



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 2:10

“Populating Heaven”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we are again thankful to Thee, that we have the privilege of the study this hour. We thank Thee for the theme the greatness of the Son of God and the glories of the saving work which he has accomplished and the glories of the saving work in which he is engaged at this very moment as our great High Priest. We thank Thee for this author who felt the burden to give us an epistle in which the ministry of the high priest is underlined and emphasized; for as we look at the other parts of the New Testament, it certainly was a needed emphasis. We are thankful for him, for his concern for the enlightenment that Thou didst give him, and for the Holy Spirit who has used him to be a blessing to the Christian church and to us. We thank Thee for the word of God. We do not want to ever forget that it comes from our Triune God in heaven. And, therefore, it is that word with which we have to do, as this author tells us later on in this epistle. We ask, Lord, that Thou will be with us as we consider the text before us this evening.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[Message] Tonight, we are looking at just one verse but it's one of the great verses of the earlier part of this epistle. It's Hebrews chapter 2 in verse 10, where the author

writes, “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

What we learn when we read the Bible is that the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ is not that of a solitary, isolated individual, but of a divinely appointed mediator and representative for others, and, as our author puts it in this text, the “captain” of their salvation. In Him, God speaks, for we are not going to forget that text in verse 2 of the first chapter, when he says, “As in these last days spoken to us in such a person as a Son.” In other words, the author’s theology as the theology of the Apostle Paul is that Jesus Christ acted, of course, for himself, carrying out the ministry committed into his hands, but that ministry was ministry done for others who are associated with him.

Paul’s great phrase is, “In Him,” and he varies that a bit, occasionally he will say, “In whom” “In Him,” and so on. But the idea of representation, the idea of mediation is found in the New Testament in many, many places, emphasized by our author and emphasized by the Apostle Paul. The Lord Jesus is the Captain of their salvation.

Now, we are familiar, of course, with representation. Many years ago, when I used to work, when I was in the insurance business, one of the first things that I was told by my father’s partner was, “Be careful in committing the company in conversation to any risk.” They think of any kind of fire insurance policy as a risk. That was the term that they used. If we wrote a five thousand or a fifty thousand or a five hundred thousand dollar policy, it is called in insurance language, a risk. “Be careful not to commit the company, without proper investigation.” That is, inspection when necessary and any other things that have to do with making a proper risk because an agent could bind, they were called binding, when you did make such a commitment, it was a binding even though the man had no policy, we were liable. He had insurance the moment you said to him, “You are insured. We’ll write your policy for you.” So binding committed the

company to the individual. So the idea of a person acting for others is evidenced in a simple transaction like that.

Augustine said many years ago, something like this, “The entire moral and spiritual history of the world revolves around two people, Adam and Christ. All are in Adam and all have fallen. Those in Christ experience eternal salvation. So that Adam is a head of a people, and Christ is the head of a people; Adam, the head of all, Christ the head of the elect.”

Now, we have this illustrated in the New Testament in a number of places, too. In my reading, I know you want to know where I am, I’m in 1 Chronicles now. But in my reading when I was reading again through David and the history of David, one of the greatest of all of the events, the event that we all know about is David and Goliath. And if you’ll remember, the challenge of David and Goliath was to David and to the Israelites, you send out your champion, I will be the champion of the Philistines and whoever wins, wins for those that are represented by him. So the idea of representation is plainly in the word of God and, particularly, in that incident David and Goliath because David is the great Old Testament illustration of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the son of David. So then the idea of representation, the idea of a mediator, acting for others, is found all through Scripture, and it is true to our life as well.

When I was studying at the seminary, I’ve used this illustration before and some of you may have heard it, but some of you are old enough to have forgotten it. When I first came to Dallas Seminary, I had begun to collect books in my library. And so one of the things that I like to do is to go into the library because I lived only a hundred yards from it and spend time walking up and down in the midst of the stacks and looking at the books in the library. And one night, when I was in the library, I picked up a book, which was a gift from H. A. Ironside to the Chafer Library. And so I opened it up and was thumbing through it a bit, and I saw a few markings on the side of one of the pages, so I stopped to read the page. And, in it there was a reference to the “last man” and the

“second Adam.” And H. A. Ironside had written in the margin with a pencil mark out to the margin, “No. He is the last Adam and the second Man.” Not the second Adam and the last man, but he is the last Adam and the second Man. He’s the second Man because there are other men who will, of course, be related to the Lord God. He’s the last Adam, however, because if he had failed, there was no other representative man who stood over against Adam the first. So “last Adam” not “second Adam.”

