

The first verses of this chapter gave us a stern warning to pay much closer attention to the things we have heard lest we drift away. We saw how that meant to be well grounded and living in the light of the Apostle's Doctrine (Acts 2:42). We saw the picture of a boat coming lose from its mooring and drifting off into the rocks along the shore. The warning continued by comparing the punishments prescribed in the Law for those who disobeyed the commands delivered by angels and the much greater punishment which we would deserve if we neglected the *great salvation* that came to us through the sacrifice of Jesus. It was a message of tough love. But now the author moves to a comforting theme.

In our passage today, the author uses Psalm 8 to show Jesus' journey to restore us to the honor and glory that was originally meant for us. *5 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.* Hebrews 2:5 The millennial age and the new earth that follows will be subject to us. That was the original condition of this world until the fall. That is when a fallen angel, Satan, began to have dominion over the earth. Jesus referred to him as the prince of this world (John 12:31).

Adam was to subdue and have dominion over everything including all living creatures (Genesis 1:28). The age to come describes animals being present (Isaiah 11:6-8). Once the dominion of Satan is removed, it will be fully restored to redeemed man. Jesus gave us a preview of this with the miraculous catch at the beginning of His ministry and after the resurrection (John 21:9). Where do you think He got the fish for the last breakfast? When the disciples came ashore, He already had a fish cooked over the coals. It must have been a big one as He invited the disciples to breakfast. He just needed to call it to Him like He called the fish into the nets. I think C. S. Lewis was thinking along these lines when he wrote the Chronicles of Narnia. The redeemed will have the Dr. Doolittle gift in the new earth.

Some people think the world to come will be boring. **The worst day in the heavenly kingdom will be incomparably greater than your best day in this fallen earth.** What worlds will there be to explore in the new heavens? What new creatures might God create? Think of the saints you will meet, the stories you will hear and share, the deep relationships that you will have with others without sin in the way. Greatest of all will be the very presence of Jesus. Yes, He's present everywhere, but there are times in the testimony of many believers when He makes us somewhat aware that He is actually present (Acts 17:23). The experience breaks you and fills you with joy at the same time. It is the epitome of the word "overwhelmed." When there will be no more need to be broken, what will it be like to stand before Him? That was what the song *I Can Only Imagine* tried to communicate. Worship will never be an effort. It will be the

Commented [PW1]: Acts 2:42 (ESV)
⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Commented [PW2]: John 12:31 (ESV)
³¹ Now is the judgment of this world; now will the ruler of this world be cast out.

Commented [PW3]: Genesis 1:28 (ESV)
²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Commented [PW4]: Isaiah 11:6-8 (ESV)
⁶ The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.
⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.

Commented [PW5]: John 21:9 (ESV)
⁹ When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, with fish laid out on it, and bread.

Commented [PW6]: Acts 27:23 (ESV)
²³ For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship,

spontaneous overflow of the heart in awe of Him, so wonderful you will be thrilled at the opportunity of worshiping Him. The anecdotal stories of those who have died and been revived tell us they were disappointed at returning to this mundane world.

That world that is coming is subject to the redeemed of Jesus. The angels will be there, but we will be in charge and more glorious than they. Of course our hearts will be fully submitted to our Savior who we adore, so our desires will be one with His.

⁶ It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him?" Hebrews 2:6 The writer knows this is a psalm of David. Most of the Hebrew readers would immediately identify it as such. What is man that the creation was originally subject to him? What is man that after giving away such a prestigious position it should ever be restored to us? Why does God bother with us sinners? I can see why He cares for the creatures. We are the only really rebellious creatures who were created for so much more, yet He *still* cares for us. Not only does He care, He gave Himself up for us! Paul asks in Romans 8 if God did not withhold His only Son from us, is there any good thing He will not give us (Romans 8:32)? It's the same sentiment as this verse. The worldly person says we are a mere animals whose motivation is to pass on our DNA and die and be no more.

I want you to think for a moment of the difference between this world's view of man and the view that God has. Fallen man says we are an accident, a parasite on the planet, of no purpose or lasting consequence. God's viewpoint is so exalted that I will have difficulty trying to convey it. These verses that follow do that to some extent, but there is so much more in Scripture. We saw in the last chapter a hint of it. *⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.*" Hebrews 1:9 God calls us Jesus' companions! At the end of this chapter we are told that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers (2:11).

