

# † The Book of Hebrews – The Superiority of Christ

...God has spoken to us in His Son...(Hebrews 1:2)

## The Conclusive Intention of God (Part 2)

Hebrews 2:5-9

*5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. 6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? 7 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; 8 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. 9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*

Satisfaction – what is satisfaction? Generally speaking, satisfaction is that in which we find contentment or pleasure. It is the opposite of sorrow, which is often that in which there is discontentment and a lack of pleasure. In what do you find satisfaction? What brings you contentment and pleasure? There are many answers we might give to such a question. However, let me rephrase the question to ask, "What brings you ultimate contentment and pleasure?" Now that is a much more difficult question, is it not? Being in and amongst God's people, an inclination is to say, rightfully, that Christ and living in Him brings ultimate contentment. But I asked you, "what brings you (actually brings about) ultimate contentment and pleasure in your life?"

I believe that if the truth be told, many of us would conclude that such a satisfaction eludes and evades us. We often long to be content and to find lasting pleasure, but it seldom seems to materialize. Why is this? I submit to you that true satisfaction is hard to come by because we look for it in all the wrong places. I recently read a statement by C.S. Lewis that well makes the point. He writes,

*"If we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling around with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us, like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot*

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*imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.”*

I submit to you this morning this thought: that it was and is God's intention for man to be satisfied, ultimately satisfied. Familiar passages of Scripture confirm this:

## ***Psalm 37:4***

***Delight yourself in the LORD; and He will give you the desires of your heart.***

## ***Matthew 5:6***

***Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.***

These are but two passages, yet the whole of Scripture gives us a picture of a Creator who desires His creatures to be satisfied. Most of you are familiar as well with the catechism question, “What is the chief end of man?” To which we answer, “Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.” But just how are we to glorify and enjoy God? I tell you that we glorify God by enjoying Him, by having a complete and full joy in God and in the things of God. And how do we have joy in God and in the things of God? I tell you that we must find all real and true satisfaction in God – God must be our contentment and our pleasure. When we look to the things of the earth, jobs, relationships, money, sex, power, hobbies and the like, we are selling ourselves short of true satisfaction. For the drug addict, his mind tricks him into thinking that just one more hit, one more snort, one more shot will satisfy, will bring him the lasting contentment and pleasure he longs for. Yet, the drug does not satisfy at all, but only creates a greater longing for more, thus enslaving the addict to sell out his dignity and his humanity in order to be satisfied for a mere moment, with the ultimate results not being satisfaction at all, but rather destruction of life, of relationships and of meaning.

It is alarming that many of us can so easily see ourselves in the trap of the drug addict. We may not be into drugs, but something or somethings have a hold on our hearts. Something of this earth we long for and lust after thinking, “just a little bit more” and I will be happy. When the creature looks to the things of the earth for satisfaction rather than to the Creator, the Creator is not glorified and the creature is never satisfied. God's being glorified in our lives is directly

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dependent upon our being satisfied only in Him. It has been said that “*we should be blood-earnest – deadly serious – about being happy in God. We should pursue our joy with such a passion and a vehemence that, if we must, we would cut off our hand or gouge out our eye to have it.*”<sup>1</sup> The most treacherous of sins, that which will bring the most damage to our lives, is not to pursue being ultimately satisfied in God with all our hearts.

How can it be that only God can ultimately satisfy? Because God is infinite. Any earthly pursuit for satisfaction, that is contentment and pleasure, is only for a moment and is but a vapor, for all earthly pursuits are finite, limited. But “do you not know, have you not heard, the Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired...” (Isaiah 40:28). Our God is infinite, not limited and so His joys are everlasting joys, the happiness He gives is eternal happiness. Have we not, as Lewis suggest, become “too easily pleased” with lesser things?

Please turn with me to the Gospel of John and chapter 15 as we see where and how we can find complete and ultimate satisfaction. Beginning in verse 16 we read this:

## **John 15:16**

***You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you.***

Here is an endeavor that bears eternal satisfaction, that we might bear the fruit of Jesus and that when we do, unlike anything on this earth, this fruit will remain – it will last forever. And how are we to bear such fruit? We read up in John 15:5:

***I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.***

We must seek after and find satisfaction in Jesus – Jesus is joy – Jesus is fullness, Jesus is Life and therefore we must be looking to Him for all real and lasting satisfaction.

