

JESUS, THE SON OF MAN

HUMANITY AND HUMILIATION OF JESUS- PART 1

(HEBREWS 2:5-18)

Pastor Charles R. Biggs

Sermon Title: *“Jesus, the Son of Man”*

The Book of Hebrews

Pastor Charles R. Biggs

Scripture Lesson: Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Philippians 2:5-11

Scripture Text: Hebrews 2:5-9

Theme of Worship Service: Jesus is the humble servant of God and glorious Lord of Heaven and Earth.

Matthew 28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, **“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”**

Isaiah 65:17 "For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind."

Ephesians 1:20-23 ...That he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.** And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

1 Corinthians 15:25-28 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all.

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that **I was made for another world.**" - C.S. Lewis

"Apparently...our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation. And to be at last summoned inside would be both glory and honor beyond all our merits and also the healing of that old ache....At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendors we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumor that it will not always be so. **Someday, God willing, we shall get in.**" – C. S. Lewis

Philippians 3:20-21 But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, **by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.**

Hymns:

1. #455 And Can It Be
2. #239 Who Is This, So Weak and Helpless
3. #247 O Sacred Head Now Wounded

Introduction

Why is there suffering if Jesus is Lord? This is the question the author of Hebrews addresses for the congregation to whom he is writing. Hebrews 2:5-9 can be understood as a Christological *theodicy*, or an inspired answer to the so-called "problem of evil" or "problem of pain and suffering".

"Jesus reigns!" Why is there suffering and death then? History seems just as fallen now as it was before Christ came! There are still sinful actions, and evil people, and divisions even in the church. If Jesus is Lord, why is this, and why should Christians suffer? Why are there still persecutions?

The Christians to whom the author is writing was undergoing intense persecution for their faith, and even having to give up their lives for Jesus. Why was this so if Jesus is Lord of Heaven and Earth?

Hebrews 2:5-9 ⁵ Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or

the son of man, that you care for him? ⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸ 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. ⁹ 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.

First, let's notice together the very sweet words of focus for us in Jesus. In v. 9, the author says: "We see Jesus" (*'blepomen ihsoun'*-this is the literal way it is stated in the Greek language with emphasis on this). The ultimate answer to the problem of pain for believers is that "we see Jesus". We will look at this more throughout the sermon, but notice first that Jesus, the name above all names, is used for the first time in Hebrews.

The author knows that ultimately for the Christian our focus should always be on Christ who suffered for us, who "tasted death" for us, and who He will later teach us was perfected through suffering, and is sympathetic with our suffering (these will be the two themes for the next two parts of this passage, 2:5-18).

Do you see Jesus by faith as you live life in this present world? Do you focus on Jesus as your Lord and your guide? Do you keep your eyes on Him? He is your Captain, your Savior, your Sympathetic High Priest who lives to love you and pray for you!

The pattern in this passage is this: The Son of Man is the humble servant unto death who is also the Exalted Lord of Glory. This is a pattern for His people: we wear the crown of thorns now, but it is a crown, identified with our Lord. One day soon, we will wear the crown of exaltation, honor and glory when we see Him face to face!

Today, let us focus on three things in this passage:

- 1. Eschatological Eras**
- 2. Eschatological Man**
- 3. Eschatological Redemption**

1. Eschatological Eras

I'm using the adjective "eschatological" in the sense of teaching not merely "last things" or certain millennial views, but as in what is God's goal for history. For instance, creation is eschatological in that it points to a greater new creation and world; the creation of man is eschatological in that man points forward to a greater and final man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Using eschatological in this way, I want to stress God's goal for history and how all of history is fulfilled in Jesus Christ. When I say "eschatological" this or that, I want you to think of how is this pointing to God's goal and final revelation at the end of time. The end of God's story, or final goal of God is realized in the person and work of Jesus Christ; this is what I mean by "eschatological" as an adjective.

