

Hebrews 2:5-7 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

Hebrews 2:5 For He did not **subject** to **angels** the **world** to **come**, **concerning which** we are **speaking** (**NASB: Lockman**)

Greek: [Ou gar aggelois hupetaxen](#) (3SAAI) [ten oikoumenen ten mellousan](#), (PAPFSA) [peri es laloumen](#). ([1PPAI](#))

Amplified: For it was not to angels that God subjected the habitable world of the future, of which we are speaking. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: It was not to angels that he subjected the order of things to come of which we are speaking. ([Westminster Press](#))

NLT: And furthermore, the future world we are talking about will not be controlled by angels. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: For though in past ages God did grant authority to angels, yet he did not put the future world of men under their control, and it is this world that we are now talking about. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: For He did not give to angels the administration of the inhabited earth to come concerning which we are speaking.

Young's Literal: For not to messengers did He subject the coming world, concerning which we speak

FOR HE DID NOT SUBJECT TO ANGELS: ou gar hupetaxen (3SAAI) aggelois:

- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Recovery of Man's Lost Destiny](#) - John MacArthur

Phillips: For though in past ages God did grant authority to angels, yet he did not put the future world of men under their control, and it is this world that we are now talking about.

(**YLT**) For not to messengers did He subject the coming world, concerning which we speak,

For - term of explanation

Note the emphatic placement of the absolute negative "**ou**", emphasizing that in no way are angels to be in authority over the world to come.

Subject ([5293](#)) (**hupotasso [word study]** from **hupó** = under + **tasso** = arrange in orderly manner) means literally to place under in an orderly fashion.

In the **active voice** (as in the present passage) **hupotasso** means to subject, bring under firm control, subordinate as used in (Ro 8:20-note).

Hupotasso - 38x in 31v - put in subjection(5), subject(16), subjected(7), subjecting(1), subjection(4), submissive(3), submit(2).

Luke 2:51; 10:17, 20; Rom 8:7, 20; 10:3; 13:1, 5; 1 Cor 14:32, 34; 15:27f; 16:16; Eph 1:22; 5:21, 24; Phil 3:21; Col 3:18; Titus 2:5, 9; 3:1; Heb 2:5, 8; 12:9; Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 2:13, 18; 3:1, 5, 22; 5:5.

In secular Greek, **hupotasso** was a military term meaning to draw up in order of battle, to form, array, marshal, both troops or ships. The idea is that the various troop divisions were arranged in an orderly fashion under the command of their leader. In this state of subordination they were now subject to the orders of their commander (and thus better able to achieve their objective).

As an aside, in the NT in other passages the idea of **submission** focuses not on personality but position. We need to see the authority over us not acting to fulfill their own will per se, but as instruments in the hand of God to fulfill His will on earth as it is in heaven. If we look at people as acting on their own will, we will likely become bitter, but if we can see them as acting as God sovereignly, providentially allows, we will be far more likely to become holy. A beautiful example of this is found in the life of Joseph. His brothers consistently mistreated him and it would have been very easy for him to become bitter. And yet he maintained a divine perspective on the problems with the result that his school of adversity helped him graduate as a holy man of God, of whom Scripture records not a single rebuke or misstep.

Hupotasso was used for any system of administration. God will not turn over the administration of the future world to angels (even has He has not placed the present world under their authority). The Messianic age to come will be the great and glorious world, the world of perfection (see Millennium). Whoever reigns in that world will be glorious indeed (Re 20:4, 5, 7, 1:6, 5:10 - see notes on who reigns [Revelation 20:4](#); [20:5](#); [20:6](#) cp [Revelation 1:6](#); [Revelation 5:10](#)). And those who reign will not be the angels. Thus their present superiority over men is temporary.

Angels ([32](#)) (**aggelos**) means a messenger... who speaks and acts in place of one who has sent him.

Angels have considerable authority in this present world (Da 10:13; Mt 18:10), and our present inhabited earth, is ruled by angels (see **notes on the prince of the power of the air** in Ep 2:2-note). The chief fallen angel is Satan, who is also prince of this world. The writer of Hebrews is emphasizing that God intends to subject the world to come to men, not angels. The first Adam lost the right to rule over the earth, but the second Adam, Jesus Christ, acting as our "Goel" or "Kinsman Redeemer" (see discussion of the **Goel = Kinsman Redeemer**; **See another tabular discussion of Kinsman Redeemer**) paid the redemption price, Peter writing...

knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. (See **notes** 1 Peter 1:18; 1 Peter 1:19)

Because of what Christ our Redeemer has accomplished men will once again be restored to the position of rulership over the earth because of our position in Christ, the One in Whom all things are summed up (Ep 1:10-note).

THE WORLD TO COME: ten oikoumenen (PAP) ten mellousan (PAPFSA):

- He 6:5 2 Pe 3:13 Rev 11:15
- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Recovery of Man's Lost Destiny](#) - John MacArthur

Spurgeon - We are the preachers of it—not the angels. The great Author and Finisher of our faith is the man Christ Jesus—not an angel. We do not now have the ministry of angels, but the ministry of men, by whom the Lord of the angels sends His messages to their fellows.

World ([3625](#)) (**oikoumene**) refers to the inhabited earth, the world. not the general term **kosmos**, which means "system," or aion, meaning "the ages."

There will be an inhabited earth to come but it cannot be referring to this present earth, because it is going to be significantly changed (Zech. 14:9-11). Many signs, in fact, seem to indicate that the change is near.

Wuest - The word "world" is the translation of oikoumene (οἰκουμένη), literally, "the inhabited earth," here the Millennial Kingdom of the Messiah. This kingdom will not be administered by angels. An angel once was the regent of God on the first perfect earth, which angel with his associated angels administered the affairs of a pre-Adamic race. His throne was on earth. He was the anointed cherub, the guardian of the holiness of God. He struck at God's throne, and forfeited the regency of this earth (Isaiah 14:12-14; Ezekiel 28:1-19). That angel was Lucifer. He is now Satan. The earth over which he had ruled, was rendered a desolation and a waste, and he, with his angelic cohorts, were banished. After the restoration of the earth, God placed man upon it, but man handed the sceptre over to Satan, who now is the god of the world-system and whose throne is again on earth (Rev. 2:13). But the Lord Jesus, through the blood of His Cross, has regained for man the dominion over this earth, and will in the Millennial Kingdom dethrone Satan, ruling as King of kings and Lord of lords. The saved of the human race will be associated with Him in this

reign. Thus, the angels will not administer the Millennial earth, but man in the Person of the Son of Man and those of the human race saved by His precious blood. ([Hebrews - Wuest's word studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

To come ([3195](#)) (**mello**) means to occur at a point of time in the future which is subsequent to another event and closely related to it Here the present participle is used absolutely to denote what is coming future.

The implication is that God has allowed Satan to rule in this present world, but his end is in sight. The prince of the earth, of the system of the world, now is Satan. (**See related** discussions on devil = diabolos; Excursus on the prince of the power of the air)

“The whole world lies in the power of the evil one” (**1Jn 5:19**). (**Comment:** John says "**we know**" which is the verb (oida) expressing absolute certainty beyond a chance. God placed this awareness in our hearts when He transferred us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His beloved Son. The use of the **perfect tense** conveys the truth that this knowledge is permanent in believers. The "**world**" is not **oikoumene** but **kosmos** which in this moral or ethically use refers to the world system of evil of which Satan is the head, all unsaved people his servants, together with the pursuits, pleasure, purposes, people, and places where God is not wanted. **Kosmos** is the hostile world of men who are living alienated, apart from God and irrevocably opposed to Him. John minces no words in this passage emphasizing that there are only two spheres of spiritual existence - one is either in Christ (in His Kingdom - children of God) or in Adam (in the world - children of Satan), the latter "spiritual address" applying to every person who has never been saved by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. In sum, this evil world system is the domain of the evil one, Satan! Because the whole world belongs to Satan, Christians should assiduously avoid its polluting and corrupting influences.)

