

“So did Jesus.”

Hebrews 2:14-15

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Hebrews 2:14-15 (PowerPoint presentation)

Preface

This world/universe from the viewpoint of so-called scientism or atheism is nothing but matter.

Although we do not really know how it is, it is said that this universe, which was formed over an estimated 13.7 billion years, which is an extraordinary period of time that humans have never seen or visited, is nothing more than a product of chance.

We think that some matter happened to exist, and then something happened to that matter, which gave birth to new matter of which we do not know what, and then matter attached to, stuck to, separated from, or destroyed each other, and a grand material world of which we do not know what came into existence.

There is no room for personality, will, intention, purpose, or values.

But, ironically or contradictorily, the human being with personality tries to find meaning in the coincidental product of these coincidences, which has no thought, idea, will, intention, purpose, or value.

A product of chance. Perhaps because God created it with a purpose, we instinctively seek something personal in a world that seems to be a mere collection of matter.

The Bible gives us the answer in a very clear and straightforward manner.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

This world was not created by chance, but was designed, engineered, and created with a firm intention and purpose.

Moreover, there is not only the visible material world, but also a certain world called “heaven,” which is behind, and at the foundation of what is visible, invisible, but more certain than what is visible, and which will never disappear.

And above all that is created, there is a supernatural One who has a personality and character that seeks intentions, thoughts, values, and meanings.

There is “the God who is both the object and the cause of the existence of all things.”

“Without knowing Him, you cannot truly know this world, nor can you know who you are.” “No matter how much you search, you will ultimately end up with something that strikes you as striking at the sky.” “Why do you refuse to acknowledge this fact? Why can’t you understand it? Why can’t you see it? Why can’t you feel it? Why can’t you be honest? Why do you try to be contradictory?” God has spoken these profound words over more than 2,000 years, and He is speaking them to us who live in the 21st century, an era that is said to be the ultimate in the material world of coincidence.

Part One

We are human beings, and although we are made of matter, we are not impersonal inorganic products with no thoughts, no will, no purpose, and no desire for value.

We desire value, we search for purpose, and we desire the feeling of life that we are alive.

A person is born from the combination of a sperm and an egg. Both sperm and egg are carriers of genetic information called DNA, and that genetic information is nothing more than a series of substances called adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine.

But strangely enough, even though we are just substances meeting substances, they give birth to a personality, a life with thoughts, feelings, and intentions.

I think it is a very mysterious thing.

When we die, we return to the dust of the earth, but no matter how much we humans mix, multiply, and add together the substance of dust with the substance of dust, the personality of life is not born there.

Not even in this form.

The Bible calls it God's creation, the work of God's hands, that in the multiplication, addition, and mixing of matter and matter, the character of life is born.

To put it more precisely, the Bible tells us that "man became a living being because God breathed into him the breath of life, into that lump of matter which he had formed from the dust of the earth.

In other words,

A person is not a "living creature" but a "breathing thing" (PowerPoint).

As I prepared this message, I was reminded of this.

"Ah, man is not a creature, not a living thing, but a 'breathing thing' that has been given a personality of life by the breath of God!

The Bible tells us that "this world is not an inorganic material world where we are just floating on the surface of water with no meaning, no purpose, no personality, and no destination, but a world and a person created by the divine intention of 'breath' (breath of life).

But, attracted by the devil, who has the power of death and does not want us to acknowledge this fact, mankind has become lost, trapped in a lie that is godless, purposeless, meaningless, accidental, unanswerable, unsolvable, unsalvageable, and lifeless.

Forgetting the inevitable One called God, writhing and groaning in the fear and darkness of chance, unable to find the light, we have lost our way.

We have lost our way, and we do not even realize that we have lost our way.

Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to God the Father except through me." We have lost the path that enables us to properly realize that we have the life of personality, and we repeat the darkness of fighting, battling, competing, robbing, being robbed, and occupying, while chanting what is not the way as the way.

The world in which Jesus was born 2,000 years ago is a perfect example of the world of darkness that people have created as a result of having lost their way.

Part Two

Let us look again at last week's scripture.

Luke 2:1-7 (PowerPoint presentation)

The description of the Roman Emperor Augustus' edict to "register the inhabitants" tells us that there is a truly dark and tragic fact, environment, and situation that we can never overlook.

That is, at that time, the nation of Israel, the people of Israel, the nation of Judea, and the people of Judea had to live under a dual rule.

Now here in this passage we have the Emperor Augustus, but in the same Gospel of Luke 1:5, we find the words "in the days of Herod, king of the Jews".

This means that while the great empire of Rome was ruling the world, Israel/Judea, which was only one region within that rule, had a king who was not an Israelite, and had him rule and govern Israel over Judea.

They had to serve two masters, even though serving just one master would have been a difficult task.

There was no room whatsoever for respect for their land, their ethnicity, or their ownership.

Moreover, the whole “register as a resident” thing is all about taxes and the military.

While it is hard to just eat one or two meals a day, let alone three meals a day, thorough and heavy taxes and tribute are firmly collected.

Since it is a dual rule, they are collected twice.

Furthermore, the number of men who can serve in the army is kept firmly in check and ready to be drafted at any time.

It means that one has to give up one’s body and life for something that is not even a nominal “for the country, for the emperor, for the king.”

Registration was predicated on exploitation and violence.

In the Old Testament, when King David conducted a census and registration, God said to David, “You have become a king, and now you want to exploit people and use them as instruments of violence!” He was furious with him, and rightfully so.

Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem, Joseph’s home town, to cooperate with and join in the violence and exploitation of their own people.

They were in such a weak position and situation that even the thought of resisting was unthinkable.

They were in a situation, a position, and a time when they had to go when they were told to go this way, go when they were told to go

that way, and when they were told to open their wallets and take out what was in their pockets, they had to do so.

