

HEBREWS

Message 11

Date:

Words: 5842

Reading:

INTRO: We are in Hebrews 2. The subject is this: Jesus Christ, the hope superior to angels. After Jesus was raised from the dead Luke 24:44-45 says this:

44 Then He said to them, "These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.

45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

The writer to the Hebrews was a man of the Psalms. Every quote so far has been from the Psalms. In verses 6-8 we had a quote from Psalm 8. It is given in Hebrews 2:5-8 like this:

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:

And now comes the quote:

"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."

That is the end of the quote. The writer then adds this:

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

And our questions was this: If God put all things under His feet and He left nothing that was not put under Him, how come we see almost all of mankind not yet put under Him? We do not see the

devil put under Him. How can it be said God left nothing that was not put under Him? The writer then goes on like this:

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

Well that is most certainly true. But there is hope given in the words "now," and "yet." That is, at this time, *now* we do not yet see all things put under Him. The hope in those words is that though we do not see that now, we will yet see it.

In verses 9-18 he will now tell us what we do see at this point.

b) What we do see (9-18)

(1) Jesus: Made lower than angels (9)

-Taste death for everyone

Well, we do not yet see all things put under Him, but what do we see? We see Jesus! We see Jeshua. We see the Saviour. We see the author and the finisher of the faith! In 1:2-4 we saw such an exalted picture of Christ as has hardly any parallel in the Bible. But in 2:9-18 we see the work of Christ described in the most vivid and glorious language!

And now in verse 9 we will see Jesus and find the answer to this question: On what ground will God be able to finally subject all things to Jesus Christ? Let me ask you, could God subject all things to Him because He is divine? No. If that was so, He could have done it already. And then we ask, could He subject all things to Christ because He is divine and He became human? No, He could not. In order to qualify to be the One to whom all things could be subjected, something very, very, big and special was required, and no angel and no other human could ever do that.

So here is our question: If Jesus was made a little lower than the angels, how is it that God would subject all things to Him and rather than to angels who are higher?

Verse 8 left off like this: "But we do not yet see all things put under Him." When are all things put under Him? In the world to come and following.

Verse 9 now continues like this:

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Translating this sentence into English makes it the most awkward sentence I have come across. Instead of taking time on that awkwardness let me give you the main sentence. It is this: We see Jesus.

There is a difference between Greek and English in the order of a sentence, in that we usually have subject, verb and then the object. In the Greek the sentence can go in any order and often if follows the order of the most important things first.

Let me rewrite this sentence in the best English order as I see it, without changing or adding any words:

9 But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Earlier we saw that we do not yet see all things put under Christ's feet and that the main sentence is, "But we see

Jesus." And now He says, "But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor!" Oh in how many things do we not need to come to where we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor. We see many things not put under Him. Life is filled with such things. But in those things do we get to where we see Jesus? Here is why I believe we don't have revival. We don't see Jesus. But you will say, "But I do see Jesus."

Consider Job? Righteous as he was, I believe he lost sight of Jesus. In my understanding he had become spiritually proud. Read the book and see what he thinks of himself. His friends said, "You are a sinner, that is why all this is happening." And he said, "I am a righteous man. If I had a chance I would talk to God and He would learn a thing or two." Do you know why it took so long until God finally spoke to him? Chapter after chapter, and God said nothing. Why did it take so long? Job was not ready to look at Jesus. And then one day God spoke. He said, "Stand up like a man. I will question you and you answer Me." Question 1, no answer. Question 2, 3, 4, 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, but no answer from Job.

And then God said, "This guy who is arguing with the Almighty, let him instruct him now. This guy who reproves the Almighty, let him answer." And then Job was ready to begin to see Jesus. He said, "Behold I am vile, what shall I answer you. I will lay my hand over my mouth. I have nothing more to say." But I thought you had something to say to God. Not any more.

Then God said, "Oh, by the way, let me point something out to you. I want to

show you a picture of pride. And then He took the largest land animal, and then He took the largest sea creature, and then he painted a picture of pride that stabbed Job's heart.

