

Hebrews 2:-5-8

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**Hebrews 2:5-8** *For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. But one has testified somewhere, saying, "What is man, that You remember him? Or the son of man, that You are concerned about him? 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. You have put all things in subjection under his feet."*

*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.*

## INTRODUCTION

We have been learning about the preeminence of Jesus – especially in chapter 1.

Specifically, we have been learning about Jesus being superior to angels.

We have been learning about the perseverance of man – beginning in chapter 2.

Specifically, we have been learning about the great salvation we must not neglect.

Today, in verses 5-8 of chapter 2, all of these themes –Jesus, angels, man, salvation - merge together to introduce the next major thought in the Hebrew epistle.

The author has stated for his largely Jewish audience the greatness of Jesus over angels, and His Divine credentials to be none other than the Messiah. Yet Jesus was a human – frail, tempted and persecuted. How could this be the Messiah? The author will now attempt to answer this seeming contradiction over the course of chapter two, and beyond. He will show that the humanity of Jesus was exactly what best qualifies the Divine Jesus to be Messiah.

He begins his defense by showing the GREATNESS OF MAN in God's economy. And he uses the well known eighth Psalm as his proof text. Our "great salvation" referred to in 2:3 takes on even greater proportions as we discover the glory of man.

## ALL TO BE SUBJECTED TO MAN

**Vs. 5** tells us that God did not subject the world of today or of the future to angels. Again, as we have been learning, angels are an incredible creation of God, but they are inferior in authority to Jesus the Son. Now we are going to learn that they are also inferior in authority to mankind, of which Jesus became a member.

**Vs. 6-8a** is a direct quotation from Psalm 8, verses 4-6. It is important to know that this psalm is not about the Messiah, but about man, and his created greatness in God's economy. Understanding this psalm is critical to our understanding of this Hebrews passage, so let's look at this psalm of David.

**Psalm 8** *O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth. Who have displayed your splendor above the heavens!*

*2 From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength, because of Your adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease.*

3 *When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained;*  
 4 *What is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him?*  
 5 *Yet You have made him a little lower than God, and You crown him with glory and majesty!*  
 6 *You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,*  
 7 *All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field,*  
 8 *The birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas.*  
 9 *O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!*

Some have suggested that this psalm is talking about the Messiah, Jesus, because it speaks of the “son of man” that the Lord God cares for, and that he is made “a little lower than God.” This same line of thinking also interprets our Hebrew passage as speaking about Jesus because He is the one to whom all things will be subject.

But it is very important that we understand that this psalm and its counterpart in Hebrews is speaking of man, not about Jesus. When we understand this, we will discover the amazing Biblical truth of the glory of man. Let’s look at the argument for this interpretation from 3 viewpoints.

## **1. PREVIOUS CONTEXT: THE GREATNESS OF OUR SALVATION**

Remember that the Hebrew author has just been speaking of the great salvation of man that we must not neglect (2:3). It makes for perfect continuity that he continues by referring to God crowning man with glory and honor, and appointing him over the works of God’s hands. This reiterates the words of Genesis 1:26 where God said *“Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over [all the animals]”*

This ruling of man over creation was how God intended it to be from the beginning. Sin entered, and all creation was disrupted, including man having all things subject to him. This is what the Hebrews author says at the end of 2:8: *“But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.”* You might recall that Paul spoke of this temporary disruption of creation in Romans 8.

**Romans 8:19-22** *For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now.*

So the greatness of our salvation also includes ultimately having all of creation subject to our ruling and authority. Amazing!

There are a couple points of confusion that must be clarified.

1. Hebrew poetry, such as Psalm 8, does not typically use rhyme in couplets, as we do. Rather, it uses couplets of phrases that express the same thought. So, “man that You take thought of him” = “the son of man that You care for him.” It’s about man. And this is even clearer when we realize that God often refers to man as “son of man” in the Scriptures. For instance, Ezekiel is continually referred by God as “son of man.” **Ezekiel 32:2** “*Son of man, speak to the sons of your people ...*”

2. In the NASB, Psalm 8 says that we were made “*a little lower than God*” and in Hebrews it is quoted as saying made “*a little lower than the angels*.” The word translated “God” or “angels” in both Hebrew and Greek is the word “*elohim*.” This plural word is most often the word for God in creation = Elohim (“In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth” – Genesis 1:1). But is it also used a number of times in Scripture to refer to the angels – thus the confusion. Even more to the point, is that in the original Hebrew the emphasis seems to be that man was created just a little lower than the Almighty Himself. This concurs with the Genesis account that man was made in the image of God. However, in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, called the Septuagint, Psalm 8 is recorded as saying that man was made a little lower than the angels (aloha = angels). It seems that the author of Hebrew was quoting from the Septuagint test – familiar at the time of his writing.

That we we made just a little lower than the glory of angels is magnificent enough. But to know that we were made just a little lower than the glory of God is overwhelming!

## **2. FOLLOWING CONTEXT: TEMPORARY HUMILIATION OF JESUS**

The overriding context of these opening chapters of Hebrews is the PREEMINANCE of Jesus. But how could the Divine mix with frail humanity? The answer is that Jesus temporarily humbled Himself to be “a little lower than God” as man in order to sanctify man and call the sanctified ones brethren (2:11). More on that next week. In other words – the author wants his Jewish audience to know that Jesus humbled Himself – but not so low – and for a great, Divine purpose.

He became human – the creation that would ultimately have all subjected to him, and be co-heirs with God’s Son; the ones whom God had appointed to be the children of God, unlike angels or any other created being.

## **3. POINT OF THE PASSAGE: THE GLORY OF MAN**

We might be tempted to think that this passage speaks only of Jesus, because He and He alone will be ruler over all. Yet the amazing revelation is that man was appointed by God from creation to be ruler over all other created things.

If you have felt a little deflated or discouraged lately – take this gigantic pill of regality – you are in training to be co-ruler with Jesus over all created things, including angels! This is part of the “meat” we have been saying that the Hebrew writer wants to give us to eat spiritually.

If you have a little of Jonah in you these days – the reluctant prophet – be encouraged. God wants to use YOU as his voice to the Ninevahs of your life.

If you have felt a little like John the Baptist – just a voice “crying out in the wilderness” with a sense of loneliness and purposelessness – be encouraged! God wants to use you to prepare the way of the Lord for someone you know or will encounter soon.

If you have felt a bit like Isaiah – called to speak to a people who will not listen or respond – be encouraged! God does not count your victories in bringing others to Jesus, He counts your victories in being faithful in proclaiming His name and truth.

- √ God remembers and cares for you (2:6)
- √ You are made “a little lower than God” (2:7)
- √ You are crowned with glory and honor (2:7)
- √ You are appointed to rule over creation (2:7-8)

**YOU ARE IN TRAINING TO BE A LEADER AND A RULER.** Lift yourself high, glorious man (and that means woman too!) You were made “just a little lower than Elohim.” And you are crowned with glory and honor. And soon, all created things will be subjected to you. Imagine!

So feast on the GLORY OF MAN, as you bow in humble reverence to the One who bestows that glory. Selah – ponder, and be still.