

“But We See Him...”—Hebrews 2:5-9

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com.]

Take a Bible and meet me in Hebrews 2...

It's not uncommon to hear it said that the job of the preacher is to comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable. This is probably true. And, interestingly, the Gospel does both—it humbles the exalted and exalts the humble. The book of Hebrews has the feel of a sermon and so it shouldn't surprise us that it has alternating sections that encourage both of these outcomes.

In chapter 1 he has comforted these afflicted Christians and us by reminding us of the exalted Christ whose cosmic reign encompasses even that which threatens us. At the beginning of chapter 2 he afflicted us with skilled precision and sober warning—“*How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?*” (2:3). But now, with that question still ringing in our ears, he turns to comfort us with the soothing salve of the Gospel.¹

Follow along as I read, beginning in verse 5. This is the Word of God Almighty...

“For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere, ‘What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him?’ ⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸ putting everything in subjection under his feet.’ Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. ⁹ But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” (Hebrews 2:5-9)

In these verses we can detect a shift of emphasis. In chapter 1, we find the deity of Christ on full display, but now, in chapter 2, it is the humanity of Christ that we are asked to consider. Both of these—Christ's divinity *and* humanity—are required for our redemption. So at this point in chapter 2, the author takes up the second of these essentials, showing us that the full humanity of Jesus is necessary to fully redeem us.²

He begins, in verse 5, with the connecting word “for” or “because,” which tells us that this passage is meant to explain the previous warning. He previously warned us that we ought not to neglect what has been revealed in God's Son by returning to the Law mediated by the angels because we will not escape judgment if we do so. Why? Verse 5—“[because] *it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.*”³ Human destiny is caught up in the person and work of Christ, not the angels, because Christ is superior to the angels (cf. chapter 1). So the author will now show us, by means of the Old Testament, the ultimate glory intended for humanity and what that has to do with the God's Son.

I love the way the author introduces the Old Testament quotation in verse 6—“*It has been testified somewhere...*” A professor of mine once joked aloud that perhaps this author was having a senior moment. Wouldn't that be encouraging?⁴ Of course, as even that professor admits, the author probably introduces the quotation this way, “not because [he] has forgotten who spoke [these words] or where

[they] occur in Scripture, but to keep the focus on God, rather than a human agent, as the primary speaker of Scripture.”⁵

The words are drawn from the heart of Psalm 8. The author is about to engage in some rich biblical theology that taps us into the heart of the human story. Since we don't know the Psalms as well as the original audience then we should probably turn there so we can have its lyrics in our mind as they would have. So keep your finger in Hebrews 2 and turn to the left in your Bible to Psalm 8.

This is one of my favorite Psalms. Derek Kidner, who has written extensively on the Psalms, describes it as “an unsurpassed example of what a hymn should be, celebrating as it does the glory and grace of God, rehearsing who he is and what he has done, and relating us and the world to him, all with a masterly economy of words, and in a spirit of mingled joy and awe.”⁶ Wouldn't it be amazing if Christian songwriters today had that as their ambition! But I digress.

The theme of the psalm is “the greatness of God and the place of man in God's universe.”⁷ Notice that the psalmist, in this case King David, begins and ends the psalm in the same way:

“O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!” (Psalm 8:1a, 9)

Framing the psalm in this way shows that ultimately the whole thing is about the majesty of God. All the wonderful things he says in the middle about man are placed within that framework. It's a reminder that we will never truly understand the place of humanity in the cosmos unless we see them in light of the glory of God. Everything that's said about our species in these verses is meant to fuel our worship of God. To that end, David continues,

“You have set your glory above the heavens. ² Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.” (Psalm 8:1b-2)⁸

From this point on David begins to reflect on the significance of man. It's from this section of the psalm (verses 4 to 6 explicitly, 7 and 8 implicitly) that the writer of Hebrews draws on in order to teach us something about...

The Destiny of Mankind: What We See in Psalm 8

When I read verses 3 and 4, I can't help but imagine David as a youth, lying in a field, sheep resting all around him, as he gazes up in the night sky lost in his thought. Look at verse 3.

