

## **JESUS: A BETTER DELIVERER**

(Hebrews 2)

This week the Western world was once again confronted with terrorism in the Manchester bombing. Ultimately, the "**weapon**" of terrorists is DEATH.

Job's friend, Bildad, fittingly called **{DP}** Death the "*king of terrors*" (Job 18:14)

For most people, contemplating death results in crippling fear:

Painful disconnection from family & friends, entering into the 'unfamiliar', fear of either nothingness or judgment.

Woody Allen **{DPa}** is famously fearful of DEATH.

Or, trying to convince himself he's not afraid of death, he says, **{DPb}**

*"I just don't want to be there when it happens!"*

As the old saying goes, "*If we don't **LAUGH**, we'll cry about it*"

And so, many, like Woody Allen, mask their fear of death with laughter:

**{CLIP 1: 'atheists & turbulence' – Ha ha! 'Life is meaningless' – hilarious! ??}**

So what's his **SOLUTION**? The people stop laughing when they learn he's serious & sad.

**{CLIP 2 – Delude yourself, believe a lie}**

*"The self-deluded are the happy . . . they're happier than me!"*

How tragic. Are those really the only 2 options?! **{DPa}**

1. *Deceive* yourself into happiness with lies: life *does* have meaning, there *is* an afterlife.
2. *Despair* because of death.

These are the only 2 offers from Atheism! (and much of Buddhism, & many religions.)

. . . just give up and sing along with Monty Python **{DPb}**

***"Life is quite absurd, and death's the final word."***

The author of Hebrews says "**NO!**" Death is not the final word. Jesus is!

*" . . . in these last days God has spoken to us in his SON." (Hebrews 1:2)*

Woody & Monty: we do not need **lower expectations** about life & death!

We need a Saviour who **lowered Himself** to redeem life & deliver from death.

There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> option: **{DPc}**

3. *Delight* yourself in the **TRUTH** that Jesus has defeated death!

How Jesus did so is astonishing & what Hebrews chapter 2 is all about.

It's central idea 'precisely' stated: **{DPd}**

Jesus is a **Better Deliverer** than angels:

Lowering Himself to the likeness of men, only He can Deliver men from Death!

We're in a series we began last week on the Book of Hebrews, written to Christians finding their spiritual journey challenging – like many of us! Despite temptations to turn back from following Jesus, the Book's main idea is this: **{DP}**

*Don't turn back because Jesus is Better*

The author of Hebrews knows, as should we, that Jesus is actually **BEST**, 'sublime', superlative – the **ONLY** name under heaven by which we can be saved.

But the author uses the comparative “Better” throughout his letter to contrast in many ways how Jesus is Better: **THE fulfilment** of every promise, every “shadow”, every *lesser* expression pointing to the *fullness & finality* of Jesus as a Better Saviour bringing better transformation, abundant life.

Last week, chapter 1, discussed Jesus in comparison with angels: and **{DPa}**  
*Jesus is a Better Messenger bringing a Better Message.*

He’s a Better Messenger because of His Worth **{DPb}**  
*Eternal God* expressed exactly, personally in human flesh. He’s to be worshipped – unlike angels who worship Him. Jesus is the **Sublime Son**.

He’s a Better Messenger because of His Rank: **{Dpc}**  
 He’s Exalted, Enthroned as King of Kings, reigning on high (again, *unlike angels*)

In chapter 2, Jesus is *still being compared with angels*, **superior** to angels, but there is a decisive reversal of direction . . . from Jesus being exalted/Lifted, to Jesus being Lowered, as we see in our Outline: **{DPb+a}**

- Bridge b/w chpts 1 & 2: WARNING–Do Not Reject Salvation in God’s Sublime Son! (2:1–4)
- The Sublime Son **Lowered** Himself – for a TIME (2:5–9)
- The Sublime Son **Lowered** Himself – for a PURPOSE (2:10-18, the MAIN section)

## **WARNING: DO NOT REJECT SALVATION IN GOD’S SUBLIME SON! (2:1–4) {DPA}**

Last week, we ended with a ‘sneak peek’ at this warning:

*Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?” (2:1-3a)*

The author of Hebrews is referencing the role of angels in delivering the law of Moses, as Stephen later reminded Israelites in Acts 7: **{DPb}**

*“You who received the Law as delivered by angels . . . .” (Acts 7:53)*

So the Law, the **OT message**, was reliable, making us accountable.

