

“The Founder of Salvation”

Hebrews 2:5-18

by Pastor Jason Van Bommel

⁵For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶It has been testified somewhere,

*“What is man, that you are mindful of him,
or the son of man, that you care for him?*

⁷You made him for a little while lower than the angels;
you have crowned him with glory and honor,

⁸ putting everything in subjection under his feet.”

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. ⁹But 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.

¹⁰For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹²saying,

*“I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”*

¹³And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

- Hebrews 2:5-18, ESV

Introduction: What Do We Need?

By 1776, the American colonists had had enough. They had been subjected to unjust taxation without representation by a Parliament that no legitimate jurisdiction over them. They had been forced to house troops sent from England to suppress them. They had been harassed and provoked into conflict. Now, they finally decided to declare their independence.

In the Declaration of Independence, signed on July 4, 1776, the Founders of our nation risked their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to state clearly what had gone wrong in their relationship to England and what principles they would seek to uphold in their new nation, a new undertaking for the ages. Ben Franklin famously said to the Founders, “Gentlemen, we must all hang together, or we will surely all hang separately.”

Today, we remember the work of our Founders every 4th of July.

Hebrews 2:10 calls Jesus “the Founder.” But what is He the Founder of and why?

Well . . .

Do you ever watch the news or spend a few minutes on social media and think, “What is wrong with this world?” Do you wonder what God thinks of the

mess people have made of His world? Well, we don't need to wonder what's wrong with the world or what God thinks of it because the Bible tells us.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. He filled the world with life and beauty and declared that it was good. He made people in His image and put them over His creation and declared this was very good. People made in God's image were given the blessing and the charge to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth with the image of God, with the knowledge of His ways, the righteousness of His character, and the holiness of His worship. But not much time went by before everything went very wrong in God's very good world.

When Adam and Eve sinned and rebelled against God, they chose to put themselves under the tyranny of the devil and their own selfish desires and to reject God's good ways. The fall of Adam and Even into sin brought God's curse of judgment into the world, but God immediately announced His plan of salvation, the way He would rescue His people from Satan's tyranny and bring us back into harmony with Him. In the fullness of time, God would send forth His one and only Son to be the seed of the woman, born of a woman, born under the Law, to set us free from the curse and bring us into a new, redeemed, and restored world, which Hebrews 2 calls "the world to come" and "glory."

Hebrews 2:10 calls Jesus "*the founder of our salvation.*" This word "*founder*" is also used of Jesus in Hebrews 12:2 where Jesus is called "*the founder and perfecter of our faith.*" Jesus is the Founder of salvation, of our faith, of "*the world to come,*" of "*the glory*" to which God is bringing "*many sons.*"

Who Does God Want to Save?

Since people alone were made in God's image and given dominion over God's creation and it was the sinful rebellion of people that plunged creation into disaster, it had to be a man who would do the work of salvation and restoration. A man had to undo the mess that a man had caused – that's the way it works. Plus, God has a unique love for people, His image-bearers,

despite our sinful and selfish rebellion against Him. He loves us, and He wants to redeem us.

Have you ever looked up at a moon-less, cloud-less starry sky or seen a stunning sunset or stood on the edge of the vast ocean with its constant crashing waves and felt so overcome with awe and wonder and so small and insignificant at the same time? Well, this feeling is what's behind Psalm 8, quoted in verses 6-8. If we pick up the verse right before what's quoted here in Hebrews, we read –

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,
what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?*

*Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings
and crowned him with glory and honor.*

*You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet*

- Psalm 8:3-6, ESV

So, people have this unique position of honor, responsibility, and privilege in God's creation. All of this means that we need a human Savior to come and save human beings. Only then, can God's people and creation itself be fully redeemed and transformed, set free from sin and death.

We read about creation's longing for this redemption in Romans 8 –

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

- Romans 8:19-21, ESV

So, “*in bringing many sons to glory,*” as verse 10 says, Jesus not only fully and finally redeems a people for God from every tribe, tongue, people, and nation, but He also ensures the final glorification of all creation.

How Does Jesus Become Qualified to Save Us?

For Jesus to do this rescue and restoration mission was no small undertaking. The eternal Son of God, the glorious One who is the radiance of the glory of God, had to become fully human. “*He had to be made like His brothers in every respect,*” to take on a full human nature, take on the full weight of flesh and blood, enter into and experience our suffering, and then experience far more suffering than we could ever imagine by becoming sin for us and being cursed and crushed for us on the cross.

Think of the ways Jesus suffered for us and for our salvation -

Jesus suffered by becoming human. He who is by nature very God of very God, who dwells in unapproachable light, who is glorious beyond human imagination, entered into our humanity by becoming a tiny human being in the womb of the Virgin Mary. He was born in a humble and poor condition, wrapped in strips of cloth, and laid in an animal feeding trough, rough wood and scratchy straw, welcomed and honored only by His poor parents and smelly shepherds. He lived a life of relative obscurity and poverty and was often misunderstood and rejected, despised by His own earthly family and nation.

