

HEBREWS

Message 13

Date:

Words: 6000

Reading: Hebrews 2:9-16

INTRO: We are in the book of Hebrews. This book was written to Jews who had turned to Christ some years earlier. No doubt they had been taught Christ would return and set up His kingdom. If that should happen, Israel would then of course, be set free from Rome's dominion. But things have not gotten better since they put their faith in Christ, rather they are getting worse. And as year after year goes by and things are still getting worse they have begun to give in to a common Jewish view that says angels will bring in the world to come.

The writer to the Hebrews knew that if they gave in to that teaching they would ultimately not survive in the Christian faith. What is the danger these Christians faced? Leaving the Christian faith altogether. And so this book is an exhortation. What the writer does is he gives a section of teaching, and then from that teaching he draws some of the most serious warnings to these Christians found anywhere in the NT. How any objective student of God's Word can study this book and believe a Christian cannot leave the faith, I do not know. That is precisely the danger these believers were in.

I have challenged numerous people, pastors and lay persons who hold to the teaching of OSAS. Here is the challenge: Give me some evidence that anyone ever taught that doctrine after the time the NT was written until, say around the 1700's. I have never received any evidence and I might enlist anyone who listens to this message, if you have any such evidence, would you please send it to me. A man I recently e-mailed back and forth with on this subject, when his every answer failed to give me evidence he called me a scorner and said that scorners need to be converted, especially those who pervert the Gospel. But let me say this, the most fearful condition of all mankind is when one has been a believer, and one has rejected the faith. That is what this book teaches. One of the biggest sins one can commit with human beings is to be untrue to one's covenant with one's marriage partner. The biggest sin one can commit with God is to violate the covenant one has made with Him, the covenant through which one was born again.

When we looked at the first major warning in 2:1, here is what John MacArthur said about it: "And may I add, that this is the

first of five great warnings in the book of Hebrews. And you must understand this, interjected throughout the book of Hebrews are warnings. They're slapped at intervals in the middle of great treatises on the superiority of Christ." There is not a single thing in Scripture that is just sort of slapped in somewhere. These warnings come by precise design after some very careful Bible teaching.

In the first warning, chapter 1 was the teaching and 2:1-3 gave the warning. All the rest of this chapter explains that warning. In 2:1-3 we have the content of this warning. Listen to it:

1 Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...

In 2:2-4 we have the consequences of failing to heed this warning. In 2:5-18, we have the reasons for this warning. What we learn is that this is a very, very serious warning. In 2:5 we have the reason for this warning given negatively and it is this: God has not put the world to come in subjection to angels. In 2:6-18, we have the positive reasons.

We learned that God has subjected all things to Jesus Christ. But then we learned that we do not yet see all things subjected to Him. And then we began to consider what we do see. In verse 9 we see Jesus made a little lower than the angels. In verse 10 we see Jesus made perfect in suffering. In verses 11-13, we see Him unashamed to be called our brother. And in verses 14-16 we see the divine second Person of the Triune God become partaker of a human body. And we are now in verse 14 which says:

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

The writer gives all of this to show that Jesus is superior to angels and that they need to heed his warnings or they would end up neglecting their salvation, and would have less chance to escape judgment than those who failed to heed the words given through angels in the OT.

(4) Jesus: Sharer of humanity (14-16)

We come then to verses 14-16 where we see the divine made a partaker of humanity.

So let us read this verse once more:

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

In the prophecy of Isaiah 8:18 as given in verse 13, Jesus said in the words of Isaiah, "Here am I and the children whom the LORD has given Me." Jesus Christ had become one of us! And now the writer says, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same."

Since those who would become believers are partakers of flesh and blood, He shared in the same. These children, who are now believers, were once unbelievers. And since they were flesh and blood, in order to redeem them Christ had to become flesh and blood. The idea of sharing in flesh and blood is that of sharing in our human nature. Jesus Christ was born as a human being so that He might share in our nature. And I have told you before that I say this carefully; when He became human He became more than God. Today, He is in glory in a resurrected human body. So He entered man's realm when He was born. He suffered the things man suffers in a fallen world but He remained sinless.

Now think of it this way, we can never understand what it like to be a horse,

or a dog, or a butterfly, or any other animated creature. That is because we can never partake of their nature so we have no idea what it is like to be any of those creatures. We can never say, "I know exactly what you feel like." We don't understand and we never will. But Jesus Christ can understand what it is to be human because at the incarnation He became human.

