

“Head over the Church”  
Hebrews 2:5-8  
(Preached at Trinity, October 8, 2023)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The author has been stressing the infinite superiority of Jesus. **Chapter 2** opens with the phrase, “because of this.” The writer is making some important application to what he wrote in **Chapter 1**. Namely, if Jesus Christ is infinitely superior to the angels and is seated at the right hand of Majesty on high, how should we respond? What expectation is placed upon us? There is great importance to the question. He is admonishing his readers: “Pay close attention!” “Give earnest heed!”

2. The writer is giving a strong warning:

**Hebrews 2:3 NAU** - "how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

This weighty admonition will be repeated multiple times in different ways.

**Hebrews 10:31 NAU** - "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

3. After giving us his admonishment and warning, he returns to the theme he pressed in Chapter 1 – the superiority of Christ.

As we continue with **Verse 5** we find the fullness of Christ’s reign. He is now reigning with absolute authority. He is now on His throne, and yet His Kingdom hasn’t yet come to its fullness. The writer refers to the “world to come.” He is talking about both sides of eternity. He is talking about the messianic age, the age in which we are now living that will extend into eternity.

Jesus is already reigning.

But His reign hasn’t yet come to its fullness. He is making His enemies His footstool. V.8 – “not yet.”

**Hebrews 1:3 NAU** - "When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,"

This is what the author has been teaching - "concerning which we are speaking."

4. He directs our attention to the Psalter – to **Psalm 8**.

Psalm 8 begins by describing the glory of God in the heavens.

**Psalm 8:1 NAU** - "O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens!"

5. Then he compares these heavenly bodies to man. Even though man is but a speck, God is mindful of him.

**Psalm 8:3-6 NAU** - "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, The moon and the stars, which You have ordained; <sup>4</sup> What is man that You take thought of him, And the son of man that You care for him? <sup>5</sup> Yet You have made him a little lower than God, And You crown him with glory and majesty! <sup>6</sup> You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet,"

- A. There is difference of opinion as to whether this passage is referring to man in general or to Christ. It would be best to see it as both.

1. God has blessed man with His great condescending grace.
2. God created man in greatness.
  - a. God created man in His own image with the ability to reason and to know Him and enjoy Him
  - b. God has given man dominion over creation – great authority.

- 3. But while man is a little lower than the angels in the created order it is also true the man is the highest of God's creation.
  - a. It was man that God sent His Son to redeem. There was no redemption for fallen angels. Christ did not take upon Himself the form of an angel.
  - b. And are not angels sent as ministering spirits to God's redeemed?
  - c. And is there not joy among the angels when a single sinner comes to repentance?
- B. The greatness of man has been exalted in our redemption. In our redemption we have been raised up in glory.
  - 1. We have been adopted and declared to be the children of God and made a part of God's household.
  - 2. We are united to Christ, the Son of God and have become partakers of the Divine nature.
  - 3. We are indwelled with His Spirit – We have become the Temple of God
- 5. Psalm 8 points supremely to Jesus Christ which is the point of **Hebrews 2**.
 

**Hebrews 2:6-7 NAU** - "But one has testified somewhere, saying, "What is man, that Thou rememberest him? Or the son of man, that Thou art concerned about him? <sup>7</sup> "Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, And hast appointed him over the works of Thy hands;"

A. The title, "Son of Man" is particularly messianic. When Jesus used the title for Himself He was declaring Himself to be the Christ.

**Matthew 10:23 NAU** - "But whenever they persecute you in this city, flee to the next; for truly I say to you, you shall not finish *going through* the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man comes."

**Matthew 12:8 NAU** - "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

**Matthew 12:40 NAU** - "for just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

**Matthew 13:41-42 NAU** - "The Son of Man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, <sup>42</sup> and will cast them into the furnace of fire; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

**Matthew 24:44 NAU** - "For this reason you be ready too; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour when you do not think *He will*."

B. What is meant by the phrase, "a little lower than the angels"

This is referring to the incarnation of Christ.

**Philippians 2:6-7 NAU** - "although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men."

C. Even in His incarnation, as He took upon Himself our human condition, He was still infinitely above the angels.

**John 1:14 NAU** - "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

**Hebrews 2:7 NAU** - "Thou hast made him for a little while lower than the angels; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, And hast appointed him over the works of Thy hands;"

**Hebrews 1:5 NAU** - "For to which of the angels did He ever say, "Thou art My Son, Today I have begotten Thee"? And again, "I will be a Father to Him And He shall be a Son to Me"?"

- C. The humiliation of Christ was temporary.

