



## “HELP IN TIMES OF TEMPTATION” (Hebrews 2:5-18)

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Intro: As we learned last week, Hebrews is a study in contrast between the Old Covenant (Law) and the New Covenant (Grace). Gal.3:19 tells us that angels were involved in the giving of the Mosaic Law. Jews in biblical history had a very lofty view of angels, as well they should. In creation, angels rank higher than man (see Heb.2:6-8a). Verse 14 tells us that angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation. They are created beings, but they have celestial bodies (I Cor.15:40). After Jesus’ resurrection, He assured His disciples that he was indeed alive “in the flesh,” a human body. He said that a spirit does not have flesh and bones as He had. Satan is an angel, but of course a fallen one. And when he fell, he led a host of other angels in rebellion against God. Angels are created with rank, and rank also determines how powerful they are (see Eph.6:10-12). Though they do not have an earthly body, they have a form. This is mysterious, because they can sometimes appear as human (Hebrews 13:2; Gen.18-19). We also know that they are capable of emotion (rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents). They love to investigate prophecy (I Peter 1:12). They do not procreate (Matthew 22:30). In my devotional reading this morning, I was reading Matthew 13:37-42, 47-50. Fascinating stuff! Matthew 28:2 says that when the angel came from heaven to roll back the stone after the resurrection, there was a violent earthquake. Wow! Could it be that the increase in earthquakes prophesied about the end times is simply an increase in angelic activity from heaven to earth, and earth to heaven? Remember that Jacob saw a vision of angels ascending and descending from heaven to earth. When Daniel saw a vision of an angel, he said he had no strength left, his face turned deathly pale, and he fell into a deep sleep (he fainted). The description of the angel’s appearance was “His body was like chrysolite, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the voice of a multitude.” See Daniel 10:4-21.

Some Jews went too far in their view of angels and ended up worshipping them (Col.2:18). As powerful and majestic as angels are, it would be easy to do. Even John the apostle almost did (see Revelation 19:9-10).

If Christ is the mediator of a better covenant, then He must be greater than the angels, because angels mediated the first covenant. This is pretty much the main point of Hebrews chapter one. The writer will cited 7 Old Testament passages proving that Christ is greater than the angels.

Hebrews 2:1-4 then exhorts us to not ignore this message and not to drift away. You see, this is the only message that can save one’s soul (Acts 4:12).

## I. THE TEXT

v.5 When has the writer spoken of the world to come? See Heb.1:13 (from Psalm 110:1). Jesus came the first time to die for mankind, and He is coming a second time to set up a kingdom for all who have received Him as Lord and Savior and to deal with all who have rejected Him (see II Thess.1:4-10; Zech 14:9). One of the most fascinating things about the prophecies that Jesus will one day rule and reign on earth is that we will rule with Him! (See I Cor.6:3; Rev.20:6; Eph.2:6; Dan.7:18, 27; Rev.3:21.)

vv.6-8a See Psalm 8:3-9; Gen.1:26. God intended for man to rule the earth, but something happened, recorded for us in Gen.3, that changed everything...man forfeited the dominion God gave him, and now the devil rules this present world. I John 3:8b tells us that Jesus came to destroy the devil's work.

v.8b We must understand what God is saying to us here, otherwise, we will expect health, wealth, and prosperity in this life. Folks, this is one of the greatest verses to disprove the prosperity teachers. Presently, we live in a cursed world, and we have to deal with sin, sickness, death, the devil, etc.

v.9 Jesus died so that we might have hope as we face death.

v.10 See Hebrews 5:8.

vv.11-13 Interesting, though Jesus is my Savior, though He is King of kings and Lord of lords, though he is exalted to the highest place, and has a name above every name, He is also my "brother."

vv.14-15 I have hope in the face of death! See Rev.1:17-18; I Cor.15:55, 57; Rom.8:35, 37. When God took the child that was conceived as a result of David's adulterous relationship with Bathsheba, David consoled himself with the certainty that the child was with the Lord, and that he would see him again one day. What a hope the Christian has in the face of death! See I Thess.4:13-18.

v.16 Abraham's descendants are not physical descendants, but spiritual descendants. See John 8:33-40; Rom.4:1-12; 2:28-29.

v.17 Only a human sacrifice would be sufficient to atone for human sin. Not only that, but it was required that a priest must be able to relate to those to whom he ministered. The first false teaching about Jesus arising in the church was not that He wasn't God, but that He wasn't really human, He only *seemed* to be human. The heresy was called *Docetism*, coming from the Greek word *to seem*. But if he was not human, his sacrifice would not be sufficient, and he would not be able to adequately minister to human beings.

v.18 What an amazing, and very encouraging statement!