Now notice the stress placed on the pronoun "He." It says, "He Himself" likewise shared in the same. It is not "He" shared in the same. It is "He Himself." He did not talk to a human to find out what it was like to be human. He Himself became human. And I think there is the idea that He, as God Himself, shared in the same flesh and blood as those who are sinners and need to be saved. The only exception is that He did not have a sin nature. And the reason He did not have a sin nature is because He was born of a virgin, a woman. He was not born of a man and so He had no sin nature.

Then note that He shared in the same. The same what? Go back to the word "partakers" in the first part of the verse. All of us as humans are partakers in flesh and blood. Flesh and blood speaks of the human nature. Humans take part, they fellowship, or they experience the same thing all humans experience. That is what human nature gives us. We cannot get out of being human. We have a human nature and we have it for keeps. We cannot enter some other nature.

But note now the word that Christ "shared" in the same nature. He

Himself shared in the same that is the same human nature. Now this requires thinking, so put your thinking hats on. The word that we as humans are "partakers" of flesh and blood, is different than the word that He "shared" in the same.

The word that we are partakers of flesh and blood is *koinonia*. We are familiar with that word as being translated to "fellowship." When we fellowship we experience the same thing together.

But note carefully now that it does not say that Jesus was a "partaker" of flesh and blood. It says He "shared" in the same. The first word is *koinonia*, this word is *metecho*. It is the word *with* and the word *to have*. Jesus has flesh and blood in common with man. We are human and only human but that is not all Jesus is. He shared in the same, that is flesh and blood, with us; but He was also God. So I mentioned earlier that when He became human He was not only human, He became human while He was already divine.

We have all marvelled at little babies. When a human being is conceived, a new person comes into existence. When Jesus was conceived, an already existing Person, a divine Person, was conceived as a human. He existed from eternity past. So we must never think that when Christ became man that He was just like us and no more. He was much more. But when He was born He entered our realm of existence. But He came from another realm. Though He fully identified with us in humanity, flesh and blood, yet

He was also fully God. And when He had been perfected, He got His license to become our Redeemer.

We come then to the last part of the verse. He became flesh and blood, and here is the reason:

...that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

What incredible words are these! Christ will play right into the devil's hands. He will let him do what he wants, and then He will defeat him at his own game! Satan thought by killing Christ he would defeat Him. But what happened was that by killing Him he set up Christ's eternal kingdom! How will Christ ultimately destroy the devil? By first dying at Satan's hands! Satan was in control of Judas and He was in control of the Jewish religious leaders and he was in control of the Roman rulers. He had it all.

He had Christ captured by the religious people of the day through information given to them by one of Jesus own disciples, Judas. He had Him brought before the Jewish judges who hated Him. And the Jewish judges brought Him to the secular leaders who delivered Him to death, not because they hated Him, but because of fear of man.

And when Christ was dead, the rest will now simply run its course. Once Satan had succeeded in bringing Christ to where He died, Satan was defeated. All the rest will now simply run its course.

Let me illustrate how something that has once begun running its course will come to a certain end. In the Ukraine a young woman, a schoolteacher with two children, entered the war when Russia attacked. She had no military experience but in a short while she learned how to use a portable antitank missile gun. She sets it up in a field somewhere and then goes in the bush to hide. Then she fires up her computer and watches the road. Then when she sees a tank coming, a multimillion dollar machine made out of thick steel, she waits until it is within range. She lines it up in her sights on the computer, and then presses the trigger.

Once she presses the trigger, she doesn't need to do a thing any more. She sits back and waits. All the rest will run its course. The machine coming toward her is a deadly machine. What she has released is a tank destroying instrument. It is millions of times smaller than the tank, but once she presses the trigger, her work is done. All the rest is a matter of time. That little bomb heading to the tank is locked on. It will do its work according to the information it got from the computer.

When Christ died, God's missile was locked on. It will do its work. The missile is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It saves from eternal death. When this message is released to sinners, those who are objective and respond to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, repent of their sins and put their trust in Christ, will be saved. This Gospel will do its work in every person who repents and puts his trust in Christ.

We read in an earlier passage that we do not yet see all things put under Christ. But the missile is locked on. It has been doing its work for 2,000 years and it will be brought to completion. If you want to know the end result, read the book of Revelation. There is no turning back. It will all happen.

And how does it happen? When Christ died, He provided a way in which every sinner in the world can get saved. If they hear the message of the Gospel and they repent and put their trust in Christ they will be saved. That is why just before Christ ascended, He gave the great commission. That is why we are helping to send Wagdi to Egypt and Sudan.

