

CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THE PROPHETS

HEBREWS 01:01–03

DIVISION OVERVIEW: Hebrews 01:01–04:13

Man has always felt an inner drive to live forever in a perfect world. Therefore, he has sensed an inner need to search and find out if there is a God, and if there is, to please Him and to gain His approval and acceptance. This is where so much religion has come from, from the inner struggle of men to find God.

The great tragedy is this: men have groped and grasped after God as though they were in a dark world that gave no evidence of God. But this is just not so; there is no need for man to be in the dark about God. Why? Because God has revealed Himself, and He has revealed Himself in many different ways:

- => through nature or what might be called a revelation of His Supreme deity and power. A person can look at nature and clearly see God's deity and power.
- => through conscience or what might be called an inner witness or sense of duty to God.
- => through law or what might be called a revelation of Supreme justice.
- => through religion or what might be called a revelation of how to worship and become acceptable to God.
- => through prophets and priests or what might be called the revelation of God through human spokesmen and mediators.

The list could go on and on, but the point is that God has revealed Himself to man, and each revelation has been very important for man's understanding of God. But despite all these revelations, something vital is still missing. If man is ever to know God, there is only one way, the very same way that man gets to know anybody. Man can know *about a person*, know all the facts about a person's life; but until he personally meets the person and associates and fellowships with him, he does not personally know him. Therefore if man was to ever know God, God had to reveal Himself in the most supreme way possible: He had to come to earth and show Himself to man, revealing exactly who He is and what He is like. This is the whole point of these four chapters. In fact, it is the point of the whole Book of Hebrews: the Supreme revelation of God is Jesus Christ, God's very own Son. God has revealed Himself in the most glorious way possible: He has sent His very own Son into the world.

Introduction: Hebrews 01:01–03

Men have usually looked upon the prophets of religion as great men of God. They have seen the prophets of God...

- as very special servants of God.
 - as men who had a special message from God.
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- as men who could tell others how to become acceptable to God.
- as men who could tell others how to live and please God.

This was a true concept, just so the prophet was one of the chosen prophets of the Old Testament. The prophets of the Old Testament were great men of God. They were men to whom God spoke and to whom God entrusted His message. But as great as the prophets of the Old Testament were, they fade into insignificance when compared to Jesus Christ, God's very own Son. Jesus Christ is far, far Superior to the prophets.

- I. Jesus Christ is the supreme spokesman of God (vv. 1-2).
- II. Jesus Christ is the appointed heir of all things (v. 2).
- III. Jesus Christ is the Creator and Maker of the universe (v. 2).
- IV. Jesus Christ is the very glory of God Himself (v. 3).
- V. Jesus Christ is the exact representation of God (v. 3).
- VI. Jesus Christ is the Sustainer of the universe (v. 3).
- VII. Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind (v. 3).
- VIII. Jesus Christ is the supreme Mediator (v. 3).

I. Hebrews 01:01–02 The Supreme Revelation of God

Jesus Christ is the supreme spokesman of God. This is the first reason why He is superior to the prophets. Note the glorious truth: God has spoken to man. He is not as most people think, far off in the distance, someplace in outer space, so far away that He is unconcerned with what is happening to man and his world. The very opposite is true: God is concerned with our lives, with the trials and trouble, sin and evil, suffering and disease, death and decay — with all that happens to us. Therefore, God has spoken to us; He has given us the wonderful words of life and of deliverance. He has told us exactly how to conquer the trials, temptations, corruption and death of this world. When did God speak to man, and where can we find the record of God's Word? If God is really not far off in the distance someplace — if God has really spoken to man, then we must find His Word and heed it. For His Word would mean everlasting life and victory over all the evil, trials, corruption and death of this life. Where is God's Word? It is found in two places.

1. First, God's Word is found in the prophets. In ancient times God spoke to man by His prophets, that is, by persons whom He had chosen to proclaim His Word to the world. Who are these persons? They are the men and women of the Old Testament Scriptures. But note a significant fact: God spoke through the prophets...
 - “in the past”: that is, in many parts (polumeros); in many separate revelations, at many different times.
 - in various ways (polutropos).