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, ⁴ what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?” (Psalm 8:3-4)

J. J. Stewart Perowne captures David's sentiments well: “As the poet gazes into the liquid depths of the starry sky there comes upon him with overwhelming force the sense of his own insignificance.”⁹ Surely you've felt this at some point, yes? David has only the naked eye. We have microscopes that show the complicated language of DNA and telescopes that register the light from stars that have gone out of existence thousands of years prior. George Carey, a former Archbishop of Canterbury, once expressed his own wonderment at such things like this:

“Consider the psychological effect of this piece of information. We are told that the light from the cluster of galaxies in Hydra that reaches us has traveled through space for two thousand million

light years. That cluster in only one of the innumerable galaxies, each made up of millions of stars, separated by immeasurable stretches of inter-galactic space.”¹⁰

What is man by comparison?¹¹ We’re puny. We’re just specks of dust in the cosmos. We have even more cause than David to cry out, “*What is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him?*”

And yet, “we fill the mind of God.” He is “*mindful*” of us (8:4). There is something special about mankind in God’s design and it is to that privileged status that David now turns his attention. In verse 5, he begins to draw on the creation tradition...

“Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. ⁶ You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, ⁷ all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas.” (Psalm 8:5-8)

This is a reflection on the creation account of Genesis. The glory and honor that men and women were crowned with is a poetic way of referring to the “image of God” in which they were fashioned. One of the ways the image of God was reflected by humanity was through their dominion over the rest of God’s creation. Genesis 1:26 reads,

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”

In verse 8 of Hebrews 2, the author remarks, “*Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside of his control.*”¹² God, in other words, set humanity up in the Garden of Eden as His vice-regents, His agents tasked with caring for His creation. “This means that [God] has given human beings, mere specks in this vast universe, a significance and honor above everything else he has created.”¹³ Adam and Eve and their offspring were created to be kings and queens, glorifying God as they ruled under the matchless authority of God. That was the destiny of mankind in God’s original design and it’s astonishing!

Now turn back to Hebrews 2. The author is tapping in to this creation tradition and ideal by quoting from the psalm in verse 6 and following. But then he anticipates the objection of the reader. Look at the end of verse 8.

“...At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.” (Hebrews 2:8b)

Now there is a translation issue I should mention here. Everyone agrees that the author of Hebrews eventually shifts the meaning of his pronouns from mankind in general to Jesus Christ in particular, but there is some confusion on when that transition occurs. The “him” pronouns after the quotation in verse 8 could refer to humanity or to Jesus. The ESV (which I’m reading from this morning) preserves the ambiguity and forces us to decide.

So the author could be quoting what Psalm 8 says about humanity and then immediately shifts to Christ as the fulfillment of this psalm, and thus, the meaning would be: “Now in putting everything in subjection to *Jesus*, God left nothing outside of *His Son*’s control. Yet at the present we don’t see everything in subjection to *Jesus*.” That’s grammatically possible, but I don’t think it’s right. Instead, it seems to me, it’s better to see the pronouns as switching to Jesus as their referent only when the author

mentions Jesus' explicitly in verse 9. That would mean that all of verse 8 is still taking about mankind in general. The New International Version brings this interpretation out in their translation:

“In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them.” (Hebrews 2:8b; NIV)

What an understatement! But the author is brilliantly anticipating the objection of his readers. He knows that his audience will hear what the psalmist says about the original glory and purpose of humanity and think, “Well, that’s all fine and dandy, but that’s not what we see at all. We’re a persecuted minority. This world is a mess! We may have been created to rule God’s creation, but that’s not what we’re doing. At least David got to be king of something. We ain’t ruling squat!” And this brings us to the next idea in our text, which has to do with...

