



G R A C E

REFORMED BAPTIST CHURCH

SOLI ◇ DEO ◇ GLORIA

THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

Sermon Notes

Jesus Christ, the Son of Man

Hebrews 2:5-9

February 15, 2009

⁵Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶It has been testified somewhere,

“What is man, that you are mindful of him,
or the son of man, that you care for him?

⁷You made him for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned him with glory and honor,

⁸putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. ⁹But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

- I. **The World To Come is Subject to Christ**
- II. **Christ Descended Lower than the Angels**
- III. **Christ was Exalted and Crowned with Glory and Honor**
- IV. **Christ Reigns Over All Creation**

- ❖ Recently, our daughter, Isabella has developed an obsession for outer space. She wants to know anything and everything about the stars, the planets, and our solar system. In fact, recently, we brought her to the Planetarium so that she could learn more about the subject for which she has become so fascinated. Yet, when we were there, I was quickly reminded how vast our universe truly is. In fact, so vast is just our own solar system that our globe is but a tiny speck surrounding the Sun.
- ❖ Consider this as well: according to scientists, if we could draw a great circle around the earth which represented the amount of “space” that we can observe, the diameter of that circle – the “observable universe” – would be **93 Billion light years** across (extending out from the earth 46.5 Billion light years in every direction). That is, if you traveled

from one end of the universe to the other, and you were traveling at the speed of light, it would take you 93 billion years to get to the other side! This incredible distance becomes even more amazing when one considers that one light year is **5,878,630,000,000 miles (5.878 Trillion miles)**! So, the total diameter of the observable universe is 93,000,000,000 X 5,878,640,000,000 miles across (93 Billion times 5.878 Trillion). Or, **546,712,590,000,000,000,000,000 miles across! (That's 546 sextillion miles!)**

❖ **Yet, as incredible as the size of our universe is, consider that the Triune God Himself simply spoke all of this into existence out of absolutely nothing.**

❖ **Not only this, but consider that the God who made the universe out of nothing came to earth in the form of man to save us from the wrath of the Father.**

❖ This seems to be the thought of the Psalmist, when he writes, in **Psalm 8:1,3-4**:

“O, LORD, our Lord,
How majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.

When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?

❖ **And, it is this Psalm that the writer of Hebrews appropriates to Christ to demonstrate the incredible lengths He went to in order to fulfill the Father's will.**

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I. The World To Come is Subject to Christ

□ As the writer of the Book of Hebrews continues to demonstrate the superiority of Christ to angels, he gives yet another reason why: **“Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.”**

- In other words, Christ is superior to the angels because the world to come is subject to Christ – not the angels.
- According to the Old Testament, it seems that the administration of this present world has been assigned to angels:

“When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance,
When he separated the children of men,
He set the bounds of the peoples
According to the number of angels of God.” (Deuteronomy 32:8)

- Yet, the greatest world – the world to come – is subjected to Christ alone. This “world to come” is the New Heaven and the New Earth. It is when Christ’s final kingship will be ultimately and finally realized.
- Richard D. Phillips notes that it “is the time when Christ’s lordship will be consummated over all, when all the promises and prophecies of blessing are fulfilled in his final reign.”
- There is certainly no doubt that Christ is reigning over His kingdom – that is, the spiritual kingdom that “is not of this world.”
- Yet, He also rules and is sovereign over ALL the created order, working all things in accordance with the will of the Father.
- **However, even though Christ is the enthroned Sovereign Lord and King, the readers of the Book of Hebrews – living in the first century and today – are subject to the forces and conditions of this fallen world.**
- In order to explain this reality, the author of Hebrews, as he has done so often, turns to the Psalmist for an explanation.
- Specifically, he quotes from **Psalm 8:4-6**.

II. Christ Descended Lower than the Angels

- In **Verse 6**, the author of Hebrews introduces Psalm 8 by stating, “It has been testified somewhere...”
 - This is an interesting way to introduce an Old Testament quotation, but it seems that the point is that it doesn’t matter where the quote is found, or who the human author was; rather, what is important is that it is the Word of God, Holy Scripture.
- The author, then, proceeds to quote from Psalm 8, from the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. NOTE: the Septuagint was translated in the city of Alexandria, Egypt, in approximately 250 B.C. It was the Old Testament that the Hellenistic Jews (the Greek-speaking Jews) would have read.
- This is an interesting Psalm, as it opens with a declaration of God’s majesty and power:

“O LORD, our Lord,
 How majestic is your name in all the earth!
 You have set your glory above the heavens...
 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
 The moon and the stars, which you have set in place...” (Verses 1, 4)

- Then, in **poetic contrast, the Psalmist contemplates the incredible insignificance of man** in light of the vast expanse of all of God’s created order:

“What is man, that you are mindful of him,
Or the son of man, that you care for him?”