**Hebrews 2:9 NAU** - "But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory

- D. He came and accomplished the redemption of His people and returned to His throne. All things are given over to His dominion.

**Hebrews 2:8 NAU** - "You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him."

- 6. Paul alludes to this in **Ephesians 1** relating it to Christ's dominion over the church.

Turn to Ephesians 1

**Ephesians 1:20-23 NAU** - "which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. <sup>22</sup> And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, <sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

- A. God has given to Jesus dominion over all things. But in Ephesians Paul ties it to the church.

Jesus sits above all and over all – **Verse 21** - "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named"

His dominion is universal – **Verse 22** – "And He put all things in subjection under His feet." But it is demonstrated clearly in the church.

- B. There are two different interpretations held for this:

1. There is the view that Jesus has been given dominion over all things *To* or *FOR* the Church. This view puts the emphasis on the word "gave." Jesus Christ has been exalted as God's gift to the Church. There are many ways that this is true. He sits at the right hand of majesty in the office of Mediator; as Prophet, Priest, and King for the benefit of the church.

2. The other view focuses on the phrase "to the church" or "with reference to the church."

In other words **Verse 22** has an emphasis upon the church under subjection to Christ. We could read it, "And appointed Head over all things with regard to the church."

- C. Grammatically, either can be the proper interpretation. Theologically, either can be the proper interpretation. But the context is speaking of the supremacy of Christ, the authority of Christ, the dominion of Christ over all things. This is the focus in **Hebrews 1—2**. Jesus is infinitely superior to all.

This supremacy must also apply to the church.

Jesus is the Head of the church.

7. This is the focus here.

**Hebrews 2:5 NAU** - "For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking."

This has a high focus upon the reign of Christ. It isn't to angels that God has subjected the Kingdom.

Matthew Henry writes: "The state of the gospel-church, which is here called *the world to come*, is *not subjected to the angels*, but under the special care and direction of the Redeemer himself."<sup>1</sup>

8. One of the seven distinctives of our church is "Christ Centered." This is a declaration of the headship of Christ. Maintaining this distinctive is essential to the existence and survival of our church.

I. We must not forget the supremacy of Christ as the builder and maker of the church

- A. The church finds its existence and fullness in Christ

1. In Verses 22-23 of Eph 1

**Ephesians 1:22-23 NAU** - "And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church,<sup>23</sup> which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

The church finds her fullness in Christ who fills all in all. Christ is all in all to the church.

2. Jesus asked His disciples in **Matthew 16**,

**Matthew 16:15 NAU** - "But who do you say that I am?"

Peter answered:

**Matthew 16:16 NAU** - "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

3. Jesus Christ is the Solid Rock upon whom the church is built, the Sure Foundation, the Corner Stone.

4. The church is founded upon Christ and finds her fullness in Christ. All that the church finds it's substance in Christ.

- B. Jesus keeps and sustains His church

1. Jesus told Peter, "And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."

- a. The picture is of all of the demonic forces rushing out of the gates of hell charging against the church

**William Hendriksen** – This "represents Satan and his legions storming out of hells gates in order to attack and destroy the church.

- b. Christ as the sovereign head of the church guarantees her safety  
"The gates of Hades shall not prevail"

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 2383.

- C. Jesus is also the lifeblood of the church

**John 15:5 NAU** - "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

- 1. Without Christ our church would not exist. Without Christ our church would die.
- 2. Just as the head is essential to the life of the body so Christ is essential to the church.

- II. We also must remember the supremacy of Jesus as the authority over the church

- A. Jesus has been given authority over all creation

- 1. The same power and authority Jesus has over the universe He has over His church. He sits upon His throne as our Lord and King.
- 3. Jesus is a gracious King who rules over us with great compassion and gentleness and infinite love. He is our Shepherd who provides for us and protects us. But make no mistake: He is Lord of all.

He is the Chief Shepherd. All other shepherds are underlings.

- B. As our King we owe Him absolute submission

- 1. Jesus said in **John 14** - "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."
- 2. Jesus declared in the Great Commission

**Matthew 28:18-19 NAU** - "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. <sup>19</sup> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations"

- 3. As our Head, Jesus is the source of our life, our power, and our authority.

### Conclusion:

As our Head Jesus is our source of being as a church. We cannot exist without Him. He has power and authority over us.

- 1. He is worthy of all praise. He is the source of our existence. Our church grows and prospers by His hand. We must pray for His hand of blessing upon our church.
- 2. He is the ruler of our church. We must never embark upon some new program or ministry without seeking His direction. We must never forget that our work is under the authority of Christ.