The Failure of Mankind: What We See in Our Experience

When we look around can we really say that Psalm 8 describes our experience? Is everything in God’s creation really subject to us? Hardly. We might pretend that we can control things, solve any problem, cure any disease, tame every beast, but that’s not even true on a small scale. At best, “we can manage *some* aspects of *some* things *some* of the time—but we are as often mastered as we are masters.”¹⁴

We try to control by intimidation or technology. We can say to the beast, “Obey me, or I’ll eat you or wear you!”, but sometimes we become the feast.¹⁵ We can create vaccines, yet half of Tyler has the flu right now. We can be the wisest investor on the planet, but we couldn’t stop the stock market from dipping this week. We educate our children and teach them right from wrong, but we can’t make their decisions for them. We can pour strong foundations and build weather-resistant roofs, but we can’t prevent the hurricane and steer the tornado that washes them away. We can plan out our schedule, but all it takes is a thin sheet of ice to keep us homebound for a day or two. Just pick up a newspaper or turn on the news and you’ll be reminded of how much is out of our control at any given moment. We can’t even control our own selves half the time. Amen, someone?

So when the writer of Hebrews says, “*At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to [mankind]*”, it’s hard to imagine a statement of fact that has more evidence at its disposal than that. We had more technological advancements in the twentieth century than we did in all other centuries combined and yet it was the bloodiest century yet. So no, we do not see everything under our feet at the present. We see frustration. Lots and lots of frustration and futility. The list of proof gets pretty long when you start to think about it. And the most conclusive evidence of this is death (which the writer of Hebrews is going to discuss later in the chapter). As one writer put it,

“Whatever we have been able to conquer as human beings, we have not conquered death. It triumphs everywhere. It strikes babies and teenagers and young adults and mid-lifers and older people. It scoffs at medicines and surgeries and diets and vitamins and exercise programs. When all is said and done, rocket scientists die. Politicians die. Doctors die. Professors die. Nobel prize winners die. The rich and the poor die....Death is *not* subject to man. And therefore *nothing is* ultimately subject to us [now], because it is only a matter of time till it all will be taken from us, and what we thought we had mastered will be ripped out of our hands.”¹⁶

This is the sobering reality. Psalm 8 is incredible, but it doesn’t line up with our experience. “If God placed everything under man’s feet, then something has gone awry.”¹⁷ And that’s just it—something has gone awry.

But the question is why? How we define a problem and its cause always determines the solution we seek out. Richard Phillips helps us think this through a bit in one his books. What is the human problem?

“Is it that people who are basically good are simply not enlightened with the right philosophy and culture needed to form a successful society? If that is the problem, then education is the logical solution. Or is the problem that people have had bad childhood experiences, that dysfunctional environments have warped otherwise healthy creatures? If that is the problem, then social reengineering is the most appropriate solution. Or, again, is poverty the problem? Is it true that people’s basic needs are not being met, so they never get the chance to develop high-order skills that will make them model citizens? If so, then surely income redistribution is a good remedy. But what if man’s problem runs deeper? What if the problem of this world is that man is in bondage to sin and under the curse of death? What if man’s problem is that since Adam’s fall we are sinners by nature, condemned by God and unable to walk in righteousness and peace? In that case, a more radical solution is called for, a solution far beyond the reach of man himself.”¹⁸

Bingo! If the first two chapters of Genesis serve as the backdrop for what Psalm 8 is celebrating, then the third chapter explains why we don’t experience the fullness of that created glory today. Adam, the first human, fell into sin. He disobeyed the command of God. Sin destroyed his relationship with God and with the rest of creation. Things changed over night in the most dramatic way imaginable.

Last week the President of the United States gave his first State of the Union address. During the event I was reminded of the role of the “designated survivor.” Are you familiar? Not Kiefer Sutherland. But the actual designated survivor. Basically whenever there is an event—like the State of the Union—when the entire government is more or less present, there is always one member of the President’s cabinet who sits the event out in an undisclosed location just in case something catastrophic happens that wipes out all those in attendance. The designated survivor is appointed by the President to ensure the continuity of the government. This year’s designated survivor was Sonny Perdue, the Agriculture Secretary.

