

Man's Destiny

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[0 : 00] Last week we opened the Scriptures in Hebrews, the second chapter.

! We covered the first four verses. Tonight, Lord willing, we're going to cover five verses, so we're really moving right along. The author of Hebrews last week told us not to neglect the salvation being offered by the Lord.

And tonight we pick it up, our study in verse 5, and we could subtitle this portion, including Scripture, destiny lost and destiny found.

Man's destiny has been revealed by God in these words that we're going to look at tonight, beginning in Hebrews 2, verse 5. For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.

It has been testified somewhere, what is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him.

[1 : 24] You made him for a little while lower than the angels. You have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.

Now in putting everything in subjection under his feet. He left nothing outside his feet. At present, we do not see everything in subjection under his feet.

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.

And I want to inject a word there or two. Everyone who believes. We don't hold to universalism. Meaning that if you're human, you're going to heaven. The Bible doesn't teach that. Once again, the writer returns briefly to the subject of angels.

[2 : 29] And by now we know that angels were an important part of Jewish life, and in some respects they were worshipped. And that, of course, is a grave sin. You never worship angels.

This portion of Scripture deals with man's destiny. The author also discusses God's sovereignty in the world to come and the fact that God will not share His sovereignty with anyone, including angels.

This includes not only holy angels, but fallen angels, including the chief fallen angel, Lucifer. And, of course, we know those fallen angels are now known as demons after the fall.

They became demons. When we speak of man's destiny, we come face to face with his current predicament. The fact is that mankind is lost.

And we look around the world and we see that lostness literally is almost total. It would be total except for the fact that God is still calling out a people for His namesake.

[3 : 45] God is still calling out a people that will forever worship His Son. We're going to talk about man's destiny. And interesting, God records the following, for it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come of which we are speaking.

Angels were never meant to rule over this world, not the present world or the world to come. This truth puts into proper perspective the great sin of Lucifer.

He was the highest created being, but decided that He was going to rule over all creation. Many angels fell in with Him to accomplish the rebellion.

We don't know how many hung their star to Lucifer's star. It could be in the billions. It could be in the trillions. We simply do not know.

We do know that it was a mutiny of a cosmic proportion. What is the role of God's holy angels?

Those that did not fall with Lucifer.

[5 : 00] They are servants. They serve God. And one day, they will serve those who are heirs of salvation. And that's the elect of God.

That's the saved. In this verse, the Holy Spirit, the ultimate and inerrant author of the epistle to the Hebrews, uses the word subject, which is used in the Greek language first as a military term. It is the image of soldiers being arranged in a specific formation so they can better serve their commander. It is also used to better administer, in this case, the world.

God is not about to turn over the world to the administration of angels. The administrator will be glorious and worshipped, and that means Jesus.

Now remember, we're talking about the world to come, and not the one we presently find ourselves living in.

[6 : 14] Now the following is an exquisite reality. It's worth the price of admission. There are several Greek words that translate into world in the English language.

One such as cosmos, which shows up in transliteration beginning with the letter K or with the letter C. Cosmos refers to a system.

Another Greek word is aeon, and that is best translated as ages, in the ages to come. But the word used here for world is okomine, and that leads us to this exquisite part I'm talking about.

Okomine refers to the inhabited world. world. And I want to stress something. It is the inhabited world in the future.

It's not talking about the inhabited world today, but one that's coming in the future. Now that's really important to understand. We're talking about the inhabited earth in a world that is yet to come.

[7 : 37] And when we think of this in terms of eschatology, end times, and eschatological models, we know that amillennialism has several adherents.

There are very good men in the past, and many good men alive today that embrace amillennialism. But the question that I want to ask tonight, does that belief system square with Scripture?

Over the years, most members and pastors of this church have believed in premillennialism. We believe that Jesus will return for His church before the millennial reign of Christ.

He'll come back before that thousand-year reign of Christ. We hold that the church will be taken out of this world through the rapture. Both those who have died in Christ and those alive in that day will go to be with the Lord.

