

**HEBREWS**  
**(Lesson 8)**  
**The Ultimate Exaltation of Man**

Text: Hebrews 2:5-9

**INTRODUCTION**

We have seen in chapter one that that there was a great change in dispensations when Jesus came. In the former days God spoke through prophets and through angels. And he spoke in bits and pieces. And he spoke principally by the giving of the law. The Scriptures say that the law was given through the ministry of angels. (Acts 7:53)

But then, Jesus was born. And he grew up and began his public ministry. And in these last days, "God hath spoken unto us by his Son." Revelation in these last days is much greater, much more complete and much more final, because it is brought to us by his Son.

And the interesting thing about this is that when God spoke through his Son, his Son was a man.

Now you all know that before Jesus became a man, he was in heaven and the Bible says he was with God and he was God. And before he became a man, "All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made." (John 1:3)

And while he was still in heaven upholding his creation by the word of his own power and doing all the things that God does, God spoke to men through prophets and angels. But then, God came personally to the earth in the form of a man and Jesus Christ spoke directly to men by his words and by his actions.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem, it marked the beginning of a new day. It was the beginning of the end for that old religion called Judaism. And it was the beginning of the end for that condemning system of ordinances called the law.

Now look at Galatians 3:19. The law was a temporary arrangement.

*It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*

So you see that the law had a shelf life – from Moses to Christ. Now we have all seen the movie of Moses. And the law was first given to Moses and he came down from the mountain with the tables of stone. And God added the law as a holy requirement of his people Israel. And God added to the law little by little as time went on.

But there was an ending point according to Gal. 3:19. It was added ‘til the seed should come. And when Jesus came, it marked the end of the law as the rule of life for Israel. And then the rule of life was the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Now that old law was especially attended by angels.

*And it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. (Gal.3:19)*

It seems that God spoke to angels and angels spoke to Moses and Moses spoke to the people. And the law was given through the mouthpiece of angels.

But the gospel comes directly from the lips of Jesus himself.

*In these last days, God hath spoken to us by his Son.*

And we have seen that Jesus is far superior to angels. And therefore, it is to be concluded that the gospel spoken by Jesus is far superior to the law spoken by angels.

Now this morning I want to share with you the meaning of Hebrews 2:5-9. And I want you to see first from this passage that,

There is a world to come

You will notice in verse 5 it says,

*For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the “world to come.”*

There is a world to come that is different than the world in which we

now live. And I take it that this world to come is the new heavens and the new earth which is spoken of in Revelation 21:1-5.

You see, there is a world that now is and there is a world that is to come. And the world that now is will pass away. (Rev.21:1, 4) And when this world passes away, there will be a new world.

Now I would like for you also to see that,

There is an issue of authority or ranking in the world to come

Notice how this issue is addressed in our text.

(v.5) *Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come.*

Now in our English translation that is a little bit wordy. Let's say it this way. The world to come will not be under the authority of angels. Now this might be quite a surprise to angels who seem to be God's highest creatures in the present world. In the present world angels are strong and mighty and they are God's highest emissaries. But, in the world to come, the rank of angels is somewhat diminished because it says,

*Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come.*

Now man is infinitely lower than God. God is the creator and all other beings are creatures. And compared to God, man would seem to be quite an insignificant creature in this world. Look at verse 6.

(v.6) *What is man, that thou art mindful of him?*

God has made various creatures in his world and man is not even first in rank. Angels are higher and then man and then the animals. And it is quite amazing that God is mindful of man. And it is astonishing that God is mindful of sinful man.

**Example: If an ant crawls across our kitchen floor what do we do? We squash him and we throw him out in the trash. And we don't even ask the ant what he thinks about it. We don't even consider his feelings. We just dispose of him. And God is infinitely higher than man. God towers over man in his power and authority more than man**

**towers over the ant. And so, the natural question is, “What is man, that thou art mindful of him?”**

And so, you see in verse 6 an implied ranking in the present world. God is way up there in authority and man is way down here.

But look, there is another ranking in verse 7.

