

HEBREWS

Message 10

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Reading: Hebrews 2:1-8

INTRO: We are in Hebrews chapter 2. Since it has been a while let me go back a little. As I outline these two chapters in 1:1-4 we had the claim of Christ's superiority over angels. In 1:5-14 we had the evidence of this superiority. Then in 2:1-4 we have the exhortation and warning drawn from this superiority.

We come back now to our study in Hebrews. In Hebrews 13:22 we learn that the writer views this book or letter as an exhortation. There are five major exhortations in the form of warnings. Each one comes after a section of doctrine or teaching. In chapter 2 we have the first exhortation and warning in the book. It says this:

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,

The warning is that the believer who neglects his salvation which is based on the words of the Lord Jesus Christ is less likely to escape than those who transgressed the words spoken by angels.

The writer greatly feared that if these Hebrew believers put their trust in angels and went back to Judaism they would end up rejecting Christ altogether. This is what he means by drifting away. And the consequences of drifting away would be no less severe, if not more so, than the consequences were for Israeli's when they left the word of angels in the wilderness.

These Hebrew believers were experiencing great difficulties in life and it appears they are in the process of giving up on Jesus Christ. That can happen to us. Let me ask you, do you face difficulties? Maybe this morning is a time to focus on how short the short end of the rope is. These believers were being tempted into the present teachings of the Jews that angels, not Jesus

Christ would come and deliver them out of their troubles and set up the long awaited kingdom, which we know as the millennium.

So having shown to these believers how far superior to angels Jesus Christ is, he has warned them not to slip from that which they had learned lest they drift away. We have looked at verses 1-4. But look now at verse 5:

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

Now, we must first make an important decision in this verse. The first word of this verse is the conjunction, "For." To interpret this verse one needs to decide what it connects to in the preceding verses. It is an interpretive call and I have concluded that it connects to verse 2:1 in this way: "Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away; ...for He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels."

So I see it as giving a reason for the exhortation. And this reason is because God has not put the world to come in subjection to angels. This is the negative point and it is given in verse 5. All the rest of the chapter gives the positive reason why God did not subject the world to come to angels.

3. The reason for this exhortation (2:5-18)

a. Negatively - World to come not subjected to angels (2:5)

The reason for this first exhortation to give more earnest heed in verse 1 is first given negatively in verse 5 like this:

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

Verses 5-8a form a unit so we'll read those. Together they give the negative and the positive:

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of

him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?

7 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.

8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him...

As I outline this, verse 8b starts another section. We'll come to it later. So look at verse 5:

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

This verse has four of the most crucial words to help us understand chapters 1-2. These words are, "of which we speak." The writer tells us what he is speaking about in these two chapters and I am so very glad for those four words. If it was not for these words we would have to guess why the writer stresses the superiority of the Son over angels. In this verse we learn that these two chapters have to do with the world to come, and that is what he is speaking about. William R. Newell says that *the world to come* is a pervasive thought in this book.

This world to come is the kingdom the Jews had waited for through the centuries. We speak of it as the millennium. That length of that age is only revealed in the book of Revelation and it had not yet been written when Hebrews was being penned.

So look at the word *world*. It is not the word *kosmos*, which is the usual word for *world*. It is the word *oikoumenee*. Let me quote what I gave in chapter 1:6. I said: "Last, notice that it says, 'But when He again brings the firstborn into the world...' Note the word

'world.' It is not the regular word for world. It is *oikoumene*, not *kosmos*. This speaks of the inhabited earth." Even today we have large parts of the world that are not inhabited. The inhabited earth is that part that mankind lives in.

So we are speaking of the world to come. It is beyond question to me that this refers to the coming kingdom of Christ, or the millennium as we refer to it. And in verse 5 we note that this coming world is not put in subjection to angels, a teaching the Hebrews were in danger of adopting.

I want you to notice another word in this text, it is the word "subjection." Notice now that God will not put the world to come in subjection to angels. The implication is clear. It will be put in subjection to Jesus Christ. Now what will the millennium be like? Here it is: "The inhabited area of mankind will be in subjection to Christ!" The inhabited world, and we could say, the inhabitants of this world will be in subjection to Christ!

Now there are those who believe that everything has been predestined. God determines everything that will be done and it is all done as it has been predetermined, or as He has predestined. Every particle that floats in the air has been preplanned to do what it does and it does that.

