

“The Son and the ‘Sons’”

(Part 2)

Heb. 2:9-18

- INTRO. - We return (this morning) to Heb. 2:9-18. The basic theme of this section has to do with the incarnation of Christ. It has to do with His *relationship* with His people in His incarnation. And as I pointed out last week, many of the heresies that have cropped up in history concerning Christ have related to a denial of *either* His full humanity or His full deity.

- But the Bible clearly teaches what is called “the hypostatic union,” or the teaching that Christ was fully human and fully divine at the same time in His incarnation.

- And this is important because this passage deals with the incarnation and all it means. It is important for us to understand the extent to which God went to win our salvation.

- We must understand, that in order to redeem us from sin, Jesus had to die an atoning death, and in order to do that, He had to become a man. He had to become fully human. And that is exactly what the Bible teaches. In mind and body He was truly human – and nowhere is that vulnerability seen more clearly than in His death on the cross.

- Now, we’re taking this in five parts, and we got to the first three last week. The first thing we saw was:

I. THE SON AS OUR SUBSTITUTE (v. 9)

- Verse 9 says, “But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.”

- The point of v. 9 is that He was made for a while lower than the angels so He could die in our place. He suffered death for us – and that is why He was crowned with glory and honor. The grace of God sent Him to the cross, where He drank the full cup of suffering and death as our substitute.

- The Jews had a difficult time accepting a Messiah who died on a cross, so the author of Hebrews is explaining that Jesus’ substitutionary death was God’s plan all along – and that it was necessary for Jesus to become for a little while lower than the angels – it was necessary for Him to become fully human – in order to die on the cross to pay the penalty for the sins of men.

- And in doing this He accomplished what no angel could ever accomplish. He was able to bring “many sons to glory.” He was able to redeem the fallen race of men. He was able to atone for sin once and for all so that men

could have eternal life – and (ultimately) rule and reign with Him. Secondly we saw:

II. THE SON AS OUR SAVIOR (v. 10)

- Look again at v. 10, “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.”

- Verse 10 is in reference to God the Father. It was God the Father who brought “many sons to glory” through the perfecting of the author of their salvation. The phrase “it is fitting” means “appropriate” or “suitable.” It means that this was all done according to the character and nature of God.

- By the will of God, the Son became the “author of our salvation” through “suffering.” The word for “author” refers to Jesus as the One who conquered death to blaze the trail for others to follow Him into glory. By going to the cross – and ultimately conquering death through His resurrection – He was able to “bring many sons to glory.” Thirdly we saw:

III. THE SON AS OUR SANCTIFIER (vv. 11-13)

- Look with me (again) at v. 11, “For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one

Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren...”

- The word “sanctified” usually refers to growing in Christian maturity but *here* the concept is talking about being set apart for God. In this context, sanctification and justification are used as synonyms.

- The phrase “He who sanctifies” is speaking of Christ, and “those who are sanctified” are believers. And his point (here) is that since the One who sanctifies (Christ) and the ones who are sanctified (believers) are both from one Father, He (Christ) is *not* ashamed to call us His brothers.

- Verses 11-13 focus on the fraternal relationship between the Son and the “sons” – between Jesus Christ and those He has redeemed. The basic premise is that they both come from the same origin.

- That commonality is what creates the fraternal relationship between the Son and the “sons.” It is that oneness that leads the Sanctifier to call the sanctified His brothers.

- And in order to prove this from the OT Scriptures, the author of Hebrews quotes two OT passages: Ps. 22:22 and Is. 8:17b-18. Now, I went through all that extensively last week, so I won’t back through that this morning. But I want to move on (now) to what we did *not* get to last week, so fourthly, we see:

IV. THE SON AS OUR SECURITY (vv. 14-15)

- Look with me at v. 14, “Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.”

- Verses 14-15 deal with the *reason* the incarnation was necessary. The goal of the incarnation was twofold. First, Christ came into the world to “render powerless” the one who held “the power of death, that is, the devil.”

- And in order to accomplish this, He had to die (Himself), and the only way He could do that was to become human. This was the first purpose for His incarnation – to destroy the power of the devil. 1 John 3:8 says, “The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

- But there was a second reason for the incarnation, and that was to free the ones who had been held captive by fear of death all their lives. Death is the greatest fear of men, and Jesus came to free us from that fear.

- But let’s unpack this a little bit more. Go back to v. 14. Notice the word “share.” This is from the Greek word

“koinonia,” which (of course) means “fellowship.” It has the basic meaning of having something in common.

- *Here* the author of Hebrews is saying that all human beings have in common “flesh and blood.” This is something that is common to all men. In fact, the phrase “flesh and blood” became a synonym for men. It actually implies the weakness and frailty of mankind.

