



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Corinthians - 15:20-28

“The Last Adam and His Kingdom – III”

TRANSCRIPT

...class by looking to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee again for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We thank Thee for the marvelous plan of salvation which he has executed so beautifully, so fully, so obediently, and so marvelously for our benefit. We thank Thee that through him we've been blessed with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. And we thank Thee that in having him, we have the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and we do not have to look elsewhere for the knowledge that really is significant for human life and for the future if we have him.

We thank Thee for the marvelous grace manifested in the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ for us and for others of the people of God. We thank Thee for the way in which the Scriptures have ministered to us in personal ways as well as in intellectual or spiritual or mental ways. We thank Thee for the encouragement of the provisions of life, for life itself, for the knowledge of spiritual truth, for the companionship that we have with the constant and eternal presence of our Lord Jesus Christ in all the experiences of our lives. We are indeed, Lord, marvelously blessed by our great Triune God in heaven.

We thank Thee. We ask that as we study the Scriptures that we may learn more of all that is ours because we have been identified by Thee with him. We thank Thee for our mediator, for our representative, and, of course, for the forgiveness of our sins.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

[Message] Well, this is the third of our series of studies on 1 Corinthians 15:26 through 28. And I have been struggling this afternoon over whether to have a fourth, and I think I will because there is one question that arises from this passage discussed by a number of people, and that is the question of whether millennialism is either supported or denied by these words. There are some who think that millennialism is denied by what Paul writes. There are others who have different views. And so next Wednesday night, the Lord willing, we will look at this from that standpoint and at least seek to come to some edifying conclusion.

But tonight is the third of our studies “The Last Adam and His Kingdom,” and we are looking at the last three of the nine verses, verse 20 through 28 of 1 Corinthians 15. The apostle writes in verse 26,

“The last enemy *that* will be destroyed *is* death. For *‘He has put all things under His feet.’* But when He says ‘all things are put under *Him*’ *it is* evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.”

Now, I have a correction or so to make in the text that we’ve read, but we’ll save it for the specific point in the exposition. If you’ve been here over the past two or three times, you know that Paul has been arguing the fact of the resurrection. He did that in

verse 1 through verse 11. He discusses the gospel, and he lays stress upon the resurrection. He said,

“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you - unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve” -- and then by above five hundred brethren. He goes on to say he was seen by some others, but those are the significant ones.

Then the apostle after discussing the resurrection and the gospel in its relationship, discusses in verse 12 through 19 the importance of the resurrection, and he states very simply that if Christ has not been raised from the dead, then our faith is empty. It is a faith that has not actually had a proper object and so, consequently, it is a faith in vain. He also says if Christ is not risen, our faith is futile. It did not accomplish what we thought it was going to accomplish. And we are, therefore, still in our sins if Christ has not been raised. So you can see that the apostle, if he were standing here, he would say that your faith rests upon the fact -- the historical fact of the resurrection. When a person denies the resurrection or when a person even has serious doubts about it, the consequences of that are one’s ultimate relationship with the Lord God. We are still in our sins if Christ has not been raised from the dead.

Now, in verse 20 through verse 28, he’s been discussing the order and the rationale of the resurrection. And you remember that he said, Christ has risen, but each comes in his own order. “Christ the firstfruits,” this is verse 23, “afterward those *who are*

Christ’s at His coming. Then *comes* the end, when He shall have delivered the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power.”

I mentioned the fact that one of the great commentators, Frederick Gaudet, said this, “By man, subjection to man or men by man there must come to them the power of rising again. It is for man to repair the evil done by man.” In other words, what Professor Gaudet has said is that essentially the fact that men sinned, men lost what God had given them, control and governorship over the whole of the creation, man must win back for he stands under the guilt and condemnation of God. So because we wrecked things in the Garden of Eden, the first man Adam, man must repair the damage because it is man who owes God the obedience of his creation. So it is -- as Gaudet has said, “It’s for man to repair the evil done by man.”

