

# CHRIST'S VOLUNTARY HUMILIATION

BIBLE TEXT : Hebrews 2:1-18.

LESSON 433 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "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?" (Hebrews 2:2, 3)..

## BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

**Hebrews 2:1-18** 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.

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

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*;

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?

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

6 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?

7 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:

8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

9 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.

## Bible References:

### Notes:

#### The Importance of Christ's Message

**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" (Hebrews 2:1).**

The word "therefore" refers to the previous chapter -- that which was stated concerning the Person of Christ and His pre-eminence. If Christ is the supreme being who is set forth in the first chapter, and occupies the pre-eminence in God's universe as the writer sets forth, that puts upon His message all importance and a pre-eminence of equal weight. Therefore this exhortation is given: "wherefore . . . give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." The things that we have heard are the things, which pertain to the Gospel which He brought, the Gospel of salvation.

**"For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; . . ." (Hebrews 2:2).**

We perhaps find more in the Epistle to the Hebrews about the place of angels in God's plan than in any other part of the Bible. It is indicated in the Bible that the Law was given by the instrumentality of angels. When Stephen was making his speech at the time of his martyrdom, in speaking of the Law he said that it was given by the disposition of angels (Acts 7:53). And again in Galatians, Paul, speaking of the Law, said that it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator (Galatians 3:19).

**"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai in the holy place" (Psalm 68:17).**

This indicates that when God gave the Law it was attended by angels. And possibly it is to this that the writer has reference because, as we have seen all through this Epistle, he is contrasting the period of the Law with the period of the Gospel.

On one mission the angels were sent to Lot. When the two men appeared at the gate and brought to him the word of the destruction of the city, their message stood fast. Every word was fulfilled and judgment was visited upon those wicked people of Sodom. In every case where angels were sent, the message they brought was carried out perfectly. If that was the case in regard to these created beings, what would be the case when the Son of God Himself speaks? Of how much more importance it is when He has come in person -- not through any instrumentality of angels or through any agent, but in actual person to deliver His message.

His message is inseparably interwoven with His Person. We cannot think of the message of the Lord Jesus Christ without thinking of His incarnation, His birth, the life He lived, the Word He spoke, the acts He did. It is all woven together in one grand whole, so completely unified that John said, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was 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.

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

13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

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;

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

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

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.

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

Therefore, Jesus and His message are one. You cannot reject any portion of His message without rejecting Him.

**"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?" (Hebrews 2:3).**

In the original, the words in the first verse, "lest at any time we should let them slip," have a nautical sense of a ship, which is drifting, one that has no anchorage. That is the condition of one who has forsaken the message of Jesus Christ, the Word of God. He is set adrift, he is tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine; he has no stability; he is double-minded.

#### **The Confirmation of His Word**

This salvation was spoken first by the Lord and then was confirmed by His disciples. The writer of Hebrews apparently was Paul who did not know the Lord in the flesh. He saw Him on the way to Damascus in that vision and thus he said "was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." That was not all. There was another confirmation:

**"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."**

As Mark said,

**"And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following" (Mark 16:20).**

He has never left His true disciples destitute of that invaluable affirmation of the truth of His Word. The seal of their commission as disciples was that wherever they went, wherever they preached, wherever they declared the Gospel and held forth this message, there would be signs, which would follow, confirming the Word which they spoke. Any body of people who have taken their stand upon that Word and have dared to preach the whole counsel of God have invariably seen that Word confirmed with signs following.

The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is supremely a supernatural Gospel, attended by supernatural power. There are certain powers manifested in false religions, but they are of a nature that do not commend themselves to men's conscience nor, in many respects, even to their common sense. But it is different with the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. It commends itself to one's conscience from beginning to end.

#### **Danger in Rejecting His Word**

It means something to turn away from this message, being confirmed as it is and coming as it has to this world. Now you can see the position of these Hebrew Christians. They were in danger of turning away because of persecutions and distresses that were confronting them. They had sure temptations to deal with; but we in this day are in as much danger of letting the Word slip as they were. We shall never reach the point until we get to Heaven, where we are past the danger of letting the Word slip. All we need to do is to neglect it, or neglect prayer, neglect the attendance of meetings, giving too much time to temporal issues, to our own business. All these things can put us into the very same position the Hebrew Christians were in danger of lapsing into.

When we see the stern warnings that God has recorded in His Word -- not only against rejecting the Word, but also against just neglecting it -- we see that it means something to hold fast to that Word.

#### **Christ's Voluntary Humiliation and Exaltation**

**"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"  
(Hebrews 2:7).**

That "little lower than the angels" is brought in contrast with what we had in the first chapter where He is spoken of as having pre-eminence over the angels. He was made a little lower than the angels, voluntarily, in His humility, in coming down to this world. This has really been attributed to Jesus because He was the great representative of the human race in His incarnation. That is taken from the 8th Psalm.

**"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" (Hebrews 2:8).**

That has not yet come to pass. Paul, in the 15th chapter of I Corinthians, tells of the time when all things shall be put in complete subjection under Him; when the last enemy, death, shall be vanquished.

