The Book of Hebrews

Chapter 2

We began this letter with a detailed explanation regarding the reason for this letter, when, approximately, this letter was written and to whom it was written and lastly by whom it was written. We also recognize that all of Scripture is God Breathed and written by God through man. All of Scripture is inerrant in its original manuscripts, then translated by fallible man.

We then looked at the initial treatise of recognizing that Jesus was superior to the Angels, and even God Himself recognizes Jesus as God, as Jesus is placed at His rightful Throne in Heaven equal and co-equal with God the Father and as we also know co-equal with God the Holy Spirit.

The writer is establishing Jesus the Messiah, who is the object of the Christian belief and worship, and as the Jewish believers’ sole objective in their worship and relationship with. The writer is encouraging them to stand firm in the face of the terrible trials they are facing or are going to face from their own people because of their belief, and that Jesus already was crucified and painfully died for them first for their sins and their redemption.

Did you ever think of the point, that after all that Jesus did, suffered for and died for; we all went just so far and then under all the duress of the enemy, turned back, and declared, that this was too hard, and we could go on no further. What, then, would Jesus have died for?

A] Hebrews 2: 1 through 4; (read)

1] “*Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard lest we drift away.”*

Note the first word; ‘therefore’. This denotes a continuing of thought and refers back to chapter 1. The first four verses of chapter 1 give us the subject for the word ‘therefore’. These things we have heard from God through His angels speaking to His prophets are the points we should be carefully being attentive to. So, from the start of this letter, those points were gone over by the writer and he exhorts the reader keep this in mind as we read further.

One more point is, as the verse tells us, heed those things or pay constant attention to all that has been taught to you, because life catches up with us and we can get caught up in the everyday things that take our attention. And as our attention wanes and we begin to forget those things of God that sustains us, we begin to slip further and further away from God’s truth and into the world’s idea of truth.

2] “*or if the word spoken through the angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation. Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,”*

Again, with those long run-on sentences. The writer continues on the thought from the first chapter (and remember again and again, this was never written with chapter and verse designations), these angels we just mentioned, that their prophecies proved correct and true, and all they prophesied about came to being. Dr McGee provides us with a real situation where the angels came to Sodom and Gomorrah and told the people to change or be destroyed and sure enough, they were destroyed. There is that just reward.

However, if we know these truths but our attention is caught up in the things of the world and we do not pay attention and forget, what then is our consequence? Right from the beginning of God’s creation he set limits and instructions, which mankind forgot and failed to follow throughout the millennia, and throughout history we see the consequences of their actions and failure to heed God’s instructions and warnings.

3] “*God, also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will.”*

Remember this is all one sentence and one thought. We should be paying close attention and obeying all the things we have seen and heard from the prophecies, and from Jesus who came to set men free. All that God has done and said from creation has led to this time. All the signs and wonders done by various prophets and by Jesus Himself. How can we miss any of this? Yet as the writer points out, apparently the believers he writes to are wilting a bit under the pressure, and how can this be if we have seen and heard all that which comes from God.

B] Hebrews 2: 5 through 10; (read)

1] “*For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.”*

At this point let’s explain the fascination with the angels. Throughout Jewish history, reference to the angels was included in many acts especially in some writings regarding Moses receiving the law from God through attending angels. In the later years leading up to the time of Jesus, The Pharisees and Priests believed in the angels but the Sadducees not so much. Because the angels played such an important part in the intervention of God and His creation, the power of angels got blurred and with Jesus coming into the world, it was the angels who played such a major role in the announcement of His impending birth, of His actual birth, and their ministering at various points during His ministry on earth.

Apparently, the importance of the angels was the major factor in the liturgical struggle between the Jewish leadership and the new Jewish believers. The seeds of doubt had been sown by the Jews regarding the position of the Angels and the position of Jesus.

The writer continues, that God did not place the authority of governance over the world to the angels, did He? Satan liked to think he was in control but the ultimate authority belongs to He who created it all, don’t you think?

2] “*But one testified in a certain place, saying, ‘What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, and set him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet.’”*

What better way to prove a point than to go directly to the source of the proof. Verses 6 through 8 are a repeat of Psalm 8: 4 through 6, and the writer quotes these to set the ‘table’ so to speak for the explanation of the difference between Jesus and the angels.

What is man? Just how important is man? Yet man is God’s creation and God wants that relationship with His creation, and because He cares so much, He sends Jesus the Son, to be that bridge between God and man. See John 3:16

When Jesus came to earth he set aside His trappings as God, King and Judge to become an earthly being. Being made a ‘little lower than the angels’ but the angels knew Him and announced His arrival, and ministered to Him regardless of the fact that He was man. His new position didn’t change the fact that He was God. And being God, but with a frail weak human body, He did need the ministering of the angels at His temptations. However, His humanity never changed who He was, He may have been human but He was fully God, and all things were still subject to Him.

