

The human Son

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Preacher: Andy Meadows

[0 : 01] Today's reading is from Hebrews chapter 2 starting at verse 5 on page 1204 of your church Bibles. And we'll be reading through to chapter 3 verse 1.

Now 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?

You made him a little while lower than the angels, you have crowned him with glory and honour, 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, but we see him for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one origin.

[1 : 16] That is, why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, I will tell of your name to my brothers. In the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise. And again I will put my trust in him.

And again, behold, I and the children God has given me. Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

But because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in the heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and the high priest of our confession.

Thanks, Annie, for reading. Do keep that passage open. There is an outline on the back of the service sheet, and it will be on the screen as well. Phil's prayed, so we're going to begin.

[2 : 40] I'm going to start this morning by saying a word. A word which might make lots of people here angry. And please know that I don't say it lightly. Here's the word.

Christmas. I know, I know. It's October. I know it's October. But in my defence, the wreath-making flies are out. And if you're like our family, you've already opened negotiations with wider family about Christmas plans.

But actually, October is actually a good time to think about Christmas. Not the planning, or maybe, but the significance.

And to do so, because we can think about it before the Christmas fatigue sets in. When we're tired of turkey. When we're tired of the same songs on the radio in the shops.

We're getting tired, perhaps, of the Christmas message itself. And yet it also goes deeper than Christmas. It's possible that we just get tired of Christianity.

[3 : 51] Tired and even bored of the Lord Jesus himself. I've heard it all before. There's no more surprises. Like the safety instructions on the plane we thought about last week.

And if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, maybe everything is new to you. You've been coming for a couple of weeks. Maybe everything is new. Or perhaps you've been coming for a while and just a bit bored.

Hearing the same thing. Why is Jesus' birth a big deal, really? Well, the problem with thinking that way is that tired and bored Christians are sitting ducks.

They're sitting ducks when it comes to drifting away from Jesus. Because we can just stop listening. Think that something better might come along when we're bored.

Or if you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, we won't start listening in the first place. Well, this is the second talk in our series in Hebrews.

[4 : 56] And we began to think last week how the people this letter was written to originally were sitting duck Christians. They were tired. They were tiring of Jesus.

Drifting into sin. The shame of following Jesus. Facing persecution. Drifting into living by sight. Thinking there's a better offer.

Back in Judaism. Or just living in the world's way. They were tiring of Jesus. And in danger of slowly drifting away from the gospel they had heard and come to believe in.

And so the strategy of the author to the Hebrews was to surprise them. Not by telling them new things. But by telling them old things from a new angle.

So he goes through all the key moments. Jesus' pre-existence as the son. That was last week. His birth. His death. His resurrection. Ascension and return.

[5 : 58] His whole journey. The Jesus event, as we might say. Going through the whole journey. To show it means more. All these things are bigger and deeper and more wonderful than they might have realised.

And so in chapter 2 he turns to Christmas. The incarnation of the son of God. And he shows us why this is a bigger deal than we're tempted to think.

And by having this bigger view of Jesus and his birth. His taking on flesh. The prayer is that we'll pay much more careful attention to him.

Perhaps some here for the first time. But for a lot of us. So we don't drift away from this message. So what does the writer want us to understand about Christmas?

Well the first point on the handout. The supreme son became man. To restore humanity. The supreme son became man. To restore humanity.

[7 : 04] The writer begins by taking us back. To the beginning of creation. Have a look at verse 5. Now 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. You made him for a little while lower than the angels.

You have crowned him with glory and honour. Putting everything in subjection under his feet. This is the background to the incarnation on the handout. The background from Psalm 8.

Where King David is reflecting on the story of creation. And we saw this in our growth group. Didn't we? Week 1 of our Bible overview. That in Genesis.

God made humanity in his own image. To reflect his glory. And his rule. Over the world. God it seems. Has a special love for human beings.

[8 : 04] And gave us a special place in his purposes. That the animals don't have. And not even angels have. That is the glory of humanity.

That is where humanity should be. But actually where we are. Is a different story isn't it? And the point the author is trying to make here.

As he goes beyond this psalm. And he speaks. If you look at the second half of verse 8. 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. Now God honoured humanity. By putting everything under their feet.

In Genesis 1. The reality now however. Is very different. Again we saw that in our growth group. Bible overview. That Genesis 1 and 2. Is very closely followed by Genesis 3.

