

1,19,23 Heb. 1:4-2:13, So Great Salvation

Before we start, I want to share something I've been thinking about. The Bible says the whole world lies in the power of the evil one; that Satan is the god of this world. Christ, of course, is sovereign over him, but when it comes to deception, politics, culture, etc., this is Satan's cosmos and he's been developing it for thousands of years leading up to the establishment of his kingdom under the Antichrist – the final global government.

I get emails and phone calls about new discoveries related to the dangers of the vaccine, about patriotic Americans standing up for godly morals against transgenderism and drag shows in our schools. I saw where the governor of Arkansas has cancelled all masks and mandates. And the list goes on. The conservatives are thrilled; the left seems to be losing ground and even Biden has come under fire for having classified documents at his residence.

But I believe Satan is playing both sides. He's like a puppet master being a liberal or a conservative when it contributes to his own purpose of dividing and conquering both the nation and the church.

But even more than that, what got me re-thinking this is a video I saw recently, which if it's true, it shows how all these issues related to vaccines, gun control, chemtrails, and a thousand other things to keep us occupied, are simply distractions to keep us from seeing what's really coming. Satan has us taking sides and researching everything we can, to understand important things, but often to the exclusion of understanding what's most important.

I've used the illustration in the past of the various passengers on the Titanic, with a variety of political backgrounds, races, ages, and cultures spending their time discussing things important to them, rearranging the chairs on the deck, completely oblivious to the iceberg.

That's what I see happening and I don't want us to get drawn into distracting, secondary issues however good they may be and lose our focus on why the church is really here – which is to be hastening the day of God.

I'll send a link to the video; you can take it or leave it. It seemed valid, but I've become cautious of being absolute about things I can't completely confirm. True or not, it will be a great teaching tool to show why things we feel matter greatly, might not matter so much when the ship is going down.

I'll also send a link to J.D.'s update on 1/15/23 because not long after I jotted down these ideas about Satan playing both sides, I decided to listen to J.D.'s latest update and discovered it was entitled "Playing both sides against the middle". I love it when things like that happen because I need all the confirmation I can get.

<https://beforeitsnews.com/prophecy/2023/01/new-steve-quayle-1122023-neo-babylonian-blindness-coming-us-destruction-steve-quayle-jamie-walden-join-doug-hagmann-the-hagmann-report-2537448.html>

<https://subsplash.com/calvarychapelkaneohe/lb/mi/+rnvd9z8>

Finally, just a quick caution for when you listen to any of the growing number of prophecy podcasters floating around: Even some of the ones I like the best, who are very good at current events research, are (I'm starting to realize) dangerous theologically. I still listen to them to get their information on events I may be unaware of, but I believe we need to exercise caution, because occasionally they will throw something in that is more theology-based than research-based, and I've noticed that in many cases, that can be a problem unless we see through it.

For example;

- 1) We've already looked at the problems of the E511 guy (John Blanchett) who has done some excellent research in the area of the Hegelian Dialectic, but teaches that Christians can lose their salvation and that the rapture doesn't happen till after the Tribulation.
- 2) A podcaster named Nathan Jones from Lion and Lamb Ministries, who claims to believe Jesus is returning soon also talks about "future generations". He doesn't think we're in the final generation. So, I don't know what he means by "soon", but he has no idea how "soon" the Lord's coming really is.
- 3) Tom Hughes & Pablo Frascini both doubled down in a recent interview on the idea that only fake Christians can be deceived – no genuine believer will be deceived. Somehow, they can't see that nearly all of the warnings given in the Bible about deception are directed at believers.

I wouldn't take time for this, but as we've seen in some of our studies, the power of deception at the end is going to pull in a great deal more Christians than we may realize. And one of those deceptions is being delivered to us through an explosion of research capable, theologically dangerous podcasters.

We do want to know what's happening around us, but that will never be as important as knowing, learning and living in the Truth. Sound doctrine is essential to our spiritual survival.

So, just be careful.

Now, let's get into Hebrews

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After the Church began in Acts 2, the enemy wasted no time is trying to destroy its spiritual testimony – to do all he could to remove the self-expression of Christ though the Church as His body and replace the manifestation of Christ with a religion of man – the self-expression of man.

The purpose or reason Hebrews was written is actually very straight forward – to show the greatness of Christ over all other religious systems, including the Old Covenant of Law under Moses, and to motivate all of those who would read Hebrews to move from infancy to maturity; from religion to relationship.

Also, all of the details of Hebrews have to match the purpose of the book. So, even though the purpose of Hebrews is easy to determine, the details of how that purpose is intended to be accomplished take some explanation.