This, they say, is true because God is sovereign. Let me give what I understand the word sovereign to mean. When Christians use the word sovereign it is heavily tainted by Calvinism. An online definition of sovereign said this:

"Sovereignty is a political concept that refers to dominant power or supreme authority. In a monarchy, supreme power resides in the 'sovereign', or king. In modern democracies, sovereign power rests with the people and is

exercised through representative bodies such as Congress or Parliament." End quote.

What is clear is that the word *sovereign* does not mean everything operates as it has been preplanned by a sovereign. It means to have authority over, or power over. For example, the sovereignty of a nation lies in the monarch or in a democracy. It is rule by one or rule by the people. That is they have the supreme power or authority. Does that mean they control everything everyone does? Of course not.

There are two key words to speak of God's control is "Lord, Greek. kurios" or "Master, Greek despotees." Even if one translates those as sovereign, neither Lord, Master, or sovereign mean that they make everything happen as they wish. A sovereign nation has the right to decide what their subjects may and may not do in that country. That government does not preplan and make everyone do exactly as the government wishes. Even the worst dictatorship does not do that. A monarch or democratic government allows its subjects the full freedom to operate within certain parameters. Monarchical countries and democratic countries want their people to achieve good things because it is good for the country.

But whenever the subjects of that country do that which the government deems detrimental to its country, it has the supreme authority to deal with that. That is what sovereign means.

Now in the world to come, the millennium, which is our subject, the Lord Jesus Christ will be the supreme authority. He will be the monarch. Does that mean He has preplanned everything everyone will do and it will happen? Of course not! Some people will sin and He never planned that. But when subjects go out of line, He will rule with a rod of iron. In that time the subjects have the full right to do whatever they wish if it falls within the parameters of His government. He will want His subjects to

succeed and do good things. God rewards His people when they achieve good things. What is the value of a reward if you were preprogrammed to do those good things?

You see, our text says God has not put the inhabited world of the millennium in subjection to angels! What that means is He has put them in subjection to Jesus Christ! He will be the Sovereign or Lord or Master! All through the Scriptures, both in this time and in the millennium people are encouraged to do what is right. But in the millennium nobody will be allowed to live against the laws of that time as set by Jesus Christ. He will be the ultimate authority. He does not preplan and determine what everyone will do, but He will deal with every disobedience by His authority. He will not let disobedience spin out of control as it is today. And He will reward all obedience. That is the beauty of the millennium.

Someday I would like to deal with the millennium more in depth. There is an abundance of information on that time period. Let me simply tell you this: If we are overcomers in this life, we will live and reign with Christ in the millennium and what we do will be in direct accordance to how we chose to live for Him in this time, and there is a lot of Scripture on that subject.

Let me give you one brief description of that time. Listen to Micah 4:3.

*3 He (the Messiah, Jesus Christ) shall judge between many peoples, And rebuke strong nations afar off; They **shall beat their** swords into plowshares, And their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, Neither shall they learn war any more.*

Do you long for that? I was going to read a number of passages but have to forego that. But the world to come is what these Hebrews were longing for, but they were slipping away from

Jesus Christ and putting their trust in angels to bring in this time and that is what the writer is warning them about.

So the writer had warned these Hebrews that if the believers of the OT did not escape judgment after they had been instructed by angels, much more will the NT believer not escape if he neglects the words of the Lord. If these Hebrew believers put their trust in angels, they will be leaving their trust in Christ.

I have watched numerous people find salvation in Christ and they were excited about their new faith, and then have seen them led off into some new teaching or give up entirely. I have seen those who endured into old age, and then gave up. As soon as one gets caught up in some new thing one is in danger of neglecting the true salvation.

I want us to notice one more word in this passage. It is the word "subjection." God has not put the world to come in subjection to angels. But He has put it in subjection to Jesus Christ! It is a military term indicating rank. It is the word I have mentioned to you numerous times as it is the same word used when it says wives are to be subject to their husbands. We will look at it more later.

b. Positively - World to come subjected to Christ (2:6-18?)

1) The prophecy (2:6-8a)

So, negatively, God has not put the world to come in subjection to angels. But positively now, we learn that God will put the world to come in subjection to Jesus Christ. The writer will now give Scriptural evidence for what he has said. Always, in everything, we must go back to the Scriptures. It matters not what the subject is. This is always the relevant question: What does the Bible have to say about this?

The writer now gives evidence for what he has said about God not putting the world to come in subjection to angels in verses 6-8a. We'll read from verse 5 to get the drift:

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?"