Now, the story of the Bible, of course, is how the man, the second man, the last Adam, for had he failed there was no other Adam, has come and has done for men what men, sinful men, could not do for themselves. And the proof of the fact or the evidence of the fact that this has taken place is the resurrection. Every Sunday that comes around is a testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Why is it a testimony? Why the men who were committed to the seven days of creation and for centuries met on the seventh day, had their meetings, their spiritual meetings, suddenly began meeting on the first day of the week, the eighth day. Historical fact, we have no doubt about that. The Christian church began to meet on the first day of the week. These were Jewish men. These were Jewish men who were used to meeting of the Sabbath day. And now suddenly, they begin to meet on the first day of the week. Now, of course, we know that our Lord appeared to them on that day and someone might say, Well, that’s just the reason. No, it was far more than that because they even went on to talk about how he was the Passover. Christ our Passover has been sacrificed for us. The Passover has an entirely different meaning for the people of God today. But every Sunday, as it comes around, is a new argument for the resurrection. So every Lord’s day, we are giving testimony. Now,

I know our age is largely ignorant of the significance of this. They are like people who are so used to the Cowboys winning football games that they wake up on Sunday afternoon and say they lost one. You know, it’s that kind of things but far more. But every time that Sunday comes around, that’s a testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ. And the fact that when Sundays come around, in so many hundreds of the countries of the face of this globe, is an evidence of how widely belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is understood or is accepted.

Now, these concluding sentences are sentences that record the nullification of death itself in the completion of the Messianic ministry. You’ll notice verse 26 says, “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.” And so the apostle wants to make plain that the work of Jesus Christ is a complete provision for men. Although, of course, it does not occur all at once. There is an order in the way in which God fulfills his plan. I am very thankful for the order. I’m very thankful the plan has not been completed yet because I came along in the twentieth century, and if everything had been completed in the first century, where would S.L. Johnson be? That’s something to think about. As a matter of fact, Peter says something about that in 2 Peter chapter 3 when he says, “He is not willing that any should perish.” And he has just mentioned the beloved, and he mentions you, any of you.

What has God been doing down through the years? He’s been gathering his people, gathering down century by century. He has a broad and vast view of the people of God. And so there is an order, and centuries pass while God continues his work. That’s what he’s doing. That’s precisely what Peter talks about, and that’s what our Lord meant when he says, “Father, let them go,” on the cross, “let them go, for they know not what they are doing.” Ignorance is no excuse. We know that in law. Everyone knows that. Ignorance is no excuse. But ignorance is ground for a delay in the execution of punishment. That’s what our Lord meant when he said, “Father, let them go,” They don’t know what they are doing.

And when Peter says God is not willing that any should perish, but that all of the beloved ones, all of those that have been predestined. Isn’t that a marvelous word? Predestined, haven’t said that in a long time. The way it rolls off your tongue, it’s marvelous. Predestined, those predestined have had time to be gathered in the people of God. I don’t know why people don’t want to preach about predestined. That’s a great doctrine. Find out that you belong to the family of God and thank him for predestination. That’s what the apostles did. That’s what the Old Testament saints did. They talked about the same thing. So anyway, I’m liable to get off the track here and start preaching something else. At any rate, that is what has been happening down through the years.

Now, these concluding sentences I say will record the nullification of death itself in the completion of that ministry. Does this have to do with the millennium? Well, we’ll save comments for next week and go into our study now by turning to verse 26 in which we have the nullification of death. The apostle writes, “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.” The reign of our Lord, remember, concludes with the vanquishing of all of his enemies. In verse 25 we read, “For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet.” So the ultimate plan of God is to overcome all of his enemies in a total victory, demands for total victory. The kind of thing the allies demanded in World War II. Total victory. That is what God is looking forward to, and so are we. “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

Now, the fact that he calls death the last enemy, what does that say to you? Well, if it’s last, look at the original text, it’s very interesting because the word last has no article. You might think the last -- the last enemy, well there is no article. As a last enemy, the text says, death is being nullified as a last enemy, but if something is last, it’s definite, isn’t it? By the very nature of it. You don’t need a “the” with it. So we pronounce it. We use the “the” to translate it even though it doesn’t have an article, but because by the very fact that it is last means it’s “the last.” It’s not any “laster” or “lastest.” Some people do talk

like that, but you wise people in this audience, you don’t talk like that. He says “the last enemy.”

