

Hebrews 2 – The Perfect Message, Man, and Mediator

Hebrews 2:1-4 – The Perfect Message

1. “Therefore we must give the more _____ to the things we have _____, lest we _____.”

[“Therefore” refers to everything in chapter 1, beginning with “God... has spoken to us by His Son,” and continuing through the explanation of Christ’s superiority over the angels as God’s Son and heir of all things (v 2); Creator of the universe (v 2); upholder of all things (v 3); etc.

“We ought” = must (imperative, a moral obligation or necessity, cf 1 Tim 3:2). Note the author’s inclusion of himself. “More earnest” = literally, “superabundant.” “Heed” = attention, regard, beware (fig. to hold the mind toward).

“To the things which we have heard” – as the New Testament was still being written and compiled during this period, it was the spoken word through which God’s message was given to man. Taken in this context, simply to hear is insufficient. We must ponder and meditate upon God’s message. And not only this, we must make personal application in our own lives.

“Lest we drift away” implies a gradual departure from the things we have heard. What an appropriate admonition for this and all time! Rarely does one depart from faithfulness all at once. It sometimes begins with some type of unresolved discontentment with the local work. Other times, life’s activities become a hindrance to faithful attendance to Bible classes and/or assemblies. As one becomes desensitized to being absent from the assemblies, his commitment to faithfulness in other areas (personal study and growth, evangelistic fervor) also suffers. The end result parallels that of Demas (Philemon 24; Col 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:10).

Consider the current state of the church. Many of “our people” no longer believe the use of instrumental music in worship is sinful, the necessity of baptism to receive remission of sins, the singular nature of the church, etc. How did we get here? Was it all at once? Or was it neglect to preach “the fundamentals” or “first principles” on a regular basis and instilling the same in our children? The answer is obvious. Show me a Christian who disparages sermons on first principles, and I’ll show you a Christian who no longer believes them.]

2. The Hebrew writer said the word spoken by angels was _____, and that every _____ and _____ received a just _____.

[steadfast = firm, sure, or force. transgression = going beyond the law of God (cf 1 John 3:4). disobedience = refusing to obey the law of God. There is record in the New Testament to the role of angels in the ordination and mediation of the Mosaic Law (Gal 3:19; Acts 7:53). However, Christ’s superiority rendered angelic ordination or mediation of His message altogether unnecessary. Though the writer here affirms the authority of the message of the angels, he shows them as being inherently inferior to Jesus (Matt 7:28-29).]

3. The “great salvation” was first spoken by whom? _____
 4. By whom was this message confirmed? _____
 - a. Identify these “confirmers.” _____
 - b. Who worked with these “confirmers?” _____
 - c. By what means did He work with them? _____
- [A.T. Robertson makes an interesting comment on this text, noting the relationship between signs, wonders, and miracles. The word translated “wonder” implies the attracting of attention. The word translated “miracle” denotes power (from the Greek dunamis, cf “power” in Rom 1:16), and the word translated “sign” refers to a token or signification, showing the purpose of the miracles. Also, these same three words appear in reverse order in Peter’s defense of the ministry of Jesus (Acts 2:22).]
- d. What does Mark 16:20 say regarding the Lord working with the apostles as they went forth preaching everywhere? _____
 - e. Whom does Acts 2:43 identify as performing many wonders & signs? _____
 - f. By what means were the gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed? (Acts 8:18) _____
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[F.F. Bruce notes the author would not have appealed to the miracles performed by the apostles if the epistle’s recipients were not witnesses to the same (30-31).

The word translated “gifts” in this text (Greek mer-is-mos) is more accurately rendered “distributions” in Hugo McCord’s translation. This correlates to Paul’s explanation in 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 of the distribution of miraculous gifts given (distributed) according to the will of the Holy Spirit. It is an entirely different word from that rendered “gift” in Acts 2:38 (Gr dorea) which signifies a gift or gratuity.]

In his Exposition of Hebrews, volume 1, Arthur W Pink correctly notes the limitation and cessation of these miraculous manifestations: “We may add that these “divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit” were given by God before the N.T. was written. Now that the Scriptures are complete, they are no longer needed, nor given” (pp 91-92).

Hebrews 2:5-9 – The Perfect Man

5. “For He has not put the _____ to _____, of which we speak, in _____ to _____.”

[There is little agreement among Bible scholars as to the meaning of “the world to come.” Some believe it to be the earth under the physical rule of Jesus (premillennialism), others the eternal abode in heaven, still others the church (of which Christ is head - Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:18), and finally, some believe it to be the world under the gospel age.

