

Man's Dominion Restored

Hebrews 2:5-9

26 June 2022

Halifax, 10:30 AM

Introduction:

Today we are returning to our sermon series in Hebrews.

- We have seen that the epistle to the Hebrews was written to Hebrew Christians who were feeling pressured by their Jewish relations to return to the Old Testament religion.
 - History shows us that following Jesus fully in our worship and practice is almost always offensive, especially to those who follow Him in a more compromised way.
 - We have pressures from family and friends to be more traditional, more contemporary, more woke, more broad, more flexible...the list goes on...
- That means that Hebrews has a lot to say to us.
 - The pressures the Hebrew Christians faced were pretty great—their businesses were boycotted, they were cast out of their homes, they were fired from their jobs, sometimes they were even physically persecuted, they were ostracised.

The remedy employed by this letter is to set forth the superiority of Christ so that believers will want nothing else but to follow Him wholeheartedly.

- If you are already following Jesus wholeheartedly, you will find great encouragement from this book—the Lord will use it to strengthen you and support you.
- If, on the other hand, you are among those in our congregation who are sluggish in your prayers, your church attendance, your Bible reading, your giving—maybe not even tithing at all, weak in your evangelism, your obedience, your service, and your willingness to take a stand for Jesus before the world as one ashamed of Him and afraid of others,
 - You need to hear and take into your life what this book has to say!

Hearing and heeding is just what we considered last time in the first four verses of chapter 2.

- God has spoken to us by His Son! How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?
 - It is a solemn warning.
 - Neglect is the pathway to hell.
 - You need not do anything else to perish eternally but neglect the only remedy.

The great issue is that we need salvation because we lost the place that God created us to occupy as human beings...

- The place of subjugation to Him and of authority over everything else.
- He made us to be under Him and to have dominion over the whole creation.
 - He did not create us to be the victims of adverse weather, sickness, attacks from enemies, deception, enslavement to our passions and lusts.

The passage we come to today sets Jesus before us as the one who restores us to that place under God and over the rest of creation.

- It is found in Hebrews chapter 2, verses 5-9.
- Listen and I will read it to you.
- It is the word of God, so listen to it in the way you should and be earnest in considering what it has to say to you.

Heb 2:5-9: For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. ⁶ 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? ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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.

May the Lord add His blessing to the reading of His holy word and may He help us to take what says into our lives.

I. This passage opens with the announcement of dominion restored.

- Verse 5 says: **For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.**

A. Ouch. This is good news with a sharp edge that stings.

- The good news is that the world to come is not in subjection to angels;
 - The sharp edge is that the world had been in subjection to angels.
1. This reminds us of the shameful disorder that we are all responsible for where angels rule instead of man.
 - That is not the way it’s supposed to be.
 - When God created man (understand that when I say “man” I use it in the same way the LORD does when He says that He created them “male and female” and called them “man.” I don’t want to have to say “man and woman” each time, but prefer to speak in the way that God does)...
 - So again, when God created man, He gave him dominion over all things.
 - Genesis 1:26 says: **Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”**
 - He bestowed this dominion on us from the start.
 - He said (Gen 1:28): **Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the face of the earth.**
 2. We were supposed to have dominion, but we surrendered our dominion to angels.
 - Notice how Heb 2:7 says that we were “made a little lower than the angels.”

- It is important to understand that the word “made” speaks of a downgrade, a demotion.
- It does not refer to the place we had when we were first created, but to the state of things after we fell.
- We were at first above the angels, but then put under them.
- You have probably heard the story of Genesis 3 that tells how this happened.
 - Satan, who was a glorious angel that rebelled, came to our first mother and deceived her with enticing words, convincing her to eat of the one tree in the garden that God had forbidden to man.
 - It was a test of our obedience to God—would we yield to Him as our God or would we rebel against His rightful authority?
 - Satan said, “You can be like God. You can be the one who decides what is good and what is evil. You can decide that instead of God. You can decide what is right for you and what is wrong for you. You can do what you want and what you think best.”
 - Eve, our first mother, ate and she gave the fruit to Adam and he ate.
 - In this way, man yielded to Satan and became in bondage to him.
 - No longer did we have the dominion that God had given us at the start because we stepped out of our place as servants to God.
 - We acted as though His benevolent and gracious rule was oppressive.
 - It was a wretched injustice and accordingly He sentenced us to die and made us subject to angels—and fallen angels at that!
 - We were now in bondage to sin, to death, and to Satan.
- 3. It is good that God took away our dominion because dominion was not appropriate to us as rebels against God.
 - a. We can scarcely imagine what evil we might have done if we had been left with unrestrained dominion over all things created.
 - From Adam to Noah, there was much less restraint in that men lived longer and had less trouble—and their wickedness grew to gargantuan proportions.
 - What would we be like if we were not restrained by an unyielding creation with its thorns and thistles, with its viruses and storms, with its breaking of our bodies and bringing us to the grave?
 - What if were no accountability, no restraint, if any one of us were given whatever we want with unlimited power—we would soon make everyone our slaves and would take all the wealth of the world to ourselves.
 - There is an episode of Star Trek where a man separated from humans is given the ability to melt down whatever gets in his way. When he comes among others, at first he uses it sparingly, but soon he melts down whoever displeases him.
 - This rightly reveals what is in us.