Now, the fact that he mentions this as “the last enemy” suggests that this is a special enemy. That is, this is an enemy that demands special consideration. The last enemy is, as he says, death. Verse 26 then, “The last enemy that will be nullified is death.” The word “nullified” is a word -- well I translated it, nullified, but my text has the last enemy that will be destroyed is death. Nullified is really the sense of it. It’s a term that means it will be brought to naught. It will not be able to do the work that it ordinarily does.

And I’d like for you to turn over to 2 Timothy chapter 1 in verse 10 where the apostle mentions this very fact. This is, incidentally, one of the greatest of the passages in the Bible, and I’m going to begin reading with verse 9. The apostle says,

-- “who has saved us and called *us* with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began” --

Isn’t that interesting? The purpose was given to us before time began. Would you say that that is an eternal purpose? And so if it’s a purpose, what is it? It’s predestination, predestination in nature, not specific words, but the sense. So,

-- “given to us in Christ Jesus before time began, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, *who* has abolished (Now, that is the same verb that is used over here and translated destroy, abolished. It’s a term that means to nullify. It means to render idol, actually. It means to, as I say nullify, who has nullified) death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Well, what does he mean when he says he has nullified death and death is still with us? Well, as we’ll mention as we go along, it’s possible to speak of something as being nullified because its death is certain. That is the ground of the completion of the destruction of it has taken place.

Now, I’d like to illustrate this as one of my favorite illustrations, and it is an illustration given by, “Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in Askelon, lest the uncircumcised liberals hear it.” It’s an illustration that a liberal man used. This is an illustration that Arthur Buttrick used in one of his books, but it is an excellent illustration. He was trying to illustrate that human history is both redeemed and unredeemed, both realized and unrealized, held in a polarity between two worlds, the world of men and the mystery of God. And he says, he talks about a man, in fact I think he says he was once in a public park in Jacksonville, Florida -- I have it before me -- and we heard another spectator of a chess game say of a certain move, That’s it. That’s it. He meant that, though the other contestant might squirm for a while, even for a long time, that one move had determined the outcome. Anybody whose played -- I’ve never played chess. I was never smart enough to play chess, but I did play checkers. And I also have had that said about something I’ve done on the checkerboard. That’s it. And I discovered that was it, and we had to think about another game. But he meant that.

Now, the rivals -- he went on to say -- might not know the victorious import of that move, and the other spectators might not know, but that particular onlooker knew, That’s it. Then Mr. Buttrick went on to say, the Bible plays the part of that perceptive man. By faith, faith being response the beckoning and grasp of the mystery, the Bible says of the total Christ event in history, That’s it. God has made his final move in the Lord Jesus Christ’s saving ministry. And when the blood was shed on Calvary’s cross and when the Son of God rose from the dead that was it. People may not have understood. Even the saints did not understand very well. They may not have understood, other’s may squirm down through the centuries and try to defeat what has surely come to pass and

will come to its final conclusion, that was it, the death of Christ. So when we read here the last enemy that is being destroyed is death. But it’s sure to come to pass and along the way we are seeing the effects of what our Lord did once for all on the cross at Calvary and then in rising from the dead. All sin and evil are going to be eliminated ultimately from this universe, and God’s purpose and plan are going to be successfully fulfilled.

So the nullification of death, it took place at Calvary. It’s still in process of being worked out in time. The resurrection of the body has not yet taken place but it’s sure to take place. You may have wondered, nineteen hundred years, people have been born, lived their lives, died. The saints were born, lived their lives, died. But the resurrection is sure to come because he has abolished death in his death on Calvary’s cross.