In sum, Satan now rules the cursed planet earth, and he is the prince or ruler of the power of the air who has authority over all unregenerate men and women. When God created man and woman Moses records

And God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (Genesis 1:28)

When Adam sinned in Genesis 3, in the garden in which he was the "king", he lost his soul, but he also lost his crown, representing his rule over the earth. He was totally sinful (sinful from head to toe, on the outside and inside = total depravity) and became enslaved to the power and rule of his new masters **Sin** and **Satan** (Devil). Adam's sin that brought the curse on creation. Docile creatures became ferocious. The ground began to bring forth thorns and thistles.

And so the writer is here referring to the new order, the salvation just described.

Peter alludes to the certain coming new order writing...

But according to His promise we are looking for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells (See **note** 2 Peter 3:13)

The phrase "**world to come**" used by **Rabbis** to refer to **Messianic age** when Messiah would rule the world as King from His throne in Jerusalem! (Re 19:11, 15 - see **notes** [Rev 19:11](#), [19:15](#))

CONCERNING WHICH WE ARE SPEAKING: peri es laloumen (1PPAI):

- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
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The author is discussing this new order introduced by Christ which makes obsolete the old dispensation of rites and symbols.

In his book **The Way Into the Holiest**, F B Meyer entitles Chapter 5

"WHAT IS MAN?"

"We see Jesus,... crowned with glory and honor." Hebrews 2:5-9.

IN the first great division of this treatise, we have seen the incomparable superiority of the Lord Jesus to angels, and archangels, and all the heavenly host. But now there arises an objection which was very keenly realized by these Hebrew Christians; and which, to a certain extent, presses upon us all; Why did the Son of God become man? How are the sorrows, sufferings, and death of the Man of Nazareth consistent with the sublime glories of the Son of God, the equal and fellow of the Eternal?

These questions are answered during the remainder of the chapter, and may be gathered up into a single sentence: He who was above all angels became lower than the angels for a little time; that He might lift men from their abasement, and set them on his own glorious level in His heavenly Father's kingdom; and that he might be a faithful and merciful High Priest for the sorrowful and tempted and dying. Here is an act worthy of a God Here are reasons which are more than sufficient to answer the old question, for which Anselm prepared so elaborate a reply in his book, "Cur Deus Homo?"

"What is man?" Those three words in **Hebrews 2:6** are the fit starting point of the argument. We need not only a true philosophy of God, but a true philosophy of man, in order to right thinking on the Gospel. The idolater thinks man inferior to birds and beasts and creeping things, before which he prostrates himself. The materialist reckons him to be the chance product of natural forces which have evolved him; and before which he is therefore likely to pass away. The pseudo-science of the time makes him of one blood with ape and gorilla, and assigns him a common origin with the beasts. See what gigantic systems of error have developed from mistaken conceptions of the true nature and dignity of man! From all such we turn to that noble ideal of man's essential dignity, given in this sublime paragraph, which corrects our mistaken notions; and, whilst giving us an explanation that harmonizes with all our experience and observation, opens up to us vistas of thought worthy of God.

MAN AS GOD MADE HIM

The description given here of the origin and dignity of man is taken from Psalm 8., which is doubtless a reminiscence of the days when David kept his father's sheep; even if it were not composed on that very spot over which in after-years the heavenly choirs broke upon the astonished shepherds "abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

Turn to that Psalm, and see how well it expresses the emotions which must well up in devout hearts to God as we consider the midnight heavens, the tapestry work of his fingers, and the spheres lit by the moon and stars, which he has ordained. How impossible it is for those who are given to devout reflection to come in contact with any of the grander forms of natural beauty, the far-spread expanse of ocean, the outlines of the mountains, the changing pomp of the skies without turning from the handiwork to the great Artisan, with some such expression as the apostrophe with which the Psalm opens and closes: "O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth." At first sight, man is utterly unworthy to be compared with those vast and wondrous spectacles revealed to us by the veiling of the sun. His life is but as a breath; as a shadow careering over the mountain-side; as the existence of the aphides on a leaf in the vast forests of being. What can be said of his character, sin-stained and befouled, in contrast with peaks whose virgin snows have never been defiled; with sylvan scenes, whose peace has never been ruffled; with silvery spheres, whose chimes of perfect harmony have never been broken by discord? Four times over is the question asked upon the pages of Scripture, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" (Psalm 144:3; Job 7:17-20; Psalm 8:4; Heb. 2:6.) Yet it is an undeniable fact that God is mindful of man, and that he does visit him. "Mindful!" There is not a moment in God's existence in which he is not as mindful of this world of men as the mother of the babe whom she has left for a moment in the next room, but whose slightest cry or moan she is quick to catch. "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me." "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" "Visiting!" No cot is so lowly, no heart so wayward, no life so solitary, but God visits it. No one shall read these lines, the path around whose heart-door is not trodden hard by the feet of him who often comes and stands and knocks. We speak as if only our sorrows were divine visitations. Alas for us, if it were only so! Every throb of holy desire, every gentle mercy, every gift of Providence, is a visitation of God. But there must be some great and sufficient reason why the Maker of the universe should take so much interest in man. Evidently bigness is not greatness; a tiny babe is worth more than the tallest mountain; and an empress-mother will linger in the one room where her child is ill, though she forsake the remainder of her almost illimitable domain. What if earth shall turn out to be the nursery of the universe! The true clew, however, to all speculation is to be found in the declaration by the Psalmist of God's original design in making man: "Thou crownedst him... Thou madest him to have dominion... Thou hast put all things under his feet " (Psalm

8:5-6, R.V.). Nor was this lofty ideal first given to the Psalmist's poetic vision. It had an earlier origin. It is a fragment of the great Charta of humanity, which God gave to our first parents in Paradise. Turn to that noble archaic record, Gen. 1:26-28, which transcends the imaginings of modern science as far as it does those legends of creation which make the heathen literature with which they are incorporated incredible. Its simplicity, its sublimity, its fitness, attest its origin and authority to be divine. We are prepared to admit that God's work in creation was symmetrical and orderly, and that he worked out his design according to an ever-unfolding plan. But science has discovered nothing as yet to contradict the express statements of Scripture, that the first man was not at all inferior to ourselves in those intellectual and moral faculties which are the noblest heritage of mankind.

"God created man in his own image" (Gen. 1:27). -There we have the divine likeness. Our mental and moral nature is made on the same plan as God's: the divine in miniature. Truth, love, and purity, like the principles of mathematics, are the same in us as in him. If it were not so, we could not know or understand him. But since it is so, it has been possible for him to take on himself our nature-possible also that we shall be one day transformed to the perfect image of his beauty.

"And God said, Have dominion" (Gen. 1:28). -There you have royal supremacy. Man was intended to be God's vice-regent and representative. King in a palace stored with all to please him: monarch and sovereign of all the lower orders of creation. The sun to labor for him as a very Hercules; the moon to light his nights, or lead the waters round the earth in tides, cleansing his coasts; elements of nature to be his slaves and messengers; flowers to scent his path; fruits to please his taste; birds to sing for him; fish to feed him; beasts to toil for him and carry him. Not a cringing slave, but a king crowned with the glory of rule, and with the honor of universal supremacy. Only a little lower than angels; because they are not, like him, encumbered with flesh and blood. This is man as God made him to be.

II. MAN AS SIN HAS MADE HIM

We see not yet all things subjected to him (see note Hebrews 2:8).

