

Sunday May 29th 2011
The Letter to the Hebrews
Part Five

1). Heb 2:1 ¶ *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, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will? 5 ¶ 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. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.*

a). As we have seen in previous weeks, Chapter 1 of the Book of Hebrews lays out for us a complete foundation concerning God's plans and purposes for the age to come with respect to the One He has appointed 'Heir of all things' and the companions who will share His throne with Him.

b). Chapter 2 then begins by admonishing us to 'give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard' – the foundation laid out in Chapter 1 – 'lest we drift away'.

c). V2 then draws our attention to the first generation of the Children of Israel to come out of Egypt led by Moses and shows us what befell them when they drifted away, teaching that they received a 'just reward' – they received exactly what God had promised them based on their actions in response to His word. And we would know from the scriptural record that the whole generation, save Joshua and Caleb, perished in the wilderness without ever receiving their inheritance - Nu 14:32 *'But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness. 33 'And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. 34 'According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My rejection. 35 'I the LORD have spoken this; I will surely do so to all this*

evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die."

d). This sobering fact is then followed in v3 with an equally sobering rhetorical question - *3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,* And the simple answer is of course that we won't escape, something that scripture clearly confirms - *Ga 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. 8 For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. 9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart.*

e). And we had seen last week that this 'so great a salvation' is the same salvation that is about to be inherited in Hebrews Chapter 1:14, it is the salvation 'ready to be revealed in the last time' of 1 Peter 1:5; the salvation 'which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory' of 2 Timothy 2:10; it is the same salvation spoken of in – Heb 9:28b.....*He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.* The same salvation that is the goal, the completion of our faith, in – 1Pe 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

f). And according to our scripture in Hebrews 2:3 the words 'so great' make it clear that this salvation is the most superlative, the most incredible thing that an all knowing and all powerful God could bestow upon His redeemed creation. Nothing has come close to this salvation before and nothing may come close to it ever again, as it has taken the death and shed blood and resurrection of God Himself to make this possible and affords those found worthy to receive it the indescribable privilege to be adopted as God's own firstborn son thereby affording them the right to sit on Christ's throne in the Heavens and to rule and reign with Him as a joint heir – it is a salvation that the prophets have tried to search out and that angels have desired to look into.

g). Not only that but this salvation, the salvation of the soul is something *which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him*

h). This 'so great a salvation' then is the message that Christ preached in connection with the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens - Mt 4:17 *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

i). Mt 25:14 ¶ *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them.*

j). And it is this same message that was 'confirmed to us by those who heard Him' – the very same message that the disciples preached both during the Lord's first advent and following His resurrection - Mt 10:6 *"But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. 7 "And as you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of*

heaven is at hand.' 8 "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.

k). Mr 16:15 *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 "He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned. 17 "And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; 18 "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover." 19 ¶ So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.*

l). And not only this, but also in confirmation of this message concerning 'so great a salvation', as we see referenced in our quotation from Mark - 4 *God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*

m). During the days of Christ's earthly ministry when the Kingdom of the Heavens was being offered to the nation of Israel, the only group of people on the earth at that time who could receive such an offer, and during the days of the reoffer of the Kingdom to Israel recorded in the Book of Acts, the signs, wonders, various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit were the means by which God gave witness, His seal of approval if you will, to the authenticity of the messengers and the message.

n). Now what I am about to say does not take away from the Lord's compassion, as being God, compassion is His very nature, but we must realize that the relief of suffering was not the motivation for the miraculous events of the gospels and the Book of Acts. Those who were healed were a small proportion of the lame, blind and dumb throughout the nation and an individual's healing was to be seen as validating the messenger and the message in line with scriptural prophecy – it represented the beginning of the fulfillment of that which God had already said - Lu 7:20 *When the men had come to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'" 21 And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. 22 Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them.*

o). We can understand this manifestation of signs, wonders and miracles then in the same way as we understand the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost following the Lord's resurrection. We might remember that Peter

gives the following explanation to the events of that day - Ac 2:14 ¶ *But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. 15 "For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. 16 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams.*

p). Peter clearly says, ‘this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel’ – this was the beginning of the fulfillment of that which Joel had prophesied, a prophecy that would be brought to fulfillment as a result of Israel’s repentance.

q). In the same way, the signs, wonders and various miracles were what were spoken by the prophet Isaiah and Isaiah’s prophecy would have been brought to fulfillment as a result of Israel’s repentance.

r). Well as we know, on neither occasion did Israel repent and so the fulfillment of both prophecies still await that time yet future when Christ comes in His Kingdom glory and Israel finally comes to repentance.

