

(Hebrews) ch.1:1-3:8

by Zac Poonen

The book of Hebrews emphasizes the importance of considering Jesus as our example and pressing on to perfection, and it shows that the new covenant is better than the old covenant because it is mediated by Jesus, who is superior to the angels.

Duration: 1:15:09

Scripture: Matthew 17:8, Hebrews 1:1-2, Hebrews 3:1, Hebrews 6:1, Hebrews 6:20, Hebrews 12:2-3

Topics: "Jesus Christ", "Christian Perfection"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of looking to Jesus as the ultimate example and source of God's final message to mankind. The book of Hebrews repeatedly urges believers to consider Jesus and hear Him. Jesus is described as the forerunner, having lived a sinless life and showing humanity how God intended them to live. The writer of Hebrews encourages believers to not stop at the foundational aspects of their faith, but to press on to perfection, which is the desire of the Holy Spirit. The letter highlights the fullness of salvation, which not only forgives sins but also leads believers to perfection.

Transcript

We turn today to the letter to the Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 1 and verses 1 and 2, first of all. 1 God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophet, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. And in those opening verses of that letter we have virtually given to us the theme of the whole letter.

We do not know who wrote this letter, it has been assumed that it was the apostle Paul, but there is no certainty that it was Paul. But whoever wrote it, it is part of God's inspired word and its subject is Christ, the final speech of God. That's what we read in these first two verses.

In times past God spoke to us by the prophets, but in these last days, and these last days begin with the day of Pentecost. On the day when the Holy Spirit was poured out, the apostle Peter stood up and said, This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, who said, In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh. So the last days refer to the entire period from the day of Pentecost to the second coming of Christ.

Whenever you read of the last days in the New Testament, it refers to the New Testament age, which is the last age before we enter into the perfect age. And in this age God is consummating his purposes for

mankind. And it says here that now God is speaking to us and has spoken to us through his Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you remember on the Mount of Transfiguration, when Peter, James and John saw the glory of Jesus and they saw Moses and Elijah talking to him on that mountain? And Peter said, Lord, it's good for us to be here. Let us make three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. Immediately a cloud overshadowed them and a voice out of the cloud said, This is my beloved Son, hear him.

In other words, the time is past when you should look at Moses and Elijah. The time has now come when you should look away from those prophets and look unto Jesus. That is the point there.

And we read in Matthew 17, verse 8, that after the cloud moved away, when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no man save Jesus only. And that is God's will for us today, that we look at Jesus. In Jesus Christ, God has spoken to mankind for the final time.

And the voice that comes through the church, through the living church of Christ today, is the voice of Jesus speaking to mankind for the last time. And so the subject of Hebrews is, we are to consider Jesus and hear him. God speaks to us not only through the spoken words of Jesus, but through the life of Jesus.

The life of Jesus described for us in the Gospels is God's final speech to mankind. And God is speaking to us not only through Jesus who hung on the cross for the sins of the world, but also through the life that Jesus lived for thirty-three and a half years on this earth, demonstrating to man how God intended man to live. And that is why you read in Hebrews these words, consider Jesus or look unto Jesus, at least three times.

You read in chapter three verse one, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. And you turn over to chapter twelve and verse two, we are told to run the race, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. We are told in verse three of the same chapter, consider him, Jesus, who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.

And so this could be looked upon as the theme or the appeal of this letter. Consider Jesus, who is our example. Turn to Hebrews chapter six and verse twenty, where Jesus is called the forerunner, a title given to him that is not found in any other part of the New Testament.

Jesus as our forerunner, the one who has gone ahead of us in this race of life, running the same race, facing the same trials, encountering the same temptations, and thereby an example for us, for he overcame and never sinned. The other emphasis in this episode that is linked to considering Jesus is found in chapter six, verse one. Let us go on unto perfection.

Chapter six, verse one, the middle of that verse, let us go on unto perfection. This is the writer's desire for the Hebrews and for all of us. This is the desire of the Holy Spirit communicated in this letter, that we are not to stop with the foundations in our Christian life.

We are to press on to perfection. And the only way to press on to perfection is by considering Jesus, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. This is why the Holy Spirit has been poured out upon us, to help us to consider Jesus.

You remember the words of Jesus himself when he was speaking to the disciples. He said in John, chapter sixteen, verse fourteen, that when the Holy Spirit has come, he will glorify me, he shall receive of

mine and shall show it unto you. In other words, the Holy Spirit takes the beauty of Jesus and shows it to us from the word of God.

And so, conforms us to that likeness from one degree of glory to another. You read that in 2 Corinthians, chapter three, verse eighteen. 2 Corinthians, chapter three, verse eighteen, we read, that we are with open face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord.

That mirror is the word of God. And the Holy Spirit shows us the glory of Jesus in God's word. And then he changes us into that same likeness from one degree of glory to another.

