

# Hebrews 2:5-9 // What is Man?

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     Amen. Amen.

Amen. ...that you care for them.

You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands. You put everything under their feet, all flocks and herds and the animals of the wild, the birds in the sky and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas.

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. The second reading is from the letter to the Hebrews, chapter 2, verses 5 to 9, which is on page 1202.

Page 1202, Hebrews 2, 5. It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking.

[ 1 : 5 6 ]     But there is a place where someone has testified, what is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? You made them a little lower than the angels.

You crowned them with glory and honor and put everything under their feet. 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. But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

This is the word of the Lord. To God. St. Silas, good evening. Great to be with you. Keep Hebrews 2 open.

That'll be helpful. Just as we start this evening, my pastoral heart wants to share this little anecdote that when I was 21, I was attending Central Baptist Church in Dundee on Sunday evenings and we began on Sunday evenings a sermon series in the book of Hebrews and when we finished that series, I was 23.

[ 3 : 1 5 ]     And it was a great year and a half or so that we had in this book and I remember reflecting on it and thinking, I don't think I've ever sat under a sermon series where week by week, the majesty of Jesus has been on display for me.

And that is helpful for us for tonight because I think I speak for the whole staff team at St. Silas when I say that no matter what your week has held, no matter what has been going on for the last few months, no matter what has happened in the last year for you, the answer is a clearer vision of who Jesus is and what He's done for you.

And I can say that with some confidence. In the last fortnight, I've sat with a couple who unexpectedly lost an unborn child. This afternoon, I was with 30 or so people who are gung-ho about planting a church in the east end of Glasgow, two completely different spectrums or ends of the spectrum when it comes to circumstantial joy in the Christian life.

But for both of those groups, the thing that has helped the most is to look at Jesus. And that's important because we're going to spend 25 minutes or so this evening looking at five verses in the Bible.

And it's my prayer and it's my expectation that that is going to be 25 minutes that is really well spent. Let's pray as we come to Hebrews 2, verses 5 to 9.

[ 5 : 07 ] Jesus, Alpha and Omega, our God, the risen Savior, oh, would we be still and behold Him. Father, may that be what we do as you speak to us through Your Word tonight.

We pray that in Jesus' name. Amen. Jonathan has done a masterful job the last couple of weeks of kicking off our time in this great book.

If you were here last week, you'll remember that Jesus trumps angels. And there are all the reasons why Jesus does trump angels. We saw that as we walked through those different Old Testament quotes from Hebrews chapter 1.

and we were left with this challenge, a really helpful challenge, that we are to pay careful attention to Jesus because there is always a risk that we will drift away from Jesus.

[ 6 : 18 ] And so we pay careful attention to Him. That's the warning from the beginning of chapter 2. And our passage for tonight continues on from that warning and reinforces that warning that it would be a tragedy if any one of us in this room tonight drifted away from Jesus.

And so we pay careful attention to Him. Heads up, we're going to get into some weeds in this passage because there are a few in there for us. Then we'll see the big picture of what the writer to the Hebrews is saying in this little passage and then we'll think about what it means for us in Glasgow in 2025.

That isn't my outline but it could be. The proper one is in the service sheet that you were handed. Let's get going. Hebrews 2.1 Who is man?

We're going to think about the tension that there is in Psalm 8 because this is what the writer to the Hebrews sort of invites us in to do. Hebrews 2.5 It's not to angels that He, that is God, has subjected the world to come about which we are speaking.

So we're reflecting again here on some of the stuff that we've been looking at in Hebrews chapter 1 last week. In case you weren't here there's a few things about the world that is coming. We're looking forward to the time when verse 12 of chapter 1 the foundations of the earth and the heavens are rolled up like a robe like a garment they will be changed.

[ 7 : 51 ] Or when God verse 13 has made Jesus' enemies a footstool for His feet. This is the world to come the world that isn't here yet but we are anticipating is on its way.

And Hebrews 2.5 says that the angels are not ruling that world. And to support that statement he quotes from Psalm 8 verse 6 but there is a place where someone has testified what is mankind that you are mindful of them?

A son of man that you care for him? You made them a little lower than the angels you crowned them with glory and honour and put everything under their feet.