What does this mean? No man could possibly receive and understand or explain the whole revelation of God. God and the truth of God is too big for any one man. Therefore, God had to make many revelations to many different people, and He had to use many different ways to speak to men. No man could ever contain or share the whole revelation of God.

Mathew Henry states it well by saying that there had to be a *gradual opening* of man's mind concerning the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. (*Mathew Henry's Commentary*, Vol. 6. Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, p. 888.)

- => God spoke to Adam and told him that the Saviour would come from the offspring of the woman (Gen. 3:15).
 - => God spoke to Abraham and told him that the Saviour would come from his offspring (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18).
 - => God spoke to Jacob and told him that the Saviour would come through the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10).
 - => God spoke to David and told him that the Saviour would be born of his house (2 Sam 7:13).
 - => God spoke to Micah and told him that the Saviour would be born at Bethlehem (Mic. 5:2).
 - => God spoke to Isaiah and told him that the Saviour would be born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14).
- Note also the different ways in which God spoke to the prophets:
- => He spoke to Moses in a great thundering sound in the midst of a storm (Exo. 19:19; Dut. 5:22).
 - => He spoke to Elijah by a gentle whisper (1 Kng. 19:12).
 - => He spoke to Isaiah in a vision (Isa. 1:1).
 - => He spoke to Samuel in a dream (1 Sam. 3:5).

On and on the list could go, for God spoke to his prophets in many different ways. But the point to see is this: each prophet could present only a part of God's revelation. No one of them could present the whole revelation of God. The full revelation of God is not found in the prophets. Where is it found then? This brings us to the second point.

2. Second, God's Word, His full revelation, is found in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. "In these last days he [God has] spoken to us by His Son." This is the most astounding truth imaginable! For God could send no greater messenger with His Word than to send His very own Son. And this is the astounding declaration of this passage: God has sent His Son to proclaim His Word to men.

Before Christ, no man could fully grasp or understand God, and no man could fully proclaim the Word of God. Men could understand only a part or fragment of God. But now God's very own Son has come to earth and revealed God, proclaiming all that God is. And note: it is He Himself who is the revelation of God. He embodies

the Word of God. In fact, He is the Word of God. Everything that God ever wanted to say to man is said in the person of Jesus Christ. He is the perfect expression of God's mind. Everything that man needs to know about God and the conquest of life with all its trials, corruption and death is seen in Jesus Christ. (See *The Word*, Jn. 1:1-5.)

Thought 1. This means several wonderful things.

- 1) God loves man. He has not left man in the dark, groping and grasping and trying to find the truth of life and death and the hereafter. God has spoken to man and revealed the truth about...
 - where we have come from.
 - why we are here.
 - where we are going.
 - how we can conquer the trials, evil and death of this life and world.
- 2) If we want to know the truth about God and ourselves, we have to look to God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He and He alone is the full revelation of God.
- 3) Jesus Christ is superior to all the prophets; He alone is the supreme revelation of God. As great as the Old Testament prophets were, they were not above God's Son. The Lord Jesus Christ is above the prophets; He is the supreme — the full and final — spokesman for God. There can be no greater spokesman than that of God's own Son.

II. *Hebrews 01:02 Jesus Christ, the Heir of All Things*

Jesus Christ is appointed the heir of all things. This is the second reason why He is superior to the prophets. What is meant by heir? It means that Jesus Christ is to receive and be "the lawful Owner of all things" (Amplified New Testament). Jesus Christ alone has inherited all that God is and has. No man is great enough or worthy enough to be the heir of God; only Christ is. He alone has *lived and walked perfectly* before God. Among men, He alone has obeyed God perfectly, therefore, He alone has inherited all that God is and has; He alone has been appointed to be the Owner of all things. What is it that Jesus Christ is to inherit and receive?

=> Jesus Christ is to inherit all power in heaven and earth.

Mat 28:18 *Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*

=> Jesus Christ has inherited the authority to execute all judgment upon men.

John 5:22 *"Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son."*

=> Jesus Christ is going to inherit the Lordship over both the dead and the living.