Now, verse 27 says, “For he has put all things under his feet.” You’ll notice the little word “for.” Whenever you see that you are looking at something that is probably a reason, introducing a reason, or perhaps an explanation sometimes “for” introduces an explanation. This is a reason I think. And so it introduces the evidence for the statement that was just made. “The last enemy that will be destroyed is death *for* he has put all things under his feet.” So this introduces the evidence of the nullification ultimately, totally of death.

Now, I’d like to point out one little thing that you wouldn’t get from the English text. You would if you were looking at the original text. Our text says verse 27, “for he has put all things under his feet.” The original text lays the stress a little bit upon the “all things.” “For *all things* he has put under his feet.” In other words, inclusive of death, everything, with a little bit of underlying, *for all things* he has put under his feet. You could underline it, all things, especially. Now, what is the evidence for that? All things have been put under his feet. All things. What is the evidence? Well, you are looking at the evidence in that first line. If you are reading your Bible and paying attention to your marginal notes or even my case the italicized words, you notice that this is a text from Scripture. For he has put all things under his feet is something that the Scriptures say

elsewhere. This is a quotation. Paul was a reader of the Bible, you know that? Does that make you feel a little guilty? I hope so because you ought to feel a little guilty. If you are not reading the Bible, if you are not reading it constantly, you should feel a little guilty. You are a believing person. The Bible is the word of God. It’s the lamp unto your feet, the light for your path, and you never look at it. No wonder you stumble, here and there. No wonder you are having problems that you hadn’t anticipated.

Well, anyway coming back to this, “For he has put all things under his feet,” this text is a text that had its origin in the 8th Psalm. In the 8th Psalm these words were said, and they were said by the psalmist in a lyrical way. That is, he composed a poem. We’ll put it in our language. He composed a poem, but his poem was about the creation. So he was in the 8th Psalm saying a poem about what God says in Genesis chapter 1.

Now, in Genesis chapter 1, we know God created Adam and Eve, and he placed the whole creation in their hands, didn’t he? They were in effect the governors of the creation. Adam was king over the creation. So the psalmist is reflecting upon that in lyrical language. And he has just said -, Paul has just said the last enemy will be destroyed is death. And Paul cites that particular 8th Psalm and uses it for his argument. Now, the 8th Psalm is a psalm which refers to the first Adam’s enthronement as king of the earth, as I mentioned. This is referred in the New Testament to Jesus Christ. He doesn’t specifically say that here, but if you know what else is said in the New Testament, you wouldn’t have any doubts at all, so I am going to ask you to turn to two or three passages. Turn to Ephesians 1, verse 22, Ephesians 1, verse 22. You remember in this prayer of the apostles -- that is, you remember if you’ve been reading your Bible -- you remember, the reason I am laying stress on this is I’m trying to build up my own motivation to read through the Bible again this year, and I’m still in Genesis so I need a little bit more motivation. So if I exhort you, then what are you going to say if I don’t provide you at least an example of at least finishing the Bible this year. I’m not going to read it three times like I did two years ago but just once. Ephesians 1:22 says, “And he

put all things under his feet.” There it is. That’s the passage from the Book of Genesis, from the 8th Psalm especially as the psalmist reflects upon Genesis, and he applies it to Jesus Christ, and he put all things under his feet. Notice verse 20, “Which he worked in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places far above all principality, power, might, and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come, and he put all things under his feet and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.”

