



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 2:5-9

“The Glorious Destiny”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures. We thank Thee for the faithful men of the word of God who sought to follow the direction of the Holy Spirit and write the things that Thou didst give them to write. And we thank Thee for the control over history that our great sovereign God in heaven has manifested and the preservation of the Scriptures. We thank Thee for the gift of the Spirit who interprets the word for us and to us, for him who wrote the Scriptures. We thank Thee for our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, who has offered the one sacrifice by which we may have forgiveness of sins and justification of life, the presence of the Holy Spirit eternally with us, and all of the other many blessings that are ours as the Children of God. How marvelous it is, Lord, to know what we are, by Thy grace. And we pray that as we study the word this evening that our teacher may be the Spirit, that our hearts may be opened, that we may learn and that we, also, by Thy grace, may be enabled to live out in our lives the things that we come to know in our minds and in our hearts. We pray for each one present here, for the problems of life, which are characteristic of our lives, all of us. We look to Thee, Lord, to meet our needs. We want to give Thee praise, our great Triune God in Heaven, and now ask Thy presence with us.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Well, we are turning again to the great Epistle to the Hebrews and, for tonight, we are looking at verse 5 through verse 9. So if you have your New Testaments, turn with me to those verses and I want to read them. And then we’ll seek to give an exposition of them.

Now, by way of background, of course, the author of the epistle has pointed out to us in his introduction that God has finally spoken to us in his Son, actually, “in Son,” that is, a son-wise revelation. The revelation is not simply what the Son has said but in who he is and in what he has done.

And then to support that, he has turned to the Scriptures and given seven Scriptures from the Old Testament to justify the statement that he makes in verse 4 that he is as Son, better than the angels, “Having obtained an inheritance more excellent than they,” and a more excellent name than they, and so the texts that we’ve looked at in some detail are designed to support that conviction that he has “by inheritance” obtained a more excellent name. Now, for those of you who’ve been here, you know I’ve spent a good bit of time on this and tried to point out that the name, while preeminently is the Son, is not simply the Son because we have seen in these texts, which in the Old Testament are the text of the Pentateuch and the Psalms and the Prophets, that in those passages, other names, also, have been applied to the Son. For example, Lord or Yahweh is applied to the Son; the texts that are used by our author in their Old Testament context refer to Yahweh but he applies them to the Son of God. And, we have seen that another of his names is the name God from Psalm 45. So Lord, Son, God, Yahweh, these are names that are applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ.

He tried, also, to make this point, which, I think, is very important, that in order to understand that and not be confused by it, because it would be confusing if we were Unitarians and we believed that there was one God and one person in the Godhead, we would be very confused. Because, how could we call this one person, Yahweh, the Son, or the Father and not have a contradiction. And we tried to point out that the Christian faith has from almost its beginning believed that there is one God who subsists in three persons and that the term God is applicable to

all three of the persons; we say God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, but the term Lord or Yahweh is also a term that applies to all three persons. We haven't tried to prove that because that would take us astray into Systematic Theology, but that term, Yahweh, is applied in the New Testament to all three persons of the Trinity. That is, a passage in the Old Testament in which the term Yahweh is used is in the New Testament applied to the first person the Father, to the second person the Son, to the third person the Spirit.

Now, we've seen that in a couple of passages here that the term, Lord or Yahweh is applied to the Son. In the Old Testament context, it's Yahweh. In the New Testament, it's the Son. And so we sought to sum it up by saying, we can say Yahweh the Father, Yahweh the Son, Yahweh the Spirit. And in reading the Bible it's necessary for us to ask the question, which person is this a reference to? That is, the text we are looking at.

So now we have finished chapter 1 and we looked at the first of the warnings, which is chapter 2, verse 1 through verse 4, which is a simple statement, if in the Old Testament individuals who disobeyed the Law of Moses were punished, judged, disciplined, as the case may be, how shall we escape if we neglect “so great salvation.” In other words, the salvation that has been given to us through the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ being a greater revelation than the revelation of the law, although both come from God. If the former revelation when disobeyed, brought judgment, how much more will this more excellent, this greater, this final revelation from God bring in judgment if we disobey it?

