

Hebrews (Part Thirteen): Chapter 2, A Mind-Bending Purpose (Part Two)

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With this sermon, I am continuing on in this brief series, within a much longer series on the book of Hebrews. This is actually the third one that I planned on giving but it is only the second that I actually gave. And I believe that I will not finish this series today either. But once we do, we will get back to the overall series that I am doing.

I am doing this specific subject with a bit more than normal detail because I believe it is of supreme importance to the overall understanding of what I am giving you regarding the importance of grasping the need of our relationship with Jesus Christ. He must not be ignored through neglect on our part. I was interested that Bill used the term "neglect" in his sermonette because it also appears in Hebrews the second chapter, that it was a fear of that author, who was probably the apostle Paul, that we neglect what he was writing at that particular time.

Now, each person is going to have to judge, set, and perform its level of importance for themselves, the level of importance of a relationship with Jesus Christ. Do not forget that Jesus said it is fruit that glorifies God, and without Him, that is, without Jesus Christ, we cannot, that is the term that He used, produce fruit without a relationship with Him. So, a great relationship with Him is of profound importance to our salvation. We must make use of our God-given faith.

I want you to turn to the book of Psalms, right in the very beginning of it, in chapter 2. Then we are going to go to chapter 8. I am just going to mention Ephesians 2 and 4 and then we will get into Hebrews the second chapter. But these particular references that I am giving you right now are important to this sermon.

Psalm 2:7-9 I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me,
"You are My Son, today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I
will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the
earth for Your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter's vessel."

Go over to Psalm 8. We have been in there before and in fact the last sermon
that I gave, I was based in there pretty much.

Psalm 8:4-6 [David writes] What is man that you are mindful of
him, and the son of man that you visit him? For You have made
him a little lower than the angels, and You have crowned him with
glory and honor. You have made him to have dominion over the
works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.

Hebrews 2:8-10 "You have put all things in subjection under his
feet." [we just read that scripture in Psalm 8] For in that He put all
in subjection under him ["him" is referring to man], He left nothing
that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put
under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the
angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor,
that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 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.

Much of the motivation for the writing of Hebrews came from Jewish people
being called to conversion, but objecting fairly strongly after learning that
they would have to accept Him, that is, Jesus, as High Priest and work
fervently with Him in a relationship. Their problem was exactly what Jesus
pointed it out to be. They really did not grasp who He truly was—God—
even though in their land they heard Him speak. Who knows how many
times they traveled to some area of Jerusalem that they knew that Jesus was

speaking in? But even though He said that He was God, even though He said that He was the Son of Man, even though He said the Father and I are one, it never really sank in for most of them.

Now, some did believe. All the original apostles believed it, so they were capable of believing it, that is, others were capable of believing, because God was gradually, slowly but surely filling the ranks out so that by the time Jesus died, there were 120 people that were following Him that closely. And like all of the apostles, had been baptized.

So their problem was exactly what Jesus pointed it out to be. They really did not grasp who He truly was, even though He told them. You will surely remember how clearly the gospels detail the Jews listening to His sermons, but eventually objecting to His claims and ultimately rejecting Him to the extent of manipulating His murder. That is how strongly some of them were rejecting what He said. Even though He healed people, even though He did things that were beyond their ability—feeding 5,000 and 6,000 people at one time from a small basket of food that a boy brought with him—they did not get it! They did not translate what He did before them in speech and also in actions, in healings, and so forth. They did not believe what He said.

Now, despite their objections to Him personally and then their ultimately murdering Him, the persecution continued right on against the church generally and the apostles most specifically, as the book of Acts clearly shows. But despite the persecution, the church continued growing and did so actually rather rapidly.

Acts 15 reveals the disputing led to that truly important conference that was held to resolve the issue between the apostles and the Jewish leaders of the opposition to Christ who were not literally persecuting the apostles. That conference was a major step in resolving the issue through the uniform teaching of the apostles and others. However, the actual epistle to the Hebrews, this epistle that we are studying into through this series, was not actually written until decades of time had passed from when the Acts 15 conference was actually held. I am sure the apostles were really busy during that period of time. They did not have the time to write something like this. They were busy preaching all the time and carrying on with the work as it was given to them at that time.

Although the epistle is unsigned, it to me has a fairly clear number of fairly strong observations that it was authored by the apostle Paul. Arthur Pink, by the way, believed very strongly that it was written by the apostle Paul. Regardless, God inspired it, and by this means he made this accounting of some of Jesus' history available for the understanding of the many generations of the called yet to come, and that includes us. And where He preserved it within the book of Hebrews.