Rom 14:9 *For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.*

⇒ Jesus Christ is going to inherit the whole universe: a new heavens and earth and a new world capital.

2 Pet 3:10-13 *But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare. Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

Rev 21:1-2, 23-26 *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. The glory and honour of the nations will be brought into it.*

⇒ Jesus Christ is going to inherit all government — eternal government.

Isa 9:6-7 *For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.*

Heb 1:8 *But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the sceptre of your kingdom."*

⇒ Jesus Christ is going to inherit all power and wealth, wisdom and strength, honour and glory and praise.

Rev 5:12 *In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honour and glory and praise!"*

1 Pet 3:22 *Who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand — with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.*

⇒ Jesus Christ is going to inherit a name above every name and every knee shall be bowed before Him vindicating His claim to be both Lord and Saviour.

Phil 2:9-10 *Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.*

III. **Hebrews 01:02 Jesus Christ, Creator of the Universe**

Jesus Christ is the Creator and Maker of the worlds or universe. This is the third reason why Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets. The word “universe” (aiones) can also be translated as ages. Jesus Christ is the creator of both the universe and the ages that roll in one upon another, creator of both the worlds and time as it moves forward from event to event, and generation to generation. The Amplified New Testament states it well:

Heb 1:2 *But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

Col 1:16 *For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*

The point is this: Christ’s creation includes all the universes of all dimensions of being, wherever they are and however many there may be. This is exactly what is meant by the “universe.” It is also what is meant when Colossians says that Christ created all things “things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.” (Col. 1:16)

⇒ If there are other *visible planets and living beings* in outer space, Christ created them.

⇒ If there are *invisible worlds and beings* in other dimensions, Christ created them.

It does not matter what kind of world or creatures they may be — thrones, powers, rulers or authorities — Christ created them all. There is nothing in existence that He has not created.

- no planet
- no vegetation
- no star
- no mineral
- no creature
- no element
- no dimension
- no thing

John 1:3 *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

1 Cor 8:6 *Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*

Eph 3:9 *And to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things.*

Col 1:16 *For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*

IV. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, the Glory of God

Jesus Christ possesses the very glory of God. This is the fourth reason why Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets. Note the phrase “The Son is” (on). It means “absolute and timeless existence” (A.T. Robertson. *Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 5. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1932, p. 335). This means that Jesus Christ Himself possessed the glory of God before He ever came into the world. He has always existed in the glory of God; He is eternal.

What does glory mean? It means all the brightness of God — all the brilliance, radiance, splendour and light of God’s Being. It means that God’s very presence — in all of His light and purity — dwells among us in the person of Jesus Christ. It meant that in Christ “all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Col. 2:9). Men could look at Jesus Christ and see the glory of God in Him — the very light and radiance of God’s Being.

John 1:14 *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 17:5 *“And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*

John 17:24 *“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”*

Thought 1. Many commentators point out that the sun is a good illustration. Just as the glory of the sun’s light reaches down to earth and touches the lives of men, so Jesus Christ, who is the glory of God, reaches down and touches the lives of men.

V. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, the Representation of God

Jesus Christ is the exact representation of God. This is the fifth reason why Jesus Christ is superior to the prophets.

=> The word “exact” (charakter) means the very stamp, mark and impression — the very reproduction of God. Jesus Christ is “the perfect imprint and very image of [God’s] nature.”

=> The word “representation” (hypostasis) means substance. Jesus Christ is the very substance, the very Being, Person and embodiment of God.

John 10: 30 *“I and the Father are one.”*

John 14:9-10 *Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”*

2 Cor 4:4 *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

Phil 2:6 *Who [Christ], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.*

Heb 1:3 *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

VI. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, Sustainer of the Universe

Jesus Christ is the Sustainer of the universe. This is the sixth reason why He is superior to the prophets. No man holds the universe together, but Christ does. God has not created the world and left it to fly through space to take whatever course it will. God is not going to let the world destroy itself. God is in control. His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, is controlling the world and moving it forward to a climactic moment of renewal and recreation — what the Bible calls the *great day of redemption*. And note how He is sustaining it and holding it together: by His powerful Word. He simply speaks and the laws that sustain the world are set in motion (cp. the law of gravity. See note, Col. 1:16-17.) The Word of Jesus Christ is...