We pointed out that it first began to be spoken by the Lord, was confirmed unto us by those that heard him and, in addition, God bore witness to those who brought the ministry to the hearers of the Epistle to the Hebrews by giving signs and wonders, gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will. So our Lord has spoken the truth. The apostles spoke the truth. The apostles gave to others that truth. It has been confirmed to those who have been the recipients of the Epistle to the Hebrews and, in addition, they are acquainted with the fact that the Holy Spirit added to the

preaching the signs and miracles that further confirm the truth of the word of God and of the New Testament revelation.

Now, tonight, in verse 5, he continues, and he’s still thinking about the greatness of the Son of God, with reference to the angels because he’s been seeking to prove that since he made the statement in chapter 1 in verse 4. Verse 5.

“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, ‘What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you take care of him? You 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. You 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. But 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.’”

The subject for tonight is, “The Glorious Destiny” of man. The space age in which we live has for some time now moved us to ponder anew the ancient questions that are found in the word of God. “For what is your life?” James asks, in the 4th chapter of his letter. “What is man?” The psalmist asks and our author has cited the passage from Psalm 8.

I remember, some years ago, when shortly after the Russians had put the first man in space, and when that took place there was a conversation that was reported by David H. C. Reed, one of the well-known preachers in New York City, a Britisher, who had come over to the country and has written a number of books that preachers read, filled with interesting sermons. He reports, in one of the messages that he gives, that shortly after the first Sputnik went into orbit and began to send back the “beep, beep” of people who are now out in space, that he was at a dinner and a lady, who was at the dinner party, turned to him and said, “You, ministers, can say what you like. Somehow that

thing, Sputnik, has gotten between me and God.” I think a lot of people probably felt like that. The idea of now man out in space made us wonder, is it really true that the things that the Bible says about the creation, about space, about the world about us, about the “worlds” about us, are they really true or are they simply the imaginations of common, fallible men, like you and me, who are so often wrong?

Well, man’s answers to the questions about himself are as varied as the philosophies and sciences of men. In the encyclopedia, you might read something like this; that man belongs to the phylum, chordata, the subphylum, vertebrata, ultimately, to primates with the monkeys and the apes, and there is sufficient illustration in human life to think that there might be something to that.

[Laughter] In fact, when we see the NFL and some of the things that happen; sometimes the things that happen make me think of the animal world.

Philosophers, such as some of those associated with by-gone philosophies have said, “Man is a victim of an impersonal logic of history, of dialectic materialism, that drives him like a robot or to the ant heap of society.”

Biologists have said, “Really, man is a part of nature, an end product of undirected process in evolution, doomed to eventual extinction and the cold silence of space.

A few years back, about fifteen years back now; I was and still am a member of the Book of the Month Club. And one of the books that was advertised in about nineteen seventy-five was a book called, *The Biological Time Bomb*, by Gordon Rattray Taylor. And in it, he speaks about some of the things that have interested us and some of the things that interest us now because in the report concerning the book, or in something of a review of it, the author who writes it says, “It’s the year, nineteen seventy-five, and the prospective parents of a child have just decided what sex they want their offspring to be; a child to be developed from an egg fertilized in a test tube.” And then, the author goes on, giving us reason why we should read this book. “In the year 2000, another pair of parents are enhancing the intelligence of their unborn child through the oxygenation of the expectant-mother’s blood. And then it’s the year beyond 2000,” the reviewer says, “and still another

set of parents, if that’s the word for them in the case of artificial insemination, have selected from a germ cell bank those qualities they want to see predominant in their child; moral courage, intellect, supreme athletic ability. All of these things, suggestive of answers to the question, What is man? Can we, by genetic engineering, create the kind of man that we are interested in? It would be interesting to see what kind of people we would create if we really had that power.” I wouldn’t, I don’t think, want to be around.