Now we have a **BETTER Message**: the fulfilment of the Law – **JESUS!**

Therefore, we MUST NOT neglect, reject, turn back from such a great salvation!

Maybe you’re a sceptic? Good News!: the Good news of Jesus was validated by His own miracles, then again by miracles He empowered His disciples to do – the rest of verses 3-4,

**{DP}** *[this great salvation] was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs & wonders & various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

“Attestation” & “bearing witness” are older words **{DP}** for giving PROOF/EVIDENCE.

Christianity roots itself in history & evidence.

This should encourage you if you’re a sceptic, a survey from this year reveals<sup>1</sup>: **{DP}**

*“More than half of Australians (52%) are open to changing their views about religion given the right circumstances and evidence.”*

<sup>1</sup>: [https://mccrindle.worldsecuringsystems.com/blog/2017/05/Faith%20and%20Belief%20in%20Australia%20Report\\_McCrindle\\_2017.pdf](https://mccrindle.worldsecuringsystems.com/blog/2017/05/Faith%20and%20Belief%20in%20Australia%20Report_McCrindle_2017.pdf)

God verified Jesus with many *miracles* – the greatest of all: *raising* Jesus from the dead, proving He is who He claimed – the Son of God & Saviour of the World.

Did you know, the **Bible** itself declares that **{DPb}** if Jesus has *not* risen from the dead, Christians are to be pitied above all people! (1 Cor 15

God and the Bible encourage you to **pursue & follow the evidence!**

Like law student Josh McDowell **{DP}** who set out to disprove Christianity but became a Christian in the process, as he tells in his book *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*.

Or like long-time atheist & veteran Homicide detective J. Warner Wallace **{DP}** who was challenged to pursue the evidence & became a Christian, as he recounts in his book *Cold Case Christianity*.

Or like Lee Strobel, **{DPa}** investigative journalist & legal editor of *The Chicago Tribune* newspaper, who also set out to disprove Christianity, but became a Christian **{b}**, as is recounted in the recent movie release *The Case for Christ* (but trust me, his book is much more informative than the movie).

See a pattern here?

Sceptics, we invite you to come along in July to our 4-week course on investigating Jesus.

And a CAUTION to us Christians:

**Unlike** the authors just mentioned, too many well-intentioned but misguided Christians appeal to supposed “miraculous” evidence (from internet stories or claims of others) that simply not stack up or stand up even to biblical standards of miraculous.

Claims of miraculous gifts that do not match the biblical gift, claims of healings that are not, instant, complete & “certifiable”, but should be – according to Scripture:**{DP}**

*Jesus touched the man covered in leprosy, saying, “Be clean.”*

*And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him,*

*“Go, show yourself to the priests . . . as proof to them”. (Matthew 8 3:-4)*

I belabour this point because the same survey, **{DPa}** while highlighting some of top “attractors” to the religious belief (integrity of life), also highlights the top “repellents” to the faith **{DPb}**, and the co-equal worst repellent is ‘miraculous stories’, obviously not backed up! Because if they were certifiable & certified, *most* would not be repelled!

So, brothers and sisters, don’t hinder the gospel; help it with discerning *filters of fake!* Make sure biblical standards are met regarding any claims of so-called miracles & gifts.

Chapter 1 testifies to the Exalted of Christ, Lifted up to the Majesty on High.

But now for the surprise . . . The Sublime Son Lowered Himself . . .

## THE SUBLIME SON LOWERED HIMSELF – FOR A TIME (2:5-9A) **{DP}**

First, consider Look at 5-8,

*For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.*

*It has been testified somewhere [quoting Psalm 8],*

*“What is man, that you are mindful of him,*

*or the son of man, that you care for him?”*

*You made Him for a little while LOWER than the angels;*

*you have crowned him with glory and honour,*

*putting everything in subjection under his feet.”*

So who exactly is

"**man**, that God is mindful of him, the **Son of man** that God cares for Him"??