- perfect and pure energy
- perfect and pure power
- perfect and pure unity
- perfect and pure cohesion
- perfect and pure force
- perfect and pure order
- perfect and pure solidarity

It is His Word that sustains and upholds everything together. It is his love and power...

- that keeps the universe from flying apart and disintegrating.
- that keeps evil from completely conquering and utterly destroying all things.

Col 1:17 *He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.*

Heb 1:3 *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

VII. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of Mankind

Jesus Christ is the Redeemer of mankind. This is the seventh reason why He is superior to the prophets. Redemption has not come from some great prophet who has made purification for our sins. Christ and Christ alone could sacrifice Himself for our sins. How could He do this? In fact, how could any man do this? No man can; this is the point of this passage. Only a perfect Person could ever purify and cleanse men from their sins. This

is the reason Jesus Christ had to come to earth and live a perfect life. He had to secure perfect righteousness for man and die as the perfect substitute for man. By so doing, He stands for all men...

- His perfect righteousness stands for all men.
- His sacrificial death stands for all men.

When a man believes in Jesus Christ, truly believes, the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ cover him. God takes the man's faith and honours it; He honours it by *counting* the man as being in the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ. The man is righteous in Christ, and he has already died to sin in Christ. Therefore, the man is purified; his sins are cleansed and washed away.

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

Rev 1:5 And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.

VIII. Hebrews 01:03 Jesus Christ, the Supreme Mediator

Jesus Christ is the supreme Mediator and Intercessor. This is the eighth reason why He is superior to the prophets. He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty in heaven, sitting there as the great Mediator and Intercessor for man. No other person could ever come close to being seated at the right hand of God; no other person could ever be accepted by God as the Mediator and Intercessor for man. Christ and Christ alone can sit at the right hand of God. Note two significant points.

1. Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of God as the exalted Lord and as the Sovereign Majesty of the universe. He is the supreme Being of the universe, the Person who is to be supremely respected, honoured, worshipped and served by all beings in both earth and heaven.

Eph 4:10 He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.

Phil 2:9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name.

2. Jesus Christ is in the presence of God as our Mediator and Intercessor, as the only Person who has the right to represent man before God. Note: Christ is not exalted to stand as our Prosecutor and Judge; contrariwise, He is before God to represent us, to plead for us, to offer His righteousness and sacrificial death for us. This means a most wonderful thing: someday when we appear before God, if we have trusted Jesus Christ as our Saviour, God will be able to deal with us in love and not judgment.

Because Jesus Christ stands before God as our Mediator, God will accept all those who have trusted Christ to be their Mediator. Remember, however: all those who have rejected Jesus Christ as the Mediator shall face Jesus Christ as the Sovereign Lord and Judge.

Rom 8:34 *Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.*

Heb 7:25-26 *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them. Such a high priest meets our need — one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens.*

Heb 8:1 *The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven.*

1 Tim 2:5 *For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*

Heb 8:6 *But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises.*

Heb 9:15 *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

Heb 9:24 *For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.*

Heb 12:24 *To Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

1 John 2:1 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. ■*

CHRIST SECURES THE TRIUMPHANT VICTORY FOR MAN HEBREWS 02: 14–18

Introduction

Man is a defeated being. He has lost the glory, honour and dominion that God gave him at creation. He has lost his Garden of Eden, his perfect world and his control over it. Man has fallen from his exalted position in the original creation. And not only is man now enslaved by a corruptible world, man is held in bondage...

- to death and to the fear of death (v. 15).
 - to the sufferings of this world, the sufferings of all kinds of trials and temptations such as disease, accidents, age, war, murder, abuse, adultery, greed, selfishness, neglect, insensitivity, loneliness and emptiness. *Within himself* man is a defeated being. He is defeated and doomed to suffer all kinds of trials and temptations throughout his life, and then he is doomed to the ultimate fate of all men: death.
- I. Christ became man's great Deliverer (vv. 14-16).
 - II. Christ became man's great High Priest (vv. 17-18).

