

God's ideal man

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Preacher: Rev Hugh M.Ferrier

[0 : 00] Hebrews chapter 2 at verse 5. For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the sight of him?

Thou madest him a little lower than the angels. Thou crownest him with glory and honor, and did set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.

For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see, not yet all things put under him.

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 should taste death for every man.

Now as we have been noticing in this epistle, the writer is pursuing his argument in support of this thesis, that Christ is superior to the angels.

[1 : 24] And we have noticed how he has said to us that in his person, Christ Jesus is superior in essence to the angels.

After all, who is Christ Jesus? He is God's Son, he is the second person of the Trinity, he is co-equal with his Father, and in his essence, he must be superior to the angels.

And not only is Christ Jesus superior to the angels in essence, but we can say that Christ Jesus is superior to the angels in status and in dignity.

Look at the position that he holds. Look at the position that he holds. He is God's Son. He is the heir of heaven.

He is, as the writer tells us here, the creator of the universe. And so he must have superior status to the angels in dignity, as in all other things.

[2 : 35] And then the writer tells us that the word of Jesus is superior to the word of angels. And because he is what he is, Christ Jesus is the sovereign of this universe.

And not only is he the sovereign of this universe, but he is preeminent, above all other things, and above all other powers.

But this is the amazing thing. And this is the amazing thing that this writer brings to our notice and to our attention.

That this Lord of creation, this heir of heaven, this Son of God, made himself a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.

Ah, we might well ask, why? The suffering of death? What did he have to do? Well, you see, it was the suffering of death that he had to undergo. That was the ransom price.

[3 : 44] That was the price that Christ Jesus had to pay in order to establish a new human order.

In order to bring into existence a new society of redeemed men and redeemed women. And, oh, my friend, never underestimate this, that it cost our Lord dear to pay that ransom price.

It cost him dear to pay that ransom price. It meant, you see, that he had to undergo this humiliation of coming forth from his Father's house of glory.

It meant that he had to come down here into this sinful universe of ours. It meant that he had to undergo these sufferings of his life.

And more, it meant that he had to undergo death itself. He had to taste death for every man. I was reading A.B. Bruce's commentary and he gives us this with regard to verses 5 to 18.

[5 : 09] He says, This supremely important section of our epistle may have, for its heading either, the humiliation of Christ and its rationale.

or, the great salvation and how it has been obtained. And Bruce goes on, The former title is the more fitting from the point of view of the writer's apologetic.

The latter from the point of view of biblical theology. The two themes practically coincide and this is the point. For the rationale of Christ's humiliation just consists in this.

That the method of the great salvation demanded it so that the boon could not be obtained without the drawback.

That's it. The boon could not be obtained without the drawback. And this boon that was to be obtained of saving men and women could not be obtained without the drawback that it cost Christ in that he had to humble himself and make himself a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death.

[6 : 32] My friend, the task of saving men and women has not been given to any angel. God did not appoint any angel to save any human being because no angel can save a human being.

No matter who that angel might be. Ask a Gabriel. Gabriel, could you save any of the human race?

No. Michael, could you save any of the human race? No. Is there any angel in heaven that could come down here and save us?

No. No angel can save us. What offering can an angel make?

What atonement can an angel offer to God for the sins of mankind? You see, angels are spiritual beings and as spiritual beings they cannot represent our humanity.

[7 : 45] There is no angel in heaven that can represent me. He doesn't know what it is to feel how I feel. an angel doesn't know what it is to be limited within a human body.

An angel doesn't know what it is to have a fallen human body. An angel doesn't know what it is to sin as I know. An angel doesn't know what it is to suffer or to die.

so an angel cannot represent me and I don't want him to represent me. And not only that but angels are inferior to God and because they are inferior to God they cannot make a satisfactory offering to the almighty for my sins.

It's a worthless offering the offering of an angel if that could be made for my sins or for your sins.

And so you see this new world of redeemed humanity is a task of redeeming this task of redeeming humanity this was a task that couldn't be given to the angels.

[9 : 09] This is how J.B. Phillips translates some of these words. 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. What is the future world that the writer is talking about? He is talking about the world of saved men and saved women.

And that world of saved men and saved women has not been put into the hands of angels. That's not their task to bring that about. men for for unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak.

But one in a certain place testified saying what is man that thou art mindful of him or the son of man that thou visit him? Now we ask this question what did our Lord do to procure this great salvation for us?

The great salvation that we were talking about last Sabbath evening. Now what the writer does is this he takes us back to Psalm 8. We read Psalm 8 together tonight.

[10 : 39] And if you read Psalm 104 we were singing some of its verses together before the sermon you will notice that the sentiments that are expressed in Psalm 8 and in Psalm 104 are similar.

And in Psalm 8 what does the psalmist say? When I he says consider thy heavens the work of thy hands the work of thy fingers what is man he says that thou hast made him and you've made him says the psalmist a little lower than the angels you've put everything in subjection under his feet.

Now what is the writer doing in Psalm 8 and why is this writer referring back to Psalm 8? Well you see the writer of Psalm 8 is showing to us ideal man.