The author of Hebrews states that Jesus has subjected “the world to come” (v. 6). While the this present world, this present age might have been entrusted to the administration of angels (see Deut. 32:8; cf. Dan. 10:13, 20-21; 12:1; Eph. 6:12), the world to come, the world of new creation, and the full realization of all our hopes and dreams, the world to come that is characterized by bliss in God’s presence, with the absence of sin, death, and all suffering (see Revelation 21-22).

The new world to come is the new world order inaugurated by the enthronement of Christ at the right hand of God (“*He sat down...*” Heb. 1:3, 10:13). The new world or “world to come” is the world of reality that will replace the preceding world of shadows (cf. Heb. 8:5; 10:1). We live now in a world of shadows and types, but it doesn’t make this world unimportant, but it is not God’s end goal. This creation, this present world was created to serve a greater goal, of pointing beyond itself to the fulfillment, the perfect world to come.

The Present World...And the World to Come

Remember that for the author, there are two eschatological eras: this present age, or this present world that is passing away (1 John 2:15-17), and that is under the curse of sin and suffering (Rom. 8:18-25). The age to come or the world to come is the glorious restoration of all things, the absence of all evil and sin and suffering, the place where Christ has been enthroned at God’s right hand, the city whose builder is God, and a Heavenly City (Heb. 11:10, 13-16).

Many of the Israelites of Jesus’ time thought that this present age characterized by sin would be forever passed once Messiah came. Although the age to come, or world to come was inaugurated and intruded into this present age with the resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the present age, or present world order would continue until the glorious return of Christ and the restoration of all things to perfection (see Eph. 1:20-23; Matthew 12:32; Revelation 12:8-12). Later in Hebrews, the author will teach us that in Christ we have the very “powers of the age to come” through the Gospel ministry in the church (Heb. 6:5).

There would be an overlap of the ages between the first and second coming of Jesus; Christians are to live in the wilderness between the full and final redemption accomplished by Jesus, and the full realization of the Promised Land in the world to come. For Christians, we live “between the times” or in “middle earth” :-) or in between the ages, but at the end of the final age, thus the reason why this time is called “the Last Days” (Heb. 1:2).

So the author is reminding the Christians then and us today that Christ has subjected fully the world to come, but we await the full realization of this (Heb. 2:5-8). Christ is truly “very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made, who for us and for our salvation come down from heaven...” (Heb. 1:1-4). Jesus is enthroned and exalted Lord of All (Heb. 1:13; cf. Psalm 2; 110). Yet we do not see this fully accomplished—yet: “At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him” (2:8).

The implications of this reality are many. We should see Jesus as enthroned Lord, and live our lives by faith that this is true. Jesus is Lord of every aspect of our lives. Our priority in

life should be to seek the things that are above, where we in union with our ascended-enthroned Lord are seated, too!! Listen to the Apostle Paul's clear teaching:

Colossians 3:1-4 ^{ESV} *If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*

In our union with Christ, we are raised with Him. This means because our ultimate identity is in Christ, there should be a healthy "other-worldliness" to us as Christians. Our hope is not found in this present age or world. This world is passing away. Even the best things about this world have been designed to focus us on Christ, and the permanent, glorious world that is to come. That does not mean that this world is unimportant, but that it is passing away.

As Christians, our priorities are to "set our minds on things above, not on things here on earth" (Col. 3:2). We have died with Christ, been raised with Him to a glorious new creation, and we are with Him, "hidden with Christ in God". Our hope is in the full realization of this reality when Christ returns!

Right now, we are to live our callings here of whatever nation God has placed us in, but ultimately our main concerns are in heaven. This seeking heavenly things should be balanced with a good healthy doctrine of our callings in this present age, but all that we are working for in an ultimate sense is for "*THY Kingdom come... THY will be done...*" There will be glimpses of beauty and much good in this present world, but they are nothing compared to what God has planned for us—His plans for us are literally "out of this world"!!! (see Jeremiah 29:4-11).

Our Salvation and Hope are Out of this World!

