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MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Sermon

Analysis of Hebrews: Chapter 2



Part 3/23

God's Last Word: An Exposition of Hebrews By Derek Prince

In our previous study we covered the material in Hebrews 1. It's not possible to give a detailed recapitulation but let me just remind you briefly that this chapter opens with this sevenfold presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ in his eternal, divine nature and also in his redemptive work. After that, the main theme of the rest of the chapter is to establish out of Old Testament scriptures the absolute uniqueness and supremacy of Jesus over all created beings and, in particular, in these verses, over all angels. There are seven successive quotations from the Old Testament, all of which in one way or another point out the supremacy of Jesus over angels.

I said in the introduction that one of the problems of the people to whom this epistle was addressed was that they were losing their vision of Jesus. They were also moving from faith to religion. Their Christianity was in danger of becoming mere religion and not a living faith, and they were losing their real perception of Jesus. There are a number of different sections in the epistle which are devoted in various ways to emphasizing the absolute uniqueness and supremacy of Jesus.

I also pointed out that we are confronted with just the same kind of problem in the church today. There are, I would say, millions of churchgoers who have never really had a revelation of Jesus. My own wife who is here tonight was brought up—I will mention two denominations not to be critical—first in a Lutheran and then in Methodist church. But she reached and went through her teens without ever having a personal revelation of Jesus. She somehow had the impression that Jesus and Martin Luther were more or less on the same level.

Now, that's not to criticize any particular denomination but you'll find today millions of Christians who somehow think about Jesus as a real good teacher, a wonderful man. They'll talk about Jesus and Socrates, or Jesus and Buddha, or Jesus and Mahatma Ghandi, or Jesus and some other guru that's emerged lately. All kinds of statements like that indicate a total failure to grasp who Jesus really is.

And I would say, in a certain sense, there is no more important message in this epistle than this revelation of Jesus. If you really grasp this revelation of Jesus you could

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never again be entangled in any kind of cult, this truth would eliminate that possibility.

Now we're going on to chapter 2 and I'm going to proceed in the same way as I did before. That is, translating extemporary from the original Greek and comparing it when necessary with the New American Standard. Therefore, we'll begin now. Hebrews 2 at the beginning of the outline, that's number 2/1. We begin with what I call the passage of solemn warning. In the introduction, amongst other things, I pointed out that there are in this epistle five successive passages of solemn warning of tremendous spiritual dangers that face Christians. I do not know of any other part of the New Testament—or even of the whole Bible—that contains such reiterated solemn warnings. And I trust that somehow tonight the Holy Spirit will make every one of these warnings very real and very personal to each one of us, myself included. I trust there will be nobody here who somehow has the attitude "this really doesn't apply to me and could not apply to me." If you think that, you're in a position of danger right there. So here then is the first passage of warning in chapter 2, verses 1–4.

> "For this reason we ought to give the more serious attention to the things that we have heard, lest we drift away..."

There's various possible ways of translating that word "drift away." This is the one that's followed by most translators and dictionaries. You'll notice that drifting away is something that

can happen rather gradually and imperceptibly not by something that a person does but rather by something that a person doesn't do. And later on in the 6th chapter of this epistle we find reference to an anchor of the soul. I think perhaps it would be helpful to put these two concepts together. There's a danger of drifting away. That analogy is primarily from a boat. One of the great remedies against this danger is having the anchor in use which God has provided to hold us secure.

Now this first passage of warning is primarily against ignoring or neglecting God's message in Jesus. It's not against being openly wicked or rebellious, it's rather against simply not paying sufficient attention to what God is saying. The more important the message, the greater the guilt of ignoring it. And in due course the writer points out that even those who ignored the message given through Moses were punished with death. The implication which he brings out is that if we neglect this much more serious and important message, we cannot possibly hope to escape with a lesser penalty.

In verses 3–4 the writer then goes on to give three reasons why the message is of such tremendous importance and urgency. I'll translate those verses and then we'll briefly look at the essence of what is said.

> "For if the word spoken through angels was firm, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward of punishment."

Let me stop and point out that the word that I translated "disobedience" means literally "mishearing". I think it's important. I'm sure that those of you that work in the capacity of giving oversight to others, whether it's spiritual oversight or oversight in business or in some manufacturing operation, I'm sure if you reflect you will realize that one of the biggest problems you have is that you give people instructions and they don't really hear what you say. Consequently, they don't do it. I think that's what the writer is speaking about here. God says something and we don't really hear what he says. Consequently, we don't do it.

By implication, in the Old Testament, hearing the voice of the Lord implies obedience. For instance, in Deuteronomy 28 which we do not need to turn to, it says "if thou will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God". But the modern translations render it "if you will obey the Lord your God". So there is a way in which hearkening or listening carries with it the implication of obedience. And you'll find in a number of languages, for instance, in the Swahili language used in East Africa, a person would say, maybe to somebody who is reproving him for disobedience "I didn't hear you, bwana." Meaning, "I didn't do what you told me."

My conclusion from studying this theme all through the Bible is that ultimately our destiny is settled by how well we hear. If we do not learn to hear God we will fail to obey God. So let me go back over that and give you the literal meaning.

> "For if the word spoken through angels became firm, and every transgression..."

