

EXPOSITION OF HEBREWS

Message #5

Hebrews 2:5-18

Following a very serious warning to believers not to drift away from the great grace salvation which is found in Jesus Christ, the writer jumps right back into the theme of **the superiority of Jesus Christ to the angels**. Most Bible commentators grammatically view the “for” (γάρ) of **verse 5** as linking us back to the paragraph of 1:5-14 and not to the warning of 2:1-4. However, we can certainly see from this the importance of not drifting from the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, especially when it comes to understanding His humanity.

Angels are ministering spirits without bodies and without limitations and when Jesus Christ was actually here on earth in a physical body, it would appear as though He was slightly inferior to the angels. But that was in no way the case. There were powerful reasons why Jesus Christ took on humanity and in this section we learn some of those reasons. **God the Son does not only reveal God before man, He represents man before God !**

We may notice from **verse 5**, that one of the great points of the previous discussion concerns the “world to come.” This is a reference to a new world order that will not be subject to angels but to Jesus Christ when He reigns on this earth. One day God’s Son will rule here on God’s earth. The angels worshipped Jesus Christ at His incarnation (1:6), and they will also worship Him at His coronation when He rules the world. God has not promised that angels will rule this world, but He has promised that men will rule the world along with His Sovereign God/Man Son.

In this passage God presents some great truths concerning His Son’s humanity:

JESUS CHRIST IS THE SUPERIOR SON OF GOD WHO WILL RULE THE WORLD, AND HE HAD SOME VERY SPECIFIC REASONS FOR COMING INTO THIS WORLD AS A HUMAN .

Just because Jesus Christ became human in no way lessens who He is. Just because Jesus Christ became human does not make Him inferior to anyone or anything. **This passage is about the importance of Christ’s humanity .** He became a man like we are and this text answers why. What was His humanity all about?

We may observe that more than once in this text it is clearly stated that His humanity state was for “a little while” (**2:7, 9**).

There are four reasons spelled out in these verses why Jesus Christ took humanity on Himself:

REASON #1 – Christ’s humanity enabled Him to redeem lost humanity before He rules the world so He could share it with them. **2:5-9**

The quotation in this text comes from Psalm 8:4-6 which is a Psalm of David. In that Psalm, David is totally humbled by the thought that Almighty God would actually share His power and His glory and His creation with humans. He could not get over the fact that God would actually allow man to share in the rule over things He had made. In order for God to actually do this, something dramatic must change for sinful man.

God originally created man to have dominion and power over His creation. But man forfeited his position. To this point, we do not see man reigning and dominating the creation of God. Man has a problem in that he sinned against God and forfeited his high position. In fact, man has a hard time controlling himself, much less all of God's creation. As Kent Hughes said, man "cannot rule over himself, let alone others" (*Hebrews*, Vol. 1, p. 58).

This is why Jesus Christ came to this world. We don't see sinful man in the exalted position and condition he should be in, but we do see Jesus who came into this world to suffer and die and resolve our sin problem.

At the present time we do not physically see everything subject to Jesus Christ because He is not now physically here. However, when He was here He did demonstrate that He was God with perfect sovereign control over all creation. He showed He had total authority over fish (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 17:24-27; John 21:1-11); over birds (Luke 22:34, 60); over wild beasts (Mark 11:1-17). He spoke to storms and He took a walk on top of water.

Man was originally crowned with the glory and honor of God, but he lost that crown and Jesus Christ came to give it back (verse 7). Man sinned against God and he has a big problem and so does all creation. It isn't functioning right. Animals are not subject to man; they must be tamed or trained. This is not the way it was supposed to be. Jesus Christ came to change all of that. **He suffered and died to offer grace to "everyone" (verse 9).** **The death of Jesus Christ is mentioned here for the first time in the book of Hebrews.**

It is true that He may have been made a little lower than the angels for a short time, but what He accomplished in a very short time was way beyond anything any angel could do. **He tasted death for everyone to offer God's grace to every sinner.** This One, now seated at the right hand at the throne of God, became a man in order to die. **Jesus Christ had an incarnation that brought Him humiliation that would lead to exaltation.** He did this so that one day He could share His reign with those who would believe on Him.

Angels cannot die. Angels cannot save lost sinners. Angels cannot restore men to the high honor and dominion. Jesus could and Jesus did.

You may feel like a zero, a nobody, as you walk through this intimidating world. Just remember this, if you are a believer, one day this world will be subject to you.

REASON #2 – Christ's humanity enabled Him to bring many sons to glory through His suffering before He does rule the world. **2:10-13**

Just as the work of creation is from God, so is the work of salvation. God the Father and this God/Person, Jesus Christ, who created all things for His own purposes, also became the author of salvation that included terrible suffering. He spoke creation into existence; He suffered salvation into existence. The whole purpose of Christ coming into this world was salvation (**verse 10**).

In **verse 10**, we read that Jesus Christ is the “author” of salvation. That word author (αρχηγος) is one that means He is the originating founder and beginning of salvation (*Greek Lexicon*, p. 62). Later in this very book, we will be told to fix our eyes on this author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2).