Let us be careful of worldliness and drifting into worldliness and having a greater affection for this world, rather than the world to come (Heb. 2:1-4). We can see the delights and good of this world and make idols out of these things. We should remember that all that is in this world is for God's glory and our enjoyment, but it is to point beyond itself as an end to Christ and our hope of the world to come.

Our mission here as God's people is a spiritual mission, with a spiritual end. We should live with a healthy spiritual-mindedness, knowing that all that we long for here, will only be found there. Listen to the way C. S. Lewis reasoned about this with a quotation from his book *Mere Christianity* and an essay entitled *The Weight of Glory*:

"If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that **I was made for another world**...."

"Apparently...our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real

situation. And to be at last summoned inside would be both glory and honor beyond all our merits and also the healing of that old ache....At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendors we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumor that it will not always be so. **Someday, God willing, we shall get in.**” – C. S. Lewis

As Christians we are made for another world. This helps us when we suffer. The Apostle Paul says that the present sufferings of this world are not worth even comparing with the world to come (Rom. 8:18-25). All of the desires we have to ‘get in’ (as Lewis puts it) are made possible in Christ. Mankind will never fully feel at home here, because this world was created to point beyond itself to another, more permanent, glorious world with Christ at the center! Amen.

Hold on loosely to all that is in this present world! There is a new world coming, that has already dawned (Rom. 13:12).

This is the author’s first point: Christ has subjected the world to come; Christ alone administers this world, while the angels serve the heirs of salvation in this world (see Heb. 1:14; 2:5).

2. Eschatological Man

But still the question: “Why suffering?” First, the author says that it is because we still live in this present age, characterized by sin and suffering and death. But why is this present world like this? Ultimately, because Adam failed as our representative to be faithful to God and to fulfill the creation mandate of subduing this world, and taking dominion as he was called to do.

The author quotes from Psalm 8. Psalm 8 is ultimately about Jesus (see Luke 24:27). The author is quoting the Psalms to show that even in the Old Testament the hope of man taking dominion of the world, was yet a future reality.

Biblical scholar William Lane in his commentary on Hebrews wrote: “There is a profound note of anticipation in the Old Testament teaching about humanity. The words of the psalmist look forward into the future, and that future is inextricably bound up with the person and work of Jesus. His condescension to be made for a brief while ‘lower than the angels’ set in motion a sequence of events in which abasement and humiliation were the necessary prelude to exaltation. His coronation and investiture with priestly glory and splendor provide assurance that the power of sin and death has been nullified and that humanity will yet be led to the full realization of their intended glory. In Jesus the hearers are to find the pledge of their own entrance into the imperial destiny intended by God for them.”

Psalm 8 goes back to Genesis 1:26-28 where man was made in God's image to be God's "glory-replica" or His "vice-regent" over creation, to have dominion on the earth on God's behalf:

Genesis 1:26-28 ²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸ And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Adam failed to do this and sinned against God, being tempted to want too much—much more than God had promised to Him, or should I say much less?! Adam subjected the world to sin and misery, and the whole world has been in this state ever since. Death, suffering, pain, sin and misery characterize this fallen world under God's curse (see Gen. 3:13ff; Ecclesiastes 1-3). This is what the Apostle Paul means in Romans 8:

Romans 8:20-22 ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now.

But Psalm 8 was written to praise God for His greatness in creation. Psalm 8 was written to praise God in keeping His promises. And that one day, man would have dominion and the creation mandate to "have dominion over the earth" would be realized. Notice:

Hebrews 2:6-8 "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? ⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸ 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.

Biblical scholar F. F. Bruce wrote: "God has a predetermined and pre-revealed plan for history..." Psalm 8 is quoted in Hebrews 2:6-8 to demonstrate how it is fulfilled in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus (paraphrase of Prof. Bruce's comments).