That means stepping over a known line. God lays down a line, you step over it, that's a transgression. The word transgression comes from a Latin root which means to step across something. So a transgression is deliberately going against a known commandment or rule.

But the other word that's translated disobedience is really literally mishearing. You don't hear. Then you kind of justify yourself by saying "God, I didn't understand you." But I believe if you could hear God's answer it would be "that's your problem." You haven't learned to listen.

> "...every transgression and mishearing [or disobedience] received a just and appropriate reward of punishment."

Let me point out to you that justice implies two things which is very, very little understood in contemporary society. Justice demands rewarding the righteous. And when we're righteous, we certainly prepare to demand our rewards. But equally, justice demands punishing the wicked. That's something that we're very silent about in contemporary society. In fact, the great part of criminal so-called justice today consists in treating the criminal better than the victim. That's a complete misapplication of true justice. You leave your car keys in your car, the car gets stolen and the authorities are more severe on you for leaving your keys in the car than on the man that stole the car. That's ridiculous. But that's somehow the attitude we find today.

All right. We're going back to chapter 2 and we're going to go to verse 3 which begins with a how. On the basis of what's previously been said, how.

> "How shall we escape if we have neglected so great a salvation?"

Now we're shown why this salvation is so great. There are three reasons given, let me translate them and explain.

> "Which at its inception [or when it received its beginning] was spoken through the Lord..."

I like to put in "himself." The message came initially through the Lord. Not through angels, not through a human servant, but through the Lord.

> "...and was confirmed to us by those who heard him..."

We don't have third-hand testimony. We have firsthand testimony.

> "...God also bearing them witness, with signs and wonders and various miracles and divisions of the Holy Spirit according to his own will."

Now the word "divisions of the Holy Spirit" obviously isn't good English so I think the translations tend to say "gifts divided according to God's will." I just give you the basic literal meaning.

Now we see the three reasons why this message is uniquely important. You'll see them there on your page. First of all, because it was first spoken by the Lord himself. Second, because it was confirmed by actual witnesses who heard him personally. Third, because it has been and is supernaturally tested by God through the Holy Spirit.

So those are the three reasons which place it on a higher level than any other message of God. First, spoken by the Lord. Second, confirmed by people who were actual witnesses present at what was said and done. And third, God himself bears supernatural testimony to its truth and its importance.

Now we're going on to chapter 2, verse 5.

> "For it was not to angels that he [that is, God] subjected the world order to come, concerning which we are speaking."

The word angels is put first and we're still emphasizing the supremacy of Jesus over angels. So it was not to angels that he [God] subjected the world order. That word is normally used for the civilized or inhabited world. I suppose it still has the same meaning but it's not of this age, it's of the next age. "Concerning which we are speaking." You need to notice that the emphasis in Hebrews is forward, upward, into the future, into a new age. But it's not pie in the sky as people tend to call it because this age for us has already begun. We find later the phrase "those who have tasted the powers of the age to come". That, I believe, is made available to us through the Holy Spirit. So although we're talking essentially about a future age, for us it's not altogether future, we've already tasted its power.

However, it's important to see that the thrust of Hebrews is always forwards. That brings us back to the key word such as heir, inheritance, perfection or completion or maturity. You won't really understand Hebrews unless you see this consistent thrust all through the epistle.

Also you need to bear in mind all the time that is concerned with an invisible heavenly realm which we can only know by revelation. There's no other way that the human mind can

know this but by revelation. So it's important all through that we do not let unbelief rob us of the truth and let our carnal mind interfere with our receiving this revelation. You will see that this is one of the most serious warnings in the epistle, is the warning against unbelief.

Now, we're going on to verses 6 to 8 and we come back now to another quotation from the Old Testament, Psalm 8. A part of that psalm we sung together tonight in the chorus taken from Psalm 8. I don't know whether the brother who led the worship had looked ahead in chapter 2 but he chose two songs which were uniquely appropriate. The first one was "O Lord, Our Lord, How Excellent is Thy Name" which is the opening verse of Psalm 8. But the next one was "I See the Lord." We'll find in this chapter the statement "but we see Jesus crowned with glory and honor."

Now let's look at this quotation from Psalm 8. You may wish to turn back to Psalm 8, keeping your finger in both passages. People have complained that when I teach the Bible they need more fingers than they have. I am not responsible for that. Psalm 8:

> "For somebody testified somewhere saying..."

I think it's rather nice that the writer to the Hebrews kind of indicates he can't remember the exact reference but he knows it's there somewhere! So if you're ever in that situation, others have been there before you.

> "Somebody testified somewhere..."

Bear in mind that these people could not carry their Bibles around with them in a pocket edition! So they had to rely much more on memory than we do. Somebody testified somewhere. The somebody was David and the somewhere was in Psalm 8. This is the translation in Hebrews. As I pointed out, the writer of Hebrews, generally speaking, takes his Old Testament scriptures not from the original Hebrew but from the translation of the original Hebrew into Greek known as the Septuagint. Sometimes there are quite significant differences. It's not possible to go into all the reasons for that. In fact, I'm sure that some of them I don't know, I just point that out.

This is now the quotation from Psalm 8:4–6.

> "What is man, that you remember him [or are mindful of him]? Or the son of man, that you visit him?"