I know that most who are listening to these studies have a good idea of what this means in terms of the purpose Hebrews was written, but all of us need ongoing and increasing clarity on the “how” of all this.

Because of the issue the author was addressing in the Hebrew Christians (which was the loss of their initial realization of the greatness of both their Savior and their salvation), the writer of Hebrews divides his letter into sections of comparison.

In vs's 4-14, he compares Jesus to angels. The reason this is so important to address is because Old Testament believers were both very aware of the existence of angels and were also aware of their power. There are numerous illustrations of this, but here's a few examples;

(2 Pet. 2:10-11) “Those who walk according to the flesh in the lust of uncleanness and despise authority. They are presumptuous, self-willed. They are not afraid to speak evil of dignitaries, whereas angels, who are greater in power and might, do not bring a reviling accusation against them before the Lord.”

(Psalm 103:20) “Praise the LORD, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.”

The Old Testament saints knew that angels were incredibly powerful beings and that God used angels to deliver the Law through Moses to Israel. So, there is no human that is greater than an angel – except Christ.

Now, with that in mind, listen to Heb. 1:4-14;

“. . . having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You’? And again: ‘I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son’? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him.’ And of the angels He says: ‘Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire.’ But to the Son He says: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.’ And: ‘You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.’ But to which of the angels has He ever said: ‘Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool’? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”

So, God begins by identifying Christ as His Son, which in the Jewish mind, implied that He was equal to God;

(John 5:17-18) “Jesus answered them, ‘To this very day My Father is at His work, and I too am working.’ Because of this, the Jews tried all the harder to kill Him. Not only was He breaking the Sabbath, but He was even calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God.”

Then the author shows that the angels are to worship the Son, which, if He were not God, would be blasphemous;

(Luke 4:5-8) “The devil, taking Him up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, ‘All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered

to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.’ And Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Get behind Me, Satan! For it is written, ‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and Him only you shall serve.’”

Next, the author calls Jesus “God” in vs. 8; “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.” The word “God” in this verse is “theos” which means “deity” or “supreme divinity”. “Theology” is the study of God.

Then in vs. 10, Jesus is called “Lord” and is said to be the Creator of the universe; “You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands.”

We see the same designation in Col. 1:16 “For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him.”

The author closes this section by pointing out that angels, far from being equal with Christ are actually “ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation” – that would be us.

By the way, I just covered an area of scripture that establishes the deity of Christ, which, for example, Jehovah’s Witnesses deny – they believe Jesus was Michael the archangel. So, the next time they come to your door, have them explain Heb. 1 to you.

Before we move into the next section, here’s a brief quote from Spurgeon who confirms what we’ve looked at;

“So, you perceive that Christ is no created angel. He is sometimes called the Angel (or Messenger) of the covenant, but he is not a created angel. He is higher in nature, higher in rank, higher in intellect, and higher in power than they. He is nothing less than very God of very God. The very man who suffered on Calvary. The angels are servants, but they are not sons; they are created, but they are not begotten. You see what he says to the Son—‘I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son.’”

Now, the author to Hebrews introduces his next section with a warning;

(Heb. 2:1-4) “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just

reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?"

What I want to do with this is going to seem unrelated at first, but bear with me.

The salvation that has been brought to us, that we can neglect or drift away from, involves a great deal more than becoming a Christian. This "so great salvation" stretches from our new birth to our eternal, heavenly inheritance.

None of His disciples understood the salvation He was going to bring until the Holy Spirit came to them at Pentecost and opened their eyes to the spiritual reality of what Jesus has taught them. And this is the single most important reality of this whole letter if *we're* going to understand this "so great salvation" >

*All spiritual sight or understanding is a miracle.*

For example;

(Matt. 16:13-17) When Jesus came into the region of Caesarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, "Who do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?" So, they said, "Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered and said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Finally, one of Jesus' disciples figured out Who He really was. Peter watched His miracles; heard His teaching; mulled these things over in his mind and came to right conclusion. Is that what happened?

Not even close. Listen to Jesus' response to Peter in the next verse; Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven".

(Luke 10:21-23) At that time Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and declared, "I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was well-pleasing in Your sight. All things have been entrusted to Me by My Father. *No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to*

whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.” Then Jesus turned to the disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see....”

Who did you think Jesus was before you became a Christian? I have probably been so repetitious on this that people are very tempted to tune me out when I say it now, but the mind *cannot* understand spiritual things apart from the miracle of revelation. Listen to this familiar passage in the context of what we’ve been seeing;

(1 Cor. 2:9-14) “Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man’s wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

As we move through this letter to the Hebrews, if you aren’t praying for a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ for every verse we look at, you might eventually come to the conclusion that something Old has been replaced by something New, but you will never understand fully why that had to happen or what the New thing is.

