

# EXPLANATION OF 58<sup>TH</sup> BIBLEBOOK

## HEBREWS 2 (A.D. 64)

### OUTLINE

2:1-4.	<i>First practical warning. Do not give too little attention to the New Testament message.</i>	1
2:5-9.	<i>Christ is Man. He is exalted through humiliation.</i>	2
2:10-18.	<i>Christ as Man is the Author of salvation and the merciful and faithful High Priest of his people.</i>	4

#### 2:1-4. First practical warning.

#### Do not give too little attention to the New Testament message.

##### a. Christians must give more attention to the New Testament message (2:1).

**2:1.** Therefore we must pay attention more earnestly to what we have, lest we drift past.<sup>1</sup>

During the Old Testament period God administered the world through angels, but *subjected the world to come* to Christ. While the Old Testament Law was communicated by angels (2:1-4), the New Testament Gospel was mediated by Jesus Christ. The New Testament revelation was God's final revelation (1:1-2)! That is why it demands more serious attention. Otherwise Christians will drift away from Christ and the Bible. This is the first exhortation (*warning*). The Gospel (the New Testament) demands much more time and attention than the Old Testament Law!

##### b. The Old Testament message was communicated by angels (2:2a).

**2:2a.** For if the message spoken *once for all* by angels was binding,<sup>2</sup>

This is not recorded in the Old Testament. Deuteronomy 33:2 says, "The LORD came from Sinai ... he came with myriads of holy ones from his mountain slopes". This is the closest to the appearance of God on Mt. Sinai where the law was given<sup>3</sup>. This truth was known in the intertestamental period<sup>4</sup> and in the early Christian period<sup>5</sup>. Galatians 3:19 says, "The Law ... given by directions of angels by the hand of a mediator (Moses)". The fact that the Law was mediated by angels and God's New Testament message was revealed by God himself, thus not mediated by anyone, proves the inferiority of the Old Testament Law to the New Testament message. Acts 7:53 says, The Israelites "received the Law by directions<sup>6</sup> of angels", that is "by God directing<sup>7</sup> angels (to transmit the revelation) to the Jews." Although God had directed angels to transmit the Law to the Jews, the Jews had rejected it.

*The word: 'Law' in Hebrews is not so much the moral Law, the Ten Commandments. It is rather the ceremonial (ritual) Law as the means to approach and worship God in the religious cult. In the letter to the Hebrews, the Law is not contrasted with grace as manifested in Christ's saving work (and as taught by Paul). The Law is rather regarded as an anticipatory picture (a preparation) of that grace.*

##### c. Rejecting the Law and ignoring the Gospel brings punishment (2:2b-3a).

**2:2b** and every violation and disobedience received (its) just punishment,<sup>8</sup>

**2:3a.** how shall we escape *when (if) we ignore (neglect)* so great a salvation which was first announced by the Lord (*which having received a beginning to be spoken by the Lord*)<sup>9</sup>

The Law was binding and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment. The penalties of transgressing the Old Testament Law were severe. Every commandment had the appropriate penalty prescribed for its infringement.

#### **First exhortation (warning) in the book of Hebrews:**

"How shall anyone escape if he ignores such a great salvation? The New Testament message is salvation by grace through faith and not through the works of the law.

##### d. The superiority of the New Testament message (2:3b-4).

<sup>1</sup> **2:1.** Therefore (δια)(pa=preposition accusative) τουτο (αpdan-s=adjective pronominal *Demonstrative* accusative neuter single) we must (δει) (vira--zs) pay attention (προσεχειν>προσεχω)(vnpa) more earnestly (περισσοτερως)(abm=adverb *comparative*) to what we have heard (ακουσθεισιν>ακουω)(vnpadn-p), lest (that not) (μηποτε)(cs=conjunction subordinating) we drift past (the water escaping its channel) (παραρυωμεν>παραρρηω)(vsaa--xp).

<sup>2</sup> **2:2a.** For (γαρ)(cs) if (ει)(cs) the message (ο λογος)(n-nm-s) spoken *once for all* (λαληθηεις>λαλεω)(vnpn-s) by (δια)(pg) angels (ο αγγελος) (n-gm-p) was (εγενετο>γινωμαι)(viad--zs) binding (reliable) (βεβαιος-α-ον)(a--nm-s),

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 19

<sup>4</sup> Jubilees 1:29

<sup>5</sup> Galatians 3:19; Acts 7:53

<sup>6</sup> διαταγη

<sup>7</sup> διατασσω

<sup>8</sup> **2:2b.** and (και)(cc) every (πας)(a- -nf-s) violation (η παραβασις)(n-nf-s) and (και) disobedience (η παρακοη)(n-nf-s) received (ελαβεν<λαμβανω)(viaa-zs) (its) just (ενδικος-α-ον)(a- -af-s) punishment (repayment, retribution) (η μισθαποδοσια)(n-af-s),

<sup>9</sup> **2:3a.** how (πως)(abt=adverb *inTerrogative*) shall we (ημεις)(nprn-xp) escape (εκφευξομεθα>εκφευγω)(vifd- -xp) *when (if) we ignore (neglect)* (αμελησαντες>αμελεω)(vpaanmxp) so great (τηλικουτος>αυτη-ουτο)(a-dgf-s) a salvation (η σωτηρια)(n-gf-s) which (ητις)(apmf-s=adjective pronominal *Relative* nominative feminine singular) having received (λαβουσα>λαμβανω)(vpaanf-s) a beginning (η αρχη)(n-af-s) to be spoken (λαλεισθεις>λαλεω)(vnp) (divine passive) by (δια)(pg) the Lord (ο κυριος)(n-gms) (which was first announced by the Lord).

**2:3b** was confirmed (*guaranteed*) to us, by those who heard (*him*).<sup>10</sup>

**2:4.** Being together testified of God (*God also testified*) (*to this salvation*) by signs, and also by wonders and by various powers, and by gifts (*distributions, apportionments*) of the Holy Spirit according to his will.<sup>11</sup>

The Old Testament message was brought to earth by an angel<sup>12</sup>. The New Testament message was not brought to earth by any angel, but by Jesus Christ! The gospel message of salvation was promised during the Old Testament period<sup>13</sup>, but is realised in the New Testament period<sup>14</sup>.

The New Testament message was first announced by Jesus Christ. Then it was confirmed “to us” (people) by the eye-witnesses<sup>15</sup>. The author makes no claim to be an apostle, but puts himself on the same level as his fellow-Christians. Also God gave testimony that the New Testament message is the truth by his signs, wonders and mighty works. These marked the ministry of Jesus Christ<sup>16</sup> and of the apostles<sup>17</sup>. And by distributing the gifts of the Holy Spirit “according to his will”<sup>18</sup>. The author uses this argument, because these miracles and work of the Holy Spirit were widely experienced by Christians and widely known to non-Christians.