By one vantage point, Psalm 8 **looks backwards**, to Genesis 1-2.

God made **HUMANITY** to have dominion over the earth.

This is part of the Genesis mandate. Listen to the language of Genesis 1:28  
*God blessed Adam & Eve and said to them, "...multiply, fill the earth & **subdue** it. **Rule over** the fish in the sea, the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."*

So humanity is the pinnacle of God's earthly creation, crowned by God, made to govern God's earth, putting everything in subjection to the Creator's purpose.

2 insights:

- 1] A privilege! Yet *angels, heavenly* beings, are HIGHER/more exalted & powerful **{DP}** than us humans. A survey of the Bible makes that obvious.
- 2] It does not take long to realise we cannot even control/govern ourselves, never mind rule God's whole world rightly!

A downward spiral began at the Fall of Adam & Eve (humanity) into sin, in Genesis 3.

So Psalm 8 also **looks ahead**, for something greater – to the **Better Adam**, a Greater 'Man that God is mindful of', the Sublime 'Son of Man that God cares for' . . . **Jesus!**

That's why, finishing the quotation, the author of Hebrews adds his commentary in v.9  
*we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely **JESUS**,*

The Sublime Son Lowered Himself – for a Time.

This was a "lowering" of both *Status & Geography*: Jesus humbly gave up His glorious status in Heaven to come down to earth as a servant at the **Incarnation**: the birth of Jesus  
 V. 14 says, Jesus "partook of/took on" flesh & blood; He clothed His deity with humanity.

He became fully man, while remaining fully God. As John puts it in his Gospel,  
*"In the beginning was the Word . . . the Word was God . . . and the Word became flesh"*

The incarnation was only the beginning. Now for the WHY, the **heart** of the passage. **{DP}**

### THE SUBLIME SON LOWERED HIMSELF - FOR A PURPOSE (2:9B-18)

A *few* purposes, actually! Look & see the repeated "purpose" phrase: **{DP}** "...so that...",  
 how each is tied to Jesus' death (as the red font highlights)

The blue font highlights each of those purposes **{DP}**

SO THAT by the grace of God He might taste **DEATH** for everyone....

*Therefore, since the children share in flesh & blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same, SO THAT that through **DEATH** He might destroy the one who has the **power** of **DEATH**, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of **DEATH** were subject to lifelong slavery.*

Jesus lowered Himself, became a man, to:

- 1] Taste Death for everyone (v. 9b)
- 2] Destroy the devil's Power over Death (v. 14)
- 3] Deliver us who were enslaved by Fear of Death! (v. 15)

Let's get into each of these liberating truths! (The first truth will take the most time.)

## 1] JESUS **TASTES** DEATH FOR EVERYONE (V.9B) {DPA}

While there are many purposes for Jesus' Incarnation – to model the righteous life, to reveal God's character & care in healing & teaching, etc. – this verse tells us the ultimate purpose of **INCARNATION** was **CRUCIFIXION**. {DPb}

*“Jesus, made a little lower than angels [made into a man] . . . so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone....”*

Here is the author's point.

Angels cannot **DIE**. They are *immortal*.

Angels are created beings . . . so angels **are** angels!

**Angels cannot “become” human.**

They can “*appear*” as a human, but they cannot become human.

So connect the dots . . .

While angels **can** temporarily spare us from death (Isaiah 37, 1 angel levelling the Assyrian army about to kill Jerusalem's inhabitants),

Angels **cannot** end physical death or provide ultimate deliverance: from eternal death.

{DP} The Bible says “***the wages of SIN is Death***” – physical & eternal death are the *earned consequences* of our sin.

Angels cannot cleanse us from ***sin's guilt***, so angels cannot deliver us from *death/judgment!*

Jesus can! Jesus is the ***Better Deliverer!***

This is the point the author of Hebrews is making . . . again, connect the dots . . .

**God** *cannot not die.*

*But man can.*

So God as Creator, can enter creation, adding on humanity, SO THAT He could taste death, to defeat it's power and save us!

Verse 9 says it is “*by grace*” that Jesus tasted death, because He did NOT deserve death.