- But notice the word “partook” (there). This is a very different word. It is the Greek word “metecho” and that has to do with taking hold of something that is *not* naturally one’s own kind.” Metecho” is a compound word from “meta” meaning “with” and “echo” meaning “to hold.” Thus “to take hold of.”

- In other words, the Son was *not* “flesh and blood” but He took on “flesh and blood” even though it was *not* His natural, original nature. And this was something totally voluntary. He willingly took on that which did *not* naturally belong to Him.

- Now, please understand – He did *not* cease to be what He was before – He *added to that* “flesh and blood” in order that He might die in our place. In His incarnation He was fully God and fully man.

- It is also very important to understand, that although Christ took hold of human nature (in His incarnation) He did it in such a way as to *not* embrace the sin nature of

man. The virgin birth (and being conceived of the HS) allowed Him to become a man without becoming sinful.

- Although all men also share (in common) the sin nature (that has been passed down from Adam), Jesus did *not* hold *that* in common with us. He did *not* partake in *that* aspect of our humanity.

- In v. 17, where it says, “He had to be made like His brethren in all things,” that does *not* include our sinful nature. We know that, because the author of this book clearly declares (in 4:15), that He was “One who has been tempted in all things as *we are*, yet without sin.”

- So He partook of our humanity without taking on our sin nature – but notice *why* He did that: “that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil...”

- The devil had obtained the power of death, and that power had to be broken in order for us to be brought to God. And (of course) the power of death is sin. It is our sin, that results from our sin nature, that creates the fear of death and judgment. So this is why Christ came into this world. By His atoning work on the cross, He was able to destroy the power of death.

- In other words, Christ was able to rob Satan of his most powerful weapon. Like the parable of Luke 11:21ff, the Champion of our salvation invaded the strong man’s

fortress, disarmed him, and took away the keys of sin and death.

- And when you see the word “death” (there in v. 14) you should understand that as including both *physical* death and *spiritual* death (eternal death). Satan held this power because man’s sin condemned him.

- The devil knows that if men continue in their sinful state, they will die and go to hell for their sin. And this is something that has caused great fear throughout history.

- And (of course) Satan wants men to remain in their sin, and to die in that state, because once they die (physically) then their opportunity for eternal salvation will be gone forever.

- But this is why Christ came into this world. He came to provide eternal salvation for us so we won’t have to die in our sin. He came to take away that power of death over us.

- The word for “render powerless” (in the NASB) is the Greek word “katargeo.” This word does *not* mean “to annihilate, or to wipe out.” It means “to render inoperative” or “to make ineffective.” It means to immobilize something. It means to take away its power.

- This is the same word that is used in 1 Cor. 13:8, where it says, “Love never fails; but if *there are gifts of*

prophecy, they will be done away; if *there are* tongues, they will cease; if *there is* knowledge, it will be done away.” The phrase “done away” translates the Greek word “katargeo.”

- So, in a sense, (going back to Heb. 2:14) you *could* say that the power of Satan has been done away with. That powerful weapon of death has been rendered inoperative.

- It’s like taking the atomic trigger out of the nuclear missile. It won’t work anymore. You push the red button and nothing happens. The weapon has been rendered inoperative.

- That’s what Jesus Christ has done to the power of death. How has He done that? By taking away our sin. Because all our sin has been atoned for by His death, there is no longer any power in death (for those who are in Christ Jesus).

- And in order to take away our sin, He had to die. Although it is a paradox, by *death* He defeated *death*. The death of Jesus was a death blow to Satan. By His death He rendered death null and void. He broke this power of Satan once and for all.

- Now, another way to see this, is to see the power of Christ as greater than the power of Satan. John MacArthur says, “If you have a more powerful weapon than your enemy, his weapon becomes useless. You

cannot fight against a machine gun with a bow and arrow.” (He says)

- And the truth of the matter is, that the eternal life that Christ established through the resurrection is more powerful than the weapon of death Satan holds. The resurrection is *not* specifically mentioned here, but it is certainly implied.

- As Bruce points out, “If death had had the last word with him too, how would anyone have supposed that through death he had disabled the prince of death?” It was the resurrection that conquered death.

- And the victory that Christ won through His resurrection also belongs to all those who are in Him. Those who put their faith and trust in Jesus Christ have obtained eternal life – and therefore no longer have any reason to fear death.

- There is never a reason for a genuine believer in Jesus Christ to fear death. That fear has been taken away. The judgment for sin has been taken away. “There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 8:1)

- Satan has nothing on us anymore. He has no power over us anymore. Jesus Christ has rendered his power inoperative. He has removed the sting of death. The sting of death has been removed because our sins have been paid for by Christ.