Like I said earlier - All spiritual sight; all spiritual understanding is a miracle.

Also, it’s not just intellect that has zero value in comprehending spiritual truth, zeal makes no contribution to this either.

(Acts 26:9) “Indeed, I myself thought I must do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”

I doubt there is anyone in the New Testament more zealous for God than Saul of Tarsus. He told us this in Gal. 1:13-14; “For you have heard of my former way of life in Judaism, how severely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers.”

Without tangential onto all the passages about Paul, he was also a genius. So, zeal, IQ, personal passion for the faith of his fathers and every other natural quality of a man we would admire were wrapped up in the character of Saul.

And it took the miracle of the Spirit's intervention on the road to Damascus to allow Paul to see spiritual reality.

So, spiritual sight is a miracle from heaven every time, and that means that everything you and I know of the Lord that is true came by a direct Spirit-to-spirit communication from God to us. To grow in the knowledge of Christ, two things must be in action. The pastor must be teaching in the Spirit and the disciple of Christ must be hearing in the Spirit.

This is the single greatest need in the Body of Christ in our generation. Christianity has become a self-perpetuating tradition filled with agendas, religious zeal, Christian celebrities, and natural creativity and accomplishment. But those who are impacting the world around them for Christ are those who realize, like Paul, that we have absolutely nothing to contribute but what God personally gives us.

Christ is infinitely greater than the Jesus being presented to us in the Laodicean generation;

(Rev. 3:18-19) "(You) do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and *anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see.*"

Instead of seeing Christ as He is, we've been given the false Jesus of the seeker-sensitive churches of the 21<sup>st</sup> century - the Jesus that makes sense and appeals to our natural mind. False Christs blind us to the wonder of the incarnate Son of God.

Many false Christ's have, and will, be presented to us from thousands of sources, but only if we discover Christ as He is, will we be conformed to *His* image. This next quote is from Sparks;

"And we were saying that we shall never get anywhere at all in the Christian life as the Lord's people, and we shall certainly never get through to the end and [be] at the end, unless we have an adequate apprehension of the greatness of Christ. Over against all the smallness of what is presented as Christianity, there stands this immensity of that into which we are called

when called into fellowship with God's Son - the Person - the great, eternal, matchless Person of Jesus Christ; it is foundational to everything.

And I say again, you'll never get very far if you only have a small apprehension and understanding of the One into whose fellowship we are called. And, seeing that many of you are Christians on the way, and well on the way, some far on the way, let me say this to you: that this is not just an initial need. We are only going to get through at the end, through all the trials, and the adversities, the difficulties, the sufferings, the afflictions, the perplexities, and problems of mature, spiritual life; we are only going to get through under the increasing pressure from the forces of evil, on the ground of an adequate apprehension of the Lord Jesus. It is He alone Who can measure up to our need."

Ok, back to Hebrews. In the first part of the section I read earlier in Heb. 2, we saw this warning;

Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect . . .

This is going to tie in to Heb. 10:26-31;

For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

Both passages use Israel's historical response to the Law as an example of the seriousness of God's people "drifting" from that which is spiritual to that which is a imitation.

And for anyone wondering whether these passages are talking about believers or unbelievers – that's cleared up in 10:30, "The Lord will judge His people".

So, because of the need to spend some extended time on this, we're going to wait for Heb. chapters 6 & 10 to break this down. I can say that I'm not aware of anyone in our studies locally or through the Zoom network that need to be concerned about these warning passages in Hebrews. And that will become more obvious when we examine them more closely.

Let's move to Heb. 2:5-9;

For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, or the son of man that You take care of him? You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor and set him over the works of Your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet". For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

Has that question ever crossed your mind? Considering what (as Paul put it) 'wretches' we are, why was the Lord so willing to bring a vast, incredible creation into existence for us, and then sacrifice His Son (through "the suffering of death") to redeem us for that creation when we rebelled and lost it? And not only that, in spite of everything we have done, He is still set on the course of placing His entire creation under our dominion. How could He even trust us with that, let alone desire it for us?