Now "visit" is Old English, King James, but it says it better than any modern word I can find. It's that you look into his life, you check on him, you find out what he's doing. God keeps a very careful check on us. If you were to find a modern word, I think to check on him, but that's obviously not the kind of phrase you want to use in Bible translation. It isn't my business to give you a translation, it's just to kind of give you the thoughts contained. Beginning at verse 7:

> "You made him a little lower than angels..."

Or it can equally well be translated "you made him for a little while lower than angels." You can take your choice.

> "You crowned him with glory and honor, you put all things in subjection under his feet."

Now, we probably better turn to Psalm 8, I'm taking the New American Standard. There are various different ways of legitimately translating Psalm 8. Psalm 8, we'll only look at the verses actually quoted in Hebrews. Verse 4:

> "What is man, that thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that thou dost care for him? Yet thou has made him a little lower than God, and dost crown him with glory and majesty!"

Now where the writer of Hebrews says "thou has made him a little lower than angels", the translator of the New American Standard in Psalm 8 says, "thou has made him a little lower than God."

Now that may puzzle you but there's a good reason if I can communicate it to you. The word there translated from Hebrew is Elohim. How many of you have heard that word somewhere before? Elohim is plural in form. It's the basic Biblical word in Hebrew for the one true God. It occurs in Genesis 1, "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." And there right at the beginning in Genesis 1:1 we have this paradox that Elohim is plural but the next word that follows, "created", is singular. So you have already a hint of the mystery of the Godhead that it contains both unity and plurality.

In the Old Testament the same word Elohim is used both for angels and for judges. You'll find various places where it's translated judges and other places where it's translated angels. The root meaning of the word is power and authority. And judges have power and authority because they're God's representatives interpreting God's law. In a

way, it should give us a sense of awe at what's implied in being a judge. In a certain sense, it's taking God's place. And woe to you if you take God's place without being invited which is what James says. Don't judge one another because the judge is at the door. When he comes into the courtroom, don't be found sitting in his chair because you'll be thrown out. But, a judge if he's acting on divine authority he's actually sitting in God's seat. So that's why sometimes the word Elohimis used of human judges.

It's also used of angels because they have supernatural power and they are the messengers and agents of God's authority. So, it's legitimate to translate it in verse 5 of Psalm 8, "thou hast made him a little lower than God." However, it's obvious that the writer of Hebrews didn't understand it that way. And he says angels. Most translations say angels. The New International Version in Psalm 8:5 says "heavenly beings" which is really the same as angels. So my personal opinion is that you probably get nearest to the meaning if you say angels or heavenly beings. Certainly that's what it says in Hebrews 2. There's no question about the meaning of that word. The Greek word is ?angolos? which means primarily a messenger, secondly an angel, because angels are God's messengers.

Let's go on with Psalm 8:5 and then go back to Hebrews 2. We're now going to Psalm 8:6.

> "Thou dost make him to rule over the works of thy hands; thou has put all things under his feet."

We don't need to go any further.

Now, going back to Hebrews 2 and our outline, first of all, we take note of the phrase "the Son of man" which is actually the title that Jesus most often applied to himself in the gospels. I think it occurs more than forty times in the gospels as the way Jesus referred to himself. Then it unfolds three successive phases of God's dealing with the Lord Jesus. They're listed for you in the outline. Number one, he was made a little lower than angels. Number two, he was crowned with glory and honor. And number three, all things were put under his feet.

Now going on in Hebrews 2:8–9—I'm going to read the New American Standard for a moment because you'll get confused if I don't.

> "For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. [verse 9] But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone."

So in those verses the writer of Hebrews points out that phases one and two are already fulfilled. Already Jesus has been made a little lower than the angels and already he's been crowned after death and resurrection with glory and honor. But phase three is not yet completely fulfilled. We do not yet see all things put in subjection under his feet. But you remember that God said to him, "sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Going on now in verse 10, and I'm going back to my reading from the Greek.

> "For it was appropriate for him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things..."

Let me pause there and point out that in the Greek there there's no verb is or are. Now that is not really permitted in Greek but it is permitted in Hebrew. Hebrew doesn't have a verb for is or are. It's just understood. For instance, "I am a teacher in Hebrew" is just "I a teacher." You don't put in the word am. He is a teacher is he a teacher. What this indicates is that the writer wrote in Greek and thought in Hebrew. You see that? There's many such examples. Also in the writings of Paul. So the writers of these epistles, though they used Greek, were still, when you got to the back of their minds, they were still thinking in Hebrew.

> "For it was appropriate for Him, for whom were all things, and through who were all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation [the leader, the commander, what does it say here, the author of their salvation] perfect through sufferings."

I point out now that there is the first occurrence of one of our theme words which is the word "perfect, perfection, mature and maturity". Bearing in mind the same word has all meanings. And notice that it is linked with suffering. He was made perfect through sufferings. I want to suggest to you there is no path to perfection or maturity that bypasses

suffering. Anybody who tries to persuade you of that is misleading you. I'm sure our natural mind would wish it were otherwise but it isn't.

Now in that verse we have three parties. First of all, the one for whom were all things and through whom were all things. That's God the Father. Secondly, we have the captain, the commander, the author of our salvation who is Jesus Christ the Son. And then we have many sons. They are the sons who come to God the Father through the sacrifice of Jesus his son.

