

Chapter 2

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, 'What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 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.

But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 'Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.' And again, 'I will put my trust in him.' And again, 'Behold I and the children which God hath given me.'

Forasmuch 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.

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

Commentary

{1} – Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

A good rule of thumb when reading the Bible is: Whenever you see the word "therefore," go back and see what it's there for. It signals the reader that the conclusion the writer is about to draw is based on the preceding premises.

The author has just gone to great pains to demonstrate from Scripture that Christ is superior in every way to the angelic host. That proof being true and irrefutable, he drew his conclusion - "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed ..." We ought to pay all the more attention.

To what? "... to the things which we have heard ..."!

What things? The gospel of Christ; His death, burial, and resurrection; His sayings, His teaching, and His New Covenant; the testimony of the witnesses and the proof of His superiority; His participation in the creation of all things, and His kingly station when all things are completed; His equality with God and His humility as a man; His mercy, His kindness, and the severity of his "rod of iron" (Psalm 2:9, Rev. 2:27, 12:5, 19:15).

We need to be diligent because these things so easily slip away under the constant barrage of daily noise and ideas that we all encounter.

The Greek word translated "slip" in the KJV is "*pararheo*," which is more commonly translated "drift." The picture is of a boat tied to a mooring while the knot is slowly, imperceptibly unraveling until it is too late and the boat is carried out to sea. That's a warning! Perhaps it is too easy for us to rest on our concepts of sovereignty and forget about our responsibility. But, this passage adjures us - wake up, take heed, pay attention and don't let these truths slip from your mind!

{2} ~ For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

The author was laying the groundwork to introduce the Sinaitic Law into his discourse. There was no more defining moment in Hebrew history than when Moses went to the top of Mt. Sinai and received the Tables of the Covenant, which would become the founding document for the establishment of the theocratic nation of Israel.

[Note: Israel was a nation in God's eyes even while they were in Egypt, according to Gen. 46:3. In fact, God recognized them as two nations, the northern and southern, during that captivity (Ezek. 23:1-4). And, they continued to be a nation before God after the law was abolished and the New Covenant was established (Jer. 31:35-36). However, during the days of their subjection to the law of Sinai, they were the only nation on Earth ever ruled exclusively by God. That theocracy was administered by the judges and ended when Israel insisted on a king (1Sam. 8:5). The law was "added" to Israel (Gal. 3:19), but Israel was not abolished when the law was replaced by the superior covenant.]

But, for the moment, the author was continuing his contrast between Christ and angels. The law was "ordained by angels" according to the apostle Paul -

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator." (Gal. 3:19)

The mediator in this instance was Moses. The law, "spoken by angels" was steadfast, unmovable, unbending. As a result, every minor infraction, every stumble, every act contrary to the rigid rule was justly and severely punished. The law was added to Israel "because of transgression" and "... the wages of sin is death." (Rom. 6:23a)

So, the all-important point is: God upheld the word that came by angels and He holds men answerable and accountable to it. But, there is One who came to Earth who is superior to angels. He also laid out His law, His torah, His teaching. And, if we ignore that -

{3} – How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

If the inferior covenant stood upright in the courts of Heaven and men were judged for every disobedience or rebellion against it, how much greater a judgment is due the person who will ignore and disobey the superior covenant?

This New Covenant speaks of grace, telling of Christ's sacrifice in our place and reassuring the sinner's guilty conscience. It is the great, eternal plan, which was revealed when Christ taught it to his disciples, who confirmed every word of it to the writer, and to the church of every age. It's the marvelous deal that says –

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Is.1:18)

What fool would walk away from such a bargain? And, if he did, how great a righteous punishment would he deserve?

So, having confirmed Christ's superiority to angels, the writer wants us to recognize the higher, better quality of the covenant He ushered in. But, if we don't keep our minds securely fastened on Him, the things we know of Him can slip away. And, if they slip too far we will eventually neglect them altogether. Then how sad is our state? What excuse will we have? What will be our escape clause? How much better to –

“... press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil.3:14)

How much wiser to –

“... give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.” (2 Pet.1:10-12)

You know them.
Remember them.
Remind each other of them.
Don't let them slip.