The only man who can say that he is filled with the Holy Spirit is the one who is increasingly, yes, increasingly, seeing the glory of Jesus in the word of God and being increasingly conformed to the likeness of Jesus Christ in his life. And this is the theme of this letter to the Hebrews. Consider Jesus and considering him, let us run the race and press on to perfection.

And so, this letter deals with a full salvation. You read in chapter two, verse three, that this is a great salvation and we cannot afford to neglect it. It's a great salvation because it not only forgives our sins, but it leads us on to perfection.

The word perfect occurs in this letter fourteen times. The word better occurs in this letter thirteen times. And this letter essentially shows us that the new covenant sealed in the blood of Jesus is far, far better than the old covenant.

And therefore, it has a tremendous message for all of us. We're looking at Hebrews and chapter one. And we saw last week that the main theme of this letter is considering Jesus as our example.

Now, we must bear that in mind as we go through this letter, week by week, as we see the glory of Jesus described in this letter, not just for us to admire and for worship, but when we see his glory as a man, there we see him as an example for us to follow. We saw that the purpose of this letter was to lead us on into perfection. God has spoken to us through his son.

And seeing the glory of Jesus is the means by which we go into perfection. We read in Hebrews, in chapter ten and verse nineteen and twenty, having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is, to say his flesh, verse twenty-two, let us draw near. This is referring to the most holy place of the temple in Old Testament times, where the immediate presence of God dwelt.

And there was a veil that covered up that most holy place so that the high priest could go in there only once a year and no one else could ever go in. But now that veil has been torn. And the book of Hebrews explains to us what that means.

More than any other New Testament letter, the book of Hebrews explains to us what the rending of that veil means and what application it has to our own personal lives and how because that veil has been rent, we can now enter into the most holy place by first the blood of Jesus and second the new and living way that Jesus has opened up for us. And this is what we see in this letter, how the blood of Jesus and the new and living way that he has opened up for us through his flesh has made a way for us to enter into the most holy place. Now this is not just theory.

This is not just a piece of nice theology to tickle our curiosity. Or to give us a little more knowledge. But it has intense and very real practical implications.

For it is the will of God that we who are redeemed by the blood of Jesus should live in the most holy place continuously. That we should enter in by faith into the most holy place and dwell there. Now, we read here in Hebrews chapter 1 and verse 1 and 2. In the past God spoke through various means by the prophets.

But now he has spoken to us by his Son. And there in the very first two verses itself you have a comparison between the old covenant and the new covenant or the old testament and the new testament or the old agreement and the new agreement. For these words mean the same thing.

And that is one of the contrasts that is drawn throughout this episode. How much better the new covenant is compared to the old covenant. How much more glorious the new testament message is than the old testament message.

How much more we have access to in these days because the spirit has been given than the old testament saints had who did not have that privilege. And so that is the contrast drawn in verses 1 and 2. In the old testament times God spoke through the prophets. Now he is speaking to us through his Son.

And we have to hear him. And the Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ is given seven titles there. There is a seven fold description of the Lord Jesus in verses 2 and 3. Right at the beginning of the letter in the very first paragraph and right through the first chapter actually we find the Lord Jesus being exalted and shown to us as he really is.

And here is the seven fold description or revelation of the Lord Jesus. In verses 2 and 3 he is first of all called God's final spokesman. In these last days he has spoken unto us by his Son.

God's final spokesman. And then we read that he is called heir of all things. Heir of all things.

That relates to the future. And then thirdly he is called the maker of the worlds or the maker of the ages. And fourthly he is called the express image of God.

And fifthly the upholder of all things. And sixth the one sacrifice for sins. Through him the one and only sacrifice for the sins of the world was offered.

And then seventhly he is the occupant, the ruler on the throne of power. And so those are the seven descriptions of Jesus. In the future he is called the heir of all things.

In the past he made the worlds. And in the present we read there that by himself he purged our sins. That was on the cross.

And then sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high, that is on the throne. And you find right through this letter the cross and the throne are brought together frequently. In chapter 12, for example, verse 2, we read that Jesus endured the cross and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

We read in chapter 2, verse 9, that Jesus endured the suffering of death and is now crowned with glory and honor. The cross and the throne. And these two are brought together and we are shown in this episode that Jesus went to the throne via the cross.

And this is the way that we shall get to the throne as well. There is no other way for the New Testament Christian to go to the throne of God except via the cross. And not just the cross where Jesus died for our sins, but the cross where Jesus bore all through his life, where he died to himself perpetually.

That is the way of the cross along which we are to walk. Along which we are to run the race that is spoken of in this letter if we are to reach the throne on high. And then in verses 4 to 14, the remaining verses of this chapter, we find that Jesus is described as one who is far superior to the angels.

He is further described in chapter 2 and verses 5 to 18 as far superior to all others. In chapter 3, as far superior to Moses. And in chapter 5, he is compared to Aaron.