Now, the hymn writers, who are going to get to heaven so as by fire, because their theology is not always the theology of the word of God, have a stanza in one of the hymns that you sometimes sing, “O loving wisdom of our God, when all was sin and shame, a second Adam, to the fight and to the rescue came.” Last Adam would have been better. Of course, he is the second, but he’s also the last because there is no other Adam to come.

Well, we’ve been saying that the author is demonstrating that Jesus Christ is the flower of genuine Judaism. He’s God’s final word, superior to angels, superior to the leaders of the Old Testament age, which is what the angels could be called. He said, in chapter 2 in verse 2, “For if the words spoken through angels prove steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward.” The angels were the mediators of the old covenant, the Mosaic Covenant, and so our Lord is the divine Son of God, the Lord, the Creator and God. All of these terms are used in the first chapter. We spent a lot of time on those verses, as you know, and pointed out that in the use of Old Testament Scripture, this author makes the claim that Jesus is, and may be, called God, he is called Yahweh, he is called creator, and he is called Son of Man.

Now, the Son of Man reference is a reference here in verse 5 through verse 8 that just preceded, probably a reference to man, Adam, not the last Adam, there but, nevertheless, Adam, as a type or an illustration of the last Adam who is to come. So he’s been demonstrating that the Lord is greater than the angels because he is, essentially, a divine person. But now, in the 2nd chapter, he’s attempting to show that the Lord is

greater than the angels because he’s the perfect man; he’s the man to whom all authority over the universe is committed. And also he is the man to whom the right to the Kingdom of God upon the earth is committed. So he is the flower of genuine Judaism, he’s the divine Son of God, but he’s also Son of Man and he realizes man’s lofty destiny as king of the earth. In that quotation from Psalm 8, “You have made him a little lower than the angels, You have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” We made the point that that was, first of all, a reference to Adam, to man, but the Lord Jesus as the second Man has come since the first man failed, and has regained, by the work on Calvary’s Cross that which God intends that man shall have authority over the creation.

So we’re in the section of chapter 2 in which the author is making the point, he’s man, he’s ideal man, he’s perfect man, he’s the one to whom the Messianic promises ultimately pertain. Now, after having given the citation from Psalm 8, and made the point, “But we see Jesus who is made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.” The author now will go on to expatiate on the work of the Lord Jesus as the great saving, mediatorial man. Verse 10 begins with “For.” Now, we’ve been talking about these conjunctions and it’s important for you to pay attention to them. “For,” this is related to the preceding verse, particularly, “we see Jesus, who is made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for everyone. For, it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

I think, it’s very interesting that he uses the term, “fitting.” Proper, it could be rendered. It’s proper. What does that mean? Well, one of the things it means is someone might say, “The son of man? Suffering? Why that would not be worthy of one who is Lord, God, Yahweh. Why suffering?” As a matter of fact, we know from Paul’s language

that the idea of a suffering messiah was a stumbling block to the Jewish people. In 1 Corinthians chapter 1 in verse 23, the apostle writes, “But we preach Christ crucified to the Jews, a stumbling block and to the Greeks, foolishness.”

We know from reading the Bible that Judaism had a very difficult time with a suffering messiah. As they read the Old Testament, one of the ways by which they sought to handle the texts that deal with suffering, as well as the texts that deal with glory, is to suggest that there were really two messiahs. That has never been satisfactory exegetically, but that indicates and illustrates the difficulty that they had with the idea of a suffering messiah. They thought of the messiah, as a mighty being who would come and establish the kingdom of God upon the earth and restore Israel to headship over the nations and that’s as far as it seemed to go, for the majority. Of course, there were others who understood the idea of a suffering messiah, but they were in the great minority.

So you can understand how our author dealing with professing Jewish believers, who are in danger of turning back, would want to underline the necessity of the suffering of our Lord. It’s fitting for him. What does he mean when he says, “It’s fitting”? Well, he means, it’s consistent with God’s character. It’s not inconsistent to have a suffering messiah. It’s consistent. That’s what that particular Greek word suggests. Consistent with God’s character, as well as suitable for our plight. So “It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things.”