‘The wages of sin is death’, but Jesus never sinned!

That grace is ‘expressed’ in verse 10, {DPd}

*“For it was fitting that He, for whom & by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the **FOUNDER** of their salvation perfect through suffering.”*

2 language details need to be highlighted/clarified:

- 1] The cool Greek word variously translated “*Founder/Author/Pioneer*” of salvation
- 2] “*made perfect through suffering*” this does NOT all at mean Jesus was sinful, defiled, needing cleansing.

• Let's start with “***made perfect through suffering***”

This does NOT all at mean Jesus was sinful, defiled, needing purification/cleansing.

The verb “to perfect” means “*to finish*”, somewhat like our old term “*finishing school*”, to be fully equipped to function in society.

Jesus, to *fully function* in His intended role, needed to *experience* our suffering.

Not just suffering in general – a particular suffering is in mind here . . .

Look at the outcome in v.11 (for a clearer translation, a blend of the NAS & NIV): **{DPe}**

*“Both He who makes people holy [Christ] and those who are made holy [Christians] are of one Father. So Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters!”*

Astounding solidarity believers have with Jesus that we do not share with angels.

Then in verse 12, the author of Hebrew quotes Psalm 22 for support.

Psalm 22 is also what Jesus quotes hanging on the CROSS. Remember?  
**“My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?”**

Psalm 22 is another Messianic psalm about the Suffering Servant, particular suffering: Christ CRUCIFIED. We see the same point at verse 17 closing the chapter: **{DPf}**

*Therefore he had to be made like His brothers in every respect, SO THAT he might become a merciful & faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation / atonement for the sins of the people.*

Jesus is our man – the only *sinless* man – suffering on the cross, to atone for our sins.

- Now we tie this together with that awesome v.10 word, *Founder/Pioneer* of Salvation. The Greek word (*archēgos*, lit. *arch-leader*) was often used to describe a **CHAMPION**. **{DP}** A “Champion” in ancient times was someone who *engaged in representative combat*. Someone who intervened for you to handle a foe that you cannot beat.

Think David “representing” Israel, facing **Goliath!** (You go David!)  
 If David wins, *Israel* wins. If Goliath wins, *Philistia* wins.

The term *archēgos* was even used in Greek mythology to describe Hercules.

As one commentator put it,

*“If this [connection] is the author’s intention, it is comparable to a modern preacher saying Jesus is “the real superman.”*

What is surprising with Jesus is not the OUTCOME of the battle (as with David & Goliath), but the **MANNER** in which our Champion Jesus achieved our liberation.

*The one with all power took the position of the powerless.*

*The Lord of life drank deeply of death.*

*The way he brings us up to God was by coming completely down to, even below our level, taking the form of a servant”<sup>2</sup> . . . taking on scandalous death on a cross!*

There in a famously tragic murder that took place in New York City in 1964.

Not only tragic for the *victim*, but tragic in what the murder shows about fallen *humanity*, and how we need a champion. This was **{DP}** the murder of **Kitty Genovese**.

Kitty came home late at night from shopping, and right in front of her own apartment, a mugger tried to rob kitty. While resisting him, she was stabbed.

She cried out loudly – *“He stabbed me! Please, help me!!”*

As reported in *The New York Times* witnesses saw dozens of apartment lights turn on & many windows opened up to look out, so the mugger quickly withdrew into the dark.

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<sup>2</sup> George Guthrie, *Hebrews* (NIVAC series)

But because people did not make themselves vulnerable, did not get involved, did NOT COME DOWN – after a few minutes, the mugger realised with no champion to defend her, he could return to finish the job. He found where Kitty had crawled to, robbed her for \$46 dollars, and left her to die.

The author of Hebrews is telling us, **Jesus is BETTER!**  
 He has not only heard our cries – and He does not only **look** down, **He came down!**  
 Not just at the risk of His life (the case with those NY neighbours),  
 But at the COST of His life, knowing full well the purpose of His coming: to die!