In chapter 7, he is shown as being superior to Aaron, having received a priesthood that was higher than the priesthood of Aaron which was the highest priesthood known under the old covenant. And so in the first few chapters, as we shall see, the aim of the writer is to show the excellence of the Lord Jesus Christ. His power, what he has done and his superiority to angels and to men.

And therefore, showing him to us as the perfect man whom we are called to follow. As far superior to all the angels in heaven. And we are told that he is superior to them first of all by his name.

Verse 4, being made so much better than the angels as he has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than them. And then secondly, we are shown that he is superior to the angels in the fact that the angels were created whereas he was begotten. Verse 5, unto which of the angels did God say at any time, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.

The angels were created, Jesus was not created. He was one with the Father. He was begotten.

And then you read in verses 6 and 7 that the third reason why Jesus is superior to the angels is by the fact of worship. The angels give worship to him and he receives their worship. Verse 6, when God brings the first begotten into the world he says let all the angels of God worship him.

And so there you see, the angels come to worship Jesus and Jesus receives that worship. And a fourth reason by which he is superior is by the fact of kingship. We read in verses 7 to 9 that the angels are called servants.

God makes his angels servants, a flame of fire. But the Son of God is the king of the throne. The angels are servants to the throne.

But the Son of God, called God in verse 8, is sitting on the throne as the king, receiving the service of the angels. And then in verses 10 to 12 he is called superior to the angels by the fact that he is the creator. Thou Lord has laid the foundation of the earth and the heavens are the works of thine hands.

Now that is referring to the Lord Jesus Christ. And there is very clear evidence in these first chapters of Hebrews, these verses that we have just read, of the deity of Christ equal with the Father from eternal ages. The angels, on the other hand, are created.

Then in verses 13 and 14, Jesus is called superior to the angels by the fact that he has conquered and overcome and come to the throne. For it says in verse 13, to which of the angels did God say at any time, Sit on my right hand until I make your enemies your footstool. And so through all these means, Jesus is called superior to the angels.

We need to understand that when the New Testament speaks of Jesus as the Son of God and of God in heaven as his Father, the relationship between God the Father and God the Son is not like an earthly father and son where one was born through the other. This is just a use of human language to help our limited, finite intellects to understand something of the great mystery that is revealed in the Bible of the Trinity of the Godhead. But Jesus is co-equal with the Father and that is why in verse 8 he is called God.

Thy throne, O God, is forever. This is God the Father speaking to the Son and calling him God. And in verse 10, Thou, Lord, hast laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of Thine hands.

Now we know that the heavens and the earth were created by God and here it is referred to as having been created by the Lord Jesus, which is another indication of his deity. And so right through these verses we find the deity of Christ standing out. Again in verse 6, the angels of God are to worship him.

The only being in this whole universe who is qualified to receive worship is God himself. And Jesus receives that worship and so it is very clearly shown that he is God. Now verses like these expose the utter fallacy of the Jehovah's Witnesses who teach that the Bible does not clearly teach Jesus as God.

On the other hand, they say that Jesus is only a man. Now what we see very clearly in the book of Hebrews is that Jesus is God and as we go to the next chapter we will find that Jesus is called a man. He is both God and man.

God was manifest in flesh. And this is something that comes out very very clearly in the book of Hebrews, particularly the first two chapters. And because Jesus is superior to the angels, we are to take heed to the message that is given by him.

And this is the point of chapter 2 verses 1 to 4. For it says there in verse 2 that if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every disobedience received a punishment, how shall we escape if we neglect a salvation that was spoken by the Lord? Since the Lord is so much superior to the angels, the old covenant was mediated by the hands of angels, but the new covenant is mediated through the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the point of his comparing the Lord Jesus with the angels. We can look at a few other things here in chapter 1 before we go into chapter 2. First of all, verse 9. We are told concerning the Lord Jesus, an Old Testament prophecy, Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity.

Therefore God, even thy God, anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. There was a reason why Jesus was anointed with the Holy Spirit. The oil of gladness is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

The reason why Jesus was anointed, it says in this verse, is because he wholeheartedly loved righteousness and he wholeheartedly hated iniquity. Jesus was not just positive, he was also negative. There are a lot of people who tell us these days, we shouldn't be negative, they say.

We shouldn't be negative in our preaching. We must be positive. There are people who tell us, if we think positively, we can have all of God's promises.

This is a mere psychological gimmick. The Bible doesn't speak about positive thinking at all. It speaks about faith.

And that is as far removed from positive thinking as heaven is from earth. And if we follow after Jesus, we shall not only be positive, we shall be negative as well. For Jesus was both positive and negative.

It says in verse 9 very clearly, that he was absolutely negative in his attitude towards sin and absolutely positive in his attitude towards righteousness. And all who would follow in the footsteps of Jesus. For remember, we saw that one of the themes of Hebrews is, consider Jesus as our forerunner, Hebrews 6.20. The one who has run the race ahead of us and shown us an example, how we are to walk.