His crown is rolled in the dust, his honor tarnished and stained. His sovereignty is strongly disputed by the lower orders of creation. If trees nourish him, it is after strenuous care, and they often disappoint. If the earth supplies him with food, it is in tardy response to exhausting toil. If the beasts serve him, it is because they have been laboriously tamed and trained; whilst vast numbers roam the forest glades, setting him at defiance. If he catch the fish of the sea, or the bird of the air, he must wait long in cunning concealment. Some traces of the old lordship are still apparent in the terror which the sound of the human voice and the glance of the eye still inspire in the lower creatures, as in the feats of lion-tamer or snake-charmer. But for the most part anarchy and rebellion have laid waste man's fair realm. So degraded has he become, that he has bowed before the objects that he was to command; and has prostrated his royal form in shrines dedicated to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. It is the fashion nowadays to extol heathen philosophy; but how can we compare it for a moment with the religion of the Bible, when its pyramids are filled with mummies of deified animals, and its temples with the sacred bull! Where is the supremacy of man? Not in the savage cowering before the beasts of the forest; nor in the civilized races that are the slaves of lust and sensuality and swinish indulgence; nor in those who, refusing to recognize the authority of God, fail to exercise any authority themselves. "Sin hath reigned," as the Apostle says most truly (Rom. 5:21). And all who bow their necks beneath its yoke are slaves and menials and cowering subjects, in comparison with what God made and meant them to be. Do not point to the wretched groups surrounding the doors of the gin-palaces in the metropolis of the most Christian people of the world, and regard their condition as a stain on the love or power of God. This is not his work. These are the products of sin. An enemy hath done this. Would you see man as God intended him to be, you must go back to Eden, or forward to the New Jerusalem. Sin defiles, debases, disfigures, and blasts all it touches. And we may shudder to think that its virus is working through our frame, as we discover the results of its ravages upon myriads around.

III. MAN AS CHRIST CAN MAKE HIM

We behold Jesus crowned with glory and honor (see note Hebrews 2:9)

"What help is that?" cries an objector; "of course he is crowned with glory and honor, since he is the Son of God." But notice, the glory and honor mentioned here are altogether different from the glory of Hebrews 1:3. That was the incommunicable glory of his deity. This is the acquired glory of his humanity. In John 17 our Lord himself distinguishes between the two. In Hebrews 2:5, the glory which he had with the Father as his right before all worlds. In Hebrews 2:4, the glory given as the reward for his sufferings, which he could not have had unless he had taken upon himself the form of a servant, and had been made in the fashion of man, humbling himself, and becoming

obedient to the death of the cross, "made a little lower than the angels, because of the suffering of death; crowned with glory and honor: that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man" (see notes Philippians 2:7; 2:8; Hebrews 2:10). This is the crown wherewith his Father crowned him in the day of the gladness of his heart, when, as man, he came forth victorious from the last wrestle with the Prince of hell. All through his earthly life he fulfilled the ancient ideal of man. He was God's image; and those who saw him saw the Father. He was Sovereign in his commands. Winds and waves did his bidding. Trees withered at his touch. Fish in shoals obeyed his will. Drove of cattle fled before his scourge of small cords. Disease and death and devils owned his sway. But all was more fully realized when he was about to return to his Father, and said, in a noble outburst of conscious supremacy, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

"We behold him."

Behold Him, Christian reader! The wreaths of empire are on his brow. The keys of death and Hades swing at his girdle. The mysterious living creatures, representatives of redeemed creation, attest that he is worthy. All things in heaven and earth, and under the earth, and in the seas, worship him; so do the bands of angels, beneath whom he stooped for a little season, on our behalf.

And as He is, we too shall be. He is there as the type and specimen and representative of redeemed men. We are linked with Him in indissoluble union. Through Him we shall get back our lost empire. We too shall be crowned with glory and honor. The day is not far distant when we shall sit at His side-joint-heirs in His empire; comrades in His glory, as we have been comrades in His sorrows; beneath our feet all things visible and invisible, thrones and principalities and powers; whilst above us shall be the unclouded empyrean of our Father's love, forever and forever.

Oh, destiny of surpassing bliss!

Oh, rapture of saintly hearts!

Oh, miracle of divine omnipotence!

(F. B. Meyer. The Way Into the Holiest)

Hebrews 2:6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [diemarturato \(1AMI\)](#) [de pou tis legon. \(PAP\)](#) [Ti estin \(3SPA\)](#) [anthropos oti mimneske \(2SPPI\)](#) [autou, e huios anthropou oti episkepte \(2SPMI\)](#) [auton?](#)

Amplified: It has been solemnly and earnestly said in a certain place, What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You graciously and helpfully care for and visit and look after him? ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: Somewhere in scripture someone bears this witness to the fact: "What is man that you remember him? Or the son of man that you visit him?" ([Westminster Press](#))

NLT: For somewhere in the Scriptures it says, "What is man that you should think of him, and the son of man that you should care for him?" ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: But someone has said: 'What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you take care of him?' ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you look upon him in order to come to his aid?

Young's Literal: and one in a certain place did testify fully, saying, 'What is man, that Thou art mindful of him, or a son of man, that Thou dost look after him?'

BUT ONE HAS TESTIFIED SOMEWHERE: diemarturato (1AMI) de pou tis:

- He 4:4 5:6 1Pe 1:11
- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Recovery of Man's Lost Destiny](#) - John MacArthur

The writer quotes not from the Hebrew but the **Septuagint (LXX)** or Greek translation of **Psalm 8** (The OT Greek reads "*ti estin anthropos hoti mimneske autou he huios anthropou hoti episkepte auton*" The original Hebrew according to Clarke reads "*What is miserable man, that thou rememberest him? and the son of Adam, that thou visitest him?*")

It has been solemnly and earnestly said in a certain place, What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You graciously and helpfully care for and visit and look after him? (**Amplified**)

But someone has said: 'What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you take care of him? (**Phillips**)

But, as we know, a writer has solemnly said, "How poor a creature is man, and yet Thou dost remember him, and a son of man, and yet Thou dost come to him! (**Weymouth**)

Testified (1263) (**diamarturomai** from **diá** = an intensifying preposition + **martúromai** = witness, bear witness; English ~ martyr) means to make a solemn declaration about the truth of something and thus indicates a solemn, testimony or vigorous testimony. David the writer of Psalm 8 made a serious declaration on basis of his presumed personal knowledge.

The first use of this verb in the NT is interesting, Luke recording the words of the rich man who had encountered his eternal destiny beginning with Hades (which itself will eventually be thrown into gehenna, the lake of fire), the rich man desperately declaring...

"I have five brothers-- that he may **warn** them, lest they also come to this place of torment." (**Luke 16:28**) (**Comment:** **diamarturomai** is not used with this meaning here in Hebrews 2:6, but it does give one a sense of the intensity of this verb compared to the simple verb for witness, **martúromai**)

Somewhere - this statement does not mean that the writer is ignorant of the identity of the writer of the psalm, but assume that his Hebrew readers would know who the author was. He obviously knew the passage well, since he quotes the **Septuagint (LXX)** perfectly!

SAYING "WHAT IS MAN THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM": tis legon (PAP) ti estin (3PAI) anthropos hoti mimnesko autou e huios anthropou hoti episkepte (2SPMI) auton:

- Job 7:17,18 15:14 Ps 8:4-8 144:3 Isa 40:17
- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
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What is man? - The insignificance of man on one hand is implied. On the other hand, although each person is insignificant compared to the stupendous work of creation (David had just said "*When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained*" Ps 8:3), God cares for him! This is an amazing, awe-inspiring truth. The reference is to the earthly nature of man as formed out of the dust. The word for "**man**" here in the Greek text is not **aner** which refers to a male individual but **anthropos** which is the generic term signifying mankind in general. So men, the redeemed ladies rule also, for both are in Christ.

