

**Patio Pulpit For January 13, 2021**  
**Hebrews 2:1-4**  
**Paid in Full...and that's Better.**

This past September, the mortgage on my condo was paid off. I now own it by myself; I no longer share ownership with the bank. Then in October I got a document from the Register of Deeds of Mecklenburg County entitled **Satisfaction of Security Instrument** which affirmed my ownership and the fact that my condo is paid for. That made me pretty happy.

Of course, nothing is ever truly paid off, is it? Now I have a smaller bill that comes every year called “county property taxes” that the mortgage holder previously took care of for me each year. And on top of that I am still responsible for paying Duke Energy and Piedmont Natural Gas and the HOA over the community where my condo is located. My daughter and her husband who live there pay those bills, but the responsibility is still mine. And I can live with all that. The bank is satisfied and so am I. My mortgage is paid in full.

Tonight I'm continuing our study from the letter to the Hebrews and as I have said many, many times if we neglect the context of any part of this particular letter, we may find ourselves questioning our salvation. But far worse than that, we could call into question the finished work of Christ and find ourselves standing before God as our Judge rather than as our Father. And that was the imminent danger the author of this letter saw looming over the heads of these wavering Jews.

This letter argues for the superiority of grace over law. It argues for the superiority of Christ over the old covenant priesthood and sacrifices. The author pressed his point that if the Jew who has heard the gospel then chose to remain under the law, he could expect eternal separation from his God with no recourse left to him. <sup>26</sup> *For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving **the knowledge of the truth**, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,*

<sup>27</sup> *but a terrifying expectation of judgment and **THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.***

**(Heb. 10:26-27 NAU)**

This letter was written around 2,020 years ago but its message is needed as much now as it was then. And not just for Jews who made up the mass of the early church, but for 21<sup>st</sup> century Gentiles who make up the mass of the church today.

Man's nature hasn't changed in the least. We have certainly gotten smarter because of the tremendous educational tools available now. But we are still flesh and blood creatures who are as corrupt as the souls that lived in Noah's day. The nature of our old man is to attempt to assuage our guilt and God's justice by doing good deeds, and that is why Paul says that if we walk in the Spirit, the Spirit will always take us to grace and not the law. The Spirit takes us to Mt. Calvary, not Mt. Sinai. So, if you consider trying to pay for your own sins, and who hasn't, don't. That carries a pretty significant payment of its own.

*<sup>29</sup> How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? (Heb. 10:29 NAU)*

The letter to the Hebrews gives us a better solution than our pitiful attempts at pleasing God. Follow me on this.

And, by the way, if one word could sum up the lesson of this letter, I would choose the word "better." The word "better" occurs 13 times in this letter but I'm going to read just a few of those.

*NAU Heb. 7:19 (for the Law made nothing perfect), and on the other hand there is a bringing in of a better hope, through which we draw near to God. That's Jesus, beloved.*

*NAU Heb. 7:22 so much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.*

*NAU Heb. 8:6 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.*

*NAU Heb. 9:23 Therefore it was necessary for the copies of the things in the heavens to be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. The ark of the covenant*

which is in heaven was sprinkled with the blood of Jesus.<sup>22</sup> *But you have come ... to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.* (Heb. 12:22-24 NAU)

If anyone ever asks you where the Ark of the Covenant is right now, tell them it's in the temple in heaven.<sup>19</sup> *And the temple of God which is in heaven was opened; and the ark of His covenant appeared in His temple,* (Rev. 11:19 NAU)

Now, this is where I want us to go and camp tonight. Hebrews 2:2 is one of those verses that can make all the difference for the disciple of Christ and for those who are not in Christ as of yet. This verse is one of so many verses that remind us of why the good news is such good news. **Hebrews 2:1** *For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.*

<sup>2</sup> *For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,*

<sup>3</sup> *how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?*

*After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,*

<sup>4</sup> *God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.* (Heb. 2:1-4 NAU)

We must deal with the matter of context before we get to verse 2. The question is, of course, what does “*For this reason*” refer to? Well, it points us back **first**, to how God has spoken in these last days, and that was in His Son (1:1) **Hebrews 1:1** *God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,*

<sup>2</sup> *in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.* (Heb. 1:1-2 NAU)

And **second**, it points us back to the finished work of redemption His Son carried out.<sup>3</sup> *When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,* (Heb. 1:3 NAU) And that speaks clearly of the finished work of redemption by informing the

reader that He made purification of sins and then having finished it **He sat down. He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.** And that meant He was through. *When He had made purification of sins* That phrase tells us that Jesus did it once and for all. It tells us this was a one-time act. “*When He had made purification of sins.*”

Chapter 2 and v.2,

*<sup>2</sup> For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,*

And here is the heart of the gospel. Here is what happened when Jesus died on the cross. This is what happened when Jesus became sin for us.

**“every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty.”**

A penalty is something that is given out. Every sport we play issues penalties to players who break the rules. Hockey even has a “penalty box.” The just penalty in our text says that every sin ever committed by fallen man was paid for by penalizing Jesus in our place. Jesus received the penalty that you and I deserved. And it was a just penalty. Not one that merely winked at our sins and our sinfulness. It was a genuine Man paying the penalty that God demanded man pay. The just penalty was what was right for each sin with the full force of the law behind it. Remember the ten commandments?

Having another god before God, received a just penalty laid on Jesus.

Making an image of God, received a just penalty, laid on Jesus.

Taking God’s name in vain, received a just penalty, laid on Jesus.

Forsaking the sabbath, received a just penalty, laid on Jesus.

Dishonoring one’s parents, received a just penalty, laid on Jesus.

Committing murder, and adultery and stealing and slander and coveting all received a just penalty.

Breaking God’s law is what brought sin and death into the world.

There is not one transgression, not one disobedience that isn’t covered by this just penalty. Whatever the sin is, it has been paid for. The penalty paid was sufficient for whatever sin it is.

Penalty is payback. Penalty is what the law demands be paid for an infraction. The wages of sin is death, but, the free gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ.

I close tonight's study with this. "*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, (2 Cor. 5:19 NAU)*

And like the author of Hebrews asked, "*how can we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*