And if he is our example, here is an area where he has given us a glorious example. He loved righteousness wholeheartedly. And he hated sin wholeheartedly.

And if we are to run the same race, this must be our attitude towards righteousness. We must love righteousness wholeheartedly. In other words, we must be absolutely upright.

Take money matters for example. We must be absolutely upright. If there is anyone from whom you have borrowed money, it must be returned.

If there are taxes to be paid, you must pay them exactly. It is far better to pay more than to pay less. We must be absolutely righteous in the matter of keeping a promise.

If you make a promise, you must keep it. Your word must always be kept. This is what it means to love righteousness.

If you tell someone that you will meet him at a particular time, you must make that appointment. This is what it means to be righteous. This is how Jesus loved righteousness wholeheartedly.

And he equally wholeheartedly hated all sin. He never wanted to be defiled in any way, even in his thought life. And all who say they are following Jesus, will follow Jesus in this area and will be anointed like he was.

We saw last week from Hebrews chapter 1 verses 4 to 14, the transcendency of Jesus, the superiority of the Lord Jesus to all the angels. And we saw there six ways in which he is superior. We saw that because he loved righteousness and hated iniquity, God anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows.

Above all other human beings. Because there was no human being who loved righteousness like Jesus did. No human being who hated iniquity like Jesus did.

And therefore there was no one who was anointed with the Holy Spirit like Jesus was. We notice in that section in Hebrews, that there are seven references to the Old Testament in that chapter. And all seven times we find the Old Testament quotations are prefixed by He said, that is God says.

He doesn't say that David said this. No, God said this. The words were perhaps penned by David, but the Holy Spirit here in Hebrews acknowledges that Old Testament as God's word.

And chapter 1 really proves the deity of Christ, the fact that he is God from the Old Testament. And chapter 2 proves the humanity of Christ from the Old Testament. And so chapter 1 shows us Jesus as God.

Chapter 2 shows us Jesus as man. And we need to hold both these truths together. And never get so taken up with one that we forget the other.

Some people, the trouble with most Christians is, that they are so taken up with Jesus as God, that they never never think of Jesus as a man. And so they are, perhaps unconsciously, as imbalanced as the

Jehovah's Witnesses who think of him only as a man and never think of him as God. The only thing is, these Christians go to the other extreme that the Jehovah's Witnesses have gone to and think of Jesus only as God and never as a man.

And this is the lesson that comes through in chapter 2. Jesus is a man. We read there in chapter 2 verse 1, Therefore, and that therefore refers back to the first chapter, where we are shown that God is now spoken to us through Jesus and not through the prophets like in the Old Testament. And that Jesus is the mediator of the new covenant, unlike angels who were the mediator of the old covenant.

And therefore, because of the superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ to the prophets and to the angels, we must hold fast to the message brought by the Lord Jesus. We read here, Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard. In other words, our privileges are far far superior to the privileges of those under the old covenant.

Therefore, our responsibility is equally far far greater than the responsibility of those under the old covenant. There were many things that God permitted people to do in the old covenant. We read there that people were permitted to have more than one wife and were permitted to divorce their wives and permitted to pluck out one eye if somebody plucked out their eye and many things like this.

But under the new covenant there is no such permission. We have to rise up now to God's highest because there are greater privileges under the new covenant. And this, as we mentioned earlier, is another theme of this letter to the Hebrews.

That the new covenant is far superior, better, much much better than the old covenant because it can lead us to perfection, which the old covenant could not. Even a man like David could not get victory over sin under the old covenant. But under the new covenant we can.

And this is through looking at Jesus. And so we could say that the book of Hebrews is trying to show us that if we look at Jesus, we can be led to perfection if we will follow Him, the example that He has set by His life. Verse 2 of Hebrews 2, For if the word spoken by angels, that is in the old covenant, was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Now notice, He is not saying in verse 3 that we shall be punished if we reject such a great salvation.

He is not talking about rejecting the salvation, but of neglecting it. There is a lot of difference between rejecting and neglecting. It is the unbeliever who rejects the gospel.

But we can receive the gospel and still neglect to enter in to all that God desires that we should enter into in this great salvation. Verse 3, Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him. God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

There you have the whole trinity. Verse 3, Spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 4, God the Father bearing witness.

The last part of verse 4, the gifts of the Holy Spirit. So there you have Father, Son and Holy Spirit brought together in those two verses all involved in one way or the other in this great salvation that has been brought to us. The Lord Jesus brought the message through His life, death and through His words.

God has borne witness to that with mighty signs and wonders that were done in the life of Jesus that approved Him and manifested Him to be the Son of God. And also it says here through the gifts that the Holy Spirit is giving to the church today according to His own will which was not so under the old covenant. And all these together show us the greatness of this salvation which is ours and therefore if we neglect it we cannot escape.

And then in verses 5 to 18. Jesus is shown as a human being, completely human in every way and yet shown as the one who as a human being triumphed and overcame. This is a very precious section of scripture.