Job records a similar thought asking...

"What is man that Thou dost magnify him, and that Thou art concerned about him, that Thou dost examine him every morning, and try him every moment? (**Job 7:17-18**) (**Comment:** Job raises the question which David asked centuries later in Psalm 8:4, and which is quoted in this section).

The answer is that Jesus became a Man, the perfect God Man. He left heaven's glory, came down to this earth, and He didn't become an angel. That is what the writer of Hebrews will explain. God made man lower than the angels,

the writers quote from Psalm 8 making this abundantly clear,.

Vincent - "*The Hebrew interrogation, "what, what kind of", implies "how small or insignificant" compared with the array of the heavenly bodies; not "how great is man."*

Someone has sarcastically stated that

"Man is a rash on the epidermis of a minor planet."

Someone else has calculated the worth (in terms of the chemical composition) of a man weighing 150 lbs as \$0.98 in the 1930s, \$3.50 in the 1960s and \$5.60 in the 1970s. Over 60% of the body weight is water, which is "no charge". In short, even considering inflation, man is not worth very much!

Remember (3403) (**mimnesko**) means to recall to mind.

OR THE SON OF MAN: **e huios anthropou** :

- Job 25:6 Ps 146:3,4 Isa 51:12
- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Recovery of Man's Lost Destiny](#) - John MacArthur

Son of man - This is not the same Greek phrase (ho huios tou anthrōpou = "the Son of the man") Jesus used so often to refer to Himself, but literally here "the son of a man". "**Son of man**" is often used in the OT to mean mankind. For example, Ezekiel is called "the son of man" more than 90 times, this phrase simply indicating that he was a human being, a part of mankind. In short, the phrase "**Son of man**" was simply a Semitic way of saying "human being".

Vincent commenting on "**son of man**" writes that it is synonymous with the "Hebrew son of Adam, with a reference to his earthly nature as formed out of the dust. Very often in Ezekiel as a form of address to the prophet, LXX, son of man. The direct reference of these words cannot be to the Messiah, yet one is reminded that the Son of man was Christ's own title for himself. ([Hebrews 2: Word Studies](#))

MacArthur writes that "Some take the son of man as a reference to Christ, but I think it is simply a parallel to man." (**Comment:** See the variation of opinion in commentaries listed below)

THAT THOU ART CONCERNED ABOUT HIM: **hoti episkepte (PMI) auton**:

- Ge 50:24 Lu 1:68,78 7:16
- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Recovery of Man's Lost Destiny](#) - John MacArthur

Concerned (1980) (**episkeptomai [word study]** from **epí** = upon + **sképtomai** = to look) means to examine closely, to inspect, to look upon, to look after, to go to see. It is related to **episkopos** which describes an overseer of the church in the NT.

Episkeptomai meant to go to see with the goal of relieving distress, sickness, or bondage and is used of visiting of the sick in NT or of a visitation for the purpose of showing or doing good to the one visited.

For example in Matthew Jesus will say to the "**sheep**" on His right (Gentiles who have survived the **Great Tribulation** and are being prepared for entrance into Messiah's **Millennial Kingdom**)...

(I Jesus, as represented by the Jews you encountered during their final time of great persecution, was) "naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you **visited (episkeptomai)** Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me." (**Matthew 25:36**) (But to the "goats" on His left He will declare) "43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not **visit (episkeptomai)** Me." (**Matthew 25:43**) (**Comment:** This passage

refers to the so-called Judgment of the Sheep and the Goats which will take place at the return of Jesus just prior to His 1000 year reign on earth.)

Vincent adds that "Here in the sense of graciously and helpfully regarding; caring for."

This word is used almost exclusively in the **LXX** of a visitation for good and has to do with looking toward someone with a view to benefiting him. It is much more than simply a wish or desire for the person's welfare. It involves active caring. For example see the use by Luke who writes...

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He has **visited (episkeptomai)** us and accomplished redemption for His people... 78 Because of the tender mercy of our God, With which the Sunrise (~ the Resurrected Son) from on high shall **visit (episkeptomai)** us (Luke 1:68, 78)

In the **LXX** many of the uses of episkeptomai are in the Psalms, so that Jewish readers of this letter would be familiar with **episkeptomai** a visitation for good. For example in the Psalms we read

Ps 106:4 Remember me, O LORD, in Your favor toward Your people; **Visit** me (**LXX = episkeptomai** here actually as an imperative of request) with Your salvation,

Ps 17:3 You have tried my heart; You have **visited (LXX = episkeptomai)** me by night; You have tested me and You find nothing; I have purposed that my mouth will not transgress.

Ps 65:9 You **visit (LXX = episkeptomai)** the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth.

OF CRABS AND DOGS AND MEN - The well-known evolutionist Stephen Jay Gould wrote, "A crab is not lower or less complex than a human being in any meaningful way." But would Mr. Gould carry out his theory to its logical conclusion? I doubt it. It's likely that he'd think nothing of dining at a fine restaurant and enjoy eating crabmeat. But I'm sure he would be appalled if the same menu offered a dinner of grilled human flesh served with French fries.

Evolutionists can say what they will, but there is a fundamental difference between man and animals. I explained this to a woman once, but she was irritated because I wouldn't assure her that dogs go to heaven when they die. She said they have just as much right to go there as we do. I told her that we deserve it less; we are sinners. Dogs aren't. They don't make bad moral choices as we do. But neither are they capable of making good choices. Furthermore, we think about God, eternity, and right and wrong. No dog has that capacity.

God created us in His image. That's why we are responsible to worship and serve Him. We can do this by admitting that we are sinners, receiving Jesus as our Savior, and growing in Christlikeness. Then we truly show the difference between crabs and men.-- Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Man's crowning glory lies in this:
God stamped on him His image rare;
No other creatures have that gift
Nor living things with man compare.
-- Dennis J. De Haan

Just because man has similarities to animals
doesn't make an animal out of a man.

VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF WHO THE "MAN" IS

MacArthur Study Bible - These quoted verses from Psalm 8 refer to mankind, not to the Messiah, who is not mentioned in the Hebrews passage until verse 9. In verses 6-8 we see God's planned destiny for mankind in general. Again the writer beautifully makes his point by using the Old Testament. ([MacArthur, John: Hebrews. Moody Press](#))

Nelson Study Bible = Since the Son's humanity might appear to be an obstacle to the claim of His superiority, the author of Hebrews cites Ps. 8, a lyrical reflection on Gen. 1, to prove that God has placed humanity over all created

things, which includes the angelic world. ([Radmacher, E. D., Allen, R. B., & House, H. W. The Nelson Study Bible: NKJV. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

C H Spurgeon (commenting on Hebrews 2:6-8) = This was the original status of man. God made him to be his vicegerent on earth; and he would still hold that position were it not that, since he has rebelled against his own Sovereign, even the beasts of the field take liberty to be rebellious against him. Man is not now in his original estate, and therefore he rules not now; and we see many men who are very far from being royal beings, for they are mean and grovelling. Yet the glory of man is not all lost, as we shall see.

Zane Hodges in Bible Knowledge Commentary - "It has been claimed that the Dead Sea Scrolls show that the sectarians of Qumran believed that the coming Age would be marked by the dominion of Michael and his angelic subordinates. The statement here by the writer of Hebrews forcefully refutes this view. Not... angels, but people, will be awarded this dominion in the world to come. That the author was not just now introducing this subject is made plain by the expression about which we are speaking. It is obvious that the first chapter, with its manifest stress on the kingship and future reign of the Son, was about this very subject." ([Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., et al: The Bible Knowledge Commentary. 1985. Victor](#)).

