

“No Angel Died for Your Salvation! Jesus did!”**Hebrews 2: 1-9 (v.9)****Facilitator: Min. Joseph Williams****I. Historical Background:**

The Hebrews were Jews in Palestine whose conversion came by way of the preaching of the Apostles. The first chapters of Acts describe that thousands of Jews came to believe. But soon after their conversions, persecutions started by their unbelieving, hardened compatriots (Judaizers). The Hebrews had become dull of hearing and slothful followed by spiritual decline. The Hebrews had not only become discouraged and weak by the experiences in their Christian faith, but some had thought of turning back to observing the Law of Moses as God’s supreme revelation. This second chapter opens with a warning against the sinful practice of neglecting the message of the Gospel given by Christ, who is far superior to angels, prophets, preachers and teachers as He is the Son of the Most High God. The message of this Gospel is affirmed by the witness of the Apostles and confirmed by God the Father in various miraculous ways including the gifting of the Holy Spirit as proof of the truth of the message and the Sonship of Jesus.

II. Biblical Context:

Genesis, chapter 1:26-27 reads; Then God said, “Let us make man in our **image**, in our **likeness**, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds of the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over the creatures that move along the ground.” So God created man in His own **image**, in the **image** of God he created him; male and female He created them.

When we read this passage, our question must be, how does the writer define the “image” of God? Having the image of God does not say we look like Him in our physical state, but that we as mankind were created with certain attributes that God possesses. The image of God refers to the righteousness, holiness and the knowledge of God. The God of creation created mankind in His likeness to be holy and righteous as He Himself is the perfect depiction of holiness and of righteousness. And scripture lets us know that “no man has seen God

except the Son”, therefore because of the sin of the first man no man has a true knowledge of God without acceptance of and knowledge of the Son, Jesus Christ.

1. **vv. 5-8. *What is the status of Mankind?***

When God created mankind, He created them to rule. God created us to have dominion over the earth. God created us to be kings and queens over all of creation. But due to the sin of the “one” man Adam, that status was removed. Although we were created to be rulers, kings and queens over creation, sin made us slaves. ***But for the Sacrifice of Jesus!***

Jews considered that human beings were inferior to angels. Therefore, they wondered how Jesus Christ could be superior to angels when in fact he was a man. The writer points out that this human status of inferiority to angels is only temporary. God’s original purpose was that human beings should rule over all things, but because of sin they lost this authority and are themselves in need of salvation.

The Lesson: “No Angel died for Your Salvation! Jesus did!”

2. **vv. 9.**

Before looking at this verse in detail we must consider the phrase ‘crowned with glory and honor’ for it helps to determine the meaning of the whole passage, and is regularly misunderstood. Now the temptation, if we ignore the context, is undoubtedly to see it as signifying Christ’s resurrection and exaltation and then to try to fit around it the other phrases. But that is totally to ignore the context. Reference to His exaltation, except in a secondary, inclusive way, is out of place here.

First, we should note that the same words are also cited in verse 7. There they indicate that (as a result of his creation in ‘the image and likeness of ‘God’’, man was ‘crowned with glory and honor’ by being made the earthly lord of creation, so that all creation was subjected to him. This was what pinpointed what man was. He was placed there from the very beginning. He was ‘crowned with glory and honor’, with

authority over all things. It was from this exalted position that he fell, so that creation was no longer subject to him. As fallen man he had become a king without a kingdom, He had been uncrowned as lord of creation.

Secondly, by His life Jesus demonstrated His lordship over creation and His superiority to angels. He was 'with the wild beasts' and angels ministered to Him (Mark 1:13), the evil spirits obeyed Him and were cast out (Mark 1: 25-26), water was turned into wine at His will (John 2:1 -11), the fish moved at His command (Luke 5: 5:-6 Matthew 17:27; John 21:6), the wind and waves obeyed His command (Mark 4:39), the sea provided Him with a pathway through the storm (Mark 6:48), the storm ceased at His presence (Mark 6:51), the young untrained colt walked quietly into Jerusalem through noisy crowds, responsive to His hands (Mark 11:2; Mark 11:7-9), even the fig tree withered at His command (Mark 11:14; Mark 11:20). All this emphasized the restoration of the crowning with glory and honor.

Herein lies the mystery of His suffering. When Jesus came, He was here as lord of creation, all of which obeyed Him. He was declared to be crowned with glory and honor as God's Son. Creation was under His rule. It was only mankind that was in rebellion and opposed His rule. It was mankind that was out of tune with creation, who brought about His sufferings, and the sufferings of all who would follow Him. From the earth came glory, but from mankind came persecution and suffering.

So as Jesus walked the earth as Lord of Creation, crowned with glory and honor, He called mankind to come under the Heavenly Rule of God, to submit to Him just as nature had. But in their refusal and rejection, apart from the few, the need for His sacrificial death was made clear. They were in rebellion against God's purpose in creation, and only through His death on their behalf could a way be made for them back to God.

Jesus was made lower than the angels because of the need for a sacrifice, 'because of the suffering of death', something that was required for mankind's redemption. That is the reason He came as One 'lower than the angels', although in His case, because of Who He is, the

‘making lower’ was a humiliation, not a privilege to rejoice in. The Psalmist in verses 6-7 could proclaim that man had been privileged to be made a little lower than the angels, but for the Son of God that was a humiliation not a privilege, because He was the radiance of the glory of God, the Lord over all. The purpose of it was simply in order that He might be able to fully identify with those He had come to save. So that as the representative for mankind He might suffer death on our behalf and in our place. Christ lowered Himself so that He might be able to become our saving sacrifice and great High Priest. Without lowering Himself to become man this could not have been.

By the grace of God, by the compassion and love of God reaching out through Him to the undeserving, to those who were worthy of nothing. It was all of grace. Who can ever begin to measure the depths and height of that grace? In this was love, not that we loved God but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

In their superior existence angels are not mortal, and will not and cannot die, for they are heavenly beings. No angel could fulfil this requirement to die, even had they been sufficient for it. There was only One who was supreme enough to become lower than the angels and who could do so. So, for Jesus, although He was the radiance of the glory of God and that He is God, being made ‘lower than the angels’ was essential in order that He might be made truly mortal and suffer death. And this was also why He had to receive on earth the ‘crowning with glory and honor’ which was mankind’s right through creation, but had been previously forfeited, constituting Himself as ‘reinstated man’, able to suffer for mankind.

John 3:16 -17 (My personal paraphrase)

God loved me so much that He gave His one and only son, that through my belief in Him I can have eternal life. God did not send His Son into the world to condemn me but He was sent so that I could be saved through Him.