I was reading that the other day and it hit me so hard. How could He be so gracious? I look at my life and think of all I should have done, all that I shouldn't have done, and all the people I wounded through my selfishness. Then I hear Him call me "brother," and say that He isn't ashamed to say that; and I wonder how that is possible. He must see the finished work even now from His timeless perspective (1 John 3:2). Outside of time He can see what He is making you and me into, which is His very own image. *²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.* Romans 8:29 I can't get used to that. I hope I never do. What is man? We are made in the image of God and He will restore that image. He even goes so far as to call us His bride, His beloved (Revelation 19:7).

Commented [PW7]: Romans 8:32 (ESV)

³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Commented [PW8]: Hebrews 2:11 (ESV)

¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,

Commented [PW9]: 1 John 3:2 (ESV)

² Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

Commented [PW10]: Revelation 19:7 (ESV)

⁷ Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready;

What really hurts our relationships is selfishness. One spouse thinks they are giving more than the other. Our expectations aren't met. We see ourselves as the deserving one and can't understand why our spouse or friend can't see that. Now think of Jesus, the most unselfish, giving One you can imagine. Everything you have came from Him. But He doesn't wonder why you give back so little in return. He loves you unconditionally (Romans 5:8). He sees what you are becoming, how His love is transforming you, and He patiently waits while loving you through your growing pains. He's always there. He never gives up. He always provides. You can go to Him 24 hours a day and never find Him annoyed or frustrated with you. What is man? We are the object of God's love (John 3:16). That is why every life is incredibly valuable. That is why your life is so valuable.

⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ^{8a} putting everything in subjection under his feet."Hebrews 2:7-8a
Angels are more knowledgeable, without aging, vastly more powerful, and can travel the spiritual realm and stand before God's throne (Job 1:6). In that sense we are definitely a little lower than the angels. Yet, we are crowned with glory and honor. Adam and Eve were to rule over all creation. We were the only creature in which God breathed into that we might be living souls (Genesis 2:7). We are the only ones made in the image of God. We are the only ones for whom Jesus would die. That makes each of us of incredible worth. Still, in our fallen state we see so little of that glory.

Even so, we are only in this "lower" state until our transformation, "for a little while" (Job 14:14). We will be exalted above the angels. Creation waits in eager expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God to be revealed (Romans 8:19). The day is coming when we will experience the full reality of what God meant for us to be.

As much as your house may feel like home, then you'll really be home! We are like fish looking out past the surface of the water with a wavy vision seeing beings in boats and lights on the shore, and wondering what it is all about, what it would be like to be in that realm. The Scriptures give us enough hints to know it is the fullness of which we only get a glimpse here. You know you were made for something more, and you get a taste of it when you meet Jesus in the Word, but only a taste, only through a mirror dimly (1 Corinthians 11:12).

God has put everything under our feet. For Adam and Eve that must have been incredible. Did they speak to the creatures? Did they ride the backs of bears to mountain peaks or porpoise through the seas? Everything under our feet today comes by sheer force. We are the top of the food chain, unless you go into the woods without a gun. We reign here now, but what a mess we have made of it. The more power we attain, the more corrupt we become. We force submission now, but in that day to come

Commented [PW11]: Romans 5:8 (ESV)

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Commented [PW12]: John 3:16 (ESV)

¹⁶ "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Commented [PW13]: Job 1:6 (ESV)

⁶ Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them.

Commented [PW14]: Genesis 2:7 (ESV)

⁷ then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature.

Commented [PW15]: Job 14:14 (ESV)

¹⁴ If a man dies, shall he live again? All the days of my service I would wait, till my renewal should come.

Commented [PW16]: Romans 8:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

Commented [PW17]: 1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV)

¹² For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

we'll run things at the Lord's direction in harmony with all that He has created. Nature will gladly submit.

^{8b} Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. Hebrews 2:8b Now the author comments on the psalm and the inconsistency of it to what we observe in the world around us. We reign over everything in this world, but do so rather poorly. The bear my ancestor hunted killed his fellow hunter. We aren't always in control. We think we can control the climate by reducing carbon emissions. That's just another financial game of greed. Experts say that if we do everything we hope, we might change the temperature by a quarter of a degree. And what about the weather? What power do we have over hurricanes, or tsunamis, or downpours that cause flooding, or droughts, or massive lightening caused fires, or earthquakes? We are very vulnerable creatures. We can't even subject our own spirits without the help of the Holy Spirit (Romans 7:21-23; 8:9-11).