- J.J. Stewart Perowne comments on this particular Psalm, stating, “As the poet gazes on into the liquid depths of that starry sky there comes upon him with overwhelming force the sense of his own insignificance. In sight of all that vastness, before all that evidence of creative power, how insignificant is man!”
- This Psalm is full of paradoxes. Here is the first one: **although man is insignificant in light of the greatness of the created order, he is quite significant in the eyes of God – the Creator of the cosmos.**
- Furthermore, this Psalm may properly be interpreted in two ways:

(1) of speaking of mankind; (2) of speaking of Jesus Christ.

- With respect to (1) **speaking of mankind**; this Psalm speaks of man’s exalted status compared to the rest of creation:

“What is man, that you are mindful of him,
Or the son of man, that you care for him?
You made him for a little while lower than the angels;
You have crowned him with glory and honor,
Putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

- Concerning the exalted status of man, F.F. Bruce writes, “The psalmist is overcome with wonder as he thinks of the glory and honor which God has bestowed on mankind, in making them but little lower than himself and giving them dominion over all the lesser creation.”
- Not only this, but the verbiage in this Psalm echoes the Creation account of **Genesis 1:26**: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”
 - In short, man was created originally **in God’s image**. Man was God’s representative on earth. This was what was meant by the Psalmist, “You made him (for a little while) lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor...”
 - No creature has the distinction or honor of being made in the image of God – *except man*.
 - Furthermore, the Psalmist echoes the Creation account by stating, “...Putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

- That is, man was given dominion over Creation (recall **Genesis 1:26**).

❖ However, in **Genesis 2-3**, something went terribly wrong: **sin entered into the world**.

- When this happened, man lost the dominion he was originally created to exercise.
- God had warned Adam in **Genesis 2:16**, “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”
 - Consequently, when Adam ate of the forbidden fruit, he, and all of creation with him, fell.
 - Thus, the words of **Genesis 3:19** come into full focus:

“By the sweat of your face
You shall eat bread,
Till you return to the ground,
For out of it you were taken;
For you are dust,
And to dust you shall return.”

- Not only did the Fall cause man to lose dominion over creation, but the order of Creation, as God had originally created it, was reversed. That is to say, rather than man having dominion over Creation, **Creation now has dominion over man**.
- This is why the Reformation Study Bible rightly states, “Man’s natural relationship to the ground, to rule over it, is reversed; instead of submitting to him, it resists and eventually swallows him. The earth, frustrated by the Creator’s assignment to disharmony, longs for restoration.”

Matthew Henry notes, “Now, when it was too late, they saw the folly of eating forbidden fruit. They saw the happiness they had fallen from, and the misery they had fallen into. They saw a loving God provoked, his grace and favor forfeited, his likeness and image lost, dominion over the creatures gone. They saw their natures corrupted and depraved... They saw themselves disrobed of all their ornaments and ensigns of honor, degraded from their dignity and disgraced in the highest degree, laid open to the contempt and reproach of heaven and earth, and their own consciences.”

- Consequently, if Psalm 8 finds its ultimate fulfillment in mankind, then the reader is left to remain in a state of sin and depravity. In fact, **the author of Hebrews states the obvious, writing, “...we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.”**

Thus, the insufficiency and inability of mankind to fulfill Psalm 8 points directly to the sufficiency and ability of Christ to fulfill the Psalmist’s words.

- It is, at this point, then, that one gains an understanding into the true interpretation of this Psalm: that it (2) speaks of Christ.

- In fact, consider the Messianic phrase:

“Or the **son of man**, that you care for him?”

- Note: the phrase, “son of man” cannot refer to Adam, as Adam was not a “son of man” for he was *not* born of a woman. In fact, Adam was a “son of God” (Luke 3:38), for he was created directly by God.
- Consequently, the phrase “**son of man**” clearly points to Jesus Christ – the true Son of Man (born of a woman).
- This Verse echoes the words of the prophet Daniel, in **Daniel 7:13-14**:

¹³ “I saw in the night visions,
and behold, with the clouds of heaven
there came one like a son of man,
and he came to the Ancient of Days
and was presented before him.
¹⁴ And to him was given dominion
and glory and a kingdom,
that all peoples, nations, and languages
should serve him;
his dominion is an everlasting dominion,
which shall not pass away,
and his kingdom one
that shall not be destroyed.”

- This reality becomes clearer as the Psalmist continues:

“**You made him for a little while lower than the angels;**”

- This quote from the Septuagint actually differs from the original Hebrew, which most naturally reads, “you have made him a little lower than God.” However, the Hebrew word translated “angels” in the Septuagint is *elohim*, and it is possible, as the Septuagint does, to translate *elohim* as plural “divine beings” or “angels.” For example, Psalm 82:1 reads, “in the midst of the gods (*elohim*) he holds judgment.”
- Now, the interesting point, here is that this Psalm refers to “man” but points to Christ. In other words, it speaks of the “exalted” status of man, with respect to all creation; **yet, it points to Christ with respect to His humiliation**. That is, his Incarnation.
 - Thus, whereas Genesis 1:26 speaks of Adam – the first Adam – Psalm 8 ultimately points to Christ – the Second Adam. As One “born of a woman” Christ

is Son of Man. As One who is from all eternity, equal in essence with the Father, he is the Son of God. Only Christ is both – Son of God and Son of Man.

