

*The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 23 May 2021. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.*

## **But We See Jesus**

### **Hebrews 2:1-9**

In his book, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus*, a young man named Nabeel Qureshi told his story of how he came to know Jesus as God and Saviour. He had been brought up in a devout Muslim home; and he believed the teachings of his religion with all his heart. In fact, he often put professing Christians to silence with the arguments that he had been taught by his parents, and by the imams. However, during his years in medical college, he met a *real* Christian named David Wood, who genuinely cared about Nabeel's soul. David was a relatively new believer, who had grown up in a non-Christian home; yet, in the short time that he had been saved, he had learned a good deal of Scripture, and had learned how to defend and share his faith. He had also acquired a passion for souls. He went out of his way to befriend Nabeel; and Nabeel and David soon became inseparable friends.

As the years of medical school rolled by, David and Nabeel passionately tried to convert each other. However, little by little, Nabeel found himself unable to refute the Scriptures. The historical reality of Jesus' death on the cross, and of His resurrection from the dead, became increasingly hard for Nabeel to ignore. Also, as he began to explore the Gospel of John, he found the Bible's teaching that Jesus is God hard to refute. Though Nabeel tenaciously denied the Bible's teaching of Trinity for the longest time, even this difficult doctrine was eventually opened to his mind--and in a very surprising way. As he was sitting in one of his classes one day, his lecturer, Mrs. Adamski, displayed a large chart, on which were three depictions of the molecule nitrate. She explained that many molecules (including nitrate) have what is called "resonance structures." This means that as the atoms of the molecule bond together, they can have as many as three different structures at the same time! She explained, "A molecule with resonance is *every one* of its structures at every point in time, yet no *single* one of its structures at any point in time." In other words, the three structures are completely distinct and different; yet, somehow, they are all one! She went on to explain, "It's all the structures all the time, never just one of them."<sup>1</sup> Nabeel could hardly believe what he was hearing! Could it be possible that *God* is three Persons in one? And could it be that God created the incredibly complex subatomic world to reflect the truth of who He is?

Finally, after about four years, Nabeel was at a breaking point. He knew, in his head, that Christianity must be true; but he feared to break his parents' hearts by becoming a Christian. Finally, in agony, he asked Allah (or the Christian God, whichever He was) to show him, by way of a dream, who he was. As it turned out, Nabeel had three astoundingly vivid dreams, which all clearly seemed to point to Jesus as Saviour. In one of these dreams, he saw a strikingly beautiful, yet narrow door, set in a brick wall. (When Nabeel wrote down the details of his dream the next morning, he specifically described it as a "narrow door.") In the dream, Nabeel was standing just outside the threshold of this narrow door; and as he looked into the house, he saw many people sitting at tables, with delicious, elegant food set before them. However, they were not eating yet. Instead, they were all looking to their left, as though they were

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<sup>1</sup> Nabeel Qureshi, *Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Reflective, 2018), pp. 194-195.

waiting for a special speaker to arrive. Nabeel saw his friend David sitting at a table; and he asked David, “I thought we were going to eat together?” David’s response was, “You never responded.”<sup>2</sup>

When Nabeel told this dream to David, David immediately knew what Scripture the Lord wanted Nabeel to read. He told him to turn to **Luke 13:24**. As Nabeel looked at the heading in his study Bible, he saw the words, “The Narrow Door.” Astonished, Nabeel read the passage; and he found it to be a parable about the people of Jesus’ day, who had sat under Jesus’ preaching, but who rejected Him. Jesus warned that one day the door to the Kingdom of God will be shut to them, because they would not respond to His invitation. Jesus solemnly warned, “**Strive to enter in at the strait gate**” (i.e., the “narrow door”)! Thank God, Nabeel (who has since died of cancer) entered into the Narrow Door of Jesus Christ, by faith.