Now, you might be asking, “what does all this have to do with Hebrews 2:5-9.” Remember that as we started looking at these verses last week, we began with the thought that these verses reveal the conclusive intention of God for man.

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<sup>1</sup> Piper, John *A God-entranced Vision of God*, p. 27

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God's purpose and plan for man is clearly revealed to us in this passage and ultimately that intention is that man be satisfied, that is find full contentment and pleasure, in God's plan.

To this end, I divided the passage up into four sections, the first two of which we looked at last week. These points consecutively reveal God's intention for man, climaxing in seeing Jesus as the fulfillment of God's intention. Let me quickly review the first two points.

## I. **God's ultimate intention for angels (2:5)**

*"For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking."*

From this, we noted that although this world is currently subject to angels, being under the influence of both God's holy angels as well as to fallen angels, as well as being under the dominion of the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:1), that is Satan; this is not God's ultimate intention for the angels. God did not create this earth to be under the dominion of the angels, but, as we learn, under the dominion of men. The ultimate intention of God for angels is that they are not to be sovereigns, but servants, as we read in Hebrews 1:14 which declares,

### ***Hebrews 1:14***

***Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation?***

When God restores this world to its original state, it will not be subject to angels, but to man.

## II. **God's original intention for man (2:6-8a)**

*6 But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT YOU REMEMBER HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? 7 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; 8 YOU HAVE PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET."*

This leads us to the second point as found in verses 2:6-8a, which expresses God's original intention for man. God's original intention for man was that He would be crowned with glory and honor and would be a sovereign on this

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earth, reigning and ruling under the one true Sovereign, the Creator God and reflecting back to the Creator the glory and honor bestowed upon him. Genesis 1:26-28 reveals this original intention of God for man saying;

### **Genesis 1:26-28**

**26 Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” 27 God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”**

Man was to have dominion on the earth – he was to rule the earth – he was to subdue the earth. But then, something dreadfully awful happened. And this then leads us to our third point.

### **III. The suspended intention of God for man (2:8b)**

*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.*

The second half of verse 8 clearly teaches us that all things were to be subjected to, that is under the command of man. There was nothing that was not to be subject to man. It is like the author here is setting up to answer another objection. If you remember, I presented you a potential objection the author was anticipating last week, namely, “If the Son is God as presented in the Old Testament, fine; but making the Son a man, doesn’t that diminish Him and relegate Him to being both in position and power, lower than the angels?” That was the first objection, which we have not answered yet. For before this objection is answered by our text, another objection could be raised from this statement, “*For in subjecting all things to him [man], He [God] left nothing that is not subject to him.*” The potential objection here would be, “This is not true! This world is not subject to man!” And our author agrees with this sentiment, yet with one qualifier. He says, “*But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.*”

The “but now” brings us into the present reality – we do not currently see the world subject to man. However, as our text has been teaching, this was not God’s intention, that the earth would not be in subjection to man. So what

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happened to suspend man's ruling and having dominion on the earth? The answer is simple – sin happened. When Adam sinned – when He disobeyed the command of God not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he forfeited his dominion and lost the kingdom God intended for him. Instead of the earth being ruled by man, the earth, by the curse of sin, began to rule man. Man was to tend to the earth and be satisfied with the provision of God, but now man's efforts are subject to futility – he plants and by the sweat of his brow he yields not only the fruit of the earth, but also thorns and thistles. Adam's help-mate, Eve, was to be God's instrument in filling the earth with princes and princesses of God to subdue the earth, but as a result of sin, the pain in childbirth was increased, making it much more difficult to subdue the earth.

A simple definition of the Fall of man into sin, while not necessarily complete, is this: The fall of man was man's taking delight and seeking joy and satisfaction in anything but God and His intentions. The result of Adam's actions was his expulsion from the garden of paradise, and the suspension of God's intention that man would rule the earth.

And that is where we are today, the "but now" where it does not appear as to man's place and God's intention. But we read on in verse 8, "*But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.*" God's intention for man to rule and reign upon the earth is not really lost, just suspended. For we do not "yet" see all things subjected to him. We are looking toward a future – this is our hope and is to be our satisfaction, that God's intentions will be fulfilled. So, in answer to the objection, "how can man be so honored by God if all things are to be subjected to him and yet things are not really in his control?" – we have the response, just wait, sin suspended God's intention for man, but it will yet come to pass.

