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Hebrews 2:9-18

Thankful for a Perfect Savior

Jewish followers of Jesus were raised on the Torah, the Temple, sacrifices and the festivals. They were more than ritual, they were their identity. They were deeply attached to the old covenant system. They were comfortable with the priest sacrificing a lamb on an altar for forgiveness of sin. They were looking for a political messiah that would deliver them from the Romans. In a sense they weren't looking for a new covenant to forgive their sins, they were anticipating a conquering king. What they got was the true Lamb, fulfilling everything that was written about the Savior in the Law and the Prophets. And now, the temple and the sacrificial system didn't matter the way it used to. The author of Hebrews knows how seductive the old rhythms are and the new covenant still feels new, uncertain and the Jewish Christians were still trying to get their minds around this paradigm shift and questioning just how Jesus could have fulfilled it.

It was in the late 60's before the destruction of the Temple. Nero was the Emperor, and according to the Roman historian Tacitus, Nero used Christians as the scapegoats for the fire he allegedly started. He tortured them and burned them alive. They were being run out of the synagogues, maybe families split over their views of Jesus, and they were viewed as traitors to Moses. So, the Jewish Christians were experiencing doubt and questions. Would it be much easier to return to Judaism to escape the persecution?

So the author of Hebrews begins in chapter 1 emphatically declaring the supremacy of Jesus. Jesus is heir of all things, the creator of the world, the radiance of God's glory, the exact imprint of His nature. He holds the universe together by the word of His power and sits at the right hand of God. The Jews

held angels in high regard for they were present when God delivered the Law to Moses. They considered the angels second to God. So, the author makes 6 points in chapter 1 why Jesus is superior to angels. Chapter 2 begins with an exhortation to the Jewish Christians saying, because Jesus is Supreme and affirmed by God, we have a new covenant-a better covenant. The writer encouraged the Hebrew Christians to set your anchor in this truth and don't be complacent lest you drift away from it. The new covenant is supreme to the old covenant. How shall we escape the penalty of our sins if we neglect such a great salvation?

Bryan did an excellent job explaining how we also struggle with understanding kingdom living. Why does God heal one and not the other? We want to understand the kingdom and make it simple, but it is not so. We want it to be a simple formula, but it does not work that way and we struggle to understand. We live in a time where some aspects of God's kingdom have "Already" been inaugurated through Jesus, but its full consummation is "Yet" to come. The writer tells us in verse 8 "At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to Him." Bryan concludes where we will pick up in verse 9 and will cover verses 9-18. The writer returns to the angels.

Warning: This text is theologically dense and intellectually challenging. Every single word is packed with meaning. Be prepared to put on your thinking caps and hold on.

Hebrews 2:9 ⁹ But we see **Him** who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

The Jews may have asked, How could Jesus be better than angels if in fact Jesus was a man, and a man that died? For angels never die and they are certainly higher than men. They were struggling with the humanity of Christ and the death of Christ to the superiority of Christ over angels. The Jewish audience, and I believe many today, would say, being a man and dying would disqualify one from being the Christ. These are the two questions that verses 10-18 seek to answer.

- How could Jesus be the Christ and our perfect savior if He was a man?
- How could Jesus be the perfect savior if He died?

The author seeks to answer the first question starting in verse 9. **He is our substitute.**

How do we test Scripture? With Scripture. When we try to understand the meaning of Scripture we look to other Scripture to confirm our understanding. The author of Hebrews does the same thing and is constantly weaving in Scripture from the Hebrew Bible to support His argument. In these 9 verses he will directly reference Genesis 3-the fall and first hint of a redemption plan, Genesis 12-the promise to Abraham to bless all nations, Messianic Psalms 8 and Psalm 22 and Isaiah 8 all supporting his message of Jesus as their perfect Savior. Here in verse 9 he is quoting from **Psalm 8**. Take the time to go and read Psalm 8. It is a fabulous messianic psalm. “But we see Him who for a little while was made lower than the angels,”