*(v.7) Thou madest him a little lower than the angels.*

That is, God made man a little lower than the angels. This verse ranks man a little lower than angels in this present world. It appears that in power and authority, there is God, then there are angels and then there is man.

But look, there is a great divide in verse 7. Man is made a little lower than the angels in the first part of verse 7. But then, look at the next phrase.

*“Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.”*

You see, God takes the lowest ranking rational creature, man, and in the world to come, he crowns him with glory.

And look at verse eight.

*(v.8) Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*

This verse ranks man higher than angels in the world to come. Remember, the world to come is not to be in subjection to angels. But, God will put the world to come under the feet of man.

So, you see there is an issue of rank going on in this passage.

Now let's go back and evaluate this passage. Note first,

## The sovereignty of God

It is God who determines the destinies of angels and men.

(v.5) *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come.*

And then,

(v.7) Thou madest him (man) a little lower than the angels.

(v.7) Thou crownedst him (man) with glory.

(v.7) Thou didst set him (man) over the works of thy hands.

(v.8) Thou hast put all things in subjection under his (man) feet.

These verses are a clear assertion that God is sovereign. He does as He pleases. He does everything that He pleases. In this case, he places angels and men in a certain rank and with certain privileges. And he does it according to his own will. He doesn't ask the angels and he doesn't ask men, but he creates them all and gives them their station in this world and in the world to come.

*. . . who worketh all things after the counsel of His will. (Eph.1:11)*

God has a divine will. And his power drives the universe to accomplish His will. The purposes of God cannot be refuted. They will certainly come to pass. What God chose to do, He does. And he makes one higher than another.

*I am God and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things that are not yet done.*

(Isaiah 46:9, 10)

*Jehovah of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely, as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand.*

Isaiah 14:24

Now man might have preferred to be a little higher than the angels in this world. But God made them a little lower. And man and angels had no say in the matter.

There is not one force in this world, not one creature, not one thought

that is outside the control of our Sovereign God. That is the God that we worship. Any god less than that is not the God of the Bible.

Kings and even presidents are by appointment of the Almighty and his decree marches forward.

Kingdoms rise and kingdoms fall by divine appointment. And,

All creatures have their place in God's universe by appointment.

And so, whatever man is or shall be. And whatever angels are or shall be, is by the sovereign hand of Almighty God.

Now, let's put in order the ranking in the present world and in the world to come.

#### The sovereign ranking of men and angels in the present world.

In the present world, God is the highest of all authorities because he appoints men and angels to their positions. After God, angels are the next ranking officials in the present world and man is made a little lower. (v.7)

But, there is going to be a great shakeup in the new world. And that is the point of this passage. There is coming a great cosmological change. Authority and power in the universe will be realigned and suddenly man will be exalted over angels and angels will be a little lower than man.

#### The sovereign ranking of men and angels in the world to come.

God will remain sovereign in the world to come. But there will be an exchange of power and authority between men and angels.

Angels will not have authority over the world to come. (v.5) Or, put another way, the world to come will not be put in subjection to angels.

But, look what authority man will have in the world to come.

(v.7) Thou crownest him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands.

Ladies and gentlemen, in the world to come, it is men not angels who will have charge of the very works of God. It is man that will be over the works of God. Now, this is almost too much to comprehend, but it is man who will be furnished the authority and the power to act on God's behalf.

In this world, God sends angels to do his bidding. But in the world to come, it is man who will walk side by side with God and exercise the very authority of God.

And what authority will man have?

(v.8) *Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*

Now, that phrase makes us think that it is talking about Jesus. But don't forget the context. The writer is talking about the status of man in the world to come. It is man that was made a little lower than the angels in this world, and man who will be exalted to a higher position in the world to come.

We will see in a few moments the basis for that exaltation of man over angels, and that basis is clearly Jesus. But the point of this passage is that man will occupy a place of great authority in the world to come.

Listen to the words of Arthur W. Pink commenting on verse eight where it says "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet:

"Here we learn that unto "man" will the world to come be placed in subjection. Here we learn that "man," frail and fallen, but redeemed and exalted by the Lord, will have, in the world to come, "all things" put under his feet." (A.W. Pink)

Now make no mistake about it, the man Jesus has already been exalted to the right hand of God and all things are already in subjection to him. (See, Eph.1:20-22) But our text in Hebrews is speaking of those human beings who have been redeemed by Christ. And they also shall be highly exalted.

