

Jesus: The Perfect Savior  
Hebrews 2:9-18

Hebrews exists to demonstrate to the Jewish mind, the superiority of Jesus over everything. This includes angels, Moses, Aaron, the law, the Temple and the sacrificial system. The author wants his readers to hold on to Jesus at the expense of everything connected to the Old Covenant.

Jesus is the center of the deity, the center of the universe, the center of humanity, the center of scripture, the center of worship. "In the book of Hebrews, all things converse on Christ and all things radiate from Christ."

This is important to the Jewish mind because the last time any Jew heard of Jesus, he had died on a cross. The writer of Hebrews is claiming otherwise.

Christ is the Lord of two worlds and one of them is in revolt against him. Nonetheless, he is still Lord. Our text this evening tells us that Jesus will one day return to earth and overcome all rebellion. All created history is hastening to the coronation of Jesus.

One of the problems in the Jewish mind is that Jesus is just one more in a long line of would-be, self-professed saviors. The Jews have one advantage; the Old Testament. For our author to demonstrate that Jesus could possibly be the Savior, he has to prove that Jesus is superior to and the point of the Old Testament.

1:5-8 & 13-14

That leads us to 2:1 – *"Therefore..."* and then a return to angels in 5-8

*"made"* = not created less but made less

*"little lower"* = a connotation of time - *"for a little while"*

Jesus is not less than angels but for a time made himself less than angels in order to do what angels could not do; become our kinsman redeemer; wholly man thus able to endure the penalty of sin and wholly God thus able to absorb the power of sin

Since we have sinned against an infinite creature, the penalty and scope of our sin is infinite. Only an infinite being could absorb an infinite penalty. This is why God became man.

But if Jesus is indeed superior to angels who do not die, how and why did Jesus die?

1 Corinthians 1:23 - *we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews*

But that is the writer's point in this passage: Jesus was made lower than the angels so that he might die.

Acts 17:1-3 - *Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ.”*

When God created humanity in innocence, He gave them dominion over the earth. Adam and Eve sinned and they immediately lost dominion. Jesus Christ came to remove the curse, so that we could regain our dominion. Jesus came to restore the crown, our place in God’s creation. If He was going to restore the crown to humanity, He had to come as a human. And if He was going to remove the curse that was on humanity, He had to take the place of people. So He had to be a human. This is why he had to be lower than angels, He accomplished something that no angel could ever accomplish. He restored us to our rightful place in relationship to God and creation.

### **First: Only a human could die for humans**

V 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.*

Ezekiel 18:20 - *The soul who sins shall die*

Romans 6:23 – *The wages of sin is death*

James 1:15 – *...sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.*

One of two things must take place: either the person who sinned must die or someone must die as a substitute

This is why the cross of Jesus and the death of Jesus is central to the gospel. Jesus was a good teacher and moral leader but none of that saves us from the power and penalty of sin.

*“...him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus” = incarnation*

This is the stunning, even staggering, stone-stumbling part of the gospel. God became a man to do what no man, no angel, no animal sacrifice could do, substitute himself for sin.

- He had to be a man because men die for sin
- He had to be God for only God could live sinlessly and die vicariously

Jesus, who is now “*crowned with glory and honor*” is so crowned “because” he was made a little lower than the angels “*because of the suffering of death.*”

Of all the things Jesus came to do, and did, dying is first and foremost. Christianity is not Christianity without the cross.

- a) The fact – *For a little while, he was made a little lower than the angels*
- b) The purpose – *Because of the suffering of death*
- c) The result – He is crowned with glory and honor
- d) The means – by the grace of God – the free, unmerited lovingkindness of God
- e) The extent – that... he might taste death for everyone

John 10:17-18 - *For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.*”

Rather than ignoring the cross, the writer to the Hebrews explains the necessity of the cross and the glory in it.

Psalm 22 – the Psalm of the cross – “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Psalm 23 – the Psalm of his care – “The Lord is my shepherd...”

**Psalm 24** – the Psalm of his coming – **T**

### **Second: Only God could die for humans**

*For 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 that he*” = it agreed with who he is..... only he

1 Corinthians 1:18-31 –

- a) Who was wise enough to create this plan? It fit his wisdom.
- b) Who was righteous enough to contemplate this plan? It fit his righteousness.
- c) Who was holy enough to perform this plan? It fit his holiness.
- d) Who was redeeming enough to complete this plan? It fit his redeeming power.