Now listen to Job 42:1-6 which comes after those two pictures:

1 Then Job answered the LORD and said:

*2 "I know that You can do everything,
And that no purpose of Yours can be
withheld from You.*

*3 You asked, 'Who is this who hides
counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I
have uttered what I did not understand,
Things too wonderful for me, which I
did not know.*

*4 Listen, please, and let me speak;
You said, 'I will question you, and you
shall answer Me.'*

*5 "I have heard of You by the hearing
of the ear, But now my eye sees You.*

*6 Therefore I abhor myself, And repent
in dust and ashes."*

But now my eye sees Jesus! There is why we don't have revival. In life's varied circumstances, many times we fail to see Jesus.

In our text, all the rest of this verse modifies this one word, the name Jesus. And how do we see Jesus? We see Jesus who was crowned with glory and honor. I have not the words to paint this exalted picture of Him. We have looked at some of this in chapter 1. I must read 1:1-4 here:

*1 God, who at various times and in
various ways spoke in time past to the
fathers by the prophets,*

2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;

3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

Jesus was crowned with glory and honor when He ascended into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High. Just before Jesus was crucified John 17:1 says this:

1 Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You,

Then in verses 4-5 He said this:

4 "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.

5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

We have studied that in chapter 1.

We go on in verse 9:

9 But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death...

Could we ask like the Hebrews might have asked, "How could Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels be the one to bring in the world to come rather than angels who were higher? Angels don't suffer and die. Jesus did. Why Jesus?"

Answer: Jesus was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death! If He had not been made a little lower than the angels, i.e., if He had not become human, He could not have suffered death for us.

Every year we commemorate Christmas. We may not have it on the right day, but this is why Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The conception and birth of Jesus Christ is one of the most momentous moments of all time: past, present, and in the world to come. He could not have died and been raised again if He had not become a little lower than the angels. His birth, life, death and resurrection are the central events of all of time. And in this passage the key idea is that He was made a little lower than the angels. He was born a human being.

In order to purge us from our sins He had to become a human, He had to become a little lower than the angels. This becoming human is what we commemorate at Christmas. So He was made a little lower than the angels for a very special purpose. And here it is from our verse: *For the suffering of death!* And neither man nor angel could do this and purge man's sins. He could not have died in man's place if He did not have a body like man. Here we have the importance of the incarnation.

So the second Person of the Triune God became human. He was made a little lower than the angels, just like the rest of mankind. Then He lived a righteous life and when He was just over 30 years old He was crucified. Why was He made a little lower than the angels? No angel can ever experience such a death. No man can ever suffer such a death.

I was asked this question some time ago: In Matthew 25 there were ten virgins, five wise and five foolish. Why could the wise not give some of their oil to the foolish? What the oil represents in that parable is a big debate. Whatever it represents, the oil pictures those who are truly saved and those who had not taken oil with them picture those who profess salvation but they are not actually born again. And here is the point, I believe; no saved person, whether parent or pastor or any other position, can ever give any part of their salvation to anyone else. And in our passage, no angel nor any saved person could ever die on behalf of an unsaved person. The divine had to become a little lower than the angels.

Not only was He both human and divine, but He was sinless and we'll see in other messages why that had to be. So He took man's sin upon Himself and died laden with man's sin. He had drunk that bitter cup in the Garden and now He had to die. No man can ever drink that cup for another. Jesus did what only Jesus could do. Time and again, though we do not yet see all things put under Him, we need to see Him.

And after He had suffered death, He was resurrected. That is what we remember

on the feast of First-fruits, or resurrection Sunday. And after He was resurrected, He ascended into heaven. We have the account of His ascension in Acts 1. He went up the Mount of Olives, gave His disciples His last instructions, and then lifted off the earth and went up until they could not see Him anymore. In an earlier verse in Hebrews we were told that He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High. We also learned that the name which is above every name was given to Him after He purged us from our sins by taking our place in death.

In Philippians 2 we find that He left the splendor of heaven, became a man, and died the shameful death of the cross. He had laid His glory by, as we sing at Christmas, and for a little while He was made lower than the angels. And 40 days after His resurrection He ascended into heaven. And now He entered heaven being more than He was when He left. He was now not only divine, but human as well. And in heaven He now has a body, a resurrected body that will last forever. He will forever be identified with both God and man!

No angel could taste death for everyone. They have no body, nor are they divine. No human being can taste death for anyone because, though they have a body, they all have a sin nature, and neither are they divine. But Christ could taste death for everyone because He had no sin and was both human and divine. He was the ultimate and perfect sacrifice!