Well, let’s get to the point of our text. God has an answer to the question of, What is man? His answer is that man is magnificently glorious. In fact, man is the crown prince of the earth, the creation’s lord. Listen again what he says.

“What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels.” Now, that can be rendered, “for a little time.” And the New Testament author seems to take that sense; although, the Old Testament text seems to take the sense of “a little lower.” Both of them are true. “A little lower than the angels,” but, also, “for a little time lower than the angels.” He goes on to say, “You have crowned him with glory and honor and set over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” So this is God’s understanding of what man is and what he, ultimately, will be. He is the lord of creation.

Now, of course, as our author will say, he’s not yet serving as that; but that’s his destiny. That’s what he’s going to be. He’s the crown prince of the earth, as verse 5 makes it plain. “The angels are not, he is.”

Now, this passage that we are looking at, I’m going to divide it into three parts. And first of all, I want you to notice what the divine intention is in the creation of man according to the author of the epistle. He states in verse 5 and this will take us through the first part of verse 8, that the divine intention is that man is to be the master of the universe. Now, remember, there are three great contrasts in this epistle; the Son is greater than the angels, he’s greater than Moses, and then he spends most of his time improving and expounding and explaining that He’s greater than Aaron, the

great High Priest. This is his great theme, the greatest of the themes that he wants to talk about. And I’m looking forward, of course, to the study of that, because that’s the primary purpose for which this epistle was written.

Now, he’s talking about the Son is greater than the angels, and as he said, earlier, already now, that he’s greater than the angels because he’s the divine Son, and he’s greater than the angels because he as the Son is Yahweh, Lord, and in Psalm 45, a text which he has cited, he is also called God. So he’s greater than the angels because of these great titles that are given to him. But now, in this part, the 2nd chapter, he will show that he is greater than the angels, not because he’s Lord, not because he’s God, not because he’s Yahweh, not because he’s the Son of God, but because he’s man, ideal man, what man was intended to be. And man was intended to be greater than the angels.

So now he’s looking at the greatness of the Son of God because He’s the genuine man. And that little word “for,” I’ve so often said this to people whom I’ve had the privilege of speaking to, that the greatest words in the word of God are often the smallest words. They are the little “fors,” the little “therefores,” the little “for this reason,” or “on account of this,” or even words like “now.” And we’ll see in a moment, the word “but,” the adversative conjunction. Those are the important words. You don’t read the Bible to get good feeling. You read the Bible to find the meaning and you’ll best find the meaning when you follow the thought of the author as he argues his points. And this author, particularly, is a very logical thinker. That is, he thinks in orderly fashion. And in the case of some of the psalms, you don’t find that. David, at times, throws out lots of thoughts, doesn’t always connect them, at least, in such a way that you can follow him easily. But this author, gives us a great deal of help because he says, “For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.” Now, the question is, to what does the “for” refer? Well, immediately preceding is the warning. But the warning, by its very nature is something of a parenthesis. He’s stated a great case, that he’s greater than the angels. Then he’s warned us about proper response to it. But now, he’s starting on another approach to the argument that “He’s greater than the angels.”

This time, because he’s man. And that little “for” will take us back to verse 14, where he stopped his argumentation.

“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?” They are ministers of the word of God; he is the Son of God. And now, picking it up after the warning, “For further reason for the greatness of the Son of God with respect to the angels, “He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.” So the “for” then connects with verse 14.

There is a point that we need to carefully note. He says, “He has not put the world to come.” There are two words in the New Testament for world, two great words. One is *kosmos* and the other is *oikoumenē*. *oikoumenē* means essentially, the inhabited world. *kosmos* has a wide variety of meanings, but it does not, it can, but it does not, by its usage, refer to the inhabited world. It frequently refers to other things. It can refer to the world in that sense, but when it does, what is underlined is not the inhabitable-ness of the world but the order of the world, and so here, the *oikoumenē*, the inhabitable world; for he has not put the inhabitable world to come, of which we are speaking, in subjection to the angels.”