Dark times. A situation in which there is no hope.

And as if resenting the fact that they were placed in such a situation, he was unable to entertain his beloved wife, who was pregnant, or at the very least, as a parent, he was unable to provide for his unborn baby.

But, but, but.

That inexpressible, unutterable, dreary place is what God intended, what Jesus wanted, and that is where it had to be. It is in this context that the depth, height, breadth, and length of God's mercy, compassion, and love for all people can be known.

It is not that there is no meaning in it, no purpose, no value, no inorganic coincidence. The summit of the expression of God's will with the inevitable, personal intention that it must be so is the Lord Jesus Christ, who was born in such an age, in such circumstances, in such a situation.

This is the manifestation of the Lord God's high declaration, who created heaven and earth and all things, that "this world is not a product of chance".

It is the manifestation of God's will, "You are my treasure".

In the midst of the darkness, where the breath of God had been lost and we were thirsty, suffocating, and about to faint, Jesus was born as if He would once again breathe the breath of God into us.

And the image in which he was born was a baby, a weak image, a manger, a weak place.

But that weakness made life possible for people.

First of all, He gave life to a weak couple, Joseph and Mary.

God himself said, "Joseph and Mary. In that weakness, I am there, and in that weakness, there is hope that shines."

Luke, the author of the Gospel of Luke, writes a tremendous verse in the midst of such a dark and hopeless situation.

Luke 2:4 (PowerPoint)

In this present state of darkness, we have to go that way when we are told to go that way, go this way when we are told to go this way, and open our wallets when we are told to open our purses. But in the midst of it all, this scripture tells us, “Joseph is of the lineage of King David, who shines brilliantly in the history of Israel, and the fulfillment of God’s promise, ‘From David a Savior will be born,’ is now taking place in Joseph’s body.

In the midst of the harsh, beastly world that spreads out before Joseph and Mary’s eyes, a world that has become an accidental product of forgetting God, he tells us that God’s intention is firmly in place, God’s purpose, and God’s life is steadily advancing.

I feel as if it tells us, “God’s intention is firmly at work in the midst of what seems to our eyes to be nothing but darkness. God has a plan. Don’t give up on living with faith in God! Don’t forget to look up to God! It’s all right. The suffering, the Divine One who was born in the form of a baby, the Lord Jesus, knows, understands, and knows every detail, so don’t worry. This world is in the providence of God’s rule.”

Part Three

Jesus was born with a clear intention, just as Hebrews tells us in today’s scripture.

Hebrews 2:14 (PowerPoint)

“As all the sons have blood and flesh, so also did Jesus have those things.”

We who have lost our way are called “children”.

There is nothing more painful for a parent than to see their child suffering.

They want to change, but they cannot.

But Jesus, as it is written, “In the same way he also did,” God became man and was born as a weak baby, taking with him the wretched, and helpless things of blood and flesh.

Hebrews 2:17-18 (PowerPoint)

It says that “Jesus had to become like us in all respects.”

Why?

Because that weakness of Jesus makes us alive.

In September, Mr. Kazuhiro Takeda, a teacher at Makiba Free School, came and spoke to us. He said, “If only that had not been the case,” that weakness that was painful, suffering, unhappy, and difficult, but because he was in pain, he could understand how others felt.

The person who understands you will be happy.

The moment you feel that way, that weakness turns into value and becomes a benefit.

Some of the users of the day service operated in Makiba are people with dementia who unintentionally harm others. When a staff member who has just given birth comes to work with a newborn baby, the users approach the baby. As I look on with trepidation, I see everyone smiling around the baby.

The staff and the users were all smiling.

One weak, helpless, baby is nursing 10 adults.

Through such weakness, Jesus warmly came to this place with the image of a helpless baby to keep us alive.

So that we will not be frightened and overwhelmed before the majesty of God who is by nature, and do not end up being overwhelmed before His strength.

He became like us, weak, so that we would not make the mistake of saying, "Strength is what this world needs," and so that we would correct that mistake.

And so, having been made alive by Jesus' weakness, he became like us, weak, in the hope that we would also use that weakness to make others alive.

The world that champions chance boasts of strength and tries to accumulate strength: the survival of the fittest, and natural selection, but strength cannot change the world, nor can it change people.

Jesus taught this important lesson.

And Jesus broke the works of the devil --- the works that declare the teachings of Jesus to be wrong and twisted, that bind people with the fear of death that they will die if they are not strong, that hold them in slavery to death so that they can only focus on resisting death for the rest of their lives --- and set us, his children, free from death.

Hebrews 2:14-15 (PowerPoint)

Jesus was born with the will to be like us, the purpose of dying for us, the judgment of destroying the devil by His death, and the salvation of freeing those who had been enslaved all their lives by the fear of death.

Jesus was born on this earth, not by chance, but as the inevitable work of God that has been steadily proceeding.

Conclusion

God's work, plan, purpose, intention, and will are still being done.

No matter what anyone says, no matter what we think, no matter what our circumstances, conditions, pain, suffering, or weakness may cause us to doubt it, God is alive and at work.

The Bible tells us that there is no room for the devil's whispers of coincidence, only God's inevitability.

I hope that we will not lose sight of, give up on, or believe in God's intentions, purposes, thoughts, values, and meanings.

We ask God's mercy to help us remember that He is at work in our weakness, even when we think we have lost sight of, given up on, or failed to believe in Him.

I hope that we will remember this Christmas season that there is true hope and light in the fact that Jesus was born in the lowest place possible, in the form of a weak and helpless baby. I hope that we will find that light in our daily reality, remember it, and walk with faith in it.

Let's pray.

Benediction: Hebrews 2:14-15