## **2:5-9. Christ is Man. He is exalted through humiliation<sup>19</sup>.**

a. The old world order was administrated by angels (2:5-6).

**2:5.** For (it is) not to angels that he (*God*) has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking.<sup>20</sup>

### **(1) The world to come is the new world-order.**

“The world to come about which we are speaking” is the new world-order in which the prophecies have been fulfilled and the shadows have become realities (8:5-8,13; 10:1). It is the new world order which Jesus Christ inaugurated at his exaltation and enthronement. At his second coming Christ will complete this new world-order perfectly. He will complete and perfect ‘salvation’ (9:28)<sup>21</sup>. ‘The powers of the coming age’ (6:5) refer to the various miracles and the greater works that accompany genuine believers living in the new world-order.

Deuteronomy 32:8-9 says, “When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples according to the number of the sons of Israel<sup>22</sup> or according to the number of angels of God<sup>23</sup>. For the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted inheritance”. While God had parcelled out the administration of all other nations to a corresponding number of angelic powers (verse 8), he kept the administration of the nation of Israel to himself (verse 9). In Daniel 10:20-21 he speaks of ‘the prince of Persia’ and ‘the prince of Greece’, but in Daniel 12:1 he speaks of the archangel Michael who champions the cause of Israel<sup>24</sup>. Angels executed the administration of the old world-order before the incarnation of Jesus Christ. That was the world of shadows which preceded the New Testament revelation<sup>25</sup>. During the Old Testament period, a veil still covered the Old Testament revelation which can only be removed by turning the Jesus Christ and his New Testament revelation<sup>26</sup>! Thus also a veil over the Old Testament prophecies which can only be interpreted in the light of the New Testament revelation!

<sup>10</sup> **2:3b.** was confirmed (*guaranteed*)(εβεβαίωθη>βεβαίωω)(viap- -zs) to (εις)(pa) us (ημεας)(nra-xp), by (υπο)(pg) those who heard (the eye- and ear-witnesses)(ακουσαντων>ακουω)(vpaagm-p) (*him*).

<sup>11</sup> **2:4.** Being together testified of God (*God also testified*) (συνεπιμαρτυρουντος>συνμαρτυρεω)(vppagm-s) (*to this salvation*) by signs (το σημειον)(n-dn-p), and also (τε)(cc=conjunction coordinating) (και)(cc) by wonders (το τερας)(n-dn-p) and (και) by various (ποικιλος-α-ον)(a- -df-p) powers (η δυναμις)(n- df-p), and (και) by gifts (distributions, apportionments) (ο μερισμος)(n-dm-p) of the Holy (αγιος)(a--gn-s) Spirit (to pneuma)(n-gn-s) according to (κατα)(pa) his (αυτος-η-ο)(nrgmzs) will (η θελησις)(n-af-s).

<sup>12</sup> Galatians 3:19; Acts 7:53. Cf. Muhammad claims in the 8<sup>th</sup> century A.D. that the Qur’an was also brought to earth by an angel called Jibril (Gabriël).

<sup>13</sup> Romans 3:21; Galatians 3:8

<sup>14</sup> Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:18-19

<sup>15</sup> Luke 1:1-4

<sup>16</sup> Acts 2:22

<sup>17</sup> Acts 2:43; Galatians 3:5; 1 Peter 1:12

<sup>18</sup> cf. 1 Corinthians 12:11

<sup>19</sup> cf. Isaiah 52:13-15

<sup>20</sup> **2:5.** For (γαρ)(cs) (it is) not (ου)(ab) to angels (ο αγγελος)(n-dm-p) that he (*God*) has subjected (υπεταξεν>υποτασσω)(viaa- -zs) the world (η οικουμενη)(n-af-s) to come (μελλουσιν>μελλω)(vppaaf-s), about (περι)(pg) which (ης)(aprgf-s=adjective pronominal *Relative* genitive feminine singular) we are speaking (λαλουμεν>λαλεω)(vira- -xp)

<sup>21</sup> cf. Acts 3:21

<sup>22</sup> Hebrew Masoretic text

<sup>23</sup> Greek Septuagint text, Dead Sea Scrolls

<sup>24</sup> In Ephesians 6:12 a part of these angelic governors are portrayed as “the world-rulers of this darkness”, but not in Hebrews. 2

<sup>25</sup> cf. 2 Corinthians 3:7-18; Colossians 2:17

<sup>26</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:14-18

**2:6.** But somewhere someone testifies saying (= quotation marks): “What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care (are concerned about), for him?”<sup>27</sup>

**b. The new world-order is subjected to Jesus Christ (2:7-8).**

**2:7.** You made him (man) for an indefinite little time lower (in rank) than the angels; with glory and honour you crowned him.<sup>28</sup>

**2:8.** and you put everything under his feet. For in putting everything under him (man), he (God) left out nothing that is not subjected to him (man). But at present we do not yet see everything subject to him (man).<sup>29</sup>

The quotation from Psalm 8:4-6 makes it clear that *Jesus Christ administers the new world-order in his role as ‘the Son of Man’ and not in the role as ‘the Son of God’*. While the original text is written in the Hebrew, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews uses the Greek Septuagint translation (LXX). The first line in Psalm 8:5 is different. The Hebrew text thinks of Genesis 1:26-27 (“Man is created in the likeness of God”) and says, “You made him (man) a little lower than God. The application is to ordinary man.

But the author of Hebrews thinks of Daniel 7:13-14 (“One like a son of man – the Man Jesus - receives from God everlasting dominion that will not pass away”). The application is not to ordinary man (the first Adam), but to Christ (the second Adam). Since that time Jesus spoke in the New Testament of himself as ‘the Son of Man’. Daniel 7:13-14 was *applied* to Jesus Christ. The author of Hebrews does the same. When the first Adam (man) failed in the accomplishment of Gods purpose, God raised up the second Adam (Jesus) to take the place of the first Adam. Who can take the place of the first Adam? Only One who is able to undo the effects of the first Adam’s fall and thus usher in a new world-order!

Psalm 8:6, “You (God) have put everything under his feet” is echoed in Hebrews 1:13, “Until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet”. *Jesus Christ is viewed as the true Representative of humanity and fulfils the words of Psalm 8. He fulfils God’s original goal at the creation*. Jesus Christ fulfils God’s goal for man.