Now, has he been speaking about the inhabited world to come? Well, he said in chapter 1, verse 13, “But to which of the angels has He ever said, ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool?’” You mean to say, the Son of God has enemies? Of course he has enemies; and these enemies are on the earth. And so here, “He has not put the inhabitable world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to the angels.” He’s talking about the inhabited world. He’s not talking about the present age. He’s not talking about the church. He’s not talking about the eternal state. He’s talking about the kingdom, the kingdom of God, which will come to pass upon the earth. He’s already referred to that, remember, in chapter 1, verse 6, “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world.” Inhabited world, remember? The Second Advent, we spent a whole night on verse 6, in dealing with that question or that question among others with reference to that verse. So this is the inhabited world and he’s saying when the inhabited world to come, comes into

existence, it's not the angels who are over it, it's the Son, himself. He's the one who brings the salvation that is referred to in verse 14.

Now, what do you do if you make a statement like this? “The Son of God is to be head over the inhabited world.” This author likes to prove his points or substantiate his points by reference to Scripture. This is what he does again; he cites from Psalm 8. Now, if you'll turn back there, for just a moment, to Psalm 8, you'll notice one point before we go on that, I think, may be of some significance to you. The psalm begins with, “O Lord our Lord,” and you'll notice it's a psalm of David. “O Lord our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! Who have set Your glory above the heavens. Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the avenger.” You'll recognize that as a text our Lord cites. And, evidently, he was a student of Psalm 8, also. Now, notice verse 3, “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, What is man?”

I can just imagine David, I'm reading through the Bible, you know, I've been telling you all along. I'm in 2 Samuel. It's been great to go along this far in so short a time. I've had some free time to read the Bible, and I've just been reading through the section, the beginning of the section on David that we spent about a year expounding a year or two ago, here. But I can just imagine David, a shepherd, out on those hills in Judea, with his sheep, those times when it was impossible for him to go back in and put them in the place where they belonged. I can imagine him lying down and looking up at the stars and the heavens. And there, under the guidance of God the Holy Spirit, reflecting on the magnificent creation that we see when we lie down on our backs and look above us. When was the last time you did that? Get out in your yard sometime, lie down on your back and look at the heavens and reflect on the greatness of the God who is in heaven.

And so doing that, there comes to his mind, by the Holy Spirit, “What is man that You are mindful of him?” This is reminiscent of nights under the heavens, the moon, the stars; and he praises God as he reflects upon man's destiny to be over all of the inhabited earth. Dominion is not

abrogated by the fall; it still is something God intends for men to have. Sin doesn't cancel that. Sin postpones it. The fall in the Garden of Eden lets us know that those things that are going to be ours are postponed until the sin question is resolved, as God intends it to be. But it is going to be the destiny of man. And I would imagine that David by just being out there would have been able to give us a great exposition of the littleness of man, of the brevity of man's life, of man's ignorance, of man's powerlessness. And yet, in the light of what he knows from Scripture, of man's ultimately great authority.

If you want to realize how small you are, think of the littleness and the weakness of man in the light of the immensity and the unswerving constancy of the laws of the universe. Compare the length of your life. I think of myself as a person whose life has gone [snap] two [snap] maybe three times. That's my life, to this point, as old as I am, it has passed just like that. There are oaks that have lived for a thousand years. Think of the littleness of man, in the light of an oak tree. How limited is man's knowledge in comparison with his illimitable ignorance of the great creation of which we are a part?

One of the older commentators has said, “How powerless in the grasp of circumstances, if the earth but stirs in her sleep, her cities fall. If the wind blows in its strength, her navies are wrecked. If the invisible seeds of pestilence crowd the air, he must breathe or die, and his science is baffled.”

Well, we are little, we live a short time, we have truly illimitable ignorance. We are powerless, ultimately. We have, however, authority, and we have a tremendous future. We are no landless kings. We are destined to have authority over the inhabited earth. Isn't that magnificent? Tremendous to think about.