We believe for a seven-year period. Why seven? That corresponds to the seven years of tribulation that will be experienced on the earth. Now, there are several passages that talk about this Old and New Testament.

[8 : 50] My favorite is found in the book of Revelation 3. Verse 10. That's that section on the seven churches. He's talking about the church of Philadelphia, the church of brotherly love.

Let me just say in passing, I've been to Philadelphia. It's not. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, that is. But in verse 10 of chapter 3, it says, and Jesus is talking, because you have kept my word about patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to try those who dwell on the earth.

He's going to protect us from that. But what do the Amalindians believe? The letter A that precedes the word millennial means no.

It's the word no. No millennium. I'm kind of of a school of thought. I don't believe in Amalindianism. And when I'm at the dentist and he says say ah, I don't even say ah.

I just say A. In other words, they believe there will be no millennial reign of Christ for 1,000 years as taught in the Old Testament and especially in the book of Revelation chapter 20.

[10 : 16] Now, to be fair, the Amalindians do believe that Christ will return but only to take us home and cast the wicked into hell and then it's all over. Nothing else.

They reject a future for Israel and for the church but does that square with Scripture. Back to our word. It means the inhabited earth in the next world.

Well, what is the next world? Well, it's the millennial reign of Christ. 1,000 years. Hebrews chapter 2 talks about being subjected to the world to come.

And he makes it clear that angels won't have a role in that. Now, are angels presently ruling this world? My answer may shock you but I would have to say yes.

Now, having shocked you, let me shock you even further. The world as we know it is ruled principally by an angel named Lucifer.

[11 : 29] An evil angel. A fallen angel. He's the chief fallen angel that we now know by the name of Satan. Another name he has is the prince of this world and another name he has is the prince of the air.

Further, we know that this world is under unimaginable influence from Satan and the angels that fell with him now called demons. Ephesians teaches us this fact in chapter 6.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in heavenly places. And by the way, that word there, heavenly places, is best translated high places. At present, Satan and demons have a great influence over every government on earth.

[12:48] The only way evil can flourish though is through the permissive will of God. He allows this to happen for a time. The Lord is still sovereign.

He hasn't given that up. And this is still His universe. And we're still His church. Protected from all that. There is a new world coming and it will not be ruled by angels, fallen or otherwise.

It will be ruled by Christ and His followers, His believers. And again, we know this from Hebrews chapter 2, which we'll get to. What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?

You made him for a little while lower than the angels. You've crowned him with glory and honor. Putting everything in subjection under his feet. That, by the way, is a quote from the 8th Psalm written by David, King David.

Many believe that the son of man referenced here concerns Christ. Some, though, believe, no, that's a reference to mankind. Most translations use the word concerned, but the ESV captures the more accurate from the Greek translation.

[14:11] It is a strong word meaning God cares for His people. And that's the church. God cares for His people.

Cares for implies action, whereas concern for can be active or can be merely mental. people. The Lord actively cares for His people, though at times we may not be aware of that and at times we don't give thanks for that.

And we should. We're also told that in speaking of man, verses 7-8, you made Him for a little while lower than the angels.

You have crowned Him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under His feet. The Scriptures tell us that mankind was made for a little while lower than angels.

Believing humanity are not lower than angels spiritually, nor are we loved less than angels by God. We are lower in the sense that we are physical and we have physical limitations.

[15:31] Angels are spirit beings and they have a whole wide range of possibilities. They can do all kinds of things. And you see this more readily in the Old Testament than you do in the New.

Angels are heavenly creatures. We're earthbound. We're earthbound until we die. Then we take off. But angels are heavenly creatures. That places significant limitations on humanity. We are even considered a lower rank order than angels.

But all that's temporary. Every bit of that's just temporary. One day believing men and women will be elevated at least as high as angels if not higher.

And don't be upset if you're a little lower than angels. When Jesus came in the incarnation he was made a little lower than angels. Not for very long. as humans we are confined to the earth.

[16:52] As spirits angels can come to earth at will. They can come down here and visit. They've done so many times. Old and New Testament. Angels have supernatural power.