In 1997, Bill Clinton appointed a man by the name of Dan Glickman, who was also a Secretary of Agriculture, as the designated survivor. Seventeen years later he told the story in an interview with NPR. Evidently he had left Washington D.C. to visit his daughter in New York during the address. He shared how, after the speech ended, he left the safeguarded location and walked 10 blocks in the sleet and rain to meet up with his daughter. In the interview he remarked, “It didn’t escape me that three hours earlier I was the most powerful man in the world and now I couldn’t even get a cab. It was a reminder of how fleeting power is.”¹⁹

That was Adam’s story. Really it’s but a shadow of how much power and glory Adam set aside when he chose to disobey his Maker. Instead of walking in the grace of his God-given destiny, he forsook it for a chance to be his own god. And therein lies the great irony of the man’s fall into sin. In an attempt to set himself up as his own master, he lost the ability to be master over God’s creation. And none of the future children of Eve were left unaffected, including you and I.²⁰ “This is the problem of mankind: *Paradise lost*, and with it the dominion and blessing offered by God”, writes Phillips. “God’s creation of mankind, recorded in Genesis 1:26 and poetically celebrated in Psalm 8, has been spoiled by Adam’s sin and the resulting curse of death.”²¹ And that, friends, is why the writer of Hebrews laments that the destiny of Psalm 8 is not what we see.

But there is good news. The Gospel. The writer holds it out for us in verse 9. Yes, it’s true, we don’t see everything now in subjection to mankind, but...Verse 9... “*But we see him...*” Him who? Jesus.

“But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” (Hebrews 2:9)

This is really what Hebrews is all about. We don't see everything as it should, but we can see Jesus. Look to Jesus. Fix your eyes on Jesus. Consider Jesus (cf. 3:1). All of these hopes are wrapped up in the person and work of Jesus Christ. And this leads us to the final point of emphasis in our text this morning...

The Hope of Mankind: What We See in Our Savior

Don't miss what the writer of Hebrews has done. He has reflected on the creation account through Psalm 8 so we can understand God's intention for humanity. Then he took that picture and applied it to us so that we can see there is a problem. We have fallen from that intention. But now he takes that same picture of God's intention and he applies it to Christ and it fits like a glove. This author, however, is not the first to see this psalm as fulfilled in Christ. In the New Testament, at least two other writers draw on this text to show that Jesus fulfilled different aspects of it (Matthew 21:16; 1 Corinthians 15:27).²²

Here in Hebrews the point is that Christ is the only one in whom we see the human destiny truly actualized in. After His resurrection, He told His disciples, *“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”* (Matthew 28:18). The writer of Hebrews has already told us that the Son is *“the heir of all things”* and that He *“upholds the universe by the word of his power”* and that He is seated *“at the right hand of the Majesty on high”* and that His throne endures forever and that's not even the half of it! That's not even one chapter in! That's basically the opening sentence!

But the point the author is making is that *“we [do] see [Jesus]...crowned with glory and honor.”* We see Psalm 8 in Christ. He is *“the perfect representation of the humanity described in this psalm”*.²³ He's the true *“son of man”* that the Psalm points us to.²⁴ *“In him the full dignity and destiny of humanity find their ultimate expression”*.²⁵ As Tom Schreiner summarized, *“this rule has become reality in Jesus, the human being par excellence.”*²⁶

But here's the amazing thing. What we see in Jesus, He has secured for us. Why? Well first of all because Jesus became one of us, a human being. That is what's meant by him becoming a little [while] lower than the angels.²⁷ God became a man. He humbled Himself by entering our weak and afflicted estate. *“But whereas the height of exaltation for man is in being made a little lower than the angels, it was for Jesus the depth of his humiliation.”* As Kent Hughes puts it, *“Jesus stooped to reach down to the height of man's glory!”*²⁸

But His humiliation didn't stop with the incarnation. He humbled Himself to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:6-8). This is why He was exalted as the God-man after the resurrection. We read in verse 9 that Jesus was *“crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death...”* What was His path to the crown? The cross!²⁹ But the death He died was not merely for His own exaltation. It was for ours as well. Verse 9 continues, *“[He died] so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”* Who is “everyone” here? Well it's not everyone who has ever existed. He's not saying that Jesus' death saves everyone. That's not what the Bible teaches at all. The writer of Hebrews is no universalist.