- b. The pages of history testify to what man becomes when he is given a great deal of power even in this world with all of the limitations it places on us—
 - How quickly we abuse our neighbour.
 - We use our power to control the people around us and to reward ourselves.
 - We have less and less concern for others, all the while flattering ourselves that if we had great power, we would use it well.
- c. The dominion that God gave us was designed to be a dominion man would use to live in harmony with others and with creation.
 - It would have been a beautiful dominion where each takes his place to be a blessing to the other under God... with gratitude and sweet devotion in joy-ful service to Him, doing all for His glory according to His beautiful ways.
 - But as fallen from God, dominion was taken from us and we were made, again, as verse 7 says, lower than the angels.

TRANS> Nevertheless, God promised at that time that He would not leave us all to perish.

- He promised that He would rescue man by a Son that would be born to us—a Son who would destroy “that serpent of old, called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.”
 - He promised that He would deliver some of us (not all of us) from bondage to sin, death, and the devil by this Son who would come to redeem us.
- B. And now, here in Hebrews, we are told of this Son who has come as promised to restore man’s dominion.
1. Hebrews 1 tells us that God has spoken to us by this Son whom He appointed heir of all things.
 - In other words, He inherits the whole creation—He takes it back from Satan for man.
 - Hebrews 1 goes on to speak of this one who was God’s Son, yet who was born to us. He is said to be superior to the all the angels, not only as the Son of Man but because He is also the Son of God.
 - The angels are called to worship Him.
 - His throne is said to be a righteous throne that endures for ever, and He is said to love righteousness and hate lawlessness.
 - He is called to sit at God’s right hand until He makes all His enemies His footstool—brings them under His dominion as either His willing servants or His prisoners consigned forever to the fiery pit.
 2. Hebrews 2:1-4 urges us not to neglect the great salvation that He brings to us... to look to Him to restore us to our rightful place with God.
 - And now in today’s reading, we are told that that rightful place is not only under God, but also over the whole creation.

3. Hebrews 2:5 calls this new order of things that Jesus the Son of God establishes “the world to come of which we speak.”
- a. It is something the writer has already been speaking about in this letter—
 - It is the world as it is now that it has been inherited by Jesus—as it is now that it has been inherited by Him as the Son of God who became human flesh.
 - The Jews knew this terminology, *the world to come*.
 - They spoke of the world to come as the state of things that would come about when the Messiah came. The Messiah would bring a new order.
 - b. This world to come is also the possession of the people that God redeems by the Messiah.
 - He rescues them from the devil, and from bondage to sin and death.
 - This letter to the Hebrews has already referred to those redeemed people as those who inherit salvation in Heb 1:14; and the salvation they inherit has been called a great salvation in Heb 2:3.
 - In Hebrews 9:12 and 9:15, it is called an eternal inheritance and eternal redemption.
 - We are said to be those who inherit the promises in 6:12; and it is called a better and enduring possession in 10:34, a city whose builder and maker is God in 11:10; a homeland in 11:14; Mt. Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem in 11:16; the city which is to come in 13:14; a Sabbath rest in 3:14; and a kingdom which cannot be shaken in 12:28.
 - c. “The world to come” is the new creation that began when Jesus came, died for our sins, and then took His throne at God’s right hand to reign until all His enemies are put under His feet...
 - It began with His exaltation and it will reach its full consummation and measure when He returns at the last day to judge the world in righteousness and to raise up His people, swallowing up their mortality with immortality.
 - d. This “world to come” that He has already begun is not in subjection to angels; but to Jesus, the Son of Man. Dominion has been restored to man.
 - Now that Jesus has come, it is He that is over us instead of Satan.
 - He is the head over all things—we do not look to other mediators, to priests, to holy angels, to kings, to popes—He is our head.
 - As our head, we obey Him, not men or angels who speak independently of Him.
 - As our head, He is also our vital influence by whom we have life before God—He sustains us the way a vine sustains its branches.
 - As our head, we have full and free access to Him, not needing to go through angels or saints or priests as mediators.
 - As our head, He constantly looks after us.
 - This is what has come about with the coming of Jesus!

