

SERMON
SERIESAND WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE
TO PLEASE HIM, FOR WHOEVER
WOULD DRAW NEAR TO GOD
MUST BELIEVE THAT HE EXISTS
AND THAT HE REWARDS THOSE
WHO SEEK HIM.

HEBREW'S



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HEBREW'S
VERSE BY
VERSE STUDYLET US DRAW NEAR IN
*Faith***SESSION OBJECTIVE: HEBREWS 2:5-9**

To understand how the world is in the process of being subjected to Christ.

Read the Text:

"For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. 6 It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? 7 You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, 8 putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. 9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone." (Hebrews 2:5-9, ESV)

Study the Text:**Already and Not Yet**

Hebrews 2:5 returns to the statement made in Hebrews 1:13-14. In verse 13, the author quotes Psalm 110:1 to argue that God has never said to the angels what He has said to the Son: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." No, rather, God has said concerning the angels that they are "ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation." Angels are agents who serve the coming Kingdom of God, not the rulers of it. In light of that, the author picks this argument back up and continues it: "For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come" (Heb. 2:5). Verses 5 through 9 then go on to unfold how this subjection has already happened, and yet it is in the process of happening still. Theologians refer to this completion in process as "already and not yet." The victory is won, and Christ is exalted; yet the world is still being subjected to Him. Below is a breakdown of this text, with particular attention to key concepts and Old Testament allusions.

THE ANGELS WERE SUBJECTED, JUST NOT TO THE WORLD TO COME

One point that needs to be made clear is that the angels have been subjected to this current world for a very specific purpose. This is evidenced by Deuteronomy 32:8: “When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he divided mankind, he fixed the borders of the peoples according to the number of the sons of God.” Of course, “sons of God” refers almost exclusively to angels in the Old Testament. The picture painted in Deuteronomy 32:8 is of angels placed over the distinct nations, ministering to those peoples. What sets Israel apart is that they did not receive an angel, but God Himself: “But the LORD’S portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage” (Deut. 32:9).

FURTHER PROOF

The author cites another Psalm to make his case: Psalm 8. At first, it seems like a strange Psalm to quote: “What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? 5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet.” A few interesting details emerge here. For one, take note that the Lord is mindful of “man.” We have not been left alone by God. God is mindful of His creation and actively involved in our well-being (Acts 14:16-18).

More than that, pay attention to the phrase “son of man” in verse 6, a favorite title of Jesus for Himself throughout the Gospel accounts. Here, the author of Hebrews draws out this connection. Jesus is the “son of man,” cared for by the Father. And by becoming “son of man,” He has been made “for a little while lower than the angels” through the Incarnation. Understanding the flow of thought here is critical. Hebrews has thus far made a strong, clear case that Jesus is God. Now, the author wants to remind us that Jesus is also unequivocally human. Jesus Christ is the union of God and man. In Him are two natures and two wills: the divine nature and will, and the human nature and will. While Jesus is without beginning in His deity, He is also with a beginning in His humanity. However, even this section of Scripture points back to His deity. That He has been made “for a little while lower than the angels” implies that prior to this, He was still superior to them.

The usage of Psalm 8 is important. The point is that God the Father has exalted the Son by placing everything in subjection to Him, and He has done this on the basis that the Father is “mindful” of man and “cares for” the “son of man,” and thus the Son of God became “son of man” to receive such subjection. The Kingdom of God is an earthly reign, and thus it was necessary for God to become man that He might reign, in a very real sense, among us.

SUBJECTION AND YET NOT SUBJECTED

Notice the tension that builds in verse 8. First, the author indicates that this “putting everything in subjection to him” has already taken place: “he left nothing outside his control.” However, notice what he says directly after that: “At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.” The subjection is complete and final, yet it has not yet fully occurred. God has decreed that all things are subjected to Christ, yet we can still see rebellion in the world. Not everything has been finally subjected to Him; everything is in the process. Christ is King, and yet some within the kingdom of earth remain in rebellion.

