

“CHRIST’S HUMILIATION AND GLORY”

I. Introduction

- A. It is difficult for us to live with the tension that is expressed in these verses.
1. When we hear the Bible say that everything is in subjection to Jesus, we want to see everything in subjection to Jesus.
 2. At the very least, we want to see Christ’s church making a significant mark on the world.
 3. We want to see something glorious.
 4. I think that this is one of the reasons why some evangelical Protestants convert to Roman Catholicism.
 5. The Church of Rome has beautiful cathedrals, colorful vestments, an elaborate calendar, lots of traditions, a past history in which it had extensive cultural influence, and visible unity under the pope.
 6. Viewed from a certain perspective, Rome cuts an impressive figure.
 7. Of course, it doesn’t take much looking to see beneath the facade, but people who want a church that is outwardly impressive tend to wear blinders that hide those things from their view.
 8. The bottom line is that whether we realize it or not, we never even begin to see everything in subjection to Jesus Christ in this present age.
- B. The recipients of the letter to the Hebrews were struggling with this.

1. They were suffering for their faith in Christ.
2. They were beginning to wonder if Christianity was worth it.
3. And in these verses, the writer of this letter helps us to understand the tension between what Scripture teaches us about Christ's dominion and what we see in the world around us.

II. You Put Everything under His Feet

- A. Our text opens by continuing on with the theme of Christ's superiority to angels.
 1. The writer says that "it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come."
 2. Instead, the world to come has been subjected to Jesus.
 3. This phrase 'world to come' refers to the future age when God's saving purposes for the world will be fully realized.
 4. It marks the ushering in of God's kingdom, the day when God will bring all creation into visible subjection to his rule.
 5. Judaism taught that the transition from this present age to the age to come would take place at end of the ages.
 6. But the writer of Hebrews says that this transition has already begun to take place.
 7. As he said back in chapter 1, God has spoken to us by his Son "in these last days."
 8. The end-time kingdom of God has already been inaugurated.
- B. This brings us to verses 6 through 8, where we find a quotation from Psalm 8.

1. In the original context, the psalmist is expressing his wonder at the fact that God has placed the entire creation under the dominion of man.
 2. When you stop and think about it, this really is an astounding fact.
 3. When we take the time to ponder the sheer mass of a mountain, or the depths of the sea, or the beauty of a sunset, or the countless stars in the sky, we are rightly humbled.
 4. We begin to see that we are very small and that the world is a very big place.
 5. Man is so puny in comparison with the vastness of the universe, yet God crowned him with glory and honor by setting him above it all as his appointed representative.
 6. In saying this, the psalmist is reflecting upon Genesis 1, where God's creation of man is the climax of the entire creation account.
 7. As it says in Genesis 1:27-28: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. 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.'"
 8. God made man as the crown of creation, and then he crowned him as the lord over all creation.
- C. The interesting thing about Psalm 8 is the connection that it makes between man's creaturely dominion and God's supreme dominion.
1. God's dominion is emphasized in the line that appears at both the beginning and the end of the psalm: "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!"

2. This is a literary device called an *inclusio*, where a passage is framed by a repeated word or phrase at its beginning and end in order to call attention to a main idea.
 3. The *inclusio* in Psalm 8 tells us that this psalm is about God's majestic dominion being made manifest throughout all the earth.
 4. The references to man's dominion in the body of the psalm fit in with this overarching theme because God's plan was to spread his glorious dominion throughout the earth through man.
 5. Man was to be God's instrument in making God's kingly rule manifest in this world.
- D. By applying Psalm 8 to Jesus, the writer of Hebrews is telling us that the goal for which God created this world will be realized in the new world that God is bringing about in Christ.
1. Jesus came into the world as a man in order that he might be the true fulfillment of our humanity.
 2. He accomplished what Adam failed to accomplish.
 3. Adam's sin resulted in the ruin of humanity and the corruption of this world.
 4. But through Jesus' faithfulness, God is bringing about the restoration of humanity and the coming of God's kingdom into this world.
- E. Four times in these verses, God tells us that everything has been subjected to Jesus.
1. He even states it negatively in verse 8, saying that there is nothing that is outside of Jesus' control.
 2. Clearly, this is a point that God wants to get across to us.

3. He doesn't want us to miss this.
4. Everything, absolutely everything, has been put in subjection to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
5. He is the ruler of all nature.
6. Wherever you look, no matter what you see, you are looking at that over which the Lord Jesus has total dominion.

III. We Do Not Yet See Everything in Subjection to Him

- A. The writer of Hebrews knows that our experience in this world does not line up with this, so he writes, "At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him."
 1. We do not see Jesus reigning in glory when we look at the world today.
 2. If that were the case, the world would hold Jesus in the highest regard and would submit to his rule.
 3. Instead, it seems that more and more often we see the world thumbing its nose at Christ and living as a law unto itself.
 4. We do not see Christ reigning in glory when we look at the church.
 5. If that were the case, the church would enjoy great influence and success.
 6. Instead, the church often appears weak, inconsequential, or culturally compromised.
 7. We do not see Christ reigning in glory when we look at the lives of individual Christians.
 8. If that were the case, Christians would be living victorious and prosperous lives.