Now, we have seen in verse 5 through 9 how, let me go back and say we will see how he regained sovereignty in verse 10 through 18, but now, particularly, we’re answering the question, why he must suffer.

One of the things that he will make clear, as time goes on, is that a priest, if he is to be a priest, he must have something to offer. He makes that point later on in the 5th chapter of this book. If he were a priest, he would have to have something to offer. Priests, by their very activity of offering, had to have something to offer. So if the Lord Jesus is a great High Priest, he must have something to offer. Now, in his case, he offers

himself, and he is leading up to a full exposition of that point. “It’s fitting for Him, for whom,” that is, for the Father, “For whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Let’s talk for a moment or two about this perfect of our champion, if I may call him that, by a representative suffering, we are to regain our destiny in him. Representation discussed first in verse 10 through 13, then the suffering, particularly, in verse 14 through verse 18. And this 10th verse parallels the 9th verse. Think about it for a moment. Think about this verse. Let me read it again and try to catch the flavor of it. “It was fitting for Him,” that is the Father, “for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory.” Now, think about it. We are here upon the earth, are we not? God is engaged in bringing many sons unto glory. To glory? Well, to just put it simply, I’ll talk about it in a moment. To put it simply to bringing many sons “to heaven.” “Bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” So the idea is the idea of soldiers who are marching under one leader to a promised land. “To make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “Make perfect through sufferings,” qualified, as a priestly mediator of the New Covenant by sufferings.

Now, why underline sufferings? Well, these individuals were professing Jewish believers. How were priests perfected in their background? Well, they were perfected by ritual. They engaged in certain ritual.

Now, if you’re following Dan Duncan’s advice, and reading through the Bible, thank you, Dan, for mentioning that, I’ve really enjoyed reading straight through as I’m reading now, you would remember the great emphasis that is placed in the Old Testament on some of these very things. The chapters that are devoted to the installation of priests into the office of their priesthood, the sacrifices that were made and the various other things that went along with it.

Aaron and the others were brought into their office by ritual. But our Lord is a priest by virtue of perfection through suffering. There's all the difference in the world between the two. In the one case, we have ritual, we have the Old Covenant, we have the Law, particularly, the ceremonial aspects of it; all of those things typical, pointing forward to the Lord Jesus. But in the case of the Son of God, who is greater than the angels, he is qualified as priestly mediator of the New Covenant through sufferings, not by ritual. All those priests had to bring something in sacrifice. As a matter of fact, the Hebrew expression is, “to fill the hand.” “Male' yad,” to fill ones hand.

You had to come with something in your offering that is a sacrifice. In our Lord's case, he comes with the suffering that has been accomplished on Calvary's Cross, so to make perfect through sufferings. And what is so interesting about this is also the fact that the Lord Jesus is not like so many who are carrying a force on to a promised land through military victory, he's not an individual who sits back at headquarters and does not have anything to do with what is actually going on in the front trenches. He is a person who is not only there with them but he is the first to do this. He is the one of whom he says here, he is “bringing many sons to glory” and “the captain of their salvation is being made perfect through sufferings.” So in our Lord's case, he himself is out in the trenches and in the awful work of Calvary's Cross that is that which purchases our salvation for us.

One of the great preachers of the last generation, made reference to a German man, Bodlschving, who had lost several of his children. A fine preacher and a well known preacher and he made the statement, which this man quoted. “He learned then,” so the man who suffered the loss of his children, “how hard God can be.” I guess, of all the people who have the right to say, “I know how hard God can be,” it would be our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who bears the infinite suffering of Calvary's Cross for others.

Now, let me stop for just a moment. If it is true that the Lord Jesus Christ has been perfected through sufferings, as our great High Priest, and thus has become as he says, “the captain of our salvation,” then what does that say about those who tell us that

we are going to be perfectly saved, possessing all that we understand by salvation, if we know that our Lord Jesus is a great teacher of divine truth? What does that tell us, if he is one who is made perfect, High Priest through sufferings? What does that say to the individual who says, “I believe that Jesus is a great teacher, and to listen to his teaching is sufficient for salvation?” Why, it tells us that is a foolish, unscriptural idea. There are many other things one could say about that. But it’s obvious that the teaching of our Lord is not sufficient for our salvation.