KJV Bible Commentary - Quoting Psalm 8, the author shows God's intended ruler: **What is man ... or the son of man**. This Psalm does not speak both of man and Christ; it is not messianic. The **son of man** is not to be distinguished from man. The phrases are merely an example of the common synonymous parallelism in Hebrew poetry. "*Hence this passage was not regarded as a messianic prediction by Jewish teachers, but as a description of what God intended man to be*" (Kent, p. 53). ([Dobson, E. G., Charles Feinberg, E Hindson, Woodrow Kroll, H L. Wilmington: KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson](#))

William MacDonald writes that the "Psalm 8:4-6 is quoted to show that the eventual dominion over the earth has been given to man, not to angels. In a sense, man is insignificant, and yet God is mindful of him. In a sense, man is unimportant, yet God does take care of him. In the scale of creation, man has been given a lower place than the angels. He is more limited as to knowledge, mobility, and power. And he is subject to death. Yet in the purposes of God, man is destined to be crowned with glory and honor. The limitations of his body and mind will be largely removed, and he will be exalted on the earth. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Lawrence Richards in the "Teacher's Commentary" - The great salvation (Heb. 2:5-18). What is the "**great salvation**" that the writer described? Hebrews views salvation as nothing less than the exaltation of humanity (Hebrews 2:5-13), and as an escape to freedom (Hebrews 2:14-18). ([Lawrence Richards: The Teacher's Commentary](#))

Kent Hughes in Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul writes that

The author establishes this as the ultimate intention by demonstrating that it is in accord with the original intention of God for humanity. His proof is a quotation from the middle of Psalm 8 that celebrates God's original intention for man. He introduces and recites it in Ps 8:6, 7, 8a. The Psalmist is completely astonished at God's intention for man. Of course the intention was not new because it was originally spelled out in Ge 1:26, 27, 28. Think of man's astonishing honor: "you crowned him with glory and honor." Adam and Eve were the king and queen of original creation. God set them in a glorious paradise and walked with them. Consider man's amazing authority: "... and put everything under his feet. This was given to mankind through Adam (Genesis 1:28). Man was given rule over the world. Adam and Eve were God's viceroys—creature king and creature queen with the responsibility of ordering creation under the Lordship of God. Poetically speaking, Adam was "an august creature with all things put in subjection to him, wearing the very sun as a diadem, treading the very stars like unconsidered dust beneath his feet."

The original intention of God, to say the least, was stupendous. If the intention had been carried out, we descendants of Adam would be living with our primal parents in the same astounding position and honor and authority—a world of kings and queens. The implicit message to the beleaguered church is that we may feel ourselves insignificant, but we are not. We are in God's image, and He cares for each one of us.

Adam sinned, and as a consequence his God-given dominion became twisted. Man's rule over creation has through the centuries become an ecological disaster. His reign over the animal world is superficial. He achieves it by intimidation: "Obey me, or I'll eat you or wear you!" And sometimes he himself has been the feast. The problem is, he cannot rule over himself, let alone

others. And the dictum, "Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely" is lived out before the eyes of every generation—as it was so personally being done before that storm-tossed little church. Chesterton was right:

"Whatever is or is not true about men, this one thing is certain—man is not what he was meant to be." ([Hughes, R. K. Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul. Volume 1. Crossway Books; Volume 2](#))

IVP BACKGROUND COMMENTARY ON NT:

The Old Testament and Jewish teaching declared that God's people would reign with him in the world to come, just as Adam and Eve had been designed to reign for him in the beginning. The writer proceeds to prove this point by appealing to a specific Old Testament text, Ps 8:4-6, in Jewish midrashic style.

"**One has testified somewhere**" (NASB) does not mean that the writer has forgotten what part of Scripture he is quoting; this was a way of expressing confidence that the important issue was that God had inspired the words. Philo used similar phrases in this manner. The writer can introduce Ps 8:4, 5, 6 naturally on the basis of the Jewish interpretive rule, *gezerah shavah*, the principle by which one was permitted to link key words or phrases. This text speaks of everything subdued under someone's feet, as had the text he had cited most recently (He 1:13-note).

Psalm 8:4-6 declares that although humanity is nothing in itself, God appointed humans as rulers over all his creation, second only to himself (alluding to Gen 1:26-27). The Septuagint interprets this passage as "a little lower than the angels" instead of "a little lower than God" (the Hebrew word used there, *elohim*, sometimes did mean angels instead of God). That angels were more powerful than people in this age was true, but the writer of Hebrews is going to make a different point. In the verses that follow, he expounds the version of this passage with which his readers are familiar in traditional Jewish interpretive style. ([IVP Background Commentary New Testament](#))

Wycliffe Bible Commentary in my opinion incorrectly interprets this passage writing = A quotation from Ps 8:5, 5, 7 introduced by the indefinite "*one... somewhere*" (ASV). This quotation is the proof of the statement concerning "the world that is to be." The quotation establishes the humanity of the Son, who was made a little lower than the angels in order to taste death for every man. Now he is being exalted and crowned with glory and with honor because in his humanity he bore the humiliation of death (Phil 2:5-8). Because he suffered he is now exalted. Because he temporarily subjected himself to the limitations of humanity, he is now crowned with glory. ([Pfeiffer, C F: Wycliffe Bible Commentary. 1981. Moody](#))

Kenneth Wuest - The question as to whether the Messiah or man is spoken of in Heb 2:6, 7, 8, is settled easily and finally by the Greek word translated "visit." The Psalmist is exclaiming as to the insignificance of man in the question, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? That is clear. But to whom do the words "son of man" refer, to the Messiah who is called the Son of man, or to mankind? The Greek word "visit" is *episkeptomai*. The word means "to look upon in order to help or to benefit, to look after, to have a care for." This clearly indicates that the son of man spoken of here is the human race. God looks upon the human race in order to help or to benefit it. Thus, the picture in Heb 2:6, 7, 8 is that of the human race in Adam. ([Wuest, K. S. Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: Erdmans](#))

NIV Commentary - The psalmist is concerned with both the insignificance and the greatness of man. There is, of course, no difference in meaning between "man" and "son of man" in this verse. The parallelism of Hebrew poetry requires that the two be taken in much the same sense; and in any case it is quite common in Hebrew idiom for "the son of" to denote quality, as, for example, "the son of strength" means "the strong man." So "son of man" means one who has the quality of being man. (We should not be led astray by recollecting that in the Gospels Jesus often calls himself "Son of man"; that usage is quite different.)

In Heb 2:8 a few commentators see "him" as referring in this place to Christ, to whom alone all things are rightly subjected. But grammatically there is no reason for this. The passage is describing the place of mankind in God's order, and we do not come to Christ's place until v. 9. ([College Press NIV Commentary Series](#))

NIV Study Bible Note - Awed by the marvelous order and immensity of God's handiwork in the celestial universe, the psalmist marveled at the high dignity God had bestowed on puny man by entrusting him with dominion over the other creatures. ([NIV Study Bible](#))

William Barclay - If we are ever to understand this passage correctly we must understand one thing-the whole reference of Psalm 8 is to man. It sings of the glory that God gave to man. There is no reference to the Messiah. The writer to the Hebrews shows us three things. (i) He shows us the ideal of what man should be-kin to God and master of the universe. (ii) He shows us the actual state of man-the frustration instead of the mastery, the failure instead of the glory. (iii) He shows us how the actual can be changed into the ideal through Christ. The writer to the Hebrews sees in Christ the One, who by his sufferings and his glory can make man what he was meant to be and what, without him, he could never be. ([Barclay, W: The Daily Study Bible Series, Rev. ed. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press](#))

Hebrews 2:7 YOU HAVE MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; YOU HAVE CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAVE APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF YOUR HANDS (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: [elattosas](#) (2SAAI) [auton brachu ti par' aggelous](#), doxe [kai time estephanosas](#) (2SAAI) [auton](#), kai [katestesas](#) (2SAAI) [auton epi ta erga](#) ton [cheiron](#) sou

Amplified: For some little time You have ranked him lower than and inferior to the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor and set him over the works of Your hands, [Ps. 8:4-6.] ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: For a little time you made him lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour; you set him over the work of your hands; ([Westminster Press](#))

NLT: For a little while you made him lower than the angels, and you crowned him with glory and honor. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of your hands. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: Thou madest him for a little time lower than the angels; thou didst crown him with glory and honor..

