

HEBREWS
(Lesson 10)
Jesus, The Captain of Our Salvation

Text: Hebrews 2:9-11

But 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 it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren . . .

INTRODUCTION

The Jews, who were looking for a Messiah, had at least two major objections to Jesus. He was a man – flesh and blood, hands and feet, fingers and toes. He got hungry. He got thirsty. He got weary. And they said, “This just can’t be the Messiah, he is a man just like us. Why, angels are of a higher order than this man.”

But even more concerning to them than this was that he died. And they said, “This man cannot possibly be the Messiah – he died.” Even angels were higher than this man for angels do not suffer death.

Now we saw last time that the writer of Hebrews answers the first objection, that is, that Jesus was a man, by showing that man has only been brought low for a little while but that the ultimate reality is that man has been crowned with glory and honor and has a higher destiny than angels.

So, let’s just review for a few minutes.

Man was originally created with a lofty rank (Genesis 1:26-31)

When God originally created man God said, “*Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.*” And there is no indication that this was ever said of any other creature, including angels. Man was made to be like God in many ways so that he was a picture of God. We were made like him. We have intelligence like no other creature. We are far above the animal

kingdom in our ability to reason and to plan. We have self consciousness. We have a moral compass. We have the ability to fellowship with God. And so it seems that man, rather than being lower than angels, was the highest order of creature.

And God said, *“Let man have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”*

So God gave man dominion over everything upon the earth.

Furthermore, God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.

But then, we find in Hebrews that,

Man was made lower than angels

It says that man was lowered. There was man in the garden of Eden. He was made in the image of God. And then man sinned, and the writer of Hebrews says, “Thou made him lower.” This idea of making lower is one word in the Greek text – elattao. And it means to decrease or to lower in rank.

And so it seems that man fell from that lofty rank to his fallen condition. And that condition places him in some ways lower than angels. And the question is, “How so?”

Certainly, man came under the wrath of God when he sinned. Man became subject to the dictates of the law of God. That is, he was under the penalty of the law and this certainly placed man in a worse condition than the good angels.

And secondly, death passed upon all men. So, man became subject to death. And in this sense he was lower than angels. This seems to be the key idea here in Hebrews. (See 2:9)

But I want you to notice that,

Man was lowered only for a little while

In Heb.2:7, it is said that man is made “a little” lower than angels. This word can mean a little in terms of space or a little in terms of time. And it seems here that the idea is that man was made only for a little while lower

than the angels. Thanks to the redemptive work of Christ, the condition of man need not forever rank below angels. It is only for a little while that he is lower and then man is raised to a rank above angels.

These two rankings are found in verse 7. Man is made for a short time lower than angels. Then, man is crowned with glory and honor. Then man is set over the works of God's hands. Then, all things are put in subjection under man's feet. (v.8)

So, man was lowered temporarily to a rank below angels, but through redemption is raised to quite a higher rank. This is the message of this passage.

You might think of it like this: Man was up here in his original creation. Then, man sinned and his rank fell to down here. Then Jesus redeemed his people and those people have been raised up again to a high ranking.

This new ranking is higher than angels. Compare v. 5 and verse 8.

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

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

Now although this reversal of rankings has already been accomplished (the past tense is used), the place where this reversal will be clearly seen is "the world to come." (v.5)

As far as this world is concerned, we don't yet see it. (See v.8)

But now we see not yet all things put under him. (v.8)

Now, through redemption, our rank which was below angels in some way, is now higher. Now by position, and in the world to come, by sight, all things will be in subjection to man, but all things will not be in subjection to angels.

This should be very encouraging to us who are still here in this world and have not made it to the world to come. There is a wondrous and glorious future in store for us. This passage seems to indicate that it is far greater than we can imagine. The world to come will be a place where,

1. We will be crowned with glory and honor.
2. We will be set over the works of God's hands. (creation)

The works of God's hands would seem to be his entire creation. The works of God's hands is everything that God does. And it seems that man will be his administrators. Man will truly have dominion. There will be none higher than man except God himself. It seems we will have plenty to do, for we will be over the works of God's hands. God may send us here and there to do his works. And he will send us with full authority and power. The heavens and the earth will obey our command and there will be no principality nor power nor angel that will not be subject to our command. We will be emissaries of God's will and we will carry out his will in the universe because it says, we will be set over the works of his hands.

3. We will be put in a position over all things. (v.8)

This is not comprehensible is it? But this was the original intent of God, that man should have dominion over this world. But this world has been cursed due to sin and it is not in subjection to man. But, God will destroy this world and restore man so that he has dominion over the next world.