We come then to the last part of verse 9. It says:

9 ...that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Now this last part of the verse is a most outstanding clause. It is that Jesus Christ, and here it is: *by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone*. Now I ask you, to whom does God show or give grace? To whom does He show favor? It is to those who please Him! Jesus Christ pleased God so much that God graced Him with the outstanding privilege of tasting death for everyone! Would you and I not say: "May I never be so privileged by God!"?

How can one be graced with death? What a statement is this? But then, maybe we are or have been graced with trials. We may not wish it to be called grace, but it may be. May I ask you, what are you going through? "Oh," you say, "please don't talk to me about that. What I am going through is not in the slightest possible way a privilege or something graced to me." I wonder sometimes what we would see if we saw ourselves through God's eyes.

So I ask you, just how incompatible is suffering death with that being a privilege experienced by grace, a favor? Would you ever put those two ideas together in one sentence? Did you know that without faith it is impossible to please God? And did you know that some of those who pleased God did great exploits for God? Yes, you knew that from Hebrews 11. There were such people such as Able, and Enoch, and Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.

But did you know this: There were those who pleased Him so much that they were privileged by God to be scourged, to be

put in chains, to be put in prisons, to be stoned, to be sawn in two, to be tempted, to be slain with the sword? Did you know that? Some of those believers pleased Him so much the Lord allowed some to be wanderers in sheepskins and goatskins being destitute and to allow them to be afflicted and tormented. It pleased Him to let them be wanderers in deserts, and to live in dens and in caves.

I ask you, do you see some of your trials and difficulties as coming to you by God's favor? May I ask you, would you consider what you are going through to have been graced to you by God? Do you consider what you experience to be a privilege? Would you count that the grace of God?

Turn to Isaiah 53. Here we have a picture of the life of Christ. It pleased God to allow the saints of the last part of Hebrews 11 to experience those very trying things, and it pleased God to allow Christ to be crucified! We need to read the entire chapter, but because of time, just go to verse 10 which speaks of Christ. It says:

10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief.

Now think carefully of these words: "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." God was pleased to bruise, pleased to crush His Son on the cross? Do you grasp these words? Read the crucifixion story and you will see what that means. He tasted death by the grace of God. Christ was made a little lower than the angels that He by the grace of God should taste death for everyone! And it pleased God to bruise Him. The word

"bruised" could be translated "crushed." What an incredible statement.

Why would God be pleased to crush His only Son? It was because of what the outcome would be. If God bruised Christ and put Him to grief Christ would see His offspring. He would bring many sons to glory.

The next part of verse 10 now says:

10 ...When You make His soul and offering for sin, He shall prolong His days...

Albert Barnes comments like this: He shall see his seed His posterity; his descendants. The language here is taken from that which was regarded as the highest blessing among the Hebrews. With them length of days and a numerous posterity were regarded as the highest favors, and usually as the clearest proofs of the divine love. 'Children's children are the crown of old men'. (Prov. 17:6)."

Why did the Lord grace Christ with death? He would make His soul and offering for sin. He would die. And after He died He would see His seed and He would prolong His days.

We are most familiar with John 3:16. God so loved the world. All of mankind! In what way did He love them? So that He gave His only begotten Son to die for them. It pleased Him to do that because through that He would purge the sins of every person who comes to Him in repentance and faith.

When all is said and done He will have with Him everyone who has trusted Him by faith from Abel, who was murdered

for his faith, to the last person who will ever be saved and they will be with Him forever.

The last part of verse 10 says:

10 ...And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand.

Christ tasted death by the grace of God with this aim in mind, that the pleasure of the LORD would prosper in His hand. That is why it was by God's grace or pleasure that Christ was crucified. We so often quote the verse that says all things work together for good to those who love God. Believers are graced with some very difficult things. It is the end result that makes it grace. The pleasure of the Lord prospers in Christ's hands in all those who are true believers. Without the cross, Christ could never experience what He is now experiencing, nor could you and I. The cross led to the crown. So it is for us.

So Hebrews 12 says that He endured the cross for the joy set before Him. There is a word for us. Don't focus your gaze on the trials of this life, focus them on what is coming!

Now in verse 11-12 of Isaiah 53, if you note carefully, God is speaking to Isaiah:

11 He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the

transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors.