2). All that we have seen then from the beginning of Hebrews Chapter 1 through the first 4 verses of Chapter 2 has had the coming Kingdom of Christ as its focus and just in case we may have been foolish enough not to have seen any of this, or not given the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, Hebrews 2:5 spells it out for us in a way that is completely unequivocal – Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

a). Could this really be any clearer than this?

b). ‘The world to come, of which we speak’ – so what is the Holy Spirit inspiring the writer of Hebrews to write about? - the inhabited world to come, the inhabited world during the age to come, during the Millennial Kingdom.

c). And we will note that he is speaking about the inhabited world to come after a particular fashion – it will not be ‘in subjection to angels’. And right here all the comparisons between Christ and the angels, with respect to the Kingdom, are brought into a sharp focus.

d). The inhabited world is at present subject to angels as Satan and his fallen angels remain in their position of rulership, but the inhabited world to come, the Millennial Kingdom of Christ, will no longer have angels in positions of rulership.

3). Then as we continue in the very next verse we discover who will be in those positions of rulership in place of the angels - Heb 2:6 *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. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.

a). And what we will immediately note here is that the writer goes right back into the OT scriptures and quotes that which God has already said on the subject. This is not then a flight of fancy, but rather it is a scriptural reality.

b). The opening words of the quotation, 'what is man....' Can be taken from two different sources that when put together provide us with an interesting perspective.

c). The first place we find this is in - Job 7:16 *I loathe my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone, For my days are but a breath. 17 ¶ "What is man, that You should exalt him, That You should set Your heart on him, 18 That You should visit him every morning, And test him every moment? 19 How long? Will You not look away from me, And let me alone till I swallow my saliva?*

d). And here we find our statement made within the context of Job's suffering, giving us the link between suffering and exaltation; something that we know only too well and is clearly shown to us in the scriptures - Php 1:29 *For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,*

e). The second place we find this is in - Ps 8:1 ¶ <<To the Chief Musician. On the instrument of Gath. 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! 2 Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength, Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger. 3 ¶ When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained, 4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen-Even the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!*

f). Our Psalm begins by declaring God's supremacy in all the earth, reminding us of that which we see in - Da 4:17 *'This decision is by the decree of the watchers, And the sentence by the word of the holy ones, In order that the living may know That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, Gives it to whomever He will, And sets over it the lowest of men.'*

g). And His supremacy over the angels - *Who have set Your glory above the heavens!*

h). The beginning of v2, ‘Out of the mouth of babes....’ is quoted by the Lord Himself on the day of His entry into Jerusalem on what we call ‘Palm Sunday’, recorded in - Mt 21:14 *Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. 15 But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant*16 and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise'?"

i). And what do we see here in these verses? We see the declaration of Christ’s deity, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David’; we see the lame and the blind healed and Lord quoting from Psalm 8 that deals with the supremacy of God in the earth and in the heavens.

j). And then within the context of our Psalm the statement concerning ‘babes’ and ‘nursing infants’ is made - *Because of Your enemies, That You may silence the enemy and the avenger.*

k). V3 then shows the awesomeness and the enormity of God’s creation – *3 ¶ When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,*

l). All of which leads us into the quotation in Hebrews 2:6 - *What is man that You are mindful of him,*

m). Then as we look at the context of this quotation within the Psalm we are taken right back to the opening Chapter of Genesis and God’s stated purpose for Man’s creation - *4 What is man that You are mindful of him, And the son of man that You visit him? 5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, 7 All sheep and oxen-Even the beasts of the field, 8 The birds of the air, And the fish of the sea That pass through the paths of the seas.*

n). The statement of God’s purpose for Man is clearly stated in Genesis, it is clearly stated in Psalm 8 and clearly stated in Hebrews 2:6-8 – Man was ‘made a little [for a little while] lower than the angels, but ultimately he will be crowned with glory and honor. God’s purpose will not change and Man’s ultimate destiny is beyond question.

