

# The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews

## *Christ, Superior to Creation*

### *Hebrews 2:1-18*

- I. CHRIST, SUPERIOR IN HIS SALVATION (Hebrews 2:1-4)
  - A. The Warning to Heed (Hebrews 2:1)
    1. The cause of the warning—“Therefore”
      - a. Christ’s superiority to the heavens and earth (Hebrews 1:10-12)
      - b. Christ’s superiority to the angels (Hebrews 1:4-9, 13-14)
    2. The content of the warning
      - a. Our accountability to that which we have heard
        - (1) The obligation admonished—“we ought to give”
        - (2) The obligation exalted—“the *more* earnest heed”
          - a) If Christ is superior to the heavens and the earth
          - b) If Christ is superior to the angels
        - (3) The obligation specified—“to the things which we have heard”
      - b. Our tendency to let things slip
  - B. The Word Spoken by Angels (Hebrews 2:2)
    1. The identification of the word spoken by angels
      - a. Hints within the passage...
        - (1) Transgression (Exodus 23:21—first use; Isaiah 24:5; Daniel 9:11; Romans 4:15; Galatians 3:19; James 2:9, 11; 1 John 3:4)
        - (2) Disobedience (1 Timothy 1:9)
        - (3) Just (Romans 2:13; Romans 7:12)
        - (4) Recompense of reward (Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:12)
      - b. Hints outside of the passage...
        - (1) Thousands of angels are said to have been in Sinai, in the holy place (Psalm 68:17; see Deuteronomy 33:2).
        - (2) Stephen declared that the Jews “received the law by the disposition of angels” (Acts 7:53). The word *disposition* denotes authority in ordering or managing of a task.
        - (3) The apostle Paul wrote that the law “was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator” (Galatians 3:19).
        - (4) Here, in our passage, the apostle Paul said the word was “spoken by angels” (Hebrews 2:2).
    2. The firmness of the word spoken by angels—“stedfast”
    3. The accountability of the word spoken by angels (see Hebrews 10:28-29)
      - a. *Every* transgression and disobedience
      - b. Received a *just* recompense of reward

## C. The Fear of Neglect (Hebrews 2:3-4)

1. The comparison stated (Hebrews 2:3)
  - a. If the word spoken by angels was...(Hebrews 2:2)
  - b. How shall we escape, if we...(Hebrews 2:3)
  - c. Note: There is some confusion as it relates to the interpretation of this verse and the intended audience.
    - (1) The problem
      - a) With Paul using the pronoun *we*, does this suggest he was addressing believers?
      - b) If so, does this mean that believers can neglect their salvation and thus lose that salvation?
    - (2) The solution
      - a) The “great salvation” obviously refers to the offer of salvation through the shed blood of Jesus Christ.
      - b) The word *neglect* came into the English language from the Latin and means *not to pick up* or *not to select*. This is validated in the pages of scripture (Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:1; Colossians 2:23; 1 Timothy 4:14; Hebrews 2:3).
      - c) The concern was not for believers who would live carnal lives after salvation, but for unsaved Jews who sought to establish their own righteousness (Romans 10:3-4).
      - d) Hence, Paul was not using the pronoun *we* because he and the intended audience were believers, but because he and the intended audience were Hebrews.
2. The identity of our message (Hebrews 2:3-4)
  - a. In name—“so great salvation” (Hebrews 2:3)
  - b. In origin—“which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord” (Hebrews 2:3)
  - c. In confirmation—“and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;” (Hebrews 2:3)
    - (1) The original disciples/apostles who heard Christ during His earthly ministry
    - (2) The apostle Paul who heard Him speak on the road to Damascus and received the revelation directly from the Lord
  - d. In witness (Hebrews 2:4; see also Mark 16:19-20)
    - (1) The identity of the witness—“God”
    - (2) The nature of the witness
      - a) Signs and wonders
      - b) Divers miracles
      - c) Gifts of the Holy Ghost
    - (3) The validity of the witness—“according to his own will”; Note: One area of great concern any time you have a witness called to the stand is whether or not that witness has been coerced into the testimony he or she is about to give. God let it be known that He bore witness to the gospel message “according to his own will” (Hebrews 2:4).

## II. CHRIST, SUPERIOR IN HIS HUMILITY (Hebrews 2:5-13)

## A. The Marvel of Christ's Humility (Hebrews 2:5-9)

## 1. Christ's superiority (Hebrews 2:5-8)

## a. To angels (Hebrews 2:5)

- (1) In this passage, a contrast is presented without being stated.
- (2) The statement: "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come"
- (3) The suggestion: But, the Father has or will do this as it pertains to the Son of God.