- That is the grand declaration of Hebrews 1:5.

II. In Hebrew 2:6-8 we are reminded how God testified to us that He would restore man's dominion.

- Take a look with me at that.
 - It says: v. 6-8: **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? ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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.***
- This is taken from Psalm 8. It is an oracle of God.
 - Just as the author to the Hebrews does not mention his own name—perhaps because he is so focused on Christ—so he does not mention the name of David who wrote this Psalm, nor does he mention that it is from Psalm 8.
 - What matters to him is that this is an oracle of God that the Hebrews had received and accepted. It was written a thousand years before Christ came, testifying that He would restore dominion to man after being made lower than the angels for a time.

A. Overall, these verses confirm that everything is to be put under the feet of man.

1. The author to the Hebrews adds the comment: **"for in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under Him"** to stress that *all things* really does mean *all things*—that it leaves nothing (except God of course) that is not put under man.
 - The dominion that man will be given is an absolute dominion.
 - We are told that we will have full authority over all created things.
 - The ground beneath our feet and the heavens above will all submit to us—there will be no more storms or destructive viruses.
 - The animals will all be subject to us—they will fully obey us, but we will not abuse them.
2. It says that we shall be crowned with glory and honour.
 - The glory speaks of the worth and weight of man's crown, and honour speaks of the beauty and splendour of it.
 - We will live in that beautiful harmony I have already described; where dominion does not mean that we trample and destroy, but where it means that we enhance and beautify and make happy all that is under us.
 - Glory and honour indeed!

B. This is so grand in itself, but it is all the more grand when we consider that it is man—debased man—who is promised this dominion.

1. The marvel of it all is brought out by the question posed to God, **"What is man that you are mindful of him or the son man that you care for Him?"**

- *Man* and *son of man* here both refer to the same thing—*son of man* in the Psalm is equivalent to *son of the earth*—man, lowly man who is made from the dust and who now returns to the dust.
 - Why should God who made all things even concern Himself with this creature that has rebelled against Him and has now been made lower than the angels?
 - Why should He concern Himself with those who have sold themselves out to God’s rebellious angels?
 - What is man that he should not be left to burn in the Lake of Fire with Satan, his chosen master?
2. It is none other than these that God graciously remembers and cares for.
- The words, “that you care for him” are taken from the word ἐπισκέπτομαι ‘*epi-skep-tomai*’ which means ‘*one who visits*’—a bishop or overseer...
 - One who visits to provide for and to bless, to care for and to minister to.
 - All through the Bible, God promised that He would visit His people, *epi-skep-tomai*; that He would visit us to bring us blessing and salvation, to redeem us and to restore us, to deliver us and rescue us from our bondage to sin, death, and Satan.
 - This word was used to announce the coming of Jesus in Luke 1, that God was now coming to visit His people with salvation.
 - In Hebrews, Jesus will later be called the *episcopos* (bishop) of our souls.
3. What is man that God should visit him?
- The answer is not in us—there is nothing in us to merit God’s gracious attention, just the opposite.
 - Yet, here it is in Psalm 8 which declares the excellence of God’s name!
 - God has not left us to perish in our sin. He has remembered us and visited us with His gracious saving work and has put all things under our feet.
- But note well. There is realism here.
- C. The last part of verse 8 frankly declares, “**But now we do not yet see all things put under him** (under man).”
1. No indeed.
 - It is painfully obvious that we are still in a world of sin and death.
 - We are in a world of pandemics, famines, pestilence, and violent storms.
 2. We look in our world and we see sin, we see hatred and war, we see anger and bitterness and deception.
 - We see bondage to Satan and to sin and death.
 3. Clearly, the promise has not yet been fulfilled. We do not yet see all things put under man nor man restored to God.

TRANS> But there is something marvellous that we do see now.