What the author of Hebrews is teaching is that it was not to first Adam that this dominion would find its realization, but to the last, or "Eschatos" Adam—it was to the *Eschatological Man*, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Son of Man who would take everlasting dominion over all creation! The prophet Daniel spoke of this:

Daniel 7:13-14 ¹³ I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

The Apostle Paul teaches this in Romans 5:12, 14, 17:

Romans 5:12-17 ¹² Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned... ¹⁴ Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.... ¹⁷ If, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ.

Adam was a type of Christ (Rom. 5:14). Adam, the first man was to point beyond Himself to Eschatological Man, or to the Second, or Final Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ. The implications are that the first Adam was made lower than the angels, but was a replica of a greater king over the earth. The first Adam lost the world, subjecting it to death and sin, but the Second Adam, Jesus, gloriously succeeded!!

How breathtaking for us to behold the incarnation of the Son of God! Behold: the Son of Man! He who was rich beyond all belief became poor, so that we might be inconceivable rich! We who were under God's wrath and exalted in pride against God, humbled Himself to come under God's wrath for us and to exalt us through humility in Him! Jesus took upon Himself our nature to accomplish God's will for us and to crown His people with everlasting glory!

John Owen wrote: "The assumption of our nature into personal union with the Son of God, was an act of mere free, sovereign, and inconceivable grace... He is not crowned with honor and glory merely for Himself, but that He may be a captain of salvation, and bring others unto a participation of His glory."

Jesus has come and taken dominion. The Glorious Son of God has taken our human nature permanently and hypostatically in union with Himself, and accomplished the dominion we were commanded to realized, but failed.

Jesus has fully fulfilled the creation mandate. Jesus has done all obedience that Adam failed to do; Jesus undid what Adam sinfully did against God and against creation. We see this in another place in the Apostle Paul:

1 Corinthians 15:45-50 ⁴⁵ Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. ⁴⁶ But it is not the spiritual that is first

but the natural, and then the spiritual. ⁴⁷ The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. ⁴⁸ As was the man of dust, so also are those who are of the dust, and as is the man of heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. ⁴⁹ Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven.

The plan of God was for Second Adam, or the “second man” to take dominion and fully succeed, the Son of God, the Son of Man, the Son of Adam (Luke 3:23, 38).

We see a glimpse of Christ, the second Adam, taking dominion over the earth in a terse narrative account at the beginning of Mark’s Gospel:

Mark 1:11-15 ¹¹ *And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."* ¹² *The Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness. ¹³ And he was in the wilderness forty days, being tempted by Satan. And he was with the wild animals, and the angels were ministering to him. ¹⁴ Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵ and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

After the Lord announces that Jesus is His true, eschatological Son (v. 11), Jesus goes as our representative, true Son of Man into the wilderness to overcome where Adam failed. In his time in the wilderness he resists the evil one, overcoming Him by God’s grace and Spirit, and he had dominion over the wild animals, while the angels ministered to him. Here we have a picture of the fulfillment of Psalm 8 and the creation mandate of Genesis 1:26-28.

Now what does all this mean? It means as long as this present world of sin and misery remains, Christ’s people will suffer. But we will suffer with Christ, particularly in union with Him.

Christ has come into this present world of sin and misery, united permanently to our human nature. He came to do all that God required in our flesh, and died under the curse of God for sins and transgressions against God. As the Lord of All, and humble servant of the Lord, Christ was crushed by the will of the Father for our transgressions, and by His stripes we are healed (Isaiah 52:13-53:12).

Christ has taken dominion! Christ is exalted Lord and fulfilled God’s will to take dominion where Adam failed. So, as God’s people we live “seeing Jesus” knowing He is Lord, while ministering humbly in this present age.

Christ calls us to have the same mind of humility (Phil. 2:5-11), knowing that exaltation and glory will follow. Christ calls us not to be surprised by sufferings and trials (1 Peter 4:12), but to understand them in light of His work of humiliation, and dependence upon His strength. Christ calls His people to the privilege of suffering with Him (Phil. 1:29).

There is nothing wrong because there is persecution and suffering and pain that remains here. There is no problem of evil, rather, Christ in His humiliation for us has solved the problem and turned evil for us rather than against us. Christ now uses suffering and such evils as this to make us more like him rather than to harden and embitter us.