{4} – God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

That's is a very odd verse division. This line is the completion of the previous thought. Even with the English punctuation added it's obvious that this is a fragment, completing a question, and not the whole question itself. The complete thought is in verses 3 & 4:

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

Big question! Seeing how the Old Covenant administered by angels was firmly upheld in the courts of Heaven, how shall we be held blameless if we ignore the all-sufficiency of Christ's atoning work and the New Covenant it brought in? After all, this unique plan of salvation was attended by numerous irrefutable proofs of its veracity:

- 1) The Lord, Himself, was the first to speak it. Christ spoke of the **newness** of His plan when He said, "... Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Mat.26:27b-8).
- 2) He spoke of the means of its **implementation** when He said, "... The son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again ..." (Matt. 17:22b-23)
- 3) He testified of its **completion** when He said, "... Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17).
- 4) He offered the **proof** when He said, "... Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (John 20:27).
- 5) He promised its **efficacy** when he declared, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And, whither I go ye know, and the way ye know" (John 14:1-4).

The Lord, Himself, was the first purveyor of the Gospel. That fact alone ought to give this Word uncompromising credibility.

These things, these events, these sayings and teachings were all brought to us by the men who actually, materially, literally witnessed and heard them. And, they testified far and wide of the gospel of grace. Ordinary men overwhelmed by extraordinary circumstances, empowered of the Holy Ghost, under threat of punishment, pain, and death, went forward and "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6). And, in so doing, their testimony was confirmed to us.

The apostles not only brought a true witness, telling of their experience, they were each miraculously changed as God added His confirmation to their preaching. Their lives became "living epistles." For instance, John, one of the "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17), was transformed into the apostle of love. Doubting Thomas declared, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). Peter, the quick to speak, who thrice denied his Lord, was three times restored with the command "Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). This same Peter, who denied Christ to save his own skin, boldly preached the Pentecost message as 3,000 entered the church.

The testimony of the apostolic witnesses was confirmed with signs and wonders - the sick were healed, the dead were raised, the Spirit fell and men spoke in tongues they had never previously uttered. People were saved, hearts were turned, sinners repented, and faith prevailed. The Spirit of God left the holiest place of the temple barren and took up residence in mere mortals.

All these things were in accordance with God's will. They were assigned by providence and completed in sovereignty. And, hence the question - "how shall we escape?" What more evidence does a rational man need? How much more proof would a sane man require? And, given what we know of the severity of God and the sternness of His decrees, how just would He be in judging us for ignoring all this?

{5} - For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

The author continued his declaration of Christ's superiority in all things. Having shown His dominance in the heavenly realm and in earthly covenantal dealings with men, He looked into the future and stated that Christ will also be the ruler and monarch of the final kingdom. Without debating whether this is a literal or spiritual kingdom, we can undoubtedly agree that Christ, not any angel, will be ruling "the world to come."

The simple point of this rapidly building argument is this: Christ was in the beginning, making all things. All things were made by Him and for Him. He rules Heaven. He rules Earth. And, He will always rule Heaven and Earth.

{6,7,8a,} – But one in a certain place testified, saying, ‘What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.’

This is a direct quote of Psalm 8:4-6. We'll take it in parts -

... What is man, that thou art mindful of him? ...

What could we possibly point at to recommend ourselves before the perfection and holiness of God? And, why would such a God take account of any individual man? Why should God pay any attention to sinful, fallen men?

“Verily, every man at his best state is altogether vanity.” (Ps.39:5)

“How then can man be justified with God? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman? Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea, the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man, that is a worm? and the son of man, which is a worm?” (Job 25:4-6)

That's a very probing question. Why would God have any dealings with such lowly creatures? He'd have been well within His rights, and consistent with His holiness, if He had left us completely to ourselves.

... or the son of man, that thou visitest him? ...

Oh, wait! It's not just that God paid attention, or was "mindful" that men existed, but also that He visited them! Knowing that we were incapable of coming to Him, He came to us. Knowing that we would not talk to Him, He talked to us. Knowing that we were incapable of loving Him, "...He first loved us (1st John 4:19).

... Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; ...

The elect angels who retained their first estate continue to worship at the throne of God. But, God put men under the firmament, down on the ground. They were subject to failure, to pain, to separation. Their place was physical, their bodies were temporal, and their hearts were wild and rebellious. Nonetheless -

... thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.

The Psalmist went on to describe the many facets of God's creation which were put under subjection to men in Psalm 8:7-9:

“All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!”

