

Hebrews

Hebrews 2:14-18 – Part II

October 26, 2008

- I. Jesus – One of us. The Basis Of Christ's Humanity.
 - A. **Hebrews 2:11-18** . . . 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, [12] saying, "I will proclaim Your name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will sing Your praise." [13] And again, "I will put my trust in Him." And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given me." [14] Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself (*Jesus*) likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. [16] For assuredly He (*Jesus*) does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. [17] Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [18] 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.

- II. A Look At The Message Of **Hebrews 2:14-15**
 - A. **Hebrews 2:14-15** . . . Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself (*Jesus*) likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.
 1. Christ's humanity is a significant theme throughout the book of Hebrews. In fact, just last Sunday we looked at Christ's humanity in relation to his being our brother and we being his brothers and sisters. Now again today, the first statements in this section that we are examining speak to us of Christ's humanity. Therefore, I want to talk about this reality today in an effort to help us grasp the significance of Christ taking on humanity and becoming human like us.

2. The **first** important significance of Christ's humanity is that this is God stooping to our level so we can, in our humanity, understand Him, get to know Him, and enter into relationship with Him:
 - a. To help us grasp the significance of this, I want us to begin our examination of Christ's humanity by looking at history – Bible history that is – and we will start in **Genesis 3:6-11** . . .
 - (1) [6]When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.
 - (a) What we see in this verse is the first act of human rebellion against God's will and word.
 - (b) Adam and Eve rebelled against God by eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They chose lawlessness over submission to the will and word of God.
 - (2) [7] Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.
 - (a) Notice how their single lawless act affected their thinking! They suddenly realized things they had never before thought about or considered or seen.
 - (b) In other words, their act of rebellion against God profoundly altered the way they thought about and saw God, themselves, and the world around them.
 - (3) [8] They heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden. [9] Then the LORD God called to the man, and said to him, "Where are you?" [10] Adam said, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself." [11] And God said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" **Notice three things here:**
 - (a) **First**, when God showed up in the Garden, Adam and Eve tried to get away from God – or at the very least they tried to avoid being in His presence.
 - (b) **Second**, Adam and Eve hid because they were afraid of God. This represented a huge change in their

thinking. They went from no fear of God and no awareness of their nakedness to enough fear of God as to want to hid rather than face Him. And what is it they feared? They feared what God might say or do in response to their disobedience to His will and word.

- (c) **Third**, God confirmed that their changed thinking was the result of their lawlessness – of their rebelling against the will and word of God.
- (4) **What is my point here?** God created us to think a certain way. Adam and Eve thought that way right up until they rebelled. After creating us, God placed us in an environment that would enable us to think the way He created us to think (*i.e.*, *Garden of Eden*). However, we see from the scripture I just read that sin, disobedience to God, rebellion against God, lawlessness or whatever else you want to call it significantly alters our thinking about God, ourselves, and the world around us. And as I am certain you are well aware, this alteration in thinking does not improve us. Instead, it ruins us.
- (a) Therefore, beginning with Adam and Eve’s first disobedience to the will and word of God, humanity has taken the downward path of intellectual ruin – a path that progressively moves us away from the way God created us to think.
 - (b) And this downward path has continued to alter the way we humans think about God, ourselves, and the world around us. Indeed, history demonstrates that we have become progressively man centered and increasingly rebellious against the will and word of God. The Flood and the current state of our own nation are two examples of this.
 - (c) There is one more point that I want to press home here before moving to my next example from history. **FEAR of God’s response** to our rebellion and disobedience is shown by the Bible to be the first outcome of human thinking damaged by lawlessness.

- b. My **second** example from history takes us to the time of Moses and the Israelites. When God revealed His presence to Israel at the time of giving them the Law, **FEAR of God** – like unto

Adam and Eve's fear – became the most significant influence in how the average Israelite saw and thought about God's presence.