But here is the problem. Now we don't see it. We don't see man exalted. We don't see all things put under his feet. We see man living in a fallen world. Things are out of kilter. Things seem out of control and out of order.

This is what it says at the end of verse eight.

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

Here is the situation. The place where we will see the exaltation of man is in the world to come. In this world we don't see it. We see man's humiliation here. Here, we see man brought down to a place lower than angels. We see man subject to death here.

But there is a place where every living creature will see the glory and honor of man. And man will be highly exalted. And that place is the world to come.

You see much of the Bible is a story about God moving his people from one place to a more glorious place, from a place of bondage to a

place of freedom, from a place of hard labor, to a place of rest, from a place of subjection to a place of dominion, from a place where we don't see all things under him, to a place where we see all things under his feet, from a place where we are lower than angels to a place where we are higher than angels.

Such is the great redemption which we have in Christ Jesus.

Jesus never spilled his blood for angels, but he did for men. Jesus never suffered death for angels, but he died for men. Jesus never redeemed the fallen angels. They are reserved in chains and they will be cast into eternal fire. But, he redeemed men. And so, it is redeemed men who are exceeding higher than angels. And though we don't see it so now, we will see it in the world to come.

Jesus said, *"I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."* (John 14:2, 3)

So, we are here, but we are going there. And that is the story of our redemption.

That story is pictured beautifully in the story of that earthly people Israel. In their infancy they lived in a foreign land called Egypt. But their destination was the land of Canaan. When they were in Egypt, they were in bondage to the Egyptians. They were not free men. They were slaves. But there was another land where they would be free men, where they would be conquerors and masters of all they surveyed.

But they needed a deliverer to deliver them out of Egypt. And along came Moses who was a type of Christ. And Moses delivered the people out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And they began that journey from the land of bondage to the land flowing with milk and honey. And Moses saved them out of Egypt.

But there was a journey that they had to take in order to get to that new land. And they journeyed through the wilderness. In an earthly sense, they were saved out of Egypt, but their faith was tested in the wilderness for a period of time and then they were finally brought to that promised land.

So you see how closely this parallels our own Christian experience. We were in bondage to sin. We were in Egypt. But God has promised to save us out of bondage and take us through a wilderness before bringing us into that new land.

We were down here, but God is taking us up there. Now we have been brought up out of Egypt, but we have not yet reached that promised land.

And so, Hebrews says, *We see not yet all things put under him.* (v.8) We are still in the wilderness. We are still on our journey. We have not yet seen that land that is flowing with milk and honey. But we are going there. God led Israel through the wilderness. And God is bringing us to that heavenly land of which Canaan was a type.

Isn't that what it says in verse ten?

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory . . .

Now this is what God the Father is doing. He is bringing many sons to glory. There is a promised land, and God is bringing his sons there. He is transporting sons from Egypt to Canaan, from a world of bondage to a world of freedom, from a world where we are under subjection to a world where all things will be under subjection to us.

But here is the trouble. We don't know the way. We don't know how to get there. Furthermore, we aren't equipped to get there.

Example: We are like pioneers trying to make our way through treacherous, mountainous territory. We don't know our way and we don't know the dangers. And so, we must hire a guide. We must have someone who knows the territory and is able to get us to the other side.

And this is what God has done for us. He has supplied us with a Captain who will take us there.

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

Now Jesus is our Captain who will get us from here to there. Just as Israel had Moses, God's children have Jesus.

Now this word Captain, is "archigos." And it carries with it two

meanings. It means first in rank. And it means first in time. Now a captain is first in rank. He is the leader. He gives orders and others follow. And Jesus is such a captain. He is first in rank. But a captain also carries with it the idea of one who goes ahead. He would be like a scout. He goes out ahead of the group and clears the way.

This idea is applied to Jesus in Hebrews 6:20 where he is called the forerunner.

Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made a high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

Hebrews 6:20

When it comes to being transported from this place to that place, Jesus is our Captain. He is the highest in rank and we follow him wherever he goes. And wherever we are going he will go there first.

Now, following this idea, Jesus outranked us. He was man like us, but he was also God. And so, he is the general and we follow him. And he has gone ahead of us. And he has entered that land, but we have not yet entered.

But now we see not all things put under him (man).

But we see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor.

You see, we are on our way, but Jesus is already there. He is our Captain and he has gone out before us and has fought off all the enemies. He has struck down the Philistines and the Amalakites and the Hittites and the Jebusites and all the ites. And now we can follow him in safely.

Jesus as our Captain went before us and now he has sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (v.3) He is in that promised land and he is bringing many sons there. This is a place of great glory and honor and now we see Jesus there and we will follow very soon.