But, the author saw much more in this Psalm. He put it into a Christological context. While it is a great mystery that God would stoop to call on fallen men, it is through the very "Son of Man" that God visited. In order that He could be counted among - and be "near kinsman" to (Ruth 3:12) - the fleshly brethren, Jesus was made lower than the very angels who were eternally subject to Him.

However, after being subjected to flesh, temptation and the wrath of God, Christ was crowned by God, seated at the right hand, and given glory and honor. He also received dominion over all the creation of God, not just beasts of the field and fish, but over every living soul. The demonic hoard shudder at His voice, Satan trembles at His name.

“... his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?” (Dan.4:34b-35)

{8b} – ... For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him ...

Every part and parcel of Heaven, Hell and Earth is under the absolute dominion of Christ. God has surely placed all - not some, not most, but all - under His subjection. As such, He may do with it as He pleases. Should He save some? It's up to Him. Should He judge some? It's up to Him. Should He tarry awhile? Should He come suddenly? Should He chasten those He loves? It's all up to Him. Will we be filled with the Holy Spirit and have faith? It's up to Him. Shall we live a life of ease, or be in trial at every turn? It's up to Him. Shall we live a day or a hundred years? Will we be wise? Shall we be blinded? Shall we do works in His name? It's subject to His will, His desire, His leading and His power. Otherwise, there is still something that is not under his subjection. Election? Death? Faith? Gifts? Preaching? Praying? Giving? What can we name that is not subject to Him?

Then the writer, having built this wonderful platform, took a sudden shift:

{8c} – ... But now we see not yet all things put under him.

Is this a contradiction? Or, is this simply pragmatism?

Actually, it's the transition statement that brings us to our next series of verses. The writer realized that rebels remain. Sin still courses through our flesh, battling for dominance. Death still reigns. Satan remains active and the world spins on in turmoil. To an honest observer it would appear, on the surface, that not everything in creation has been finally, once-and-for-all, placed under His feet. The Prince of Peace appears to reign over a decidedly frightening, warring, restless world.

But, we hold to the promise that it won't always be that way. We believe in the "world to come." We have the very present surety of its total completion and Christ's world dominion. That guarantee, pulled from the prophetic Psalms, stands unquestionable and indisputable. That's one of the primary characteristics of what the author called "the world to come."

However, the author posited a sharp contrast: "But **now** we see not yet all things put under him." Regardless of our particular eschatological bent we are forced to recognize the writer's juxtaposition between these two times and the evidence of those times:

The world to come = all things in subjection.
Now = all things are not yet put under Him.

Allow me to belabor the contrast. We Christians are certain that our God reigns and that His Christ is lifted up on high, seated in authority, holding the promise of universal dominion.

"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God." (Rom.14:11)

And -

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Phil. 2:9-11)

Yet, any honest observer of the affairs of this world would have to admit that stiff-necked rebels continue to slander the name of Christ, and our mortal enemies - sin, sickness, death - continue to plunder the sons of men. So, what are we to say to this conflict? Where should we turn our attention to find comfort, peace, and assurance in the face of this life's turmoil?

{9a} - But we see Jesus, ...

The Christian views the world through the eyes of faith.

"For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7).

And, just as importantly, how do we see Him? Frustrated? Confounded? Wringing His eternal hands at how the whole plan has gone awry? Nope...

{9b} - ... who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour;

Though He took on flesh and blood and suffered death, which no angelic being ever experienced, we see Him now crowned in Heaven's splendor, glorified, and honored. A perfect example of this idea is found in the death of Stephen. He died at the hands of unbelievers who would not bow to Christ. Stephen saw that not everything was in utter subjection to Jesus. But, as he died, "being full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:57), he looked up steadfastly into Heaven. He saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at God's right hand. Stephen cried out -

"... Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:56)

Stephen saw, and suffered under, the fact that not all things were under Christ's absolute subjection. But, He saw Jesus. That was all he needed to see. And, he didn't see Jesus frustrated. He saw Him high and lifted up, arrayed in splendor and ruling in glory. Jesus returned to the glory He had with the Father before the worlds were made (John 17:5). And, He rules to this very moment.

As believers, it would be easy for us to become discouraged as we look at the mess the world is in. I sympathize with those who are frightened or confused. But, we must not look at the world and adjust our faith to accommodate what we see. We must keep our eyes on Christ only, and adjust our knowledge of reality to fit what we know by faith. So, that being said, what do we see when we look at Him?