- Of course, that is exactly what Paul wrote in 1 Cor. 15:55-57, “O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- Jay Adams puts it like this, “What the evil one once was able to do—to bring fear into the heart of the unforgiven sinner—he can do no longer once that sinner is forgiven. He can no longer subject him to **slavery** (to fear) **throughout** (his) **entire lifetime**. That power has been taken away by the blood of Christ’s cross.”

- Look at Heb. 2:15, “...and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.” The word for “deliver” has the idea of releasing someone from bondage. He says that men have been “subject to slavery all their lives” because of the fear of death, but He has come to free us from that bondage.

- And notice what it is that has kept men in bondage. It is the fear of death. Hebrews does *not* say we have been delivered from (physical) death, but that we have been delivered from the *fear* of death.

- That is (no doubt) the greatest fear of men. In the Book of Job, Bildad the Shuhite called death the “king of terrors.” There is no doubt *that* is true. Men fear death more than anything else.

- ILL. – American filmmaker Woody Allen once summed up this fear when he said, “It’s *not* that I’m afraid to die, I just don’t want to be there when it happens.”

- Well, I have news for Woody Allen – he *will* be there when it happens! As we will later see in this book, “...it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment...”

- But the good news of the gospel is, that you don’t have to still be in your sins when you die. You can stand before God fully justified through faith in Jesus Christ.

- Now, I have quoted from 1 Cor. 15, but (really) that entire chapter was written to explain this. The power of the resurrection of Christ destroyed the power of the fear of death.

- And the very last verse of that chapter reads, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not *in vain* in the Lord.”

- We can stand confident (and fully assured) that what we do for the Lord is eternal, (and that it is *not* in vain), because we know He has won our eternal victory through His crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus Christ is our security! He is the One who has conquered death so we can have everlasting life.

- ILL. – Elisabeth Elliott was the famous former missionary and wife of martyr Jim Elliott. She once told the story of following a guide through the jungles of South America. They were traveling along a very primitive path, when all of a sudden the trail dropped into a deep ravine. The only way across was on a tree that had fallen across the ravine.

The guide jumped onto the tree and started nimbly across, but then noticed Elisabeths' hesitation, as she was terrified at the prospect of falling. When he recognized her reluctance, he went back to the edge and took her by the hand. He then led her safely across.

- What she needed at that moment was one who had an obvious mastery of the situation to give her the confidence to go safely across. In a similar way, the Bible tells us that Christ is “the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep (or faced death).” (1 Cor. 15:20)

- That is an agricultural image that speaks of the initial produce of a crop, which gives hope of the full crop to come. In the ultimate, spiritual application Jesus is the first one through death so He can give us assurance and confidence for the day we go through it.

- Ron Phillips writes, “The fear of death is gone forever. It is no longer the great unknown, for He has charted a course through it. It is no longer a leap into the dark, for He has kindled the bright and morning star of the

resurrection. It is no longer a terrible sting, for He has taken the ‘sting of death’ in His own body (1 Cor. 15:51-56).”

- Jesus went into death, and through death, and came out on the other side – therefore He can say, “...because I live, you shall live also.” (John 14:19) It was the resurrection (and ascension) of Christ that rendered death powerless for the believer.

- When we receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, the fear of death no longer exists. We can say (with Paul) “for me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Death simply releases us into the presence of our Lord. It translates us into Paradise – as Jesus told the thief on the cross, “Today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43).

- It is this assurance that has enabled Christian martyrs to boldly face death in Jesus' name throughout church history. It is the victory over death that Christ has won that gives us the courage to stand firm in the faith even if it means losing our physical life.

- Now, the ultimate (and final) overthrow of death (and the devil) will *not* occur until the end of this present age. In Rev. 20 we read where *both* Satan and death will be cast into the lake of fire. There is coming a day when both the devil and his weapon of death will be forever history.

- Until that day, men and women are still subject to physical death, but Christ has removed its terrors. Because the Word of God declares that death can never separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39) we never need to fear death in any way.

- So we see the Son as our substitute, our Savior, our sanctifier, our security – and lastly we see:

V. THE SON AS OUR SYMPATHIZER (vv. 16-18)

- Go with me to v. 16, “For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.” The Son did *not* come to the aid of angels – He came to the aid of His people.

- The phrase “for assuredly” has the meaning of, “everybody knows this” or “as we all know well.” The descendant of Abraham would (technically) refer to the Jews, but since this is in the context of the Book of Hebrews we would expect that. We can (rightfully) broaden out the application to include all men.

- One Bible scholar explains that “in Hebrews the descendants of Abraham include *not only* Israel’s ancestors but also the Christian community, that is, believing Jews and believing Gentiles.”