Ideal man. Ideal man expressing his lordship. God man man man man miniature God listen to what it says in Genesis God created man in his own image in the image of God created he him male and female created he them and God blessed them and God said unto them be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air and over every living thing that move upon the earth so what

God did when he created man was this he made man a little lower than himself a little lower than the angels what a unique privilege what a unique honor that was conferred upon man you see you read about the angels and you will never read that the angels were created in the image of God nor will you read that the angels were created in the likeness of God but man was made in God's image and not only was he made in God's image but after God's likeness and more than that what God did with man was this he subjected all things to his sovereign rule to the sovereign rule of man thou made is him a little lower than the angels thou crowned is him with glory and honor and did set him over the works of thy hands the writer is not referring to

[14 : 02] Jesus he is referring to man as he was at the beginning there was put all things in subjection under his feet for in that he put all in subjection under him he left nothing that is not put under him you see what God did he said to Adam there you have the the earth at your disposal everything is subject to you every creature that is upon the face of the earth every bird that flies in the sky every fish that passes through the seas it's all in subjection to you you are just like me you are in my likeness you've been created in my image ah that's a picture of man in his pristine glory and when we go back to Adam at that stage in his pristine glory you can see this that man was in control of the environment that was given to him and because he was in control of his own environment he wasn't afraid of nature he wasn't afraid of the living creatures but you see it's all changed now and sometimes we are afraid of the reaction of nature against us sometimes we are afraid of these creatures that fly in the sky or these creatures that crawl on the ground are these creatures that move through the seas and yet that wasn't the intention of

God for us to be afraid of them no God said you are in dominion over them you are Lord of creation and now do we not see having looked at that picture and this is what the writer wants us to see and to understand having looked at that picture now do we see the damage the damage that has been caused by the intrusion of sin into human experience and the catastrophic nature of sin which has altered the whole divine plan plan and so man today is no longer the Lord of God's creation as God meant him to be he is no longer king like that he is no longer able to subdue his environment indeed what Paul the Apostle tells us is this that the whole creation groans and is in travail and in pain to this very moment and because of that man is sometimes afraid of nature and sometimes he is afraid of the living creatures that God made and that God placed in this environment and that is why the writer here says this but now in verse 8 we see not yet all things put under him all things are not yet put under the feet of man simply because man has sinned he has failed to live up to the ideal of God man was meant to have dominion over everything as someone has said but he has not he is a creature who is frustrated by his circumstances defeated by his temptation defeated by his temptations get about with his own weakness he who should be free is bound he who should be a king is a slave and by quoting Sam 8 showing to us God's ideal man the Lord of creation what the writer is doing is this he is showing to us man in his total lostness man in his failure he is showing to us man who has not yet all things under him but he doesn't leave it there he goes on in verse 9 to say this but he says we see Jesus we look away from that picture of ideal man that was never realized by human beings we look away from that picture and we look now to Christ Jesus but we see Jesus who was made a little Lord just as man was a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man

for every man ah now here we are coming to see ideal man Christ Jesus is the ideal man he is the last Adam as Paul calls him he is the second man in the eyes of Paul there were just two men first Adam and then Jesus Christ Adam the first failed but the second man Jesus Christ succeeded but now we see Jesus and this is the RSV translation who for a little while was made lower than the angels crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone here then we are being introduced to the son of God the heir of heaven the creator of the universe and what did he do?

he humbled himself he made himself a little lower than the angels and why did the son of God make himself a little lower than the angels?

that he by the grace of God should taste death for men in Adam we lost everything that's the sad fact of human experience and that's the sad fact of human history in Adam we lost everything what did I lose in Adam?

[21 : 34] I lost my innocence I'm now there standing before God guilty guilty of sin because of what Adam did it's very interesting to notice that when it says that Adam begat a son it doesn't say that he begat a son in the likeness of God or he was made in the likeness of God but when he begat a son he didn't begat that son in God's likeness no it says he begat a son in his own likeness Adam could only produce a fallen offspring he could only produce sinful men and sinful women like himself and from Adam's day down to this it's the history of human of the human race that we can only bring in fallen children into the world of men we lost our innocence in Adam and not only did I lose my innocence in Adam but I lost my sonship with God became estranged from God because of what my first father did no longer God's son but now a stranger to God an alien as far as God is concerned and not only did I lose my sonship with God but I lost my lordship over the creation and so I find myself not in control of my environment but my environment is controlling me and instead of me exercising dominion over the creation of God

I can only do it in as far as God allows me and that's not very much and not only did I lose my lordship over creation but I lost my hope of eternal life and facing me as a sinner there is nothing but eternal death I now stand condemned under the sentence of death because the soul that sinneth it shall die and because I am a sinner I must die but you see Christ is the last Adam Christ is the second man Christ is God's son who entered into a covenant of grace with God his father for us yes Christ Jesus entered into this covenant of grace a covenant is a contract between two parties and here is God the father and he is the one party here is Christ the son and he is the other party and they make an agreement they make a covenant and what is the covenant?