Now I want to point out there that this word that's translated author is—let me give it to you in Greek, it's archegos. It comes from that root that means beginning or rule or authority. The two are not finally separated because the one who is in the beginning is the one who rules and has authority. However, you'll see that it's difficult to find one word in English to translate it. I think the King James says captain, I think this version says author.

However, let me point out to you two places in the book of Acts where it's translated differently. Let's look for a moment in Acts 3:15. Peter is speaking to the Jewish people in Jerusalem and he says:

> "You put to death the prince of life."

The same word: the prince, the author, the commander.

And in Acts 5:31, again I think it's Peter who is speaking. He says:

> "He is the one whom God exalted to his right hand as a prince and a savior."

Same word.

Now I felt prompted to put in that rather cryptic phrase "compare the Israeli tank commander," commander being the corresponding word. One of the things that is said about Israeli tank commander, he does not say to his troops, "Advance," He says, "Follow me." He's the leader, the author and the captain. I think that's a beautiful picture of Jesus. He didn't say to us, "Advance, go in and handle the devil." He said, "Follow me. I've gone first, you can follow me." In this way he became a pattern for us.

Let's look also in 1Peter 2:21. This is one of those verse that the natural mind sometimes wishes wasn't in the Bible.

> "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in his steps."

Follow in what? Suffering, that's right.

That's part of what our calling is. Not all of our calling, but if you leave that out, sooner or later you're going to be very frustrated and disappointed because you'll be starting out with a false picture of what it requires to come to maturity or perfection. That was the road for Jesus and it's the road for you and me.

Turning back now to Hebrews 2:11:

> "For both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified [those who are being sanctified] are all from one..."

Interestingly enough, there's no verb "are" there. I've just noticed that for the first time. Again, it's a Hebrew form in Greek words.

> "For both the one who sanctifies [or makes holy] and those who are being sanctified [a continuous present tense] are all from one."

Let's pause there and look at three parties. I've put it there in my outline. He who sanctifies is Jesus. Those who are being sanctified is the other sons, the many sons. The one from whom they all take their source is God the Father. So you have three parties. God the Father, from who it all originates. Jesus the son of God who sanctifies, the sanctifier. Remember, that's one of his titles just like savior or healer or baptizer, sanctifier is a title. And the many sons, those who are being sanctified. God's end purpose is the other sons. Because the Father calls us sons, Jesus calls us brothers. Jesus always leaves the initiative with the Father. Going back to the end of verse 11:

> "...for which reason He [Jesus] is not ashamed to callus brothers..."

Why is he not ashamed? Because the Father is not ashamed to call us sons. It's a very beautiful principle. Jesus never took the initiative out of the hands of the Father. He did not call us brothers until the Father called us sons. And once the Father called us sons, he had no alternative but to call us brothers. That is true for you and me. If God calls anybody his child, you have to call that person a brother or a sister. You don't have any option. You

may think God made a strange choice but you cannot go against his choice.

Being sanctified is part of the process of salvation. Hebrews 10:14:

"For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified."

Notice the offering is once for all, it's perfect, complete, never has to be repeated or added to. But the process of sanctification is ongoing. So by the one offering he has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. That should be all of us. We should all be in the process of being sanctified.

I'll read Hebrews 2:12 and 13 the same way that I have been reading the other passages and then we'll make some comments on them. You have to go back really to the end of verse 12, "for which reason he [Jesus] is not ashamed to call them [the believers] brothers, saying..." And now we go into the quotations from the Old Testament. The first quotation is from Psalm 22:22. I'll read it as it's here in the Greek text, then we'll go back to the Old Testament.

> "I will declare your name to my brothers, in the midst of the church I will sing praise to you."

We'll go no further for the moment.

Now, back to Psalm 22:22, I'm reading from the New American Standard.

> "I will tell of thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the assembly I will praise thee."

Now we need to find out who the "I" is, who is speaking. Psalm 22 is one of the most widely accepted Messianic psalms. In other words, it's a prediction of the Messiah. And though it's presented in the first person and the words were uttered by David, it's fulfilled only in the Messiah, in the Lord Jesus Christ. If we look at the previous verses we'll find a very vivid picture of the crucifixion of Jesus. Perhaps as vivid as any found anywhere in the Old Testament. And several of these verses are actually quoted in the New Testament in connection with the crucifixion. Beginning then in Psalm 22:1:

> "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?"

Those words were actually uttered by Jesus on the cross. They're quoted in Aramaic in one of the gospels, "lama, lamasabachthani." You've probably seen those words. Why, oh why have you forsaken me.

Now we do not have time to read all these verses but verse 8, the people who are watching and wagging their heads say—and I prefer the marginal translation:

> "He committed himself to the Lord, let him deliver him."

And again, those words are actually put in the mouths of the Pharisees and the priests as they stood and watched the crucifixion. Verse 9:

> "Yet thou art he who didst bring me forth from the womb; thou didst make me trust upon my mother's breasts."

This is one of various passages in which the Messiah prophetically speaks of his birth from a human mother but does not speak of a human father. There are a number of other passages like that.