7 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.

8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet."

All our quotes in chapter 1 came from the Psalms and once more we have a quote from the Psalms. So we go now to Psalm 8. We begin in verse 1:

1 O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth, Who have set Your glory above the heavens!

2 Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.

John F. Brug, a premillennialist who has written 2 volumes on the Psalms says of this Psalm, "Psalm 8 seems out of place in the book because it is so different from the psalms which precede and follow it. However, it forms a fitting contrast to them. It is a Messianic Psalm which presents Christ as the second Adam, the perfect man, who is the exact opposite of the slanderers and the evil rulers of Psalms 7, 9, and 10. This psalm also contrasts the simple praise which God

receives from children with the arrogant defiance of the wicked described in the surrounding psalms" (I:63).

We continue on then in Psalm 8:3:

3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,

4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him?

5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

7 All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field,

8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.

9 O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!

Psalm 8 is a Messianic Psalm. That means it is prophetic of Jesus Christ. Here we see part of it. In verse 3 the Psalmist says that when he considers the heavens, the stars and planets and galaxies he breaks out with these words, "What is man that You are mindful of him?" I wonder how many times you have wondered that same thing when you looked up at night.

But when you look up at the stars, many of which we know today are actually galaxies made up of billions of other stars, and then you read the Scriptures, you find that it is not the universe, but man that is the crowning act of God's creation. Man is the

most incredible part of God's creation! In all that exists, the believer and his faith is the most important thing to God. God will let us go through anything to grow our faith, which is the most precious commodity to Him.

So listen to verses 3-4 and then you tell me if this Psalm speaks of mankind or of Jesus Christ:

*4 What is man that You are mindful of him,
And the son of man that You visit him?*

*5 For You have made him a little lower
than the angels, And You have crowned him
with glory and honor.*

So let me ask you, does this speak of mankind or of Jesus Christ? Well, it speaks of both. Here is the wonder of it all, Jesus Christ became one of us. Our passage will tell us that numerous times. But in Hebrews, the writer applies this passage to Christ in particular.

So let me ask, just how are we as people made a little lower than the angels? Well, man is locked into a sphere angels can move into and out of at will. Angels can appear before God and then come down and be with man. That is beyond us. It seems to me that when it says God makes His angels winds, it speaks of speed. Let me ask you how long it would take light to travel from here to where God is? Well, we can't even measure beyond the second heaven, so we have no idea. I have read that the farthest star Hubble has seen is almost 13 million light years away. When you think of the distance through the first two heavens, the travel of angels must be almost instantaneous. Man's travel at fastest is extremely slow in comparison. Angels can be in heaven and the very next thing be on earth. We know that distance to them then is nothing. Distance to man is huge.

And furthermore man is locked into a sphere of five senses. He cannot think beyond that. Then angels can ascend into the presence of God but man, before the creation of the new heavens and new earth can never see God. Yet angels always behold the face of the Father. Certainly man was made a little lower than the angels.

When we speak of those who spend time on water and those who mostly live on the earth, we call those on earth dwellers landlubbers. But when we think of man in the universe, we could call man an *earthlubber*. That is a brand new word. What I mean is that man is earth bound. Only with very special equipment can he enter the second heaven, and very, very, seldom can he penetrate the third heaven. And no doubt that experience was a spiritual experience. We are earthbound because of our body. Not so with angels, because they don't have a body. They are God's winds and His messengers; His ministers; and they are spirit beings.

But though man was made a little lower than the angels, God did set him over His creation. When creation was complete, Genesis 1:28 says:

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

So Psalm 8:5-8 says:

5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,

7 All sheep and oxen—Even the beasts of the field,

8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.

We have a picture here of man's dominion over God's creation. But this Psalm speaks prophetically of Christ becoming one of us. We will learn more in this chapter of Christ becoming one of us. He was made a little lower than the angels. So the prophetic application speaks of Jesus Christ.

Listen as I read two passages for you. First, Ephesians 1:22 speaking clearly of Christ says:

22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church,

Then 1 Corinthians 15:25-28:

25 For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

27 For "He has put all things under His feet." But when He says "all things are put under Him," it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted.

28 Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

Now I ask you, are all things subject to Christ today? No! Can we then say that He controls everything? No! What does He control today? He controls the universe as distinct from mankind. And of mankind He controls only a very small part. In mankind He only reigns over Christians. Christians are subject to Him because they have submitted themselves to His rule over them. He does not make them submit to Him, they choose to submit to Him. He desires for all to be saved so he can reign over them, but few submit to Him. They are not subject to Him. They do not do what He wants them to do.