[9 : 01] Where humanity rebelled against God. And now the world is not. Under our control. It feels very much out of our control. Doesn't it? As we look around.

As we see the news. Because in fact. Humanity. We can't even control ourselves. There is now a mismatch. Between what was meant to be.

And what actually is. Perhaps you remember in the news. The Willy Wonka chocolate experience. In Glasgow. Back in February. It was promoted.

As an immersive. And interactive. Family experience. Great promise was made. People paying 35. 40 pounds. A ticket.

For this event. But it ended up being. An abandoned warehouse. With a small bouncy castle. A teenager with face paint on. And each child gets.

[9 : 57] Two jelly beans. And a quarter of cup. Of lemonade. Parents were angry. The police were called. It definitely wasn't.

A world of pure imagination. It was a complete mismatch. Between what was supposed to be. And what it actually became.

Well likewise. With creation. And humanity's role in it. We were made. To rule over creation. Crowned with glory. And honour. Under God. But because of our rebellion.

Against him. We see death. And destruction. And chaos. Everywhere. And it's into this broken world. That the son of God.

Steps in. To restore us. To where we should be. This is the ultimate bailout. His journey comes in stages. He goes down.

[10 : 53] Down again. Before coming up. So firstly. On the journey. The son became. Human. If you look at verse nine. But we see him.

For a little while. Was made lower. Than the angels. Namely Jesus. Crowned with glory. And honour. Because of the suffering. Of death. So that by the grace of God.

He might taste death. For everyone. The key phrase there. Did you spot it? A little while. Made lower. Than the angels. That's the link.

Direct link. Back to Psalm 8. Describing. The description of humanity. With the incarnation. Of Jesus. Jesus. Now we're acclimatized to this.

We think about the Christmas story a lot. But have we pause again to think how shocking it is. That the supreme son.

[11 : 48] That we thought about last week. That he has a divine name. Who has the divine work of creating. The eternal life of God. The exact imprint of his nature.

Took on flesh. Flesh and blood. Became a man. Not just a man. But a baby. This is not a rags to riches story.

But a riches to rag story. In other words. But it goes further. Because the supreme son. Goes down a stage. Again. As he died.

So verse 9. Speaks about Jesus. Facing the suffering of death. Making this an even bigger shock. Not only did the supreme son.

Become human. He stooped even lower. Into death. Each year. Prince William. And his family.

[12 : 45] Kate and the kids. They travel up to the Balmoral Estate. In Scotland. And this non-event. Hits the headlines every year. Because of the way they travel. Not by private jet.

But in economy class. The passengers on their budget flight. Could hardly believe. The royals would stoop so low. As to go economy.

Share their flights. And travel. As they did. Well the far greater headline. Of the Christian faith. Is that Jesus.

The supreme. Eternal royal. Son of God. Started much. Much. Much. Much. Higher. Than the earthly royal family. He's God's king of the universe.

And went to a much lower place. Than economy class. Stooped. So low. To give his life on a cross. Down into death itself.

[13 : 42] It's actually quite mind boggling. When we pause. And think afresh. Yet it's true. So he goes down. He goes down again. And the third stage.

He comes up. He rose. And ascended. Now crowned. With glory. And honor. So verse 9. Speaks of Jesus being crowned. With glory and honor. Again.

A link back to that psalm. That the writer. Points us to. Psalm 8. That he quotes in verse 7. Describing Jesus. As the one who has this rule. That humanity was destined to have.

He is the one who is crowned. With glory and honor. Right now. Now. And this is where psalm 8. Of Hebrews 2. Connects with psalm 110. Of Hebrews 1.

That we saw last week. With the key word. Feet. So last week. We saw that Jesus. Gets the seat. That no other angel. Gets.

[14 : 39] At the right hand of God. Above the angels. And a time was coming. Where enemies. May be a footstool. For his feet. And now. With the eyes of faith.

We see Jesus. Risen from the dead. Enthroned. Somewhere in heaven. There is a physical man. In flesh and blood. Wearing a crown.

Sitting on the throne. A human being. Back where humanity. Is meant to be. So this is actually. A riches to rags to riches story.

And so if we. Are tired. Of Christmas. Tired. The same thing every year. We're tired of the Christian faith. We're tired of the birth of Jesus.

Or bored. If we're tempted to drift away. From him. Because of. Or drifting into sin. Seems so much better. Or the shame of following.