- (1) However, by the time we get this far along the path of human history, we see that the Israelites fear of God was noticeably greater and more irrational than Adam and Eve's.
 - (a) In fear, Adam and Eve hid themselves at first, but in the end they came out and talked to God – face-to-face.
 - (b) By the time God came to the Israelites to give them the Law, the accumulated deterioration of human thinking was such that the Israelites did not even want to press on through their fear in order to enter into the presence of God themselves. They simply wanted to avoid God's presence altogether.
- (2) However, in spite of the downward spiral in human thinking, God did something wonderful at this point in history. Instead of expressing anger at Israel for wanting to avoid His manifest presence, He showed compassion. In **Deuteronomy 18:15-19** we read of God's compassionate, gracious, loving and even humble response to Israel's messed up thinking.
 - (a) **Deuteronomy 18:15-19** . . . The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him. [16] This is according to all that you asked of the Lord your God in Horeb on the day of the assembly, saying, 'Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, let me not see this great fire anymore, or I will die.' [17] The Lord said to me, 'They have spoken well. [18] 'I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. [19] 'It shall come about that whoever will not listen to My words which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him.
 - (b) God's compassionate answer to our rebellion induced and fear driven messed up thinking – concerning Him, ourselves, and our world – is to become one of us,

dwell among us, and speak to us as someone we don't need to be irrationally afraid of.

(c) **In other words, Jesus Christ is to be to us what God was to Adam and Eve before they disobeyed – a god we can relate to without the anxiety of fear.**

c. My **third** and final example from history comes from the NT. In **Romans 12:2** we read that one of the key ingredients to not being conformed to this world **is to be transformed** in our thinking from the way we used to think to the way we ought think **by means of a renewed mind**.

(1) You see, the mind that has been sliding down the path of intellectual ruin – a path that progressively moves us away from the way God created us to think – must be transformed if it is to think rational and right thoughts about God, self, and the world around it.

(2) What this means is that one of the requirements for moving away from our rebellion induced irrational fear of God – a fear that makes us want to avoid Him or distrust Him or see Him as evil – is to be transformed by the renewing of our intellectual processes.

(3) Isaiah is a great example of a renewed mind. When God revealed Himself to Isaiah, Isaiah's response included fear. However, Isaiah's fear did not drive him from the presence of God but rather gave him clearer thinking about God and himself in relation to God.

d. In our world today, you may not think this kind of fear is a problem among the unbelievers you know. Consider this: it is my opinion that the general population in our world today has tried to solve their problem of ruined thinking and irrational fears of God by:

(1) either forming a concept of God that somehow comforts them in spite of their behavior

(2) or by numbing themselves to the reality (*manifest presence*) or relevancy of God. This numbing of ourselves to the manifest presence of God is being helped along by the ill-use of science and philosophy.

- e. Okay, what is the point I have been trying to make?
 - (1) We are flesh and blood – so God, in the person of Jesus Christ, stooped to our level by becoming flesh and blood in order to enable us to understand Him and come to Him.
 - (2) In our natural, unconverted state we have been sliding down the path of intellectual ruin – a path that progressively fills us with irrational fears of God and motivates us to avoid God. Yet God deals with us, not in anger but in compassion – a compassion that has led Him to become one of us so we will not be afraid to come to Him and hear what He has to say and do what is required to be reconciled to Him so we can enter into fellowship with Him.
 - (3) Think about this – the eternal, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-wise, everywhere present, creator God has – like a loving father, had compassion on us and not dealt with us according to our sins or rewarded us according to our iniquities. Of all the compassion He has on us, the one compassionate act I want us to think about today is His act of taking on our humanity in order to help us come back to Him.

- 3. The **second** important significance of Christ’s humanity as shown in these two verses is that this is God freeing us from the power of sin and the devil:
 - a. **Hebrews 2:14-15** . . . Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself (*Jesus*) likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, [15] and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.
 - b. Because Christ became like us, he was able, through the sacrifice of death, to break the controlling choke hold the devil has over humanity – the fear of death.
 - (1) Once again we see how fear keeps us from thinking as God created us to think and in so doing, hinders us from coming to God.
 - (2) But Christ, being God in human flesh, died for sinners in order to bring them to God. Yet he did not stay dead.

Christ rose from the dead. And it is in his **dying and rising** that something significant has happened.

- (a) Christ defeated the choke hold the devil has on our thinking. The devil can not keep us on the downward path of intellectual ruin. He has no power to keep us living in irrational fear of God. We can break out of this destruction condition – because of the grace of God and the work of Christ in his death and resurrection.
- (b) But there is more. Christ, in dying and rising has given us proof that we too, brothers and sisters of Christ, will rise again to live with God forever. Death can no more keep us in the grave than it kept Christ in the grave. And how do we know? Because Christ, who is one of us, is risen just as he said.

B. Conclusion:

1. God has become one of us so we can feel safe in coming to Him
2. And God, in becoming one of us, and in dying and rising on our behalf, has broken the power of the devil over us. We who are in Christ are no longer in bondage to the devil. We have been set free to serve our Heavenly Father.