And then a picture of the actual crucifixion beginning in Psalm 22:11:

> "Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help. Many bulls have surrounded me... [verse 13] they open wide their mouths at me as a ravening and a roaring lion. I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint..."

Many people believe that was literally fulfilled in the crucifixion. Verse 15:

> "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, [and at the end of the verse] thou dost lay me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me; a band of evildoers has encompassed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. [quoted twice in the New Testament. And then verse 18] They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots."

Again, quoted in the New Testament in relation to the crucifixion. I give you all that to point out that the "I" who is speaking here is the one who was crucified and then resurrected, fulfilled in Jesus.

Now let's go to verse 22 again and see what is implied. He says:

> "I will tell of thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the assembly I will praise thee."

Go back now to Hebrews 2:12 and you have the New Testament rendering of that:

> "I will proclaim thy name to my brothers, in the midst of the congregation I will sing thy praise."

That's the New American Standard but the word that's translated congregation is the Greek word ekklesiawhich is the normal Greek word for the church. So I prefer there to take the translation in the midst of the church I will sing praise to you." So we see that the brothers there are the believers who come to the Father through Jesus. The church is made up of those brothers and in the midst of those brothers Jesus does two things: he proclaims the name of the Father and he sings his praise to the Father. This is the total church, the church that spans heaven and earth.

We need to understand that Jesus is in the midst of the church. When we praise he leads us in praises to the Father. But I think in a way even more significant is the statement "I will proclaim thy name." That's the Father's name "to my brothers."

I want to look at just two or three passages in the New Testament in the gospel of John which amplify this statement which I think most of us are not really very clear about. That Jesus is going to proclaim the name of the Father to his brothers in the midst of the church. I want to suggest to you a thought which has come to me many times in the last two years but I have never fully worked out. The name of the Father is the ultimate revelation of the New Testament. That's where we are headed. I suspect that it's going to be very powerfully emphasized by the Holy Spirit in the years that lie ahead. I think that's the culmination of New Testament revelation, it's the revelation of God the Father through his name which is Father.

Let's look at three passages in John's gospel. John 14:6–9. I will not go into the background, I'm sure they're familiar to most of us. John 14:6–9:

> "Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me."

We often say Jesus is the way but we frequently overlook the fact that a way is meaningless unless it leads somewhere. Where does this way lead? Jesus tells us. No one comes to the Father, but by me. So I am the way to the Father.

> "If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; from now on you do know him, and have seen him. Philip said to him, Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."

Philip said we don't understand you and we haven't seen the Father. We don't know him.

> "Jesus said to him, Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know me, Philip? He who has seen me has seen the Father; how do you say, Show us the Father?"

In other words, the final revelation that comes to us through Jesus is the revelation of the Father. If we have truly seen Jesus we have seen the Father. Elsewhere in the New Testament it tells us that "no one knows the Father but the Son, and no one knows the Son but the Father and he to whom the Father pleases to reveal him." This is one reason why Jesus is the last word because only the Son can bring us the ultimate revelation which is the Father. You'll recall that right at the beginning of this epistle Jesus was presented to us as the Son.

In a certain sense, we have missed the supreme purpose of God in sending Jesus if it does not bring us to the revelation of the Father.

Now turn to John 17:6–9. Jesus is now praying to the Father and says:

> "I manifested thy name to the men who thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were and thou gavest them to me, and they have

> kept thy word. Now they have come to know that everything thou hast given me is from thee."

That's what Jesus wanted them to know all along. I'm not the source, I'm the channel. The Father is the source.

> "For the words which thou gavest me I have given to them; and they received them, and truly understand that I came forth thee, and they believe that thou didst send me. I ask on their behalf; I do not ask on behalf of the world, but of those who thou hast given me, for they are thine."

The whole emphasis and thrust there is towards the Father as the source and the ultimate. It all came from the Father, it's all designed to bring us back to the Father. But in verse 6 Jesus says, "I manifested thy name to the men whom thou gavest me."

Now, it's possible, I suppose, not to see that the way I do. I feel tempted to say like Bob Mumford, "How can I help it if I'm right!" But personally, I have no doubt that the name Jesus manifested is the sacred name Father. That is the ultimate revelation.

Perhaps you could keep your finger in John 17 because we haven't finished there and also your finger in Hebrews 2—what are you laughing at—and turn to Ephesians 3. Now you've got plenty of fingers, wait until I really exercise them! I'm reading from the New American Standard. Ephesians 3:14–15. Paul says:

> "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name."

You need to know that the Greek word for father is pater, the Greek word translated family there is patria, formed directly from pater. This translation says "I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name." In the margin it says "the whole family in heaven and on earth." Another version which is closer to the original says "every fatherhood in heaven and on earth derives its name." Ultimately, a family is a fatherhood because the father is the initiator and the life source of a family. No ERA movement or women's lib can change that biological fact. The ultimate source of the life of the family is the father. And in New Testament terminology a family is named after a father.

But the ultimate Father from whom every family and every fatherhood derives its name is God the Father. You see, there's an emphasis all the way through of the name Father.