[15 : 34] Jesus. Well. We need to think. We need to see the incarnation of Jesus. Jesus. In its full dress colors. As the moment.

The eternal. Royal. Divine. Supreme. Son of God. Swept down below the angels. God. Showing himself. So determined. To reach the world. That we have undone.

That he became a man. To do it. I don't think. King David. Would have dreamt. That would have happened. The supreme son. Became man. To restore.

Humanity. To put us. Back in our rightful place. And he did it. All for us. The second point then. The supreme son. Became man. To restore humanity.

Bringing many brothers. And sisters. To glory with him. Because God's plan. Is not just have one person. On a throne. But there are many people. On the throne. Crowned with glory and honor.

[16 : 31] Have a look. Verse 10. For it was fitting. That he. For whom. And by whom. All things exist. In bringing many sons. To glory. Should make the founder.

Of their salvation. Perfect. Through suffering. For he who sanctifies. And those who are sanctified. All have one source. That is why. He is not ashamed.

To call them brothers. Now there's lots complicated. In those verses. And the verses. That follow. Though we haven't got time. To do a deep dive. In that. But the overall thrust.

Is clear. The purpose of the incarnation. Of the son. Was not to replace humanity. But to save it. Verse 10.

Bringing many sons. To glory. And that word glory. Hasn't changed. Its definition. Since the verse before. In verse 9. The writer was talking.

[17 : 22] About glory and honor. Humanity's rightful crown. In our place. In the world. In the world. But it turns out. That God's purpose. Not just put one man.

On the throne. But many. That is why. Jesus calls us. Brothers and sisters. It's like the son of God.

Looked into creation. He had made. Seeing humanity. Ruined. And said. They are my brothers. They are my sisters. I'm going to come for them. And so.

When we think about Christmas. And the incarnation. It's. It's not just. Showing God. What's in his box of tricks. It's. It's not God. Just showing us. What he can do.

It's not a cameo. Appearance. In the story of the world. It's an amazing statement. Of God's love. And care for us. That he is mindful of us.

[18 : 20] He didn't give up on humanity. And his plan. So again. If we are tired Christians. If we are bored Christians. Tempted to drift.

Under pressure. Into sin. Into sights. We need to look again. At the extraordinary extent. Of the grace of God. Jesus came not just to save.

But to make us his family. He looked at me. And you. And said. My brother. My sister. Jesus came to bring his people.

To glory in a world. Where. We will share in his reign. In the new heavens. And the new earth. Just as God called us to. Right from the start. That is the big picture. That is what's going on.

That is the plan. Now the writer of the Hebrews. Then walks us through. Some of the logical. Underpinning of that. What needs to happen. For that to be the case. What needs to be conquered.

[19 : 19] From Genesis 3. That needs to be put right. Well he needs to remove. The Genesis 3 obstacles. In the way. Namely death and sin.

So the first obstacle. Jesus brings us to glory. By destroying death. We are acutely aware. That death is the greatest. Enemy of humanity. And the tragedy.

That stalks every loving. Relationship. And with that in mind. Hebrews 2. 14 and 15. Are amazing verses. If you look down. Since therefore.

The children share in. Flesh and blood. He himself. Likewise partook. Of the same things. That through death. He might destroy. The one who has the power. Of death. That is the devil.

And deliver all those. Who fear. Who through fear. Of death. Were subject to lifelong slavery. This describes. The Genesis 3 world. That we live in.

[20 : 17] Since the fall of humanity. A world where we fear death. Not because we're psychologically weak. But we. Because we live in a world. Where death is coming. And not just as a natural process.

But God's judgment. On humanity. And verse 14. Speaks of death. As the devil's weapon. Not that. He's been put in charge of it.

By God. But rather. He can. Kind of like. Demand it. As a righteous punishment. For our sin. And not just as a. And so.

And so we live. In fear. And slavery. And under the shadow. Of death. All the time. Imagine a child. At school. Getting picked on. And a gang of bullies.

Has surrounded him. Suddenly. His older brother. Walks up. He was a lot bigger. And says. Is there a problem? We're family.

[21 : 17] So you'll have to deal with me first. Well the bullies melt away. He's not ashamed to stand by his brother. Well humanity is bullied by Satan.

With the fear of death. But Jesus has become one of the family. And he stands by us. He walks into our world as it were. And says. Is there a problem? Jesus is not ashamed.