Young's Literal: Thou didst make him some little less than messengers, with glory and honour Thou didst crown him, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands,

The writer of Hebrews here quotes verbatim from the OT Greek rather than the Hebrew. One can see this even by just an examination of the English translation of Psalm 8:5 where we read "a little lower than **God**" which is the Hebrew word *elohim*, for which the writers of the Septuagint substituted "aggelos" or angels.

Septuagint (LXX) of **Psalm 8:5:** [elattosas auton brachu ti par aggelous doxe kai time estephanosas auton](#) (Emboldened text from the Greek translation of the OT is used here in Hebrews 2:7)

Septuagint (LXX) of **Psalm 8:6a:** [kai katestesas auton epi ta erga ton cheiron sou panta hupetaxas hupokato ton podon autou](#) (Emboldened text from the Greek translation of the OT is used here in Hebrews 2:7)

Here are some other renderings of the English of Hebrews 2:7...

For some little time You have ranked him lower than and inferior to the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor and set him over the works of Your hands, (**Amplified**)

Thou hast made him only a little lower than the angels; With glory and honor hast thou crowned him; And hast set him to govern the works of thy hands; (**Montgomery**)

You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour, and set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet'. (**Phillips**)

YOU HAST MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS: elattosas (2SAAI) auton brachu ti par aggelous:

- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Recovery of Man's Lost Destiny](#) - John MacArthur

Made lower (1642) (**elattoo** from from **elattôn** = less) means to lessen, to decrease in status or rank, to make less. In a comparative way it means to make less, to make lower or to make inferior in position. As used by John it means to become less important and so diminish or become less. There are only three NT uses, the present verse and the following two verses...

He must increase, but I must **decrease** (elattoo) (John 3:30-see notes)

Comment: John the Baptist gives us the "secret" to a powerful, purposeful life. Observe the order - Jesus first and foremost. Why? When we see Him in this manner, we have but one choice if we are rightly related to Him. The verb decreased here is in the **middle voice**, indicates the special interest {reflexive = "I myself decreased"} John had in his own decrease, e.g., in authority and popularity.

But we do see Him who has been made for a little while **lower** (elattoo) than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. (See **note** Hebrews 2:9)

What does this mean? Just this: angels are heavenly creatures, while man is earth-bound. Obviously this is a limiting and major difference, and man is therefore now of a lower rank. But there is a time limit for this inferiority. The present chain of command is temporary. God has a destiny for man that will elevate him to king, when he will be above angels (man's blessed hope Eph 1:21, 2:6).

Little while (1024) (**brachus**) means short (of time, place, quantity, or number). In other words, compared to eternity, it man will not long be lower than the angelic hosts! Hallelujah!

Ryrie writes that "**for a little while**" "may mean (1) for a short time, or (2) more likely a little lower in rank. In the order of creation, man is lower than angels, and, in the Incarnation, Christ took this lower place. ([The Ryrie Study Bible](#))

Barnes writes that "The Greek may here mean a little inferior in rank, or inferior for a little time."

Angels (32) (**aggelos**) is strictly speaking a messenger, one who speaks and acts in place of one who has sent him

As someone has quipped "Man is not, as evolutionists think, "a little higher than the apes," but rather "a little lower than the angels."

The Hebrew here has Elohim (Lxx has aggelos) which word is applied to judges in Ps 82:1,6 Jn 10:34f. Here it is certainly not "God" in our sense. In Ps 29:1 the LXX translates Elohim by huoi theou (sons of God). Jn 3:30

THOU HAST CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR: doxe kai time estephanosas (2SAAI) auton:

- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Recovery of Man's Lost Destiny](#) - John MacArthur

Crowned (4737) (**stephanoo** from **stephanos** = crown - see word study) literally meant to adorn one with an honorary wreath which served as the "crown" of the victor in the Greek public games. The only three NT uses are here Hebrews 2:9 (note) and in 2 Timothy where Paul uses this verb to challenge his young protégée letter to Timothy instructing him...

And also if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not **win the prize (stephanoo)** unless he competes according to the rules. (See **note** 2 Timothy 2:5)

The Psalmist refers to God's purpose in creating man with such a destiny as mastery over nature and made such that he was granted the stephanos or crown of honor. When God made Adam pure and innocent, He gave him honor

and glory. Someday soon, He will restore it. How great is the salvation of our God!

Jamieson - "as the appointed kingly vicegerent of God over this earth"

No doubt both David and the writer of Hebrews were thinking of the first chapter of Genesis 1:26 - Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Glory ([1391](#))(**doxa** [**word study**] from **dokeo** = to think) in simple terms means to give a proper opinion or estimate of something and thus the **glory** of God expresses all that He is in His Being and in His nature, character, power and acts. He is glorified when He is allowed to be seen as He really is. To be where God is will be glory. To be what God intended will be glory. To do what God purposed will be glory.

AND HAST APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS: auton kai katestesas (AAI) auton epi ta erga ton cheiron sou:

- Hebrews 2 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Our Glorious Destiny in Christ](#) - Steven Cole
- [Hebrews 2:5-9 Recovery of Man's Lost Destiny](#) - John MacArthur

Appointed (put in charge, made) ([2525](#))(**kathistemi** [**word study**] from **katá** = down + **histemi** = to set or stand) means literally "to stand or set down". Most of the NT uses of **kathistemi** are figurative and refer to "setting someone down in office" or appointing or assigning a person to a position of authority. To put in charge or to appoint one to administer an office. To set in an elevated position. This definition would help understand what is "**so great**" (He 2:3-note) about our salvation... it is not just that we are "**saved forever**" (Hebrews 7:25) but that we are "**heirs of salvation**" (He 1:14-note) appointed over the works of God's hands! (For more on your inheritance in Christ see Eph 1:11- note).

It is interesting to note the first NT use of **kathistemi** is by Jesus who asked (and answered)...

Mt 24:45 "Who then is the faithful and sensible slave whom his master **put in charge** (kathistemi) of his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46 "Blessed is that slave whom his master finds so doing when he comes.

Spurgeon writes...

It is so, in a measure, in the natural world. Man is made to be the master of it, and the ox and the horse, with all their strength, must bow their necks to man; and the lion and the tiger, with all their ferocity, must still be cowed in the presence of their master. Yet this is not a perfect kingdom which we see in the natural world. But, in the spiritual world, man is still to be supreme for the present, and therefore Christ becomes, not an angel, but a man. He takes upon him that nature which God intends to be dominant in this world and in that which is to come.

This was the original status of man. God made him to be his vicegerent on earth; and he would still hold that position were it not that, since he has rebelled against his own Sovereign, even the beasts of the field take liberty to be rebellious against him. Man is not now in his original estate, and therefore he rules not now; and we see many men who are very far from being royal beings, for they are mean and grovelling. Yet the glory of man is not all lost, as we shall see.

It was so with Adam in his measure. Before he fell, through his disobedience, all the animals which God had made were inferior to him, and owned him as their lord and master. It is infinitely more so in that second Adam Who has restored to humanity its lost dignity, and, in his own person, has elevated man again to the head of creation: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet."