Hebrews 2:8 says, “In putting everything under him (Christ), he (God) left nothing that is not subject to him”.

In 1 Corinthians 15:27 Paul adds “It is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ”. Nevertheless, in Hebrews 2:8 the author of Hebrews implies this too.

Hebrews 2:8 continues, “Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him”. Who is meant by the words ‘to him’? *In the context of Psalm 8 it refers to man*. We do not see man exercising his God-given right as lord of the creation<sup>30</sup>, but we do see God’s Man (Jesus Christ) invested with universal sovereignty<sup>31</sup>. The author of Hebrews thinks that it is not easy to recognize an ordinary man “crowned with glory and honour” and enjoying dominion over all the works of the Creator’s hands. However, he sees this unfulfilled promise to man fulfilled in Christ and fulfilled through Christ on behalf of mankind.

*But in the context of Hebrews 2 we cannot exclude that Hebrews 2:8 also refers the words to Christ*. “Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him”. Jesus Christ is still far from having been accepted and acclaimed as King by everyone in the universe. Unbelievers and demons are not yet (willingly) subject to him. The author of Hebrews expresses the discouragement of despised and persecuted Christians, who wait in vain for God’s Kingdom to appear on earth<sup>32</sup>. But the militant Kingdom of Jesus Christ proceeds continually. Jesus Christ must put down his enemies (1:13), before the full and triumphant realisation of the words: “everything is subject to him.” *The author of Hebrews recognises that even in exaltation and enthronement Jesus Christ is waiting “for his enemies to be made his footstool”* (10:13). This implies that while Jesus Christ is the rightful ruler of everyone and everything in the universe, not all people and other powers acknowledge his sovereignty yet. He does not yet command the willing allegiance of all.

The sovereignty, which ordinary man has proved unable to exercise thus far is already wielded on man’s behalf by the Son of Man! The suffering and the triumph of Christ constitute the pledge of his eternal and unshakeable Kingdom.

<sup>27</sup> **2:6.** But (δε)(ch=conjunction hyper/superordinating) somewhere (που)(abi=adverb Indefinite) someone (τις)(apinm-s=adjective pronominal Indefinite nominative masculine singular) testifies (διεμαρτυρατο>διαμαρτυρεω)(viad- -zs) saying (λεγων>λεγω)(vrpanm-s): “What (τι)(aptn-s=adjective pronominal inTerrogative nominative neuter singular) is (εστιν)(vipa- - zs) man (ο ανθρωπος)(n- gm-s) that (οτι)(ch=conjunction hyper/supercoordinating) you are mindful (μυνησκη>μυνησκω)(vipn- -ys) of him (αυτος-η-ο)(nrgmzs), or (η)(cc) the son (ο υιος)(n-nm-s) of man (ο ανθρωπος)(n-gm-s) that (οτι)(ch) you care (are concerned about, visit)(επισκεπτη>επισκεπτομαι)(vipn- -ys) for

him (αυτος-η-ο)(nramzs)?

<sup>28</sup> **2:7.** You made him (man) (αυτος-η-ο)(nramzs) lower (reduced in rank) (ηλαττωσας>ηλαττωω)(viaa- -ys) for an indefinite (τις, τι)(a-ian-s / apian-s indefinite)(βραχυ τι = a little while) little time (quantity)(βραχυς-εια-υ) (ap-an-s / ab) than (παρα)(pa) the angels (ο αγγελος)(n-am-p);

with glory (η δοξη)(n-df-s) and (και) honour (η τιμη)(n-df-s) you crowned (εστεφανωσας>στεφανωω)(viaa- -ys) him (αυτος-η-ο)(nram zs)

<sup>29</sup> **2:8.** and you put under (υπεταξας>υποτασσω)(viaa- -ys) everything (πας, παντα)(ap-an-p) under (υποκατω)(pg) his (αυτος-η-ο)(nrgmzs) feet (ο πους, ποδος)(n-gm-p). For (γαρ)(cs) in putting under (υποταξει>υποτασσω) (vnaa) everything (τα παντα)(ap-an-p) (under) him (αυτω)(nrdmzs), he (God) left out (omit)(αφηκεν>αφημι)(viaa- - zs) nothing (ουδεν)(apcan-s cardinal) that is not subjected to (independent from)(ανυποτακτος-ον)(a- -an-s) him (αυτω)(ap-an-p). But (δε)(cc) at present (νυν)(ab) we do not yet (ουπω)(ab) see (ορωμεν>ορωω) (vipa- -xp) everything (τα + πας)(ap-an-p) subject (υποταγαμενα>υποτασσω) (vrpan-p) to him (αυτος-η-ο)(nrdmzs) (man).

<sup>30</sup> cf. Genesis 1:28

<sup>31</sup> cf. Matthew 28:18

<sup>32</sup> cf. 2 Peter 3:4

“God put everything under his feet” (2:8)<sup>33</sup>. Yet, he first “has to be made a little lower than the angels” (2:7)<sup>34</sup>. *Jesus Christ fulfilled the words of Psalm 8, by becoming the true Representative of the human race.* He humbled himself to a state lower than that of the angels and took on the state of sinful and lost man. Compare this to Philippians 2:5-8!

c. **This sovereignty of man is realised in Christ, but only through his death and resurrection (2:9)**

**2:9.** But we see Jesus who through the suffering of death was made lower for only some little time (*a while*) than the angels, crowned (*and forever wearing that crown*) with glory and honour, in order that by the grace of God he might taste death for (*in behalf of*) everyone<sup>35</sup>.

### **(3) The new world-order is realised through Jesus Christ.**

In contrast to Hebrews 2:8, “At present we do not see everything subject to him”, Hebrews 2:9 says, “At present we see Jesus crowned with glory and honour”! Just as in Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12 and Philippians 2:5-9, Jesus Christ is exalted only through humiliation.

First, the eternal Son of God took on the human nature and became a man. As such “he was made a little lower than the angels”. Then “he suffered death so that he might taste death for everyone”. Finally, “he is crowned with glory and honour” - and sits at the right hand of God until all opposition to his sovereignty comes to an end. Then only we will see in full degree “everything subject to him” (2:8). Our author is referring to all people and powers in the universe. He does not add (as Paul does), that also the whole groaning universe would “be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God”<sup>36</sup>. *The cosmic aspect of the redemptive work of Christ falls outside the theme of the Letter to the Hebrews.*

Some (Chrysostom)(397 A.D.) have interpreted Christ’s ‘tasting death’ as Christ giving people *an example of experiencing death*, even though Christ did not really need to die. But the Bible (and the author of Hebrews) understands ‘tasting death’ as *a divine necessity, a divine ‘must’*<sup>37</sup>, in order to accomplish atonement for sins! He must experience suffering that consists in death<sup>38</sup>.