If you were to turn to the New International Version in John 17 you would find, probably to your frustration, that in various places it leaves out the word "name." It just says instead of your name, you. Now you might feel indignant about that, I think you have some right to feel indignant. But I want to point out there's a reason behind it. In Hebrew, as you probably know, the Jewish people for many, many centuries have never pronounced the sacred name which we mistakenly call Jehovah which was probably something like Yahweh. Normally speaking, a religious Jew will never pronounce that word, it's too sacred to be pronounced. So, they have two common substitutes. The one is adonaiwhich we would translate in English "the Lord," although it's interesting because it's plural in form. We won't go into that. The other is ?hashim? which is in Hebrew, "the name." That's probably the most common way that religious Jewish people refer to God as "the name."

For instance, when the Israeli General Counsul was here some time back, I quoted to him from Psalm 128, "the Lord bless thee out of Zion.. But it doesn't say "the Lord" in the way Hebrew says, ?eve-are-rech-ih-ha hashem mits Zion? "May the name bless you out of Zion." In other words, in Hebrew thinking, the name is, in a sense, the Lord. So the revelation of the name is the revelation of the Lord. In other words, there's much more in a name than we appreciate from a non Hebrew background.

So in talking about revealing the name Jesus isn't just talking about etymology, he's talking about the innermost nature and identity of God.

Now, going on to the end of John 17, verses 25 and 26.

> "O righteous Father, although the world has not known thee, yet I have known thee; and these have known that thou did send me..."

Notice always his final purpose is that they may recognize the Father as the source.

> "And I have made thy name known to them..."

Now the next statement is breathtaking if you can see it.

> "...and will make it known."

In other words, the revelation is not yet complete. There is more for them to know about the name of the Father. And it's done for a purpose:

> "That the love wherewith thou didst love me may be in them, and I in them."

In other words, until we fully enter into the revelation of the Father, there's a dimension of love we cannot experience because the Father's love is the ultimate love behind and above all other love.

And in entering into the revelation of his name we open up to the full experience of his love. This is the purpose of the Lord Jesus for his church.

Now, go back to Hebrews 2:12 and consider what's implied. Bear in mind that the writer of Hebrews is here pointing out that this picture of a father/family relationship is contained in the Old Testament but brought out into the open in the New. We read again the quotation:

> "I will proclaim thy name to my brothers; in the midst of the church I will sing praise to thee."

I wonder if you see it as I see it. It means, in other words, that there is still the full revelation of the name of the Father to be given to the church. At the end of his prayer in John 17 Jesus said, "I have made thy name known, and I will make it known." I have come to believe this is the ultimate revelation without which we cannot be complete, the church cannot be complete, God's purposes for this age cannot be complete.

Now we're back in Hebrews 2, we've looked at verse 12. We'll look at verse 13, another quotation from the Old Testament.

> "And again I will be having trusted in him."

That's not good English, but that's what it says. I will be in a state of having put my trust in him. It's perfect tense. What does that mean? It means I've put my trust in him, there's no vacillating, there's no changing my mind, there's no doubt. I have finally once and for all, forever put my trust in him.

There's a somewhat similar use in Matthew 18:18 where Jesus says "Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be having been bound in heaven." Again, it's future plus the perfect participle if you want the grammatical term.

In other words, when we, meeting the conditions, bind the thing on earth, from that moment it has been bound in heaven. It's very, very emphatic. It's utterly settled. Here it's an utterly settled decision "I will be having put my trust in him." From now on, there is never going to be a situation or a circumstance in which I will not trust the Lord. A good decision to make.

Notice it was made first by Jesus. And we're still in Hebrews 2:13:

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

We have to go back to the source which is in Isaiah 8. While you're turning to Isaiah, let me offer a suggestion to those of you who are really industrious and serious minded, which is that if you feel so disposed, read through the entire epistle and count all the quotations from the Old Testament in it. It takes quite a lot of work and sometimes the quotations are just one or two or three words. I would suspect there must be well over fifty. It would be interesting. If I have time I'll do it myself but I'm not sure I'm going to have the time just now. But for those of you that would like to exercise your mind and, in a way, get into the thing a bit deeper, there's a good way to do it.

Now we are in Isaiah 8, we'll start at verse 16.

> "Bind up the testimony, seal the law [or the teaching] among my disciples. And I will wait for the Lord who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob; I will even look eagerly for him."

Where that translation says "I will even look eagerly for him", the writer of Hebrews says, "I will put my trust in him." First of all, we need to notice in the Hebrew in Isaiah 8:17, it's past tense. I have hoped in him. That's the primary meaning of that word, I have hoped in him. But if you hope in someone you've put your trust in him. It's past tense because as it's brought out in the Greek translation, it's a settled decision. So it's very interesting, I'm afraid this is a little difficult to communicate but the Greek says "I will be having put my trust in him." Okay?

If you want to look at the New International Version of Isaiah 8:17, you'll find it uses the word trust. Isaiah 8:17:

> "I will wait for the Lord who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob; I will put my trust in

him."

So that's just an indication that there are various different possible ways of translating the one word and the one phrase. However, the writer of Hebrews singles out the meaning trust.

Then we're going on in Isaiah 8:

> "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion."

So the writer of Hebrews quotes both a part of verse 17 from Isaiah 8 and a part of verse 18. Are you with me? I don't know whether it's possible to follow this because it's involved and I don't know any way to make it simple. There is no guarantee that everything in the Bible is simple. Did you know that?