Now let's put all of this into context. There are perhaps some Jewish believers who are being persuaded to return to Judaism. And they are being told that Judaism is the true and permanent religion. The law of Moses is better than the grace of Jesus. The law which was administered

by angels is better than the gospel which was brought by Jesus Christ. And they say that Jesus could not possibly be the Messiah because he was a man and angels are ranked higher than men.

Not so says the writer of Hebrews. The ultimate destiny of man is much higher than angels. Man is lower only for a little while. Then, he will be raised up in glory and honor. All things will be put under his feet. But all things will not be put under the feet of angels. Look at Jesus. He is the forerunner and he has sat down at the right hand of God. And that is the ultimate destiny of man through Jesus.

Now the second objection of the Jews might have been that Jesus died. Jesus could not have been the Christ because he died. Jesus was subject to death and therefore he was not the Christ because even angels don't die. Therefore angels in that sense are superior to Jesus.

Now let's take a look at the humanity of Jesus. You might call it his incarnation or his humiliation. And what was his rank with respect to angels.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels. (v.9)

Jesus was made lower

Now it should not be supposed that Jesus ever became anything less than God. He was always God, has always been God and will always be God. But he was not always flesh and blood. He became a man. And when he became a man, the writer of Hebrews says he was made lower than angels.

Now remember, we talked last time how it is impossible to imagine that Jesus was in any way lower in nature to angels or any other creature. He was omniscient and all powerful. But he took on a station in life that is ranked lower than angels.

Now, the angels were the ministers of the law of God (Hebrews 2:2) and Jesus was made under the law. Jesus was subject to the law which was spoken by angels. But not only this, Jesus became subject unto death. (Hebrews 2:9) Now this voluntary assumption of a human body that was subject to death ranked Jesus lower in that regard than angels. But we will see that subjecting himself to death in no way proved that he was inferior to angels.

Jesus was made lower only for a little while

See verse 9.

Now, I want to show you that when Jesus voluntarily became a man, subject to death, this was a great honor to him, and was an act which is very glorious. Far from making him less than angels, it proved him to be far above any other creature. How was it an honor to become a man and to die?

That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. (v.9)

It was a high honor because,

1. Christ became a man and died for the benefit of others.

Jesus didn't become a man for his own benefit. He already was perfect and complete in heaven.

He was made lower.

He engaged in sufferings. (v.10)

He tasted death. (v.9)

But he did it *for every man*. A better rendering might be *for every son*. (see v.10, many sons; v.13, the children which God hath given me)

The fact is that Jesus didn't die due to his own weakness or due to his own sin. But he did it for others. And this is a very honorable thing.

See Phil.2:4-8. Jesus didn't do all of this because he was thinking of himself, but he was thinking of others.

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

John 15:13

Far from being inglorious, the death of Jesus was very glorious in that it had the benefit of others in view.

Example: If a man is executed for crimes he has committed, that is very inglorious. But if a man throws himself in the way of a car and pushes a child out of the way and gives his own life to save another, why, he is a hero of great proportions.

And Jesus is a hero of great proportions. And therefore the death of Jesus who died for the sins of others brings great honor to Him and not disrespect.

2. The death of Christ brings honor to Christ because it was mechanism of bringing the grace of God toward men.

Now the grace of God was not poured out on Christ when Christ died. God's wrath and judgment was poured out on him. But the death of Jesus opened the floodgates of grace to be poured out on men.

How are we saved? We are saved by the grace of God. It is only by the grace of God that such a plan could be devised and carried out. And the death of Jesus put God's grace on display. The fact that Jesus died in no way made him less than angels, but the fact that Jesus, who was sinless and righteous, died for others, made him far greater. Jesus was the one through whom God poured out grace on his people and Jesus is the only avenue of grace.

This is why it says in verse 9 that Jesus, "by the grace of God tasted death." It was not grace upon Jesus but it was grace upon us. We can bow our heads and thank God that he is gracious to us through the death of Jesus.

Grace does not come through the law and it does not come through angels. But grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

So you should get a sense of how the death of Jesus does not prove his inferiority but proves his superiority.

3. The death of Christ is an honorable thing because it made him a qualified Captain. (v.10)

Example: What if a dog was standing on the banks of a river and he wanted to get to the other side. And the dog stood there

thinking and thinking but he could not figure it out. Then, a bird walks up beside him and says, “Let me show you how to do it.” And the bird flaps his wings and takes off and easily flies across. Now you can see that the dog needs to know how a dog can make it across.

And Jesus became a man in order to be a Savior of men. We were human beings, and a human being must be our Captain. And he was made a most qualified Captain by suffering and particularly suffering death. See v. 14.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. And deliver them who through the fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.