One of the tragic tendencies of fallen men is that they become *comfortable* with hearing the truth that God has revealed to them; and they never let it penetrate their hearts. One of the most amazing examples of this can be found in the children of Israel. They had *heard* the Word of God from Mount Sinai. They had *heard* His testimonies again and again. They saw, with their own eyes, the most astounding miracles that the world had ever seen, on a very regular basis. On a daily basis, they gathered bread that had miraculously fallen from heaven. Yet, most of them rejected what they had heard. They refused to believe. They hardened their hearts against the Redeemer of Israel, and ended up in hell.

To this day, there are still many people who *hear* the Word of God, but who reject the Saviour. Many of these people have had *much* exposure to God’s Word. They have heard God’s Word day in and day out (or, at least, every Sunday). They have *heard* it all; but they have treated it casually. They have heard that Jesus is the *only* one who can save them; and they have even mentally *agreed* with this fact. **Yet, they have never let that truth penetrate their hearts.** They have never let go of their own righteousness and placed their trust in Jesus alone. Comfortably inoculated to the message of salvation, and foolishly confident that they are all right with God, they drift on through life, and harden their hearts more and more; **and after death, in horror, they lift up their eyes in the flames of hell!**

The Hebrew audience to whom Paul wrote this letter was made up of many such people—*religious* people who weren’t saved. They had *heard* that Jesus is the end of the Law, and the Saviour; and they professed to believe it. Yet, they had never *really* repented and believed on him. Now that they were being persecuted for their professed belief in Jesus (which was never really genuine), they were ready to turn away from Jesus entirely. As we will see in our Scripture this morning, Paul is violently waving the red flag of warning to these people. He is saying, “Stop! Don’t ignore what you’ve heard! Don’t turn away from the Door of salvation! If you do not trust in Jesus, you will face fiery indignation!”

The title of this morning’s message is ***But We See Jesus***.

## **Read Hebrews 2:1-9.**

### **I. Christ’s warning (vv. 1-4)**

As you will remember from last week’s message, Paul has just finished showing his readers that Jesus Christ is “*better*” than the angels, because He is God. Most of **Hebrews 1** is about Jesus’ superiority to the angels. But now, Paul is getting to his point. The point, for those who are thinking of turning away from Christ, is this: “You’d better take warning!” Paul is sounding the alarm to those who are in danger; and as he gives this warning, he points out three things that God has given us. He has given us a **command**; He has given us a **Mediator**; and He has given us a **confirmation**.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p. 268.

First, Paul says that **God has given us a command. (Read verses 1-3 again.)** The command couldn't be clearer. The command is: "Take heed to what I am telling you about Jesus! Jesus isn't just another prophet. He isn't an angel. He is God, your Redeemer. He is the only One who can save you. Believe on Him, and be saved! Do ignore the invitation!"

Now, Paul uses an interesting expression to describe the danger that many of his readers were facing. He warns them not to "**let slip**" the things that they had heard. The Greek word for "**let slip**" doesn't mean "to let something *slip away from you*"; rather, it means for *you* to slip away from something. So, what is Paul saying? He is giving a solemn warning to those who were just about to "slip away" from the threshold of salvation! Salvation wasn't slipping away from them: they were slipping away from salvation. The problem wasn't that salvation wasn't available: it was still there, as it had always been. The problem was that *their hearts* were drifting away from it. With each moment, their hearts were growing harder, as they continued to "play church," without truly coming to Christ in repentance and faith.

Now, in order to show his readers how seriously they should take this command, Paul takes his Jewish audience back to Mount Sinai. **(Read verse 2 again.)** In this verse, Paul is reminding his Jewish brethren of the Old Covenant, which was given to their forefathers on Mount Sinai; and he is reminding them of how strict that covenant was. God gave Israel hundreds of laws; and for each of those laws, He gave an exact penalty for its violation. Many of these laws called for nothing less than *death* if they were violated. The Jews knew exactly what to expect if they disobeyed God's covenant; and we have many sad examples of God's *instant* judgment upon individuals who broke His statutes. **Nadab and Abihu** were struck dead for offering up "strange fire" upon the altar. **Uzzah** was struck dead for touching the Ark. The man who **picked up sticks** on the Sabbath was stoned to death. **Achan** was stoned to death for taking spoil from Jericho, when God had commanded them not to do so.