Now, continuing to comment on Isaiah 8:17–18 I say this: It depicts Jesus with the other children whom the Father has given him as brothers. See that? "I and the children whom thou has given me." So when Jesus prayed in John 17 "the ones you have given me", probably his mind was in Isaiah 8:18, you see? God the Father gave him the Father's children to be his brothers.

Okay? So he speaks about "I and the children whom thou has given me", and then he says "they are for signs and wonders in Israel."

Now if you look at the whole passage in Isaiah 8, beginning at verse 11 —which we need to just read quickly.

> "The Lord spoke to me with mighty power and instructed me not to walk in the way of this people [that's Israel], saying, You are not to say, 'It is a conspiracy!' In regard to all that this people call a conspiracy, and you are not to fear what they fear or be in dread of it. It is the Lord of hosts whom you should regard as holy, and he shall be your fear, and he shall be your dread. Then he shall become a sanctuary; but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Many will stumble over them, then they will fall and be broken; they well even be snared and caught. [Then it goes on] Bind up the testimony, seal the teaching among my disciples."

Now turning back to my outline, I think I've said it as clearly as I can there, the background in Isaiah 8:11–18 shows three successive phases. First of all, Israel as a whole are alienated from the Lord. Isaiah says don't think the way they think, don't call a conspiracy what they call a conspiracy, don't fear what they fear. In other words, Israel as a whole at this point prophetically are depicted as alienated from the Lord.

Then it says the Lord will be a sanctuary for those who trust and obey him but a stumbling block to the disobedient. So it depends on our attitude to the Lord whether we find him a sanctuary or a stumbling block.

Now, in connection with that it would be good if you could keep your finger in Isaiah 8, Hebrews 2, and turn to 1Peter 2:6–8.

> "For this is contained in scripture: Behold I lay in Zion a choice stone, [and that's quoted in Isaiah 28] a precious corner stone, and he who believes in him shall not be disappointed. [verse 7] This precious value, then, is for you who believe. Not for those who disbelieve, the stone which the builders rejected, this became the very corner stone, [verse 8] and, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense; for they stumble because they are disobedient to the word, and to this doom they were also appointed."

So again Peter sets forth either the Lord Jesus as precious or he's a stumbling block. And he says in effect, to the majority of Israelites at this time, he is a stumbling block, they stumble over him.

Now turn back to Isaiah 8 for a moment, verse 14.

> "Then he shall become a sanctuary [to those who believe, to the disciples], but to both the houses of Israel, a stone to strike and a rock

> to stumble over, and a snare and a trap for the inhabitants of Jerusalem."

That's a very solemn prophetic statement because in 70 AD that was fulfilled. All the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem were snared and trapped. Jerusalem was captured, the Jewish people were killed.

Now going back to my outline on Page 2/3, the third aspect of this situation predicted by Isaiah. The Lord's teaching is revealed only to a small group of disciples who become his children and signs to Israel. If you will meditate on that you'll see how much that we have seen fulfilled and are seeing fulfilled as contained in those statements. I've gone into that rather carefully, one reason being that it shows you how you should approach Old Testament prophecy. It's often very condensed and contains three or four different aspects of the truth. It is something of a test of being able to analyze to draw the truth out.

Now we go back to Hebrews 2:14–15. You can let your fingers go from everything else!

> "Since therefore the children partake of blood and flesh..."

All English translations always say flesh and blood because it's contrary to English usage to put it the other way around. But the Greek always puts it the other way around, it's blood and flesh. I think logically blood comes first because that's the distinctive mark of our body. They contain blood. This is just an opinion which is shared by many Bible teachers, the resurrection body will contain glorified flesh but no blood. That I believe. It could be wrong but that's the distinctive mark of humanity in its present condition, it's blood and flesh.

> "Since therefore the children have partaken of blood and flesh, He also likewise partook of the same."

That is, blood and flesh. He took on human nature in other words, a human physical body.

> "In order that through death he might render powerless the one who had [or has] the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver [or set free] those who by fear of death all through their life were subject to slavery."

Okay? Now let's look at my outline. Speaking on verses 14 and 15. These verses affirm the complete identification of Jesus with humanity. And they also bring out the double outworking of his death. First of all, to strip the devil of his power. Secondly, to deliver humanity from the slavery of the fear of death.

As a confirmatory scripture for the first, to strip the devil of his power, I would offer you one of my favorite scriptures, 1John 3:8.

> "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil."

The second purpose, to deliver humanity from the slavery of the fear of death. We need to face this fact and be honest about it in our own lives. As long as we are afraid to die, we are potential slaves. Is that right? Anyone who can threaten us with death can get us to do what he wants us to do. It's a very solemn thought. The passage I've quoted there is Revelation 12:11 and we don't need to turn there, I'm sure it's familiar to many of you.

> "They overcame him [the devil] by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony, and they loved not their lives unto the death."

In other words, staying alive was not priority number one. Priority number one was doing the will of God. Whether that meant living or dying was a secondary issue. Only people with that measure of commitment can overcome the devil. The tools are there in the blood and the testimony. But the quality of person is determined by attitude to living or dying. That's the ultimate decision.

Going back now to Hebrews 2:16:

> "For indeed he does not help angels, but he helps the seed of Abraham."