Now, the support for this is from Scripture. You know, the Navigators? The Navigators is a Christian organization that began in World War II, I believe; men out on our ships, fighting a war, studying the Bible. Out of the Navigators rose an organization that today is still in existence, in which literature goes forth, Bible studies are taking place, the work of Christian witness and

testimony. The Navs, as they are called, have often been interested, one of the great interests, I should say, is memorizing Scripture. And they have a way to memorize it, a little way in which you memorize Scripture, when you have memorized a Scripture is when you say the text, say the verse, then say the text. So you have the origin of the text, the text, and then the origin of the text again. And so you begin everything by “John 3:16, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son,” *et cetera*, “John 3:16,” twice, give the location of it.

The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews was no Nav. You notice, “One testified in a certain place, saying.” He doesn’t even tell us where it is. He just says, “Someone,” the Greek text says, “Someone has said somewhere.” Now, of course, he knows his readers know he’s talking about the Bible but he just loosely says it. He wouldn’t be a very good member of the Navigators. Well, I think they would probably take him in because of what he says because it’s obvious he was knowledgeable of the word of God because he cites lengthy sections from Jeremiah 31 and he cites them in two places. In fact, he cites in more than one text from it. But he cites them very close to the original text; but they differ, which gives you an idea, of course, that he probably had it in his mind, memory. And the slight differences are characterized by the fact that the memory is not perfect, as is the memory of you.

So this is the support, it’s the text of Scripture. Now, having said that, we turn to, and he cites, beginning at verse 6, through the first part of verse 8. If you’ll look at your Bible, he doesn’t cite all of Psalm 8, but just these verses. And the last words are, “You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” Man’s feet.

Now, Psalm 8, I started to give an entire message on Psalm 8, but I didn’t think that that would be really good for our series. Some of you may give up, if we don’t make a little progress. But Psalm 8 is a lyrical treatment of the creation. In other words, the psalmist, looking back at the creation, Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, then puts those great truths to verse, so to speak, to poetry, Hebrew poetry. And so that’s what we read here. He’s interested, however, in not all of it, but simply the major point of it. And it is this; that God created man and he said to man that you are to

rule and have dominion over the face of the earth. And that’s the point that he wants to bring out. So he says, “You put all things in subjection under his feet,” just as God said in Genesis chapter 1 and again repeated it in other places.

Now, having stated that, having stated as the psalmist states that “Man is God’s creation and given authority over the creation” now, he’s going to talk about the present condition of man and point out that man, who has been given authority over everything, has been mastered by sin. Sin has come in since Genesis 1. So he says verse 8, the latter part of it, “For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him.” God is to rule over all of the inhabited earth but,” notice the last part of verse 8, “But now, but now we do not yet see all things put under him.”

G. K. Chesterton once said this, and he was right, I think, “Whatever else is, or is not, true, this one thing is certain. Man is not what he was meant to be. Instead of having the mastery, he is mastered. Instead of ruling, he is enslaved. Instead of being characterized by strength, he’s characterized by great weakness. Instead of being an ally of the Lord God, subject to Him, the Scriptures tell us that he is a rebel against God. Instead of being characterized by glory, he’s characterized by shame. Man seeks his destiny by tyranny and cruelty. There is still something planted within the nature of man that leads him to want to rule.”

You hear all of our politicians talking about it and all of those who are not yet in office. What do they talk about? What did we hear about over and over again? And what are we still hearing about? Through the election and now? Individuals want what? Power. Power. Have you heard that word? Well, of course you’ve heard it! If you’ve listened to the TV or listened to the radio, power is what people want.

Now, that’s something God has placed in the nature of man. Power! Because that’s what he’s going to have. Power! But now, it’s twisted. It’s crooked. It’s self-serving power, self-interested power. All the kinds of things that we see in politicians. All the kinds of things we see in businessmen. All the kinds of things, tell it not in Ashkelon - [Laughter] What is it? Publish it not in Ashkelon; lest the uncircumcised Philistines, who don’t know about preachers, might hear. It’s in

preachers, also. They want power. Look at our great denominations? Look at our individual churches? What do people want in the church? Power! It's characteristic of the elders. It's characteristic of the deacons. It's part of human nature to have power. But now, touched by the wickedness and crookedness of sin; it's self-interested power.