Incidentally, have you ever noticed how little of the teaching of our Lord, specifically, is given by the apostles in the epistles of the New Testament? The thing that they centered most attention upon, they didn’t deny the importance of the other and one can sense that here and there, but the thing they emphasized, the thing that they emphasized more than anything else was the suffering, the cross that our Lord underwent.

What does that say, also about the person who says that Jesus Christ was a great example that we are to follow? Well, it says much the same thing, doesn’t it? It tells us that being an example is all right, he is an example for us, but more is necessary for salvation. We must understand as a crucified redeemer.

What does that say for an individual who says that the Lord Jesus is not only a teacher, not only an example, but a great prophet? Sometimes you read this in modern theological literature, contemporary literature, they acknowledge that he was a great prophet. And we even have it in Mohammedanism where they, themselves, think of our Lord as a prophet. But it’s evident that being a prophet also is not enough. He says that our great High Priest is made perfect “through sufferings.” And becomes the “captain of their salvation through sufferings.” As Paul puts it in Galatians chapter 2, verse 21, “I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness come through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

Let me put it this way, if righteousness comes by Jesus Christ’s teaching, then it was not necessary for him to die. If righteousness comes by the fact that he was an

example, he was that, and then it was not necessary for him to die on the cross. If righteousness came by being a prophet, which he was, then it was not necessary for him to die on the cross. Obviously, he did die on the cross. That’s necessary. It’s necessary that we understand that. That’s why Paul says, “I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him, crucified.” That’s what He specialized in, not signs and wonders. As a matter of fact, he said, signs and wonders are not even necessary, so far as the Corinthian’s are concerned. “I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and this one, crucified.” Crucified. That’s the preaching of the Gospel. There are lots of evangelicals today, who are telling us, “You’re not really preaching the Gospel if you’re not performing miracles, signs, and wonders.” That’s contrary to the apostolic teaching. Paul said, “I determine not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him, crucified.” To affirm, it’s necessary that signs and wonders be performed, for the Gospel to be preached, is to contradict the inspired word of God.

I put in my notes here, when I was writing up these notes today, politics. I’m not sure I know exactly what I meant when I just put that one word down. But, I think, I meant this, because it disturbs me. In our public life, in our public life our great public leaders give the impression that America will be all right, we’re on the road to recovery if, and then we speak about health care, and we speak about economics, and we speak about jobs and we speak about a list of other things, as if everything will be all right if we accomplish those things. But the one fundamental thing the politicians never speak about, never, never, and that is the necessity for the change of heart for the individual; for the necessity of a new birth. Consequently, politics will always fail, ultimately.

We’re not going to have an altar call, so don’t worry. I know that I’m right about that. As long as the American people remain what they are, unsaved individuals, as a general rule, not knowing what it is to be born again as a people, there are many, of course, we thank God for the millions that are. We will never solve our national

problems. We look forward to what the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews did, the kingdom of God upon the earth.

Now, he says here in verse 10, “To make the captain of their salvation.” Remember, now, he’s got in his mind the picture of a great procession of interminable files of people gathered behind one leader, moving on to the glory of God. He says, “Bringing many sons unto glory.” This one captain, one Hercules, as a matter of fact, he may have even had Hercules in mind, because Hercules was known as an individual, a mighty man, who had fought some battles and, actually, fought with death and overcame some of the figures of the underworld. And as a matter also, he uses, in the case of Hercules and the histories concerning him, the same word that is translated here, “captain” is a word that is used of Hercules. And so some of the New Testament scholars feel that our author had in the background of his mind, Hercules, the great strong man, half god, half man, who won great victory over the underworld as well as the upper world, as well. And so they say that we are to look at this as hero Christology or hero Soteriology. One great man and drawing upon that which the ancient world made a great deal over, our author has written this passage. Whether that’s true or not is beside the point. But it’s very true that our Lord is looked at as a great captain of our salvation. What does that mean? Well, it means, of course, that he must lead the way. And that’s what we read later on in this epistle in chapter 12 in verse 2, our author says these words. “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” He leads the way. We look unto him for he has gone on before us.

