

We See Jesus **Hebrews 2:5-13**

Introduction

In the first chapter of Hebrews the author makes the argument that Jesus is superior; “having become so much better than angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they” (1:4). Jesus is superior in name, in person, in inheritance. The writer of Hebrews anticipates an objection or question; angels are spirit beings; Jesus was a human being/divine being. How could Jesus be better if he had the limitation of a human body and all that goes with being human? Spirit beings have real advantages. Human beings have disadvantages. Now the writer will provide an explanation for Christ’s incarnation. The Lord God provided a body for Jesus in order to be the Last Adam (vv.5-13); to defeat the devil (vv. 14-16); to be a sympathetic priest (vv.17-18).

The chapter began with a warning (vv.1-4); but now will focus on the work of Christ (vv.5-18). In God’s sovereignty Jesus created all people (vv.5-6) cares for people (v.6b-7); commissioned Adam to be in charge of God’s original creation (v.8a). Things went horribly wrong. Jesus agreed to come to the earth and become ‘lower than angels’. Man’s rebellion resulted in a kind of forfeiture of control and so Jesus would die on Calvary’s cross for sinful man. Now Jesus lives to make us holy (separate).

The Lord God did not create the earth for angels. The Lord allowed human beings to be created with human bodies to live in this world. It would appear that our human condition would be temporary and one day we would be given a glorious body appropriate for our final destination. It makes perfect sense that God would allow Jesus to come; be made human; be made a little lower than the angels; to suffer death for human beings and be exalted and crowned with honor and glory; to reveal in part the glory of God and the nature of God by making Jesus the Captain of our Salvation. Jesus will reconcile us the Father; His Father our Father; We will be joint heirs with Christ as brothers and sisters; we can worship God (v.12) and be allowed to trust God (v.13).

The Lord’s Future Fantastic Plans For This World (vv.5-6)

Hebrews 2:5 (NKJV) 5For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.

Which world does the author make reference to? Is this the cursed and fallen world? Is this our planet and our world? Is this a future world? Part of the New Heaven and the New Earth?

For the observant Jew—in the first century to image the Holy God—acquiring a human nature—and a human body would have seemed unthinkable. This is the great Jewish objection. Jesus is not God. Jesus is a man. And as a man he belonged to something lower than angels. The writer does not dispute that Jesus is a man—but rather even as a man Jesus is better than the angels. The writer of Hebrews believes Jesus is God!

Whatever this world is in the future— it will not be controlled by angels.

The Lord’s Manifest Destiny For Man (vv.6-8)

6But one testified in a certain place, saying: “What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?”

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The one who testifies is the Psalmist (8:4-6).

Who is the subject? Is it man or Christ? What is being said is true of both. Kenneth Wuest writes; “The question as to whether the Messiah or man is spoken of in verses 6-8 (Psalm 8) is settled easily and finally by the Greek word translated ‘visit’ (or here ‘take care of him’ NKJV). The Psalmist is exclaiming as to the insignificance of man in the question, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? That is clear. But to whom do the words ‘son of man’ refer, to the Messiah who is called the Son of man, or to mankind? The Greek word ‘visit’ is episkeptomai. The word means ‘to look upon in order to help or benefit, to look after, to have a care for.’ This clearly indicates that the son of man spoken of here is the human race. God looks upon the human race in order to help or benefit it. Thus the picture in verses 6-8 is that of the human race of Adam” (Hebrews. “Wuest Word Studies” Vol. 2; p.55).

AT Robertson points out the definite article is absent; not ‘the son of man’ but rather son of man; much like the expression is used in Ezekiel.—where God addresses Ezekiel as ‘son of man’ some eighty times. Barclay; Vincent all agree it is a reference to the glory of man as God meant it to be (Barclay).

7You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.

8You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

If these passages are a reference to human beings, to mankind than this passage points to mankind’s future. Why indeed should God take note of human beings? Why shouldn’t God just crush us, or purge this planet of our presence? Some of our pantheistic friends or philosophical naturalists might think of humanity as a giant plague on the planet upsetting the eco-systems of our planet.

And even those who are more kind towards humanity are willing to concede that human beings are rebels, ignoring, neglecting, rejecting God.

Why not just purge the planet? Why not just give the future world to angelic beings?

The Bible teaches that part of our great salvation is to rule and reign with Christ in the future!

How can we neglect ‘so great a salvation’ that also includes world domination with Christ? It sounds surprising when we speak the promise out loud. We shall rule and reign with Christ. But all of the pitfalls of tyranny, and human inequity we will be gone.

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Even good governance now includes fallen people living in a broken world.