It's possible to translate that "he does not take the nature of angels." That's the way it's translated in the King James and it is a possible translation. But let's take the phrase "he does not help angels but he helps the seed of Abraham." In that interpretation this is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 41. Let's turn there for a moment. This is what you'd call a concealed reference to the Old Testament. Isaiah 41:8–10. The Lord is speaking through the prophet to Israel.

> "But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, descendant of Abraham my friend [the Hebrew says seed of Abraham my friend], you whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called from its remotest parts, and said to you, You are my servant, I have chosen you and not rejected you. Do not fear, for I am with you; do not look anxiously about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you."

See, that's the promise to the seed of Abraham which was fulfilled through Jesus taking on human nature.

Going back to Hebrews 2, I want to finish this chapter in this session. Verses 17–18:

> "Wherefore he was obligated to become like his brothers in all things, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, so as to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that he has suffered himself having been tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted."

Let me turn, in order to save being too long-winded, to my outline and go from there. That's on Page 2/3, the comments on chapter 2:17–18. This is the first occurrence of high priest, one of the great key themes. And then the writer points out three consequences of the identification of Jesus with Abraham's seed or descendants, three purposes for which it was necessary. First, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest. He had to come down to the level of the people whom he represented as high priest.

Secondly, through it he was able to make atonement for their sins. In Hebrews 10 later on we'll see, if we live long enough, he said, "Lo, I come to do thy will; a body thou has prepared for me." And then it says by the sacrifice of that body we have been sanctified. So it was necessary for Jesus to have a body of flesh and blood that he might offer that body as a sacrifice for the propitiation of the sins of the people.

The third purpose was that he should be able to empathize with and thus help his brothers. He knows what it's like to be a human being. We can never say to him, "Lord, you don't understand." He says, "I do understand, I've been right where you've been. I've been tempted just the way you are."

Let me just point out the closing statement there. This chapter, chapter 2, from verse 6 to the end emphasizes the complete identification of Jesus with humanity. That's the thrust of those verses.

Now, in our next session, God willing, we will deal with the appendix to chapter 2 which is the Old Testament picture of the high priest. And I would strongly recommend that in the intervening week you read Exodus 28, preferably in two versions: The New American Standard and the New International Version. The reason why I recommend the second is it's much easier reading, it comes out much more vividly. But that will be where we'll start in the next session, with this Old Testament picture of the high priest. Until you have an understanding of the high priest from the Old Testament, you can't understand what it means that Jesus has become our high priest.

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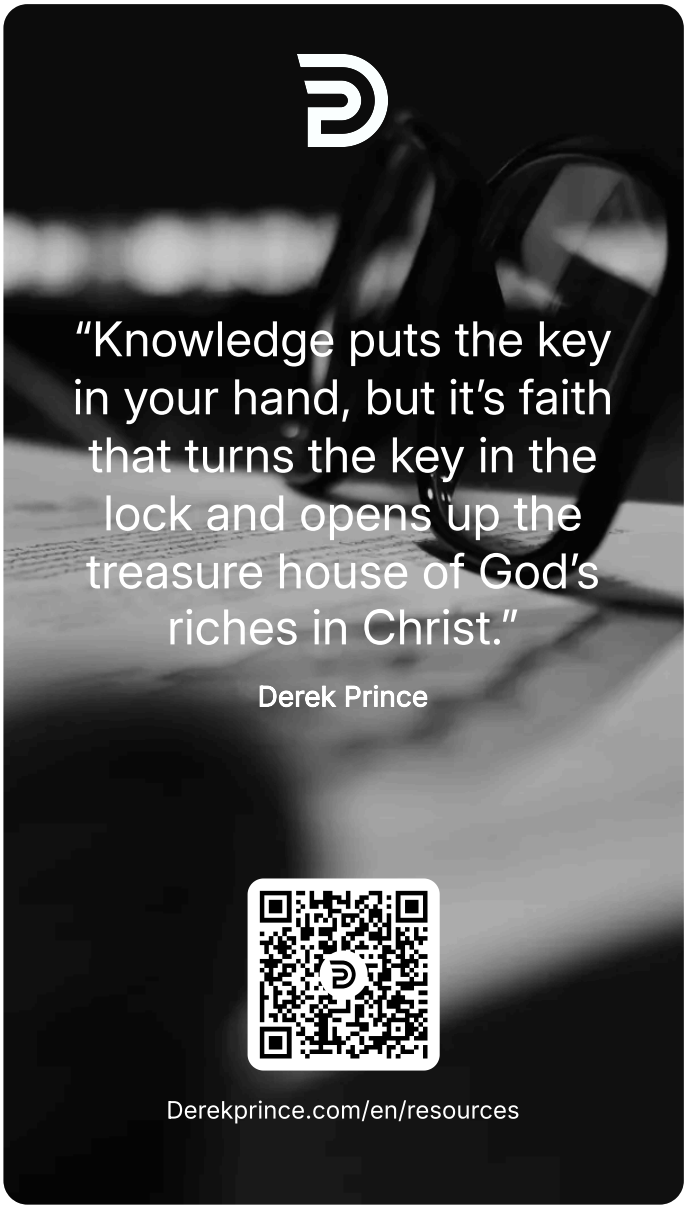

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