We read in verse 5. For unto the angels has not God put in subjection the world to come but one in a certain place testified saying what is man that thou art mindful of him. This is a quotation from Psalm 8 verse 4. Or the Son of man that thou visitest Him. Thou madest Him a little lower than the angels.

Thou crownest Him with glory and honor and set Him over the works of thy hand. Man became a little lower than the angels. When He fell and God did not forsake Him.

He still had a plan for man to come back to that original place of dominion made in the image of God reflecting and radiating the glory of God and fulfilling God's will. And so it says here verse 8. Thou hast put all things in subjection under His feet for in that He put all in subjection. Under Him He left nothing that is not put under Him.

But now we see not yet all things put under Him. God has a tremendous purpose for man. The world to come we are told in verse 5 is not going to be under the dominion of angels.

It's going to be under the dominion of man. Man is the highest of God's creation because as far as we know no created being was made in the image of God except man. And no created being has the privilege of calling God Father except man.

The angels cannot call God Father. They call Him God. And the greatest of all things is of course the fact that God Himself took the form not of an angel but of a man.

That's why it says in verse 9 the fulfillment of that reference to man in Psalm 8 is in Jesus. Verse 9. We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor. And we are told further down that God did not take upon Him the nature of angels, verse 16 but the nature of the seed of Abraham.

This is the glory of man that God chose to become man. We must see the dignity of man if we are to enter into our calling. Hebrews 2.7 The angels do not die and Jesus had to taste death.

And so we see here that He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. But now He is crowned with glory and honor. Now the angels go back and worship Him.

He went via the cross to the throne. For a little while He was made inferior to the angels. As we read in the margin of verse 7 Thou madest Him for a little while inferior to the angels.

For that short period of His lifetime on earth He took that position of being inferior even to those whom He had created, the angels. There we see the greatness of the love of Jesus for us. That He was willing to come all the way down right down to our level so that we might be lifted up to His level.

And by the grace of God, verse 9 He tasted death for every man. And today all things are under His feet. Because He went the way of suffering and humiliation and the cross and death God raised Him up to the highest heights of glory.

And if we follow Jesus in His humiliation God will raise us also to glory as God raised the Lord Jesus Christ. If we walk in the footsteps of Jesus who says to us If any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. If any man will follow in the footsteps of Jesus going this way he too will share the throne of Jesus one day.

And in verses 10 to 18 we are shown how completely He became one with us. How exactly He became just like us in every respect so that He could be the captain of our salvation.

Verse 10 we read For it became Him or it was something befitting Him for whom are all things everything exists for the Lord Jesus Christ by whom are all things everything exists by His supporting power even though His position is this and His power is this in bringing many sons to glory He took this place lower than the angels His desire was to bring many sons into the glory which He Himself had but there was no way to lead others into that glory unless He Himself went through suffering and so it says in bringing many sons to glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering this is what God has permitted for both He that sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all out of one out of one Father Jesus calls God His Father and He tells us to call God our Father and

this is why after the resurrection when He appeared to Mary He told her go and tell my brothers John chapter 20 verse 17 those amazing words go and tell my brothers He doesn't say my disciples He says my brothers go and tell them that I have sent to my Father and your Father to my God and your God many people are not able to understand how Jesus has become the elder brother of those who will walk in His footsteps He wants to be our elder brother and that is the point here in verse 11 He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified Jesus that is He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified that is us are all from one Father for which case for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brothers isn't that fantastic that Jesus is not only our Saviour and our God and our King and our Lord but

He is also our elder brother as a man and He says in verse 12 again a quotation from the Old Testament Psalm 22 verse 22 I will declare your name this is Jesus speaking to His Father I will declare your name to my brothers that is exactly what He did in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee Jesus becomes the leader of the praise of the church to the Father and this is why He is called the head of the church leading the church in the worship of the Father and again verse 13 I will put my trust in Him Jesus put His trust in His Heavenly Father as a man and again behold I and the children which God has given me a quotation from Isaiah 8 verse 18 I and the children whom God has given me Jesus desire as I said was to bring many sons unto glory but the only way that could be

possible was through He Himself who is the captain of our salvation verse 10 becoming perfect through suffering Jesus had to be made perfect through suffering and thus He could lead us also to glory and for this purpose we read in verse 14 for as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He also took part of the same Jesus took part of flesh and blood and became a human being just like us for we are called His brothers in Ephesians chapter 5 verse 31 and 32 we are told that Old Testament verse in Genesis 2 a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall be one flesh one flesh and He says in verse 32 this is a great mystery but I am speaking concerning Christ and the church this is the depth to which Christ came to lift us up He became

one flesh with us He became completely man oh that we would see this mystery it would open up new vistas of understanding for us Zach Fuller we turn to Hebrews chapter 2 and verse 14 for as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood He also Himself likewise took part of the same that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death that is the devil and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage and here we are told that Jesus took upon Himself flesh and blood just like us we saw last week those verses in Ephesians 5 verse 31 and 32 where we are told Christ became one flesh with the church that is with us who have been redeemed by His blood and who are seeking to follow after Him He became one flesh with us He became