So the Apostle Paul lets us know that Psalm 8, and in effect Genesis 1 as we shall see, ultimately is a reference to Jesus Christ. How is that? He is the representative man, the one who stands for us. Well, that’s just one passage. You might say, Well, that’s just one, Dr. Johnson, How about some more? Well, there are more. First Peter chapter 3 in verse 22 -- 1 Peter that’s just before 2 Peter -- 1 Peter chapter 3 in verse 22, I feel like when I say something like that, you know give it the Limbaugh twist. 1 Peter 3:22, notice what he says here in verse 22, who has gone -- he is talking about Christ -- who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels, and authorities and powers having been made subject to him. Again, Psalm 8, the truth of it are referred to Jesus Christ. Turn back just a little bit to Hebrews chapter 2. Here it will be very plain. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews -- those of you that were here in the exposition last year, you may remember some of this. In verse 8, the writer of the Epistle says “For he has not put the world to come of which we speak in subjection to angels but one testified in a certain place saying” -- now here a good bit of Psalm 8, “What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you take care of him. You’ve made him a little lower than the angels, you’ve crowned him with glory and honor, set him over the works of your hands, you’ve 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. But “that’s it” has taken place. It’s just a matter of time. The writer goes on to talk a bit more about that, but we don’t have time to do it.

So what we want to say is that Psalm 8, the reflection on Genesis chapter 1:2 is fulfilled in the representative man, Jesus Christ, and his ministry. That is why in this very chapter Paul is thinking about all of these things writing, and he will talk about the first man Adam, and then he will talk about the last Adam in verse 45, right there. His mind is filled with these things, and he’s talking about the way in which Jesus Christ acts as a representative for his people. This is one of the fundamental facts of Biblical doctrine, to understand that our Lord is a covenantal head of the people of God. And what he does, he does for those in him. He is their representative. He bears our judgment. He rises from the dead, and we rise with him, ideally and ultimately shall follow him in the resurrection of our bodies. So the fulfillment of Psalm 8 is found in the representative man, Jesus Christ, and that’s what Paul means when he says, “The last enemy that it will be destroyed as death *for* he has put all things under his feet.”

Now, there is a limitation, however. We have the limitation of time of course. Because someone might say, Well, all things don’t seem to be under our Lord’s feet. Well, they are not, if we are just looking at the way things look. They don’t look to be under his feet. The saints, the believing saints, the body of Christ, they are dying just like everybody else, as I mentioned last week. They are born. They live their lives. They decay. They grow old. Ultimately they die. So where is our victory? Where is our victory?

If you look at the man who reviles the Scriptures, hates Jesus Christ, has no interest whatsoever in him, his life looks just like our lives. Well, you might find some here and there, illustrations that you could single out and say, Well, sin certainly has wrecked his life, but then there are a lot of people that one doesn’t see any of that and, furthermore, there are some people when you look at them, they are the kinds of people that cause some of the saints of us to really covet their lives. And in fact, some of the saints appear to be under the discipline of a heavenly person. So “that’s it” has taken place, but the conclusion is not yet.

So he has put all things under his feet, but when he says all things are put under him. Now that “he” in my text, I don’t know whether you have a “he” or not. But the original text has something that might be rendered “it,” for it says, but it could be rendered he says. Could be rendered for when he shall have said, and personally I prefer that, when he shall have said all things are put under him. But the point I want you to notice is that the he may be God or it may be it, and if it’s it, it’s the Scripture. If it’s he, it’s God. And so of course it’s sure to come to pass. But I render it then, because it’s futurum exactum, same kind of construction, we have two or three here in this passage. We have them in one or two other places in the New Testament, but when he shall have said all things are put under him, it’s evident that he who put all things under him is accepted. I’d like to render it this way: when God -- using the He as God -- when God shall have declared his purpose to subject all to Christ accomplished, it’s evident that all are subjugated except -- this is the limitation -- except the one who put all in subjection to him. So when he shall have said all things are put unto him, it’s evident that he who put all things under him is accepted.