There is no one except for the Father who is more important to our salvation than the One that this epistle describes. Never, never forget His admonishment that without Him we can do nothing. He meant that. He meant every word of it, every syllable of it. We need Him for the strength that He is able to give us in understanding so that we accept His Word, though the Jews did not at that time.

Now, in brief, in chapter 1 is a listing of Jesus' qualifications without, at the same time, the apostle providing any corresponding descriptions of what He does or did to accomplish them. They are already written in the four gospels, so he was not going to repeat them. What was important, when it was written, is that the Jews understood the terminology that is used in chapter 1 and they could not give valid biblical arguments against them because they had the right instruction in the kind of a circumstance that fit their circumstance better there in the first century.

Each of the author's points through the epistle clearly establishes yet other perfectly valid biblical reason that Christ undoubtedly established His superiority over angels. The two most telling propositions can both be compressed into one basic element and both are answered in the first chapter of the book of Hebrews. He, Jesus Christ of Nazareth is, and also was, as a human, the merciful Creator God. That is broached immediately in the first chapter to set the stage for the rest of the chapters that appear in the book of Hebrews.

God got right to the point: that once He began inspiring the Bible, the first thing He broached is that Jesus Christ was rejected by the Jews. He challenged them on that issue and basically what He was saying through the apostle who was the human stenographer, I guess you might call him, who

was writing, is that right off the bat He broached the issue. All of those doubting His qualifications had to do was to prove what Jesus Christ inspired in the first four verses. That is how quick He got right to the issue, the first four verses had His qualifications.

All these people had to do to prove this out was believably study the Old Testament scriptures, given them by the author of what is now Hebrews, or given and expounding them in sermons or Bible study. And that incidentally is why I began with Psalm 2, with Psalm 8, with Ephesians (which I did not read because the issue was covered in those psalms right there). Jesus, the only person ever born on the face of this earth who fit into what God wrote in Hebrews the first chapter. It could not possibly have been anyone else! The Jews must have been stunned when they read in the Old Testament what God said about Jesus of Nazareth, who they rejected. They were turning their back on God.

Chapter 2 begins building upon the things that are in chapter 1 by means of the author (in this case it was God speaking through the apostle), erecting a large body of elements those called of God stand to lose. This is the way God formed the organization of the book of Hebrews. In the first couple of chapters, God erected a large body of elements those called of God (and did not respond especially) stand to lose if they, and therefore *we*, allow ourselves to drift away from the realities that we are called to receive if we do not buckle down by following through and producing fruit that glorifies God. He gave us the greatest help we could possibly ask for in His Son.

Let me say it. Do we have any excuse whatever to fail that will stand before God after He made this offer to mankind, those He calls? Brethren, that is stunning! We have no excuse because the help is there, but only if we believe. That is the issue. Do we believe it? The Jews did not. They chose not to believe.

That pretty much, in broad generalities, defines what the book of Hebrews expands upon in the remainder of the epistle. It clearly establishes the issues for those being called, that the epistle to the Hebrews confronts for us so that we can see its value hopefully more clearly. What we are involved in in this

very sermon is a huge one. That is why I chose this subject. Whether I will make it clear, that is another issue altogether. But if we do not perceive its value by faith, we *will* drift away.

You remember that word drift in Hebrews 2? We will drift away out of neglect because we think so very little of the truths we hold in various stages of worthlessness. That is what the Jews did. They considered what Jesus was saying as worthless and that is why they really did not pay any attention. The help to perceive its values is available through Christ. However—there is a catch—we must carry the ball. Do you know what I mean? We must carry the ball by means of our relationship with Christ. So the help is there. And that is what he hit the Jews with right off the bat.

Now, in my previous sermon (which I really did not give) I ended that sermon by showing a part of the fact that God is not placing an angel, or many angels, in authority over the world to come. That was one thing that I did have in there. Now turn back in thought to the verses we concluded within that sermon. Again be reminded that Psalm 8 was vague in terms of the Jews understanding it correctly. This lack is understandable because grasping its vital truths needs the support of clearer information found only in the New Testament. Actually, in a way, that is what we are expanding upon here in this sermon. It is Psalm 8. The Jews could never figure it out that it did not fit the Nazarene. It did, but they did not figure it out. Now in many cases it was not available to people early in the lifetime, I guess, of God's creation here.

