah’s sufferings in Peter’s day, but He had not yet fulfilled the prophecies of Messiah’s glorification. Even the angels are waiting to see how and exactly when God will fulfill them (cf. Heb. 1:5–2:18)” (Constable, 25). “For all their privileges in the spiritual world, even to that of being commissioned to reveal some of God’s secrets to human beings (Ezek. 40:3; Zech. 1:9; Luke 1:13, 26; Rev. 21:9, 15), even angels are not privy to all the details of God’s salvation plan. Naturally enough, like the OT prophets in their situation, the angels long to know more, for it is clear to them that the subject is of supreme importance in the divine scheme of things” (Hillyer, 40-41).

1 Corinthians 4:9

v. 9 *procession, spectacle* “*spectacle*. ‘Theater’ is derived from the Greek word used here. Paul refers to the triumphal procession of a victorious Roman general with captives of war bringing up the rear—men condemned to die in the arena in mortal combat with gladiators or with ferocious beasts” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1Co 4:9).

v. 9 *angels, humans* “Paul says that there is a cosmic dimension to the spectacle: He is on display before the whole universe, as it were—not just human

beings, but the angels as well . . . We may assume that he means those messengers of God whom we would call ‘good angels,’ since Paul does not call those who are evil ‘angels,’ but ‘principalities and powers’” (Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, NICNT, 175). “He pictures all the world and even angels looking on while the apostles are brought in last to fight to the death” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on 1Co 4:9).

1 Timothy 5:21

v. 21 *charge* “This note of seriousness is emphasized by the use of the very strong verb [*diamarturomai*], ‘I solemnly charge,’ and by Paul’s reminder that Timothy is always in the presence of God, of Christ, and of the angels and therefore is *accountable* to them” (William D. Mounce, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 46, *Pastoral Epistles*, 315, italics added).

v. 21 *elect angels* Cf. “chosen angels” (NASB, “The reference to the ‘elect angels’ here is perplexing, especially since the expression occurs nowhere else in Scripture” (Walter L. Liefeld, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus*, 195). “They are ‘elect’ in contrast to the fallen angels; but the main thought is ‘chosen to share in the judgment’” (Walter Lock, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Pastoral Epistles*, ICC, 63).

v. 21 *keep, do* The “instructions” referred to are those pertaining to elders (vv. 17-20). “Paul strongly adjured the young minister to follow through on (**keep** is lit., ‘guard’) **these instructions without partiality** (lit. ‘prejudging,’ used only here in the NT) or **favoritism** (*prosklisis*, lit., ‘inclination toward someone,’ used only here in the NT)” (A. Duane Litfin, “1 Timothy,” in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*, 744).

Hebrews 13:1-2

v. 2 *hospitality* “Hospitality to strangers [*philoxenia*] is the corollary of brotherly love [*philadelphia*] . . . For Christians, a delight in the guest/host relationship reflects the expectation that God will play a significant role in the ordinary exchange between guests and hosts. This lends to hospitality a sacramental quality” (William L. Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol 47B, *Hebrews 9-13*, 511, 12).

v. 2 *strangers, angels* “*strangers*. Members of the Christian community not personally known. *Shown hospitality to angels without knowing it*. As did Abraham (Ge 18), Gideon (Jdg 6) and Manoah (Jdg 13)” (*The NIV Study Bible*, note on Heb 13:2).

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

The fact that angels are observer/participants in the unfolding plot of redemption reminds believers that they themselves are participants in a salvation narrative of cosmic proportions.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

A few years ago, I was headed into the grocery store with one of my boys when we happened upon a homeless man asking for food. I was mentally going through my list and hurrying my young son along, trying to get in and out of the store as quickly as possible. Honestly, I would have missed the man entirely, or at the minimum, barely acknowledged him, but my precious son looked up at me with those innocent eyes and said, "Mommy, we have to get him some food." When things or people don't fit into my agenda or to do list, I'm very quick to slide right past them. Thankfully, children seem to have a much clearer vision than adults. Where adults see just another homeless person, children see humanity, a person dearly loved by the Creator of the universe. Oh, that we could see through the eyes of a child! We did grab this man a hearty dinner with snacks to spare and I was reminded of Hebrews 13:2, "Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it." On the way home, my son and I had a fun conversation about the possibility of this man being an angel. What if the opportunity in front of you to care for an elderly person or give a hand to the homeless is really an opportunity to show hospitality to an angel? That's pretty cool to consider and could truly shift how we view others. Only our sovereign God could give us these divine opportunities. Will you take them? We're praying for you!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Mt 2 (with 1Pe 1:10-12; 1Co 4:9; 1Ti 5:21; Heb 13:1-2)

1. What did the Magi call Jesus?
2. Who appeared to Joseph twice and how did he appear (vv. 13-23)?
3. What did the angel tell Joseph to do? Did Joseph obey?

What Do You Think?

How would you react if an angel appeared to you in a dream?

What Do You Do?

Hebrews 13:1-2 says you might show hospitality to an angel by showing hospitality to a stranger. As a family, offer hospitality to a stranger through one of our Compassion Partners (gift for Angel Tree, serve at Central Storehouse, etc.).

CORE COMPETENCY: Hope

I cope with the problems of life and death with the help of Jesus.

MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 9:6

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

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Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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