Note our verse again:

14 ...that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,

God wants to destroy the devil. So we ask, what does this word destroy mean? Does God want to put Satan out of existence? Let me give you some definitions of what this word "to destroy" means. It means: to render idle, unemployed, inactivate, inoperative; to cause a person or thing to have no further efficiency, to deprive of force, influence, or power. When Jesus Christ destroys the devil, the devil will still exist but he will be rendered idle, inoperative. He can no longer accomplish anything.

Let me go back to the antitank missile. It doesn't blow the tank out of existence. I saw a Ukrainian farm tractor towing a Russian tank home to

be used for scrap metal. It was still in existence but it had been rendered inoperable. It had become unemployed. It had no more force or influence or power. That is what God wants to do with the devil.

Now let me ask you this question: Why did God not destroy the devil a long time ago? Why didn't He destroy him as soon as he sinned? Here is what I believe. He couldn't. You say, "What do you mean, He couldn't? God can do anything. He is all powerful. If He is all powerful, surely He could have destroyed the devil when he sinned."

God is all-powerful, that is true. But the reason God could not destroy Satan until now has nothing to do with God's ability. It has to do with creatures He created with a free will. What I am telling you is there are some things God cannot do, not because He is not powerful enough. It is because of who He is. It is because of His character. He is fully righteous, fully just, and fully good.

Let me give you some examples: God cannot lie. Why? Because He is righteous, just, and good. He cannot cheat. He cannot violate man's free will because He is righteous and just and good. He cannot violate His own character. There are some things He cannot do. He cannot save sinners who refuse to repent and believe the Gospel. God cannot do it. Why? He would violate man's free will and His own character and that would be wrong, and He cannot do wrong.

Now I have shared what I am about to tell you before but the verse before us gives some evidence for it. There

is no doubt that God wants to destroy the devil. But if and when He does so, it must be done in a way that is right, and just, and good. Here is how I see this problem of justly destroying the devil. Before God created man He created angels. And one of those angels sinned and he brought down, we believe, 1/3 of the angels with him. That angel was a kind of angel known as a cherub which is a high ranking angel.

Now angels, like mankind, are free moral agents. Like man, I believe they were created to glorify God. So we ask, why did God not destroy Satan right there at the very beginning when this anointed cherub became proud and sinned by rebelling against God? From the book of Revelation we believe 1/3 of the angels fell with him. That means that the other two thirds of the angels who were still worshipping God as they were created to do. They recognized God's goodness and His character and they worshipped the most awesome One in existence.

But if God had destroyed Satan and those angels who followed him as soon as they sinned, now the rest of the good angels would be left with this conclusion: "We are not free moral agents! We have to worship God. If we don't, we immediately get the axe."

Those of us who did not want to take the shot for covid experienced some of that kind of free will. We were told we should vaccinate, but we did not need to if we didn't wish to. But if we didn't we couldn't travel, we couldn't eat in the restaurant and

whatever else went with it. But we were fully free to do as we wished.

So we said, "That is free choice? You don't need to do this but if you don't you can no longer do this or that or that, but we are free?" By the way, our Canadian Government learned a lot about an evolving science called behaviour modification. It is called psyop, something used against enemies in warfare.

I do understand there might be times when certain measures may be necessary, but I think this may well be the forerunner of more to come. In the recent World Economic Forum there was talk that they are working on a way to keep a record of each person's carbon footprint. And guess what? You will be free to take it or not take it. But it has the ominous sound of China's social credit system and there is no end to where that can go. But it is all by your free will of course. The problem is you might not be able to fly or buy food etc...

All of that to say this: If God had destroyed Satan and the angels that followed him immediately, this would have been the message to the good angels: "I have created you to worship Me. You don't need to do this. It is all of your own free will. But if you don't worship Me you immediately get the axe."

If God had immediately destroyed the devil, no longer could it be said that the rest were serving Him of their own free will. In order to destroy the devil God has to do it in such a way as is just and good and righteous. And it had to leave the rest of the angels

in such a way as to realize they truly had a free choice in worshipping God.

I am speculating now, but I believe that God made man with the aim in view that through man He would be able to justly destroy the devil and leave the angels that did not fall knowing their worship was entirely by their own free will.

If man had obeyed God without falling into sin, the angels would have understood they were worshipping God of their own free will. Man's fall into sin was the failure to live by faith. In order to please God, man, who has never seen God, must live by faith and faith alone. He must trust God of his own free will without ever having seen God.

