

The Book of Hebrews

Part 5: High Priest of Heaven & Earth (Heb. 2:5-18)

I. The World to Come

After calling our *complete attention* to Jesus and the wonderful message of grace (the message God loves to confirm with signs, wonders, and gifts of the Spirit), the author now builds on his earlier point about angels and Christ's supremacy over all creation.

With this comes one of the most stunning truths in Scripture. The author will borrow from another Old Testament Psalm as he expands upon the message of the gospel:

5 For God will not place the coming world, of which we speak, under the government of angels. 6 But the Scriptures affirm: "What is man that you would even think about him, or care about Adam's race. 7 You made him lower than the angels for a little while. You placed your glory and honor upon his head as a crown. And you have given him dominion over the works of your hands, 8 For you have placed everything under his authority."

This means that God has left nothing outside the control of his Son, even if presently we have yet to see this accomplished.

(Hebrews 2:5-8 TPT)

We are told here of the "coming world" ruled by Christ. This is the "*new heavens and new earth*" mentioned in many other Scriptures (Isaiah 65:17, Revelation 21:1, 2 Peter 3:13). This vision of a new world is at the heart of the gospel and something else we are called to focus on.

This new world is in fact already here—but in seed form. Even now, it blossoms through the lives of those embrace Jesus's leadership *today*. One day it will come to full bloom and cover the entire earth. When it does, there will be no more disease, corruption, wickedness, or death.

This coming world will be run by Jesus together with redeemed human beings; those who are currently referred to as the "church." In this present time, we are being *trained to reign*. God is using this season of rebellion from both angels and humans by turning it into an opportunity to lay eternal foundations of faith, hope, and love.

Another way to say this is that God is transforming this dark season of human history into a kind of womb. We are being prepared to be "birthed" into the true essence of life. Upon the foundations being laid during these dark days, God is establishing his eternal Kingdom.

The author quotes Psalm 8, reminding us that humans were made "*a little lower than the angels for a little while.*"

For most of human history, the world has been under the influence of angelic beings, many of whom have turned to darkness themselves. Other parts of Scripture refer to these beings as “*powers and principalities in the heavenly places*” (see Ephesians 6).

In this chapter we will see how these powers have been defeated at the cross. Jesus is **now** the rightful Ruler of planet earth. However, his Kingdom is both *now and not yet*. It is in a growing seed form. The reason for this is that victory has come, but there is still choice involved for people to enter this victorious Kingdom.

Unlike the fallen angelic powers that influence the world around us, Jesus will not manipulate or force people into submission. As we just said, his Kingdom is built upon the foundations of love, which also involves freedom. This means there would be no Kingdom of God if he began forcing his rule.

This chapter tell us that everything is under Jesus’s “control” (power), but we do not presently “*see this accomplished.*” This connects to something that came up in the first chapter of Hebrews:

13 But to which of the angels has He ever said, “*Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet?*”
(Hebrews 1:13)

Jesus is seated victoriously at God’s right hand, but now we are in a kind of waiting period. We are waiting for all his enemies to come under his *feet*. This mention of “feet” leads us to a deeper understanding of the victorious Kingdom that is here and not yet...

The Scriptures tell us that Jesus is bigger than one Man. In other words, Jesus’s “Body” is comprised of other human beings. We are literally *the Body of Christ*. This means we are the extension and manifestation of the Mind of God—what John calls the “*Logos,*” which is Christ himself.

In other words, Jesus Christ is the Head of Humanity (1 Corinthians 11:3, Ephesians 1:22). The “human race” is meant to be one interconnected entity walking in unity and grace. This is because we are made like the Trinity who is also One entity and yet comprised of different Members.

The problem is that not every human has embraced this reality. Many live in the delusion of separation, disconnected from the Head (see Colossians 2:19). They are living a “self-life,” which leads to emptiness. This gives dark forces permission to operate in their lives. They become a kind of false “head,” or a false authority and influence over their lives.

We can see this dynamic in a home where violence and addiction reigns. Demonic forces are much more active there as opposed to a home filled with forgiveness and worship. This is also clear in the lives of individuals who are truly following Jesus versus those who are not.

The beautiful promise of the Gospel is that one day all dark forces will be no more. Every enemy will be subdued under the feet of Christ.