4). The quotation from Psalm 8 concludes in Hebrews with the writer giving commentary on that which has just been quoted - Heb 2:8 *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. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.*

a). There is nothing then, according to our verse, that has not been put in subjection to Man – however, ‘we do not yet see all things put under him’.

b). God’s purpose for Man is rulership, but he is not ruling yet. V8 of Hebrews Chapter 2 is probably the clearest statement of the fact that Man does not yet have dominion that we can find, and leaves us in absolutely no doubt.

c). For those who teach that the Kingdom is here now as all things changed following the cross we would have to point out that Hebrews 2:8 was written after the Lord’s death and resurrection and was written under direct inspiration of the Spirit. There is really nothing more that would need to be said.

5). However, although we do not yet see all things put under Man, this is what we do see - Heb 2:9 *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.*

a). Jesus Himself, the Son of God, the One appointed heir of all things through whom also He made the worlds, was made for a little while ‘lower than the angels’. And this brings us directly to the Lord’s incarnation.

b). There is no sense in which the Son of God, the second person of the trinity, could ever be perceived as inferior to angels, but it is true to say that He, with regards to the rulership over the earth, placed Himself for a little while, under the ruling angels’ jurisdiction. And He did this, according to our scripture for a specific purpose – ‘for the suffering of death’, ‘that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone’.

c). He did it in order to pay the penalty for sin thereby making a way possible for fallen Man to ultimately regain the position for which he had been created – something that the fallen angels had failed to recognize - 1Co 2:7 *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.*

d). Then we also read in Hebrews 2:9 that as a result of suffering death, Christ is now crowned with glory and honor – suffering precedes glory – Lu 24:25 *Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! 26 "Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" 27 And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*

e). 1Pe 1:10 ¶ *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.*

6). Heb 2:10 ¶ *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

a). It was ‘fitting’, it was absolutely right for God to make salvation possible through the suffering of His Son. This then is within the nature and character of God, it could not be any other way than this. The price for sin had to be paid and the only One who could pay God’s price is God Himself – and so here again we see the complete harmony and unity of the Godhead in the provision of salvation. God the Father provides the salvation, God the Son procures it and God the Holy Spirit implements it.

b). In the phrase ‘in bringing many sons to glory’ we are to see not only the redeemed from the human race but also the Son as well as we have already read that Christ was crowned with glory and honor because of His suffering.

c). Captain = Greek – ‘archegos’, *ar-khay-gos*’ = a compound word made up of ‘ago’ = to lead or go and ‘arche’ = first – therefore one who goes first, a leader.

d). Christ then is the first of the many sons to be brought to glory, He is the leader, the One who leads the way - Joh 14:6 *Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

e). Lu 9:23 *Then He said to them all, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*

f). Heb 6:19 *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

g). Now when we read that Christ was ‘made perfect through sufferings’ this clearly has nothing to do with Him being somehow lacking. Such a thought would be quite absurd – the Greek word translated ‘perfect’ here is the same word translated ‘end’ in 1 Peter 1:9, speaking of the ‘end [goal] of your faith’ – and this is how we should understand its use here – Christ’s goal is accomplished, His purpose is brought to completion – ‘through sufferings’.

h). And if the goal of our faith is to be accomplished, if we are to be one of the many sons brought to glory, then it must happen after exactly the same fashion ‘through sufferings’ – Ro 8:17 ¶ *and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.*

i). 2Co 4:17 *For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*

j). And here we have once again that which we already know – Christ suffered by dying in His flesh and we suffer through dying to our flesh. Christ’s suffering preceded His exaltation and glory and so will ours as we follow the example that He has set for us - 1Pe 2:21 *For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:*

k). 1Co 15:20 ¶ *But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21 For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 23 But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming.*

7). And so as we draw to a conclusion for today let us go with one final thought, a thought we shall pick up on again next week - Ro 8:3 *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,*

a). Christ came ‘in the likeness of sinful flesh’, that is even though He is God He was born in a body of flesh and bone and blood just as ours is. He became a man, while remaining God, and died as a man - Zec 6:12 *"Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD;*

b). Joh 19:5 *Then Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold the Man!"*

c). Heb 2:14 ¶ *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.*

d). And here we will continue next week, if the Lord is willing.