III. We see Jesus, the Son of God, exalted.

- Verse 9 says: **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.**
- A. In Jesus we see God fulfilling His promise to restore man’s dominion.
1. There He is, made a little lower than the angels that He might suffer and die.
 - This one that Hebrews has been describing as the very Son of God who is the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of God’s person, whom the angels are commanded to worship, who upholds all things by the word of His power and who inherits all things...
 - We see Him made like us for a time—made lower than the angels so that He Himself became subjected to mortality and death by becoming man.
 - He took His place as one lower than the angels for a time for the very purpose that He might suffer and die.
 - As it says, *for the suffering of death...*
 2. The author is very frank about the fact that Jesus came to die.
 - His dying was the very thing that offended the Jews who rejected Jesus as their Messiah.
 - The author to the Hebrews tells them that Jesus made Himself lower than the angels in order to do that very thing.
 - We see Him as the one who did that.
 3. And we see Him as the one who was debased like that now crowned with glory and honour—now seated at the right hand of the majesty on high, because He did that.
 - Yes, as it says, He is crowned with glory and honour because He was debased that He might suffer and die.
 - Philippians 2:5-11 describes Him as **“Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to *the point of death*, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**
- B. The most glorious thing about Him is the thing the Jews despised Him for—
- **That He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death... that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.**
1. Tasting death means to fully experience it for Himself.
 - Owen says that it means that He fully experienced what was in death as threatened to sinners.
 - We see Him as the one who did that and it changes everything.
 2. He did it, as it says, *for* everyone.

- The Greek word *for* is always used for something you do for another person—instead of them, or for their sake.
 - He died for us, that is, in our place. He took our penal death.
 - He took our place as the one who was cursed for our sin that they might be pardoned.
 - ‘Everyone’ does not mean that He took the place of every person, but of all those that the Father had given Him—every one of them
3. It was by the grace of God that this was done.
- There was nothing in us to make us deserving of this—what is man that you visit him?
 - Robert Martin says, “This is an expression of the largeness of heart and generosity towards undeserving sinners displayed by Him who sits on the throne of grace.”
 - John Owen says, “Grace is the first spring and moving cause of the sufferings of Christ. It is the gracious, free, sovereign purpose of the will of God, suited to and arising from his natural grace, love, goodness, benignity, pity, mercy, compassion, exerting themselves therein.”
- C. Yes, all things are not yet brought under Him, but we see Jesus now having been to the cross for us and having been given dominion as the Son of man that He might restore dominion to all His people.
- Let us glory in Him!
1. Glory in Him who remembered us and visited us that He might restore us.
 2. Glory in Him who came here to suffer and die in our place so we could be forgiven and restored to God.
 3. Glory in Him who in this way has made our salvation secure and certain.
 4. Glory in Him who is crowned with glory and honour because of what He has done.
 5. Glory in Him who has been, as the Son of man, now given all authority in heaven and earth.
 6. Glory in Him who is the Lord of the gospel church, our head and master who has gone before us, who represents us, who gives us life, who cares for us.
 7. We see Him as the Son of man exalted over all things and so we trust in Him and delight in Him and follow Him and obey Him.
 - Even though everything is not yet put under His feet, we who believe see Him reigning.
 - We see Jesus crowned with glory and honour and it changes everything for us.
- D. Let us imitate Him who has established a kingdom where we are restored to our proper place under God and over the whole creation.
1. Let us endeavour, by His grace, to live in that dominion, that harmony, that He came to restore—

- In harmony with God, in harmony with nature, in harmony with each other. Let us live in it as much as it depends on us.
 - Where we have leadership—men as the head of their homes, parents over their children, pastors and elders over the flock, employers over their employees, governors over their citizens—
 - let us exercise dominion under Christ as those who use our authority for blessing of those under us and not for selfishness.
2. That is how we, as Christians, are to glorify God now—
- Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus!
 - He is our Lord and Master!
 - He is our example.
 - He is the one whose name is above every name and in whom we delight.
3. If you do not know Him, His offer is extended to you and to all.
- He says, (Isaiah 45:22: **“Look to Me, and be saved, all you ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.”**)
 - Beautiful, glorious dominion is only to be found in Him.
 - Our society is hell bent on trying to find harmony within ourselves—by following our own passions and desires.
 - We are still following Satan, the fallen angel.
 - That is the pathway to destruction.
 - Jesus is the way to eternal blessing.