These were harsh punishments. Make no mistake about it, though: God still means business about His commands. Paul has reminded his readers about the terror of Mount Sinai; but now, he brings his hearers back to the present, and says, "**How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?**" God has commanded all men everywhere to be saved by believing on His Son; and there is no escape for us if we do not heed that command! In fact, the penalty for disobeying *this* command is far worse than the penalties of the Old Testament were. The worst *earthly* penalty for breaking an Old Testament commandment was physical death. However, if you disobey the command to believe on God's Son and be saved, you have nothing to look forward to but *eternal death* in the Lake of Fire!

Many people have the notion that God, in this New Testament era, has somehow "changed His mind" about sin. Many people think of God as though He were some kind of aging, senile grandfather who has mellowed into an "old softie" in recent millennia, and who has decided to stop "zapping" people when they get out of line. They think that God is too loving to send people to hell if they don't place their full trust in Jesus. Surely God will "cut some slack" to people if they are "doing the best they can," right?

My friends, nothing could be further from the truth! God loves us more than we can imagine; but His love and His justice are *always* perfectly balanced. What people fail to realise is that God gave the Law in order to show us His righteous, holy character. The lesson we should learn from the Law is that God has not changed His mind about the seriousness of sin. *The wages of sin is still death*--not only physical death, but *spiritual and eternal death* in hell.

That is why we need a Saviour: and God has provided that Saviour in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ. He *is* our Salvation; and if we *neglect* our great Salvation, we cannot escape.

Now, not only has God given us a **commandment**: He has also given us a **Mediator**. (Read **verses 2 and 3 again**.) You'll notice that in **verse 2**, Paul says that the Word was "*spoken by angels*." This "*word spoken by angels*" is the Old Covenant, or the Law.

Now, we know that the Law was spoken by God; yet, Paul says that it was spoken by *angels*. In some way that Scripture does not fully explain, the Law was given by God *through the mediation* of angels. Paul mentions this fact in **Galatians 3:19**. Stephen said that the Law was given "*by the disposition of angels*." David mentions this in the **Psalms**, as well.

### **Read Psalm 68:17.**

We don't know everything that happened on Sinai during the 40 days when Moses was there; but we know that it was terrifying! There was fire, lightning, thundering, and voices; and in some way, a host of angels assisted in delivering the Law to Moses. The giving of the Law on Sinai was literally an earth-shaking event; and angels were all around as it happened. But guess what? That's nothing compared to the delivery of the New Covenant! The Old Covenant was delivered by *angels*; but the New Covenant was delivered by the *Son of God*!

Now, Paul doesn't use the actual words "*new covenant*" in **verse 3**; but when he talks about "*so great salvation*," he is talking about the New Covenant, which brings us salvation. And who is the Mediator of this *New Covenant*? It's Jesus! Jesus began to reveal the message of the New Covenant when He came into the wilderness of Judea preaching, "*The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel*."

### **Read Hebrews 12:18-24.**

Do you see what Paul is saying? He is contrasting the *angels* of the Old Covenant to the *Jesus* of the New Covenant; and there is no comparison. Paul is saying, "Listen closely, those of you who are ready to abandon Jesus, and to go back to Judaism. You think that keeping the Law can get you to heaven? You think that the rituals of the Law are the 'end-all' because they were delivered by *angels*? If so, I have news for you. The *New Covenant* was delivered by none other than the **Son of God**—who, as I have told you, is far superior to the angels! He *is* the End of the Law. If you turn from Him, you will be eternally lost!"