## b. To man (Hebrews 2:6-8)

- (1) The place of man in relation to God (Hebrews 2:6; see Psalm 8:1, 4)
  - a) The wonder that God would think of man—"What is man, that thou [the LORD] art mindful of him?"
  - b) The wonder that God would humble Himself to visit man—What is "the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Note: Though man was made a little lower than the angels, God's visitation will eventually place man over the angels (1 Corinthians 6:3). However, this is only possible in Christ. Consider the following notes on God's visitation of man.
    - i) The first usage – "And the LORD visited Sarah as he had said...For Sarah conceived..." (Genesis 21:1-2); Note: God's redemption of Israel out of Egypt is also identified as a visitation
    - ii) The time of visitation
      - (a) "...Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people," (Luke 1:67-68)
      - (b) "Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:78-79)
      - (c) "And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people." (Luke 7:16)
      - (d) "For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou

knewest not the time of thy visitation.” (Luke 19:43-44)

- (2) The place of man in relation to angels—“Thou madest him a little lower than the angels;” (Hebrews 2:7; see Psalm 8:5)
  - (3) The place of man in relation to the remainder of creation (Hebrews 2:7-8; see Psalm 8:5-8)
    - a) “[T]hou crownedst him with glory and honour,” (Hebrews 2:7)
    - b) “[A]nd didst set him over the works of thy hands:” (Hebrews 2:7)
    - c) “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet” (Hebrews 2:8).
      - i) The plan—“For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him.”
      - ii) The problem—“But *now* we see not yet all things put under him.”
2. Christ’s humility (Hebrews 2:9)
- a. The contrast presented
    - (1) Unto the angels hath He not...
    - (2) But we see Jesus
  - b. The condescension presented
    - (1) “Jesus,” the very Son of God
    - (2) “[W]as made a little lower than the angels”, though He is the God of angels and the recipients of the angels’ worship (Hebrews 1:6)
    - (3) “[F]or the suffering of death,” though He had done nothing worthy of death, nor was it possible that Christ should be holden of the pains of death (Acts 2:24)
    - (4) “[C]rowned with glory and honour”, though He was the one who crowned man as the king of creation only for man to yield his throne to “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2)
    - (5) “[T]hat he by the grace of God should taste death for every man”, though man relinquished his own everlasting life; Note: This passage presents a dual nature that needs our attention.
      - a) Potentially, Christ paid the price for all men.
        - i) He tasted death for “every man” (Hebrews 2:9).
        - ii) He takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29).
        - iii) He draws all men unto Him (John 12:32).
        - iv) He died for all (2 Corinthians 5:15).
        - v) He gave Himself a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6).
        - vi) He is the propitiation for the sins of “the whole world” (1 John 2:2).
        - vii) He bought those who deny Him (2 Peter 2:1).
      - b) Practically, Christ’s payment is applied to believers.
        - i) Specially of those that believe (1 Timothy 4:10)
        - ii) That whosoever believeth on Him (John 3:16)
        - iii) To whosoever shall confess Him (1 John 4:14-15)

## B. The Kinship of Christ's Humility (Hebrews 2:10-13)

1. The process of Christ's perfection (Hebrews 2:10; see Hebrews 5:7-9)
  - a. The nature of the process—"it became him"
  - b. The result of the process
    - (1) The One "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things"
    - (2) "[I]n bringing many sons unto glory,"
    - (3) "[T]o make the captain of their salvation perfect"; Note: The concept of Christ's perfection is often misunderstood
      - a) Consider the definition of the word *perfect*.
        - i) The word perfect does not mean *sinless* in the Bible.
        - ii) The etymology of the word shows the main idea of the word to be *finished* or *complete*.
        - iii) To be perfect means to be complete in all respects; without defect or omission; sound.
      - b) Consider the perfection of Christ.
        - i) His work was "finished" on the cross (John 19:30).
        - ii) He was "perfected" in His resurrection (Luke 13:32).
        - iii) He was made "perfect" through sufferings (Hebrews 2:10; Hebrews 5:8-9).
          - (a) He learned obedience (Hebrews 5:8; Philippians 2:8; Mark 14:32-36).
          - (b) He became the author of eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:9).
          - (c) He became one with His brethren (Hebrews 2:10-11).
          - (d) He became the succourer of those tempted (Hebrews 2:18; Hebrews 4:15).
      - c) Consider the dual nature of His perfection.
        - i) He was made perfect in His nature—He learned obedience and understood how to succour those tempted.
        - ii) He was made perfect in His work—He completed the work of reconciliation and became one again with His brethren.
    - c. The path of the process—"through sufferings"
  2. The unity of Christ's perfection (Hebrews 2:11-13)
    - a. The sanctifier and those sanctified are all of one (Hebrews 2:11).
    - b. Christ is not ashamed to call those sanctified brethren (Hebrews 2:11-13).
      - (1) He promised to declare God's name unto His *brethren* and sing God's praise in the midst of the church (Hebrews 2:12; see Psalm 22:22; with Mark 14:26).
      - (2) He promised trust in God and spoke of the *children* God gave Him (Hebrews 2:13; Isaiah 8:17-18).