- Do you remember what God told Abraham, as He was instituting the Abrahamic covenant? In Gen. 12:1-3 we

are told that it was through the seed of Abraham that God intended to bless all the nations of the earth.

- He told Abraham that He would greatly bless him, and he said to him, “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” As Herschal Hobbs puts it, “This was God’s covenant of redemption, a covenant of grace.”

- The Apostle Paul identified this “seed” with Christ Himself (in Gal. 3:16). Jesus (of course) was born a Jew, and Paul went on to say that all those who believe in Him are “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” That’s Gal. 3:29.

- So one way we can interpret v. 16 is to say that Christ did *not* come to redeem angels, but to redeem men. But *not only* did He come to redeem men – He also came to help them when they are tempted.

- The author of Hebrews is continuing to answer the question of *why* Jesus had to become a man – and one very important answer is so that He could become their sympathizer – so He could fully understand their temptations and give them aid when they are tempted.

- Look with me at v. 17, “Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”

- In order to become a “merciful” high priest, He had to be made like us in all things. And (as I have already said) that does *not* include our sinful nature, but it *does* include our vulnerability to temptation.

- Go on to v. 18 (and then we’ll come back and break this down a bit). Verse 18 says, “For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.” He is able to sympathize with, and to help those who are tempted.

- Now, these final two verses of this chapter set up an effective transition into the great central portion of Hebrews, which focuses on Jesus as our great high priest.

- That section will begin (in earnest) in 4:14 and go all the way to 10:25. So we are going to see much more on this theme, but here is where he introduces it. And the bottom line is, that Jesus Christ – the One who suffered in the flesh – knows your sorrow and your pain. He understands your temptations.

- Listen, no Christian can rightly sing, “Nobody knows the trouble I’ve seen”! NO, we have to go on and sing, “Nobody knows but Jesus!”

- Jesus came to perfectly identify with us. He came to understand our human weaknesses. He experienced what we experience. And in 4:15 the author of Hebrews will say, “...we do not have a high priest who cannot

sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as *we are, yet* without sin.”

- It is because of this that He is our merciful and faithful high priest. Jesus felt everything we feel – and more! He even went *beyond* what we feel by enduring the wrath of God on sin (as He hung on the cross). He went beyond our suffering and pain, as He took the weight of all the sins of mankind on Himself as He died.

- In fact, that is why we see the word “propitiation” in v. 17. He did this “to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” That word means “to make satisfaction for sins.”

- It refers to the function of the high priest on the Day of Atonement. Every year the high priest would enter into the Holy Place (in the Temple) and would carry the blood of the sacrifice into the Holy of Holies. He would sprinkle that blood on the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant to atone for the sins of all the people.

- And what the author of Hebrews is going to declare, is that Jesus Christ became our High Priest, and He made a once-for-all atonement for all sins. His sacrifice would *not* be an *annual* sacrifice, but would atone for sin for all time. His propitiation for sin would be final and complete.

- He did this to reconcile us to God. In fact, the word for “propitiation” and the word for “reconciliation” come from the same root. These words can be used as

synonyms. The concept of atonement also comes into play here.

- And as one author explains, “atonement has to do with the restoration of a relationship marred by sin, and this encompasses both expiation, the removal of sin, and propitiation, the averting of divine wrath.”

- And notice the connection between the mercy seat and the fact that He came as a merciful high priest. As Ron Phillips rightly observes, “He is our mercy seat where we may come before Him to cry for help.”

- He is our faithful high Priest who comes to our aid when we are tempted in any way. The word for “come to the aid” (in v. 18) is the Greek word “boetheo.” It is a word that is often used of running to help a crying child. He is faithful to come to the aid of His children who cry out to Him.

- In Matt. 15:25 this word was used by the Syro-Phoenician woman, who cried out to Jesus, “Lord help me...” And any time you are tempted, you can cry out to Him in the same way and He will help you.

- He is our faithful and sympathetic high Priest. And I believe the word for “tempted” (there in v. 18) refers *not only* to any temptation to sin, but also to any kind of trial. It literally means “to be put to the test.” Any test – any trial of any kind – He is there to help you.

- My friend listen, our God is *not* a God who is detached from His creation. He is *not* One who is powerful and holy, but indifferent to us. He is a God who cares and He is a God who is there to come to our aid.

- As John MacArthur puts it, “He is the God we can go to *not only* for salvation but for sympathy.” Jesus Christ is our merciful and faithful high Priest.

- Do you know Him today? This only applies if you know Him as Lord and Savior. Is He your high Priest? Has He made propitiation for your sins? Has that propitiation for sin been applied to your life by faith in Him?

- MAKE APPEAL

- PRAYER