THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF MAN

**DATE: 8/14/2013 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 2:5-8**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Hebrews 2:1-4** is a parenthesis in the argument of the writer

At the end of **chapter 1** the writer leaves off his discussion of Jesus being better than the angels …

.. And interjects a Warning in **chapter 2**, **vs. 1-4**

Now in **v. 5** he picks up where he left off in showing that Christ is superior to the angels

- As he resumes the argument, he explains that although angels have the role of being God’s -

*Ministers in the world*

They have not been given the role of being God’s …

*Managers of the world*

- This is a role that has been given to one who is lower than angels

- This is a role that God has given to Man

As the writer declares this role, he gives us a portrait of -

***The Past, Present, and Future of Man***

- He first shows what man will be in the Future

- Then what he has been in the Past

- Finally what he is Presently

**Ill.** An ancient ruler called his prime minister in and said, *“I want you to write for me a history of the world.”* The prime minister summoned his consultants and framed a history of the world, making up five hundred volumes. He presented it to the sultan, saying, *“I have here several hundred donkeys, and several hundred volumes containing the history of the world.”* The emperor looked at the mass of material and remarked, *“Could you not have reduced this amount of material to a readable portion?”* The prime minister thought a minute and then replied, *“Sire, it could be put all in one sentence—'People who have lived, who have suffered, and who have died'”*

- The history of man, from God’s perspective, is more than just living, suffering, and dying

Man has a ***Great Past***, a ***Grievous Present***, but he will have a ***Glorious Future***

Let’s pray and then look at these 3 stages in the history of man according to the writer of Hebrews

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First, we see that -

**I. MAN HAS “A GLORIOUS FUTURE”**

The writer, in discussing men, begins with the **Future**

That may not be where we would have started, but …

He says in **v. 5 –**

***“For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak”***

***“The world to come”*** takes us into the future

- The word ***“world”*** speaks of an *inhabited place*

- The words ***“to come”,*** literally mean *the one which is about to be*

The writer is not talking about an entirely *new world*

Such as the ***“new heaven and earth”*** that John saw in **Revelation 21:1**

But rather this inhabited world and a time when it will be under Divine Rule

Most believe that the writer is talking about the Millennium …

A time when Christ will rule and reign over this world for 1,000 years

As for this ***“world to come”*** the writer tells us that it will not be ruled by angels,

… But instead this assignment has been given to man

When we see man in this role we see it as -

**A. A ‘Lower Role’ for Man**

In **v. 7** the writer states that man has been made -

***“a little lower than the angels”***

The word ***“lower”*** means *less in rank or influence*

The writer is not saying that man is less important to God than angels

Or that man is lower on heaven’s totem pole in God’s Plans and Purposes

The idea is that man by creation has limitations that angels do not

Man is a physical being, whereas angels are spiritual

Angels are heavenly and men are earthly

Man is confined to the earth and to relatively nearby space

Angels, on the other hand, are not confined to the earth

They are able to come to earth at will, and have supernatural power and strength that even sinless man in the garden did not have

Not only that, but man's only direct communion with God has been that which he had with Jesus while He was on earth

Angels have continual access to the throne of God

Angels are spirit beings; man is made out of the dust of the earth

It is in this sense that man is lower than the angels

**A ‘Lower Role’ for Man**

However, the writer then declares -

**B. A ‘Loftier Role’ for Man**

The writer resumes his argument by announcing that ***“the world to come”*** will not be under angelic rule

**v.5 – *“For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come”***

This is a role that will be assigned to you and I

Men by creation have at the present a lower role than the angels

But in ***“the world to come”*** he will have a **Loftier Role**

As the writer continues his argument

He makes clear that one day, redeemed man, will rule in God’s Kingdom on earth

Today it is almost taboo for a Christian to serve in a public office

Or at least announce, or be vocal about, their faith

But during the Millennial Reign of Christ upon earth …

God will put all His people in charge of His kingdom

Man may be lower than the angels

But the angels ***“hath He not put in subjection the world to come”***

He will restore man (redeemed man) back to their original intent

To understand God’s original intention

We continue by noticing that

**MAN** (not only) **HAS “A GLORIOUS FUTURE”**

But also -

**II. MAN HAS “A GREAT PAST”**

The writer declares that man is special to God in **v. 6**

He says - ***“But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou visitest him?”***

The ***“one”*** whom the writer is referring is *David*

The ***“Certain place”*** is **Psalm 8**

When you look at **Psalm 8** you find David contemplating the marvel of God’s creation

As he does, his heart is overwhelmed with the realization that God’s chief concern (among all He created) is man

We read David’s words in **Psalm 8:3-6 …**

David is overwhelmed, that of all God has created,

He is ***“mindful of man”***

The word ***“mindful”*** speaks of how God remembers man

As well, David spoke of how God ***“visitest”*** man

The word ***“visitest”*** means *to go see*

The idea behind the word is much more than just visiting someone to see them

It has the idea of being concerned and caring for someone

It is a visit, designed to benefit the one who is visited

For example, the word is used in **Luke 1:68** where we read,

***“Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people”***

God visited this earth in Jesus Christ for the purpose of redeeming man

David was overwhelmed with the thought of how much God cared for us

In this vast universe God created, that which He cared about the most, was man

The unique place that man held in the heart of God is seen in that God gave man ***“dominion over the works of thy hands* and *put all things under his feet”***

