

Hebrews - A Letter Addressed to Modern-Day Christians

Part 4

Hebrews 2:5 – 18

Having shown that Jesus is superior to all created things including angels, the writer of Hebrews, prompted by the Holy Spirit, reveals Jesus as “*The Son of Man*”. The title “*Son of Man*” was one that Jesus preferred as a title.

Hebrews 2:5-18 [NIV] *“It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour and put everything under his feet.” In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.” And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me.” Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”*

These verses emphasise the complete identification of Jesus with humanity.

Hebrews 2:5 [NIV] *“It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking.”*

Again the writer emphasises that Jesus is *not* to be likened to angels.

Hebrews 2:6 [NIV] *“But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?”*

This is a quotation from the Psalms.

Psalms 8:4-6 [NIV] *“what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour. You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet.”*

This applies to man in general but Jesus as “*The Son of Man*” in particular.

The word translated “*heavenly beings*” [NIV] “*angels*” [KJ] “*God*” [Amplified] is Hebrew “*elohim*” is also translated as Judges five times in Old Testament. The root meaning of the word is power, might or authority.

Judges do have power as they are representatives of God administering His Law.

This fact should make us stand in awe of one who is appointed a judge and also make us consider well before we set ourselves up to be a judge of others, for in a certain sense it is taking God's place.

James 4:11-12 [NIV] *“Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you, who are you to judge your neighbour?”*

James here warns us that in our present condition we should **not** set ourselves up to be judges.

Yet the writer of Hebrews shows that our destiny is to rule, as a judge, with Jesus over all of God's creation.

Hebrews 2:8 [NIV] *“and put everything under his feet.” In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him.”*

One thing is certain: humanity is not yet what we were created to be, for we have not yet qualified for what God eventually wants us to become.

Because we are not what we should be, there is a “*built in*” frustration in humanity, being defeated by our weakness in the face of temptations, bound to uncontrolled emotions when we should be free, and slaves when we are designed to rule as kings.

Hebrews 2:9 [NIV] *“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”*

It was into this frustrating situation that God sent Jesus as the ultimate solution.

Jesus the Christ died to make humanity what we should be and rid us of our frustration, servitude, bondage and weakness and allow us to inherit the dominion we ought to have.

Three basic ideas emerge from this passage of scripture:-

- 1 God created physical humans, a little [or for a little time] less than angels [Judge or God], eventually to have mastery over all other things he had created.
- 2 We through our sin [missing the mark or goal] entered into frustration and defeat instead of mastery and dominion.
- 3 Into this state of frustration and defeat came Jesus the Christ, in order that by His Life, Death and Glorification, He might make us what we were meant to be.

We may express this another way; this passage shows us:-

- 1 What the ideal human should be, kin to God and Master of the Universe.
- 2 The actual state of humanity, frustration instead of mastery, failure instead of glory, slaves instead of kings.
- 3 How the actual can be changed to the ideal is through Jesus our Saviour.

Hebrews 2:10 [NIV] *“In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.”*

Our future inheritance is **totally** joined with Jesus the Christ.

Three parties are referred to in this verse:-

- 1 God the Father.
- 2 Author of Salvation – Jesus Christ.

3 Other sons [adopted] who are to become sons through Jesus.

“*Author*” – beginning, rule or authority – more than the cause or start of our salvation, but as His name Jesus implies, “*is the saviour*”. [Jesus is a transliteration of the Hebrew “*Joshua*” meaning “*Jehovah is salvation*” – “*Jehovah*” – self-existent or eternal “*yasha*” – to deliver or make free.] “*Author*” same Greek word is translated “*prince*” [KJ] in **Acts 3:15** and **Acts 5:31** [both KJ and NIV]

By nature Jesus was always perfect, but to become the author of salvation to humanity He had to be “*made perfect*” by suffering during His physical existence.

Making Him then a pattern for us to follow in His Footsteps.

1 Peter 2:21 [NIV] “*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.*”

We follow Jesus where He has already been.

Hebrews 2:11 [NIV] “*Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.*”

We have three parties mentioned here again.

- 1 “*He who sanctifies*” – Jesus.
- 2 “*Those sanctified*” – other “*Sons*” of God.
- 3 “*Of one*” or “*from one*” – God the Father.

Because the Father calls us “*sons*”, Jesus calls us “*brothers*”.

Note: As always Jesus left the initiative with the Father; likewise whatever we struggle to accomplish for God will come to nothing unless we also leave the initiative to God, then follow through ourselves.

Jesus had no alternative but to call us brothers once the Father had called us sons; likewise we also have to call brothers anyone whom God has called to be His Son!

We have no option; we may think God made a strange choice but that must not deter us from treating them as a brother or sister.

Hebrews 2:11 [NIV] “*Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.*”

“*Sanctified*” or “*made Holy*” [NIV] is part of the process of “*salvation*”.

Hebrews 10:14 [NIV] “*because by one sacrifice he has made perfect for ever those who are being made holy.*”

Remember the underlying meaning of these two words mentioned again here.