This is a statement of time, not a statement of position. For a little while, was made lower than the angels. Note, it is not saying that Jesus was “made” as if He was created, but “He was made less for a little time.” He was made incarnate for a period of time for a specific purpose. Incarnate meaning, He took on human flesh and form which is lower than the angels. He left His position as God the Son and took on human flesh for a little time. And then the author goes on to explain **why** for a little while was made lower than the angels. **So that he could die.** He was born to die. His death and what His death accomplished was the reason that He was made lower than the angels. His death did not disqualify Him but qualified Him to be the perfect solution. It was all part of the mystery of God’s redemption plan for mankind since the fall in Genesis 3. Jesus did not lose his dignity by being lower than angels. He became lower for the very purpose of restoring what was lost at the fall. When God created man, He gave him dominion over earth. When man sinned, he was cursed and lost his dominion. And if God was going to remove the curse that was on man, He had to take the place of man. So He had to be a man. And even though Christ was lower than angels, He accomplished something

that no angel could ever accomplish. He accomplished the restoring of the crown to men. One day, when Jesus returns to establish His kingdom, we shall reign with Him in glory and honor.

Verse 9 ends with, “So that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” By God’s grace. By His grace alone God sent his son to taste death for everyone. It is kind of like the King’s taster. The king would have someone taste their food before it got to them. The cup of poison that belonged to us was taken by Jesus and He accepted the cup and drank it all.

2 Corinthians 5:21 For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew not sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

He is our substitute.

In verse 10, we shall see Jesus is also the **“founder” of our salvation**. The Greek writing uses the word, *Archēgos*, to describe to one who brings us to salvation. Jesus is **our captain, our leader, the one who leads us to glory**.

Hebrews 2:10 ¹⁰For it was fitting that He, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the **founder** of their salvation perfect through suffering.

- “For it was fitting” – It agreed with His nature. It agreed with His character.
- “for whom and by whom all things exist” – He is the creator of all things and all things were created for Him for His glory. He is our Creator and it was fitting that Jesus is the perfect Savior to bring many sons to glory.
- He is founder or Captain of our salvation and He redeems us to Himself and perfects our salvation through His suffering. Because of Jesus’ righteousness, He is perfectly qualified to be our Savior and High Priest. Jesus became man, suffered and died.

He is the founder of our salvation.

Let’s look at verse 11 telling us Jesus is the one who also **Sanctifies us**.

¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.^[b] That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,^[c] ¹² saying,

“I will tell of your name to my brothers;
in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”

¹³ And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

What does it mean to be “sanctified?” To be set apart. To be Holy. In Christ you are sanctified and you are Holy. You and I may not act holy, but we are holy. Positionally we are holy and perfect in Christ. “He is not ashamed to call them brothers.” The author again quotes from the Hebrew Bible to the messianic **Psalm 22:22** saying, I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise. Psalm 22 describes the crucifixion of Jesus in great detail and Jesus speaking to the Father after his resurrection, “I will tell of your name to my brothers, in the midst of the church I will praise You.” Because we are set apart as holy in Christ we are called brothers with Christ and “Children of God.” We share the same nature and belong to the same family. What amazing grace!

I was reading John MaCarthur and he pointed out that Jesus never called His people brothers before the cross. They were disciples, sheep, friends, but never brothers. Why? Because they could not be brothers until sin is paid for and the righteousness of Christ is imputed to them. Right after the resurrection, as soon as Jesus was risen from the dead, He said to Mary, “Go to my brethren.” What an amazing transition. The result of Jesus suffering, death and resurrection we are supernaturally restored to the family of God. We are brothers with Christ and children of God. Paul tells us in Romans 8 that we are heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.

The author then adds from Isaiah 8:13 ¹³And again, “I will put my trust in Him.” And again, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

This is Christ speaking, “I will put my trust in Him.” The prophet Isaiah is foretelling the words of Christ. Like my brothers, I became a man and put My trust in the Father. He relates to us who face temptations and uncertainty and put our trust in God. Amazing to realize that Jesus was fully human. He goes on to say, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.” Behold, take notice, Know this. We are by His righteousness His brother and children of God. We are called to walk by faith and trust in God as He did. **Jesus sanctifies us.**

Verse 14 – 16 tell us that **Jesus is our Satan-conqueror.**

Hebrews 2:14-16 ¹⁴Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.

The just penalty for the sin of man is death. Satan, the deceiver, is the author of sin and sin brings the power of death over man. God is the only one that is sovereign over all things or has ultimate authority. Satan does not have sovereign authority over the world, but Scripture does say that he has limited authority to influence.