I. *Hebrews 02: 14–16 Jesus Christ, Man's Great Deliverer*

Jesus Christ became man's great Deliverer. How? By doing five things.

1. Jesus Christ delivered man by *willingly becoming a man*: Christ "shared in" human flesh; He "shared in their humanity:" the very same "flesh and blood" that human beings have. But there is a significant difference between a newborn baby who became flesh and blood at birth and Christ who "*shared in*" the same. Christ willingly "*shared in their humanity*," whereas a child had no say-so in the matter. Everyone of us has been born by an act of some other man and woman; not one of us had anything whatsoever to do with the matter. But Jesus Christ chose — He deliberately determined and purposed — to *share in their humanity*. He voluntarily took part of human nature — of a nature that was not a natural part of His being. This is seen in the Greek words used to describe what He did.

=> "Children have [koinonia] flesh and blood." The word means to share, to be partners of a *common human nature*.

=> The word used of Christ is entirely different: Christ *shared in* (metecho) human nature. The word means *to hold with*. The idea is that Christ *took hold* of human nature and held human nature with man. He added human nature to His divine nature. His human nature was an addition to His divine nature. As God the Son, Jesus Christ had absolutely no part of flesh and blood, but as the Son of Man, He took hold of man's

nature. The point is this: Jesus Christ became man, and as Man He took part of flesh and blood, willingly and voluntarily. Jesus Christ loves us so much that He would pay the ultimate price to deliver us. He would humble Himself to such a degree that He would leave heaven above in order to come to earth and live as a Man. (See Heb. 2:17-18.)

***Isa 7:14** Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.*

***Isa 9:6** For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

***Luke 1:31** “You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.”*

***John 1:14** The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

***Rom 8:3** For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man.*

***Phil 2:7** But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

***1 Tim 3:16** Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*

2. Jesus Christ delivered us by dying for us. We die, and there is no escaping the fact. Death is all around us — the death of acquaintances, friends, neighbours, relatives and family. We die, never to return to one another in this world. Only a *perfect being* does not die. Picture a perfect person — he would be completely perfect, perfect through and through; therefore, he would never die. He would live forever. He would be perfect in morality, justice and goodness — perfect in body, mind and spirit — therefore, he would never die. But as human beings, we are different. We are imperfect, sometimes immoral, unjust and bad; and because we are imperfect, we die. We die because we are short of what we should be; short of morality, righteousness, justice and goodness.

The point to see is this: we die because of sin, because we are short of perfection. Death is the result of sin. If we are going to ever become perfect and live forever, sin and death have to be taken care of and removed. If sin and death can be removed, then we can live forever. This is what Jesus Christ has done for us: He died for us. He took our sin and imperfection upon Himself and suffered death for us. How could He do

this? He was perfect. When He was upon earth, He lived a sinless life, a perfect and righteous life. Therefore, He became the Ideal and Perfect Man, the Ideal Pattern for every person. As the Ideal Man He covered and blanketed all men. Whatever He did counted for all men. This is what is meant when the Bible says that Christ died for all men — for the whole world. If a person believes — really trusts that Jesus Christ has died for him — then God identifies the person with Christ. God counts, reckons, considers and accepts the person...

- as being righteous in Christ.
- as having already died in Christ.
- as being already resurrected to eternal life in Christ.

God accepts the person as being acceptable to Him; therefore, the person never has to die. He is delivered from sin and death through Jesus Christ. But remember, it is only through Jesus Christ. We must always remember this, and we must remember why God accepts us: because we believe — really believe and trust in His Son. God will do anything for the person who honours His Son by believing in Him. If a person honours Christ so much that he surrenders and commits his life to Christ, God will deliver that person from death.

John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

Rom 6:23 *For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Rom 10:9-10 *That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.*

1 Pet 2:24 *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

1 Pet 3:18 *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

3. Jesus Christ destroys the power of the devil over sin and death. As noted in the previous point, man dies because of sin. The devil was the *first sinner*, and he is the one who tempts a man to sin. The devil has the power to tempt and entice men to sin; therefore, he has the power to lead men down the road to death.