However, I want us to turn back because I want you to see in the book of Daniel that there was the very important clue about Jesus of Nazareth, especially after He came. Let us go to the 7th chapter, verses 13-18 and we will see what the clue was there for the Jews to have.

Daniel 7:13-18 "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples and nations and languages should serve Him. His

dominion [this Son of Man] is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed.

I, Daniel, was grieved in my spirit within my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near to one of those who stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me and made known to me the interpretation of these things [Here is God telling Daniel this. I pulled this verse out because I want you to see clearly it was already written in the Old Testament. It was there.]: 'Those great beasts, which are four, are four kings which arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall receive the kingdom, and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever.'

So, this was already in the Bible. I want to go back to verse 13 again. I want to make sure that we see this.

Daniel 7:13 "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of Man [that is a Son *of* Man. In other words, a man!], coming with the clouds of heaven. He came to the Ancient of Days
...

I want to repeat this again so that we see it. The Son of Man was a different personality from the Ancient of Days. But Daniel called him "*like* the Son of Man," because he was not as clear on this as he might have been either at that time.

Daniel 7:13-14 . . . they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him [to the Son of Man] was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed."

Now, what does that teach you? Who was the Son of Man? It was *the* Son of Man, Jesus Christ. We had a Bible study subject by Richard just a month or so ago, and he gave us, I do not know, it must have been 15 or 20 scriptures, in which Jesus identified Himself as God. That was right out of what is now the New Testament.

So He made it very clear to those people, even those people who rejected Him when He was preaching there on earth. They rejected His testimony that He was *the* Son of Man. I believe that Jesus named Himself the Son of Man very close two dozen times. But even if He did not name Himself the Son of Man that number of times, the Son of Man *is* mentioned about a dozen times, and He came before the Ancient of Days.

These were two distinctly different personalities. One of them was absolutely *known* to be God in the vision. And of course it turned out that the other One was also God in the vision. It is the Son of Man to whom is given the Kingdom and all peoples, nations, and languages serve Him. Now, this is a very important section of identification. It is the Son of Man who is given the Kingdom and all peoples, nations, and languages serve Him. Brethren, from what you know from the New Testament, is that clear or what?

You also know, I am sure from the New Testament, angels are not mentioned in any ruling, governing function anywhere. So with the addition of the identifications given in the New Testament, that Son of Man's identification here is pointing in this Daniel 7 prophecy, singling out Jesus Christ to the Jews. We should understand this and know this. They had a weakness there, but it was made up in a hurry. Now, Jesus called himself the Son of Man somewhere near to a dozen times and He is clearly identified. He did not lie.

Let me just show you a couple of places. Turn back to the New Testament again to Luke the 9th chapter and in verse 44, where it says (Jesus is the speaker),

Luke 9:44 "Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."

Luke 9:56 "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.

Luke 12:40 "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

There are three of them just in one book. Within three chapters of one book He identified Himself as the Son of Man. The Jews really had no excuse for rejecting Him. They did not have the revelation that we have, but Jesus did not hide who He was. Now I want to get us into this because I do not want us to be separated from it. And if we for some reason decide that we are not going to continue with Jesus Christ and we are going to allow the drifting to take place, I want you to see something in the book of Revelation.

Revelation 7:13-17 Then one of the elders answered, saying to me, "Who are these arrayed in white robes, and where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you know." So he said to me, "These are the ones who come out of the great tribulation, and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple. And He who sits on the throne will dwell among them. They shall neither hunger anymore nor thirst anymore; the sun shall not strike them, nor any heat; for the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne will shepherd them and lead them to the living fountains of waters. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes."

Revelation 21:1 Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea.

Revelation 21:7-8 "He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

If you remember what I preceded these scriptures with, then you know exactly what God was doing, pointing out to the Jews what they were going to give up if they did not develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. And it is the same for us—we lose out on the Kingdom of God and we will not share

an eternal life with Jesus Christ. That is what we stand to lose if we do not use the book of Hebrews to develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. It is that important.

Resurrected mankind will be exceedingly higher than angels in the Kingdom of God, which rules over the entire universe, and resurrected man, including even his pre-resurrection union with the Christ will be clearly manifested to all. Did you hear what I just said? What I just said is, God is going to show those people who maybe laughed at us, ridiculed us, or whatever, that when we were walking the earth, we had a relationship with Jesus Christ. That is really interesting. He is going to remind these people what they witnessed and maybe gave up.