And secondly, his followers must trust in him, just as we read concerning Moses, in chapter 11, verse 27, “By faith, he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” And then, thirdly, his followers are provided for as we read in this same chapter 2, verse 18. “For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”

You know, there is a magnificent verse, in the Old Testament. One of my teachers that I studied under had a marvelous sermon on this text, which I’ve read more than once. I’m not sure that I can give all of the details of it, but the essence of it, I think, I can. It’s the text of Isaiah chapter 52 in verse 12, where Isaiah, the prophet, writes.

“For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you, and the God of Israel will be your rear guard.”

Now, what is in the author’s mind here, Isaiah’s mind, as he calls upon the children of Israel, ultimately, this hasn’t taken place yet, it’s evident, when he calls upon them to return to the Lord, is they are going to go out with the Lord before them and the Lord behind them. Now, what does that call to mind? Well, that calls to mind the children of Israel leaving Egypt, does it not? I read about this not long ago in Exodus chapter 14, when the children of Israel are leaving Egypt. You remember that under Moses’ leadership, they went out and they approached the sea. And the Egyptians marched after them. And we read in Exodus chapter 14, verse 10, “So they were very afraid and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord. Then they said to Moses,” this is so typical, so typical of us humans, they said to Moses, what do you think they said to Moses? “We saw all of those marvelous wonders that you performed, Moses, when we were in Egypt. Everything is going to be all right. We’ll play nine holes of golf while the Egyptians, over there, are coming close.” No. What do they say? The same thing that you and I say when we’re in difficulty, we forget what has happened previously, and so we do what they did, what do they do? They do it very vividly. They say, “Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, “Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians?”

I've even heard Christians say to me, “I wonder if it's a good thing that I've become a Christian, because we've suffered so much since then.” Have you heard people like that? Well, if you've been around a good while, you've heard someone saying that, because that's true to human nature. “For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness.” So Moses said, “Don't be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.”

Now, that's the time when preachers want to send out a prayer letter; when the missionaries want to send out a prayer letter; when churches want to ask for money in the service. But Moses tells the children of Israel, “Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, He will accomplish that for you today. The Egyptians, you'll not see anymore, forever.” Then note what he says, “The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace.”

What was that, in Isaiah, chapter 52? I lost my place. Chapter 52 in verse 12, he said, “For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight; for the Lord will go before you.” The Lord will fight for you and you shall hold your peace. And then he goes on to tell them that He will harden the hearts of the Egyptians and “Then the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gained honor for Myself over Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen.” And the children of Israel are just looking at the back. The Egyptians are getting closer, getting closer, getting closer. Look, I can even recognize somebody. Look at those chariots. Look at those chariots. And then we read, “And the angel of the Lord,” now just mount up and interpret that expression; that's the Lord Jesus Christ of the Old Testament. “And the Angel of the Lord,” “The Angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before them and stood behind them.”

Now, our text here in Isaiah says, “For you shall not go out with haste, nor go by flight,” Isaiah's thinking about Exodus, chapter 14, “For the Lord will go before you, And

the God of Israel will be your rear guard.” So they are covered, fore and aft, by the presence of the Lord God, the captain of our salvation.

Look, my Christian friend, all of our activities, all of our lives, all of the things that pass through our experience, they are within the sovereign determination of our Lord God, who goes before us. And he also comes and stands behind us. He’s our vanguard, he is our rear guard, the Lord Jesus Christ.

My friend referred to Alexander White, who was the pastor of St. George’s West in the University in Edinburgh. And he said that Alexander White once spoke to the Christians in his church and reminded them that once they had become a Christian, they were going to find that Satan was going to pursue them, just as he had before. And, furthermore, he said, “He will pursue you in all of your experiences, right up to the gates of heaven, itself, and those dogs will leave their bloody slaver on the bars of the gates in heaven.” Now, many Christians know what that is. They’ve experienced that, as Christians, they know that Satan is still active. But we have a captain of our salvation.

I’ll tell you, I love the way that Luther translates that, “The captain of their salvation.” He calls the Lord Jesus, “Herzog of Blessedness.” Now, Herzog is the German word that means Duke. We have a German in the audience. He knows that, better than I. In other words, the Lord Jesus is not called “the captain of our salvation” he’s called “the duke of our blessedness.” Isn’t that interesting? You can picture a duke, a powerful duke, and that’s the idea back of Luther’s unusual rendering. Other modern versions don’t render, in German, do not render it that way. But he rendered it that way. “The Duke of our Salvation” laying stress upon the greatness of our leader, the Son of God.