That's what we see. So what is this psalm the author is quoting all about? It speaks of the honor and glory of man. Is it just speaking of a time before man's fall or of a day to come? Are we left just hoping it is not wishful thinking? But wait; there is a forerunner.

⁹ But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. Hebrews 2:9 At the incarnation Jesus was just like us, a little lower than the angels. He is our model who has shown us what is to come. That is why God had to order the angels to worship Him. Throughout time past Jesus ordered the angels about, but for this brief moment in eternity, they have more adaptability and power. They appear more glorious, except for that moment on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-2).

The "for a little while" of verse 7 was about 33 years. When Jesus gave Himself for our sins by experiencing death in our place and taking our punishment in obedience to the Father, God crowned Him with the former glory and honor that He had set aside to be one of us (Matthew 28:18). Now He has returned to His rightful place at the right hand of God. Now the angels don't have to be told to worship Him. They cry "holy, holy, holy" day and night, overwhelmed with the wonder of His presence (Isaiah 6:3).

In referring to this psalm, the author has shown us that it is about us, yet it is most importantly about Jesus, the son of man, who showed us what we were meant to be. The joyful Son of God went through every moment of His life on this earth fully trusting in the Father and always looking to Him (John 5:30). He knew the outcome because He knew the Scriptures. The world saw a carpenter from the little backwater town of Nazareth and didn't think much of Him, even after the miracles were displayed. They

Commented [PW18]: Romans 7:21-23 (ESV)

²¹ So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.

²² For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being,
²³ but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members.

Commented [PW19]: Romans 8:9-11 (ESV)

⁹ You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.

¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.

Commented [PW20]: Matthew 17:1-2 (ESV)

¹ And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves.

² And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light.

Commented [PW21]: Matthew 28:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Commented [PW22]: Isaiah 6:3 (ESV)

³ And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!"

Commented [PW23]: John 5:30 (ESV)

³⁰ "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.

nailed Him to a cross and thought they were rid of Him only to set Him up to be exalted to the highest place. Now every knee in heaven and on earth will bow to Him and every mouth will confess that He is Lord (Philippians 2:8-11).

Think for a moment of the recipients of this letter, surrounded by a sea of Jews and the powerful Romans worshiping their little idols. Nero, their Caesar, was a maniac with legions of well-trained fighting men. He had decided to make Christians his scapegoat for burning an area in Rome that he happened to want to build differently. Many could see through his act, but it didn't matter. He held the power. This little Christian church felt so powerless, so insignificant. The psalm reminds them of who they really are. They are those in whom the image of God is being restored. They are the ones who will rule the world to come. Their future reign will make Nero's look like a child's board game. Slipping back into Judaism to hide their true identity in Christ would be to deny the truth and promise of this psalm.

How did they know the psalm was true, that they were glorious, honorable, and would rule the world to come? They see Jesus with spiritual eyes and through the gospels. He is the firstfruit showing them that the promises would come to pass for them too (1Corinthians 15:20). Would they forsake it all for the hope of a little more security against the wave of persecution? Or would they realize their calling was much more noble, glorious, and honorable. Though they felt powerless, the author was telling them things weren't what they appeared. Even if they suffered, they should remember Jesus and the result of His suffering. Not only was their salvation secure in Him, but He showed them that suffering for the will of God results in greater honor than this world can ever offer.

Do you feel insignificant? Do you wonder if a life focused on Jesus is worth it? If you want to know your true worth, look at Christ on the cross. Do you want to know your significance? See Jesus seated at the right hand of God, for we are seated with Him in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6).

Questions

- 1 Review the first four verses.
- 2 Who rules the world to come?
- 3 What's so great about heaven?
- 4 What's the difference between the world's view and God's view of man?
- 5 How does it make you feel for Jesus to call you "brother"?
- 6 What is man?
- 7 What happened to all things being subject to us?
- 8 In whom do we see that?
- 9 What did this teach the first recipients? Us?
- 10 How can we see our true significance?

Commented [PW24]: Philippians 2:8-11 (ESV)

⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Commented [PW25]: 1 Corinthians 15:20 (ESV)

²⁰ But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

Commented [PW26]: Ephesians 2:6 (ESV)

⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,