But someday soon, we believe, He will catch up the Church. Then this world will experience seven years of tribulation. When that comes to an end He will come down to earth with the Church and defeat all enemies including the false prophet and the antichrist, and then He will reign over mankind and the earth for 1,000 years. In Revelation 20:1-6 we read that the devil is bound and cast into hell for those 1,000 years.

When this has happened, saved mankind reigns with Christ for a thousand years. This is the world to come of verse 5. As I see it, under Christ, all things are put under mankind and mankind, though made a little lower than the angels, now is also crowned with honor and glory!

After this, the devil will be loosed and he will go against Christ with all he can gather to himself, and then the Lord will destroy those and then He will have put all things under His feet except one thing.

Then He will resurrect all the lost, judge them, and sentence them to an eternal hell, and then all things will have been put under His feet.

Now notice that verse 7 says, "You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with glory and honor." The prophetic fulfillment where Christ was made a little lower than the angels took place in Christ a 1,000 years after the prophecy was given. In our passage in Hebrews, it had just been fulfilled between 20-40 years earlier. When Christ ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God He was crowned with glory and honor.

We come then to verse 8a:

8a You have put all things in subjection under his feet."

So we ask, what does it mean that God has put all things under Christ's feet? Notice that this prophecy of when all things are put under His feet is written in the past tense, as though it had already happened. But Christ did not come for 1,000 years after this prophecy was given! And when He did come He was crucified. Certainly not all things were put under His feet!

So I ask you, do we see all things put under Him today? Do all do His will? Do all follow Him? No, that is far from true. Yet notice what it says further:

...For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him.

When the writer said, "You have put all things under His feet," He was quoting from Psalm 8. When he says: "For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him," now he is not quoting. So I ask you, have all things been put under His feet? If God left nothing that was not put under Him, are all things put under Him today?

Do you remember that unfulfilled prophecy may be given in the past tense or in the present tense when it has not yet been fulfilled? Well, let us look at the fulfillment of this prophecy.

2) It's fulfillment (2:8b-18?)

a) What we don't see (2:8b)

What we have to see is that there are some things we do not yet see about this prophecy. I suspect the writer knows the readers will say, "Hey, just a minute. There is our whole problem. You say all things have been put under Him, but we do not see all things put under Him." The Hebrews could say, "We are being persecuted by people who are in no way under Him. They are doing their own thing and we are suffering for it. How can you say all things have been put under Him?" That is still true today, some 2,000 years later. We can look around us today and say, "We see very few of mankind that has been put under His feet. How can you say all things are put under Him?"

So notice what he says in 8b:

...But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

Now you might ask, "What kind of prophecy is this that says, 'All of this has taken place,' and then it says, 'But we don't yet see it all having taken place yet?'" It is a prophecy given in the present tense because of its certainty of fulfillment.

When Christ ascended and was crowned with glory and honor, being seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He began to reign. There were 120

believers, and the next day there were over 3,000. Today He reigns over all true believers. But He is not reigning over unsaved mankind today. He has authority over all of them. They will stand before Him to be judged some day for all they have done, but He is not reigning over them. They are not in subjection to Him. We do not yet see all things put under Him!

By the word "yet" in verse 8 we see that the time will come when all things will be put under Him, but it has not happened yet. In 2:5 and 8 we have the word "subjection." It is the word "hupotasso," which you have heard me mention. It is the word used when a wife is instructed to be subject to her husband. It is a military term.

In the world to come, in the millennium, the inhabited world, mankind will be in subjection to Christ. That does not mean they do not have a free will. It means they will serve Him of a free will. But what we learn is that there will still be sinners, and those sinners will be dealt with by the One who has authority over them.

Here is the difference between the millennium and the new heavens and the new earth. In the millennium, not all will want to subject themselves to Christ. When the time of the new heavens and new earth comes, all will willingly subject themselves to Christ. They will desire nothing else. God will be glorified in free moral agents who desire to be subject to Him, and man will be fulfilled by doing His will and there will be perfect harmony forever. After the millennium, when the New Heavens and New Earth come we will truly be able to end this part of the

story and say: And they lived happily ever after!