(v.7) “you have made him a little lower than the angels”; here little probably is a reference to time—rather than being or state or position. Human beings were made a little lower than angelic beings or spirit beings or heavenly beings by virtue of the fact that we are flesh and blood. We are lower—for a little while—but from the beginning God’s plan was to elevate and lift human beings to a place of honor and nobility. We are shocked and surprised to discover that God created human beings for friendship and fellowship; but also to crown human beings with glory and honor. C.S. Lewis seeks to capture this truth in his famous Narnia series where he has the children occupying places of great honor. When God created Adam and Eve he created them with perfect—disease free—bodies—an excellent mind—intelligence—creativity—ability—let’s try to imagine for a moment. In our fallen, depraved, rebellious and wicked circumstances; we see hints of a former beauty, athletes, engineers, artists and thinkers. We look at the genius of people like Einstein, Beethoven, Jonathan Edwards, George Washington Carver; and so many others. Our capacity for greatness is profound.

Imagine two human beings; absent all sin; incorporating all God’s gifts intended for human beings. All the intrinsic abilities to subdue and control and rule on this earth. Human beings walking in complete worship, fellowship, friendship with God; peace on the earth; tranquil and affectionate interactions with God’s creation. No violence, no storms, no plagues, no terrors, no death. Human beings were created to be excellent, noble, beautiful. We were meant to rule the world—subdue the globe—and perhaps even the stars. But our power and our potential has been marred by sin—limited by sin. And sin has twisted us—and perverted us—and caused some of us to deny God—and fabricate an origin more to our human liking—we are the sum of a million happy coincidences over billions of years—that make us self-aware.

The Psalmist wrote (100:3) “Know ye that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.”

And what of our current state? What of our fallen state? Look around you. You may want to escape to some primitive wilderness or beautiful shore unmarked and unmarred by human beings; but once you make your way back to Social Media and CNN you see diseased bodies riddled with Ebola; beheadings in the Middle East; murder, hate, war, greed, a desperate scramble for power—and those who make selfish choices to hold on to that power; our filthy human laundry soiled with suffering, adultery, fear, drunkenness, intoxications, pride, prejudice, jealousy.

And like a cloud ready to burst is the promise of death. How did we lose glory, honor, power, rule, dominion, life, fellowship with God? Adam fell.

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

We do not yet see the promises fulfilled. Christ has not returned.

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We were meant for so much more. Sin—not doing what God said—caused Adam to fall. The ultimate destiny of man is found in his dignity—a dignity reflected in his origin and redemption.

The Lord’s Exciting Exaltation Of Jesus (vv.9-13)

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

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels. In what way lower? Lower in the sense of a physical body—given for this world—and given for the suffering of death.

From heaven to a virgin’s womb; from Bethlehem, to Gethsemane—to Gabbatha (the pillar); to Golgatha, to the tomb; Yet still crowned with glory and honor—that He—by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

This was God’s plan for Jesus. A plan that includes hope. Human beings are fallen. We are plagued with sin, enslaved by evil, in a corrupt world engulfed in suffering.

In all of this pain, in all of this brokenness, in all of this sorrow, we see Jesus.

What do you see? Does your vision seem to focus on doom? Does your vision seem to rest in a dungeon of despair? Is your world filled with a perpetual night of darkness? Do you live in a constant state of unbelief?

What happens when we see Jesus? The answer might surprise you. Often seeing God brought conviction. Do you remember our study in Job? “I have heard of you by the hearing of the ear; but now my eye sees you” (Job 42:5; Isaiah 6:1). Seeing the Lord brings salvation; we see Jesus as the object of our faith; seeing Jesus brings deliverance; seeing Jesus brings joy; seeing Jesus brings clarity and understanding; “When he shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2).

At the end of the verse the writer says “might taste death for everyone”. The word taste means to experience or partake of—God sent Jesus to partake or experience death for everyman. This was no accident. This was all a part of God’s plan.

The author invites the reader—to believe—that when Jesus returns—when we see Jesus—when Jesus returns in glory—the dominion of this world will return to man.

Jesus will restore what Adam lost. And more.

10For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

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God sent Jesus into the world to show human beings the very nature of God.

In the righteous character of God it was fitting that God in Christ should restore what Adam lost. The humiliation of the Savior makes possible the exaltation of Sinners. Sin had disturbed God's order (MacDonald p.2162). "Before order could be brought out of chaos, sin must be dealt with righteously. It was consistent with the holy character of God that Christ should suffer, bleed and die to put away sin" (p.2162).

This was God's plan. God is a wise planner. God made everything for His glory and His pleasure.

The plan of God and the purpose of God in Salvation was to bring many sons to glory.

This should surprise you. Why? When you think of our sinfulness and worthlessness you should be amazed that God would even bother with you! He wants to bring many sons to glory.