He is no callous King.  
 Jesus is no Allah of Islam, no Greek pantheon of gods, *remaining distant & enthroned.*  
 He's no Prince Harry, who might dispatch someone else to help outside the Palace.  
 He's the Prince of Peace, who came down Himself, to our Ground Zero.  
 Through His *Incarnation*, became an "Insider", our Man.  
 Through His *Crucifixion*, Jesus became our "Champion!"

Main argument explained, more briefly we consider our next "So That", v.14: **{DP}**

## 2] DESTROYS THE DEVIL'S POWER OVER DEATH (v. 14)

*Since therefore the children share in flesh & blood, He himself likewise partook of the same things, so that through death He might destroy the one who has the POWER of death, that is, the devil.*

The devil, as *purveyor* of sin, *tempter* in the Garden, was *instrumental* in death entering the world – through sin.

The name Satan means "accuser" and that's what he is.  
 Satan's ultimate weapon against us is our own sin. We *rightly* stand accused!

The word "destroy" means "*to render inoperative, ineffective*".  
 So, Jesus destroying the devil, means nullifying his work as accuser.  
 Hopefully we've got the idea:

If the wages of sin is death.  
 by dying on the cross to pay for *our sins*,  
 Jesus nullifies our judgment of Death.

Jesus has taken the chief weapon of the devil out of his hand.  
 He cannot make a case for our death penalty,  
 because the Judge has acquitted us by the death of his Son!

To put it another way, on the Cross, **Jesus 'de-fanged' the devil.** **{DP}**

*"O Death, where is your sting?"*  
*The sting of death is sin,*  
*But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" (1 Cor 15:55)*

Notice, the devil's *power* is destroyed, but the destruction of *death itself* – the final enemy – awaits the Day of Reckoning, when all the dead will be resurrected:  
 Those in Christ, to *eternal life*.  
 Those not, to *eternal death*.

The Devil's argument to Adam & Eve was:

*You will surely not die! There will be no consequences! Forget about your sin!*

His **deceptive, tempting lies** continue to be spread TODAY, **{DP}**

*Life is quite absurd, and death's the final word.*

*You must always face the curtain with a bow!*

**Forget about your sin** – give the audience a grin 😊

*Enjoy it, it's the last chance anyhow!*

(the full verse from the sacrilegious comedians Monty Python)

Don't buy satan's lie! You cannot ignore your sin, because God cannot.

Poet Dylan Thomas echoes the lie: if you fight death, fight *without* our Champion Jesus

**{DP}** “Do not go gentle into that good night,  
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.”

All the rage in the world will not give you defeat over death.

And death is no “good night” for those who enter without Jesus as their risen Champion.

Finally, raging against death will not free you from **fear** of it . . . (the final Purpose)

### 3] **DELIVERS US WHO WERE ENSLAVED BY FEAR OF DEATH!** (v. 15) **{DP}**

“and deliver all those who through FEAR OF DEATH were subject to lifelong slavery.” (v. 15)

Woody Allen, Monty Python and Dylan Thomas – and maybe you – can wax eloquent all about supposedly not fearing death.

I so appreciate the *humble honest insight* of Leo Tolstoy **{DPa}**, the great Russian author.

He came to realise first-hand that deceiving yourself into hope & meaning does not work – it cannot last. Fear of death paralyses, just like the author of Hebrews writes. As a 50 year old, I plead with you to listen now to Tolstoy's reflections<sup>3</sup>,

“Something strange began to happen to me at age 50. I had a wife who loved me, and whom I loved; I had an large estate that kept increasing . . . my name was respected, I enjoyed physical strength, and yet **{DPb}** I could not live because of death.

The question, which brought me to the verge of suicide, sought an answer without which one cannot live: **{DPc}** Is there any meaning in life that my inevitable death does not destroy?

Today or tomorrow death will come to those I love, and then to me. Soon not only will I not exist, but eventually no one will . . . Why then go on with the effort? What is it all for? What difference does it make whether or not I do this thing or that thing or nothing at all?

So I could give no rational meaning to any single action or even to my whole life. But what was so surprising was how we can fail to see this. For a time it is possible to live intoxicated with life – but as soon as one is sober, it is impossible not to see that **{DPd}** life in the face of death is a fraud, and a stupid fraud. How often I have been told, ‘oh you cannot understand the meaning of life so don't think about it, just live.’ But I no longer can do that.”