## II. HOW JESUS HELPS US IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TEMPTATION

### A. He Sympathizes With Us (Heb.4:14-15)

- Read Hughes, p.83, bottom.
- The Christian life is a battle, a *daily* battle, and a lifelong battle (Luke 4:13). Every day has enough evil (Matt.6:34), and there is a day of evil (see Eph.6:13).
- Jesus never failed in His entire earthly life. Now, let's really think about this. Some say he could not have failed because he is the Son of God, and they have the idea that Jesus, because he is the Son of God, had an edge on us. In other words, his suffering in resisting temptation was not as painful as ours. But exactly the opposite is true. He knows the ultimate suffering in resisting temptation. Jesus endured greater temptation than any man because He never gave in to sin. "He knows the full force of temptation in a manner that we who have not withstood it to the end cannot know."

### B. He Showers Us With Grace When We Fail

- Failure may occur at any point in life.
  - When you are young, when you are old, after great victory, in times of trial and hardship, in times of great success and jubilation...
- Even the most mature saint can fail.
  - He was an exceptional example as a young boy. Any youth pastor would have loved to have this kid in their group. He was faithful as a shepherd watching over his father's sheep. As a matter of fact, he loved his father and the sheep so much that he more than once put his life on the line to defend and protect them (bear and lion)...By outward appearance he wasn't all that impressive, but God said about him that he was "a man after His own heart." So when it came time to anoint a new king, Samuel the prophet was sent to his house. But Jesse (this young lad's dad), didn't even bring him in to be considered for the throne. And so all of the seven older brothers passed before the prophet Samuel, but none of them was anointed. And then they sent for...David. It would be years before he actually took the throne. He would become a national hero after defeating Goliath, then spend years running from jealous King Saul. And oh what humility David displayed time and time again as he was faced with repeated temptations to slay his enemy, but each time the Word of God directed him to refrain ("I will not lay my hand on the Lord's anointed"). At crucial junctures he could have failed miserably, fallen to temptation, and forfeited the future exaltation God had planned for him. After finally taking the throne, he became the most loved king Israel ever had. And yet, in time, his reign was marked by the failure... See II Samuel 11:1-12:14ff.

- (summarize)...amazingly, after all the terrible consequences of his failures, near the end of his life he fails again... See II Samuel 24, David counting the fighting men (II Samuel 24); took nine months and twenty days; 1,300,000 men; but God had not given David victory because of the size of his army (worldly glory), but rather God had given victory as a result of David's faith and *humility*...v.10b I have done a *very foolish thing*... Note the altar (Calvary). See Psalm 51:1-12.

### C. He Provides Everything We Need For Victory

#### 1. A way of escape

- I Cor.10: 13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

#### 2. An example for us to follow (Matthew 4:1-11)

- Jesus' temptation in the wilderness

### D. The Three Battlefields Of Temptation (I John 2:16)

#### 1. The lust of the flesh

- This is an appeal to our physical appetites; the temptation in the Garden of Eden involved appealing to man's physical appetite. To consistently win the battle of temptation in this area, we must develop self-control (see I Cor.9:27; I Thess.4:4-5). In my life I regular say no to a meal, sometimes several. I generally don't do dessert. I say yes to exercise (and it's getting harder and harder to do so). One of the greatest temptations on this particular battlefield is sexual temptation, so I practice looking away, as well as controlling what I watch on TV, what movies I go to (hardly any theses days).

#### 2. The lust of the eyes

- When I was young, I remember especially after Thanksgiving (and the beginning of the Christmas season) my family would occasionally go shopping. But the kind of shopping we did was interesting. They called it "window shopping." We would look in the store windows at all the things we wanted but could not afford.
- This is an appeal to our desire for the "things" of this world. Results from failure in this area are evils such as envy, greed, and materialism.
- Commandment # 10, "You shall not covet your neighbor's house...manservant or maidservant, ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

### 3. The pride of life

- This is an appeal to our “person;” Matthew 4:5-7 was an appeal for Jesus (because of who He is) to act in a foolish way outside the will of the Father. The temptation that appeals to our pride is powerful and pervasive. It’s pride that says, “I don’t have to take that from them,” or “I’ll get them back,” or “I don’t deserve that,” or “Hey ya’ll, watch this!” or “Who’s da man?”

### E. Repeated Failure Results In Weakness To Resist And Bondage To Sin

- John 8: 34 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.
- II Peter 2:19b a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.
- I Cor.6: 12 "Everything is permissible for me"--but not everything is beneficial. "Everything is permissible for me"--but I will not be mastered by anything. (v.13, context is sexual immorality).

### F. Biblical Essentials For Victory Over Temptation

#### 1. The Word of God

- In Jesus temptation, he responded with the Word of God.
- See Psalm 119:9-11.

#### 2. A willingness to suffer

- See I Peter 4:1ff.
- Jesus was made “perfect” through suffering, so we must also be made perfect through suffering. We will never mature apart from suffering. And resisting temptation always involves suffering. See Gal.5:17.

#### 3. Daily donning the spiritual armor God has provided.

### CONCLUSION

- Romans 8:17
- “What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world...”