So the key reason why the quote is here is to point out that in the world to come mankind will be ruling and the angels won't be but there are some weeds for us to dig out in this little quote.

The first weed does the author to the Hebrews need to do a little bit more research when quoting from the Old Testament because it's a funny way to introduce a quote from Psalm 8 isn't it?

[ 9 : 10 ] There is a place where someone has testified. You know when you're in an exam and you're writing the essay and you've got a quote but you don't know the proper sort of way to reference that quote and you think you know who it came from but you're not quite sure?

Well on the authority of Hebrews 2.6 you can just write there is a place where someone has testified and quote away to your heart's content. When you're reading the Bible and you come across something that is a little bit odd or that jumps out at you as strange not quite what you'd expect it's worth asking some questions about why that's there and in this case why introduce a quote like that?

And it would be worth comparing how the author has done it previously so if you look back through chapter 1 if you just glance your eyes over it you look at verse 5 for to which of the angels did God ever say? Verse 6 again when God brings his firstborn into the world he says verse 7 in speaking of the angels he says verse 8 but about the son he says all the way through Hebrews the writer is consistently really really keen to emphasize that the Old Testament that scripture is the very word of God that it's on his lips and then he gets to Psalm 8 and it's just obviously a very human reflection it would be a bit clunky to attribute it to God directly but the author doesn't want to suggest that it's only a human word by saying David wrote even though David did write it and so it's introduced in this way but he's trying to maintain this theme throughout the book so far and it will continue that scripture is trustworthy because it is on the very lips of Jesus on the very lips of God on the very lips of the

Holy Spirit this is a trustworthy word it's not just a historical document written by some people this is God's revelation to us that's important from this weed Psalm 8 is authoritative it's the sort of thing that you can build your life upon that's the first weed second weed them or him them or him quick show of hands how many people in the room speak more than one language a few of us brilliant those people will know that translation is never an exact science you're always making little judgment calls here and there to translate something as helpfully as you can now my cards on the table the NIV is my favorite Bible translation there are other good ones too if you prefer a different one that's okay we can still be friends right but one of the challenges that translators have is that in modern

English when we use the word man our reflex in modern usage is to consider that a gendered term to associate it with maleness but that wasn't always the case in English or in other languages so man was one way of describing humanity as a whole so if you have a different translation that you're reading from right now your Bible might read something like what is man that you are mindful of him and that's a helpful translation it's got the trade-off that it might confuse you by thinking that it's talking about maleness and it's not because it's talking about humanity as a whole hence why the NIV says mankind but because they translate it mankind they have to have a plural word at the end they have to say them instead of him at the end of the line because it wouldn't be an English sentence to say what is mankind that you are mindful of him you're mixing a plural with a singular on that level you're starting to see this is a bit confusing why this is a weed right the next line is a son of man that you care for him singular now this is not a messianic reference to the son of man those prophecies come later in the

[ 13 : 40 ] Old Testament from Daniel and from Ezekiel it's just a human person in Psalm 8 but there's supposed to be a tension in Psalm 8 between what is man that you are mindful of him human race what is the son of man potentially a human representative that you are mindful of him and then it's ambiguous as you work through Psalm 8 is this referring to mankind as a whole or potentially some representative of the human race who are these promises being made about that's the tension that's the important thing to know from the weed at this point there's a tension in Psalm 8 who are these promises going to be made to third weed from Psalm 8 creation or new creation Psalm 8 as Ines read for us before is so beautiful because it's

David looking up at the night sky and he sees the moon and he sees stars and he sees galaxies and he sees all the vast array of these lights and he stops and he goes God you are so majestic and then he's blown away by the fact that humanity figures in God's estimation at all for God the one who made all of this must be so vast and like humanity is so nothing and he goes when I look at all of that why do you care for people like me but then he says but you do care because you set Adam the first man to be in charge of creation to rule the plants to name the creatures to tend the earth and David goes God surely we as a race are not worthy of this in this creation and then the writer of Hebrews picks up this quote and says well weed one this is