But after man was created, the devil succeeded in luring him into sin and disaster struck mankind. It is not that God did not know what would happen, but He also knew that when that happened, He would then use the result of sin and death to destroy the devil. So our passage says that Christ, through experiencing death, will be able to destroy the devil. All this had to be, in order to destroy the devil. Romans 16:20 says that the God of peace will crush Satan under our feet shortly. What a wonderful promise.

And so we have the incarnation, with which this passage deals, and we have God becoming man and then dying at the hands of sinful man. And through this death, which the devil thought would destroy Christ, Christ will be able to destroy the devil. And He will remain holy and just and good; and the angels

will know they serve Him of their own free will.

There is an interesting statement in the NT that speaks of the salvation Christ provided for fallen man. It is 1 Peter 1:10-12 which says:

10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you,

11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

Notice that it was not only the angels that marveled at man's salvation. Verse 11 says that the prophets of the OT inquired and searched carefully regarding, and think of the word grace here as favor, they searched carefully of the favor that God would show to believers in the days that were to come.

Now the words, "which the angels desire to look into" are interesting. The word "to look" has the idea of stooping so as to look with outstretched neck into this matter of salvation. When Peter and John and Mary came to the empty tomb it uses this word to say they "stooped down to look into." The angels have this

strong desire to look deeply into this salvation. Could it be that they cannot grasp how sinners can be made righteous by faith. Angels do not have a human nature and they cannot identify with us like Christ can. Could it be that they cannot understand faith since they can never exercise faith because they are in the presence of God? Could it be that they too realize their own free will is at stake in all those who live by faith alone?

The angels announced the birth of Christ. They ministered to Christ when He was tempted and when He was to drink the cup of our sin. They were in the tomb after Jesus was resurrected and when others came to see it. Hebrews 1:14 says they are ministering spirits sent to minister to those who will inherit salvation.

I wonder if they are awed at how the Gospel saves free moral agents and then transforms their lives from sinners to saints by faith? The angels cannot exercise faith because they have been in the presence of God. But man that has never seen God exercises faith in Him and through faith their lives are transformed and the angels marvel.

One of the greatest of all marvels is the transformation salvation can cause in sinners. And the biggest thing of all is for those who get saved by faith, to continue to live by faith. The greatest challenge of all things is to live by faith when one has a sin nature. That is where each one of us is today. The greatest thing you and I can do for God and angels and fallen

man is to live by faith day by day,
never wavering.

Now listen to our verse once more:

*14 Inasmuch then as the children have
partaken of flesh and blood, He
Himself likewise shared in the same,
that through death He might destroy
him who had the power of death, that
is, the devil,*

You see, without humanity, this would
not be possible. And how will God
destroy the devil? Through the death
of Jesus Christ and then through those
who live by faith! Go to 1 Corinthians
2. You see, not the devil nor the
princes of this world could ever
figure that out even though true
redemption was revealed to the saved
throughout history!

We begin in verse 1:

*1 And I, brethren, when I came to
you, did not come with excellence of
speech or of wisdom declaring to you
the testimony of God.*

*2 For I determined not to know
anything among you except Jesus Christ
and Him crucified.*

*3 I was with you in weakness, in
fear, and in much trembling.*

*4 And my speech and my preaching were
not with persuasive words of human
wisdom, but in demonstration of the
Spirit and of power,*

*5 that your faith should not be in
the wisdom of men but in the power of
God.*

*6 However, we speak wisdom among
those who are mature, yet not the*

wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing.

7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory,

8 which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

Here is the hidden wisdom of God. It is hidden, not to the saved, but to the lost. This is the wisdom that is not of this world. It is not taught in colleges and universities. It is divine wisdom. It is foolishness to the world, but to those who are saved it is the power of God. It delivers from sin.

Go back to 1 Corinthians 1. We'll begin in verse 17:

17 For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.

18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, And bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent."

20 Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?

21 For since, in the wisdom of God,
the world through wisdom did not know
God, it pleased God through the
foolishness of the message preached to
save those who believe.

22 For Jews request a sign, and
Greeks seek after wisdom;

23 but we preach Christ crucified, to
the Jews a stumbling block and to the
Greeks foolishness,

24 but to those who are called, both
Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of
God and the wisdom of God.

25 Because the foolishness of God is
wiser than men, and the weakness of
God is stronger than men.

26 For you see your calling,
brethren, that not many wise according
to the flesh, not many mighty, not
many noble, are called.