The “feet” is the bottom part of the body. This speaks of the promise that the Father has given to his Son—that all nations will come to him (Psalm 2:8, Psalm 22:27, Revelation 5:13). This is the promise of a completely unified humanity connected to Christ. As it says in Philippians, one day *every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus* as the true head—the Lord of all.

Because of this, humans will no longer give access to darkness. This is how the waiting period ends and the victory of the cross will be fully “realized” or manifested on earth as it already is in heaven.

It’s imperative to understand that darkness in every form has already been defeated at the cross. Through Jesus’s death, God declared humanity forgiven and released from our participation with evil. There is no human on earth who needs to live a moment longer in bondage to darkness.

Yet even though all are freed, not all have accepted it. A helpful metaphor for this is the *Emancipation Proclamation Act of 1863*. Through this Act, President Lincoln, the highest authority of our nation at the time, declared every slave in America free. Nonetheless, there were other powers (former slave-masters) who did not share this news with their slaves, and thus many were deceived. They were kept in illegal bondage, either out of ignorance or fear.

Darkness continues to reign through deceived human beings—including Christians who believe in Jesus but do not yet understand their full freedom and redemption in Christ.

Because of this continued deception (which is why we need to spread the Gospel), defeated spiritual forces continue to manipulate the Body of humanity toward harm. They impact economic systems, media, government, education, and more; all to steer these human institutions toward legalism, famine, war, disease, and death.

But when the world takes hold of Christ’s freedom, powers and principalities fall from their lofty positions. Blessing comes to people, homes, and entire regions that embrace Christ and his leadership. As that happens, the “coming world” breaks into the present. Again, this new world will fully appear one day. It is a promise from God the Father to God the Son. Humanity will inherit the universe as its rightful stewards as they live in surrender to Christ.

As this happens, angels will gladly hand over their temporary position of dominion. Rebellious “angels” will lose their grip as more and more people come to Christ. Humans will then come exercise a humble authority over angelic beings (see 1 Corinthians 6:3).

We are in a day and age where followers of Christ are called to live by faith. Jesus reigns in victory and is promised to tangibly and evidently rule over all creation. We do not yet see this happening in fullness. This is why we need to focus, shifting our attention to the risen and victorious Christ.

But as we do this, we are not looking to one Person. As we will understand more throughout the chapter, we are looking at **the High Priest representative** for all humanity. It is not just Jesus seated at the right of the Father. The whole world is seated in resurrected glory. The human race is already redeemed because the Head representative sits there on our behalf!

This is why Jesus is called the “hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27). He is the “first-fruit” promise of a worldwide resurrection that will one day manifest before our waking eyes...

II. The Role of a High Priest

We will start with an overview of the next section before breaking it down piece by piece...

9 But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying, “I will proclaim your name to My brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”

13 And again, “I will put my trust in him.”

And again, “Behold, I and the children whom God has given me.”

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

(Hebrews 2:9-15)

This is where we begin to get into the heart of Hebrews and the message the writer is calling its readers to *pay much closer attention to...*

Though the words “High Priest” do not show up until verse 17, the concept is beginning to be introduced here. This revelation of a High Priest will help us see how the new world has already come—and how we can enter into it today. This is the hinge of the entire book, and its importance cannot be stated enough.

Generally speaking, a “priest” is a representative of people before God. What happens to the priest happens to the people. What God speaks and says to the priest, he speaks and says to the people whom priest represents.

The Hebrew people to whom this letter was written were extremely familiar with this concept of a spiritual representative. Today, we have legal representatives in the form of elected officials, but we are deeply out of touch with the idea of a spiritual representative.

We also live in a world that places a high value on individuality. The idea that we are our own person separate from other people is a hallmark of Western civilization. This has many positive elements to it; however, it can become a hindrance in our ability to appreciate (and trust) in the reality of sharing the identity of someone else.

As our priest, Jesus truly shares his identity with us. We are called to look beyond our individual selves and see ourselves **in Jesus**, sharing his identity and life. This is the key to the entire Christian life. *May God give us modern readers the grace to connect with this truth mentally, emotionally, and spiritually!*

We can connect more as we understand the role of the High Priest of Israel. This person stood above all other priests, representing the entire nation before God. His role was most clearly seen on the holy day of Yom Kippur—the Day of Atonement. On that day, the High Priest would approach God with offerings on behalf of himself and the people. If the High Priest’s sacrifice was accepted by God, the entire nation was accepted by God.