exactly like us in every way so that He might through death destroy the devil who had the power of death over us and thus deliver us from all the bondage upon our lives now this is a glorious truth that Jesus not only came to take away our sins to pay the price for the penalty for our sins but also that He came to destroy the works of the devil in the first episode of John chapter 3 we are told two reasons why Jesus came verse 5 we are told that He was manifested to take away our sins and He carried them away through His death on the cross in verse 8 we are told He was also manifested to destroy the works of the devil and through death He destroyed him who had the power of death that is the devil there was no way to overcome Satan except through death when Jesus died He overcame Satan's

power He made a show of principalities and powers we read in Colossians 2.15 openly triumphing over them in the cross when He died on the cross He not only took away the charges that the law could level against us taking away that penalty but He also spoiled principalities and powers stripped off their power on the cross so we read here in Hebrews 2.14 through death He destroyed him who had the power of death that is the devil and thus delivered us through fear of death for all the lifetime subject to bondage it is not God's will that we should be in bondage of any form it is not God's will that we should be subject to Satan in any area of our life the bible says in Ephesians chapter 4 very very clearly give no place to the devil no place at all Ephesians 4.27 it is not God's will that we

should be in any type of bondage and I would say that to you if you are in any type of bondage in any area in spirit, soul or body in your mind, your emotions your body, your spirit in any area of your life I can tell you on the authority of the word of God and in the name of Jesus Christ that you are not meant to be under that bondage shake it off in the name of Jesus Christ for it is not God's will for you to be under that bondage the devil is trying to fool you by saying that God has put that bondage on you He doesn't put bondage on anyone God has called us to liberty Jesus came not to bring people into bondage but to set people free and this is the will of God that we shall be free completely free in every area of our life and so it says here for as much then as the children are

partakers of flesh and blood he took part of the same the purpose was not something for himself that he took part of our flesh and blood and that he took our death it was for something for us that we might be free now how did Jesus overcome Satan we are told in verse 14 through death when he died on the cross he stripped the devil's power so that we could be free but in his own life right through the 33 years the devil could have no touch on Jesus as a man he had no grip on him no hold on him because Jesus lived a life where he perpetually died to himself Jesus walked the way of the cross long before he went to the cross he said these words to his disciples in Luke chapter 9 verse 23 he said if any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me in

other words if we want to follow Jesus we have to take up our cross daily and die to ourselves this is not speaking about a physical death for we cannot die physically every day it cannot mean a physical death

what then does it mean to take up the cross daily every day of our life we have to take up a cross that's what Jesus said otherwise he said in Luke 9 verse 23 we just cannot follow him there is no way of following Jesus if we do not take up the cross daily many many people who say they are born again believers know absolutely nothing of the cross and therefore they are not disciples at all for no man can be a disciple of Jesus Christ unless he takes up the cross daily don't be deceived dear friend listen to Jesus words in Luke 14 verse 27 in Luke 14 27 Jesus said whoever does not

bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple that cross is a cross on which we have to die to ourselves and if we are not willing for that we just cannot be disciples of Jesus but turning back to Luke 9 verse 23 we are told there that if we are to follow Jesus we are to deny ourselves and take up the cross or in other words that indicates that Jesus himself who is going ahead along this way in which he calls us to follow him Jesus himself was also denying his own self and taking up his cross daily otherwise he would be no example at all for us to follow him he could never be an example for us to follow if he himself never took up the cross daily, if he did not deny himself daily, but he did Jesus died to his own self every day he died to his own self will every day he never

never never did his own will he always sought to do the will of the father it was not only in the garden of Gethsemane that he said father not my will but thine but all through life he said that we read about that in John chapter 5 and verse 30 I do not seek my own will Jesus said there was the cross my own will I do not seek it Jesus said in other words he put the cross upon his own will and died to his own choices in life died to the desires of the flesh he died to the choices that he would like to make as a human being died to all of that that he might live to do the fathers will and this is essentially the meaning of the cross John 5.30 I seek not my own will but the will of the father who sent me and so there was a death that worked in Jesus continuously all through his life he died

to his own choice that he might do the will of his father and this is why he never never sinned if he had done his own will he would have sinned through death he destroyed him that had the power of death and through that death that Jesus bore continuously for 33 years consummating in that final death physically as well on the cross the devil was defeated and this is how the devil is going to be defeated in our life too if we will follow in the footsteps of Jesus who never pleased himself never did his own will denied his own self everyday took up the cross and followed his father if we will walk in those footsteps we shall be free from the power of satan satan will have absolutely no hold over us dear friends we need to see this it was not through doing miracles that Jesus overcame satan