the father promises to give to his son an inheritance of redeemed humanity but on condition ah this is it on condition that the son will make satisfaction for that humanity's sin how was the son going to make satisfaction for humanity's sin?

he had to die for humanity how could he die? well he had to humanize himself he had to come down here into this world of men he had to take bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh and so the mighty son of God became an infant of days and passed through the womb of the virgin taking from her bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh and he entered into human society and he had to do that in order to suffer that's the only way there could be suffering in a human body and so he had to suffer for us and not only suffer for us but he had to die for us he had to taste death for us and it's not just a case that he tasted it and that was all but when you taste a thing you take that thing into your very constitution into your very being when I take a piece of bread and taste it it means that I take that piece of bread

I put it into my mouth it becomes part of my being and so in the same way Jesus had to taste death he had to die and he did die he died on that cross and this is what the writer is about he is attentioning focus he is rather focusing our attention on Christ and on what Christ had to do to recover man to his ideal position and when we go to Jesus we find that in Jesus everything that was lost in Adam is restored in Christ and much more Jesus is God's ideal man you will notice that when Jesus was on earth for example he was in control of the environment he was in control of everything the sea no matter how it raged and roared had to obey him the sicknesses of men had to yield to him men who were put into the grave he could raise them to life you know how there was that day when Jesus came riding into Jerusalem on a coat the fall of an ass

[28 : 31] I think I said this once before I say it again there was a jockey who was reading that one day and as he read of Jesus riding this fall he said what strong hands he must have had here was this experienced horseman and he knew what it was to break a foal and how hard it was harder even than a horse the breaking of a horse and what strong hands a man must have had for that and it made him say my what strong hands he must have had yes Christ is God's ideal man thou hast put all things under him and this is what Christ is doing he is restoring man to that ideal position not only that but he has reconciled us to God by his death and having reconciled us to God by his death by tasting death for us it's now possible you see for God and it's Christ who has made this a possibility it is now possible for God to adopt us and to bring us back into his family so that we are no longer strangers but we become joint heirs with Christ and in Christ we live and in Christ we will reign eternally you see the Lord's death has secured what we lost in Adam's fall and now in Christ Jesus what we see is redeemed man restored man we see man being made what God intended him to be ideal man and so Jesus was made a little lower than the angels but now he has gone into heaven he has spoiled principalities and powers he has exhausted the curse of God and because he has achieved all that death could no longer hold him and so death had to yield its grip and Christ has now ascended to the place from which he came to God's right hand

Paul in his letter to the Philippians tells us how the Lord of the angels took the form of man he became says Paul obedient unto death even the death of the cross but now says Paul having been obedient unto death even the death of the cross now he says God has highly exalted him God has raised him up from the dead and God has given him a name which is above every name my friend Christ Jesus has tasted death for man do you know what Christ did when he came down here and when he went to that cross do you know what he did he went into the jaws of death to rescue us who were in the jaws of death and he went into these jaws of death and he pulled us out and pushed us away from that death and in the process he died and as John A. Owen puts it he died death outright and by entering into the jaws of death himself this is our great salvation now we see Jesus as our great Savior and now we see how we are redeemed to God and how are we redeemed to God we are redeemed to God through the precious blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

He shed His blood for us He made the atonement when I see the blood I will pass over you said God to the ancient Israelites and so God says to His redeemed people today when I see the blood of my Son as the atonement price on you I will pass over you because I have already smitten my Son I have already punished sin in my Son and when I see the blood on you I will pass over you well I close the writer gives us a picture of ideal man man as God intended him to be but he also implies here or he gives us here a picture of actual man man as he really is man weakened and destroyed by the power of sin but he doesn't leave it there he goes on to show us too man redeemed in Christ man renewed in Christ and it's all through Christ we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man for every sinner who comes to him for everyone who will take advantage of his redeeming love have you taken advantage of it?

have you come to Christ? have you given your heart to Jesus? have you come to Christ and said oh Christ look at me I am a wretched hell deserving sinner a fallen son of Adam my first father I cannot redeem myself I cannot save myself I am in the jaws of death I am on the way to hell but you have died for sinners like me will you not take me out of these jaws of death?

will you not apply your precious blood to me and cleanse me and make me one of your people make me one of redeemed humanity will you pray like that?

[36 : 56] if you pray like that God will not reject you God will not turn you away in any disappointment He will make you His child let us pray O Lord our God we thank thee for the atoning work of Christ our Saviour we confess that we have destroyed ourselves by sin that the ideal has been lost because of our foolishness but blessed be thy name that ideal can be restored and is being restored in Christ and we thank thee that when we come to Jesus and when we give ourselves over to him his blood is applied to us and we are cleansed and not only that but thy Holy Spirit comes into the life and breaks down the opposition and breaks down all that makes us untoward in thy sight and we thank thee that the Holy Spirit conforms us to the image of thy Son so that at the end of the day we become like Christ himself

Christ our elder brother Christ our Saviour Christ our friend be with us take away our sins for the Redeemer's sake Amen