The people were *neglecting* the Salvation that was being offered them. Tragically, so do many people today—including people who sit through church every Sunday (yes, even in Baptist churches)! By the way, the very word that is translated "*neglect*" is also used in a parable that Jesus told in **Matthew 22**.

### **Read Matthew 22:1-14.**

In **verse 5**, Jesus says that the people who were invited to the wedding feast "*made light of*" the invitation. The Greek word for "*made light of*" is the same word that is translated as "*neglect*" in **Hebrews 2:3**. The people were *neglecting* the offer that was given them. And whom do these people represent? The Jewish nation, as a whole. They "neglected," or "made light of" Jesus' gracious offer to believe on Him and be saved, and to come to His Wedding Feast. In fact, not only did they "*neglect*" the offer; they murdered His servants. These "*servants*" represent John the Baptist, the Apostles, Stephen, and all the other Jewish believers who lost their lives as they tried to take the Gospel to their own people. And what was the

result of this atrocity? The King (who, of course, represents God) sent the Roman armies to destroy the city of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Israel, as a nation, has been temporarily set aside in God's plan; but in the meantime, salvation is offered to everyone, whether they be Jew or Gentile.

However, the same thing that applied to the Jews applies to *all* of us. *We* must not neglect so great salvation, either! Look at that last part of the parable. **(Read verses 10-13 again.)** What was the consequence for the Gentile man who came to the wedding feast without a wedding garment? He was cast into outer darkness, where there was “*weeping and gnashing of teeth.*” This is clearly talking about hell! Now, think about that for a moment. This man wasn't like that first privileged group of people who had received the invitation, but who had ignored it altogether. *This* man had paid attention to the invitation, and had come to the very “threshold” of the feast. He *did* wish to enter. However, he neglected (or “made light of”) the requirement of a *wedding garment*. So it is with anyone who professes to be saved, but who tries to get into Heaven without the “garment” of Christ's imputed righteousness. A person may be *interested* in eternal life, and may *call* himself a Christian; but if he will not take heed to God's requirement of *receiving Christ's imputed righteousness*, he will end up in hell, just like the person who totally disregards the call to salvation. Christ's perfect righteousness *must be* imputed to your moral account, as though it were yours. You must *stop* trusting in your own righteousness, and admit that you can't save yourself, and ask for Jesus' righteousness, like a spotless robe, to be put on you. When you come to God on these terms, He accepts you for His Son's sake, and receives you into the “wedding feast” of His Kingdom. My friend, are *you* trusting in anything other than Christ alone? If not, I urge you to trust in Him today!

We've seen that God has given us a **command**: and that command is to be saved. He has given us a **Mediator**: and that Mediator is His Son, Jesus Christ. He has also given us a **confirmation** that His Son's New Covenant is true. **(Read Hebrews 2:3-4 again.)**

In **verse 3**, Paul says that this “*great salvation*” has been “*confirmed unto us.*” And how has it been confirmed? It has been confirmed by “*them that heard him.*” It is confirmed not only by the Apostles, but by many hundreds of others who saw Jesus doing His miracles, and who saw Him after His resurrection. To the Jews who were about to go back to the Old Covenant, Paul is warning them that they *could not* afford to neglect the Christ of the New Covenant. *They had no excuse for doubting that Jesus is who He claimed to be.* No one could say, “But how could *I* know that Jesus was really the Son of God? After all, *I* never saw Him!” They were without excuse. Why? Because God has given unmistakable confirmation of Jesus' claims, through His Apostles and prophets.

God put His seal of authenticity on the *Old* Covenant by sending many signs and wonders through Moses. However, God has given *far more abundant* confirmation of the *New* Covenant. First, there were the miracles that *Christ Himself* did, which were far greater than anything that Moses ever did. Then, there were the personal testimonies of the twelve Apostles, as well as the testimonies of hundreds of other Jewish believers who had personally seen and heard Christ when He was on earth, and who were *still living*, even when this letter was written. As if that weren't enough, God gave first-century Christians the power to do many miracles, signs, and wonders, through special gifts of the Holy Spirit; and it was all for the purpose of authenticating the message of salvation through Jesus Christ.