So anyway, man seeks his destiny by tyranny and cruelty. Stop talking about those nearest to us: husbands, wives. Why is it, do you think, that when Hillary Clinton's name is mentioned, Rush Limbaugh plays “Hail to the Chief?” Why? [Laughter] Why do you think that automatically comes on? If you've never heard it, it's funny. Suddenly you hear it, when her name is mentioned in the background, “Hail to the Chief” is played. It's just his way of pointing out, of course, a lot of people think that she's the power behind the throne. They could probably play that in a lot of our families, too.

We don't have too many records that I know of, but if we had that one, I'd want to break it, lest it be played when Martha comes to the fore. Might learn where the true power lies. [Laughter]

Anyway, look back at history. Pharaoh! Alexander! The Caesars! Attila the Hun! Genghis Kahn! Charlemagne! Napoleon! All the way down to our present time, a lust for power, which is a faint resemblance of God's original grant of dominion.

The Bible's pages are bloody. That's been impressed upon me again as I've been reading through the Bible. It's amazing how bloody they are. Over and over again, page after page, chapter after chapter, almost verse after verse, somebody is slaying somebody else. And some of the great men are doing it. The Bible's pages are bloody. Why are they bloody? Because, men are violent, that's why.

Saddest word in the Bible, in one sense, it's not death, it's not Hell, it's not the word “lost.” The saddest word in the Bible is the word sin. I think, one of the saddest things that I have read in my Bible reading, I just read a night or so ago. When, you remember, in the latter part of 1 Samuel when Saul goes to the witch of Endor and has the encounter with the witch of Endor and Samuel is called up. And we've talked about that in messages here. And, I'm just going to say, God brought

Samuel up and Saul has the conversation with him. And in having the conversation with Saul, after his life has now become in service to the sin that characterized his reign, Samuel speaks to him and says, “Because you did not obey the voice of the Lord, nor execute his fierce wrath upon Amalek, therefore, the Lord has done this thing to you this day. Moreover, the lord will also deliver Israel unto you, into the hand of the Philistines.” And then I was impressed just last night that Samuel said to Saul, “And tomorrow, you and your sons will be with me.” What a terrible thing to hear the prophet say. “Tomorrow, you and your sons will be with me.” Sin! The saddest word in all of the Bible. The Bible is a perfect mirror of the heart. And the greatest exhibition of the sin of man, of course, is the cross of Jesus Christ because there we see, really, how wicked men are. Religious men. How really wicked the human heart is. Do you know about whom I’m speaking? You and me. We are men. We are sinners. The Bible describes us as wicked individuals. We are violent. And if we cover it over with a veneer of our civilization, it’s still fundamentally there.

So the present condition of man, mastered by sin, but he’s promised dominion. What’s the solution? Well, after saying, “But now we do not see yet all things put under him,” the author goes on to say, “But we see Jesus.”

Look out over the creation, and we do not see things under the authority of the Lord God in heaven and man serving over this inhabited earth as God’s vice-regents. We do not see that. But he says, “We see the Lord Jesus, made a little lower than the angels,” or “For a little time lower than the angels, on account of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.”

It’s very interesting, the words that our author uses. He’s used the word “see” twice, in verse 8, the last line or so, and then again in verse 9. These are two different words in the Greek text. One of them means to see with a kind of durative sense; we see and reflect upon it. The other means something like, to take a glance. That’s probably a little too strong, but it’s probably something like that. It’s like a glance.

We see, as we look out over the world, man is not subject. Well, creation is not subject to man. Man is not what he is going to be. All things are not yet put under him. But if we take a look up and see our Lord, what do we see? We see the guarantee that these promises will be ours, because he is the great representative.