God's word and we stand on every letter of it weed two who is this speaking about humanity as a whole or some representative and weed three if this is true for the creation that we are in now this is also true for the new creation that is to come the world to come that we've been talking about in the last chapter so here is God's world to come and it's not subject to the angels verse 5 they aren't managing it they are under it in some way they're not in charge of it and Psalm 8 mankind is lower than the angels and Psalm 8 how does that work where is mankind are we above are we below who knows what's going on these are the weeds this is

Psalm 8 and this is what the writer of the Hebrews wants to bring you into what's going on here how does Psalm 8 make sense as we think about God's world to come it's a good place to be it's where the writer of the Hebrews wants you to be to be a bit perplexed we're going to spend the rest of our time stepping back and seeing his reflection on Psalm 8 and just prepare yourselves because it's stunning second point for this evening where is man is it top box or bottom box this is the reality that we see verse 8 the quote finishes everything is put under their feet in putting everything under them God left nothing that is not subject to them him mankind yet at present we do not see everything subject to them

God's intention for humanity as the pinnacle of his creation is that they would rule and rule well that they would bring order and beauty to chaos and evil that they would be a people united with each other and united with their God that they would be partners with God in looking after creation nobody thinks more highly of mankind than God does but what do we see as we look at the world around us and we think of mankind at the present we see a vision of humanity in the world around us which is based on the assumption that we are nothing more than slightly more developed animals that you are nothing more than a clump of cells atoms matter it's a view or a perspective called scientific naturalism a vision of the world that there is nothing more than matter in the words of scientific naturalist

[19:16] Carl Sagan the physical universe is all there is all there was and all there ever will be and to give credit to the scientific naturalist that is the reality we see humanity is a hot mess mankind doesn't look like or behave like a race of people with enormous inherent dignity mankind is down the bottom mankind is low mankind is like the animals mankind is not united mankind is not ruling mankind does not reflect God if all we have to make an assessment of humanity is our current experience and our current observations then maybe we do agree with the scientific naturalists it's the reality we see but the reality we see day to day is not all we've got we have the Bible we have revelation from God we have what God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets and the

Bible tells a different story the Bible tells a story where you and the 80 year old woman in Beijing and the 40 year old man in New Delhi and the unborn child in Jakarta and the tech bro billionaire in Silicon Valley and the serial murderer in Moscow all have an inherent dignity because you have been created by God in his image to live for him to rule his world but the story is that we are a fallen people like our father Adam we have sinned and we've fallen short of the glory of God and so the reality we see is one so heavily tainted and blackened by sin that you would never know by looking at our race that we were created with such lofty ambition and yet there are little glimpses when a child is born and every first time mother and father is blown away by this miracle of life you tell them that this is just a bunch of cells in their arms or when the elderly resident in the nursing home who everyone has forgotten about still makes time to walk up to the receptionist of that nursing home and ask her about her family and ask her how she's going and pray for her you tell her that he is just a bunch of cells there are resources that humanity has in our being that suggests that God has breathed life into us selflessness courage love where do they come from well it's a leap of faith to say that they purely come from molecules and matter mankind is a special part of creation a set apart feature of creation but the reality we see is our fallenness at present we do not see everything subject to them we aren't at the top we're at the bottom and yet the promise is that humanity will be at the top so third point how does man ascend how does humanity mankind move from the bottom of that diagram to the top and the answer is the cross of Christ at present we do not see everything subject to them but we do see Jesus the reality we see around us is a broken and a tainted humanity but we do see

Jesus the reality we see around us is sinful and fallen humanity but we do see Jesus we see Jesus on the pages of scripture we see Jesus in his story and so we're told his story by the writer of the Hebrews Jesus who was made lower than the angels for a little while now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone at the first Christmas the eternal son of God took on flesh and he took hold of the name Jesus Saviour and when the eternal son of God entered into our world he was made a little lower than the angels for a little while he became one of us and because he suffered death he was crowned with glory and honour and because he stepped in as the representative human as he is exalted mankind is dragged up with him and he ascends to the position where

God had promised that mankind would be the cross of Christ is the only way for mankind to ascend to the place where God would have us be returning perhaps even surpassing those design blueprints whether you're a Christian or not as you're here tonight it is a deeply human impulse to want to ascend to move upwards in the self help world the concept of leveling up is all the rage at the moment I did a quick look for books on the subject and here's just a sample list of books with that phrase in their title or their subtitle here we go level up get focused stop procrastinating upgrade your life leveling up 12 questions to elevate your personal and professional development level up rise above the hidden forces holding your business back level up your mental toughness boot!