Why does the devil do this? Because he is out to hurt and cut the heart of God, and he does this by leading men away from God. He knows that God's heart bleeds over every man who turns away from Him. Therefore, Satan does all he can to entice men to turn away from worshipping and serving God, away from living with and for God. The devil works to get men to...

- curse and reject God
- ignore and neglect God
- rebel and deny God

This is what sin is: doing one's own thing — simply rebelling against God and His control and say-so in one's life. Sin is living like one wants to live, living selfishly instead of living for God and being thankful to God. Sin is rebelling against God and His Word and going against God. When a person does this, he is naturally not living for God nor with God. It is because of this that men die and have to face separation and judgment from God. And note: this is clearly understandable:

=> If a person follows the devil and has nothing to do with God in this life, how can he have anything to do with God in the next life?

=> If a person does not know God in this world, how can he expect to know God in the next world?

=> If a person chooses to live without God in this world, then he is bound to live without God in the next world.

Very simply, the devil has chosen to go his own way and to have nothing to do with God. And he is like so many people in this world: he is out to entice and to get as many people as he can to satisfy his lusts. He desires and lusts, and he wants his desires and lusts fulfilled. Therefore, he seeks people who will join him in his lusts and desires. He has the same power all men have, the power to mislead and to use people for his own purposes. As an angelic being, he just has more power than earthly men have.

The point is this: Jesus Christ has broken the power of the devil over death. He did this by taking man's sins, guilt and judgment upon Himself and by dying for man. Man is now delivered from both sin and death by Jesus Christ. If a person believes that Jesus Christ died for him — if a person really trusts Jesus Christ — God counts that person as having already died in Jesus Christ. Because the person honours God's Son by believing and committing his life to Christ, God promises to deliver the man from death. God promises to transfer the person into heaven quicker than the blink of an eye. The power of Satan over death is thereby broken and destroyed.

=> Satan no longer has the power to enslave man in sin and evil unless a man rejects Jesus Christ and continues to follow the way of Satan and sin.

=> Satan no longer has the power to hold man in death unless a man rejects Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ alone has broken and destroyed the power of Satan over sin and death. The word “destroy” (*katergazomai*) means to bring to nothing, to make inoperative. Satan’s power over sin and death functions and operates within man, and what a power it is — the awesome power to separate men from God for eternity. But Jesus Christ has broken that power. He has made the power of Satan ineffective and inoperative. Man no longer has to be enslaved by sin and its guilt nor by death. He is delivered from death because Jesus Christ has broken Satan’s power over death.

John 12:31-32 *“Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.”*

John 14:30-31 *“I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on me, but the world must learn that I love the Father and that I do exactly what my Father has commanded me. “Come now; let us leave.”*

Col 1:13-14 *For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Col 2:15 *And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.*

1 John 3:8 *He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.*

4. Jesus Christ has delivered men from the fear of death. Men dread and fear death. Despite suicides and the denial of some, the fear and dread of death are still a fact. Death is so feared that most men simply will not think about it; they push the thoughts of death out of their minds. Men dread and fear...
- wondering about the unknown of death.
 - wondering what lies beyond death.
 - wondering if there is a life hereafter.
 - not wanting to leave this world and life and the pleasures of it.
 - not wanting to leave loved ones.
 - not wanting to leave their possessions.

And above all, men dread the sense which every man has within him — the sense of coming judgment and the sense that all wrongs will be made right. Think for a moment: one minute beyond life — having been dead for just one minute — where is the dead person? What has happened to him? Where has he gone? What has happened to him...

- ten minutes after death?
- thirty minutes after death?
- one hour after death?

Where is the dead person? What is he doing? The teaching of Scripture is that death must be feared. No matter what men say — psychologists, therapists, physicians, philosophers, preachers — no matter what anyone says, death and judgment are to be feared.