### **Revelation 5:1-14 – T**

*“for whom and by whom all things exist...”* – Only the creator could be crucified because only the creator is able to be crucified

Only the Creator can be the Savior

*“It was fitting that he...”* because only he was fit.

What we needed was a superman and if you’ll stop to think about it, only Jesus is super enough

### Third: Only God as a human could be made “perfect through suffering”

*For 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.*

“founder” = *archegos* = pioneer or leader / captain

Acts 5:31 - *God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior*

Hebrews 5:8 - *Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. <sup>9</sup>And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,*

So this is what it means to be made “perfect” – the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him. And only by God taking on human form and dying, could that be accomplished.

God is the source of our salvation in principle – Ephesians 1:4

God is the source of our salvation prophetically – Genesis 3:15

God is the source of our salvation practically and personally in the cross

1 Corinthians 15:20-24 - *But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>21</sup>For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. <sup>22</sup>For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. <sup>23</sup>But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ. <sup>24</sup>Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power.*

Ephesians 2:1-7 - *And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup>in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup>among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. <sup>4</sup>But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup>even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— <sup>6</sup>and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

G.B. Hardy, in *Countdown*, says this is the ultimate question in the world. “Number one, has anybody ever cheated death? Number two, if he did, did he leave the way open for me?”

The answer to #1 is ‘no.’ Jesus did not cheat death. He paid the full price for you and me and actually died and then came back alive.

The answer to #2 is ‘yes.’

Hebrews 10:19-20 - ... *we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,* <sup>20</sup> *by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,*

The writer is pointing to that time that Jesus died and what it accomplished.

If you miss the provenance, you miss the point

During the lifetime of Jesus, the holy temple in Jerusalem was the center of Jewish religious life and the only way to God. Hebrews 9:1-9 tells us that in the temple a veil separated the Holy of Holies—the earthly dwelling place of God’s presence—from the rest of the temple where people dwelt. This signified that man was separated from God by sin (Isaiah 59:1-2). Only the high priest was permitted to pass beyond this veil once each year (Exodus 30:10; Hebrews 9:7) to enter into God's presence for all of Israel and make atonement for their sins (Leviticus 16).

Solomon's temple was 30 cubits high (1 Kings 6:2), but Herod had increased the height to 40 cubits, according to the writings of Josephus, a first century Jewish historian...somewhere near 60 feet high. An early Jewish tradition says that the veil was about four inches thick, but the Bible does not confirm that measurement.

The size and thickness of the veil make the events occurring at the moment of Jesus’ death on the cross so much more momentous. *“And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit. At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom”* (Matthew 27:50-51a).

The veil reminded every Jew that he was unfit to enter God’s presence. Jesus, by his “fitness,” made every Jew who believes on him, fit, to enter God’s presence.

Every day, twice a day, in the morning and the evening, an unblemished male lamb was to be sacrificed in the sanctuary and offered along with a sacrifice of flour and wine (see Nu 28:1-8; Ex 29:38-42).

Jesus was crucified at the third hour (9 AM), the ordinary time for the daily morning sacrifice (Mark 15:25) and morning prayers (Acts 3:1)

Jesus died on the cross by virtue of commanding His spirit to leave His body at the ninth hour (3 PM), the time of the evening sacrifice (Exodus 12:6; Mark 15:25, 33-34, 37). Both references to the time of Jesus’s death are meant to tie his death to the daily, perpetual sacrifice being offered in the Temple.

Jewish tradition tells us that at 9am and 3pm the Jews were in the Temple praying for redemption, the forgiveness of sins, the coming of the Messiah and the resurrection of the dead. Jesus fulfills it all.

**Of note:** 1 Kings 18:26-29 - *And they took the bull that was given them, and they prepared it and called upon the name of Baal from morning (3<sup>rd</sup> hour/9am) until noon (6<sup>th</sup> hour/12pm), saying, "O Baal, answer us!" But there was no voice, and no one answered. And they limped around the altar that they had made. <sup>27</sup> And at noon Elijah mocked them, saying, "Cry aloud, for he is a god. Either he is musing, or he is relieving himself, or he is on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and must be awakened." <sup>28</sup> And they cried aloud and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them. <sup>29</sup> And as midday passed, they raved on until the time of the offering of the oblation (9<sup>th</sup> hour/3pm), but there was no voice. No one answered; no one paid attention.*

Hebrews 10:26-31 - *For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, <sup>27</sup> but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. <sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>29</sup> How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?<sup>30</sup> For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." <sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

**Conclusion:** Our text

<sup>9</sup> *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. <sup>10</sup> For 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.*

No angel every did that!!!