## **2:10-18. Christ as Man is the Author of salvation and the merciful and faithful High Priest of his people.**

a. **Jesus Christ is the Author of our salvation (2:10a).**

**2:10a.** For it was fitting for him (*God*), for whom (*are*) all things and through whom (*are*) all things, by once for all having brought many sons to glory,<sup>39</sup>

What was fitting for him to do? *The people who say, “I could not have a high opinion of a God who would (or would not) do this or that”, are not adding anything to our knowledge of God; they are simply telling us something about themselves! The only way to discover what is a worthy thing for God to do is to consider what God has actually done! We may be sure that all that God does (e.g. his work of salvation and his work of judgement) is worthy of God!*

Here our author singles out one of God’s actions and tells us that ‘it became him’ (‘it adorns him’, ‘it looks well on him’, ‘it suits/fits him’) - namely, through his sufferings ‘God made Jesus perfectly qualified to be the Saviour of his people’. It is in the death of Jesus that we can see the very heart of God<sup>40</sup>! Nowhere is God more fully and more worthily revealed as God than when we see God “in Christ reconciling the world unto himself”<sup>41</sup>.

“For whom and through whom are all things” is here God the Father, the Author of everything<sup>42</sup>, and in another context Jesus Christ, the Mediator of creation<sup>43</sup>.

<sup>33</sup> Psalm 8:6

<sup>34</sup> Psalm 8:5

<sup>35</sup> **2:9.** But (δε)(ch) we see (βλεπομεν>βλεπω)(vira- -xp) Jesus who through (δια)(pa) the suffering (το παθημα)(n-an-s) of death (ο θανατος) (n-gm-s)(δια + the accusative always expresses ‘the ground’ - because of - and not ‘the object’ - in order to) was made lower (ηλαττωμενον> λασσω)(vprpam-s) for only some (τις, τι)(a-ian-s / apian-s indefinite adjective of quantity) little time (a while)(temporal) (βραχυς-εια-υ)(βραχυ τι=a little while) than (παρα)(pa) the angels (ο αγγελος)(n-am-p), crowned (and forever wearing that crown) (εστεφανωμενον>στεφανωω)(vprpam-s) with glory (η δοξη)(nn-df-s) and (και) honour (η τιμη)(n-df-s), in order that (οπως)(cs) by the grace (η χαρις)(n-df-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s) he might taste (γευσηται<γευομαι)(vsad- -zs) death (ο θανατος)(n-gm-s) for (in behalf of) (υπερ)(pg) everyone (πας)(ap-gm-s /ap-gn-s)

<sup>36</sup> Romans 8:19-21

<sup>37</sup> Luke 24:44

<sup>38</sup> cf. Mark 9:1

<sup>39</sup> **2:10a.** For (γαρ)(cs) it was fitting (adorns) (επρεπεν>πρεπω)(viaa--zs) for him (αυτος-η-ο)(nprdmzs) (God), for whom (δι ον) (apram-s= adjective pronominal *Relative* accusative masculine singular) (are) all things (τα παντα) and through whom (ου) (aprgm-s= adjective pronominal *Relative* genitive masculine singular)(are) all things, by once for all having brought (αγαγοντα>αγω)(vraaams) many (πολυς-πολλη-πολυ) (a—am-p) sons (ο υιος)(n-am-p) to (εις)(pa) glory (η δοξα)(n-af-s),

<sup>40</sup> John 3:16; cf. John 15:13; 1 John 4:10 1 Corinthians 2:7-8

<sup>41</sup> 2 Corinthians 5:19

<sup>42</sup> cf. Romans 11:36

<sup>43</sup> Colossians 1:15-16

b. Jesus Christ is made perfect through suffering (2:10b)

**2:10b.** to *once for all* make perfect the Author (*Archégos*) of their salvation through sufferings.<sup>44</sup>

**(1) The Author<sup>45</sup> of our salvation.**

The message of salvation (the gospel) was not simply proclaimed to us by Jesus Christ (as other prophets also do)! Salvation was first of all procured/earned through his death as an atonement for sins! *Jesus Christ is first of all ‘the Author, Pioneer, Pathfinder or Trailblazer’ of our salvation by actually procuring our salvation through his death and resurrection.* He not only proclaimed the necessity of an atonement sacrifice for sins, but actually became the only sufficient atonement sacrifice!

The same word: ‘Archégos’ is used elsewhere:

- ‘the Archégos of our faith’ (12:2), the One who makes faith possible and actually gives faith<sup>46</sup>
- ‘the Archégos of life’<sup>47</sup>, the One who makes life possible and actually gives eternal life<sup>48</sup>
- “whom God exalted to his right hand as Archégos and Saviour (the Author/Pathfinder/Trailblazer of our salvation)”<sup>49</sup>.

God had created man for his glory<sup>50</sup>. But sin prevented man to reach the goal for which he was made, that is, to attain that glory of God<sup>51</sup>. Jesus Christ blazed the trail of salvation along which God’s many sons could be brought to glory. Only in this way<sup>52</sup> can man reach the goal for which he was created!

**(2) The word ‘perfect’ is used 14x in Hebrews in the sense of ‘unhindered entrance to God’ and ‘uninterrupted fellowship with God’.**

- 2:10. “God made Christ perfect through his sufferings”.
- 5:9. “Christ became perfect by his obedience”.
- 5:14. “Solid food is for the (perfect)/mature.”
- 6:1. “Let us move on to (perfection)/maturity. *The word ‘perfect’ means ‘reaching the full measure / those full grown / those spiritually mature’.*”
- 7:11. “If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood”.
- 7:19. “The Law made nothing perfect”.
- 7:28. “God’s oath appointed the Son who has been made perfect forever”. According to the Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament<sup>53</sup> the word ‘perfect’ means ‘to bring to an end’/ ‘to bring to its goal’/ ‘to bring to accomplishment’ in the sense of overcoming/supplanting an imperfect state of things by a state that is free from objections. When used of Jesus it is usually understood to mean the completion and perfection of Jesus by overcoming earthly limitations: Or: ‘being consecrated/initiated’ to be the Author of salvation.
- 9:9. “The gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to make the consciences of worshipers perfect”. “
- 9:11. “Jesus went through the greater, more perfect, not man-made tabernacle”. *The word ‘perfect’ means ‘divine’ / not man-made’.*
- 10:1. Repeated sacrifices can never make worshippers perfect”. *The word ‘perfect’ means ‘reaching unimpeded access to God’ / ‘unbroken communion with God’.*
- 10:14. “By the one sacrifice Jesus made perfect forever those who are being made holy”. *The word ‘perfect’ means ‘bringing someone to experience the (divine) reality of regeneration of the new covenant’<sup>54</sup>.*
- 11:40. “Only together with us – New Testament believers - they – Old Testament believers - could be made perfect”.
- 12:2. “The Perfecter of our faith”.
- 12:23. “The spirits of righteous men – the departed Christians - made perfect – they are with God and have unbroken communion with God”. *The word ‘perfect’ means ‘reaching the goal’ / bringing to a close<sup>55</sup>.*