but through the death on the cross and in exactly the same way it is not through miracles that we are going to overcome satan but as we take up the cross and die we shall be free from every bondage that the devil seeks to impose upon us we turn now to Hebrews chapter 2 verse 16 we saw last week from verse 14 and 15 that Jesus took upon himself flesh and blood just like us it says as the children are partakers of flesh and blood he also likewise in exactly the same way took part of the same not of something else but of exactly the same flesh and blood that we have and the purpose was that he might make a way for us to be freed from the bondage and dominion of satan and we are told in verse 16 that he did not take hold of the nature of angels but he took on him the seed of Abraham now the

point there is that when the angels fell you read in Isaiah chapter 14 and Ezekiel chapter 28 of the fall of Lucifer created to be the head of the angels along with many other angels who fell away from their privileged position Lucifer falling away from his privileged position as the anointed cherub, losing that authority that he had over all the angels and yet God never took on him the nature of those angels to

redeem them but when man fell God took upon him the nature of man to redeem man there you see the greatness of man in God's eyes he took on him the seed of Abraham of course one reason for this could be that the angels fell of their own accord whereas man fell in the garden of Eden through the incitement of Satan and so God didn't take upon him the nature of angels to redeem them

but he did take upon himself the nature of man it says here the seed of Abraham Jesus took on him the seed of Abraham very very clear he came to earth of the seed of Abraham just like us and that is further reinforced by this statement in verse 17 wherefore in all things not in a few things not in most things but in all things he had to be made like unto his brethren so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sins of the people and so Jesus came to earth in every respect like us chapter 2 verse 17 in every respect like us the only difference is that he never committed sin whereas we have committed sin but apart from that in every other respect he came to this earth exactly like us and this is why the Bible calls Jesus

a man the apostles called Jesus a man much more than they ever called him God in fact they always refer to Jesus as a man if you turn to Acts chapter 2 you read there in verse 22 Jesus of Nazareth this is Peter's sermon on the day of Pentecost and he says Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved by God among you by the miracles and wonders and signs which God did through him notice what Peter calls Jesus he doesn't tell this unbelieving multitude Jesus is God though Peter knew very well in his heart that he was but that's not what he says he tells this unbelieving multitude of Jews Jesus of Nazareth, a man a man approved by God this was how completely the disciples were gripped by the fact that Jesus was a man we need to be gripped by this fact again in this day and age for it is only as we see

him as a man that we shall be led into that life of perfection that the New Testament offers to us you read again in Acts chapter 17 Acts chapter 17 verse 31 Paul preaching to the people of Athens on Mars Hill says these words Acts 17 31 God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he has ordained God is going to judge the world he says, by a man and that man is the one whom he has raised from the dead, Paul tells these Athenians and so it is again in 1 Timothy chapter 2 and verse 5 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 5 there is one God and one mediator between God and men the man Christ Jesus notice he is not called the God man that's what we would have written into that verse but the Holy Spirit does not call him the God man it never is Jesus called

the God man in the New Testament he is called the man he is called God and he is called the man because God was manifest in flesh and when he came in flesh, he came completely as a man, he emptied himself we read in Philippians chapter 2 and became a man Philippians chapter 2 verse 6 and 7 we are told though he was in the form of God he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped at there we are told that he was equal with God from eternal ages but he did not consider that something to be grasped, but he relinquished it gladly and took upon himself the form of a man and this is why the apostles call him a man, he emptied himself not of his essential person as God, but of his powers privileges and rights as God when he was in heaven he came as a man and in every respect it

says in Hebrews 2.17 he had to be made like us so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in all things to make reconciliation for the sins of the people and this is one of the things that is further emphasized in chapter 4 and 5 particularly the humanity of Jesus Christ so that he could be our leader he could not be our leader if he was not a man exactly like us if he was in some way different from us or if he was in some way more able than us, then he could not say to us follow me because we could say to him Lord you did not have the limitations that I have so how can I follow you but he became exactly like us so

that we can follow him he took our limitations that we might be able to follow him and as he walked the way of perfection we can walk the way of perfection too

because he came with our limitations so there is no excuse for anyone today to say I cannot walk the way of perfection because Jesus has walked that way and Jesus was exactly like us verse 18 we read in that Jesus himself has suffered being tempted he is able to assist and relieve or succor or run to the assistance of those who are tempted Jesus was tempted how was he tempted? we see in chapter 4 and verse 15 the last part that he was tempted exactly as we are yet without any sin he was not tempted in a different way he was tempted just like we are in no different way but exactly as we are he was tempted but he did not sin and because he has gone through temptation we are told in verse 18 today he is able to run to the assistance of those who are tempted when we are tempted Jesus knows

exactly what we are going through because he has gone through it himself what an encouragement this is to us that every time we face temptation we can say Lord you know what struggle I face because you went through it yourself and therefore he is able to come to our assistance and help us when we are tempted so that we do not fall into sin we turn to Hebrews chapter 3 today Hebrews chapter 3 verse 1 here we see Jesus as superior to Moses and as our leader in the first two chapters we have seen Jesus first of all as God and then as a man exactly like us in every way and something of the work that he did and now we are told that Jesus is superior to Moses and this is to contrast the new covenant with the old covenant to contrast grace and the message of grace with law and the message that