Christ has wrestled the dragon to the ground and as our Great Captain of Salvation, as one greater than David, He has decisively defeated the Serpent, and all of our Goliaths! But we still live in the wilderness between the ages, in a perilous realm, here in “Middle Earth” (the middle being between the first and second comings of Jesus!). Notice what the Apostle John teaches us in Revelation 12:

***Revelation 12:9-12** ⁹ And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world- he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him. ¹⁰ And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God. ¹¹ And they have conquered him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, for they loved not their lives even unto death. ¹² Therefore, rejoice, O heavens and you who dwell in them! But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come down to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"*

Although the dragon-serpent has been defeated by Jesus Christ, and there is salvation that is gloriously accomplished by our Lord Jesus, we are to rejoice, but also to watch and pray. Why?! Because although the victory is sure, the “devil knows that his time is short!”

The truth is that there is a real “already, not yet” that we must understand in this passage in Hebrews 2:8b: “At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.” Although we don’t see everything “YET” in subjection to Him, Jesus has fully conquered as our Glorious Savior Lord, Captain, and Son of Man! Although we cannot fully see His victory, we see Jesus:

“But we see Jesus...” (emphasis in Greek- 2:9a). Note the excellent King James Translation of this! What does this mean? Jesus has taken dominion, and we keep our eyes on Jesus during our time of suffering and humiliation. We look with eyes of faith, and walk with Him in this wilderness, knowing that He has gone before us.

As He suffered and was exalted, so we will suffer and be exalted- -but He has tasted death, the wrath of God for us—we will never experience the wrath of God because of Jesus- -but we will suffer with Him. We should expect this as Christians in the wilderness.

This means that over-realized eschatological expectations of triumphalistic Christianity here in this world, or rigorous and imbalance forms of “dominion theology” should be reconsidered. All transformationist, triumphalistic, and advances at dominion here must be carefully and humbly

realized through the Lord Jesus Christ. Man is not called to take dominion any longer; Christ has taken dominion, and we have dominion in Him in our union with Him. Christ calls us to live now as humble, suffering-servants in this present world fulfilling our callings faithfully.

We need to be careful to understand that Christ didn't redeem us so that we could merely restore this present age. We as God's people, are not merely trying to "get back to the garden" (that might be Crosby, Stills, and Nash's goal, but not ours!). We must see Jesus and go forward on our spiritual pilgrimage, walking by faith, being surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses!

Christ redeemed us so that we could live as faithful suffering-servants in our callings, witnessing to a spiritual reality, realizing a spiritual mission, with the spiritual means that Christ has given to His Church. This is why in Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus gives us our mission of service:

Matthew 28:18-20 ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Our mission is primarily spiritual in this present world, and we are to minister, to be servants. We are to go and make disciples of all nations...we are to teach them, and know Christ is with us.

“We see Jesus.”

We are exiles and pilgrims and strangers in this present world; this is not our home (Heb. 11:13-16). Let us be wise and careful what we spend our time, prayers, and money trying to change. Let me encourage you from this passage to spend the priority of your time, prayers and money and energies on building the kingdom of Christ, and planting churches!

Notice this in 1 Peter 2 (various verses). Peter calls God's people a holy nation (the only holy nation under God made up of all kinds of nations), he tells us to submit ourselves to governing authorities (reminding us that Christ's kingdom is not of this world), and to do good, witnessing God's power in our changed and transformed lives, and to follow Christ's example of suffering. This is the expectation we should have.

1 Peter 2:9-13, 21: ⁹ But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. ¹¹ Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. ¹² Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and

glorify God on the day of visitation. ¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme.... **1 Peter 2:21** ²¹ *For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.*

“For to this you have been called...” (1 Peter 2:21). In other words, Christ has taken dominion through humiliation and has been exalted, let us now trust in His dominion and work for us, and then follow his example and lead.