Now, we are talking about our Lord as the Messianic King, as the Messiah, serving under God the Father in heaven. It’s the Father who subjects all things to the son. And in subjecting all things to the son, he himself is excepted so far as the subjugation is concerned. He who put all things under him then is a reference to the Father, God. Remember you have to follow, if you’re going to understand. Remember the term “God” is not a term reserved for the Father. We’ve said this so often, last year in studying Hebrews, but it has to be said over and over again. I read some very fine Christian commentators who will talk about Christ and then talk about God. If they are talking about the Father they use the term God, if they are talking about Christ they use the term Christ. Why is that? Because it is hard for us to think, evidently, of Christ as God. It would be much better off if you thought of God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, our Father God, our Messiah God, even. So that’s very important. We worship a

trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, coequal, coeternal. The Son no less equal than the Father, no less eternal than the Father. Do we get it? Some of you do. Others of you, maybe you do. Well, that’s it.

So he who put all things under him, the reference is to the Father God, not the Son God. Now, verse 28, now when all things are made subject to him, then the Son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him that God may be all in all. You’ll notice the 28th verse in my text, I didn’t look at the King James Version, and I didn’t look at any of the other versions this afternoon as I was thinking about this, but my text has verse 28, “now.” That’s a Greek particle that often is transitional, and that’s the sense of it here. So he’s making a transition to a slightly new thought, “now” -- there is the Greek term -- to the new thought this passage is somewhat parallel to verse 24.

“Then comes the end when he shall have delivered the kingdom to God the Father, when he shall have put an end to all rule and authority and power.” So here, “Now when all things are made subject to him then the son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him that God maybe all in all.”

So here we come to something that’s not easy. In fact, one of the commentators, I like what he said because I think he’s a good man. In fact, there were two men who wrote this, Robertson and Plummer in their commentary and they were good men, both of them, I believe, were believing men. Their commentary is a big, useful commentary on the Greek text. It’s a little out of date in some ways now, but still a lot of good things in it. When they come to this section they say this: The passage is a summary of mysteries which our present knowledge does not enable us to explain. That doesn’t say much for my explanation for you tonight, does it, because I am explaining to you that. He says passages so full of mysteries that our present knowledge doesn’t enable us to explain. Well, he didn’t hear me explain so he hasn’t had sufficient understanding of that point. And which our present faculties perhaps do not enable us to understand.

So we’re talking about something that if you find a little puzzling, well, you can see that there are people who’ve spent their lives, and those two men did, interpreting the New Testament text. They’ve found some difficulties here. So we realize that we are talking about difficult things. Now when all things are made subject to him, subject to the Son, the Son, who is God the Son, so all things are subject to the Son. Now when all things are made subject to him, then the son -- I would suggest to you that when he says, all things subjected to him, he’s still thinking about Psalm 8. But it’s obvious if he has been made subject to the Father -- he is subject to the Father, and then he’s been given this wide authority over the earth, and now he is going to turn it back to the Father in heaven, and be himself subject to the Father in heaven, how has he acted? If all things have been committed into his hands, the Son of God, as our representative, our mediator. And he has for a time been king of kings, lord of lords. He’s been in history -- we know in the Old Testament the Son of God was active. The angel of Jehovah was one of the instances, and we’ve seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as well as in other places, that in the Old Testament our Lord was active even though he had not yet become incarnate. So he was active under the hand of God in heaven. And if he has had that supreme authority, and there is a time coming when he’s going to deliver to the Father his authority and be himself subject to the Father, then how has he acted? Well, he’s acted, has he not, as a mediator, a mediator. That’s precisely how he has acted. That’s why the Epistle to the Hebrews calls him the mediator. He’s a mediator. So a mediator.

