

## How Could Jesus Be Made Perfect? Why?

[Hebrews 5:7-10](#)

Hebrews, Day 17

### Audio Version

*In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.*

- Hebrews 5:7-10, ESV

Thanks to a long and strange history, the English language has picked up some very unusual expressions. Many of us have no idea why, when we're facing a difficult task, we say, "Well, I'm just going to have to bite the bullet." Why in the world would anyone want to bite a bullet? Or when someone is being very quiet, we ask them, "What's the matter? Cat got your tongue?" How could a cat get someone's tongue? What a strange thing to say!

Hebrews has one of the strangest expressions in the Bible, at least on the surface of it. It's most clear in today's passage, which refers to Jesus "*being made perfect*." This is one of three times when Hebrews speaks of Jesus being made or becoming perfect ([2:10](#); [5:9](#); [7:28](#)). To my mind, at first glance, these seem impossibly strange. How could the perfectly sinless Son of God be made perfect?

Some people might jump on these verses and use them to claim that Jesus was not sinlessly perfect, but the Book of Hebrews is clear that Jesus never sinned. ([Heb. 4:15 & 7:26](#)). In fact, Hebrews makes it clear that if Jesus ever sinned, He would not be any better as a Savior and high priest than the priests of Aaron (see yesterday's devotional).

So, if Jesus is sinlessly perfect, how could He have been "made perfect" and why would He need to be? One way to understand this is to understand that the word "perfect" has different aspects to its meaning. In Greek, the original language of the New Testament, the word perfect is usually the word "*teleo/teleion*" which means perfectly suited for its purpose or its intended end.

Hebrews 5 tells us Jesus was being made perfectly suitable for His purpose or His intended end by suffering and by learning obedience as He suffered. When Jesus was in heaven, in perfect blissful communion with the Father, enjoying the worship of angels, He was sinless and glorious, but He was not a suitable Savior or sympathetic High Priest.

For Jesus to be a suitable Savior, His willingness to obey His Father had to be tested. He had to earn a perfect righteousness for us, in our place, as our representative. Just as Adam was tested in the Garden of Eden and failed, dragging humanity into sin and misery, so Jesus had to be tested. He was tested for forty days in the wilderness and again in the Garden of Gethsemane, resisting temptation and honoring His Father fully to the end.

For Jesus to be a sympathetic High Priest, He needed to experience every kind of temptation, just as we face. By suffering, He knows what it's like to suffer. By being tempted, He understands what it is to be tempted. He can fully sympathize with the human condition because He is the "man of sorrows, acquainted with grief" ([Isaiah 53:3](#)).

So, how could Jesus be "made perfect"? Not by getting rid of any flaws, for He never had any. Rather He was made to be the perfect Savior and High Priest for us, the perfect righteousness, the perfect sacrifice, the perfect sympathetic intercessor and the perfect representative for us before the throne of God. So, instead of puzzling over this seemingly strange expression, we can thank God that Jesus was indeed made perfect for us and for our salvation!