

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

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

Note: By implication this present world **is** subject to angels.

Matthew 18:10 [NIV] Guardian angels for human beings.

Hebrews 2:2 [NIV] Angels God’s messengers.

Ephesians 2:1-2 [NIV] Follow the spirit [angel] who rules this society.

2 Corinthians 4:4 [NIV] The God of this world, the one whom most people obey unknowingly, Satan the fallen angel.

Hebrews 2:6-7 [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? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour.”*”

This is a quotation from the Psalms.

We as human beings are subject to the influence of angels in the fact we are “*lower*” than them.

But this subjection will **not** be part of the new dispensation brought in by Jesus Christ.

When we come under this dispensation, accepting the Blood of Christ and receiving the active indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we are not subject to this angel influence, as long as the Holy Spirit is active in our lives and we have not “*grieved Him*” [**Ephesians 4:30**] or “*put out the fire*” [**1 Thessalonians 5:19**] that the love for God generates in our lives.

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.

v6 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.

Christ also was as the *“Son of Man,”* as a human being a little lower than angels, subject to their influence.

Philippians 2:6-7 [NIV] *“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”*

When the Son of God emptied Himself of the externals of His Divinity and became the physical human Son of Man, He became for a little while lower than spirit angels.

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.

Jesus Christ as God was perfect in every way as far as sin, disobedience to God, was concerned.

The Greek word translated “*perfect*” [“*teleios*”] means to “*consummate*” fulfil the goal set before you.

John 19:30 [NIV] *“When he had received the drink, Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”*

“*It is finished*” – in this sacrifice Jesus Christ became the perfect High Priest, to lead us into the presence of the Holy Creator God.

Luke 23:44-46 [NIV] *“It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour, for the sun stopped shining. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Jesus called out with a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.’ When he had said this, he breathed his last.”*

The veil that cut off the people from God’s presence was torn apart to give all humanity access to the Holy God.

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 [King James] *“For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,”*

Hebrews 2:11 [Message Bible] *“Since the One who saves and those who are saved have a common origin Jesus doesn’t hesitate to treat them as family.”*

We are born finite humans and Jesus stepped into time and became for a period of time human.

It is because of this perfect sacrifice that God the Father calls us His children and Jesus calls us His brothers and sisters.

We have three parties mentioned here again.

- 1 “*He who sanctifies*” – **Jesus.**
- 2 “*Those sanctified*” – **other “Sons” of God, human beings.**
- 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.*”

“*Those being made Holy*” – an ongoing process that is initiated by Christ’s sacrifice.

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.

Accepting the death of Jesus as a substitute for our own deserved deaths, because of our sins, sets us apart as God’s own people.

Romans 6:20-23 [NIV] *“When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness. What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death! **But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.** For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

We have changed Masters.

Instead of serving sin, the product of our own nature, society and Satan’s influence, we now become slaves to righteousness [God] that leads to holiness and with it eternal life.

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.**”*

It is this contact with the Holy Spirit that leads us to a union with Him, the result of which is a new being acceptable to a Holy God, we are “born again.”

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.”*

Gentiles [those without contact with the Creator God] are able to join the people of God, who are acceptable to God by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 12:1-2 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.”*

Our reaction to what God has done for us through Jesus Christ is to offer our whole beings [bodies – Greek “*soma*” – whole body/mind/spirit] as a “*living sacrifice*.”

This is really the **only way we can worship God fully**.

John 1:10-13 [NIV] *“He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”*

We are called by God to do this to bring total unity to His created family.

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 [NIV] *“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.’ Philip said, ‘Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.’ Jesus answered: ‘Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?’”*

John 17:6-9, 25-26 [NIV] *“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.” ... “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”*

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 [NIV] *“Jesus gave them this answer: ‘I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the*

Son also does.’” ... “By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.”

John 8:28 [NIV] *“So Jesus said, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.’”*

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** [NIV] *“He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”*

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.

Isaiah 41:8-10 [NIV] *“But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”*

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.”*

We lay down our lives by giving up our time and substance to help others in need.

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.