Well, now, he goes on to say, in verse 12, “to make the captain of their salvation.” I find that very interesting, too, because he doesn’t say, “the captain of ‘his’ salvation” but, “the captain of their salvation.” In other words, he didn’t die to show us how to die, he died that we might be saved. And this is no reference to His salvation; it’s our salvation. He’s the captain of ‘our’ that is, “their” salvation, and made perfect “through sufferings.”

And finally, the purpose of the Father. Go back and look at the opening part of the verse. “It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory.” Bringing is the word really that means leading. “Leading many sons,” as opposed to a few. God’s not satisfied with just one son, many sons, now, of course, he’s the one infinite divine Son. We are part of the company of many sons, but we are adopted sons. We are brought into the family of God and we are given a divine nature; but we are not the infinite kind of son that the Lord Jesus is.

This is one of the, I think, one of the loftiest conceptions of God’s purpose, bringing many sons to glory. Dr. Louis Sperry Chafer used to have a series of messages that he occasionally preached on. He would come back on Tuesday, and we would ask him where he’d been preaching on the weekend. He would tell us where he’d been preaching. And somebody, of course, would always ask him, “What were you preaching?” And he had one series that he’d preached on, more than once, called, “Populating Heaven.” And this was the text that he’d used, “Bringing many sons to glory,” populating heaven.

So bringing many sons to glory, what does he mean by that? Well, he’s just mentioned in verse 10, the “captain of their salvation” and so, evidently, the glory is the glory of their salvation, or their salvation included the participation in divine glory, the glory of the future. This is the end of the march. Glory. The whole army brought successfully into heaven, itself, with its vanguard and its rear guard guaranteed by the Lord Jesus Christ, we are sure to come there. The end of the march, the liberation and the reintegration of the cosmos, what he’s been talking about in Psalm 5, when that which God gave to man in the beginning, rule over the earth will, ultimately, belong to the sons of God. This is the explanation of what salvation means. It’s not simply the forgiveness of sins. Our salvation encompasses ruling the whole of God’s earth and in God’s kingdom. So it’s a magnificent future that lies before us. In once sense, this word “glory”

is the word that takes in all of the other terms. God, Savior, life, love, heaven, the word that consummates everything is the “glory” of God, the presence of God.

Recently, I’ve been giving a series of messages in another place in Dallas, on Jacob. And one of the chapters that we looked at was the chapter, the 28th chapter of the Book of Genesis, when Jacob sees the ladder let down from heaven. The text says, “He dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; there the angels of God were ascending and descending upon it.” I made the point, everybody, I think, who’s pondered this knows it, if you look to the New Testament, the Lord Jesus refers to himself under the figure of the ladder, and so he says in John, chapter 1, you’re going to see greater things than what you have seen so far, Nathaniel. You’re going to see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man. The ladder is the son of man. The son of man is the ladder. The mediator. The one who brings earth and heaven into relationship.

And then, the Lord stood by the side of that ladder and said to Jacob, “I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give it to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread aboard to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land;” and now, listen to this, this is a marvelous promise, “for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you.”

Talk about the perseverance of the saints? Think about the perseverance of the Lord God. He will not leave us until he has done everything that he has promised that he would do for us. What could be greater than that? Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ.

Well, it’s drawing near the end of our time together; and it’s kind of warm in here tonight. And, it’s not because of the text. [Laughter] I felt a little warm when we started.

And I, if I were here by myself, I would have taken off my coat and invited you to do yours, but I'd hoped it was going to get cooler. But it's not. And we're getting near the end of our time.

I've omitted a couple of words here that, I think are not really necessary to the major sense of the sentence but I'd like to close with reference to them. He might have written, instead of what he wrote, “It became the Father to make the leader perfect through sufferings.” “It became the Father to make the captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings.”

But he added these words. Well, he wasn't adding them, I'm looking at them as added now. “It was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and through whom or by whom are all things.” These two things express two great thoughts. The Father is the final cause of everything. The sons are to come to heaven for His glory, ultimately. The Lord Jesus delivers them up to the Father, and God is glorified in that. As the Apostles writes, in Romans chapter 11 in verse 36, “For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

And then the second thing is not only on account of whom but through whom. He is the efficient cause of everything. He orchestrated the perfection of the Son in suffering that there might be as a result of this, the sons of God brought to heaven.