They have supernatural strength. I remember the angel that killed 185,000 hardened Phoenician warriors with the jawbone of a donkey.

Not much of a weapon. That's what he used. So they have supernatural power, supernatural strength. Holy angels have access to the throne room of God.

We read about that and I love it in the sixth chapter of Isaiah where you had those angels that hovered kind of like celestial helicopters and they engaged in antiphonal singing.

Now you guys in the choir didn't know I knew that word. What's antiphonal? It's like row, row, row your boat. This angel starts out over here praising God and this one picks up and this one and he starts over and it's antiphonal singing.

[18:02] And it's beautiful. Read the sixth chapter. It's lovely. But they have access to the throne room of God.

The only direct communication we have with God existed while Jesus was on earth. While angels are spirit beings were made from dirt.

Dust of the earth and we're going to return to that unless the Lord intervenes and takes us out of here. Consider this fact. after Satan rebelled, he and his followers were cast out of heaven.

After Adam rebelled, every person that would ever live was placed under Adam's curse.

That is why in Adam all die. All die. die. All in the coming new earth, things are going to be radically different.

[19 : 14] God's children are going to inherit the kingdom that will last forever. It's going to be an everlasting kingdom. It is also a kingdom where humans rule along with Christ.

Angels will never rule. We're going to be crowned in Christ. We will receive a crown called a Stephanos.

That means a crown of honor. God made Adam pure and innocent. One day that will be restored. Now in putting everything and subjecting to him, he left nothing outside his control.

Hebrews 2.8 one day man will be given the right to rule over God's creation. God will put that under man's feet. That is quite a destiny for mankind.

But right now our destiny is restricted by sin. At present we do not see yet everything in subjection to him.

[20 : 30] something horribly dramatic happen to man's destiny. We all had a destiny through our original parents.

And it was suddenly and definitively restricted. What restricted it? It was restricted by the sin of Adam and Eve.

Which by the way we refer to as Adam's sin. Here is God's restrictions on Eve. Jesus is actually speaking.

To the woman he said, I will surely multiply your pain and child bearing. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband sin, but he shall rule over you.

Here are God's restrictions on Adam. And by the way, why did I call it Adam's sin? Eve was deceived. Adam chose to sin. And to Adam he said, because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, you shall not eat of it.

[22 : 00] Cursed is the ground because of you. In pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you and you shall eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken for your dust and to dust you shall return.

All that's the third chapter of Genesis. When Adam was created the earth supplied every need that he had. It provided food, provided water, I wrote down it provided shelter, I don't know before the fall if he even needed shelter.

He lived in a perfect environment. When sin entered the human race after Adam and his wife were tempted by Satan, Adam lost his kingdom called paradise, Eden, it even disappeared from the earth.

Satan appropriately referred to as the tempter usurped the crown intended for Adam and his offspring. well Adam woke up one morning and he found himself at the bottom.

[23 : 38] He was at the bottom. He was banished from the garden and now under Satan the earth was no longer user friendly.

Mankind no longer rules the earth. The earth and its various systems are ruled by Satan because for now God allows it.

We read this in John's first epistle 5:19 we know that we are from God and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

This explained why governments are the way they are including ours. Including ours. Much changed when sin was introduced into the human family.

The earth was cursed and man no longer had mastery over it. Man was no longer master of even his own fate much less that of earth's fate.

[24 : 48] Not only was man totally sinful he was a slave to sin. Very frustrating. When sin was introduced the animal kingdom changed.

Originally animals were subservient to man out of affection. Now many animals became subservient out of fear.

Other animals became untamable and man rightly fears them. Last thing I did before I left the house I went out and put corn out for the deer.

About to bankrupt about 25 of them come in and they were out there looking for some left over from last night. I walked out with this big bucket of corn and they all ran off.

And I'm thinking don't you know I'm not going to hurt you? Not going to do that. But they don't know that. They live in fear. Through sin man lost the ability to garden easily.

[26 : 03] I got gardeners in here. I'm a failed gardener. I tried. I mean I brought in a few potatoes one year and lots of potato bugs.

