

“A Mission Into Death”

Hebrews 2:9-17

August 20, 2023

Hebrews 2:9-17 *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.*

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. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹² saying,

“I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”

¹³ And again, “I will put my trust in him.”

And again, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 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.

v. 9 ... “But we see him” ...What does humanity see when it sees “Jesus”?

Jesus! What are you doing here?!?

— When You Take on the Title “Savior of the World”— You Have to be able to Touch the Really Big Stuff! ...The really Big Stuff in the Human Drama is— Death, the devil, & propitiation!

Jesus ...On a Mission

Hebrews 2:9 *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.*

“For a little while, lower than the angels” — This is the Incarnation!

- There is Something about Jesus’ Mission that Requires a certain role/posture
 - **Heb 2:16-17** *For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 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.*
- “Lower than” ...the mission of Jesus involved humbling Himself in order for something greater to take place Through Him and For us!
- The Beneficiaries of this Mission — **the descendants of Abraham, NOT the angels!**
 - v. 16-17
 - **There is no redemption for the angels!**

v. 14-15, 17-18 *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, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ...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.*

- “Death” and the “Devil” — Are to be DEFEATED and DESTROYED
- “Propitiation” — “God is to be SATISFIED” (next week)

Death—the Devil—FEAR

v. 14-15 *that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

...Death is presented as an ever-present, lurking, shadowy character in the human drama! Hebrews firmly recognizes this as real and impacting!

What is “Death”? ...Why does it cast such a long “shadow” (as described in this verse)?

- Death in the Scriptures

- We first meet Death in Genesis 3 (although he is introduced as a concept in Gen 2)

Gen 2:15-17 *The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.¹⁶ And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “You may surely eat of every tree of the garden,¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.”*

- **Death is introduced as the by-product of man's disobedience & rebellion.**

Rom 5:12 *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—*

...Death is an INHERITED Problem! ...Death touches Everyone & Everything! ...Our Interaction & Exposure to Death is Unavoidable!

- **Death (in its essence) is a "SEPARATION"**

- Death is “Spiritual Before it is Natural”

Ephesians 2:1-2 *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience—*

1 John 3:14 *We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.*

- Death is also a Physical, Natural and Experiential Certainty! ...Death is a ‘destroyer’ and a ‘thief’ and a ‘disorientating’ force! ...AND We Were Not “Wired” for Death!

“Genesis 1 and 2 show us humankind put by God into a world without death or suffering. The evil we see today was not part of God’s original design. It was not God’s intent for human life. That means that ultimately, even a peaceful death at the age of ninety years old is NOT the way things were meant to be. Those of us who sense the ‘wrongness’ of death—in any form—are correct. ...we were not meant for mortality, for the loss of love, or for the triumph of darkness.” **Timothy Keller**, “Walking with God Through Pain and Suffering”, p. 113

"What is grief? ...Grief is the inward desolation that follows the losing of something or someone we loved—a child, a relative, an actual or anticipated life partner, a pet, a job, one's home, one's hopes, one's health, or whatever. ...Loved is the key word here. We lavish care and affection on what we love and those whom we love, and when we lose the beloved, the shock, the hurt, the sense of being hollowed out and crushed, the haunting, taunting memory of better days, the feeling of unreality and weakness and hopelessness, and the lack of power to think and plan for the new situation can be devastating." **J.I. Packer**, "A Grief Sanctified", p. 11

...Grief at the loss of a loved one is as old as the human race. Everyone who loves will experience it sooner or later, and the greater the love the greater the grief when the time of loss arrives. ... As the enjoyment of another's love invigorates one inside, so the blow of losing someone near and dear drains strength from both mind and body for months and perhaps years. And if the bereavement was unanticipated and not prepared for, grief hits harder and hurts more. ...Grief is regularly more draining and harrowing than we thought it could be." **J.I. Packer**, p. 159

Death contains elements of “Separation” ... “Disruption & Disorientation” ... “Loss” ... “Ending/Finality” —We are “haunted” and “stalked” by this character! ... That threatens to change and end the things that bring us security, joy, love, affection, purposeful activity, pleasurable connections, meaningful sharing!