To call us brothers and sisters. That is why Jesus had to become human. He stepped into our fight. To break the power of Satan.

And to free us from this fear of death. Not that death is nothing. It's painful and sad. But to free us from this fear. Jesus tasted the death that we deserve.

So we can have the eternal life that he deserves. That's the point. And so Hebrews invites us to see Jesus. Like the sun behind the clouds.

[22 : 16] The one who liberates his brothers and sisters from the fear of death. Removing that obstacle. To the path to glory. In the world to come.

Well linked to this. Is that. Well to remove the obstacle of death. To bring many brothers and sisters to glory. You've got to deal with sin. He does it by dealing with sin.

If you look at verse 17. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect. So that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest.

In the service of God. To make propitiation for the sins of the people. Now to make propitiation. It's a Bible word. It means to turn away God's anger. In the Old Testament.

The high priest offered animal sacrifice. To do that very thing. But they weren't. They were never fully effective. Or designed to be. As Hebrews will point out later in chapter 10.

[23 : 18] When we get to it. But Jesus as our high priest. Made full atonement for sin. Once for all. By offering a sacrifice. And that sacrifice was himself.

Now there's lots more we're going to say. About Jesus being a high priest. As we go through Hebrews. Particularly chapters 4, 5 and 8. So I don't want to preempt. Don't want to write my material for then now.

So. But for now. Now notice. That three times. In this chapter. The writer has told us. Why Jesus became human. And each time.

It has involved his death. So first. Verse 9. He became human. So that he might taste death for everyone. And there restore our glory.

Then verse 14. He became human. So that through his death. He might set us free from the fear of death. And then finally verse 17. He became human.

[24 : 21] To make propitiation. For the sins of the people. Jesus really became a real human being. All to taste death for us.

And to deal with our sin. And in doing that. Through his death and resurrection. And ascension. Back to the father's side. He restores humanity.

And he will bring us with him. To a rightful place of glory. In the world to come. And so chapter 3 verse 1. Is where the writer lands.

Therefore holy brothers. You who share in a heavenly calling. Consider Jesus. The apostle and high priest of our confession.

Consider Jesus. That's what he says. If we are. If we trust in the Lord Jesus. Then we are his brothers and sisters. And with a heavenly calling. We are to fix our eyes on him.

[25 : 21] Pay much closer attention. To what we have heard. Lest we drift away. And if you wouldn't call yourself. A Christian here today. We're delighted you're here. Then this is what is on offer.

To everyone. Restoration to glory. In the world to come. With the Lord. Of the universe. As our brother. With death.

And sin defeated. So in the midst of suffering. And the fear of death. We can consider the incarnate Jesus.

The son who came alongside us. In our pain. And our suffering. As our brother. To bring us through death. To glory in the world to come.

In the midst of temptation. It's easy to feel overwhelmed. By the power of sin. For all of us. I'm sure there are things. We've said and done.

[26 : 14] That haunt us with deep regret. Maybe that thinks. How can. How can God. Welcome me to glory. And with that battle.

Of ongoing sin. Now. How can God. Welcome me in. In those moments. We can consider. The crucified Jesus. Breaking the power.

Of Satan. Dealing with our sin. And the punishment. Of ultimate death. Once for all. And in the midst. Of threat. And shame. It's easy to.

Recoil in fear. If we're having a tough time. For being a Christian. But we can consider. The resurrected Jesus. Who has overcome the grave.

And in the midst of boredom. And tiredness. In the Christian faith. When it's so easy. To drift away. We can consider. The ascended Jesus.

[27 : 12] Who is crowned. With glory. And honor. All to take us with him. In the world to come. All of this. Because of that. Glorious. Christmas.

Truth. A humble birth story. With a simultaneously. Stunning reality. The eternal. Son of God. Coming to earth.

In Jesus Christ. For us. For his brothers. And sisters. He stooped. So low. In order to raise. Us up. And bring us to glory.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father. We give you great thanks. And praise. For the Lord Jesus. Taking on flesh. That he came.

To live. And to die. For us. And to rise again. And now he ascended. At your right hand. Crowned. A glory and honor. All so to. He could take us.

[28 : 06] With him. To the world to come. Please help us. To delight. In the Lord Jesus. And his birth. Please help us. To have a bigger view. Of what is going on. At that first Christmas. Amen.