{9c} - ... that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

That's why the Son of God was made flesh, lower than the angels. It was for a purpose. His arrival on the stage of history was not a random thing. He came

with an agenda and a destiny. He came to die. And, in that death, He conquered death. In tasting death, He made it possible for us to step from life into life. In accomplishing His death, He accomplished our death. In rising from the grave, He purchased our eternal life. As our substitute, we were in Him as He died and rose again. Having died once for all His people, the people will live evermore. And, that – most importantly – was an act of grace. We did not want Him, love Him, desire, nor worship Him. Yet, as an act of unfathomable kindness, God in Christ did for us what we neither could do, nor would have done. God died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6). It's a marvelous thing, this grace of God.

{10} ~ For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

In the great, eternal purpose of God - the owner and author of all things - He purposed to save some of His creatures. And, He chose to call them "sons." That's amazing. There was only one true Son. But, by the declaration of God, Christ is our elder brother and we are the adopted sons of the Almighty Father (Rom. 8:15). More amazingly, the methodology through which God determined to bring those children home was through the suffering of their Lord.

I love the phrase "captain of their salvation." The captain leads the way. The captain guides the vessel. The captain takes charge and gives the commands. But, our Captain humbled Himself and suffered under a torment we could never bear and which we will - thank God - never know. He was separated, forsaken of the Father, on our account. But, He promised us:

"... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." (Heb.13:5b)

And, He rose victorious from the onslaught of God's wrath! He was perfected, completed in all that He was destined to be. And, by that singular, sacrificial act, we sons and daughters are welcomed into our eternal home - following our faithful Captain's lead.

{11} ~ For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

The word here rendered "sanctifieth" is the Greek, "*hagiazō*," from the root "*hagios*," which is usually translated "holy." It has to do with being separated or set apart for God's exclusive purpose and use. That's what Christ did for us. He set us apart, separating us from the world, from sin, and from our own destructive

desires. He made us the exclusive property of God, specifically for His use. He changed the direction of our will, redirected the desire of our hearts, and paid the debt our sin had incurred. He "sanctifies." We are "sanctified." And, in Him, we are all one, gathered to our Father, ready and willing to follow His purpose. That being the case, Christ is not ashamed to stand before the magisterial throne of the everlasting, almighty Ruler of the universe and call you and me --- brethren! His brothers and sisters!

We are made "one" with the only true Son.

Wow.

{ 12 } - *Saying, 'I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.'*

That's an exact quote of Psalm 22:22. The writer intended his readers to see that the idea of brotherhood between the Lord and His people existed even back in the Psalms. Christ came to save those whose names were written "in the book of life of the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev.13:8). He always saw us as brethren. He came to tell us about our Father. He came to declare God's name, His authority, His character, His nature, His plan, and His salvation.

And, whom did He tell? His brethren! In the midst of the assembly of "out-called" saints, Christ came to teach us how to praise and worship "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).

{ 13a } - *And again, 'I will put my trust in him ...'*

That's most likely a reference to Psalm 18:2 -

"The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

The author was pointing out that we share a common faith with Christ. We all look to the Father for deliverance and place our trust in Him. It was a continuation of the "brethren" proofs. As was -

{ 13b } - *And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*

Through these several verses the author emphasized the family unity between the Father, the Son, and the brethren. Based on solid Old Testament proof, he continued to develop the purpose of Christ's appearance on Earth.

{14} – Forasmuch 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;

Flesh dies - plain and simple fact. Flesh gets old, gets sick, becomes feeble, and dies. Young flesh dies. Old flesh dies. Flesh is weak. The life of the flesh is in the blood (Gen.9:4). So, to perfect His kinship with His brethren, the Son took on flesh and blood. Theologians call that the "hypostatic union." It means that He became something beneath what He was by nature. He did it so that He could die. That's why He came. That death accomplished many things. Not the least of His accomplishments was the overpowering and plundering of Satan's domain. The "power of death" had been relinquished to Satan back in the Garden of Eden. But, along with that power came this prophecy –

“And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”
(Gen.3:15)

At Calvary, Christ vanquished Satan and took that authority from him –

“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.” (Rev 1:18)

{15} – And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

We are the recipients of this glorious victory! The fleshly man's greatest fear is that one day he will die. Death is the great equalizer. Rich or poor, free or bond, we all die. Satan utilizes that fear to keep a stranglehold on men. They live their whole lives fearing the day of their demise. And, that bondage of fear is enough to keep men chasing fleshly immortality through fame, wealth, notoriety - anything to prove they were here. The fear of death drives men into all sorts of egocentric activity.