So we read now, when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him, that is under the Son. So the Son himself, this objection, how can the Son be subject to the Father and still be God the Son. Isn’t he coequal, coeternal? Well, yes, he’s coequal, he’s coeternal. What kind of subjection is it? Now, some like to think of this subjection as being the subjection of our Lord with reference to his human nature. I don’t really think that’s the sense, although that, of course, is true. The Son himself is to be subjected to the Father. Subjection is not

that of course of the eternal “logos,” it not the second person of the trinity coequal, coeternal. The word “Christos” which is used just here verse 23, “Those who are Christ’s at his coming. Designates a theanthropic office that is Theos means God, anthropos means man, so theanthropic is Godman, a Godman office. Christos is a theanthropic word, that is it’s a term used of the Godman. So the subordination is not that of the eternal logos. It’s the subordination of the theanthropic man. That is, it’s the subordination of the Godman. The subordination is the official subordination of the incarnate Son to God as God. In other words, it’s a voluntary position that he has taken for the benefit of you and for me. He has, in a sense, removed himself from one of the thrones of the eternal Triune God taken to himself human nature to carry out a task. And he’s carried out his task and ultimately he will deliver back into the hands of the Father the rule over everything which was conveyed to him as agent of the Father for a time, the time of the mediation. Ah, these are mysteries, aren’t they? These are big things. You are very fortunate to have someone explain them to you when they cannot be explained, but anyway I am trying. I don’t say that I have explained these things perfectly, but I think we are on the right track anyway. We’ll put it that way. I’m not quite the Limbaugh of Biblical exposition. If he were here and if he were expounding the Scriptures with the style with which he expounds his political and social views, we’d have the truth, but I’d like that.

I want to point out to you this, that it is possible for a person to be subject to someone else with whom or under whom and yet be an equal. Let me explain. It says that the Son is going to be subjected to the one who subjected all things to him. The Son of a king is the equal of his father so far as his attributes are concerned, is he not? He’s not officially yet the king. Look at Charles. It’s a pretty poor illustration these days of course, perhaps for many, but destined, I guess, at least for a lengthy period of time to be the ruler of Great Britain. Certainly, the equal of his mom and his father, so far as attributes are concerned. And in the case of a son who has all of the necessary attributes

to be the king at the same time he may be officially inferior. In Charles’ case, he’s the Prince of Wales. Ordinarily the Prince of Wales would become the king, and he would be equal with father or his mother, but at the same time subordinate. This is the kind of subordination that we are talking about here when we read that when he says all things are put unto him it’s evident, he who put all things under him is excepted now. When all things are made subject to him, then the son himself will also be subject to him who put all things under him that God -- not the Father, that the Father may be all in all, but that God may be all in all, and he’s part of the Godhead, isn’t he? -- so that God may be all in all.

In other words, the subordination of the son to the father is an official subordination of the incarnate Son to God the Father as God, that God may be all in all, God reigning as God.

Now, the son who is king of kings and lord of lords during his present mediatorial reign is to surrender then the reigns of universal authority and power in the universe to God the Triune God as the Triune God. So this is what Paul is saying, that we have a mediator who has been and is for a time in authority, given his authority by the Father. He will carry out his task as the mediator, and when the task is finished, and after all he’s already died, he’s been raised from the dead and thus “that’s it” has taken place. But there is a time in which the remainder of the purposes are going to be worked out. But the time will come when the Son will deliver the authority back into the hands of the father and he, God the Son, will rule and reign with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit as the eternal God.

But there is something else here that I’d like to mention. There are some who have thought of this as being a kind of universalism. It says in verse 28, that God maybe all in all, all things in all things. In other words, is everything going to be merged into God? He will be all, and all will be God. Some have limited this all to the intelligent beings, and that’s all. Is this what he’s talking about, that all sin and evil will be banished

from the whole universe. Well, I don’t have time to argue this point, but there are several reasons why that is not the point. This interpretation would be perfectly arbitrary words being pressed beyond their contextual meaning if one does that, why limit the in all to intelligent creatures. Why not say God is all and in all in other things too? So that we have a universe, which is just largely God, everything merged into God. So the passage would teach pantheism if it teaches universalism in that sense. The interpretation is contrary to the sense of the context, too, which has to do with the continuance of the mediatorial dominion of Christ over the universe under the Father. And also, it’s contrary to Scripture and the faith of the church universal. They’d never believe something like this.