I urge you to reconsider some of your thinking if you think you may be imbalanced in your expectations of what you think Christianity can accomplish here, or should accomplish here using power and political means.

Think also of the reality that our human nature is in union with the Second Person of the Triune God and has been taken up into heaven with Him! Think about how much Jesus loves us, and who has lived “in our suffering shoes” and knows us intimately and knows intimately of what we are going through and how much we need Him! The crowing and exaltation of Jesus followed the “sufferings of death”.

3. Eschatological Redemption

Briefly, let me close by reminding us all that salvation has been accomplished fully by Christ. There is nothing more that needs to be done for the salvation of God’s people. All that we needed has been accomplished by our dear Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is Lord, as the Apostle Paul clearly teaches:

^{ESV} 1 Corinthians 15:25 For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For "God has put all things in subjection under his feet." But when it says, "all things are put in subjection," it is plain that he is excepted who put all things in subjection under him.

He reigns now, but has sovereignly chosen that there will be a temporal period for Gospel witness where all of His enemies will not be fully submitted to Him, including the “last enemy” who is death.

Because we live between the times, we keep Jesus in our sight, and “we see Jesus” who was our Savior and Lord, who humbled himself and was exalted for us. We realize that this redemption is our redemption, and this is also a pattern for the way we live our lives in this present world, awaiting the world that is to come!

Let me use an illustration that Oscar Cullman made famous in the early 20th century to help us to realize how our redemption has been fully accomplished but not yet realized.

When the allies decisively defeated the Nazis at Operation Overload, or D-Day in June 1944, there were still many deaths and much horror to go through before the full realization of this final, decisive victory. It would not be until May 1945 of the following year that much of the world would celebrate the victory of V-E Day, or the final surrender of Hitler and the Axis powers (the majority of all deaths of WWII happened between these months, in this brief time period; ghastly!).

Christians live between the decisive victory of Christ over sin, Satan, hell, death and the devil, but there may be much horror we still have to undergo and go through. Our expectations should be prepared to suffer. The devil who has been defeated, nevertheless (like Hitler and co.) seeks to do as much damage as possible before final surrender (see Revelation 12:8-14, particularly verse 17). We may be asked to give up our lives. We in the West need to be careful that we do not think that ease and prosperity are normal.

The New Testament “normal” is suffering with Christ. In the West predominantly, Christians have been in the “driver’s seat” for some time. Has this been all that successful? This is very hard to tell, and extremely hard to estimate finitely. If the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church, then we might humbly re-estimate our influence on the world?!

The last time I checked statistically, Christianity was a minority religion in 87 percent of the world’s countries, and in many places around the world at this very moment, brothers and sisters are being tempted by the evil one to give up their confession; some at this very moment are being tortured for their faith; some are imprisoned. Right now.

Sometimes Jesus answers our prayers for deliverance from evil and persecution in this present world, and sometimes He uses it for our good and His glory. Read Hebrews 11:32-39, a list of those who suffered for their faith and were commended. Notice that sometimes Jesus answers our prayers to be healed, and sometimes He answers our prayers to die and be with Him. Let us trust our Sovereign Lord and King, that whether He heals us from what we are struggling with here, or whether He heals us through death to be with Him, that we could learn to courageously say: “For me, to live is Christ; to die is gain.” Listen to words that bring us courage from the Lord Jesus:

^{ESV} Revelation 2:10-11: Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. ¹¹ He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.’

Here is our hope as believers: “Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted.”

When the world to come fully dawns and the reign and dominion of Jesus Christ is fully realized, the Bible teaches us that God himself will comfort us and wipe away every tear from our eyes—what more could we ask for?! I will close with these dear words:

*^{ESV} **Revelation 21:1-7:** Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ² And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³ And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." ⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment. ⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.*

Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!

Our next two sermons, Lord willing, will be on the "Suffering Savior" (Heb. 2:10-13) and "Sympathetic High Priest" (Heb. 2:14-18).

In Christ's love,

Pastor Biggs