For obvious reasons, the first option is wrong, for there will be no physical reign of Jesus upon the earth (John 6:14-15; 18:36), nor can there be any such reign (Jer 22:24-30, cf Matt 1:1, 11).

The second option is also not a scriptural possibility, as 1 Corinthians 15:21-28 teaches that when the end of this world comes, Christ will cease to reign over all things, and will put down all rule and authority (v 24), returning all such things to the Father (v 28).

Though it is true that Christ is the head over the church, and also that the church is not subject to angels (Gal 1:8; Rev 19:10; 22:8-9), this interpretation does not fit well in the context of the discussion. Therefore, we must also reject it, leaving us with one possibility, that “the world to come” is the world in the gospel age.

A key phrase in understanding this verse is found in Hebrews 1:5-6, where the Son of God is spoken of as being brought “into the world.” The two “worlds” under consideration come from the same Greek word. The word is not the Greek kosmos, commonly translated “world” (John 3:16). Neither is it aion, generally meaning a period of time or age (Matthew 28:20). This particular word refers to the physical, inhabitable world into which Jesus the man was born, the world over which He now rules (1 Tim 6:13-16). Though man has not submitted himself to Christ’s authority, he is nonetheless under Christ’s rule and law (John 12:48).]

6. “What is _____, that You are mindful of him? Or the _____ of _____ that You _____ him? You made him a little _____ than the _____.”

[The meaning of the phrase “a little lower than the angels” is important. The NASB translates the phrase, “a little while lower than the angels.” My NKJV has a similar margin note.]

7. “You have put _____ in _____ under His _____.”

[According to 1 Corinthians 15:21-28, Christ must reign until all His enemies are put under His feet, and the last enemy to be destroyed is death. Though Christ Himself has overcome the power of death, death does still reign on the earth, and no man can (or ever will be able) overcome it (Heb 9:27). Only at the resurrection and judgment (John 5:28-29) will all things be subdued to Christ, thus the statement, “but now we see not yet all things put under him.”

Note: though I believe the context is clearly pointing to Jesus (evidenced by v 9 ff), there is a definite sense in which this text refers to Christ and to mankind. Man was created, glorified, and given authority from the beginning (Gen 1:26-28). Jesus was born as a man (Matt 1:18-25), glorified (John 12:28; 13:32) and given authority (Matt 28:18).

Also, man is spoken of as sitting in judgment of the angels in 1 Corinthians 6:3; this notes a position superior to them. Additionally, as being the sole trustees of the gospel (2 Cor 4:7; Gal 1:8), I believe man is now in a position superior to the angels, who desire to look into the things now revealed to us (1 Pet 1:10-12).

Finally, in Hebrews 1:14, angels are spoken of “ministering spirits sent to minister (i.e., serve or help) for them who shall be heirs of salvation (Christians). I believe these also show how “the world to come” of Hebrews 2:5 is the world in the gospel age.]

8. “But we see _____, who was _____ a little _____ than the _____ for the _____ of _____, crowned with _____ and _____; that He by the _____ of _____ should taste _____ for _____.”

[In this verse is seen the purpose of the incarnation of Christ, that is to say, the purpose for His manifestation in the flesh (John 1:1-4, 14). Jesus came that He might give Himself as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of all mankind (cf John 12:27). As Deity, Jesus was not subject to death (cf Ex 3:6; Ps 90:2). Therefore, of necessity He took upon Himself the form of man, that it might be possible to die for sin (Phil 2:7-8). This verse is one of many that refute the Calvinistic doctrine of “limited atonement.” According to Calvinism, Jesus did not die for all men, but only for those whom God had predestined to salvation before the creation (cf 1 Tim 2:3-6; 2 Pet 3:9).]

Hebrews 2:10-18 – The Perfect Mediator

9. “For it was _____ for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the _____ of their salvation _____ through _____.”

[Taken in light of the entire verse, this phrase is introductory to the phrase “to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.” Since “the captain of our salvation” refers to Jesus (cf Heb 5:8-9), then the one “by whom are all things, and for whom are all things” must refer to the Father. “Captain” here refers to a “chief leader.” Robertson says “one who blazes a trail, a pioneer. It is elsewhere translated “Prince” (Acts 3:15; 5:31), and “author” (Heb 12:2).