Jesus Christ should not be thought of as falling short of perfection. He was originally not imperfect in order to be made perfect afterwards. *Jesus Christ is the eternal perfect Son of God who has also become the perfect Saviour of his people by opening the way for them to God. To do that, he had to endure suffering and death. The pathway of perfection that his people must tread must first be trodden by the Pathfinder.* Only in this way could Jesus Christ be their adequate Representative and High Priest in God’s presence.

<sup>44</sup> **2:10b.** to *once for all* make perfect (τελειωσαι>τελειω)(vnaa) the Author/Pathfinder (Archégos) (ο αρχηγος)(n-am-s) of their salvation (η σωτηρια)(n-gf-s) through (δια)(pg) sufferings (το παθημα)(n-gn-p).

<sup>45</sup> Greek: Archégos

<sup>46</sup> Acts 13:48; 16:14; 8:17; Ephesians 2:8; Philippians 1:29; 1 Peter 1:1

<sup>47</sup> Acts 3:15

<sup>48</sup> John 11:24-25

<sup>49</sup> Acts 5:31

<sup>50</sup> Isaiah 43:7

<sup>51</sup> Romans 3:23

<sup>52</sup> John 14:6

<sup>53</sup> Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich

<sup>54</sup> Jeremiah 31:31-34

<sup>55</sup> Luke 13:32

In order to be a perfect High Priest, a man must sympathise with those on whose behalf he acts. And *he cannot sympathise with them unless he can enter into their experiences and share their experiences for himself. His incarnation and substitute sacrifice were a divine necessity*<sup>56</sup>.

An atonement efficacious in itself could be presented only when the following conditions are fully met:

- Every high priest had to present an atonement sacrifice for men to God. This High Priest presented himself!
- This High Priest had to share the experiences of the *human nature*, identify completely with humans.
- This High Priest had to be *without sin*, perfectly holy and righteous.
- This High Priest had to be completely *willing to die*, unmarred by any reluctance to obey.
- This High Priest had to be *chosen by God*.

*Only Jesus Christ fulfilled these conditions!*

**c. The solidarity of Jesus Christ with his people (2:11-13).**

**2:11.** So not only the One (*Jesus*) who makes men holy but also those who are made holy (*believers*) (*are*) all out of One (*God*). For this reason he (*Jesus*) is not ashamed to call them (*believers*) brothers.<sup>57</sup>

*Christ and Christians are of 'the same family (stock) (2:11)*<sup>58</sup>. Christ is the Sanctifier<sup>59</sup> and Christians are the sanctified<sup>60</sup>. Sanctification means: i) to be set apart from sin and ii) to be dedicated to God, to worship and serve God with a holy life-style with a view to be glorified, that is, to enter into God's glory.

This 'One' from whom Christ and Christians alike have their being, is God. *Christ is ontologically 'the Son of God'. That is: in the essence of his being he is God. But He also took on the human nature. Christians, however, are created human beings. But they have received the position of '(adopted) sons of God'*<sup>61</sup> or '*children of God*'<sup>62</sup>.

*Christ calls Christians 'brothers'*. Christ not only took the human nature of Christians on himself, but also endured their trials and temptations and made atonement for their sins, so that they might follow him to glory on the trail to salvation he blazed. He is the Trailblazer and that is why he calls Christians 'his brothers'. *Christ identifies himself with the experiences of his brothers (2:12-13)*<sup>63</sup>.

Three quotations from the Old Testament. These quotations show that God's people (Israel or the Church) during the Old Testament period are continued and enlarged during the New Testament period!

**(1) First quotation: Psalm 22:22.**

**2:12.** He says, "I will *certainly* declare your name to my brothers; in the middle of the congregation I will praise you."<sup>64</sup>

The Psalmist's lament about the suffering king<sup>65</sup> gives way to his public thanksgiving and the confidence that "all the ends of the earth will turn to the LORD. All the families of the nations will bow down before him. Future generations will proclaim the righteousness of the LORD"<sup>66</sup>. This is a Messianic Psalm, used by the Early Church as a testimony to the crucifixion of the Messiah. Christ himself is the Speaker within this Psalm. *The once crucified Christ is now the Exalted Christ*. Now Christ proclaims the name of God to his brothers (the believers) in the congregation (the Church). The people whom the Son of God is pleased to call 'his brothers' are the members of the Christian Church. By virtue of his suffering Jesus Christ has become the Representative Head of the new mankind. *The new mankind (the congregation/Church) is 'his brothers'*.

<sup>56</sup> A divine must: Everything written by the prophets shall be fulfilled (Luke 18:31). Jesus must keep going today, tomorrow and the next day to die in Jerusalem. He will reach his goal (Luke 13:32-33). What is written about Jesus (being numbered among transgressors) must be fulfilled and is about to reach fulfilment (Luke 22:37). "Believe all that the prophets have spoken. Christ had to suffer these things and then enter his glory. Jesus explained what was said concerning himself in all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:25-27). "Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24:44-45). See also Luke 9:23 and Acts 4:12.

<sup>57</sup> **2:11.** So (γαρ)(cs) not only (τε)(cc) the one who makes men holy (αγιαζων>αγιαζω)(vppanm-s) but also (και)(cs) those who are made holy (αγιαζομενοι>αγιαζω)(vppanm-p) (are) all (πας)(ap-nm-pronominal adjective) out of (εξ)(pg) one (εις-μια-εν, ενος)(apcgm-s cardinal (NIV: Are of the same family). For (δω)(pa) this (ην)(a-raf-s relative) reason (η αιτια)(n-af-s) he (Jesus) is not (ουκ)(ab) ashamed (επαισχυνεται>επαισχυνομαι)(viph--zs) to call (καλειν>καλεω)(vnpa) them (αυτος-η-ο)(npanzp=noun ppronoun accusative masculine 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural) brothers (ο αδελφος)(n-am-p)

<sup>58</sup> Christians belong to the same Body of Christ, in which Christ is the Head and the Christians the members.

