

UPWARD CALL

Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but this is my one aim: to forget everything that's behind, and to strain every nerve to go after what lies ahead. I press on toward the finish line, where the prize waiting for me is the upward call of God
IN KING JESUS.

(Philippians 3:13-14)

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Made Lower Than Elohim

David looked up to the heavens and saw the mighty work of God in the moon and the stars that He ordained, and he was compelled to write a psalm. As he contemplated the awesomeness of the heavens above, David began to meditate on mankind and how God took this being we collectively call *man*, formed from the soil of the earth, and gave him dominion over the works of His hands.

What is man that You remember him? And the son of man that You visit him? Yet You have made him a little less than Elohim, and have crowned him with esteem and splendour. You made him rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, passing through the paths of the seas. (Psalm 8:4-8 The Scriptures '98+)

In answer to his two questions regarding man, David declared that God has made man less than or lower than God. In the Hebrew, the word translated as *God* in many English versions is actually the word *Elohim*. It is the same word that is used in Genesis 1 in reference to the restoration of the earth in six days. On the sixth day, man was formed from the soil of the earth.

And Elohim said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all the earth and over all the creeping creatures that creep on the earth." (Genesis 1:26 The Scriptures '98+)

The explanatory notes of *The Scriptures* by the Institute for Scripture Research (ISR 2003) state: The word "El" is a very ancient Semitic term. Among Semitic languages it is one of the most used terms for greatness, strength or deity. In Hebrew religious usage it does not denote a proper name but is used as a title. Used for the Creator's superiority over all other as a generic term in Daniel 11:36 "...the El of elahin..." *El, Eloah, Elohim* is used to refer to the Creator, but also applied to rulers, messengers and persons. *Elohim* is the plural of *Eloah*, meaning rulers, messengers.

Although *Elohim* can be used to refer to others such as rulers, judges or messengers (angels or men), it is apparent that David meant *Elohim the Creator*, as declared by Moses in the book of beginnings, Genesis. Notice the connection between Genesis 1:26 and Psalm 8:6: *Let them rule over, and You made him (man) rule over the works of Your hands*. Some commentators call this the *dominion mandate*; that is, man was given dominion over the earth.

There is something tremendous in these verses. *First, Elohim* made man to be perfected into His image and likeness—to be imaging Him. Do you realize how tremendous this is? No wonder David marveled as he contemplated the heavens. He saw the magnificence of God's creation and then looked at himself and wondered how it could be. How could *Elohim* take soil from the earth and form man to become His image and likeness and then give him dominion over the earth? *Second, Elohim* made man to be a little lower or less than God. One translation declares: *Thou has made him little less than divine* (Psalm 8:5 James Moffatt Translation). In other words, man was not made to be God but to be less than God, and yet, to possess a

likeness to the Creator. The Hebrew words translated *image* and *likeness* refer to *resemblance*. Man is to resemble *Elohim*. When one sees man, they are to see an image or reflection of God.

Now, the writer of the Hebrews epistle was led to quote Psalm 8; but the word *Elohim* was changed to *messengers* or *angels* (in most translations), which comes from the Greek word *aggelos*.

But somewhere one has witnessed, saying, "What is man that You remember him, or the son of man that You look after him? "You have made him a little lower than the messengers. ¹You have crowned him with esteem and respect, and set him over the works of Your hands. "You have put all in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left none that is not subjected to him. But now we do not yet see all subjected to him. (Hebrews 2:6-8 The Scriptures '98+)

A footnote in this particular translation questions why it does not read *Elohim*. Perhaps the word *Elohim* does make more sense. After all, man was made to become the likeness and image of *Elohim*. The most likely reason for using the word *angels* is due to the seven references to angels in the opening chapters of Hebrews (1:4, 5, 6, 7, 13; 2:2, 5). Perhaps, in translating from the Hebrew to the Greek, the translators could not grasp the thought that Jesus as the Son of Man could have ever been lower than *Elohim*. There is good reason for this thinking, for, speaking of the Son, Hebrews 1:8 and 9 declare: Your throne, O *Elohim*; and *Elohim*, Your *Elohim*. But these declarations pertain to Jesus as the begotten Son of God, not the Son of man. Clearly, Psalm 8 refers to the son of man, and this designation is carried over into Hebrews 2:6 as well. In the context of the Son of man, Jesus is made a little lower. But lower than what? *Elohim* or angels?

But we see Jesus, the One having been made only a little lower [or, only for a short while lower] than [the] angels because of the suffering of death, having been awarded the victor's wreath [of] [or, having been crowned with] glory and honor, in order that by [the] grace of God He should taste [fig., experience] death on behalf of all. (Hebrews 2:9 ALT)

Consider this: Jesus, as the Son of man, was made a little lower than *Elohim*, because the suffering of death and the tasting of death on behalf of all is primarily for the benefit of man, not the angels. In taking this lower position, Jesus, as the Son of God, did not relinquish His divinity as *Elohim* the Creator. He took this lower position as the Son of man. In other words, Jesus came to this earth to be on the same level as all mankind and to die for all mankind in order to restore the *dominion mandate* to what it was intended when first given to Adam and Eve. He fully and unequivocally identified with man as He died for the sin of the world. He had to be made in the form of man in order to redeem all mankind. He emptied Himself of all His privileges and submitted to the will of His heavenly Father (Philippians 2:5-8), and now He is the victor over death.

Let us recount some facts. All has been subjected under the feet of man, and nothing has been left out of this subjection. This is the *dominion mandate* that was given to man through Adam, and it has not been revoked. However, today we do not see all subjected to man. Think about it; today, we do not see that God has put all in dominion under the feet of man. But we see Jesus; and because we see Jesus, we know that a day is coming when we will see all placed under man's dominion. Whatever has been placed under Jesus' dominion is what will be placed under the dominion of all His conquerors chosen to reign with Him in the ages to come. Do you know what this dominion is? It is all, and in all; all in the heavens and all on the earth! To be lower than but like *Elohim*, and to be in dominion over all! Dear beloved in Christ, this is your destiny.