But, if we are Christ's, He has destroyed that fear. He has loosed us from that bondage. Our lives are not geared toward our glorification, but toward His. We don't fear dying because we know that it is simply a transition from this phase of life to the next phase of life. So, the devil has no threat to dangle over our heads. Satan is powerless to bind us up with worry and fear over our death. Our death, just as our life, is in the hands of our Captain, our elder brother.

{16} – For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

Abraham was the first Hebrew (Gen.14:13). Abraham was the great patriarch who received God's promises of inheritance, nation, countless offspring and Messianic lineage. The first century Hebrew audience who received this epistle looked to Abraham as their common forefather. We'll be hearing a lot about Abraham as we move through this book.

But, the immediate point is that, though some angels fell and left their first estate, Christ did not stoop to help them. He did not take on an angelic body, nor die on their behalf. Their sin remains on their heads. But, Christ did stoop to help fallen men. He took on flesh and blood and it was found in the particular fleshly line which first received the promise, "... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen.12:3).

{17} – Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

In all things it "behooved" - that's an Old English way of saying "it was necessary" - Jesus to be made like His brethren. In order to reconcile man and God, Christ became one of us. Then, being both man and God, He could represent both sides and solve our conflict.

God established a line of priests when He brought the children of Israel out of Egypt. Moses' brother, Aaron, was the first high priest and his sons followed after him. But, the hundreds of priests who served in the temple could never accomplish actual redemption. We needed a merciful high priest to pay for our iniquity and a faithful priest to continually be our advocate and redeemer in the court of Heaven. We needed someone who could purchase our redemption. We needed someone to buy us off the slave market of sin. We needed someone to overthrow Satan and release us from the threat of deathly bondage. We needed

someone to absorb the wrath of God on our behalf. We needed someone to sanctify and separate us to God, securing our heavenly destiny. All these things made it necessary that Christ take on flesh and blood and accomplish the high priestly tasks that Aaron's descendants foreshadowed.

{ 18 } – For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

What a beautiful verse to close this chapter on. It's popular today for people to feel segregated, singular, distinct. And, they suffer alone. The popular cry of pain is, "You don't know what it's like!" And, that's true. As humans, it's utterly impossible for us to fully enter into someone else's agony. The temptations of this life can be overwhelming. The trials can be inundating. It can make us feel very solitary - - - and scared.

But, we're not alone. Jesus knows what it's like. I'll say that again. Jesus knows what it's like. He has suffered more than any of us; or all of us put together. He has been tempted by Satan, face-to-face. He withstood the trials of this life and suffered hunger, fatigue, loneliness, and terror. He knows what it's like. Yet, He remained faithful.

And, because He knows firsthand the difficulties of life in the flesh, He is able to comfort us. He is able to reassure us. He is the one we can, and should, run to for help in time of need. He will help. He knows what it's like.

I like Kenneth Wuest's rendering of this verse. It reads,

“For in that He suffered, having Himself been tempted and put to the test, He is able to run to the cry of those who are being tempted and put to the test, and bring them aid.”ⁱ

Jesus runs to the cry of His brethren!

And, what is the outcome, the upshot, of this relationship? I think it is 1 Cor. 10:13 -

“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

If every temptation and trial we encounter is common to man, then it's a trial that Christ endured and triumphed over. He knows what it's like. Take comfort in that.

Well, for the sake of wrapping this chapter up, I'll conclude with this line –

"But, we see Jesus."

Everything else that's written here reverts back to that common thread. Regardless of our life's problems, the world situation, or the trials of the flesh, our gaze must be fixed on Him and our faith must be rooted and grounded in His word. Everything that's written of Him will come to pass. He is coming back. He is going to reign until the culmination, judging His enemies and rewarding His faithful. We will live eternally in His presence and find ourselves standing before the God of Ages, accepted in the Beloved.

Our Beloved

Our Captain

Our Elder Brother

"But, we see Jesus."

ⁱ Wuest, Kenneth. "The New Testament – An Expanded Translation". 1989. William B Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, MI.