<sup>59</sup> ο αγιαζων

<sup>60</sup> οι αγιαζομενοι

<sup>61</sup> Ephesians 1:4-5

<sup>62</sup> John 1:12-13

<sup>63</sup> cf. John 15:13-15

<sup>64</sup> **2:12.** He says (λεγων>λεγω)(vppanm-s), "I will *certainly* declare (απαγγελω>απαγγελλω)(vifa--xs) your (σου)(npg-ys) name (το ονομα)(nan-s)

to my (μου)(npg-xs) brothers (ο αδελφος)(n-dm-p); in (εν)(pd) the middle (το μεσον)(a-dn-s) of the congregation (η εκκλησια)(n-gf-s) (Greek Septuagint translation) I will praise (υμνησω>υμνεω)(vifa--xs) you (σε)(nra-ys).

<sup>65</sup> Psalm 22:1-21

<sup>66</sup> Psalm 22:22-31

**(2) Second quotation: Isaiah 8:17b.**

**2:13a.** And again. “I will put my trust in him.”<sup>67</sup>

The prophet Isaiah, finding that his proclamations of salvation and judgement meet with no response from either the king or the people of Israel, seals these proclamations up and hands them over to his disciples (the faithful remnant) for safe keeping, in order that, when their fulfilment comes, this sealed document may prove that what he had spoken were the true words of God. Meanwhile (during the persistent disobedience of the people) the prophet puts his trust in God.

The link between the first and second quotation is the fact that God turned his face away from the Representative of God’s righteous people because of *their* sins<sup>68</sup>, but then turns his face towards him and listens to his cry<sup>69</sup>. Likewise, God hid his face from the house of Jacob<sup>70</sup>, but Isaiah puts his trust in God<sup>71</sup>. Both the prophet Isaiah and the Son of God were rejected by those to whom they came. Both put their trust in God. *Christ identified himself with the experiences of the people he came to save.* They (the believers) are his ‘brothers’.

The disciples of Isaiah are the beginning of ‘God’s remnant’ - the beginning of ‘true and faithful Israel amidst the natural nation of Israel’<sup>72</sup>. God’s remnant is ‘the ekklesia’ (church, congregation)<sup>73</sup> of the Messiah! In Isaiah’s view, the coming King and his people are closely associated with the Son of God and his brothers.

**(3) Third quotation: Isaiah 8:18a.**

**2:13b.** And again, “Look/behold, (here am) I and the children God has given me.”<sup>74</sup>

“We are signs and symbols in Israel from the Lord Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion<sup>75</sup>.” In the Greek Septuagint translation (LXX) of the book Isaiah these words form a separate sentence from verse 17.

The king and people of Israel may pay no heed to the proclamation of Isaiah, but as long as Isaiah and his disciples (the congregation of the coming Messiah) went about in Jerusalem, they were an abiding witness to the message of God which had been proclaimed to them. *These genuine believers were walking (living) Bibles witnessing to the truth written in the Bible.* The name ‘Isaiah’ means ‘the LORD<sup>76</sup> is salvation’. And the names of his children mean ‘the remnant will return’<sup>77</sup> and ‘robbery hastens closer, spoils speeds closer’<sup>78</sup>, which sum up the dominant themes in the book of Isaiah: salvation, return from exile and judgement. Their names also express their confidence that what God had said would surely come to pass!

That Christ’s confidence in God had been vindicated by his exaltation was not yet a matter of public manifestation; it had been revealed to believers and was proclaimed by believers as part of their witness. *The witness and life of Christians is a sign to all people that they had not seen or heard the last from Jesus Christ. If Jesus Christ represented his people (the Christians) at the right hand of God, they represented Christ on earth!* The words of Isaiah may be applied as words of Christ to Christians.

Note the words of Jesus in his high priestly prayer in John 17. “That your Son might give eternal life to those you have given him” (verse 2). “I have revealed you to those you gave me” (verse 6). “I am praying for those you have given me” (verse 9). “I want those you have given me ... to see my glory” (verse 24).

**d. Jesus Christ shared in our humanity (2:14a).**

**2:14a.** Since then the children have a share in blood and flesh, he too in like manner shared in their (*humanity*).<sup>79</sup>

We, the children, are human beings with flesh and blood. In order for Christ’s solidarity to be genuine, Christ must be a true human being with flesh and blood. Human beings are created as creatures of flesh and blood, but flesh and blood form no essential part of Christ’s eternal being.

<sup>67</sup> **2:13a.** And (και) again (παλι)(ab). “I will (εσομαι>ειμι)(vifd--xs) put my trust (πεποιθω>πειθω)(+vpranmxs) in (επι)(pd) him (αυτο)(npdmzs)

<sup>68</sup> Psalm 22:1

<sup>69</sup> Psalm 22:24

<sup>70</sup> Isaiah 8:17a

<sup>71</sup> Isaiah 8:17b

<sup>72</sup> cf. Romans 9:6. “Not all who are descended from (natural) Israel are (spiritual) Israel.”

<sup>73</sup> cf. Psalm 107:32 in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. The faithful people of God during the Old Testament period are called ‘the Church’!

<sup>74</sup> **2:13b.** And again (he says), “Look/behold (ιδου<ειδον)(qs=particle *sentential*)(Hebr. hinneh), I (εγω)(nprn-xs) and (και) the children (infants) (το παιδιον)(n-np) God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s) has given (εδωκεν>διδωμι)(viaa--zs) me (μου)(npd-xs)

<sup>75</sup> Isaiah 8:18b

<sup>76</sup> Hebrew: JaHWeH

<sup>77</sup> Hebrew: Shear jashub

<sup>78</sup> Hebrew: Maher shalal hash baz

<sup>79</sup> **2:14a.** Since (επει)(cs) then (ουν)(ch) the children (το παιδιον)(n-np) have a share in (κεκοινωνηκεν>κοινωνεω)(vira-zs) blood (το αιμα)(n-gn-s) and flesh (η σαρξ)(n-gf-s), he (αυτος-η-ο)(nprnmzs=noun pronoun nominative masculine 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular) too (και) in like manner (similarly) (παρομοιωσως)(ab) shared (μετεσχεν>μετεχω)(viaa--zs) in their (αυτων)(ap-gn-p=adjective pronominal genitive neuter plural) (*humanity*) (in like manner partook of the same).

The human nature of Jesus Christ became part of his being at a fixed point in history, when he chose to take on the human nature besides his divine nature<sup>80</sup>. Then he began to share fully the human nature of the people he came to redeem.