Jesus suffered when tempted. Jesus endured the full suffering of being tempted personally by Satan with the maximum weight of temptation any human being has ever faced. You and I never experience anywhere close to the full weight of Satan’s tempting power because we give in relatively early and easily. But Jesus never gave in, and Satan was never interested in causing any human being to sin more than the Son of God.

Jesus suffered in obedience to His Father. In seeking to obey His Father and go through with His self-sacrifice, Jesus suffered such agony in the Garden of

Gethsemane that His sweat became drops of blood and He needed to be strengthened by an angel to endure.

And yet, through all this suffering, Jesus never surrendered to temptation. He never gave up. He endured in faithful obedience to the end.

In Hebrews 12, the other place where Jesus is called “the Founder,” we read this –

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, ² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (ESV)

Jesus endured the cross, the suffering necessary for our salvation, for the joy that was set before Him, the joy of “*bringing many sons to glory*,” the joy of having you and I, and all of God’s children, join Him in the glory of the world to come. This is a great encouragement to us but also a pattern for us to follow. Jesus loved you so much that the joy of having you in glory with Him motivated Him to keep going through the suffering of the cross. If we’re going to endure suffering faithfully, we need to have our eyes locked on Jesus at the right hand of the Father and on the joy that awaits us when the suffering of this life is over.

What Does Jesus Save Us From?

What does Jesus save us from through His suffering and victory over sin and death? It’s so much more than just – “We can go to heaven when we die.” As wonderful as that truth is, it’s a bit simplistic and reductionistic.

All human beings are held in a lifelong slavery by the fear of death. We’re held under the cruel oppressive fist of a tyrant, the devil, who uses our fear of death to make cowards and slaves of us all. Think of how many of the truly cruel and evil things people have done because they were afraid that if they

stepped out and challenged the system, they would be killed and accomplish nothing. But even more, think of how the fear of man – the paralyzing fear of rejection or harm by others – causes us to shy away from the truth, compromise our faith, give in to cultural peer pressure, and more.

So, Jesus sets us free from this kind of lifelong slavery.

But He also saves us from the feeling of helplessness and loneliness in the face of temptation. How often do we struggle with feeling like we're alone – we're the only ones facing this kind of temptation in this kind of way – and how much does this make us feel helpless, like no one else can possibly help us?

Every human being faces the same kinds of temptations. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says, *“No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.”*

Every temptation is common to man, and Jesus faced and overcame them all. Do you believe that?

All temptations fall into three categories: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. The lusts of the flesh are animalistic, craving-driven, appetite-demanding temptations toward gluttony, lust, sloth. The lust of the eyes is materialistic, possessive, like greed, covetousness, and envy. The pride of life is a self-centered boasting in what we have or do, arrogance, condescension, entitlement, etc.

Jesus faced and conquered all three of these kinds of temptations which are all common to all people. You can read about these temptations in Matthew 4 or Luke 4. The temptation to turn stone into bread was lust of the flesh. The offer of all the kingdoms of the world and all their riches was lust of the eyes. The temptation to throw Himself down from the Temple and show all of Jerusalem how special He was when the angels come to bear Him up was the pride of life.

As One who has overcome, Jesus is not pridefully self-righteous and distant, as we would certainly be if we had passed a test half as difficult. Of course, that shows our pride and why we would fail so quickly and easily. No, Jesus is not like us. Having passed every test, He is a merciful and faithful High Priest.

How Does Jesus Help Us Now?

Jesus gives us help now as our merciful and faithful High Priest. *“He is able to help those who are being tempted.”* But how does He help us?

Through His word, He gives us truth and helps us cut through the lies of the devil, the Father of Lies.

Through His example, He shows us what a life of loving, faithful obedience looks like.

Through His intercession for us, He gives us the help of the Holy Spirit, who lives within us.

He hears us when we cry to Him and welcomes us in our weakness. He sends grace through the Holy Spirit to empower us against temptation and to reassure us of forgiveness when we fall.

He is our righteousness before God, our acceptance before the throne of grace, our advocate with the Father, our older brother, our kinsman-redeemer, our example to follow, our strength in our weakness, our forgiveness in our guilt, our covering for our shame, and our security from the enemy’s attacks.

How do we get this help? We need to trust Him, look to Him, go to Him, call upon Him, listen to Him, praise Him, depend on Him.

The Human Weakness

Our human weakness is tricky because it's both fragile and proud, fallible and self-reliant. The biggest thing that keeps us from our help in Jesus is how we so often don't think we need it. Or we stay away from His help, and then when we fall on our faces, we think we've messed up too badly to come to Him.

Self-reliance and shame are a toxic combination, and Satan plays on them like a virtuoso. The only way to break free is to constantly and relentlessly seek the Lord for His strength, His mercy, His righteousness, His grace.

We do not do so on our own. God gives us the fellowship of our church family so we can seek the Lord together and strengthen and encourage each other to seek Him.

So, thank God for such a merciful and faithful High Priest. Then, turn to Him and trust in Him, always.