So, what we have been talking about is the mediatorial reign of the Lord Jesus. He at the present time is a mediator carrying out a task the Father has given to him. All things have been made subject to him king of kings, lord of lords. He will finish that work. He will finish it successfully. He will turn the kingdom back to God the Father and resume his position as God the Son within the eternal trinity. But having done this, we are not to say that he has abandoned his relationship to the church of Jesus Christ. He is also the head of the church of Jesus Christ throughout all eternity.

So we are to think of our Lord as a person who has carried out this magnificent task of mediation involving the suffering of the cross and all that is involved in that. The suffering of the eternal judgment of God, my God, my God, why is thou forsaken me, as he suffered for you, you believers, and then as he returns to his place in heaven, he returns giving the Father back the kingdom that was given to him but still one of us. Always the Godman, always the Godman, always the head of the church, the head of the church forever. The thought of that is something that to use an expression that doesn’t belong in the language of Scripture, blows one’s mind, doesn’t it? Paul never thought of that. But that explains it pretty well, it seems to me. It blows one’s mind to think that Jesus Christ has accomplished what he has done and has married eternal -- has married

human nature forever, forever. So that God the Father, God the Son -- God the Son is God -- the Godman the Son forever. And we are one with him. We are one with him.

There is a marvelous little picture in the Old Testament. It’s in Exodus chapter 21 -- you may remember it -- when a man who had been sold into slavery, a Hebrew man, and he had fulfilled his years of service after a certain number of years -- I’ve forgotten whether it is six or seven. After those years, he was given the privilege of becoming free. If he had married, things were complicated. If he had married someone who belonged to his master, then he couldn’t take his family with him. If he had brought in his wife, then of course he could take his wife with him. But if he had married the daughter or a slave probably of his master then when the years were up of his service and he could be free, he had to make a decision. He had to make a decision about his wife and his children. And in the Old Testament, in Exodus chapter 21, there is a marvelous little passage that says that if the servant loves his master and loves his family, then there’s a little ceremony that he underwent, he had his ear bored with an awl and thus he was able to stay as husband and father, but it had to be eternally; that is, forever for him.

Now, that’s a beautiful illustration of our Lord. Dr. Ironside talks -- he wants to make it personal so he has a family with little children around and the little child jumps up in the lap of his father who is the slave and says, Daddy, what’s that ugly hole in your ear? And his mother says, Son, don’t talk about that ugly hole. That hole is beautiful. That expresses his love for me and his love for you and his commitment to us forever when he went through that service. Well, that does illustrate our Lord. Bible teachers have known that. That’s an illustration precisely of our Lord who took to himself human nature, became one of us and having become one of us and having his ear bored -- this is not altogether Scriptural, I’m just saying it this way -- having his ear bored in the suffering of Calvary’s cross has identified himself with us and is identified with men forever. The church of Jesus Christ, he’s our head. He’s our Lord, and I’m thankful for what he has done. I may be like that little boy and say as I look at that cross and say, That certainly

was ugly. It was ugly. Look at the descriptions in the New Testament, and you’ll see it was ugly, but to me it’s beautiful. It’s what he suffered for me. It’s what he’s done for me. And how can anyone who understands that ever be the kind of person who would not want to serve him forever because of what he has done. May the Lord help us to really understand what our Lord has done for us.

Let’s bow in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee and praise Thee for the greatness of the gift of the Son of God. We acknowledge, Lord, the mysteries are too great for human minds to plumb the depths of these great things. But we thank Thee for the preeminence of the Son of God, what he, as the eternal Son, underwent when he took an additional nature, a human nature as the mediator, carried out his ministry for the people of God, has ascended to the right hand in the resurrection and ascension, and there awaits the completion of the divine program.

We thank Thee, Lord, for that which Thou hast done. O God, through the Holy Spirit, so work in the fulfillment of the promises of the Scriptures that the church may be completed, the people of God may reach their fullness if it please Thee in the near future. If, Lord, there are some here who have not yet believed, give them no rest nor peace until they rest in Him.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.