After the High Priest did this annual duty, there were parties and celebrations all over the nation as people came into **the joy of feeling personally forgiven and blessed by God**. They experienced this at an emotional level, so much so that they erupted in joy. This celebration was then coupled with acts of generosity as they shared food with the less fortunate and invited others into their homes to celebrate with them.

This is supposed to be a picture of the entire Christian life! We are called to personally receive the joy of salvation, which then leads us to tangible generosity and hospitality.

Jesus is our spiritual representative and High Priest. This passage shows us that he took on the “suffering of death” on our behalf. Death is the consequence of sin. Jesus overcame both sin and death *for us and as us*. This means that our deep-rooted fears of death are no longer valid. Jesus set us free from the slavery of fear.

This involves an unhealthy fear of God and the fear of divine punishment.

Such truth releases deep peace in the human soul.

We also learn here that Jesus gives us victory over the devil, the dark force that influences human hearts primarily through guilt and accusation. In Christ, we are free to confess our sins, allowing light to shine in from a place of pure love, knowing we are fully accepted. We have been emancipated from all judgment!

III. Our Victory Over Judgment, Death, & Satan

There are many more things to unpack from this passage. Let's look closer at the first few verses of this section:

10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.

This is about Jesus fully identifying with us, even in our sufferings caused by sin. Jesus is the One who made each of us, and he is the One to whom all will return ("*for whom are all things...through whom are all things...*"). In other words, Jesus is the only One who can totally and rightfully represent us. And this is what he did. He identified with us completely, even in our sufferings caused by our sin.

This passage says Jesus was "perfected" as the author of our salvation. The word "perfect" can also mean *finished* or *completed*. The phrase Jesus uttered on the cross—"it is finished"—uses this same term. It does not mean Jesus became perfect.

It means Jesus *finished* his work of salvation for humanity. He did this by experiencing all the suffering we experience, yet he triumphed over it through his death and resurrection.

This also doesn't mean that suffering is how we find salvation. God takes suffering in our lives and turns it around for good; however, our salvation comes from the finished work of Christ—not by our ability to die to ourselves or suffer for Jesus. This is extremely important to remember.

This passage is all about our Creator and Sustainer becoming one with humanity. This gets developed in the next two verses:

11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying, "I will proclaim your name to My brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."

"*He who sanctifies*" is Jesus. The word "sanctify" means to set something apart. "*Those who are sanctified*" is referring to us. Jesus is the One who set us apart. He set us apart from our sin. He does this by being our priest. Jesus sanctified us already. He set us apart by representing us and standing in our place.

This passage says that both "*he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified* are all from one Father."

This passage is a reminder of our original blessing. As human beings, we come from God. We are his children—even when we were lost. Jesus came to rescue lost sons and daughters. Every human, including Jesus, was born of a woman, and all of us come from the same heavenly Father.

For this reason, Jesus is not ashamed to identify with us. This is also what the passage is highlighting. The author is trying to get the readers to understand that the Son of God had no problem coming down to represent us. Even though we were lost in sin, we were still precious to God.

Therefore, he calls us brothers and sisters. The author then quotes another Scripture, telling us that Jesus spoke these words: *"I will proclaim your name to My brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."*

In the Bible, a person's name is their identity. Jesus proclaims God's name to us as his brothers. In other words, he reveals God's true identity to us. He reveals God's fatherhood to us.

This passage also includes the wild revelation that Jesus worships with us. God receives our worship because we are doing it in union with Jesus!

The author then quotes more of the Old Testament, claiming that these are verses are things Jesus himself spoke out as our High Priest:

13 And again, *"I will put my trust in him."*

And again, *"Behold, I and the children whom God has given me."*

These two quotes are incredibly comforting in light of the fact that they are spoken by our priestly representative.

Jesus said, *"I will put my trust in him."* Jesus has total trust in the Father. Jesus's faith is what saves us. We are not saved by our own faith. Ephesians 2:8 says ***"By grace you have been saved through faith..."*** In other words, faith (or trust) is the way we enjoy the salvation that has already been given to us *by grace*.

We are called to rest in Jesus's faith. He is our hope of salvation—not ourselves.