Hebrews 2:5-9
Our Glorious Destiny in Christ

Steven Cole

What would you do with a 19-year-old Christian young man, who wrote in his diary, “9. Resolved, To think much, on all occasions, of my dying, and of the common circumstances which attend death”? As you read through his 70 resolutions, you encounter things like,

“7. Resolved, Never to do any thing, which I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.”

“17. Resolved, That I will live so, as I shall wish I had done when I come to die.”

If that young man lived in a modern evangelical home, his parents would probably be looking for a good Christian psychologist to get this kid’s focus off of such morbid subjects. Maybe a prescription for Prozac would help!

That young man was Jonathan Edwards, who went on to become the great revivalist preacher of the First Great Awakening (his resolutions are in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards [Banner of Truth]*, 1:xx-xxi). His writings are still immensely helpful to believers, 300 years later. Lest you think that he was a gloomy, depressive type, I should point out that his first resolution was, in part,

“1. Resolved, That I will do whatsoever I think to be most to the glory of God, and my own good, profit, and pleasure, in the whole of my duration; without any consideration of the time, whether now, or never so many myriads of ages hence.”

Edwards realized, even as a teenager, that to live for God’s glory in light of death and eternity was to live for the greatest personal good, profit, and pleasure.

It seems to me that modern evangelical Christians are far too focused on the here and now. We’ve lost the central focus that Edwards had, even as a teenager, of living each day in view of death and eternity. The modern view is, “Heaven is a nice thought, but I want the good life now. If Jesus can help me succeed in my family, in business, and in my personal emotional life, that’s what I want! I’ll think about heaven when I’m in my eighties.”

As a result of our shortsightedness, we don’t handle trials well. It is unknown how we might handle persecution, should such arise against the church, but it probably would free up a few seats on Sunday mornings. I agree with John Piper, who observed (in a tape on Charles Simeon; order from www.desiringgod.org) over a decade ago that evangelical pastors are too emotionally fragile. If we catch strong criticism or personal attacks, we’re quick to bail out of the ministry. One main reason for this weakness is that we are not focused on our glorious eternal destiny in Jesus Christ.

A main practical theme of the Letter to the Hebrews is endurance under trials. The author frequently exhorts his readers, “Hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end” (He 3:6; see also He 3:14; 4:14; 6:11,12). “For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised” (He 10:36).

In order to give his readers the perspective to endure, the author focuses on their eternal destiny in Christ. In He 1:14, in his argument that Jesus is greater than the angels, he pointed out that the angels serve “those who will inherit salvation.” While we now possess salvation (if we have trusted in Christ), much of it is reserved for eternity as our inheritance. As Paul puts it in Romans 8:17,18, we are now children of God, “and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow-heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.” To endure our present sufferings, we must focus on the glory ahead in Christ.

That is the train of thought in Hebrews 2:5-9. After his brief exhortation to pay attention so that we do not drift (He 2:1-4), he comes back to deal with Jesus’ superiority over the angels. It is difficult to say whether the opening word, “for,” links back to He 1:14 or to the entire preceding argument. It is likely that he was thinking of an objection that some of his Jewish readers who were wavering might have had. They may have been thinking, “If the Son of God is greater than the angels, having obtained a more excellent name than they (He 1:4), then how does this fit with His becoming a man, since men are lower than the angels? Furthermore, how does this fit with His dying on the cross, since angels never die? How then is Jesus superior to the angels?”

The author responds by showing that God did not subject the world to come to angels, but to man. To support this point, he cites from Psalm 8 (LXX). His introduction of the quote, “one has testified somewhere,” does not mean that he couldn’t remember where the quote was from. He cites it accurately (the original probably omits the last part of

He 2:7, “and have appointed him over the works of Your hands”). Rather, the author wants to emphasize that the quote comes from God, rather than to draw attention to David, the human author. Psalm 8 reflects on the high position to which God appointed man, putting him over all creation.

But, the author adds, “we do not yet see all things subjected to him” (He 2:8). The unstated but obvious event that overturned man’s high position was the fall. Then, in He 2:9, he shows that Jesus (the first use of His name in the book, obviously emphasizing His humanity), because of His death on our behalf, was crowned with glory and honor. Thus He recovered what man lost in the fall. In the world to come, redeemed man will reign with Jesus as God intended. So the main idea is that...

Although God’s original high purpose for man was lost in the fall, it will be recovered through Jesus Christ.

Because the train of thought is not easy here, I need to explain the text first. Then I will apply it.

1. God’s original intent for man was that we rule over the earth (He 2:5-8a).

He makes two points here:

A. Man’s destiny is higher than that of the angels (He 2:5).

“For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.” There is debate about the meaning of the phrase, “the world to come.” The Greek word for “world” means “the inhabited earth.” Some take the whole phrase to refer to the messianic age inaugurated by Christ at His first coming. Others understand it to refer to the future Millennial Kingdom.

In the original creation, God created man in His image to subdue the earth and rule over it (Ge 1:26, 27, 28). Man lost that do-minion to Satan in the fall, so that he is now “the ruler of this world” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; also, 2Co 4:4; Eph. 2:2; 6:12; 1Jn 5:19). At the cross, Jesus overcame Satan’s power (John 12:31; 16:11). Christ’s victory will be finalized in His second coming and kingdom rule. At the end of that 1,000-year kingdom, Satan will be loosed briefly for one final assault on Christ’s kingdom, only to be defeated and judged forever (Rev. 20:7, 8, 9, 10).

Thus I understand “the world to come” to refer primarily to the future Millennial Kingdom. But there is currently a heavenly conflict for dominion on earth. We participate in this conflict and reign with Christ as we conquer the strongholds of Satan through spiritual warfare (Ep 6:10-20-see notes; Da 10-see **Daniel 10 Commentary**). To the extent that we live under Christ’s lordship, we experience a taste of His kingdom rule now. But the full expression of Christ’s kingdom awaits His return, when He will reign over all the earth. Then we will reign with Him and we will judge the angels (1 Cor. 6:3). So our ultimate destiny is higher than that of the angels, since we will rule the world to come with Christ.

B. God’s original intent for us is described in Psalm 8 (Heb 2:6-8).

David was probably standing out under the night sky, gazing at the impressive array of stars, when he marveled, “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth, who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!” As he considers his own smallness in light of the immensity of the universe, he marvels, “What is man, that You remember him, or the son of man that You are concerned about him?” David stands amazed as he realizes that, in spite of man’s insignificance compared to the vast universe, God has appointed man below the angels to rule over creation.

The phrase, “a little lower than the angels,” is ambiguous. It can mean either “by a small degree” or “for a short time.” The former sense fits the psalm as applied to man, who lacks the super-natural powers of the angels. The latter sense fits the psalm as applied to the Son of Man, who laid aside His glory for a short time to take on human flesh while on this earth (Philip E. Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews [Eerdmans], p. 85). He retains His humanity forever, but when He ascended, He took back His glory (John 17:5; Rev. 1:12-18).

As the Psalm unfolds, God created man as the apex of His creation, giving him great glory and honor. He gave man a position of authority, to rule over all other creatures. Adam and Eve were in a perfect environment, enjoying perfect fellowship with their Creator. Man’s original high position of honor shows how utterly inexcusable the fall was! What more could Adam and Eve have wanted? What did they lack? They had position, prestige, and power over everything on earth! Yet, they wanted more, to be like God Himself.