- Another way of stating this is that **as the eternal Son of God, Christ is infinitely superior to all the angels – for He created them. Yet, as the Son of Man, He was made “a little lower than the angels.”**

- That is Jesus Christ is unique in that only He is the (1) the Son of God; AND (2) the Son of Man. No one can properly make that claim!

- F.F. Bruce writes, “Therefore he who has already been introduced as ‘so much better than the angels’ had to be ‘made a little lower than the angels,’”
- So it is here that Christ’s humanity, as the Second, the last Adam, is emphasized.

Richard D. Phillips writes, “On one hand there is man, captured in the darkness of his Paradise lost. Then onto the stage God sends his own Son, the New Man and Second Adam. He is the answer both to man’s problem and to the problem of history. He is the great, the last, the only hope of a dying race; in him is the fulfillment not only of man’s promised destiny but of God’s plan as set forth in Psalm 8.”

- ❖ As the Second Adam, Jesus Christ is the Head of the New Creation, the world to come!

III. Christ was Exalted and Crowned with Glory and Honor

- When one understands the proper (Messianic) interpretation of Psalm 8, the clear divisions between Christ’s Humiliation (Incarnation) and His Exaltation become clear:
 - **Humiliation:** “You made him for a little while lower than the angels.” This speaks of the time when Christ took on mortal flesh and walked among us on this earth.
 - **Exaltation:** “you have crowned him with glory and honor, / putting everything in subjection under his feet.” **This speaks of God the Father “exalting Him to the highest place” through the Resurrection and Ascension (because of Christ’s obedience in His life and death).**
 - The “crowning with glory and honor” is the Enthronement of Jesus Christ as King of Kings and Lord of Lords at the Right Hand of God the Father Almighty.
 - Furthermore, the phrase, “...putting everything in subjection under his feet” echoes Psalm 110 :1 (which the author quoted in Hebrews 1:13):

“Sit at my right hand
Until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”.

IV. Christ Reigns Over All Creation

- Then, the author writes, underscoring the sovereignty of the Exalted Christ: “Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control.”
 - Few words could express the sovereignty of Jesus Christ more clearly than these words.
- After this, though, the author of Hebrews writes with tremendous honesty: “At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.”
 - The idea, here, is clear: even though Jesus Christ is the Sovereign King of Kings and Lord of Lords, it does not seem, in looking around, that He is ruling over all creation.
 - **This is the question that any reader would naturally ask who was told that Christ is the Sovereign of all creation: “Well, it doesn’t *appear* that He is in control.”**
- Then, in response to this apparent objection, the Hebrews author states, in **Verse 9**, “But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”
 - Then, the author writes, “But we seem him who for a little while was made lower than the angels...”
 - The author here echoes the words of Psalm 8, and very clearly appropriates them to Jesus.
 - In fact, this is the first time in all of the Book of Hebrews that the name of **Jesus is mentioned**.
 - Then, the author states that Jesus was “crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death...”
 - In other words it was precisely ***because of*** His suffering and death that God the Father crowned Jesus with honor and glory.”
 - Finally, the author of Hebrews writes, “...so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone...”
 - It was, indeed, the grace of God that led the Father to send the Son to suffer and die so that He might taste death for everyone who believes in Him.

□ **Consequently, because of the work of Jesus Christ, a powerful contrast exists, and is made clear in Verses 8 and 9:**

○ **“...we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see him...”**

▪ **In other words, this world is fallen, and that is clear when simply open our eyes and look around; yet our hope is to be found in Jesus, the object of our gaze.**

▪ **For it is in Jesus Christ , the One crowned with glory and honor – not in this present and fallen world - , that we find our hope, our joy, and our peace!**

Crown Him With Many Crowns

Verses 1, 3, 9

Crown Him with many crowns, the Lamb upon His throne.
Hark! How the heavenly anthem drowns all music but its own.
Awake, my soul, and sing of Him who died for thee,
And hail Him as thy matchless King through all eternity.

Crown Him the Son of God, before the worlds began,
And ye who tread where He hath trod, crown Him the Son of Man;
Who every grief hath known that wrings the human breast,
And takes and bears them for His own, that all in Him may rest.

Crown Him the Lord of years, the Potentate of time,
Creator of the rolling spheres, ineffably sublime.
All hail, Redeemer, hail! For Thou has died for me;
Thy praise and glory shall not fail throughout eternity.