9. Instead, Christians struggle with health problems, with persecution, with financial concerns, with depression, with trials and temptations, with spiritual apathy, with worldliness and sin.
 10. It certainly does not look like everything in this world is in subjection to Jesus Christ.
- B. We have to make sense of this if we are going to make it through this life with our faith intact.
1. The way to make sense of it is to understand the significance of the phrase “not yet.”
 2. We do not yet see everything in subjection to Christ, but a day is coming when we will.
 3. At present, Jesus’ dominion over all things is analogous to the veiled majesty of the character Strider in Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*.
 4. Strider was a ranger, a mysterious wanderer who looked like he had been living out in the wilds for who knows how long.
 5. But as it turned out, he was actually the rightful heir to the throne of a great kingdom.
 6. Strider certainly didn’t look like royalty, though we do get glimpses of his true character as the story unfolds.
 7. But when the great battle is finally over near the end of the book, Strider’s kingly glory is unveiled and he claims his throne.
 8. It would be easy for us to look at the lack of evidence for Christ’s reign of glory and become pessimistic about the advance of the gospel.

9. The words “not yet” help us to see why we would be wrong to do that.

IV. We See Him Crowned with Glory and Honor

- A. In verse 9, the writer of Hebrews shows us why we do not see everything in subjection to Christ.
 1. We presently see Jesus crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death.
 2. The key point here is that there is a vital connection between Christ’s suffering and his glory.
 3. Jesus has been crowned with glory and honor “because of the suffering of death.”
 4. His pathway to glory went by way of the cross.
 5. And it is through the proclamation of the message of the cross, a message that is weak and foolish in the eyes of the world, that Christ’s kingdom is advancing in this present age.
- B. Notice that the writer says that Christians are able to see Jesus crowned with glory and honor in this present age.
 1. It is not something that we can see with our eyes, but we can see it by our faith.
 2. Jesus’ kingdom is being made manifest to us as a kingdom of grace, not as a kingdom of glory.
 3. These are not different kingdoms, but two manifestations of the one true kingdom of God.
 4. At present, Jesus’ glory is only seen by those who believe that he suffered “so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”

5. One day, Christ's majestic glory will be revealed to all people.
 6. One day the announcement will ring out, 'The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever' (Rev. 11:15).
 7. But in this present age, Christ's kingly glory can only be seen by those who look to him in faith and receive the grace that God pours out on us because of Christ's sufferings on our behalf.
- C. I want to say something about the phrase "for everyone" at the end of verse 9.
1. This is a verse that is sometimes cited to argue against the doctrine of limited or definite atonement.
 2. Limited atonement is the doctrine that says that Jesus died only for the elect, not for all people.
 3. This is the 'L' in the acronym 'TULIP,' which is often used to summarize the so-called 'Five Points of Calvinism.'
 4. In his masterful work *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, John Owen masterfully refutes the claim that this verse goes against the doctrine of limited atonement. [237-8]
 5. Owen points out that phrases like "for everyone" are often used in Scripture to signify everyone within a particular group and not necessarily everyone in the world.
 6. For example, when Paul says in Colossians 1:28, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ", the word 'everyone' does not refer to every single person in the world but only to those to whom Paul preached.
 7. In the same way, Hebrews 2:9 does not mean that Jesus died for everyone in the world but for everyone he was given to

save, for the elect.

8. Owen also points out that the fact that Jesus tasted death for us means that that bitter cup has passed from us.
9. But this is something that can only be said of the elect.
10. Death has only lost its sting for those who trust in Christ, and the only ones who will do so are the elect.
11. Lastly, Owen points to the surrounding context, noting that the very next verse says that Jesus' death results in his "bringing many sons to glory," a description that verse 13 applies to those whom God has given to Christ, to the elect.

D. This is not just an abstract point of doctrine.

1. We need to ponder the significance of what this verse is saying when it tells us that by God's grace Jesus tasted death for everyone.
2. There is immense comfort for us here.
3. Jesus Christ has tasted death on our behalf.
4. He drank the cup that we deserved to drink, the cup of wrath.
5. And because he drank that cup all the way down to its bitter dregs, we can drink the cup of blessing, the living water that wells up to eternal life.

V. Conclusion

- A. The longer we live in this world, a world that is filled with so many struggles and so many sorrows, the more we long for the day when we will see all things in subjection to Jesus Christ.
- B. And we can rest assured that that day will come.

- C. There is no doubt about it because Jesus has secured it by his faithful life and by his obedient death.
- D. He is already crowned with glory and honor as the rightful heir of all creation.
- E. At present, we can only see this by faith.
- F. But a day is coming when our faith will give way to sight, and we will see him as he is.
- G. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!