Tragically, there are many people today who profess to believe on Jesus; but it is not *Jesus* whom they truly seek. Many people seek after tongues, healing, miracles, and miraculous

experiences—but miss out on salvation! They think that they are “somebodies” because of a spiritual power that they think they have, or because of an “experience” that they’ve had. They fail to realise that Jesus died not to “make them somebodies” by giving them miraculous powers, but to pay for their sins, which have separated them from God.

Years ago, as I was working my way through college, I had a co-worker named Jason. This young man had recently gone to a Charismatic revival meeting, and had supposedly gotten saved there. He offered, as proof of his salvation, the fact that he had “spoken in tongues” at the meeting. As I probed deeper, it became apparent that he didn’t have a clue of what salvation is. He thought that speaking in tongues was salvation. He had no idea that Jesus died on Calvary to pay a price that he could not possibly pay. Tragically, Jason died in a car accident not long afterward. On an icy winter morning, as he was driving to school, he failed to scrape the ice off his side windows; and he pulled out of his driveway into the path of a school bus. Sadly, just as he failed to take heed to the bus that was coming straight toward him, he also failed to take heed to the warning that I had tried to give him--the warning that he needed to trust in *Christ*, and not in a mystical experience. My friend, don’t let that be you! Should you be relying on something or someone other than *Christ alone* to get you to Heaven, you are lost. It doesn’t matter how seemingly good or godly that thing may be: if it be not Christ, it is a false hope. Many of the Jews relied on the Law, the prophets, the angels, and Moses, but missed out on salvation through Jesus Christ. My friend, *don’t neglect salvation!*

## II. Christ’s work (vv. 5-9)

In these next few verses, Paul shifts his focus to the *work* of Christ--what He does. First, he focuses on Christ's work **as our sovereign Lord. (Read verses 5-8 again.)** As you can see, Paul is again reminding us that the angels will not rule in the Kingdom. *Christ*, not the angels, has inherited His Father’s Kingdom. To demonstrate this, Paul quotes from the **Psalms**.

### Read Psalm 8:3-6.

On the surface, this psalm seems to be talking about our father Adam. After all, it was Adam to whom God gave dominion over the earth, and over all the creatures. This psalm also seems to be speaking about mankind in general. After all, Adam *is* mankind. The very Hebrew word "adam" means “man," or "mankind."

However, you’ll notice that Paul is taking this verse from **Psalm 8**, and is applying it to *Jesus*, not Adam. Jesus, Paul says, is this "Son of Man," who was made "*a little lower than the angels.*" Is Paul misapplying this Scripture? Is he reading something into it that isn't there? No, he is not! Remember, when Adam sinned, he forfeited his dominion over the earth to *Satan!* Satan himself pointed out this fact when he was trying to tempt Christ to sin. Satan made the statement that the kingdoms of this world had been *delivered unto him*. In a very real sense, Adam did hand the dominion of this earth over to Satan when he sinned. **How, then, could the dominion over the earth be restored to man?** *Could* it be restored? Yes, it could be restored; and it *has* been restored. Through Christ's sacrifice on the cross for mankind, the dominion that Satan claimed to have has been wrested from him, and has been delivered into the hands of the “last Adam”—the Second Adam—Jesus Christ!

### Read 1 Corinthians 15:20-27, 45, 47.

We must never forget that although Jesus is the Son of God, He also became “the Son of Man” when He took on human flesh. He isn’t merely *a* son of man: He is *the* “Son of Man.” He is

the Head of a new humanity. He has put all things under His feet; and He is now awaiting the moment when He will return to earth to reign as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords!