When I go to a staff meeting I can ask, *“Is everyone here?”* But I'm not asking, *“Is everyone who exists present and accounted for?”* No. Of course not. I mean everyone on the staff. So who is the writer of Hebrews referring to when he says that Jesus tasted death for *“everyone”*? The next verse tells us. He's referring to the children of God that He is bringing to glory (verse 10). The ones He sanctifies (verse 11).

The ones he calls “brothers” (verse 12). The children that God has given Him (verse 13). You get the idea. As one commentator explains it, “he has in mind everyone without distinction instead of everyone without exception.”³⁰ The immediate context confirms this. But don’t miss that the crown and rule are rewards to Jesus. They’re grace to us. “Jesus is the only human being who reigns over death by virtue of his suffering. The rest of humanity will only share in that victory if they belong to Jesus.”³¹

Because of His perfect life as a man and His tasting death in our place, so that God’s people, by grace and through faith, might be brought to glory (verse 10). What glory? The glory we lost in the Garden. The glory that Psalm 8 celebrates. The glory of God’s original purpose for humanity. The glory that Jesus is crowned with. The glory that He will share with His Church. The glory we now see when we look at Christ. We see Him... (verse 9). And the beauty of it is that we see in Him what we will be. Truly, “in the reign of Jesus, we see the destiny of the human race, the destiny of all those who belong to Jesus.”³² I love the way Hughes puts it, “Christ’s glorification is our foothold in glory.”³³

He is the new and greater Adam. “The first Adam plunged humanity into sin and death; the last Adam was plunged into death” that He might undo the work of the first Adam.³⁴ Jesus is that last Adam. The first man of a new creation (1 Corinthians 15:20). Our Pioneer, who went through it all in advance of us. Our Trailblazer. Our “*forerunner*” (Hebrews 6:20). Our Champion, who engaged in representative combat for us and ended the reign of death. In Him, “death has been dethroned.”³⁵ He has become the victor and death has become His victim.³⁶ “*God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God*” and thereby be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:21; NIV). What we see in Him will happen to His people because He tasted death for us. We will share in His victory and rule. There is so much to say there, but the rest of chapter 2 will be our guide. We will save the stuff about the incarnation and the means of our redemption next week. You won’t want to miss that.

But the author of Hebrew is helping his readers understand that it would be absolutely crazy for them to turn away from Jesus, who offers this hope to them. They will find these things from no other source. Neither will you. So it would be equally foolish for you to turn away from Jesus. He is our only hope in life and death. Hallelujah! What a Savior! Praise the Lord!

Yet, what we see in Christ through the eye of faith, the rest of the world doesn’t recognize. Not yet. We see Him exalted. But His reign has not been revealed in all its fullness yet. Does Christ truly reign now? Absolutely. But His reign is not universally recognized. It’s inaugurated, but not consummated. This is what many theologians refer to as “the already-not yet aspect of the kingdom of God.”³⁷ When Christ returns it will be to reveal the “not yet.” So we have to look forward to His return. We must remember that the things we have been describing—the things that Psalm 8 describes—are already ours in Christ, but not yet fully realized in our experience until the return of Christ.

So what shall we do? Here again, I think John Piper really nails it.

“What then shall we do? Put your faith in the promise of this great future grace—that what you see in Christ today will someday be your portion. Fix your eyes on Christ, not on the pain and futility and frustration and sickness and death of this age. They will not have the last word. Christ has conquered death and all the sin and pain that leads to death. Think on him. Consider him. Look to him. And say to cancer and paralysis and sightless children and airplane-eating Everglades and child-shooting fathers—say to every unsubjected enemy—‘Psalm 8 is my destiny! In Christ Jesus all things will one day be put under my feet, and I will rule with him in glory forever and ever.’ Believe that and say that—in the face of every calamity and every frustration in life. Because it is true. Jesus has made it true.”³⁸

But absolutely no one captures how we are to live realism and hope in this “already-not yet” world, than the Apostle Paul in Romans 8. I’ll let His words ring in our ears as the final word this morning.

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

²⁶ Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. ²⁸ And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:18-39)

Let’s pray...

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul* (PWS; Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 55-56.