“**Perfect**” – Greek “*teleios*” meaning a “*person [or object] who has fully carried out the purpose or the plan for which he or it was purposed and designed*” – could be translated “*mature*” or “*fully grown*”.

Jesus the Christ was “*made perfect*” through suffering to fulfil His present office of High Priest. How is this?

- 1 Through suffering Jesus can really identify with humanity who suffers.
- 2 Through suffering Jesus literally *“feels with humanity”* so can sympathise. Jesus knows what it is like to be in pain, weary, tempted, sorrowful, rejected, lonely. He experienced them all.
- 3 As a result of the above, Jesus can really help at all times of need; He knows exactly what help we need. Therefore, He is the perfect High Priest.

“Holy” or “Sanctified” – Greek *“hagiasmos”* – meaning *“separation to God”*, and the conduct befitting those so separated.

Sanctification is thus a state pre-determined by God for believers, into which by grace He calls them, and in which they begin their Christian course and so pursue it. Hence they are called *“saints”* [*“hagioi”*]

This relationship with God we enter by faith in Jesus Christ.

Acts 26:17-18 [NIV] *“I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”*

Spoken by Christ to Saul [Paul] on the road to Damascus.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 [NIV] *“Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”*

After a vivid description of our previous life, Paul contrasts us to what God has made us.

Romans 15:16 [NIV] *“to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”*

The Holy Spirit is the agent in sanctification.

1 Peter 1:2 [NIV] *“who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.”*

The Holy Spirit is associated with the choice of God, being the agent working with us leading to our calling by God, and sanctification.

John 14:17 [NIV] *“the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you.”*

Sanctification is an on-going process in each individual; it cannot be transferred or imputed, it is an individual possession, built up, little by little, as a result of obedience to the Word of God, and of the following the example of Jesus Christ.

Romans 15:16 [NIV] *“to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.”*

Hebrews 2:12-13 [NIV] *“He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.” And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me.”*

The Old Testament foretells this position of mediator between God and man that Jesus would fulfil perfectly.

A **Psalms 22:22** [NIV] *“I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.”*

Jesus, what is predicted in this Psalm *is only fulfilled* in Jesus Christ.

John 14:6-9; John 17:6-9, 25-26 Jesus did reveal the Father to all mankind.

B **Isaiah 8:17** [NIV] *“I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob. I will put my trust in him.”*

Jesus set the pattern for us to put our trust totally in the Father.

John 5:19, 30; John 8:28

C **Isaiah 8:18** [NIV] *“Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion.”*

Depicts Jesus with other “children” whom the Father has given him as “brothers”.

Hebrews 2:14-15 [NIV] *“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”*

Again affirms the complete identification of Jesus with humanity and the double outworking of His Death.

1 To strip Satan of his power over us; i.e. death that Satan has through blinding us to the good news of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ’s Death, to free us from death. [1 **John 3:8**]

2 To deliver humanity from the slavery of the fear of death; *as long as we fear death we are slaves to those who threaten us with death.*

1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 [NIV] *“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him. Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”*

This knowledge of hope beyond physical death takes away the fear of death.

Revelation 12:11 [NIV] *“They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death.”*

Having overcome the enslaving power of Satan through the blood sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, and our own testimony [witness] of what Jesus had personally done for us, we can face death without fear.

Hebrews 2:16 [NIV] *“For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.”*

The redemptive work of Jesus is *not* for angels but for descendants of Abraham, thus fulfilling God’s Promise as recorded in **Isaiah 41:8-10** [NIV].

Who are the descendants of Abraham?

Those who **by faith** in the sacrifice Jesus the Christ, receive the Promise that God made to Abraham and his children.

Hebrews 11:8-19 [NIV] *“By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. By faith Abraham, even though he was past age, and Sarah herself was barren, was enabled to become a father because he considered him faithful who had made the promise. And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore. All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them. By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had received the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, even though God had said to him, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” Abraham reasoned that God could raise the dead, and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from death.”*

Abraham showed his like-mindedness to God by being willing to sacrifice his only son as an expression of love and faith.

Faith can only be expressed through love and the accompanying sacrifice that goes with love.

John 15:13 [NIV] *“Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.”*

James 2:19-24 [NIV] *“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that, and shudder. You foolish man, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless? Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. And the scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,” and he was called God’s friend. You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone.”*

Faith without works [expressed in sacrificial love] is useless.

Hebrews 2:17-18 [NIV] *“For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”*

First occurrence of one of the key words “*High Priest*”, and with it three consequences of the identification of Jesus with the descendants of Abraham.

- 1 A merciful and faithful High Priest.
- 2 The sacrifice that brings atonement for our sins.
- 3 His ability to “*emphasise*” with and therefore help His brothers.

We have now been shown the complete identification of Jesus with humanity; we can now apply this to the work that Jesus the Son of Man is performing now as our High Priest.