In this present world system, God has allowed angels to preside over the affairs of men (with Himself ultimately in control). God's **holy angels** have whole nations over which they minister. In **Daniel 12:1**, **Michael** is called the "**great prince**" who stands for the nation of Israel. Likewise, demons have nations over which God has allowed them to preside. For example, the Bible tells us about two demons named the "**Prince of Grecia**" and the "**Prince of Persia**." Satan's demons are called "**principalities and powers**" because they wield real power over vast regions of mankind.

However, in the coming Kingdom of Christ (the *true* "New World Order"), the angels will *not* have dominion. Satan and his angels will be banished to the bottomless pit for 1,000 years; and even God's holy angels will not administer over the nations. *Man* will rule over the nations. Particularly, *one* Man will rule over the nations; and that Man is the God-Man, Jesus Christ! Furthermore, we, *as redeemed* men, will be given the privilege of sharing with Him in the administration of His Kingdom. We will rule and reign with Him!

Once again, we see that Christ is superior to the angels. *Christ*, not the angels, will reign in the 1,000-year kingdom. He was made a "**little lower than the angels**" in *position* when he became a Man; but after His resurrection, He was exalted above all principalities and powers. Yet, Christ's reign over the nations has not come about yet. Satan's kingdom is broken, and his overthrow is sure; but is hasn't happened yet. We don't see Christ's Kingdom on earth *yet*. Not everything is put under Christ's feet *yet*. But in the meantime, what *do* we see? Paul says that "**we see Jesus**." And how do we see Him? Let's take a look. (**Read Hebrew 2:9 again.**)

According to Paul, we see Jesus **as the obedient Son of God**. Though we don't yet see Christ enthroned on Mount Zion, we can, by faith, look back in history, and see the Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, and who is now crowned with glory and honour.

### **Read Philippians 2:5-11.**

Immediately after stating that Jesus became "**obedient unto death**," Paul says, "**wherefore God hath also highly exalted him**." It is *because* Jesus went to the cross that the Father has now "**crowned him with glory and honour**." Jesus had to be crowned with thorns *before* He could be crowned with glory and honour. Because Jesus has bought back mankind with His blood, and has reclaimed the kingdoms of this world, *His* name is to be exalted above all!

That is why the name *Jesus Christ* is predominant in the New Testament! The primary name for God in the *Old Testament* was *Jehovah*. This name appears more than 6,000 times in the *Old Testament*! Yet, the name *Jehovah* is not mentioned even once in the *New Testament*. Whenever the *New Testament* writers quoted an *Old Testament* Scripture in which the name *Jehovah* was used, they simply replaced "*Jehovah*" with the Greek words *Theos* ("God"), or *Kurios* ("Lord"). The name *Jehovah* was predominant in the *Old Covenant*, because *Jehovah* is the special name that God uses between Himself and the nation of Israel; but in the *New Covenant*, the name of *Jesus Christ* is predominant, because He is the Member of the Godhead who ratified the *New Covenant* with His blood. With the cross and the tomb behind Him, Jesus is now high and lifted up above all other names. Peter said that there is "**none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved**." It is at the name of *Jesus* that "**every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess**" that He is Lord. Before He went

back to Heaven, Jesus commanded us to be “*witnesses*” unto *His* name. The name of Jesus is worthy to be exalted above all others, because He is the Son of God and the Son of Man. Truly, *we see Jesus*.

**Conclusion:** Folks, we cannot afford to neglect so great salvation. We cannot afford to turn away from Jesus. He is our Salvation! He is the only Way to the Father! You cannot offer God *anything* that He will accept--except for a contrite heart, which has abandoned all self-righteousness,” and has instead clung to Jesus Christ for salvation. Have you done this? Are you saved? I would also ask: "Christian, are you serving Jesus Christ with all your heart? Jesus tasted death for you. Are you willing to die, too? Will you take up your cross today, and die to self-will? Let Jesus have complete reign in your heart!