

Christ Perfected...

Hebrews 7.28

We come to one of the most curious statements in the book of Hebrews. The author uses the word perfected about Jesus several times and if we are not shocked by the word, we are not paying attention. The fact of Jesus needing to be perfected will rock the very foundation of our souls if we do not rightly understand what is being said... the perfection of Christ is the cornerstone of our faith and the bedrock of the church. If He is not perfect, He is not qualified to be our priest and we are found liars and fools... so how is it that the writer of Hebrews tells us that He **has been** perfected?

I. JESUS CHRIST IS PERFECT

A. He is God made flesh and bears all of the nature of the divine wrapped in humanity.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of

men. And the light shined in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:1-5,14, NKJV)

Or consider Paul’s passing statement in Romans 9...
“who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.”

(Romans 9:4–5, NKJV)

- B. Being God, He is actually perfect; and so we have the testimony of His divinity to attest to His perfection in nature.
- C. We also have many witnesses to testify to us of His person, His nature and His perfection.

- 1. His own testimony -

“But because I tell the truth, you do not believe Me. Which of you convicts Me of sin? And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me? He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God.”” (John 8:45–47, NKJV)

- 2. The testimony of Scripture

“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.” (Hebrews 4:15)

“For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens;” (Hebrews 7:26)

3. The testimony of eyewitnesses

1John 1.1-5

4. The testimony of your own experience of Him. When Christ encounters us (and it is always HIM encountering us... He is always the one seeking and He is always the one who places Himself in the way...) do we not have the same reaction as the disciples on the road to Emmaus?

“And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”” (Luke 24:32)

II. BUT HE WAS ALSO MADE PERFECT.

A. The first was in His own nature and person. He was morally and internally (as well as externally) actively perfect.

- B. But there had to be a perfecting for the role of our eternal high priest, intercessor and mediator...
- C. This perfecting is about being prepared, done, finished and fully so for the job in front of you, the role you must fulfill. Jesus testified of this exact completion using the term "perfected" in Luke 13.

Luke 13.31-35

1. Notice that He states there is work to be done and after it is accomplished He will be perfected. The symbolism of the days should not be passed over, He is speaking of not only the ongoing work to establish His authority and power, but also the impending reality of His death by crucifixion and subsequent resurrection.
2. There is also the promise fulfillment of scripture in the declaration of the crowds on the triumphal entry... this helps us see that there is a prophetic dimension that must also be fulfilled and perfected.

III. HE WAS PERFECTED AS A MAN

A. He learned and was honed by the things He experienced as a man... His sufferings were not just His passion and death, but also the constant torment of being among sinful mankind ... consider a curious verse in 2Peter...

“and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked (for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)—” (2 Peter 2:7–8, NKJV)

B. Now, I have always had issues with Peter calling Lot righteous, but set that aside for just a moment - if LOT tormented his soul with the company he kept, how it must have been a constant sorrow and source of limitless suffering for Christ to be among us! It is no wonder he often withdrew to the wilderness to be alone with God... He SUFFERED and actually learned the shape of obedience every day He walked this earth!

1. This is what the writer of Hebrews alludes to in chapter 2

“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.” (Hebrews 2:10, NKJV)

2. And again in chapter 5...

“though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8, NKJV)

IV. HE PERFECTED AND FULFILLED THE LAW OF GOD.

“But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.”

(1 Corinthians 13:10, NKJV)

- A. Primarily Paul speaks of the transformation of our soul, of our nature into the likeness of Christ and the relative unimportance of the extravagant spiritual gifts that are so often sought... but there also a principle that is being expounded here which is important for us to understand:
- B. There is no need for the imperfect placeholder once the one for whom it held its place arrives. In all things and in all ways. All too often we hold on to the weak and empty containers of promise instead of laying hold of the real fulfillments. Like children who prefer the box over the toy at Christmas, we cling to old dead things that no

longer serve any purpose in our lives... this is why Paul went on to say

“When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.”

(1 Corinthians 13:11–12, NKJV)

C. In fulfilling the law, Jesus set it aside. The Levitical law does have any place or power in the life of a blood bought Christian. And it never shall again! No second temple, no return to Judaic law, no sacrifices no need for the fake picture when the true bridegroom has come for His bride! The law is about the relationship we can have with the Father - but it could not provide the lasting connection which allowed that relationship to exist. Christ has fulfilled and perfected that connection to God for relationship.

D. But we continue to walk in our folly. We cast Him aside in favor of the broken things we find in the gutter. We cling to those things that bring us

no life, and actually deliver death to our souls...
we ignore the perfect for the sake of the ruined...

1. We cling to drugs
2. Alcohol
3. Illegitimate sexual relations
4. Pornography
5. We seek fulfillment in the success of our children, in the praise of men in the work we perform
6. We fill up our lives with the flotsam of a shipwrecked society and pretend it's OK with God because the culture tells us so...

E. So Christ is the perfection we long for, the perfection we need. He is the power of God to be restored to Himself and to find in Him all our needed provision.

V. PERFECTED AS REPRESENTATIVE.

- A. Jesus was also perfected for His role as our representative, and as such gives to us perfection as a standard and mark. Our birthright, our passport for the presence of God if you will.
- B. We are commanded to be perfect

“Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect.” (Matthew 5:48, NKJV)

1. We are imitators of God in all that we do, think and love. -

“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children.” (Ephesians 5:1, NKJV)

2. We tend to imitate those who we love and admire. And God will grow and perfect us in the places where we need to be refined... helping us imitate Him better. We all have places where God is at work... For most of us it begins with selfishness...

“Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” (Philippians 2:3–4, NKJV)

3. Some with riches -

“Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”” (Matthew 19:21, NKJV)

4. For some it is speech

“For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.” (James 3:2, NKJV)

5. Self vengeance

“Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord.” (Romans 12:19, NKJV)

C. We are invited to share in the life of Jesus and the excellence that it brings

“Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.” (Colossians 1:28, NKJV)

“But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.” (Colossians 3:14, NKJV)

D. We are perfected by His power within us -

“And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

(2 Corinthians 12:9, NKJV)

E. We are made perfect by the death of Jesus in our place -

“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an

innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”

(Hebrews 12:22–24, NKJV)

VI. PERFECTED IN SACRIFICE.

A. Christ was perfected by his own obedience to God , by living out everything that it entailed and required to be our High Priest. He was faithful despite the terrible crushing weight of righteousness in a fallen world... thus the perfection of Christ, and by extension us, is best defined and demonstrated in the cross.

B. He was the perfect Lamb and has indeed taken away the barrier between us and God. He has fulfilled everything we need and in His life, death, burial and resurrection we also are made perfect forever the sight of God.

“For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.” (Hebrews 10:14, NKJV)