You know, what we are talking about really here is the sovereign grace of God in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. I'd like to close with a comment that Charles Haddon Spurgeon made. He said, “The modern religionist not only hates the doctrine of sovereign grace but he raves and rages at the mention of it. He would sooner hear you blaspheme than preach election by the Father, atonement by the Son, or regeneration by the Spirit.” Now, if you're looking for some illustration of that, just look at our modern life today and you will find, without doubt, that our modern world is not unhappy if you blaspheme. They'd rather you blaspheme, so that you can be one of them, than preach election by God the Father, atonement by God the Son, and regeneration by God the

Holy Spirit. That is, absolutely, anathema in our public society today. He went on to say, “If you want to see a man worked up, till the satanic is clearly uppermost, let some of the new divines hear you preach a free grace sermon.”

Now, let me say to you, it's worse than that. Because, it is true that in many of our professing Christian churches today, called evangelical, if one preaches strongly a free grace sermon, evangelicals don't like it in many cases. A gospel which is after men will be welcome by men, but it needs a divine operation upon the heart and mind to make a man willing to receive it into his inmost soul; this distasteful gospel of the grace of God. “Learn then,” Mr. Spurgeon said, “that if you take Christ out of Christianity, Christianity is dead. If you remove grace out of the Gospel, the Gospel is gone. If the people do not like the doctrine of grace, give them more of it.”

What good advice that is. If people do not like the grace of God, what do you do? Tone it down? Emphasize music? Emphasize entertainment? Cut the sermon short? Is that what you do? No. No “Mac Church” here! Did you read the editorial in the Dallas Morning News entitled, “Mac Church: Fast Worship Comes to America.” Any backsliders? It takes a miracle to resist the temptation, hit the links of the sofa instead of the pew. After generations of inspired but long-winded sermons, a former U.S. Navy Chaplain in South Florida has come up with a tempting idea for bored church goes. His Sunday service for the nineties is a come-as-you-are twenty-two minute service, replete with an abbreviated eight minute sermon. Imagine, listening to the word of God while dressed comfortably in Bermuda Shorts [Well, that might be one, incidental, benefit here, this evening but [Laughter] and tennis shoes. Quick reflections on the meaning of life could be condensed for those in a hurry to get on with life. A “lite” sermon from reverend Mac Preacher, might go, “The Lord is my Shepherd; see you next Sunday.” [More laughter] Or the Ten Commandments might be whittled down to the two recommendations. Mac Worship may be the latest symptom of life on the run.

It comes about a year after a Dallas funeral home tried to establish drive-up service. The concept of driving up to a window and viewing the corpse of a loved one, promptly nicknamed, “Mac Stiff” [More laughter] did not catch on. Fast church services might strike some as sacrilegious, but in the end, other pastors may come to agree that a little religion is better than none. If so it’s just a matter of time before we start hearing worshipers all over America saying, “I’ll take a psalm, a sermon and a small order of hymns.” Now, it would be a different, I would change that, “I’ll take a psalm, a large order of hymns, and a little Sermon, a lite sermon.”

So Mr. Spurgeon concludes, “Whenever its enemies rail at a certain kind of gun, a wise military power will provide more of such artillery. That our Gospel offends the king’s enemies is no regret to us.” Mr. Spurgeon said.

I’m really sorry you’ve been warm tonight, but I hope this great text has made an impression upon you. “It was fitting, proper, suitable, consistent with the character of God for Him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”

Let’s bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful to Thee for these magnificent words that the author of this epistle has written. Lord, deliver us from the kinds of things that are contrary to Holy Scripture, that keep us from having our Lord Jesus as the center of our lives. We thank Thee for these comforting words, that “Thou art our vanguard and thou art our rear guard,” and that as our Lord Jesus, as our great captain, leads us to heavenly glory, we can be sure that He provides for all of his people. And, Lord, we know there are many in this audience who have trials and tribulations and difficulties, illnesses, and not only theirs but friend’s as well, and we ask, Lord, that Thou will give each of us this text as a means of support in the trials of life. And when Satan and the forces of evil press down upon us to turn aside from following our Lord, O God, as Thou didst promise

to Jacob and to the Philippians, do not let go of us until Thou has accomplished all that
Thou hast promised.

For Jesus' sake. Amen.