3] “*For in that He put all things in subjection under Him. He left nothing that is not put under Him. But now we do not yet see all things put under Him. But we see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.”*

God is God and is over all things, but as the writer adds there are things under his control we have no idea of yet. God is capable of anything He wants, and was fully capable to become common man. But a man that was righteous and perfect for the lamb sacrifice that he would die a death for all for the forgiveness of sins. The angels would be heavenly beings, but he would much more. He would be fully man but the Holy Spirit who dwells within Him to be God. ---------Got that?

C] Hebrews 2: 10 through 13; (read)

1] “*For it was fitting for Him, for Whom are all things and by Whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”*

Do we see the tenor of the letter yet? Are we seeing the state of the Jewish Christian? I can see that the Jewish Christians, because of the constant barrage of negative comments, slurs, and outright accusations, and because their properties and families are being confiscated, are beginning to buckle under the pressure of this treatment. This opening dialog is to fortify their beliefs with affirmations of who Jesus is and His true deity in opposition to what the Jewish leaders may be trying to teach them or indoctrinate them with.

The writer starts with, that is what Jesus was supposed to do, that He being all in all, knowing what must be done according to His own Law to bring sinful man to repentance, there must be suffering and death and it must be His.

2] “*For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying:”*

We can read this as, For He who ‘sets apart’, and those who are being ‘set apart’. This is a continuing work of God, that He sets apart those who call on His name and those who are being set apart are those who have called on his name, and because of this, we enter into that special relationship with the Son by being called Children of the Father and are therefore brothers of the Son. By calling on His name means that I am repentant, and call on the name of Jesus, and by doing so I take in Jesus as my sacrifice for my sins past present and future therefore I am redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb and am saved. Being saved, means I am then adopted into the family of God and being adopted then means I am a child of God, a son or daughter, and then brother of Jesus. Does this make sense?

3] “*I will declare Your name to My Brethren, in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to you.”*

This is from Psalm 22: 22, but essentially states; Jesus says He will declare the name of God to all those who come to Him and Believe in Him, meaning Jesus. Paul says it, that when we come to Jesus, as His siblings, we are justified, being justified means we are declared not guilty, through the atoning action of the Blood of Christ, and we are being made clean and righteous through the blood of the sacrificed lamb. That it is in this condition we can then become true sons of God and that is how Jesus presents us. We can also look at this as Jesus being the Holy (set apart) intermediary with God the Father who speaks and acts on our behalf before the Father.

In your free time re-read Romans 3: 24 through 26, which we studied last year and see what Paul explains on the matter. It is the base of the Christian understanding and doctrine regarding the Christian belief.

4] “*And again, ‘I will put my trust in Him.’ and again, ‘Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.’”*

We must keep in mind as we read this, that from verse 5 through verse 18 is a piece of the exhortation the writer is bringing to the Jewish Christians and contains a building thought regarding them as saved brothers, and that Jesus is there both as human and as God and they are His and He will care for them. The passages are loosely based on Isaiah 8: 17 and 18; and refers to the fact that Jesus and God have that relationship that the believers can trust in.

D] Hebrews 2: 14 through 18; (read)

1] “*Inasmuch then as the children having partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is the devil,”*

This reads that the children are those who belong to Jesus, and who are flesh and blood, (human beings) and Jesus Himself who took on the Humanity (flesh and Blood) of man and defeated the usurped power of the Devil and defeated even death itself, by His own death and resurrection.

2] “*and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”*

Mankind was, and still is, a slave, or in bondage, to sin since Adam, and death was the ultimate result. We all fear death to a certain point, even as believers to a certain point, but believers are not in bondage to their sins due to the atoning blood of Jesus. The writer tells these Jewish believers that they have been released from their bondage, and they need to take heart, stand strong, especially during these stressful times for the reason that Jesus died that they might live.

3] “*For indeed, He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.”*

Frankly, do the angels even need aid? If we think back to the times where angels visited Abraham, one might have been Jesus according to many scholars. There were a few other circumstances where Jesus also appeared as an angel with other angels during times where heavenly interference was required. But Angels are created beings expressly for divine use, and surely do not need Jesus to come and save them, (maybe except for Satan and his horde), However, the Jews are well familiar through their lore, with angels and their mission on earth. So, the writer lets them know that Jesus work of redemption was for whole of mankind and not for the angels.

4] “*Therefore in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”*

Therefore is continuing the thought with a conclusion, Jesus had to come to earth as a man, human in every aspect, needing daily sustenance and daily ablutions, needing His sleep and rest periods, but what set Him apart was His innocence and purity, a man who did not sin, who became the High Priest, (and remember the Temple High Priest was the only priest who had access to the Holy of Holies. And the High Priest was the priest over the ministrations of the sacrifices. Propitiations simply means made atonement through the sacrifices.

5} “*For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”*

There are two times where Jesus physically suffered and that was when He was tempted, at the beginning of His ministry; and at the end as He approached the cross, He did ask the Father that this bitter cup might pass from Him, but in His holiness, He accepted the fate that awaited Him, and in death the weight of the sins of all mankind descended on Him at Calvary. Through this we are saved. The point here is, He knew and understood temptation in His Humanity, and therefore understand our human temptations in our frailties, and is there when we call on Him.