Our next study, we’re going to deal with one verse, the 10th verse. That’s the point of that 10th verse, that he is the great representative who has represented the people of God and gives them, through his work, what God has promised them to have. And they will, ultimately, experience it. But we see Jesus. He’s the pledge and the guarantee.

Luther used to say, “Our plight is a *nodus deo vindice dignus*. A knot, which needs God’s help to unravel.” How true it is. “O, loving wisdom of our God, when all was sin and shame, a second Adam,” we should say, the last Adam, but our poet says, a second Adam, “to the fight, and to the rescue came.”

Now, the description is given in two ways. First, as a historical event: the coming of our Lord. And then, the spiritual significance of it is set forth. He says, “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death”

In other words, he retains his human nature. He is, by incarnation, now, one of us, the man, the perfect man, the Lord Jesus. Made a little lower than the angels for a time. We see him in this state, “For the suffering of death” and we see him “crowned with glory and honor.” It’s a look at his whole history. That is, we see him a little lower than the angels, his incarnation, crowned with glory and honor, his exaltation, after his death. So made a little lower, represents what Arthur Pink used to call, “That fathomless stoop, by which he who was the Son of God, the eternal God, stoops to take human nature to himself, apart from sin, but true full human nature, and comes down to minister to us.”

What is interesting so, about this to me, and so important is that when our Lord took human nature to himself, took a man to himself. Well, really like a woman taking a man and a man taking a woman, he took human nature to himself and he betrothed human nature to himself forever.

Forever. Think of it. The eternal Son, with all of the glory of God and all the fullness of it, taking to himself at a point in time, human nature, becoming what we call the God-man and, thus, forever being possessed of our nature. What condescension. What marvelous condescension, so marvelous because we could not be saved otherwise. He cannot be our substitute if he is not one of us. The whole Bible, in the Old Testament read through Ruth. I read through that not long ago, too. Ruth, also, in the kinsman-redeemer, sets out that great truth. He must be one of us, as well as, the eternal God himself, to be our substitute and to have the authority and power and strength, saving power, to deliver us. The God-man now one of us, forever.

I know you well enough, I've thought about this myself, if I were the second person of the Trinity, would I have taken to myself human nature? Forever? It's a decision that's forever. It's not for a time. It's forever, always. The second person of the divine Trinity with a human nature. It really is something that we cannot, at least, I cannot, fully appreciate what is involved in that. How thankful I am. Betrothed himself to the human race, for better for worse, forever.

But now, the last little statement, “That He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone,” outlines the spiritual significance of it. It's as if he looked at what happened historically, in a historical way, and now, he looks at it in a spiritual way.

Let me illustrate in this way; when the Lord Jesus died on Calvary's Cross, it would have been possible, of course, for individuals not to realize what was happening. In fact, if you had come around the cross, you might have found a situation like this. You might have approached one man, and you are asking for information, and you ask him, and this happens to be a Jewish man. And you ask this Jewish man, “What happened this day in this crucifixion?” And he, if he were an unbelieving Jewish man, he would say, “A Jewish rebel was crucified this morning.” The second man might speak about it in this way, “A blaspheming apostate was crucified this morning, getting precisely what he deserved.” You might then, approaching a woman, one of those that followed him out to this cross, and ask her, “What happened today?” And she might say, “A poor, fair, gentle soul was martyred today by wicked men.” And then if you approached a genuine Christian, who understood,

John came back, they all ran and forsook him, John came back, evidently, if you'd asked John, he might have been able to say, “The Son of God died for our sins.”

You see, in other words, that's the interpretation of what happened. That's why, in the Bible, we need interpretation, not simply the facts. We need interpretation. And the Bible is the interpretation of many of the great saving events that took place in history, “That He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man.”

God has spoken in His Son, we read in verse 1 and 2 and 3, and that He has, by himself, purged our sins and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High. He has tasted death, by the grace of God. God has spoken. Marvelous infinite, matchless grace, freely bestowed on all who believe. Taste death. There's no indication that it's only a sip. This means the full experience of death, “Tasted death for every man.”