We come back to Hebrews 2 now to the last part of verse 9 which says:

9 ...that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

We are now looking at the words that He tasted death for everyone. As I read that I thought, "Well, that is a very non-Calvinistic verse, if ever there was one. I wonder what John MacArthur said about Christ tasting death for everyone." In the messages in which he dealt with this passage which I had before me he said nothing! He just said Christ died for everyone.

I checked a few others and John Gill, another staunch Calvinist, commented like this, and you have to listen carefully:

"Christ died, not merely as an example, or barely for the good of men, but as a surety, in their room and stead, and that **not** (emphasis mine) for every individual of mankind; for there are some he knows not; for some he does not pray; and there are some who will not be saved: the word "man" (i.e KJV) is not in the original text, it is only υπερ παντος , which may be taken either collectively, and be rendered "for the whole"; that is, the whole body, the church for whom Christ gave himself, and is the Saviour of; or distributively, and be translated, "for everyone"; (He then defines what for everyone means. He died...) for everyone of the sons God brings to glory, **Heb 2:10** for everyone of the "brethren," whom Christ sanctifies, and he is not

ashamed to own, and to whom he declares the name of God, **Heb 2:11,12** for everyone of the members of the "church," in the midst of which he sung praise, **Heb 2:12** for every one of the "children" God has given him, and for whose sake he took part of flesh and blood, **Heb 2:13,14** and for everyone of the "seed" of Abraham, in a spiritual sense, whose nature he assumed, **Heb 2:16.**"

So, let me reduce all that to make it a little more understandable: Christ died, not for everyone. He did not die for these: those He doesn't know; for those He does not pray for; for those who will not be saved. The word "man" (KJV) is not in the original text. But these are the ones He did die for. For everyone of the sons of glory; everyone of the brethren whom Christ sanctifies; for those He is not ashamed to own; and to those to whom He declares the name of God; for everyone who is a member of the Church; for everyone of the "children" God had given Him; and for everyone of the "seed" of Abraham in a spiritual sense."

So let me reduce that all to its bare Calvinistic bones: "Christ did not die for those He reprobated; He died only for the elect."

Now let me give you the *real* good news, the good news of the whole Bible. If anyone should prefer to not use the word *man* as it occurs in the KJV, then read it like the original has it. Here it is: He died for all!

The conclusion of our point is this: God did not put the world to come in subjection to angels, He put it in subjection to Jesus Christ. Christ

qualified to be the One to whom all things could be subjected because being divine, and having become a little lower than the angels by taking on a body, He died for all! We do not yet see all things in subjection to Him, but we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels by becoming man that He might taste death for everyone!

It was only for a little while that He was made lower than the angels. And in that little while He purged us from our sins. Then He ascended to heaven and there He was crowned with glory and honor! He was given the name which is above every name!

(2) Jesus: Made perfect (10)

Verse 8 said we do not yet see all things put under Jesus Christ. We can rest assured that we will see that someday in the future. But now we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels so He could die on our behalf.

We go then to verse 10. It says:

10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Verses 9-10 have some concepts that seem strange to us. Think of this: Suffering death by grace! Being saved by grace, that works for me. Suffering death by grace?

But now think of this: It says this was fitting, it was appropriate for God, the One for whom all things are and the One who made all things to be make His Son perfect through sufferings! That is

fitting? To let His only Son go to the cross was appropriate or fitting?

Consider the word "fitting." It speaks of that which is proper. Turn to Matthew 3. Jesus had just turned 30 years of age. His cousin, John the Baptist had begun his ministry already, being 6 months older than Jesus. And John had preached very convicting messages and people came to him by the score to be baptized.

We begin in verse 13:

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.

14 And John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?"

John recognized who Jesus was. He could have said this: "What! You, the Creator of the universe, You are coming to me for baptism! Don't ever think it!"

Verse 15:

15 But Jesus answered and said to him, "Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him.

Do you see the word *fitting* in this text? It is the word of our passage. It is the word *prepo*. I remember doing a message on this text many years ago and I spoke on the word "fitting," something like this. "Let us say you have made a good friend. And he does not have family around and you invite him for Christmas. He is to be there for a big meal. He is an hour late. You were anxious already. And he has logger's boots on his feet, and jeans

and an old shirt. He walks over to the table, plunks himself down and says, 'All right, bring it on.'"