After citing the line of the Psalm, “You have put all things in subjection to his feet,” the author of Hebrews explains, “For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things

subjected to him” (He 2:8). The question is, does “him” refer to man or to Christ? It probably refers to man in the first place, but also beyond man to Christ as the representative Man (F. F. Bruce, Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews [Eerdmans], p. 37). As Bruce explains (ibid.), “The writer confesses that it is not easy to recognize in man the being whom the psalmist describes as ‘crowned with glory and honor’ and enjoying dominion over all the works of the Creator’s hands.” But, as he will explain in verse 9, man’s failed purpose is fulfilled in Christ. The author refers to that failed purpose in He 2:8b:

2. God’s original intent for man was hindered by our fall into sin (He 2:8b).

The fall looms behind the words, “But we do not yet see all things subjected to him.” The author, then, is saying that Psalm 8 had reference to the first Adam, created in God’s image to have dominion over His creation. Everything without exception was to be subject to man. That was God’s original intent, but that is not what we now see. Man fell through sin, thus thwarting the fulfillment of everything in creation being subject to him.

As a result of the fall, God ordained that the earth would be cursed, so that man would have to till it by the sweat of his brow (Gen. 3:17, 18, 19). Adam and Eve were put out of the garden, losing their place of dominion. The human race became subject to sickness, injury, and death. The effects of sin infected the entire race, so that Adam and Eve’s first son murdered his brother. Man became subject to what we call “natural disasters,” such as earth quakes, volcanoes, floods, fires, tornadoes, hurricanes, drought, and extremes of heat and cold.

John MacArthur describes it this way (The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Hebrews [Moody], p. 57):

Man lives in jeopardy every hour. Just at the height of professional achievement, his brain may develop a tumor, and he becomes an imbecile. Just at the brink of athletic fame, he may be injured and become a helpless paralytic. He fights himself, he fights his fellowman, and he fights his earth. Every day we read and hear of the distress of nations, of the impossibility of agreement between statesmen in a world that languishes in political and social conflict—not to mention economic hardship, health hazards, and military threats. We hear the whine of pain from dumb animals and even see the struggle of trees and crops against disease and insects. Our many hospitals, doctors, medicines, pesticides, insurance companies, fire and police departments, funeral homes—all bear testimony to the cursed earth.

Even if we look beyond man as the reference in He 2:8b, to Christ as the representative Man, we do not yet see all things subjected to Him. That idea ties back to He 1:13, where the Father says to the Son, “Sit at My right hand, until I make Your enemies a foot-stool for Your feet.” That has not yet happened. In God’s sovereign plan, He allows wicked men and nations to rage against His Messiah in this present age. But the day is coming when He “shall break them with a rod of iron” and “shatter them like earthenware” (Ps 2:9). This leads to the third link in the author’s thought:

3. God’s original intent for man will be realized through Jesus Christ (He 2:9).

The order of thought here follows Paul’s treatment of Jesus’ humiliation and glory in Philippians 2:5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 (notes). There, Jesus who existed in the form of God emptied Himself of His glory, took on the form of a servant, and became obedient to death on a cross. Therefore, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name.

Here, Jesus, the eternal Son of God (Hebrews 1) humbled Himself by taking on human flesh, becoming “a little lower than the angels.” But He didn’t stop there. He submitted to “the suffering of death,” “so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.” As a result, He is now “crowned with glory and honor.” To “taste death” means not to nibble at it but, rather, to experience death to the fullest degree. “Everyone” refers to all that will experience the benefits of Christ’s death through faith, the “many sons” whom He will bring to glory (He 2:10).

The risen Jesus chided the two men on the Emmaus Road for not believing in all that the prophets had spoken. Then He said, “Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?” (Luke 24:26). Peter said that the prophets sought “to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow” (1Pe 1:1 1). In other words, Jesus’ death was not unforeseen. The Old Testament prophets had predicted His death and after it, His glory.

This was God’s ordained means of rescuing the fallen human race from the ravages of sin and restoring us to the place of His original intention. If we are in Christ through faith, then we are seated in the heavenly places in Him. If He is now crowned with glory and honor, then we share that glory and honor, although we do not yet see it (He 2:7; Ps. 8:5). When He comes again to reign in His kingdom, we will reign with Him! That is our glorious destiny in Christ!

To recap, Christ's incarnation and death did not in any way imply His inferiority to angels. This is supported by the fact that God ordained that man will rule angels in the world to come. Psalm 8 shows that this was God's original intent. That intent was hindered by the fall, but now has been recovered in the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. Through His death, resurrection, exaltation on high, and coming again to reign, we will reign with Him.

Conclusion

Hopefully, you now understand the flow of thought in this text. How should we apply these verses practically?

First, we should not let present trials cause us to neglect our great salvation, because one day we shall reign with Christ. A. W. Pink p. 97) said, "The practical bearings of this verse on the Hebrews was: Continue to hold fast your allegiance to Christ, for the time is coming when those who do so shall enter into a glory surpassing that of the angels." In other words, we need to develop and maintain the eternal perspective of our glorious destiny in Christ so that we can endure joyfully our present trials. If Jesus had to suffer first and then enter His glory, so do we. God used suffering to perfect His Son (He 2:10), and He does so with us. Jonathan Edwards was right: we should focus often on the shortness of life in light of eternity.

Victoria was Queen of England from 1837 to 1901. When she was young, she was shielded from the fact that she would be the next ruling monarch of England, lest this knowledge should spoil her. When her teacher finally let her discover that she would one day be Queen of England, Victoria's response was, "Then I will be good." Her life would be controlled by her future destiny.

Our situation should parallel hers. Our future destiny is that we will reign with Jesus Christ, not for a few years, but throughout eternity. Our knowledge of that should enable us to endure present hardships and trials. We should live as set apart unto Christ because we look ahead to our glorious destiny.

Second, by faith we should see Jesus and marvel at what He did for us and that we are now in Him (2:9). He left the splendor of heaven and not only took on human flesh, but also went to the cross on our behalf! "Amazing love, how can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me?" (Charles Wesley). That is why our Lord ordained Communion, so that we would remember Him and what He did on the cross for us. Paul said, "I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" (Gal 2:20-note). Paul daily saw Jesus, who endured the cross on his behalf. And, he saw himself in Christ, so that all the benefits of Christ's death applied to him. That is how we should live each day.

Third, if you feel weak, despised, or insignificant in this evil world, take courage! In Christ, we are more than conquerors. Although it is difficult to fathom, in the ages to come we will reign with Christ in His kingdom. It doesn't really matter what the world thinks of you. What matters is what God thinks of you. If you have trusted Christ as the One who bore your sins on the cross, then God has imputed His righteousness to you. You are purified from your sins. You can know that although you are just a speck on planet earth, which is just a speck in this gigantic universe, God cares for you and has a purpose for your life. That purpose transcends the short life we have in this body, and extends through eternity in our glorified bodies that we will receive when Christ returns.

But there is a final truth that may apply to some: If you are not in Christ, you should greatly fear. Though He is now despised and ignored by millions around the world, the day is coming when they will cry out for the rocks to fall on them and hide them from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb (Rev. 6:16-note). He is that chief cornerstone, which the builders rejected. If you build your life on Him, you will find a sure foundation for every storm in life (Matt. 7:24, 25-note). But if that Stone falls on you, it will scatter you like dust (Matt. 21:44). "Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, for His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him" (Ps. 2:12).

Discussion Questions

How, practically, can we keep our focus on our eternal destiny in the midst of life's problems?

Sometimes Psalm 8 is used to teach the unbiblical concept of "self-esteem." Was David's response to these truths to glorify himself or God? Is it proper to have a sense of significance as those created in God's image?

To what extent do the effects of the fall remain in believers? To what extent are these effects removed?

Is the Christian life just "pie in the sky when you die"?

To what extent should we experience the abundant life now? What exactly does that mean?

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