It is this role that the writer of Hebrews is thinking of when he quotes David

It is a role that reminds us of The Great Past of man

The writer looks at Man’s Great Past and speaks of -

**A. Man’s ‘Glorious Adornment’**

In **v. 7** the writer states, ***“Thou crownedst him with glory and honour”***

The word ***“crownedst”*** means *to adorn with an honorary wreath*

The word used is *stephanos* which was a crown of honor

Of all creation, God adorned man with a ***“glory and honour”*** that He gave to no other part of His creation

**I Corinthians 11:7** says that Man is ***“the image and glory of God”***

The Life of Man has Honor, in that, it is Precious and Bears the Image of God

Of all that God created, man is the only part that it is said that -

**Genesis 1:27 - *“… God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them”***

There was a Glory about all of Creation

For it was a Reflection of the Glory and Greatness of its Creator …

But only man was made in the Creator’s Image

In this; man was Crowned with Glory and Honor

**Man’s ‘Glorious Adornment’**

The writer also speaks of -

**B. Man’s ‘Great Appointment’**

He also says in **v. 7** that God ***“didst set him over the works of thy hands”***

As the Crown of God’s Creation,

Man was given a exalted role over all God had created

God set ***“him over”*** all that He had created

He states in **v. 8**, ***“Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet”***

Again we see this great appointment declared in **Genesis 1:26 -**

***“And 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 fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth”***

The Hebrew word ***“dominion”*** means *to tread down* and has the idea of *subjugation*

God put man, the Glory and Honor of His creation, over all He had created

The word ***“set”*** in **v. 7** speaks of being *appointed*

Man was *appointed* by God to Rule and Reign over His creation

All things were put in ***“subjection under his feet”***

All of God’s creation was subordinate to man

As **v. 8** states, ***“For in that He put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him”***

In Man’s Great Past we see that God’s original intention was for man to rule

Man was a divinely appointed king over creation

The Glory and Honor of God’s Creation …

… was made to Rule and Reign

**MAN** **HAS “A GLORIOUS FUTURE”**

**MAN HAS “A GREAT PAST”**

However, when we look at man in the **Present**

We find that he is anything, but what he was created to be

The writer explains what has happened by speaking of how -

**III. MAN HAS “A GREVIOUS PRESENT”**

The final words of **v. 8** describe how …

Something has happened that drastically changed man from God’s original intention

We read, ***“But now we see not yet all things put under him”***

When you look at man in the **Present** …

There is an obvious change that has occurred from what man was in the beginning

The 4 words - ***“But now…not yet”*** are a summary of Genesis 3

When we look at **Genesis 3** we find what changed man’s condition on earth

**A. The ‘Entrance’ of Sin**

The Bible says in **Romans 5:12 –**

***“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:”***

The change was due to the entrance of sin into the world

God placed man over all His creation, giving him dominion over all things

However, there was one single restriction in **Gen. 2**

**Vs. 16, 17 - *“And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: …***

***…But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die”***

In **Genesis 3** we see man’s disobedience to God’s command,

And in that act of disobedience, ***“sin entered the world”***

**The ‘Entrance’ of Sin**

**B. The ‘Effects’ of Sin**

Whereas, man had served as a king over God’s creation,

When man sin he forfeited this privilege

We read that immediately there was a change made in man’s condition on earth –

**Genesis 3:16 -19 …**

Sin cost man what he originally had

As a result of the Fall, man became the loser in every way imaginable—intellectually, psychologically, morally, physically, emotionally, spiritually

In taking fruit from the tree, Adam and Eve thought they would become like God

Instead, they became less than what they were

When we look at man in the Present, we see that man is living far beneath God’s original intention

Man was meant to have dominion over everything but he doesn’t

He is a creature who is …

- Frustrated by his Circumstances

- Defeated by his Temptations

- Surrounded by his Weakness

- He should be Free, but he is Bound

- He should be a King, but he is a Slave

**CONCLUSION**

In that short phrase the writer of Hebrews is describing the Grievous Present of Man

But as we have seen, he began this section by speaking of the Glorious Future of Man

What man was, has changed

But, what man is, will change

There will come a day when God will restore man (redeemed man) to His original intent

What about God's intention?

Will man's alleged significance ever be achieved?

The answer is a resounding "Yes!"

I end where the writer of Hebrews started

Things are not what they should be for man …

But thank God they are not what they are going to be

What changes things as they are?

I close with the opening words of the Scripture in our next study

They explain the change –

**v. 9 - *“But we see Jesus”***

**MAN** **HAS “A GLORIOUS FUTURE”**

**MAN HAS “A GREAT PAST”**

**MAN HAS “A GRIEVOUS” PRESENT**