When Jesus goes on to say, *"Behold, I and the children whom God has given me,"* he is including us in the words, *"I will put my trust in him."* Therefore, this is what Jesus is saying here: *"I trust God perfectly! I and the children God has given me, together. I trust God, and therefore they trust God."*

This has wonderfully tremendous implications. For example, when you don't "feel" spiritually strong; when you feel your faith is weak and victory seems lost; when you feel you're not praying enough; or that you're not holy enough or bold enough ... all of that is an opportunity to remember Jesus is your faithfulness before God. He's your holiness and boldness as well.

Jesus stands in your place. This is the mystery of union, the heart of the Christian life. **This is our victory over the devil, and it is what we need to pay much closer attention to...**

Timeless Words from Charles Spurgeon

The Holy Spirit's work is to turn our eyes from ourselves to Jesus Christ, but the enemy's work is the very opposite. Nine out of ten of the insinuations of the devil have to do with ourselves.

"You are guilty," says the devil—that is self. "You have not faith"—that is self. "You do not repent enough"—that is self. "You have got such a wavering hold of Christ"—that is self. "You have none of the joy of the spirit, and therefore cannot be one of his"—that is self.

Thus the devil begins picking holes in us; whereas the Holy Spirit takes self entirely away, and tells us that we are "nothing at all," but that "Jesus Christ is all in all."

Satan brings the carcass of self and pulls it about, and because that is corrupt, tells us that most assuredly we cannot be saved. But remember, sinner, it is not thy hold of Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not thy joy in Christ that saves thee—it is Christ; it is not even faith in Christ, though that is the instrument—it is Christ's blood and merits.

Therefore, look not so much to thy hand with which thou art grasping Christ, as to Christ; look not to thy hope, but to Christ, the source of thy hope; look not to thy faith, but to Christ, the author and finisher of thy faith; and if thou dost that, ten thousand devils cannot throw thee down, but as long as thou lookest at thyself, the meanest of those evil spirits may tread thee beneath his feet.

(Sermons Vol. 1 Book 2 – p. 307)

REMINDER: Jesus is the Universal High Priest

When Jesus refers to "*the children God has given me,*" some argue this is only for certain people who have been chosen for salvation. However, in the larger context of Scripture, this statement is referring to anyone with flesh and blood. See **John 17:2** where Jesus prays to the Father and says, "***You gave him authority over all flesh.***" In Israel, the High Priest represented the people whether they were bad or good, believers or unbelievers. What the High Priest did affected everyone regardless of their personal state... In the same way, Jesus is High Priest not only of the church, but of the entire world. The apostle John states this clearly:

And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for [those of] the whole world.

(1 John 2:2)

IV. Humanity's Original Identity & God's Comfort

16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

(Hebrews 2:16-18)

The author comes back to the topic of Jesus's (and now, humanity's) primacy over angels. He then says that Jesus "*had to be made like his brethren.*" There is a powerful indication here that humanity was already the brothers and sisters of Jesus *before he became flesh.*

We know that Jesus became flesh to fully identify with us; however, his assumption of human flesh revealed that the human frame was custom designed to host the fullness of God. Jesus did not take on a new kind of super-human body. He assumed regular human flesh, which proves its original glory and value.

From here, the author wants the readers to understand that Jesus is not like any earthly High Priest. *This High Priest is faithful and merciful.*

Thus, we come to another purpose of the letter—to bring comfort. Not only do we draw encouragement from the fact that Jesus restores our identity, but we are also comforted to know that he understands our struggles and weaknesses.

The author is writing to people who have grown weary. They were losing faith and feeling to pressure to succumb to the religious culture around them. The author is acknowledging how Jesus understands these temptations to doubt and fear. He is compassionate and patient with us. This will be unpacked further in later chapters.

Even though there are an abundance of stern warnings in the book, the author is telling us that we can draw near to Christ and trust him to give us the strength we need. This letter was not written to reprimand people, but to call them to remember sweet and beautiful truths that will safeguard their lives.

The message is that we have a true and faith-filled High Priest. He both reveals and redeems our original identity. With this, he forgives and covers the false identity of our sin and rebellion. He will never leave us, and he will never forsake us. He is always compassionate, and he will be there long after we've read this letter.

Follow-up Encounter:

*Prepare to take communion. Ask God to show you something about the “world to come.” Ask him if there’s a way you can start to tap into this **today**.*

Pray for a deeper revelation of Jesus as your representative. What excites you about this? What questions do you have?

As you take communion, meditate on Christ being your life and identity. Look at who he is and ponder the fact that this now defines who you are.

After some time for reflection and partaking, share with others what you are sensing God may be speaking.