Jesus Christ must partake of the human nature “in like manner”, thus with flesh and blood by the gateway of birth. He had no human father, but he was really born of the virgin Mary. He is not the appearance of a human being as the Docetists<sup>81</sup> and Apollinaris<sup>82</sup> taught.

e. Jesus Christ shared our death (2:14b).

**2:14b.** so that by his death

Jesus Christ must partake of the human nature ‘in like manner’, thus, also by suffering and death. The death of Jesus Christ was not expected by his people and it made them feel completely hopeless. Judas Maccabaeus was a political and military freedom fighter engaged in ‘a holy war’ against the Greek or Roman oppressor who died for his cause. But the people of Jesus Christ did not expect his death. His death made them feel hopeless. It seemed as if they had joined a lost cause.

The purpose of the incarnation of Jesus was not to die in a political or military conflict, but to die as *a sacrifice of atonement for sins*. By dying he drew the sting of death for believers<sup>83</sup>. By resurrecting from the dead the frightened community of believers turned overnight into a fearless community of witnesses of his resurrection. They continue to proclaim boldly: “Jesus lives!”

f. Jesus Christ reduced the devil to nought (2:14c).

2:14c. he might destroy<sup>84</sup> him who holds the power of death – that is the devil.<sup>85</sup>

The Greek word ‘destroy’ means to make impotent, inoperative, ineffective or to abolish (f.e. the law)<sup>86</sup>, to wipe out, to destroy (the devil who wielded the power over death). Jesus Christ had reduced the lord of death to impotence! At his first coming he had ‘bound’<sup>87</sup> the devil<sup>88</sup> and made him powerless to prevent the spread of the message of salvation<sup>89</sup>.

Jesus Christ became a human, not to help and deliver angels, but people who believe in him! Angels cannot save anyone. In Hebrews 2:14-16 we read that by his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ reduced the devil, a fallen angel, to impotence. The particular evil work of the devil is to instigate people to ‘sin’<sup>90</sup>. Because sin leads to death<sup>91</sup> the devil makes people slaves by their fear of death.

*The purpose of Christ’s first coming was to destroy sin, make impotent the instigator to sin, and wipe out the fear of death. For a Christian, all his ‘sins’ have been forgiven, ‘the devil’ has been bound (curbed, curtailed, limited) and physical death is no longer a threat, because physical death becomes the beginning of life in the very presence of God!*

g. Jesus Christ sets Christians free from the fear of death (2:15).

**2:15.** And *once for all* free those who through the whole of life were *constantly* held subject to slavery by their fear of death.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Philippians 2:5-8

<sup>81</sup> **Docetism** (δοκεῖν<to seem, to appear; δοκῆσις, apparition, phantom, illusion) taught that the human form of Jesus was a mere semblance without

true reality, that Christ (the Word) at his revelation took on ‘a spiritual body’ and not ‘a physical body’. He *only appeared to have a human body. The suffering, death and resurrection have no reality or they happened to another human, called Jesus*. The historical Christ was not the ideal or real Christ. The docetists (δοκῆται) first appeared around 200 A.D. Docetism was unequivocally rejected at the first council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.

<sup>82</sup> **Apollinaris** taught that a human being has three parts: a body, a soul and a spirit. Jesus had a body and a soul, but no spirit. The divine Word took the place of his spirit. He agreed with the Arians that two natures could not be united in one being. The divine nature of Jesus was the Logos (the Word). Thus he denied the real humanity of Jesus and sidewise also his divinity. He left the church in 375 A.D., was declared to be a false teacher at the Synod of Constantinople in 381 A.D. and became the forerunner of the Monophysites (who influenced Muhammad’s view of Jesus in Arabia).

<sup>83</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:52-54

<sup>84</sup> Greek: καταργεω

<sup>85</sup> **2:14c.** so that (ἵνα)(cs) by (δια)(pg) his death (ο θανατος)(n-gm-s) he might destroy (καταργηση>καταργεω)(vsaa--zs) him who (τον) (dams=definite article accusative masculine singular / ημπαμς=noun pronoun accusative masculine 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular) holds (εχοντα>εχω)(vppaam-s) the power (το κρατος)(n-an-s) of death (ο θανατος)(n-gm-s) – that (τουτ)(apdnn-s=adjective pronominal demonstrative nominative neuter singular) is (εστιν>ειμι)(vipa--zs) the devil (ο διαβολος)(ap-am-s).

<sup>86</sup> Ephesians 2:15

<sup>87</sup> δεω

<sup>88</sup> Matthew 12:28-29

<sup>89</sup> Colossians 2:15; Colossians 1:13

<sup>90</sup> cf. 1 John 3:8

<sup>91</sup> Romans 6:23

<sup>92</sup> **2:15.** And (και) *once for all* free (απαλλαξιη>απαλλασσω)(vsaa--zs) those (τουτους)(apdam-p demonstrative) who (οσος-η-ον)(apnm-p relative) through (δια)(pg) the whole (τας)(ap-gm-s / a--gn-s) of life (ζην>ζαω)(vnpag) were *constantly* held subject to (held captive to)(ενοχος+) (a--nm-p) (ησαν>ειμι)(viaa--zp) slavery (η δουλεια)(n-gf-s) by their fear (ο φοβος)(n-dm-s) of death (ο θανατος)(n-gm-s).

Before Jesus Christ conquered death, people feared death and it seemed that death had the last word! Nevertheless, during the Old Testament period *some believers in the Living God hoped for the resurrection from the dead and prophesied about it.*

The Psalmist confidently said, “But God will redeem my life from the grave; he will surely take me to himself”<sup>93</sup>. And Isaiah confidently said, “The LORD will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away tears from all faces”<sup>94</sup>.

*But this only became a reality in the New Testament period!* Only at the first coming of Christ and his resurrection from death “Jesus brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel”<sup>95</sup>. Jesus Christ is “the firstborn among the dead”<sup>96</sup>. He is “the first fruit of those who have fallen asleep and have been raised from the dead”<sup>97</sup>. Jesus Christ gave faith in the reality of the resurrection a firm basis. Christ, and not the devil, bears the keys to Hades and death<sup>98</sup>. For Christians ‘physical death’ is still a reality. ‘Death’ will be the last enemy that Christ conquers<sup>99</sup>.

For people who do not know Christ, death is their greatest terror. And the devil uses this fear of physical death as a means of intimidation, compelling people to do his will.

However, for people who believe in Jesus Christ, *the meaning of death is completely changed. Death is then no longer a punishment for sin and a terrible bondage to fear. Death is then a blessing and the final liberation from suffering in this world. When a believer dies, his death will take on the character of the death<sup>100</sup> and the resurrection of Jesus Christ<sup>101</sup>; namely, the death of a Christian can never separate him from the love of God for him<sup>102</sup>!*

This assurance causes martyrs to face death boldly. The resurrection of Christ proves that Christ imparts the power of his risen life to them. Therefore by faith and hope Christians oppose the devil or any other evil power that hold the threat of death over their heads as a means of intimidation.