What does that mean? It is the process whereby God justifies you, and then sanctifies you, and then glorifies you! MacDonald; "And what is the cost of our glorification? The captain of our salvation had to be made perfect through suffering" (see p. 2162).

The captain of our salvation; moral character perfect. But he will suffer the punishment that our sins require and deserve. We would hope that his moral character might be sufficient to satisfy God's demands for our sin. But it is not true. A spotless life—necessary—but a substitutionary death—absolute necessity.

"God found a way of saving us that was worthy of Himself. He sent His only begotten Son to die in our place" (p. 2163).

If For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,

For both He who sanctifies (Jesus) and those who are being sanctified (saints) are all of one (that is human beings).

Jesus sanctifies human beings; Jesus separates us from the world—and then separates us to God. In the Bible a sanctified person is one who is set apart from ordinary use—and used for a specific God given use—we are God's own possession. We are set aside for His use, His pleasure, His enjoyment.

One of the ways to understand this—is by understanding the opposite of sanctifies—profanation.

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Profane is a word that means not holy or not set apart—not in the derogatory sense—but rather common or ordinary. These are nations or people who live lives quite separate from God, Bible, Jesus.

In the Bible certain days and seasons were set aside (sanctified). God blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it (Gen. 2:3). “Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee” (Deut. 5:12). Physical objects could be sanctified—like Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:23); Levitical offerings (Ex. 29:27); the fields; the tabernacle; the city gates; houses; and people were to sanctify themselves (Lev. 11:44); “For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy: neither shall you defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth”. One man could sanctify another—“Sanctify unto me all the firstborn, whatsoever openeth the womb among the children of Israel, both of man and beast: it is mine” (Exodus 13:2). The Bible says that God sanctified Christ; and Christ sanctified Himself (John 17:9).

Dr. Harold Wilmington gives a helpful contrast with justification;
Justification deals with our standing, while sanctification deals with our state.
Justification is that which God does for us, while sanctification is that which God does in us.
Justification is an act, while sanctification is a work.
Justification is the means, while sanctification is the end
Justification makes us safe, while sanctification makes us sound
Justification declares us good, while sanctification makes us good
Justification removes the guilt and penalty of sin, while sanctification checks the growth and power of sin.
Justification furnishes the track which leads to heaven, while sanctification furnishes the train.

We may have family members who cause us grief and who we are reluctant to invite to family gatherings or who cause us embarrassment or shame. **Jesus is not ashamed of us! The writer appeals to Scripture and to Sanctification—to prove his point!**

Jesus becomes a true human being in the fullest sense of the world. Jesus was and remains human; in his earthly body and ministry—absent sin—spotless life. No sin at all. As a true human being he is not ashamed to identify himself as human and we as brethren.

12saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”

The writer of Hebrews cites Psalm 22:22 to substantiate the claim; “I will declare Your name to My brethren;” the same verse pictures the Messiah identified with His people—united in worship; “in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.”

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The Messianic Psalm 22 seems to picture the Messiah—dying for sins. In His dying agony He sees into the future—a day when he leads the ransomed saints—the congregation of the saved in praise to God the Father.

13 And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

The writer of Hebrews cites two more passages; Isaiah 8:17 (LXX); The Messiah speaks of putting His trust in God; confidence in Jehovah is one of the marks of true humanity. Then in Isaiah 8:18; the Lord is quoted as saying, "Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me!" The thought is that they are members of a common family—acknowledging a common Father.

Isaiah wrote chapter 8 in the context of an impending Assyrian invasion. A son was born to Isaiah; a son whose name would reflect the prophecy and its fulfillment that Assyria would succeed in its invasion. The prophet identified his sons with his prophecies. In the same way Jesus identified Himself with us! The outward circumstances in Psalm 22 (a painful death) and Isaiah 8 (invasion destruction) seemed bleak and tragic. But the eye faith looks beyond the immediate circumstance to the ultimate triumph of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

The limitations of body and mind will one day be removed. The consequences of sin cleansed.

The writer of Hebrews argues that only a true human can restore what Adam lost.

In Jesus the writer draws our attention to His sovereignty, His suffering, and His sympathy to meet all our needs. As the Son of God—Jesus might seem a little out there—remote—distant—unapproachable—but as the Son of Man—we see His wounds, His tears, He is human—superior—approachable—His destiny is our destiny.

This is the story of the Bible. God in His sovereignty created us in dignity for a glorious destiny. God in His sovereignty revoked our privileges because of our sin; but in Jesus revived us. In Jesus everything is restored. The privileges, dominion, blessing, thrown away by Adam—are back in the person of Jesus Christ. Christ's sufferings and sympathy result in our sanctification!

We sometimes see ourselves with all our faults and feelings and foibles and frailty. But the Lord looks beyond and sees His plan for us; His destiny, His purpose.