=> Scripture says that death and judgment are terrible for the sinner: it is better to face the most evil person on earth than to face God after death. An earthly man — no matter how evil he is — can only take our life from us. He cannot destroy our soul. But this is not true with death and God. God can destroy both body and soul.

Mat 10:28 *“Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell.”*

=> Scripture says that death and judgment are terrible for the sinner: it is better to have never been born than to be born and enter death as a sinner and have to face the judgment to come.

Mat 26:24 *“The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.”*

=> Scripture says that death and judgment are terrible for the sinner: it would be better to enter life being blind and without hands and feet than to die and have to face judgment.

Mat 18:7-9 *“Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come! If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.”*

=> Scripture says that death and judgment are terrible for the sinner: it would be better to escape death and the coming judgment than to possess all the wealth in the world.

Mat 16:26-27 *“What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father’s glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done.”*

Mark 8:36-38 *“What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father’s glory with the holy angels.”*

=> Scripture says that death and judgment are terrible for the sinner: the pain experienced is greater than all the pain ever experienced in the world. That is, if you took all the physical pain ever experienced in the world and packaged it into one box, that pain would be nothing in comparison to the pain of a sinner dying and having to face judgment. How could this be? Because death and judgment for the sinner are eternal: they never end.

Mat 3:10 *“The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

Mat 7:19 *“Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

Mat 8:12 *“But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Mat 13:42 *“They will throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Mat 18:8 *“If your hand or your foot causes you to sin cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.”*

Mat 22:13 *“Then the king told the attendants, ‘Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’”*

Mat 24:51 *“He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Mat 25:30 *“And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Mat 25:41 *“Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’”*

Mark 9:43, 45 *“If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell.”*

Luke 3:9 *“The axe is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”*

Luke 13:28 *“There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out.”*

John 15:6 *“If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.”*

But this is the point of the glorious gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has delivered us from the fear of death. There is no need to fear death, for we never have to die. When we come to that moment of passing from this life into the next, God will transport us into His presence quicker than the blink of an eye. We never have to taste death; we never have to experience death. If we believe — really trust Jesus Christ as our Saviour — He will deliver us from death. There is no death and no condemnation for the believer — nothing to fear — not if we really believe and trust the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has delivered man from death and condemnation — delivered all who will really believe and commit their lives to Him.

Isa 25:8 *He will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken.*

1 Cor 15:26 *The last enemy to be destroyed is death.*

1 Cor 15:54 *When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: “Death has been swallowed up in victory.”*

2 Tim 1:10 *But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.*

Rev 21:4 *“He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”*

2 Tim 4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Heb 2:14-15 *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

Psa 23:3 *He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.*

5. Jesus Christ has delivered us from the bondage of the flesh (sinful nature). The words “he helps” (epilambanetai) mean to take; to lay hold of; to take by the hand. This tells us a most wonderful truth: Jesus Christ did not only take hold of man’s nature, He took hold of man’s hand. He took us by the hand and delivered us. The picture is that of love and tender care, of His delivering us out of the bondages of the flesh (sinful nature) and of human nature. Note: it is not angels that He took by the hand, but the

seed of Abraham, that is, the spiritual seed of Abraham, those who believe and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Phil 3:3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

Col 2:11 In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ.

Col 3:11 Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

1 Pet 5:7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Psa 18:35 You give me your shield of victory, and your right hand sustains me; you stoop down to make me great.

Isa 41:10 So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isa 46:4 Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will earn you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

II. Hebrews 02:17–18 Jesus Christ, Great High Priest

Jesus Christ became man's great High Priest. This was the very reason He was made like man, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest. Jesus Christ was constrained and moved to be a man in order to sympathize and feel for man. He wanted to go through all the trials and temptations of man, to experience all of life as man experiences it. Why? Why would anyone, especially the Son of God who existed in the glory of perfection, want to go through all the pain and suffering of life? There were four reasons.