Now, I know that some of you know that I happen to be a consistent Calvinist. And so you naturally are wondering, what in the world is he going to say about “He's tasted death for every man,” for everyone. As a matter of fact, it's singular, for everyone.

I could say to you, well, there is a distinction between the use of terms like “all” or “every” or “world.” You can speak of everyone without exception, or you can speak of everyone without distinction. And “all” is a term that applies to both of those concepts. All without exception, that is, every single individuals or, you could say all without distinction, that is, Jews and Gentiles, because everybody is either Jew or Gentile, all without distinction. I could say, that settles the question right there. But there's more to it than that. I want you to notice what our author does in his context. He says, “He tasted death for everyone.” Now, in verse 10, he talks about “bringing many sons to glory.” “Sons” he brings to glory. Verse 11, he talks about those who are sanctified. Verse 12, he calls them “my brethren.” In verse 13, he calls them, “the children whom God has given to me.” In verse 16, he says, “For indeed he does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.” This is the everyone of whom he's talking about. Everyone of the seed of Abraham. Every one of the children. Every one of the sanctified! Every one of the brethren!

But I didn't intend to go into that in detail. [Laughter] That's too much fun to waste on two minutes, so I'll just leave it that way because I know you wanted to say, “What will he do with something like that?” Well, study the Bible. We all have fun studying the Bible. We're never going to agree with everything our believing brethren and sisters say. We do need to remember, we are in a family of God. And it's just like brothers and sisters, and I've got a brother and two sisters, and I'm not sure that we've ever agreed on anything altogether, perfectly harmoniously with the exception of some historic facts, like both of our parents are now dead. We agree on that. [Laughter] But beyond that, I'm not sure of what we really do agree on but yet, in general, we agree.

Well, our question was, What is man? Is gloriously answered. Man, although he flung his destiny away, I never have liked that, by the way. This afternoon, I want to say, that the principle parts of fling are fling, flang and flung. But they are not. It is fling, flung, flung. So he flung. That sounds a little strange to me. But flang sounds strange to you. So he flung his destiny away but he has regained his kingly status in his substitute, in the Lord Jesus Christ, in the seed of the woman who has crushed the serpent's head. And through him we are going to have what God has promised us.

There is a marvelous story to me that James Denney talks about. He wrote a letter once to Sir William Robertson Nickel, a great Scottish theologian, himself, and he said, “I do not believe that the Christian religion, let alone the Christian church, can live unless we can be sure of three things: A real being of God in Christ, the atoning death, and the exaltation of Christ.” And then he goes on to say, “If Jesus was not in a real sense God manifest in the flesh, God wearing the homespun of our human nature, but only one more fallible man like ourselves guessing and groping after God we'd better erase the word Gospel from our vocabulary and close our churches. We're no better than the Unitarian preacher who went to Aberdeen and for three days and nights sought to win converts from the down-and-outs. On the third evening, a fallen woman out of the crowd bluntly told him, he'd better pack up and go home. “Your rope,” she explained, “is not long enough for the likes of me.” But his rope is long enough. He has offered himself as the atoning sacrifice by which, in tasting

death, those who lean upon him have the assurance of eternal life and, also, that they will rule and reign over the inhabited earth to come.

We may wonder, with the Psalmist, of man’s frailty yet, when we see the Lord Jesus, the second Man, we cry from redemption. “O, that with yonder sacred throne we, at His feet, may fall, join in the everlasting song, and crown Him, Lord of all.” Isn’t that what you would love to do? Crown him, Lord of all. May God give us the grace to stand in him, so that we are able to do that. We invite you to come to Christ, if you don’t know him? Our time is up.

Let’s bow in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for this marvelous letter, written out of the fullness of a man’s heart, expressing such gratitude for the redemption that our Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished. He has tasted death for everyone. We ask Thy blessing upon each one, present here. May these great truths lift us up and enable us to serve him in our day in a way that will be pleasing to our Lord.

For Jesus’ sake. Amen.