“ I remember when we moved from our first house to the house we live in now. The facts were that we were moving to a nicer home in a better area, closer to friends and fellowship. The day we closed on the sale, I took one last walk through the now empty house — the house, where all my kids had been born, and where we had learned how to be a family. I couldn’t stop crying. I wasn’t losing my children — they were moving with me — but I was losing part of my life just the same. It was a part I’d never get back, and I was grieving its loss. To this day when I drive by there, I tear up. Life is filled with many small and monumental “grievances.” These are but a reflection of the great end irreclaimable loss we know as death.” **Andy Farmer**, “Real Peace”, p. 97

THE DEVIL (and the “Power of Death”)

...This passage reveals an unholy trinity between Death-the Devil-Fear ...that visits our life experience in a “lifelong way”!! — Our “events” and “moments” and “relationships” and “treasured things” (hopes, dreams, goals, possessions)—Cannot escape the shadowy presence of VULNERABILITY!

...The Devil Never Misses an Opportunity to “LEVERAGE FEAR” in our lives!—and this verse reveals why!
...Because Fear is ENSLAVING and Controlling!

— What is the “Fear of Death”?

...It is The Fear of losing some aspect of “LIFE” that we are looking to, hoping for, being meaningfully strengthened by or experiencing!

"What is grief? ...Grief is the inward desolation that follows the losing of something or someone we loved ...Loved is the key word here. We lavish care and affection on what we love and those whom we love, and when we lose the beloved, the shock, the hurt, the sense of being hollowed out and crushed, the haunting, taunting memory of better days, the feeling of unreality and weakness and hopelessness, and the lack of power to think and plan for the new situation can be devastating. ...The idea, sometimes voiced, that because Christians know death to be for believers the gate of glory, they will therefore not grieve at times of bereavement is inhuman nonsense." **J.I. Packer**, "A Grief Sanctified", p. 11, 12

V. 14-15 *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, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

...Jesus was on a mission to “destroy” death, the devil and “deliver” us from death’s shadow!

...How does He “destroy & deliver” us?

- **He does not do that by eliminating our future experience of physical death**
- **He does not overcome death through the gift of HEALING ...**

...Then How does He Overcome Death and it’s Shadowy Threat!?

- **He overcomes it by “inserting something greater” —He adds another “More MASSIVE” object that exerts its own ‘Gravitational Force’ that is Stronger & More Significant Than Death and its Dark Partner ‘Fear’!!**

(1) His PRESENCE ... (2) a New REALITY

(1) His Presence!

Psalms 23:4 *Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*

John 16:32-33 *Behold, the hour is coming, indeed it has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home, and will leave me alone. Yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me. ³³ I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*

Matthew 28:20 *And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

Psalms 73:28 *But as for me, the nearness of God is my good;
I have made the Lord GOD my refuge,
That I may tell of all Your works. (NASB)*

NOTE: This is NOT the Subtraction of Death—it is the ADDITION of Something More Powerful ...the PROMISE of His Nearness!

(2) A New Heaven & New Earth!

Revelation 21:1-4 *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."*

...This world of "deliverance" must be understood in THIS light! ...Deliverance from death doesn't mean death no longer exists in our world nor does it mean we won't be powerfully tempted to FEAR!

"The answer to grief isn't simply the eradication of death. It is the personal care and comfort of God. He will wipe away your tears--your grief will be a former thing. Grief will pass away, never to return. ...Where does grief meet its final end? The New Jerusalem. The city of eternal peace, Where the Prince of Peace makes all things new. ...If you grieve, this glimpse of the city of eternal peace was meant for you to ponder, to tuck away in your heart. It is coming and you can look forward to it. And the Prince of Peace will comfort you with his peace." **Andy Farmer**, "Real Peace", p. 108