So, resurrected man, including his pre-resurrection union with Christ will be clearly manifested to all. And those resurrected will be second only to the Father and to the Son in all creation. Now catch this (what I just said). *Those resurrected will be second only to the Father and the Son in all creation.* I want you to think about that—the only ones in authority over those who are resurrected in the first resurrection will be the Father and the Son! Consider that. Do you want to give that up? I do not think so.

The remainder of this sermon will focus on the spiritual mechanisms of how this will be accomplished. But remember the key to the accomplishment of what God wants to give us, where we will be right under the Father and the Son in terms of being God. Their authority will be over us, but we will be right under Them. And that relationship with Jesus Christ has something to do with that ranking. In fact, brethren, it has everything to do with that ranking which we will be given. Just remember that.

Now, I will tell you bluntly, it will not be earned by us. It will be accomplished through God's merciful grace and mixed with our faith. We are involved and the feeble faith that we do possess we have because God in His mercy gave it to us as a gift, thus enabling us to have it. But we have not finished with Hebrews 2:9 yet.

Hebrews 2:9 But we see Jesus [brethren, everything from now on is going to be filtered through Jesus], who was made a little lower than the angels [He became a man], for the suffering of death

crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

This verse has a very important for a term within it. Verse 9 begins this way, "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." Was the apostle Paul, if he was the author, actually *seeing* Jesus? He saw Him at one time there for sure, but he was talking about right now the way he is using that term "see." Were they looking or are we looking at Jesus? And do we *see* Jesus? I hope you do, brethren, according to the definition that we are going to give "see" here in just a little bit.

Now let us go back over something that we know of here. That verse says that we see Jesus, who is eternal Spirit and He is normally invisible within the timeframe of the comment, and also our Creator who became human and He died but is now alive again, but without sin. He suffered horribly with great shame—the just for the unjust—and He is now off in heaven and truly invisible to our human vision. But the apostle says we *see* Jesus. He is not visible to us but He is, by the Word of God, crowned with glory and honor. We do not see that either. But do you believe it? Because this verse is using see in an unusual way that you and I are able to emulate. Do you believe this? What did the author of Hebrews mean by this? How do *we* see Jesus?

Well, it is not through visions and it is not through dreams. That is not what he is talking about. Nor do we artificially form an accurate vision in our mind because we have no idea what He looks like. We do it by a gift God gives to us in our calling when we receive His Spirit. We do it by faith because God empowers us to believe.

Now from this place, I want you to turn with me to John the 8th chapter and we are going to read about four or five verses there. In verse 52, you remember the argument that was going back and forth between Jesus and the Jews who are listening to Him.

John 8:52-56 Then the Jews said to Him, "Now we know that You have a demon. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word, he shall never taste death.' Are you greater

than our father Abraham, who is dead? And the prophets are dead. Who do You make Yourself out to be?" And Jesus answered, "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing. It is My Father who honors Me, of whom you say that He is your God. Yet you have not known Him, but I know Him. And if I say, 'I do not know Him,' I shall be a liar like you; but I do know Him and keep His word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad."

How about that.

What this is saying here is possible for us too to do. Now do you believe that you can see God in the manner that the apostle does as he writes there in the second chapter in the 9th verse?

Here it comes the explanation. It is actually very simple. *Faith* is the eyes and the ears of the Spirit available to us *because* God called and gifted us and we are thus empowered to believe Jesus' word! That is why the Jews never really got it. God did not give them the ability to see who Jesus Christ really was, even though they could look on Him face-to-face.

Now, let us keep going. Faith is the eyes and the ears of the spirit available to us because God called and gifted us and we are thus empowered to believe. And it is faith that gives us the power to "see" Jesus Christ. Understand this: we do not literally see what the Holy Spirit reveals in words, even humanly, with no attachment to God whatever. We humans have a saying, that we saw it, whatever it happens to be, in our mind's eye before it occurs. We say, "I knew that it was going to happen, if he did that or didn't do that." In our thoughts we anticipate it. Hebrews 2:9 is a seeing akin to that human-generated saying.

I will explain even a bit more clearly. I hope it is a bit more clearly. We are going to go in the book of Job, chapter 42.

Job 42:1-6 Then Job answered the Lord and said: "I know that You can do everything, and that no purpose of Yours can be withheld from You. You asked, 'Who is this who hides counsel without knowledge?' Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,

things too wonderful for me, which I did not know. Listen, please, and let me speak; You said, 'I will question you, and you shall answer Me.' I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Now, Job did not literally see God any more than we do in our time and our day see God, or John 1:18 would not be true. That is where it says that nobody has seen God. But Job said he saw God, But he was not the only one. Abraham saw God, and Job now believed he saw God in his mind's eye. He did not literally see God, but he did rather thoroughly get it. He understood it. He grasped what he was being taught. He thoroughly comprehended it, understood it in terms of spiritual faith in portions of what God chose to reveal to him of His plan, and Job made it a part of his life's actions.