I believe there is a two-fold purpose for the Father to make Jesus “perfect through sufferings.” First, we must understand what is meant by the word translated “perfect.” It is from the Greek *teleios*, meaning “complete, consummate in character,” (cf 2 Tim 3:16-17) and in no way implies fault or sin in Jesus. Rather, the text is showing how Jesus was completely qualified in every way to be our Savior. As our Savior, He is also our heavenly Mediator (1 Tim 2:5), High Priest (Heb 4:14-16) and Advocate (1 John 2:1-2). Had Jesus never experienced the entire scope of human existence, which of necessity includes suffering, then He would not have been qualified in the fullest extent to act on our behalf in these capacities.

Consider also that this was all done for our benefit! God made His Son endure the atrocities

and rejection of humanity that He might bring many sons (that's us!) unto glory.

Second, there is a sense in which the suffering of Christ was inconsistent with the Jewish ideas concerning the Redeemer of Israel (Isa 49). A suffering Redeemer was the furthest thing from their mind, as they anxiously awaited a king to deliver them from the shackles of Roman oppression and restore to Israel her former earthly (and of necessity, military) glory. In connection with this thought, the suffering Messiah was clearly foretold in Isaiah 53 and many other Old Testament passages. This comment on the suffering Savior, especially in light of everything that has been said of Jesus thus far in the epistle, may have so placed to help these Christians answer those, who no doubt, were in fierce opposition to the idea that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah.]

10. "For both He who _____ and those who are _____ are all of _____: for which cause He is not _____ to call them _____."

- a. Who is "He who sanctifies?" _____
- b. Who are "those who are being sanctified?" _____
- c. What do think "all of one" means? _____

[Bruce notes, "He who... sanctifies is the Son of God and those who are sanctified are the sons of God." Thus, the phrase "all of one" most likely refers to our common parentage as each Christian, like Jesus, is a son of God, though not through identical means. We are made sons of God through the word of truth - James 1:18.]

- d. How, or by what means, are we sanctified? (John 17:17) _____
- e. Who are "the sons of God" according to Romans 8:14? _____
- f. What does it means to be "led by the Spirit of God"? _____
- g. Does Romans 8:16-18 speak of us as having anything in common with Christ? _____
if so, what? _____

[Romans 8:14-18 provides a wonderful commentary on Hebrews 2:11. Note the relationship to being "led" in Romans 8 and being "brought" in Hebrews 2. In the Greek, both are translated from the same Greek word.]

11. "I will _____ thy _____ in the midst of the _____; in the midst of the _____ I will _____ to you."

[The Hebrew audience would immediately identify this statement as coming from the 22nd Psalm, which Jesus quoted from the cross. In fact, the Psalm is reference in some way at least 5 times in Matthew and John's accounts of the crucifixion.]

12. What is the commonality between Psalm 22 & the Gospel accounts that follow?

- a. Psalm 22:1 = Matthew 27:46? _____
- b. Psalm 22:8 = Matthew 27:43? _____
- c. Psalm 22:15 = John 19:28? _____
- d. Psalm 22:16 = John 20:25? _____
- e. Psalm 22:18 = John 19:23-24? _____

[Thus, the entire Psalm would have been recognized as Messianic in its import, further solidifying in their minds the Messiahship of Jesus.]

13. “Forasmuch then as the _____ are partakers of _____ and _____, he also likewise took part in the _____, that through _____ he might _____ him who had the _____ of _____, that is, the _____.”

[Since human beings (“flesh and blood”) were in need of redemption and salvation, and since there must be the shedding of blood for remission of sins to take place (Heb 9:22), the only way to secure redemption was through a human (flesh and blood) sacrifice. Consider this – the “taking part” in the nature of flesh and blood was for Jesus a voluntary act. This is especially evident from Philippians 2, where Jesus “made Himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man” (v 7).

Something else that should be considered is this: though we are at present beings of flesh and blood, we are at our very essence “spiritual beings.” Each one possess a spirit, or soul, that shall endure into eternity following the death of our physical bodies. Though we, unlike Jesus, did not choose to be flesh and blood, we must always remember that we are made in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27), spiritual beings, unlike anything else in God’s creation. In this sense, we are also only partakers of flesh and blood, for flesh and blood is not what or who we are at our very essence.

Verses 14-17 clearly teach the manifestation of God in the flesh, yet do not attempt to explain the dual nature of Jesus. That is to say, His co-existent deity (Heb 1:8) and humanity (2:16). Note! Just because we cannot explain or comprehend something does not make it any less true. As Paul said in 1 Corinthians 13:12, “but now we see through a glass darkly.” Can anyone “explain” how sin defiles the soul, and how the blood of Jesus is applied to cleanse one’s soul at baptism (Eph 5:26; Rev 1:5)? Though we cannot explain it, we nonetheless believe it by faith in God’s Word. As Paul also wrote to the Corinthians, “for we walk by faith and not by sight” (2 Cor 5:7).]