² John Black, "How Human Is Jesus?", a sermon preached on November 8, 2009, to First Evangelical Free Church in Wichita, KS, and accessed as of February 4, 2018, at <http://firstfreewichita.org/sermons/sermon/2009-11-08/how-human-is-jesus> .

³ Thomas Schreiner, *Commentary on Hebrews* (Biblical Theology for Christian Proclamation Commentary; Nashville: Holman Reference, 2015), 85. "The world to come" is an expression that has been interpreted in different ways. Donald Guthrie lays out the options nicely: "The Greek expression (*hē oikoumenē hē mellousa*) can be understood in various ways, as for instance (i) of the afterlife, (ii) of the new order inaugurated by Jesus Christ, *i.e.* the fulfillment of the looked for 'age to come' which was now come in the present kingdom of God, or (iii) of the end of the present age." (Donald Guthrie, *Hebrews: An Introduction and Commentary* [TNTC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983], 84). Guthrie admits that there "may be truth in all three," but ultimately leans to the second understanding. I think, however, that the assessment of Richard Phillips is probably best: "'The world to come' is the time when Christ's lordship will be consummated over all, when all the promises and prophecies of blessing are fulfilled in his final reign. In one sense that consummation has already been secured, as Christ now reigns at God's right hand. This is what Jesus emphasized prior to his ascension, as the basis for the Great Commission: 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me' (Matt. 28:18). He is in control of his spiritual kingdom and reigns now over the world, and especially in the lives of those who call him Lord. Here, then, is the situation: Christ is presently reigning over his new kingdom and new humanity, yet at the same time the readers of this epistle, like us, find themselves still subject to the conditions of the old reality. This is the apparent problem, and, as he has done before, the writer of Hebrews approaches it by means of a citation from the Psalms. His use of the Old Testament demonstrates that what is happening now is part of God's predetermined and prerevealed plan for history." Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews* (REC; Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2006), 57.

⁴ D. A. Carson, "As a Man He Bypasses the Angels," a sermon preached on April 23, 2002, and accessed in the *D. A. Carson Sermon Library* (Bellingham, WA: Faithlife, 2016).

⁵ George H. Guthrie, "Hebrews 2:6-8," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007), 944. He adds, "He does not present this quotation as God speaking, of course, because this portion of Scripture is spoken to God—he is the one being addressed." *Ibid.*

⁶ Derek Kidner, *Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary on Books I and II of the Psalms* (London: InterVarsity, 1973), 65–66.

⁷ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 67.

⁸ "The Hebrew noun standing behind the idea of 'praise' has the meaning of 'strength' [as here in the ESV], sometimes interpreted as a 'bulwark' against the psalmist's enemies. That is, the praise of God rising from the lips of children and infants is more powerful than the assaults mustered by enemy forces." C. Hassell Bullock, *Psalms 1-72, Volume 1* (TTC; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2015), 60.

⁹ J. J. Stewart Perowne, *The Book of Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966), 150.

¹⁰ George Carey, *Why I Believe in a Personal God: The Credibility of Faith in a Doubting Culture* (Wheaton: Harold Shaw, 1989), 29; also cited in Bullock, 64.

¹¹ C. Hassell Bullock has an interesting discussion on the ways in which this question is asked on three occasions in the Old Testament; see *Ibid.*, 60.

¹² This probably would have included angelic beings. Cf. 1 Corinthians 6:3, where Paul says that believers will judge the angels. "We may be a little lower than angels, but in principle, in putting everything under, the angels are at best not more than ministering servants to us." Timothy Keller, "Brother, Captain, King," a sermon preached on February 13, 2005, and accessed in *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive* (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

¹³ Boice, 69.

¹⁴ Scott Lindsay, "Hebrews 2:5-9, A Sermon," *Reformed Perspectives Magazine*, Volume 10, Number 11 (2008).

¹⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul* (Wheaton: Crossway, 1998), 58.

¹⁶ John Piper, "Who Rules the World to Come?", a sermon preached on May 19, 1996, to Bethlehem Baptist Church and accessed as of February 4, 2018, at the following website: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/who-rules-the-world-to-come> .