### III. CHRIST, SUPERIOR IN HIS SUFFERING (Hebrews 2:14-18)

#### A. The Victory of His Suffering (Hebrews 2:14-15)

1. The commonality of nature (Hebrews 2:14)
  - a. The nature of children (Hebrews 2:14)
    - (1) That is, children of God or people of His creation, but specifically the Jews
    - (2) They “are partakers of flesh and blood” (see 1 Corinthians 15:50)
  - b. The nature of Christ (Hebrews 2:14); “he also himself likewise took part of the same;” (Philippians 2:7-8); Note: If Christ had not adorned the nature of man, He could not have submitted Himself to death. Thus, this was the only path to victory.
2. The cause of this nature (Hebrews 2:14-15)
  - a. The destruction of Satan (Hebrews 2:14)
    - (1) That through death
    - (2) He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil
      - a) The power of the fear of death (Job 24:17; Psalm 55:4)
      - b) The ultimate power of death (Deuteronomy 32:39; 1 Samuel 2:6)
      - c) The permissive power of death (Job 2:6; Psalm 118:18; 1 Corinthians 5:5)
  - b. The deliverance of people (Hebrews 2:15)
    - (1) Men were in constant fear of death.
    - (2) This fear made them subject to bondage.
    - (3) It only stands to reason that the removal of this fear would allow men to experience a freedom not experienced by those who always lived in its fear.

#### B. The Path to His Suffering (Hebrews 2:16)

1. Not through the nature of angels
  - a. Angels are spirits (Psalm 104:4; Hebrews 1:7)
  - b. Christ specifically said that He was not a spirit (see Matthew 14:26-27; Mark 6:49-50; Luke 24:37-39).
2. But through the seed of Abraham (see Galatians 3:16, 29)
3. Note: This passage, though quite simple, has been greatly complicated by the modern perversions.
  - a. A sampling of translations
    - (1) New International Version—“For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendents.”
    - (2) New American Standard Version—“For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the seed of Abraham.”
    - (3) New King James Version— “For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.”

- (4) New American [Catholic] Bible— “Surely he did not help angels but rather the descendents of Abraham.”
  - (5) New World [Jehovah Witness] Translation— “For he is really not assisting angels at all, but he is assisting Abraham’s seed.”
  - b. Comments about the translation
    - (1) This is not a matter of a difference in the Greek text. The Greek text reads the same for all the translations. This is a difference in how to translate the words that are there.
    - (2) The modern versions all agree with one another no matter what their leaning doctrinally.
    - (3) Yet, this does not mean that the King James Bible is wrong. In fact, the modern versions are all teaching false doctrine.
      - a) They teach that Jesus does not or did not assist, help or aid the angels.
      - b) How can the One who created the angels and preserves them be said to not help or aid them?
    - (4) The italicized words in the King James Bible shows the abbreviated nature of the verse in the Greek. However, the taking on of the nature of angels is the only meaning that makes sense in view of the subject material of Hebrews 2:14, 17.
- C. The Purpose and Outcome of His Suffering (Hebrews 2:17-18)
- 1. The declaration of necessity (Hebrews 2:17)
    - a. In all things, it behoved Christ to be made like unto His brethren.
    - b. The word *behoved* denotes necessity (Luke 24:46). Historically, it was defined as “to have need of.”
    - c. Therefore, Bible indicates that it was a necessity for Christ to take on Him the nature of man or seed of Abraham.
      - (1) For the sake of fulfilling scripture
      - (2) For the sake of self-perfection
  - 2. The explanation of the necessity (Hebrews 2:17-18)
    - a. His responsibility before God—for the purpose of offering a scriptural sacrifice (Hebrews 2:17)
      - (1) He was made like unto His brethren.
      - (2) This allowed Him to be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.
      - (3) This further made Him able to make reconciliation for the sins of the people (see Matthew 1:21).
    - b. His responsibility before the people—for the purpose of being an adequate priest
      - (1) The happenings in Christ’s incarnation—“in that he himself hath suffered being tempted” (see Hebrews 4:15)
      - (2) The results of Christ’s incarnation—“he is able to succour them that are tempted” (see Hebrews 4:16)
      - (3) The contrast of Christ’s incarnation—Christ is not “compassed with infirmity” (Hebrews 5:2)