27 But God has chosen the foolish
things of the world to put to shame
the wise, and God has chosen the weak
things of the world to put to shame
the things which are mighty;

28 and the base things of the world
and the things which are despised God
has chosen, and the things which are
not, to bring to nothing the things
that are,

29 that no flesh should glory in His
presence.

In the salvation provided by the death
of Jesus Christ, the devil is
defeated, the princes of this world
are rendered foolish, and no saved
person can ever glory in God's

presence and say, "I did this and that, and I deserve to be saved."

Should we not burst out with Paul in Romans 11:33-36:

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

34 "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?"

35 "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?"

36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

The Gospel, the message of the cross of Christ, which means His death, is the hope of mankind. It is foolishness to the world but to us, who are being saved, it is the power of God. It is through the cross that we are delivered from sin and it takes place in the process of sanctification which takes place by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me say this to each one who is truly saved: To live your life by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest thing you can do for the kingdom of God. Of course, it involves all of life. May I ask, do you seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness? This is what truly counts in life!

We go back to the last part of Hebrews 2:14 once more:

*14 ...that through death He might
destroy him who had the power of
death, that is, the devil,*

How can it be said that the devil has the power of death? The word for power here is *kratos*. It has the idea of strength or might. So, first, it is not that he has the might to kill anyone he wants to. He can only kill if God allows it.

We see that in the book of Job. Satan did everything God gave him a right to do, but he did not have right to take Job's life. So how does Satan have the strength or might of death? It is through sin. If we did not sin we would not need to die. Through sin we have inherited a sin nature, and through it we come to sin and through sin we become subject to Satan's program of death.

But we have already seen that it was through death that Jesus Christ also will destroy Satan and render him powerless altogether. Instead of operating as he has until then, he will be tormented in hell forever.

We come then to verse 15 but we'll read now verses 14-15 together:

*14 Inasmuch then as the children have
partaken of flesh and blood, He
Himself likewise shared in the same,
that through death He might destroy
him who had the power of death, that
is, the devil,*

*15 and release those who through fear
of death were all their lifetime
subject to bondage.*

Jesus Christ shared with man in taking on flesh and blood and this is

followed by two purpose clauses. The first is that He might destroy him that had the power of death; that is, the devil. We have looked at that. The second purpose clause is that He might release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Jesus Christ came to deliver, remove, release, or set man free. Mankind lives in fear of death. We have recently seen how man can be driven to unreasonable places by fear of death. I tend to think that one of the main reasons almost all of mankind is religious is because of death. There is something in us that cannot believe we will die and be gone forever; six feet down, as some put it. And all religions seek to give some kind of hope for the afterlife.

Death is an enemy of man. 1
Corinthians 15:25-26 says:

25 For He (i.e., Christ) must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet.

26 The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.

All of mankind is subject to bondage through fear of death. It is the Gospel that delivers the believer from this bondage. Now the word "subject" is the word *enochos*. It means to be held in. It has the idea of the danger of being found out when one is guilty for something. It is translated as "danger" 5 times and being "guilty" 4 times and "subject to" once and that in our passage.

I think this may be the fear that after death I will be discovered for

the things I am guilty for, and I will meet justice. It is like being guilty for something and the law is on my case and I am constantly living in fear of being found out.

So people live their life-time being subject to the bondage of the fear of death. This word "bondage" is slavery. Mankind is enslaved to this fear of death. So we develop teachings, or religions to deliver us from this slavery. The NAM has teachings that deliver those who trust their teachings from this fear of death. But for the Christian it is the Gospel that delivers one from this bondage. I remember that bondage from a young child until I was 22 years old. It was not that I always lived in this fear, but time and again it would come. I might be outside and see some falling star and then fear would strike. If we could listen to the true heart of unbelievers we would be amazed at what we would uncover.

CONCL: So because I used up my time I will close very briefly. Jesus was made a little lower than the angels so that He, by the grace of God could taste death for everyone. Two great reasons are mentioned for that here; first, so that He might destroy the devil, and He will. To do that He had to taste death. Second, He tasted death for everyone so that they might live the rest of their life in bondage because of the fear of death.

I wonder, is there or will there be someone listening to this message and you are afraid of death? It is sin that keeps you there. To be delivered from that, one must repent of one's sins and receive Christ by faith and trust Him for one's salvation. Maybe you think you are saved but you are not truly saved. The Bible says we are to make our calling and election sure.

If we got but one glimpse into hell, and one into heaven, the meaning of the word Gospel would take on new meaning for us. This book, the book of Hebrews, will encourage us, "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