I don't know all the answers to that, but I think I know the foundation of God's reasoning. Listen to this explanation of the repentant thief on the cross by Watchman Nee;

We cannot be absolutely certain why the robber who at the beginning railed at the Lord Jesus should suddenly change and believe in Christ. I think, however, that it probably was due to that precious prayer of Christ as recorded in Luke: "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do" (23.34). These words must have touched his heart. Such mercy, such love, such gentleness, such fullness of grace must have moved his hardened soul, modified his prejudice, and melted his wicked heart. That prayer caused him to know that the One who was crucified was truly the Christ, the Son of God. The Roman cross caused him to rail at Christ; but the cross of Christ caused

him to repent and believe in the Savior. Law and punishment cannot save souls; but grace and love will produce tears and repentance in hardened sinners and draw them near to God for mercy.”

It's never been something in us that caused the sovereign God to sacrifice and forgive so much for us. Just making it to heaven would be wonder enough, but to be “crowned with glory and honor and set over the works of (God’s) hands; to have put all things placed in subjection under (our) feet?” That’s hard to imagine let alone understand; but that’s God’s decision and purpose for us.

And He made that decision, and set that purpose in motion, knowing the end from the beginning – knowing exactly what kind of creatures we are. So, the fact that “God is love” (as 1 Jn. 4:16 tells us), is the only thing I can think of that would make sense of this.

The other thing that, for lack of a better way to put it, motivated that decision was His knowledge that this race of rebellious, selfish creatures would take on a nature completely different from the one they are born with before the final “subjection of creation” to them would happen.

That’s why right after the author of Hebrews wrote, “But now we do not yet see all things put under him”, he then wrote, “But we see Jesus.”

Things begin to make more sense when you realize that the new nature that would ultimately characterize the part of humanity who would receive that nature, would be identical to the nature of God’s Son.

There’s no problem imagining God’s creation placed under the care of a humanity made in the express image of Christ.

(Rom. 8:29) “For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son . . .”

So, God’s motive for undertaking this eternal project is love for Christ and for us as His consort; and the way in which this project will result in a creation filled with inexpressible joy is through conformity of our humanity to Christ.

The final part of this chapter that we’ll have time for tonight is vs’s 10-13;

For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them

brethren, saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly, I will sing praise to You." And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

I'm going to approach this by starting at the end and working backward. So, the last part of this section is "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

Now, compare that phrase with these verses:

First, John 6:37-39; "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will under no circumstances cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose none, but should raise them up at the last day."

And now Rom. 8:39; "(Nothing in all creation) shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Two extremely encouraging realities come out of these passages;

- 1) It was in the heart of the Father in eternity past to provide a perfect companion of His Son, just as He provided Eve for Adam.
- 2) Once the specifics of who would be a part of that companion were determined (also in the eternal counsels of God), not one of those joined to Christ would be lost.

The Church was predetermined to be in eternal union with the Son of God as His bride; sharing His glory and His destiny as the heir of creation.

(Rom. 8:16-17) "The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. And if we are children, then we are heirs: heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ . . ."

Now let's move back to the first part of our section;

"For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren . . ."

When he says, “both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one . . .”, he’s saying (as Kenneth Wuest put it in his translation) “In order to bring many sons to glory, our Lord became our brother.” So, He is not ashamed, to call us ‘family’. We share a common nature, having been re-born into a new species of humanity that is created in the image of God.

Spurgeon adds;

“They are poor, they are despised, they are persecuted; what is worse, they are imperfect and faulty, often sorrowful, cast down, condemning themselves, groaning at the mercy-seat; yet he is not ashamed of them. There is such a unity between the believer, be he in what sorrow he may, and the Christ, be he in what glory he may, that he is never ashamed to own the close relationship between them.”

We know we are imperfect and faulty, condemning ourselves and groaning for help at the mercy-seat. This is why sanctification is needed and why, because of our Lord’s unconditional love, it is guaranteed.

(1 Thess. 5:23-24) “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”

He will do it – He will complete what He’s begun in each member of His beloved family for whom He suffered to win to Himself.

I don’t know if you’ve ever heard a writing called “The Fellowship of the Unashamed”; it’s not only incredibly encouraging and inspiring, but it perfectly shows our ideal response to the revelation in the scriptures that the Son of God is unashamed of us in spite of us.

We will close with this;

I am part of the "Fellowship of the Unashamed." The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. My past is redeemed and my future is secure. I am finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, chintzy giving, and dwarfed goals. I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, or popularity. I now live by presence, walk by faith, love by patience, lift by prayer, and labor by power.

My pace is set, my gait is fast, my goal is Heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions few, my Guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, deterred, lured away, turned back, diluted, or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I must go until Christ returns, give until I drop, preach until all know, and work until He comes. And when He comes to get His own, He will have no problem recognizing me. My colors will be clear.