Wise words, as last time I checked (in my lifetime at least), the death rate is still 100%.

<sup>3</sup> from Leo Tolstoy's work, **A Confession**.

This **crippling, paralyzing fear** . . . this not being able to *live* because of *death* . . . it's inevitability . . . this is what awakened Tolstoy to **pursue Jesus** . . . to drink in the Gospels, to devour Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. **{OFF}**

And we have the same choice this morning.

Actually we must choose: Jesus said "*whoever is not for me is against Me.*"

So not to trust in Christ, worship Christ, IS to choose.

So I have a closing word to those not-yet-Christians, and then to Christians.

### **Not-yet-Christians**

As we see in books like Job, the devil, has the power to destroy our body.

[though only subject to God's righteous permission & purposes].

At the Cross, Jesus disabled death's master & Satan has lost that privilege against Christians. But for non-Christians, who have not Jesus as Champion, the devil's accusations still stand!

And on the Day of Reckoning, all judgment has been given to the Sublime Son (Jn 5:22,27)

So when Jesus said,

*Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul.*

*Rather fear Him who can destroy both soul & body in hell.*

He was referring to Himself.

Forgiveness is found in Christ, by grace!

Judgment is dispensed from Christ, by justice.

I plead with you to *turn to Him* who **TASTED DEATH** so that you could live!

Who destroys the accusations of the devil!, and

Who delivers from crippling fear of death!

I will NEVER forget the year we went to RiverFire, and instead of watching the F111 fly over from Southbank, we were in the CBD on George St, with high rises surrounding us . . . acting as reflective sound boards.

I don't think I ever experienced such Fear & Trembling.

When the pilot hit the afterburners right over our heads, I saw the every high-rise window shaking violently, felt my chest was shaking, and I could hear nothing else but ROAR for many seconds . . . until the sound faded and I all heard were kids crying everywhere on George Street and almost every car alarm going off from the vibration!

It hit me – that plane has the

- the Power to **Destroy!**

- the Power to **Defend!**

I was so glad the plane was on my side, not coming to drop bomb payload.

PRAISE God who has the power to send me to hell!, BUT defends me, saves me!

Not from bombs, but saves from MY sin and the eternal condemnation I deserve.

PLEASE, run to His arms of grace in repentant faith.

### **Christians**

Until the final day, death is still the last enemy.

Christians still experience physical death, although we have nothing to fear from it. Yet sometimes we do fear it.

O, how I need the encouragement of this passage!  
How often I lose perspective. So do others.

It's one thing, say, at a diagnosis of cancer, to consider all options:  
pray earnestly for God to heal; pursue God-given ethical medicines;  
even revisit the debated topic of is the miraculous spiritual "gift of healing" still functioning today. All fine, all good.

But I've known Christians of solid theological grounding, who completely lose the plot, in grasping at straws, they've actually gone to heretical ***gospel-denying*** prosperity-preacher/healers. We are not to turn from the gospel to pursue earthy

This passage shows that God WANTS His children *free, liberated* from fear of death! Jesus has disabled death's master.  
What a difference this should make!

Christian author C.S. Lewis just hits the nail on the head, when he wrapped up *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a famous series of fictional novels with deep Christian symbolism.

Because in Scripture Jesus is called 'the Lion of the Tribe of Judah', Lewis depicts Jesus as a Lion named "Aslan".

And the four children of the Pevensie family in England are blessed with eyes to see & experience the land of Narnia, *God's eternal reality*, where Aslan is King. Our earth, being just a shadow of that reality, is called the *Shadow-lands*.

Listen to how Lewis beautifully & biblically wraps up his Narnia series, with Aslan speaking to the Pevensies, who just experienced a train crash in England.

*"All of you are — as you used to call it in the Shadow-Lands — dead.*

*The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: **this** is the morning."*

The narrator takes over.

*As Aslan spoke He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read, which goes on for ever, in which every chapter is better than the one before."*

If we do not need to fear our last & greatest enemy, death,

. . . then we do not need to fear ANYTHING!

We can be free: free for joy, free for others, free to hope, free to forgive.