What we see put under Him at this time is the true Church. That is all. True believers have been put under Him because they desire to be there. And these true believers can be found in every country in the world. Let me mention again that the true, universal Church is made up of true believers only. There are no professing Christians in the true Church. There are many professing believers in local churches, but not in the universal Church. In that body there are only true believers and a true believer, though he or she has not won over every part of the sin nature, he or she is subject to Christ.

But look at our present world. How much of this world is not yet subject to Christ? This is what troubled the Hebrews. They were suffering because so much had not been put under Christ yet. It is like that today. Look at our governments. Let me ask you, how much in our Prime Minister's life would have to change before we could say he is in subjection to Christ? How about our premier? May I ask you, do you pray for these leaders? I mentioned a while ago that it is my personal view that our country's leader is demonized. If that is so, how do I then pray for him? How can he ever become subject to Christ in this life? If I am correct, he is in a far deeper bondage than many others. He is held captive by huge demonic forces. If I am correct, how can he be delivered? Does it look hopeless?

We do not yet see all things put under our Lord but when we do we will be in the world to come. But let me say this, though things will be much improved in

the millennium from what it is now, it will not yet be a perfect time. In the millennium the majority of mankind will willingly and happily submit to Jesus Christ. But in the end many will rebel. The time that is coming when all will willingly and happily submit will be when we are on the new earth.

But the millennium, the world to come, is what these Hebrews were so desperately waiting for! We saw some of that new world in the few prophecies I read of the millennium in an earlier message. We could add a very long list to those few passages.

May I ask you, how many difficult things do you have in life? What are you going through? How much of it is because of your subjection to Christ? How much of it is because of our failure to be in subjection to Him? May I just remind us of how short life is in light of eternity? I believe the true Church will be caught up very soon. I have preached a number of messages on what life will be like in those seven years in heaven, when the tribulation plays out on earth. Those will be indescribably glorious years. But then read Revelation 19 of the Church coming down with Christ, and then in chapter 20, of the binding of Satan and then the millennium that follows. But then read chapters 21-22, the eternal state, and we should be encouraged to finish our race well.

In the trials of this life, do you feel like crashing sometimes? Maybe I should put it like this, do you feel crushed? Have you ever seen the process of polishing rocks in a rock tumbler? I have likened Christians to those rocks and the number of revolutions they have to make in the polisher, being knocked

against each other again and again before they become a polished gem. Sometimes we feel like those rocks and we might feel like yelling, "Please stop this thing! Let me out for a while! I need a break!" But it doesn't stop and round and round you go.

I think that is where the folk of the book of Hebrews were. And now they are saying, "I am thinking of leaving this Christian thing. It's not working out."

That Christ would achieve superiority over the angels was prophesied in Psalm 8. If Christ became human when God made Him a little lower than the angels, how could God crown Him with glory and honor and set Him over the works of His hands? Here it is: Christ had to be crushed! Gethsemane was the place of crushing. They used to crush grapes by treading them under their feet to make grape juice. But there is a big difference between crushing a grape and crushing an olive. The name Gethsemane speaks of a place where they crushed olives to extract the oil. Isaiah 53 says Jesus Christ was bruised for our sins. That word 'bruised' can be translated 'crushed.' He was crushed for us, now we must be crushed for Him. For three hours He begged God not to be cut off in the midst of the years and then He was crushed.

In order for Christ to be crowned with glory and honor, He had to first become human. It was Gethsemane, Golgotha, and then glory! That is why He was made a little lower than the angels.

CONCL: And to conclude, God has not put the world to come in subjection to angels! He made man a little lower than the angels. That includes Jesus Christ who has already been crowned with glory and honor. But I say this; that the true believer

will be crowned with glory and honor and that will take place in the world to come, the millennium.

All the saved will be forever delivered from sin and corruption and they will live and reign with Christ for 1,000 years. The glory of those years are prophesied over and over in the OT. It is that which the Jews looked forward to all through the ages. It is that which we look forward to, and it is that which the whole animal kingdom longs for.

Now if you will have noticed the writer has referred to the Psalms over and over again. And each reference is to some aspect of the millennial reign of Christ. In this passage we have a prophecy to the fact that all things have been put in subjection under Christ and this refers to the world to come.

How many times have I said we could put this passage side by side with Revelation 19? Well, here, once more, we could read Revelation 19 and we could go into chapter 20. We would find all of sinful mankind having come to an end. We would find the antichrist and the false prophet in hell. We would find Satan bound and we would see all things put under Christ's feet. Jesus Christ will rule this time period, not angels!