1. Jesus Christ became the great High Priest so that He could be merciful to man. Man needs mercy. Mercy is his only hope of ever living with God. Unless God loves man so much that He will just pour out His mercy upon him, man is lost and doomed forever. Jesus Christ was made like man so that He could be a merciful High Priest.
2. Jesus Christ became the High Priest so that He could be faithful to God. God loves man, loves him with an eternal love; therefore, he willed that Christ come to earth and deliver man from sin, death and judgment to come. And Christ was faithful. He came to earth so that He might be a faithful High Priest to God *for man*.
3. Jesus Christ became the High Priest so that He could make atonement or propitiation for the sins of the people. The words "atonement" or "propitiation" (*hilaskomai*) means to sacrifice or to make a covering, satisfaction, payment or appeasement for sin.

It was, of course, the task of the High Priest to offer up the animal sacrifice for the sins of the people. This is the picture being painted of Christ. But note one distinct difference: Jesus Christ Himself is the atonement for man's sin. It was not His teachings, power, example or life that made Christ the atonement. It was His blood: His sacrifice. His death, His sufferings, His cross that caused God to accept Jesus as the atonement or propitiation. It is the blood of Christ that God accepts as...

- the *sacrifice* for our sins.
- the *covering* for our sins.
- the *satisfaction* for our sins.
- the *payment* for the penalty of our sins.
- The *appeasement* of His wrath against sin.

When Christ died for man...

- the righteousness of God was satisfied.
- the perfection of God was satisfied.
- the justice of God was satisfied.

Jesus Christ became the *atonement*, the *propitiation* — the covering and satisfaction for the sins of man. He became the High Priest in order to make atonement and propitiation for our sins.

Heb 2:17 *For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement [propitiation] for the sins of the people.*

1 John 2:1-2 *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defence — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

1 John 4:10 *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

Luke 18:13 *“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’”*

4. Jesus Christ became the High Priest so that He could help man when he faces the trials and temptations of life. The word “help” (*boetheo*) means to aid, relieve, assist; to be so eager to help that one runs to the cry of a person. What a picture of Jesus Christ! He has heard our cry in all of our suffering and pain, trial and temptation; and He has run to help and deliver us. Just think! He has been made like us in order to feel with us and deliver us. He has become the perfect High Priest. He needed to do this in order to

experience every situation, condition and trial of man. He experienced the most humiliating experiences imaginable. He experienced...

- being born to an unwed mother (Mt. 1:18-19).
- being born in a stable, the worst of conditions (Lk. 2:7).
- being born to poor parents (Lk. 2:24).
- having his life threatened as a baby (Mt. 2:13f).
- being the cause of unimaginable sorrow (Mt. 2:16f).
- having to be moved and shifted about as a baby (Mt. 2:13f).
- being reared in a despicable place, Nazareth (Lk. 2:39).
- having His father die during His youth (Mt. 13:53-58).
- having to support His mother, brothers and sisters (Mt. 13:53-58).
- having no home, not even a place to lay His head (Mt.8:20; Lk.9:58).
- being hated and opposed by religionists (Mk. 14:1-2).
- being charged with insanity (Mk. 3:21).
- being charged with demon possession (Mk. 3:22).
- being opposed by His own family (Mk. 3:31-32).
- being rejected, hated and opposed by listeners (Mt. 13:53-58; Lk. 4:28-29).
- being betrayed by a close friend (Mk. 14:10-11, 18).
- being left alone, rejected and forsaken by all of His friends (Mk. 14:50).
- being tried before the high court of the land on the charge of treason (Jn. 18:33).
- being executed by crucifixion, the worst possible death (Jn. 19:16f).

And Jesus Christ suffered so much more, but the point to note is this: in each of these experiences His suffering reached the depth of humiliation. Christ stooped to the lowest point of human experience in every condition in order to become the *Perfect Sympathizer* (Saviour). This is the reason He can now identify with and feel for any person's circumstances. No person ever comes close to the depth of suffering and humiliation He bore. Jesus Christ can help — feel for, care for and look after every person — no matter their condition, trial or temptation.

John 14:1, 18 *“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”*

John 14:21 *“Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.”*

Heb 2:16-18 *For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

Heb 4:14-16 *Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

Psa 103:13 *As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.*

Isa 63:9 *In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old. ■*