Can I say, the difference Jesus makes is a difference the **world needs to see** in us!

I did not plan to end 3 weeks in a row with a 1 minute video clip from the Middle East!

But here we are again . . . with a *powerful example* what the world needs to see in us about Hope in Life, No Fear in death.

This year on Palm Sunday (the Sunday before Easter), in Cairo, Egypt, twin suicide bombings by **ISIS** killed **{DP}** more than 45 Christians in worship.

A Christian widow is being interviewed, asked "*What is she thinking toward those who just killed her husband*"? Her husband died, shielding others from the suicide bombers.

Here is her answer of *hope, forgiveness & gratitude* simply stuns Amr Adeeb – perhaps the most prominent talk show host in Egypt, and NOT a Christian. After 12 seconds of stunned silence (which I edited out), carefully listen to his response.<sup>4</sup>

[actually, read the subtitles, but hear his shock, feel his fervour, his praise]

### **{CLIP}**

With *fearless hope & free forgiveness* "Christians are made of a different substance!" ALL because and ONLY because our 'Man of Steel', Jesus, is our **Lowly** CHAMPION, our Better Deliverer from Sin & Death & Fear!

This is what the world needs to see in us, and what we need to see *in each other!*

Rejoice Christian – for Jesus is **a Better Deliverer!**

Rejoice Seeker – for Jesus who has defeated the power of death, can be found!

### **CLOSING SONG MEDLEY**

"In Christ Alone"

(*"No Guilt in Life, No Fear in Death, THIS is the power of Christ in me!"*)

"From the Squalor of a Borrowed Stable" (perfectly summaries Hebrews 2!)

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2017/april-web-only/forgiveness-muslims-moved-coptic-christians-egypt-isis.html?start=1>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Title/Central Idea:

Jesus is a **Better DELIVERER** than angels  
 – **LOWERING** Himself to the likeness of men, only He can Deliver men from death!

### Introduction

- 1] How often do people around you discuss death?  
 When death is raised, how quickly is the subject changed?  
 When death is actually discussed, where does the conversation usually turn?

WARNING – Do Not Reject Salvation in God’s Sublime Son! (2:1–4)

- 2] How does the warning wrap up chapter 1, Jesus being a Better Message/Messenger?  
 What role did *angels* play in the message of the OT? What’s the warning about.
- 3a] What role did ‘attesting miracles’ play in the author’s *confidence* in Jesus’ message, and Jesus as Messenger?
- b] What do we need to be mindful of today regarding miraculous claims, especial given this year’s Aussie survey & top “repellents” to faith. How should we appeal to the miraculous?

The Sublime Son **Lowered** Himself – for a Time (2:5–9a)

- 4] The author quotes Psa 8 to make his point; how does it relate to the Genesis mandate (Gen 1:27-28)?  
 How does humanity compare in status/role to the rest of *earthly* beings? Compare to angels?
- 5] Since things went wrong at the Fall, what exactly is the “**Lowering**” Jesus had to do to fulfil that mandate? (what did He need to become?)

The Sublime Son **Lowered** Himself – for a PURPOSE (2:9b-18)

#### ● To Taste Death for everyone (v. 9b)

- 6] The Incarnation was the beginning. What is the ultimate purpose of Jesus’ birth?  
 (How is Jesus “lowering” essential to atonement? See also verses 10-11, 17-18)

#### ● To Destroy the devil’s Power over Death (v. 14)

- 7] What is the devil’s *main weapon*? How does it no longer apply to Christians?
- 8] What are the *common lies* of the devil today about death, sin & consequences?

#### ● To Deliver us who were enslaved by Fear of Death! (v. 15)

- 9] When people discuss death, what are they *most* afraid of? (the process? The outcome?)  
 What are *you* most afraid of? How can remembering Jesus as your Champion help?
- 10] When death is discussed, how can you go about *bringing up* Jesus as Champion (v.10)?  
 How is the world impacted by our *attitude* make when Christians close to us die?  
 (Discuss the impact of the Coptic Christian widow, and how Jesus as our Champion should instil hope [instead of fear] and forgiveness [instead of grudge] in us, the Delivered.)