That man did not do one "fitting" one "prepo" thing. Everything he did was inappropriate. We were on the river bank with my brother Ben one time. He has now passed away, but his little granddaughter did some nice and she said, "Did I do good papa?" And he said, "Yes, that was nice. But everything you did up to there was not."

Did you know that it is not appropriate for one not to be baptized if one is a true believer? It is not *prepo*. I understand that if you grow up in a Christian home and you profess salvation at a young age it is not appropriate to be baptized at 5 or 10 years of age. But when one matures, and one claims to be a Christian it is "fitting" it is proper, it is *prepo* to get baptized.

Now I can understand things like baptism. Some things are appropriate. But to understand that Christ might partake of death by grace, or that it was appropriate for God to make Him perfect by suffering, this is hard to understand.

One of the outstanding things in grammar, Bible interpretation, especially in the NT is the use of prepositional phrases. In my estimation, correctly understanding prepositional phrases in the NT is key to the interpretation of a big part of the NT epistles.

So let us now ask, how was it appropriate for Christ to be made

perfect in suffering? Note in our verse now the prepositional phrase, "in bringing many sons to glory." Jesus Christ came to save sinners. What qualifies Jesus Christ to be man's Saviour? Let me ask this now, is it appropriate for a liar to help another liar to quit lying? Would not the other liar say, "What do you have to say? You are a liar too"?

But how would one help a liar if one has never been tempted to lie? Maybe one has been a liar and then one has overcome that in some way and now one is victorious, now one might help another with that problem.

Let us go forward and read verses 14-18:

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

16 For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.

17 Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

So if Christ is to bring many sons to glory, is it not appropriate, that He experience what man experiences? He suffered and was tempted just like we are, yet without sin.

If the second Person of the triune God had not become human and had not been tempted in all points like we are in a human body how could He have been a merciful and faithful High Priest? Here is what I see in people. One person is strong in one area, and he or she has little patience for another who is weak in that same area. But that person who is weak in that area, is strong in another. And if you live a while and care, you will observe that.

Well, we cannot finish this verse this morning. Here is something for you to think about this week. Why did Jesus have to be made perfect? How could He be made perfect? Was He not always in every way perfect? If you do this homework you will be ready to listen next week.

CONCL: Well, we have covered a lot of material this morning. Here is our verse again:

9 But we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Why was Jesus made a little lower than the angels? You say, "Why do you keep bringing this up?" I'm checking to see if I am a good teacher. I read of a boy who mowed lawns in his town to make some money. One day he went to one house, knocked on the door and then asked if they needed anyone to do their lawn. And the guy said, no, we've got somebody already. And the boy said, "Well, are you happy with how he does his job?" "Oh yes, we're very happy with this job." "OK," he said and he was off. He was the boy who did that lawn and he was checking up on himself. So I'm just checking up on myself.

So I have one more question: How can it say that tasting death came by grace? How could God be pleased to crush His Son? Please tell me. It was so that in the end, the pleasure of the Lord could prosper in His hands. Without this crushing there would be no crown. And when He had been crushed, His pleasure began to be fulfilled in bringing many sons to glory. And we now we see Him crowned with glory and honor. Why is the Lord sometimes pleased to crush us? It is for the end result.

I see two great reasons why we don't have revival. The first is this: We don't see ourselves. And let me say this, when we have ugly things inside we don't want to see what is inside. Do I have trouble with anger? Do I want to see what the problem is why I am that way? No. I don't. I just want the anger to go away. But the anger, the lying, the pride, whatever it is reveals a fault within.

There may be second reason why we don't have revival. It is because we don't do anything about it when we do see something wrong within. And if the Lord will do great things in us we just have to be crushed. Job went through excruciating pain before he laid his hand over his mouth. Then it took some more before he said, "Behold I am vile. I abhor myself." If I come to that point I might stand there and say, "That is me? Unbelievable! I stink! I am gross!" And when Job was crushed, then out came the pure olive oil of Gethsemane. Oh the peace and the new joy. Oh the new life.

Listen to this verse my wife read me the other day: "Hear my voice according to Your lovingkindness; O LORD, revive me according to Your justice (Ps. 119:149). And if we should pray that, what death would He have to grace us with?"