Bring it on 100 plus exercises to boost your resilience determination and grit upgrade the no BS guide to leveling up your life there's a hunger and an acknowledgement in our culture that in our humanity we aren't living as we ought to be that we need to ascend we need to be better if you haven't heard of leveling up perhaps you've come across the glow up glowing up is another self improvement movement it's an ascension through body transformation physical presentation positivity if you're a young woman and you feel awkward about your appearance or you lack self esteem the world may tell you what you need is a glow up spend more time on your appearance let your true self shine and boost your confidence skyward based on that whether you're a

[ 27 : 05 ] Christian or not it is a deeply human impulse to want to ascend to be better to move upwards and here's the thing some of that can be used by a Christian in a healthy way confession time I once read the four hour work week by Tim Ferris which is kind of like an early manuscript for the level up crowd and I read it to see if I could make it work to be a self funded gospel worker unfortunately for the trustees of the church plant I failed so they have to pay me but you can be a Christian and receive some of the ideas in some of this stuff as helpful the thing is what nothing in the self help world can do is ascend humanity you can level up and glow up and still be stuck in the bottom box and yet sometimes we feel ourselves drawn to these things more than we're drawn to

Christ sometimes we can catch ourselves putting more effort and more work and more energy into upgrading ourselves and less and less going into our walk with Christ who truly restores our humanity and I think the reason why we would do that the reason why we would drift from Jesus is because it's more intuitive to think that we ascend by trying to move upwards it just makes sense but it's not the path that Jesus took why did Jesus ascend why is he the only hope for mankind verse nine but we do see Jesus now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death Jesus path to ascension for himself and for the whole human race was to make himself lower than anyone to take on sin to take on guilt to take on shame to take on all of the fallenness and the taintedness and the blackness of mankind to take on all of the reality that we see so that by the grace of

God he might taste death for everyone even me even you it's not an intuitive path you wouldn't write a self-help book about it but if we don't pay careful attention to it Hebrews says we may drift away and drift towards worldly wisdom drift towards things that make a bit more sense at a very superficial level no matter where you're at no matter what the last week has held for you no matter what has been going on in the last couple of months no matter what has happened in the last year the answer is a clearer vision of who Jesus is and what he's done for you because when we see

Jesus clearly we have hope hope that we're not stuck in the muck of the bottom box forever hope that we're not defined by our brokenness and our fallenness but that God's lofty ambition for us might be realized that we might be truly the people who God created us to be clear vision of Jesus is always the answer let's pray heavenly father we thank you so much for Jesus because we know how deeply we need him and father as we're here right now and some of us are very new to things of faith yet to make a decision as to whether

Jesus is our king would you speak to those people so clearly convict them that this is right that you are who you say you are that Jesus has done what he said he has done and may those of us who profess to follow Christ cling onto him so dearly knowing that we have nowhere else to go in this world and may you see us through to the last day we pray in Jesus name amen let's stand and we'll sing our closing songs together holy Savior's blood.

[ 33 : 35 ] Mighty for me who caused his pain, for me who him to death pursued.

A blessing love, how can it be that thou, my God, should side for me.

A blessing love, who can and can it be that thou, my God, should side for me.

This mystery of the immortal dies, who can explore his strange design.

He gave the firstborn serf tries to sound the depths of love divine.

[ 34 : 47 ] This mercy of the immortal, that angel might incredible.

This mercy of the immortal, that angel might incredible.

O Lord, O Lord, O Lord, He let his Father stone above, so free stone and finite his grace.

Empty himself from all but love, and death for heaven's helpless face.

This mercy of the events and free, for all my God, he found on me, his mercy of the events and free, for all my God, he found on me.

[ 36 : 14 ] O Lord, O Lord, O Lord, my embrace and spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's eyes.

Thine I diffused, I quickly pray, I broke the dungeon faint with light, I changed the love, my heart was free, I rose when forth and forth.

And I am