

Everything Under His Feet

In **Genesis 3**, we can find the start of a process which we do not see completed until the closing chapters of **Revelation**. God made the physical world, crowned his earthly creation with mankind and placed them in charge of all the plants and living creatures. It was **after** this that Satan succeeded in persuading them to rebel against the loving commands of the Creator. Whether or not you believe in a literal Garden of Eden, **Genesis 1:24-31** makes it clear that mankind was placed in a position of rule and responsibility over all the rest of creation.

When Adam and Eve 'fell' from their open relationship with God as a result of their rebellion, in a very real way they took all this world's creation with them. **Romans 8:18-25** shows how the whole of the created world cries out to be released from the frustration of being ruled by rebellious man, longing for the time when 'the children of God' will be in charge.

This position is made clear in several other passages of Scripture. In **Psalms 8**, David marvels at the fact that man is so small and insignificant in the light of all the majesty of creation and yet God has chosen to make him only "*a little lower than the angels*", placing him in the position of authority over "*all things*". This passage is quoted in the New Testament and applied both to mankind in general and also specifically to the Lord Jesus Christ. Perhaps it is significant that Jesus often referred to himself as 'the Son of man', underlining his total identification with mankind.

As he writes about resurrection and some of the events leading up to the final judgement, Paul quotes from this Psalm in **1 Corinthians 15:20-28**. He is writing about the end of the present age, when Jesus will rule on the earth and all the

enemies of God will be abolished. The last enemy to be abolished is death. Notice that he talks about a process, even at that time; Jesus must reign **until** he has put all his enemies under his feet.

Another passage, which Jesus himself quoted (when he was facing the scribes and Pharisees with the fact that the Messiah was more than just a great man) is **Psalm 110:1**. Here is that word 'until' again - clear evidence of the **coming** rule of the Messiah (=Christ). It has not happened yet, but certainly will do.

In **Hebrews 2:6-10**, the words of Psalm 8 are applied to mankind in general. Although God put everything under the feet of man, we cannot yet see that fully realised. Man has allowed Satan to usurp his God-given authority over creation. None the less, God the Father is **determined** to bring "*many sons to glory*", and has been since before the beginning of the world. The Father has had his eye on us individually since before the foundation of the world - before all this mess started. (See **Ephesians 1:3-4**.) To achieve this, he made the Lord Jesus, his Son, "*lower than the angels*" for a little while, bringing him into the territory occupied by the enemy.

In order to break the stranglehold of death which Satan had on mankind and the rest of creation, Jesus entered the human arena, the realm of flesh and blood, the realm where death **could** touch him. The worst that Satan could throw at him was death itself. When the Lord Jesus had gone through death, the enemy had exhausted his armoury on him, he had nothing left. This is the message of **Hebrews 2:14-18**.

Why did Jesus do all this? "*To deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives*" (**Hebrews 2:15**). He has personally triumphed over Satan and death and offers us the opportunity to stand in that victory as we stand in him. He has not 'defeated Satan' in a total and complete way - not yet, that will come later! He has, however, rendered him

powerless over himself - Satan just cannot touch him, nor us, as we stand in Jesus.

In **Hebrews 2:16**, "*the seed of Abraham*" is mentioned. Paul makes it clear in **Galatians 3:7 & 29** that we who belong to Christ are the true offspring of Abraham. See also **Romans 4:2-5 & 13-16**. God promised Abraham many years before that he would be "*heir of the world*" and that it would be through Isaac that his offspring would be named. Then followed the amazing demand that he made on Abraham, to offer up this same Isaac as a sacrifice. See **Genesis 21:12** and **Genesis 22** - the story is familiar.

To see this incident in perspective, we need to read **Hebrews 11:11-17**. Even Isaac, the 'son of promise', needed to pass through 'death & resurrection'. There are interesting parallels; Isaac's birth was almost impossible - Jesus's birth **was** impossible. Isaac almost passed through death and resurrection - Jesus actually did.

Back to **Hebrews 2** ! Verse **14** shows that Satan held the power of death, its dominion, rule and authority and that Jesus, by becoming flesh and blood, submitting to death and overcoming it, rendered Satan powerless. We certainly do not see Satan powerless in the world - not yet, though there is too much glib talk by Christians about Satan being 'a defeated foe'. No wonder other people must think we are crazy! On the one hand we talk about Satan at work in the world and on the other we talk about him being a defeated foe! Satan is very much alive and well and active in this world which is still his sphere of activity. It is only **in the person of Jesus** that he has been defeated. The wonderful thing is that the Father has joined us who believe to his Son, so we can benefit from that defeat, getting a foretaste of the future, when Satan will be completely crushed under the feet of Jesus, as promised in the Garden of Eden.

Jesus stands as both the end of Adam's line and the beginning of a new order. See **1 Corinthians 15:45-49**. He is the 'last Adam' but he is also the 'second man'. Just as we have been born and made like the first natural man Adam, so we have been re-born and will bear the image of Jesus.

This chapter speaks of our physical death and resurrection at some time in the future but the principle of death and resurrection is already at work in us. See **Colossians 2:12-15**. Jesus 'divested himself' of the rulers and authorities when he died on the cross - the word means to take off an item of clothing - they have no more effect on his life. And, says Paul, you believers have both died and been raised from the dead with Jesus. As we take hold by faith of what Jesus accomplished by his death, we come into the good of it. No more guilt, no more slavery to sin, no more condemnation - we are safe to 'abide' in his death and resurrection.

So, our Father has made the provision we need to live in victory, even in a world still controlled and dominated by Satan. Although we cannot yet see Satan's total defeat, a time is coming when we will. When the Lord Jesus returns to rule on this earth, he will reign until all his enemies are under his feet (see **Psalm 110:1, 1 Corinthians 15:25**).

Revelation 20 charts the events at the end of this present age that we now know and the last verses depict the final destruction of Satan, judgement and the end of death. Once that is all complete, **chapter 21** starts with, "*and I saw a new heaven and a new earth*". This is the final end of the chapter which started in **Genesis 3**, and it is as if the Father says, "Right, now let's get on with what I want to do next!" What a privilege we have to share in that great inheritance!

Dave Taylor March 1999