14. How did Jesus, through death, destroy Him who had the power of death? (John 10:17-18)

[What does “that He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil” mean? At first glance, one might think of the utter destruction of the devil at the Judgment (Matt 25:41). However, the word translated “destroy” does not mean to annihilate (apollumi, Strong / Thayer #622), but rather means “to bring to nought, render inactive, nullify, or void” (katargoo, Thayer #2673, cf Eph 2:15). Also, whatever it means must be understood in the immediate context of the purpose of Jesus’ incarnation and death.

So, what power did the devil have? He did not have the authority to take life (Deut 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6; Job 2:6; Psalm 68:20). But he did (does) have the power to entice men to sin, causing spiritual death. This is why Jesus called the devil as “a murderer from the beginning” (John 8:44), making reference to his evil work in the garden (Gen 3). Jesus’ perfect life (conquering sin) and sacrificial death accomplished the bringing to nought the power of the devil. That is, though the devil may entice and deceive men into sin, Jesus’ life and death brings to nought the power of the devil. In his first epistle, John writes, “for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8).

Second, there is a sense in which Jesus also rendered useless the devil’s accusations against man. In Revelation 12:10-11, John write, “Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. And they overcame him with the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, and they loved not their loves unto the death.”

In Job 1-2, Satan appeared before God as an accuser against righteous Job. Also in Zechariah 3, Satan is described as standing before the angel of the Lord to accuse Joshua the high priest (ESV). Through His perfect life and propitiatory death, Jesus now stands before God as our Advocate (1 John 2:1-2), as one who speaks to God on our behalf. Therefore, His incarnation, death, and resurrection enabled Him to render void any charges the devil may bring against God’s children.]

15. “And to _____ them who through fear of _____ were all their lifetime subject to _____.”

[Those who will be delivered are the sons of verse 10, the brethren of verses 11-12, and the children of verses 13-14. In the context, the “fear of death” must refer to the consequences of sin, i.e., spiritual death and separation from God. On this thought, Pink commented: “It was this “fear” which made Adam and Eve hide themselves from the presence of God (Gen 3:8), which made Cain exclaim, “My punishment is greater than I can bear” (Gen 4:13)... which made Felix to tremble...” (p 138).

Paul speaks of this deliverance in 2 Timothy 1:10, where he writes of Jesus, “who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Finally, because of the deliverance from death purchased by Jesus, Paul was able to write to the church at Corinth: “Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 15:54-57).]

16. “For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.” But note the KJV – “For verily He took not on him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham.”

[Both translations are grammatically and linguistically acceptable, but the New King James better embraces the purpose of Jesus’ incarnation.

This verse is devastating to the Jehovah’s Witnesses and anyone else who believe Jesus to be nothing more than a deified angel (an angel made into God). The phrase “took on” means to “get hold of, catch, attain, or receive” (Strong’s #1949) It is the same word Matthew used to describe Jesus when He “caught” Peter as he began to sink in the sea (Matt 14:31). If Jesus had His beginnings as an angel, as some claim, then this verse makes no sense, as it is nonsensical to speak of an angel as not taking on the nature of an angel.

Taking hold of Abraham’s seed has the primary meaning of taking on the nature of humanity (cf Phil 2:5-8). Additionally, all who are baptized into Jesus Christ (Gal 3:27) are the children of God (Gal 3:26), and are also Abraham’s seed and heirs according to the promise (Gal 3:28). These verses further establish our oneness with Jesus Christ as seen in Hebrews 2:11.]

17. “Therefore in _____ He had to be made like His _____, that He might be a _____ and _____ in things pertaining to God, to make _____ for the _____ of the people.”

[“He had to be made” (KJV - “It behooved Him”) – commenting on this phrase, A.T. Robertson said, “Having undertaken the work of redemption voluntarily, Jesus was under obligation to be properly equipped for that priestly service and sacrifice.”]

18. Because Christ suffered and endured temptation, what is He able to do for those who are tempted? (cf Heb 4:14-16) _____

[What a marvelous thought that our Redeemer, Mediator, and Advocate is conversant with our struggles, and understands them every one! Never should the child of God bemoan his lot in life as if none had ever experienced his sorrow. In the words of that great hymn – “My Jesus knows just what I need.”]