This is the reality we exist in. There is tension in the world. There are stories every day of God’s providential goodness to people. There are stories every day of people coming to faith in Christ and turning away from their former lives. And yet, at the same time, the world seems to be continually descending into further darkness. Why is this the case? Because we live in a state of “already” and “not yet.” The world has “already” been subjected to Christ, and at the same time, the world is “not yet” in full subjection to Him.

TASTING DEATH FOR EVERYONE

If there was any doubt about who the “son of man” is that has been made “lower than the angels,” verse 9 clears it up: “namely Jesus.” This “lowering” in the Incarnation was important for more than just inheriting the Kingdom of God on earth. He was also “crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone” (Heb. 2:9). Jesus has received glory and honor because, although He was the perfect God-Man, He suffered on behalf of humanity to “make purification for sins” (Heb. 1:3). Now, put this together with Psalm 8. The “son of man” is given “glory and honor” for receiving the world that has been subjected to Him. But how does He receive it? Through “the suffering of death.” Victory in the kingdom of God looks like defeat because the way to victory is through death and suffering. However, Christ conquers death. He tasted death “for everyone” in that His death is enough to cover everyone “who believes” (Rom. 1:16). He is the substitute. And His substitutionary death is significant for more reasons than this one verse can articulate. However, Session 5 will revisit this in greater detail.

What About Now?

The primary takeaway from this passage is important because it helps us make sense of the tension we face in the world today. We live in a state of “already and not yet.” The world is subjected to Christ, and yet the world is not yet fully subjected to Him. It’s easy to lose hope when faced with the reality of such darkness and evil all around us. However, remember the truth of God’s Word: Christ has already won; the world is simply not yet fully subjected to Him. But one day, it will be (Rev. 21:1-6).

Study Questions**Day One**

1. Read Hebrews 2:5. Was the world to come subjected to angels? To whom, then?

2. Read Deuteronomy 32:8. To what world were the angels subjected?

Day Two

1. Read Hebrews 2:6-8. What verse is being quoted here? What former argument does this support?

2. Read Hebrews 2:6-8. Who is God “mindful” of? What is the significance of the title “son of Man?” Who is this applied to elsewhere in the New Testament?

Day Three

1. Read Hebrews 2:8. Why has the “son of man” received “glory and honor?” What does this say about the Kingdom of God? (Hint: See above notes)
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2. Read Hebrews 2:9. What does it mean that Jesus was “made a little lower than angels” temporarily? What aspect of Jesus Christ does this highlight?
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Day Four

1. Read Hebrews 2:9. What does it mean that Jesus has “tasted death for everyone?” (Hint: See above notes)
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2. Read Revelation 21:1-6. Does this describe an “already and not yet” moment? Why or why not?
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Discuss the Text!

Session 4 Discussion: Already and Not Yet

One of the major themes of Hebrews 2:5-9 is the tension we feel in a world that has been subjected to Christ and is still being subjected. Talk about the “already/not yet” tension as you experience it not only in the world, but also in your own sanctification.

1. Icebreaker: What’s an example of “already/not yet” outside of the spiritual context (e.g., a blueprint that is already completed, but construction that is not yet finished)?
2. Read Galatians 2:20. The life we now live in Christ is *Christ’s life*, but we still live it *in the flesh*. Talk about the “already/not yet” tension between justification and sanctification.
3. How does God use Christians to “bring the world into subjection” under Christ? How has He used you?
4. Read Romans 10:14-17. How does this text relate to the world being subjected to Christ?
5. What evidence do we have that the world has been partially subjected to Christ? In other words, what good things can we point to that indicate the kingdom of God has arrived?
6. Kid Talk (For Home): Start a puzzle with your child. Talk about how all of the pieces are in the box to complete the puzzle; it’s been fully designed. But it hasn’t been fully put together either. Explain how God has made the world to fully submit to Christ, but like a puzzle, God is in the process of putting it together.

Takeaways:

1. The world is in a state of tension; it has already been subjected to Christ, and yet it is not fully subjected.
2. Christ received glory and honor for His victory, but He achieved it through suffering and death.