the law brought and to show how much superior the new covenant is to the old covenant as Christ is superior to Moses and we being followers not of Moses but of Christ can enter into a far higher realm than those who followed Moses in other words just like Jesus said the least in the kingdom of heaven will be greater than John the Baptist who was up until that time the greatest man born of women why was that? because John the Baptist and all those old testament prophets lived under the law and the law could not make anyone perfect because of the weakness of the flesh but through Jesus Christ grace has come and grace is able to lead us into perfection and it is this perfection of the new covenant which is far far superior to the old covenant and so he says holy brethren partakers of the

heavenly calling consider the apostle and high priest of our profession Christ Jesus who was faithful to him who appointed him as also Moses was faithful in all his house for this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses in as much as he who has builded the house has more honor than the house itself for every house is built by some man but he who built all things is God and so we are told that just like a builder has more honor than the house itself so Christ has more honor than Moses.

Moses was only a part of the house whereas Christ was the builder of the house and he is called God again in verse 4 Moses it says in verse 5 was only a servant he was faithful in all his house as a servant what a testimony of those things which are to be spoken later on but Christ is not a servant but a son over his own house whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end we like Moses are part of the house and Jesus is the one who build the house who is a son over his own house and so the apostle says consider the apostle and high priest of our profession Christ Jesus who was faithful who was superior to Moses now this word faithful occurs a number of times in this passage it says in verse 2 that Jesus was faithful as Moses was faithful

according to the level of Moses understanding in all his house and again in verse 5 we are told Moses was faithful in all his house and Christ as a son over his own house was also faithful now this is very important

for us to see because this is the spirit and the characteristic of God's house one of the prime characteristics of those who belong to the house of God is faithfulness steadfastness not success but faithfulness and we shall discover in the final day when we stand before the judgment seat of Christ that the important question that will come to us will be concerning not our success but our faithfulness remember the story of the talents where and the pounds where when people came back to show their master the fruit of their labor with what the master had given them the master's

commendation was never well done you successful servant but always well done you faithful servant it was faithfulness and the man who had produced a hundred percent profit whether it was two talents over two talents or five talents over five talents they both got the same commendation the same commendation well done good and faithful servant and so it is with us it is faithfulness that God looks for in his house which is the church we are told in verse six whose house are we if we are also faithful like Moses and like Jesus Christ our forerunner if we are faithful and hold fast to the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope that we have firm until the end we are faithful until the end then we can truly say that we are the house of God in which God dwells that we are the temple of God

it's a great tragedy when people who are utterly unfaithful say that they are the temple of God just because they said Lord Jesus come into my heart it requires more than that it requires faithfulness it requires a holding fast read verse six very carefully and see what it says we are the house of Christ if there is a big if we should never remove that if out of that verse we the writer includes himself the apostle who wrote this letter includes himself and says we are the house of Christ if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of our hope firm until the end he who endures until the end will be saved it is faithfulness that matters in the long run and therefore verse seven as the Holy Spirit says do not harden your hearts if you hear his voice today that is a great danger if we cease

to be faithful if we cease to listen to what the Holy Spirit is speaking the great privilege that we have is described in verse six hearing his voice under the old covenant nobody could hear the voice of God no they couldn't they told Moses you go and hear the voice of God and tell us what you have heard we don't want to hear him ourselves we will die but under the new covenant we are told all will know me says the Lord from the least to the greatest everyone will know me and no one will have to teach his brother saying know the Lord Hebrews 8 verse 11 we can hear his voice directly this is the great privilege of the new covenant but the great danger is that when we hear his voice verse 8 we may harden our hearts if we will soften our hearts and humble ourselves to the word that we hear

from God then we shall have a part in God's house and that's the point of the writer quoting from Psalm 95 at this point, Psalm 95 11 is quoted here, today if you will hear his voice harden not your hearts as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness when your fathers tempted me proved me and saw my works for forty years wherefore I was grieved with that generation and said they do always earn in their hearts they have not known my wrath so I swear in my wrath they shall not enter into my wrath the children of Israel under the old covenant were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb out of Egypt but yet they missed God's best because they were not steadfast they did not endure until the end they were not faithful, they believed in the beginning they believed that the blood

of the Lamb was sufficient to save them from death and it did save them from death they came out of Egypt they believed and the Red Sea was open and they were baptized into Moses in the Red Sea a picture of water baptism they were baptized in the cloud unto Moses we read in 1 Corinthians 10 2 a picture of baptism in the Holy Spirit and yet in spite of all this they did not enter into God's best and so that

is set before us as a warning so we are told today if you hear the voice of God in any area dear friend if you hear God's voice don't harden your heart lest you also miss out on God's best

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