Adam was quite the gardener. But he lost that. Outside of Eden, Adam discovered that producing a crop on which to survive was extremely difficult.

Man was now better able to produce weeds and thorns and other things that were harmful or useless. In a sinful world, man discovered extremes of weather.

There was extreme hot and cold there is to this day. man also discovered there was earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, disease, and war. I remember one day in Oklahoma, true story, I was still a police chief, and we had a tornado, we had a hot streak out in western Oklahoma, we had a cold spell hit the east part of Oklahoma, we had a tremor, an earthquake, and I was being interviewed by channel six on the phone, and I said, this is Oklahoma, we may have a tsunami before the day is over with, you know, maybe Grand Lake will come over, but we have all those things.

I'll tell you something else about the earth, if you've never thought about this, we live in a desolate graveyard, we live in a graveyard, and there are people walking around, as one author that I trust said, that are really zombies, they don't know it, but they're destined to die, every human that lives on this planet, is traveling toward a rendezvous with death, the only exception of that is believers that may be caught up in the rapture, and we don't know when that's going to happen.

[28 : 18] All of this and much more was released when man chose the path of sin instead of obedience to God. And you saw how many reacted to that.

You know, what's the first thing they did? They hid. Why? They were ashamed. Why? They were naked. They didn't realize they were naked until then. They were shamed. So they hid, and then they created a human religion to try to get back in favor with God.

They sewed fig leaves together to hide their shame, and that way they thought they could enter into God's presence. They did a human work to try and enter into God's presence.

I call it fig leaf religion. They created a human religion. And human religion is always man's efforts to reach God and they always fail. And the earth is full of them.

Christ is God reaching down to man. And when he does that, it succeeds. But there's so much we could say about the earth.

[29 : 28] Is it any wonder that the scriptures say the whole creation groans until such time as Christ returns and make things right?

It's groaning. One final point tonight. Man's destiny will one day be recovered by Christ.

Hebrews 2.9 But we see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels. Jesus, 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.

Man receives several curses due to the fall. We've mentioned some of them this evening, not all of them. The ultimate curse of man's lost destiny is death. We know that death is universal because everybody's doing it.

No one has taken a stand, no human said, you know, I'm not going to die. I had a good friend of mine in Dewey, my dad's best friend. Mike knew my dad. It won't surprise you, it'll probably shock everybody.

[30 : 50] And Lee was a health nut. He took vitamins, same age as my dad. He took vitamins every day and he walked everything. And dad said, Lee, why don't you do that? He said, I'm going to live to be 120.

Dad said, why? You're boring now. Does that sound like? And Lee died a couple years ago. But death's universal because everybody's doing it.

But there's some good news. You want to end on a good note? The cross of Christ defeated the curse. Jesus was victorious over the curse.

The kingdom will one day be restored and man will serve with Jesus in the restored kingdom. How will that happen?

How can it happen? Paul tells us in Romans 6 23, for the wages of sin is death. for man to regain his place in the created order as God intended it, the curse must be removed.

[32 : 11] The only way the curse can be removed is for the penalty for sin to be paid in full. Either every man must die or a suitable substitute must take his place.

that's the grandeur of the cross. Romans 6 5 and following, for if we've been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin.

Now if we've died with Christ we believe that we also live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again. Death no longer has dominion over him.

For the death he died, he died to sin once for all, everyone who believes. But the life he lives, he lives to God. So also you must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

[33 : 30] The question to close with this evening is this, have you died with Christ? Have you been put to death with Christ?

Paul addresses this in the book of Galatians chapter 2 verse 20. Christ? I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. when you were admitted into God's family through faith in Christ, a faith provided by God himself, Ephesians 2, 8, and 9, you died with him on the cross.

When that happened, the curse you inherited from Adam was removed. You were crucified with him, you were buried with him, you were raised with him in newness of life.

That's our baptismal service. That's why we immerse. Christ is the one who tasted death for all who would believe.

[34 : 56] That is why he is our perfect Savior, which by the way is where we're going to pick it up next time. Our perfect Savior.

Thank you.