Now what we learn here is that the author of our salvation was perfected in some way by this whole plan. **The word “perfected” (τελειωω) means that Christ was perfectly completed and fulfilled as being the author of our salvation through this suffering package.** Do you get this point? Jesus Christ was actually perfected or completed in being the author of our salvation, which meant He had to endure terrible suffering. By taking on humanity as God, He was completely equipped for God’s complete work of redemption .

Verse 11 gives us more reason why Christ was fulfilled in doing this - because this whole sanctifying plan was from the Father . In order for sinful people to be called sons of God, they must be set apart as holy. In order for that to happen, Jesus Christ, the Sanctifier, must suffer and die so that He could sanctify sinners and then could call them His brothers. The term sanctification, in the book of Hebrews, is always associated with Jesus Christ and not the Holy Spirit (**2:11**; 9:12, 14; 10:9, 10, 14, 29; 13:12). As W. H. Griffith Thomas says, its meaning is consecration, not purification; it refers to position, not condition (*Let Us Go On*, p. 35). Jesus Christ is the only One who can make us one with God.

It is interesting that **verse 12** is a quote from Psalm 22, which starts out “My God, My God why has Thou forsaken Me?” Here is one answer; so that His brethren could be God’s congregation and sing praises to Him.

In **verse 13**, we see how He coped with the suffering; He put His trust in His Father and that is how we cope too.

REASON #3 – Christ’s humanity enabled Him to destroy the devil and deliver us from death . **2:14-16**

Satan uses death to try to frighten God’s people, because death is directly connected to our sin.

Now God’s people are not angels, they are flesh and blood; and because they are flesh and blood and because they are sinners they must die. Jesus Christ came to take away the fear of death.

Most people live their entire lives in fear of death. Most people, especially unbelievers, have all kinds of fears. People can be afraid of the pain. People can be afraid of the separation from what we know and people we know. People can be afraid of the unknown. People can be afraid of not being anything after they die. People can be afraid of everlasting punishment.

God’s people do not need to live their lives in fear of death because of one reason - Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came and died so when we sinners die we have nothing to fear. Christ’s death does not give help and hope to angels, but it certainly does to God’s people. We have a solidarity with Jesus Christ. Nothing can separate us from His love (Romans 8:33-39).

REASON #4 – Christ’s humanity enabled Him to be the merciful and sympathetic High Priest to and for His people. **2:17-18**

Jesus Christ is called “Priest” for the first time here in Hebrews.

Jesus Christ has a oneness with us and in us as our own High Priest. There are three amazing High Priest ministries that Jesus Christ has with every one of His people:

High Priest Ministry #1 - Jesus Christ is our High Priest Personal Mediator. **2:17a**

The Apostle Paul said, “There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men” (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Jesus Christ did not just resemble a human being, He was a human being in every way and one reason why He needed to be a human being in every way is because this would enable Him to be our merciful and faithful High Priest as our mediator in everything pertaining to God.

Now let us see if we can illustrate what it takes to be a merciful mediator. Suppose you are driving home after church and you see someone lying alongside the road who is not conscious and has no one to assist him. The person is totally helpless and hopeless unless you stop and help. If you stop to help, you are merciful. If you do not, you are unmerciful. You are the sole lifeline mediator. There is not one thing that person can do to save himself; you must stop and help. That is mercy.

Jesus Christ saw us in a totally helpless and hopeless condition. There was not one thing any of us could do to save ourselves. He saw us from heaven and He stepped out of heaven and out of all of His glory to come here to be our lifeline to God. He is our merciful mediator, our lifeline link to God.

But not only is He our merciful mediator, He is our faithful mediator. Two things are needed to be our mediator: A. Faithfulness to God in every way; B. Mercy to us in every way. He became our High Priest by faithfully bearing our sin and God’s wrath. He took our sin so we could take His heaven.

High Priest Ministry #2 - Jesus Christ is our High Priest Sin Propitiator. **2:17b**

The doctrine of propitiation is a doctrine that assumes the existence of the wrath of God and the need to legally satisfy or appease the wrath of God. Paul said in Romans 3:25 that the only place where God’s wrath is legally appeased is in the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the legal propitiatory in the case of God’s wrath against us, and by His shed blood He fully meets all the demands of God and He takes away our sin.

High Priest Ministry #3 - Jesus Christ is our High Priest Temptation Helper. **2:18**

Most people do not understand this temptation matter as it relates to us and as it relates to Jesus Christ.

The word “tempt” (πειραζω) is one that shows up several times in Hebrews: **2:18**; 4:15; 11:17, 37. The word is used in a variety of ways. It may be used in a good sense to refer to a test that proves someone, or it may be used in a bad sense to refer to a temptation to sin (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 351).

Now the point pertaining to Jesus Christ is profound if we apply it to ourselves. We have been put to the test and tempted and failed time and time again. Jesus Christ was put to the test and tempted and never failed one time. He, then, becomes our perfect High Priest.

When we fail He is able to help us in that we look to Him to restore our relationship with God because He never did fail. He is able to perfectly come to our aid because we can look to Him for the cleansing we need to restore fellowship with God.

In order for Jesus Christ to have these High Priestly ministries, He had to temporarily come to this world in human form. No angel could do what He did. No angel can forgive us our sins. We see Jesus Christ. He is superior to everything; and one day He will rule the world, and the amazing thing is, He will let us rule the world with Him.