#### **h. Jesus Christ helps the children of Abraham (2:16).**

**2:16.** For surely, it is not angels he helps, but he helps the seed (*descendants*) of Abraham.<sup>103</sup>

Jesus Christ became a man in order to help men. When he took on the human nature, he passed by the state of angels and stooped even lower than slaves to die as a criminal on the cross in order to save men<sup>104</sup>. The word ‘help’ is used in Hebrews 8:9 in the sense of ‘*taking man by the hand to lead*’ and thus includes the ideas of ‘helping’, ‘guiding’ and ‘saving’!

He did not do that with angels, but with people called ‘the sons of Abraham’. *This does not refer to the physical sons of Abraham<sup>105</sup>, but to the spiritual sons of Abraham<sup>106</sup>.* The author is in full agreement with Paul in Galatians 3:7. It is these Christians whom he calls ‘many sons’ in Hebrews 2:10.

#### **i. Jesus Christ is the merciful and faithful high priest (2:17-18).**

**2:17.** For this reason he *was all the time* obligated to be made like his brothers (*in every way*), in order that he might become a merciful and faithful High Priest in things that pertain to God, for the making of atonement (*propitiation*) of the sins of the people.<sup>107</sup>

**2:18.** in which he himself suffered *when* he was tempted. He is *always* able to help those who are being tempted.<sup>108</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Psalm 49:15

<sup>94</sup> Isaiah 25:6-8 (cf. Job 17:13-16; Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:10; Psalm 49:15; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2,13; Hosea 13:14)

<sup>95</sup> 2 Timothy 1:10

<sup>96</sup> Colossians 1:18

<sup>97</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:20

<sup>98</sup> Revelation 1:18

<sup>99</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:26

<sup>100</sup> Luke 23:46

<sup>101</sup> John 20:17

<sup>102</sup> Romans 8:38-39

<sup>103</sup> **2:16.** For (γαρ)(cs) surely (δηπου)(qs=particle sentential), it is not (ου)(ab) angels (ο αγγελος)(n-gm-p) he helps

(επιλαμβανεται>επιλαμβανω)(vipn--zs), but he helps (επιλαμβανεται>λαμβανω)(vipn--zs) the seed (descendants) (το σπέρμα)(n-gn-s) of Abraham

<sup>104</sup> Philippians 2:5-8

<sup>105</sup> Jews. Cf. Matthew 3:9. God can raise up (physical) sons of Abraham from stones.

<sup>106</sup> Believers in Jesus. John 8:39. (Spiritual) sons of Abraham do the things Abraham did (believe in the Messiah).

<sup>107</sup> **2:17.** For this reason (therefore)(οθεν)(ch=conjunction hyper/superordinating) he *was all the time* obligated to (must) (ωφειλεν>οφειλω)(viaa--zs)

be made like (ομοιωθηναι>ομοιωω)(vnap) his brothers (ο αδελφος)(n-dm-p) (in every way), in order that (ινα)(cs=conjunction subordinating) he might become (γενηται>γινωμαι)(vsad--zs) a merciful (ελειμων>ον)(a--nm-s) and (και) faithful (πιστος)(a--nm-s) High Priest (ο αρχιερευς)(n-nm-s) in things (τα) that pertain to (προς)(pa) God (ο θεος)(n-am-s) (accusative of reference), for (εις)(pa) the making of atonement (propitiation) (ιλασκεσθαι>ιλασκομαι)(vnpa) of the sins (η αμαρτια)(n-af-p) of the people” (ο λαος)(n-gm-s)

<sup>108</sup> **2:18.** in (εν)(pd) which (ω)(aprdn=adjective pronominal demonstrative nominative / npdnzs=noun pronoun dative neuter 3rdperson plural) he himself (αυτος-η-ο)(nprnmzs) suffered (πεπονθεν>πασχω)(vira--zs) *when* he was tempted (πειρασθεις>πειραζω)(vparpm-s). He is *always* able (δυναται>δυναμαι)(vipn--zs) to help (βοηθησαι>βοηθεω)(vnaa) those who are being tempted (πειραζομενοις>πειραζω)(vpppdm-p).

This aspect of solidarity with his people is the author's special concern.

In order to serve his people in the capacity of a High Priest, Jesus Christ:

- had to be a *human* being (cf. 2:9, made lower than angels), able to sympathize with the temptations and sufferings of other people
- had to be a *sinless* being (cf. 4:15, without sin),
- had to be a being completely *willing* to sacrifice himself (cf. 1:13-14, shared death)<sup>109</sup>,
- had to be a being *chosen* and sent by God (cf. 1:2; 5:4-5, called and appointed by God).
- had to present himself as an atoning sacrifice for men to God!

Jesus is a merciful High Priest, because he sympathises with the sufferings of his people. He is a faithful High Priest, because he persevered to the end.

The purpose of the incarnation of Jesus Christ is that he might make propitiation for the sins of his people (the believers), that is, to do in effective reality what the sacrificial ritual of Old Testament times could only do in token (shadow) form. *The propitiation of Christ is far from resembling the placating of a vengeful or capricious power, because in both the Old and the New Testament, the eternal gracious and merciful God himself takes the initiative to provide the means for restoring the broken relationship between himself and people*<sup>110</sup>.

During the Old Testament period people could still bring a sacrifice of atonement (as a shadow token), but in the New Testament period 'propitiation' is something which only God through Jesus Christ did. The sacrifice of atonement<sup>111</sup> which Jesus Christ brought (the reality) turned away God's holy and righteous indignation (wrath) against sin and reconciled the sinner with God. It dealt with the problem of enmity between God and people and reconciled the broken relationship with God<sup>112</sup>.

Jesus Christ suffered and endured not only the trials and temptations that are common to man<sup>113</sup>, but also those subtle temptations which attended his messianic calling<sup>114</sup>. He did not choose some less costly way of fulfilling his calling to suffer and die. He endured the temptations with perseverance and victoriously.

That is why only he can and will help his 'brothers' to also endure and be victorious.

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<sup>109</sup> John 10:18

<sup>110</sup> Leviticus 17:11; Romans 3:25

<sup>111</sup> το ιλαστηριον

<sup>112</sup> Romans 5:10

<sup>113</sup> 1 Corinthians 10:13. πειραζομαι

<sup>114</sup> Matthew 4:1-11