So, Job no more knew what God looked like than we do. But what did Job do? From the things that he was taught he grasped, understood, comprehended God becoming a man, preaching, being sacrificed for the forgiveness of our sins, rising from the dead, being crowned with glory and honor, and then Job himself becoming converted, joining with Christ in the Kingdom of God. Now make sure that you hang on to this because it has some very important truths attached to it.

Now, here again in the book of Hebrews, in chapter 2 and verse 10, the author begins explaining briefly why God did as He did by means of Jesus becoming subject to death. Our Savior's human life having very much in common with ours has very great motivational value for us, far beyond what appears on the surface.

One possible reason for God doing as He did with Jesus was so that mankind would have a Savior whose death was of such exceedingly great value it would be sufficient to pay the death penalty for all of mankind. That is, the very death of the Creator Himself, who Himself has very many similarities with us. He was the model that we are to some limited extent being fashioned after. And in a major sense, it proves a point. A creator, and most especially this sinless One, is worth more than the totality of all he creates because His creation would not even exist without what the Creator thoughtfully imagines, designs, and then produces. He produced everything

that is out there and He Himself is worth that. We have to see that in our mind's eye.

A second reason is so that those who are called and converted (as God's purpose unfolds along the way of the timeline of His plan as God chooses to move it), during their lifetime would receive the encouraging benefits of perceiving the witness of Jesus Christ, who followed the same basic obstacle course we must follow and succeed within. In plain words, that we would grasp even more sharply our having to do the same basic things the Captain of our salvation had to do, though not to the same degree of perfection and not to the same intensity nor number. But, nonetheless, along the same course of glorification of God and achievement.

Now, *what Jesus accomplished, set the standard of perfection and is the model for us to follow that, at the same time, is confirmation of our salvation*. Hang on to that thought. His life and His salvation—get this—is confirmation of our salvation. If He had not gone through it there would be no salvation. And the very fact that He was saved from death is the confirmation of our salvation. So we are following the same basic path toward the goal that God has set. This is the reason the apostle Paul used the "we are parts of His body" metaphor and the apostle Peter used his "we are parts of the same building, a holy temple" metaphor in their descriptions of our place within Christ's organization.

Get the point—that we are going through basically the same things that Jesus did but not with the same intensity, not being required to reach the high points that He did in His testing. Therefore, in an organizational manner, *Christ being crowned with honor and glory is the guarantee of ours too if we remain faithful since we are part of the same structures*. Do not forget this! That is why Paul used the body metaphor and why Peter used the building metaphor. We are part of the same system that God is bringing through the testing. And together we are one unit with Christ. We are part of His body. That is the way God views us. Please understand that.

Let me put it another way. It is right in the book of Hebrews. He is truly our Forerunner. He is going before us, we are following along the same path all the way into the Kingdom. I said we were going to show you eventually the mechanics of what God is doing here.

Now, what we are proceeding to learn in this brief series is a much, much fuller understanding of Psalm 8. That psalm does not, I repeat, it does not concern *only* Jesus Christ. Do not forget the psalm asked, "What is *man*," not just one person, not just Jesus Christ, what is *mankind*, not the Messiah. We are doing something here that was not done in the days of the first century. It did not begin to be done until Jesus Christ preceded us there. He had to go first. And so Psalm 8 is beginning to open up to us, because Psalm 8 concerns all the converted who become even as Jesus Christ now is.

Did you hear what I said? Psalm 8 involves all of the converted who become even as Jesus Christ now is following His resurrection, as compared to what He was after being born of Mary and preaching the gospel during His ministry. And that is the key to understanding this "seeing" that is in Hebrews 2:9. It is the key to understanding this.

I am going to stop there because time is short and this next section is too important. But what I want you to remember out of this is that we are following almost exactly the same pattern that Jesus Christ was. It is the same pattern, but not with the same intensity—understand this—but before we can ever be in the Kingdom of God, we have to first become a part of Jesus Christ.

Do you understand that? That is why He is so important. Unless we are a part of His body, if we are not in Jesus, if we are not a cell within His body, we are not part of Him. He is that important to our salvation! This is not just a matter of just accepting Him. We have to become part of Him, and we will touch on that, hopefully, in the next sermon.