**"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" (Hebrews 2:9).**

We have clearly set forth the sacrifice of the Lord. His substitutionary offering. It could not be stated more clearly that He should taste death for every man. His vicarious death is being denied in these days. "Vicarious" means "for another," -- He suffered for another. It is even being denied as necessary that there should be such a sacrifice. But here it is written plainly, as well as in many other portions of the New Testament. To bring many sons unto glory was the great object in Jesus' coming down to this world. In other words, to have them share in the same glory that He Himself entered into when He ascended from this world. That will be the privilege of all those who have followed Him here below.

Jesus first came down to earth and suffered humiliation temporarily that it should be followed by His exaltation. Peter said, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Peter 5:6). That is the order that the Lord took, and every one of His disciples will take the same road.

### **David's Example**

David was anointed king by Samuel; but a long period elapsed before David was crowned king on the throne. He had a schooling to go through before God was ready to put him up as king over Israel. If you will read the experiences that David went through before he was crowned king, you will confess that he endured some severe lessons.

God gives us our lessons in the school of experience, in hard knocks, in hard places to go through. It was in those hard knocks that David went through when he was being pursued by Saul, and his life was constantly in jeopardy, that David learned the lesson of humility, to walk softly before the Lord.

Some fail to take those lessons; they rebel against them. When Saul was brought to task and rebuked for his faults, instead of receiving it he rebelled, with the disastrous consequence that he not only lost the kingdom, but he lost his own soul and became an outcast and beset with all evil spirit.

But David took the chastisements which came his way with the result that he received a good schooling that prepared and fitted him for his position. He first had the humiliation and afterward the crown. That is the order that the Lord has chosen all the way

through, not only for His Son whom He sent to this world, but for every disciple of His. First the cross and then the crown, first the humiliation and then the glory that follows.

### **The Captain of Our Salvation**

**"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" (Hebrews 2:10).**

The word "captain" is the same word, which we find in the 12th chapter where it speaks of the Author and Finisher of our faith. It means "file leader," the one who goes ahead and leads. Thus Jesus is set forth as being the Captain, the Firstfruits of the Resurrection. He went through all this for the supreme purpose of bringing many sons unto glory.

**". . . For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; . . ."**

Jesus prayed that His disciples might be one, even as He and the Father were one. You see what a perfect oneness that is, that we be one with Christ as Christ is one with the Father. You can see how essential it is to be sanctified.

**". . . For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11).**

We hope the study of this Epistle to the Hebrews will enlarge our vision of the Gospel -- its heights and depths -- that it will give us a wider range of God's calling, and inspire us to rededicate and consecrate our lives anew to the Lord. When we think of the extent to which God has gone to meet the needs of sinful humanity, covering not a short period but centuries of time, unfolding His plan as He has, we can just begin to glimpse the importance of this great salvation of which we are made partakers.

**"Behold I and the children which God hath given me" (Hebrews 2:13).**

### **Christ's Compassion**

We can understand the heart of the Saviour as He was upon the mountain overlooking Jerusalem about the last time He surveyed the city, and cried that lamentable cry:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matthew 23:37).

It was not that they could not; they would not. He had the love; the yearning was there; there was no lack upon His part. The lack was on the human side. They had failed to respond to the love that He had manifested in coming to this world.

"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" (Hebrews 2:14).

Satan's power is through sin. He is over the realm of death because of sin by which death was ushered into this world. There was no death in the world until sin entered.

"For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16).

The Lord might well have chosen a lesser being in Heaven. Michael, or Gabriel, or one of the archangels, to come down to this world to bring the message of salvation. In olden times He sent the angels as messengers. But had such a messenger come we might well have said, "He cannot understand the position in which we are placed. This angel knows nothing about the temptations that you and I are subject to, the infirmities of the flesh which beset us, nor the allurements of the world, the flesh and the devil." But God did

not send such a messenger. He sent the Lord Jesus Christ of 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" (Hebrews 2:17).

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

There is no temptation that confronts any child of God but that Jesus Himself went through such. The worst temptation any man could ever experience has never touched the fringes of what the Lord went through.

#### **Christ's Voluntary Servitude**

**"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**

**"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:**

**"But made himself of no reputation," [And if we have Christ, we have His mind.] (Philippians 2:5-7).**

He made Himself of no reputation. He said upon one occasion that no man took His life from Him. He laid down His life and took it up again, so His humiliation from beginning to end was voluntary. He could have turned from it at any time, even in the crisis in the Garden. He prayed the Father to let that cup pass from Him if it were possible; but He immediately added, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). This shows that it was perfectly voluntary upon His part to go through with it or turn aside from it, just as it is with us in following Him.

**". . . and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7).**

He told His disciples: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

Paul said: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (II Corinthians 8:9). We see the great purpose that Jesus had in forsaking all, making Himself of no reputation. That literally means emptying Himself of all the glory, of all the power, of all that He had, to come down to this earth and become a servant among men. He suffered the contradiction of sinners, going to the cross, enduring the death there and ascending on, high, that He might bring many sons unto the Lord. We can thank God we are of that body. Perhaps sometime we may have the words for expressing it like William Cowper, the writer of the song which says:

**"Then in a nobler, sweeter song,  
I'll sing thy power to save,  
When this poor lisping, stammering tongue  
Lies silent in the grave."**