#### IV. **God's present intention for man (2:9)**

*9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*

Now we come full circle and are able to answer the first objection raised – namely - "If the Son is God as presented in the Old Testament, fine; but making the Son a man, doesn't that diminish Him and relegate Him to being both in position and power, lower than the angels?" From verse 9 we learn that the Son being a man is not placing him in a position of inferiority to angels, rather, the Son comes and fulfills for man what man lost in the Garden. You see, the first man, Adam, forfeited the glory and honor given to him by God through his

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disobedience to God. The second Adam, that is, and note something here for the first time in the book of Hebrews – Jesus, that is the Son's earthly, human name, regained and was crowned with the glory and honor God originally intended for man.

You see, all mankind – every person who has lived, lives and will live in this age is united to Adam as we are all his children. When Adam sinned, not only did we sin with him, but the degenerative nature to sin was passed down to all of his children. So then, being in union with Adam, we all have sinned, we have all been disobedient to God and we all are faced with the consequences of sin – that is death, or eternal separation from the joys and satisfaction that is found in God alone. That is the bad news. The good news is that Jesus is the second Adam, and all those who are in union with Him receive the blessings of His obedience – that is life and righteousness. Romans 5 deals with this extensively, but note Romans 5:19 which says,

## **Romans 5:19**

***For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous.***

And note also the difference between the first Adam and the last Adam in 1 Corinthians 15:45;

## **1 Corinthians 15:45**

***So also it is written, "The first MAN, Adam, BECAME A LIVING SOUL." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."***

Now, how did Jesus secure this position for Himself and His posterity? Our text tells us that it was *"because of the suffering of death...so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone."* This phrase speaks to us of the grace of God revealed in our salvation. Here we are being told what the man Jesus Christ did at the cross cannot be found in a claim to merit on our part. We did not direct the mind of Christ to bear our sin before God. We did not offer Christ any motivation or incentive to be our sacrifice – for He died while we were still His enemies. Man, because of sin, had lost glory and honor and he did not love God, nor was he faithful or worthy in any manner. Why did Jesus suffer death for us? How did He secure for humanity a restoration to glory and honor? Christ died for us - *It came out of the abundance of God's grace.*

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Salvation from sin and God's restoring man to his original position was not secured by angels mediating before God on your behalf. No angel could do this. There is no other person, no so-called saint or Mary or a preacher or a parent that can mediate before God for you. There is no church that has tasted death for you. Here we see that *it was Jesus Christ alone, by the grace of God that tasted the pangs of eternal death on your behalf.* So, salvation is found nowhere else else.

So then, let me go back to the beginning of verse 9 and set the stage by asking the question: What is God's present intention for man? The answer is found in the statement, *"But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus..."* Do you see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, as having tasted death for you? How can we "see" Jesus? I tell you that we see Jesus by faith. We are to be as Peter, who in 1 Peter 1:8-9 declares:

## **1 Peter 1:8-9**

***8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.***

By faith then, what must we see about Jesus? I close this address with these five things that we must see about Jesus and can only see by faith.

1. We have seen His incarnation – God in the flesh, coming from the paradise of heaven to the poverty of earth to save us (Matthew 1:21; John 1:14, 29).
2. We have seen His sacrifice for our sins reconciling [making us one with] to God (1 Peter 2:24; 3:18).
3. We have seen His resurrection from the dead (John 20:29; Romans 10:9-10)
4. We have seen His exaltation, being crowned with glory and honor (Philippians 2:9-11; Hebrews 2:9).
5. We have seen His revelation – His sure testimony in the Word of God as to what is life, contentment and pleasure (Matthew 11:28-30; John 10:10; 14:6; 15:10-11).

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## **Matthew 11:28-30**

**28 Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**

## **John 15:10-11**

**10 If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. 11 These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.**

And how do we know if we have truly seen and believe these things? Are you satisfied? Are you satisfied with Christ? Do you find contentment and pleasure in pursuing the things of God or rather do you still seek finite, temporary and only disappointing contentment and pleasure in the things of this world?

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## **Soli Deo Gloria**

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