Luke 4:5-6 ⁵And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, ⁶and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will.”

John 12, 14, and 16 refer to Satan as the “ruler of this world.”

We, by nature, are “flesh and blood.” Jesus who is not by nature “flesh and blood” willingly “**partook**” in “**flesh and blood**” in order that He might die in our place. He would stand in our place as our substitute to take the just

penalty that we deserved. That is death. Physical death. Spiritual death. Eternal death. Jesus tells John in Revelation 1:18:

Revelation 1:18 I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and **I have the keys of Death and Hades.**

The death of Jesus became the death of death. Satan, the great deceiver, may have thought that he had defeated the Son of God at his crucifixion only to realize Jesus' power to overcome death through His resurrection.

Verse 15 ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.

Believers in Christ no longer need to fear death and be subject to the lifelong slavery that fear holds us. The power that Satan has held over men, that is the fear of death, is broken. As believers in Christ knowing that through Christ we have also defeated death we can with Paul proclaim.

1 Corinthians 15:55-58 "Death is swallowed up in victory."

⁵⁵ "O death, where is your victory?

O death, where is your sting?"

⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But **thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

⁵⁸ Therefore, my beloved brothers, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

If I had a Thanksgiving verse it would be this one. "Thanks be to God, who give us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Victory over sin and death. Therefore, be steadfast, Be immovable, Abound in the work of the Lord. Your labor is not in vain, but will result in victory over sin and death for others.

And we live with anticipation, proclaiming:

Philippians 1:21 For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Reading verse 16:

Hebrews 2:16 ¹⁶For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.

Jesus did not take on the nature of angels to save fallen angels. There is no savior for the fallen angels. Instead, He lowered Himself to become a man in order to save man. Not just a man, but a Jew. An offspring of Abraham to fulfill God's promise in Genesis 12:3 as declared by Paul in his letter to the Galatians.

Galatians 3:8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify^[a] the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed."

Jesus is our **Satan Conqueror**. He has conquered death and removed the fear that enslaved us. We have no fear.

In these final two verses, the author tells us **Jesus is our perfect Savior because He can sympathize with us**.

Hebrews 2:17 ¹⁷Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

He had to be made like His brothers - Angels are not able to identify with us in our weakness. But Jesus can. Jesus was made "like his brethren in every respect." He experienced all that we experience. He was born a helpless baby, He was a growing child and maturing adolescent. He experienced weariness, hunger and thirst. He knew what it was like to be despised, rejected, to be lied about and falsely accused. He mourned the loss of his friends. He can **sympathize** with us. He Himself experienced physical suffering and death. All this was necessary to **qualify** Him to be our **High Priest** to give His life to cover our sins.

Hebrews 2:18 ¹⁸ For because He himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.

When you are going through a difficult trial or temptation, who is the most qualified person to give you advice? Someone else who has experienced a similar trial and has come out on the other side. My friend Bert Keller has volunteered with AA for many years. He is qualified because he has experienced and experiences temptation and has overcome.

Jesus experienced temptation and no temptation ever conquered Him. Because He has defeated every enemy He can sympathize with us and give us the grace and strength to overcome any temptation that comes our way. He is also our Advocate. We do, at times, fall to temptation and sin. When we come to Him and confess our sins He represents us before the throne of God and forgives our sins.

- 1. How could Jesus be the Christ and our perfect savior if He was a man?**
- 2. How could Jesus be the perfect savior if He died?**

It was the only way. It was God's plan to redeem men through His son. By becoming lower than angels for a little while, He lived the life of a man, experienced all the temptations of a man, suffered and died and defeated death in His resurrection so that we may, through faith, be represented by Him as righteous.

- He is our substitute – He was born to die
- He is the Founder of our Salvation – He perfects our salvation through His suffering.
- He is our Sanctifier – We are set apart and made holy. We are made brothers.
- He is our Satan Conqueror – He delivers us from the fear of death
- He is our Sympathizer – He has experienced and overcome temptations and can give us grace to overcome any temptations.
- He is our perfect Savior – He is our High Priest who has experienced and relates to all our troubles. He is able to help us in our temptations and when we confess our sins is our advocate before the throne in our failures.

But thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus

Christ!