Notice what authority man will have.

*Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. (v.8)*

Now remember, this is speaking about redeemed human beings. And of course it refers to something that will be done in the future. You will notice it uses the past tense, but this is not unusual for the Scriptures to use the past tense as though the act is already done. After all, if God has ordained it, it is as good as done. If God says it shall be done, then it has been done. Furthermore, at the time this was written, Christ was sitting at the right hand of God with this world under his feet. And if we are redeemed by his blood, then we are in him.

We were in him when he lived an obedient life and therefore by imputation we lived an obedient life.

We were in him when he suffered and died on the cross and therefore by imputation we died with him.

We were in him when the penalty for sin was paid and therefore by imputation our sin debt was paid.

We were in him when he rose from the grave and therefore by imputation we have already risen.

We were in him when he ascended to heaven and sat down and therefore by imputation we are now seated in the heavenlies.

*And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.*

Eph.2:6

And so it uses the past tense in Hebrews when it says he has, "Crowned man with glory and honor and did set him over the works of thy hands." And when it says, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet."

I don't think we can possibly comprehend the glory and honor that will befall us when we set foot in heaven.

There is no created thing that will not be in subjection to man in the world to come. It says,

*Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.*

Whether they be principalities or powers or nations or angels, they will be in subjection to man. Man will reign over all things.

*We shall also reign with him.*

II Tim.2:12

In Revelation 5, John has a vision of the redeemed in heaven and they are singing a new song and they are singing to the Lord and praising him because he is worthy to open the seals of judgment, and they sing,

*Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.*

Rev.5:9, 10

Human beings will reign with God.

*The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.*

Romans 8:17

You see, it will be human beings who will be joint heirs with Christ. It will be human beings in heaven who will have all authority. It will be human beings who will have all things in subjection under their feet. (v.8)

But in keeping with our context, let me say that in the world to come, human beings will have authority over the angels.

*Know ye not that we shall judge angels?*

I Cor.6:3

In this world, angels are more powerful, more swift, more glorious, and higher ranking than man - but not so in the world to come. In the world to come, it will be angels who will be in subjection to men.

Now this is partially true now, even in this present world, because angels are sent forth to minister to men. But they are not sent to minister to all men, only to the redeemed.

*Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? (Heb.1:14)*

And this leads us to our next point which is,

### Men are exalted in the world to come by being in Christ

It is Christ who overcame the world. It is Christ who lived a perfect life. It is Christ who suffered and died according to the will of God. It is Christ who rose again and who was exalted on high and who sat down at the right hand of God. It is Christ who is worthy, not fallen man.

But this is what being in Christ is all about. We are in him. We partake of his glories. We are joint heirs with him. We shall reign with him. Christ sits on his throne and we shall also sit on thrones judging angels and judging the nations.

Don't you love the doctrine of substitution? His life counts for our life. His death counts as our punishment. His reward is our reward. And so, all things shall be in subjection under our feet.

### Not all men shall be exalted above angels in the world to come

Those who reject Christ have the most horrible place in the next world. They will rank far below redeemed men and far below angels - for they will be outcasts in the world to come.

There is a place prepared for all the enemies of Christ and that place will be a place of eternal torment and misery. And they will not enjoy joint heirship with Christ. They are not in him and they are none of his.

Only the redeemed will be exalted. Only those who believe in Him will rule with Him. Only those who love Him to the end will be above angels in the next world.

But the redeemed of God will rule the world as joint heirs with Christ. Can you imagine such a thing? And all of this honor and glory will be bestowed on mere sinners such as you and I. What grace is this that makes worms equal heirs with God himself?

*Beloved, now are we the sons of God: and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

I John 3:2

When he appears we will see him in his glory. Whatever Jesus is, we will be like Him for all eternity.

May this thought have a purifying effect on God's people.

*And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. (v.4)*

I John 3:3