¹⁷ Phillips, 58-59.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 60-61.

¹⁹ Drawn from the NPR article, "Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue Was 2018's 'Designated Survivor'", accessed as of February 3, 2017, at the following page: <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/30/581980695/agriculture-secretary-sonny-perdue-is-2018s-designated-survivor> .

²⁰ "Now, when it was too late, they saw the folly of eating forbidden fruit. They saw the happiness they had fallen from, and the misery they had fallen into. They saw a loving God provoked, his grace and favor forfeited, his likeness and image lost, dominion over the creatures gone. They saw their natures corrupted and depraved... They saw themselves disrobed of all their ornaments and ensigns of honor, degraded from their dignity and disgraced in the highest degree, laid open to the contempt and reproach of heaven and earth, and their own consciences." Matthew Henry, *Commentary on the Whole Bible*, 6 vols. (New York: Fleming H. Revell, n.d.), 1:25–26.

²¹ Phillips, 60.

²² For example, on one occasion Jesus “had entered Jerusalem in triumph on what we call Palm Sunday. While he was in the temple area, healing the blind and lame who came to him, the children who had observed the triumphal entry continued to praise him, crying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David.’ This made the chief priests and teachers of the law indignant. But Jesus replied, referring to Psalm 8, ‘Have you never read, “From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise”?’ (Matt. 21:16). If these leaders of the people had been indignant before, they must have become nearly catatonic now. For by identifying the praise of the children of Jerusalem with Psalm 8, Jesus not only validated their words, showing them to be proper. (He was, indeed, the ‘son of David,’ the Messiah.) He also interpreted their praise as praise not of a mere man, which a mere ‘son of David’ would be, but of God, since the psalm says that God has ordained praise for himself from children’s lips. Jesus also placed the scribes and teachers, who resisted his claims to be the unique Son of God, in the category of ‘the foe and the avenger,’ thereby identifying them as God’s enemies.” Boice, 68.

²³ “Psalm 8,” *ESV Devotional Psalter* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2017).

²⁴ The same psalm is also cited by Jesus (Matthew 21:16) and Paul (1 Corinthians 15:27). Both cite it in ways that show the fulfillment in Christ. While “Son of Man” becomes a messianic title (especially owing to the prophecy of Daniel and the language of Jesus Himself), Psalm 8 was not considered a messianic psalm by the Jews. We can see why the mention of the “son of man” would lend itself to an appropriation to Christ. See Bullock, 61, 66-67; Schreiner, 92; Carson, “As a Man He Bypasses the Angels.”

²⁵ Guthrie, “Hebrews 2:6-8,” 947.

²⁶ Schreiner, 87.

²⁷ The Hebrew is “God” or “gods,” but the word can also be rendered “heavenly beings” (cf. 1 Samuel 28:13). The Septuagint (i.e., the Greek translation of the Old Testament) translates with “angels,” showing the widespread Jewish understanding of the verse. This is the reading that this New Testament writer also adopts. See Bullock, 61.

²⁸ Hughes, 59.

²⁹ Schreiner, 86.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 91; cf. Jerry Bridges and Bob Bevington, *The Great Exchange: My Sin for His Righteousness* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 219-220; John Piper, “For Whom Did Jesus Taste Death?,” a sermon preached on May 26, 1996, to Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis, MN, which could be accessed as of February 4, 2018, at the following website: <https://www.desiringgod.org/messages/for-whom-did-jesus-taste-death>.

³¹ Schreiner, 86.

³² *Ibid.*, 91; “Man is certainly remotely like the ideal humanity portrayed by the psalmist, but Jesus has come into the world to show us what man is like in God’s original purpose and what man can be through God’s effective work.” Raymond Brown, *The Message of Hebrews* (BST; InterVarsity Press, 1984), 57.

³³ Hughes, 59.

³⁴ R. Albert Mohler Jr., *Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary: Exalting Jesus in Hebrews* (Nashville: Holman Reference, 2017), 29.

³⁵ Schreiner, 93.

³⁶ Phillips, 63.

³⁷ Mohler, 29.

³⁸ Piper, “Who Rules the World to Come?”