

Hebrews

Hebrews 2:14-18 – Part III

November 2, 2008

I. Jesus – One of us. The Application 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 2:16-18**

- A. **Hebrews 2:16** . . . For assuredly He (*Jesus*) does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.
1. To get the full picture of what God is saying to us in this verse we must look back to the previous verses – **verses 11-15**.
 - a. As we have already seen from our study of these verses over the past two weeks, Jesus became one of us so we could become like him in relation to God – brothers and sisters of Christ and children of God.
 - b. In **verse 14** we see that one of the reasons Jesus took on our humanity was to become our sacrifice for sin – paying our penalty for sin in our place so we could live forever with God in His eternal kingdom. And of course we owed this penalty because of our sinfulness.
 - c. Now returning to **verse 16** we read that Jesus did not provide this kind of help to angels, but to the descendants of Abraham.

And who are the descendants of Abraham? The Jews, for sure. But also those who live by faith – as God makes abundantly clear in **Romans 4:13-17**.

2. What is the point God is making here in **Hebrews 2:16**?
 - a. Jesus did not become like the angels in order to help those angels who rebelled against God.
 - (1) And it is plain to see that the rebellious angel's situation is dire – for they have not only been thrown out of Heaven, they are condemned to eternal damnation in the Lake of Fire.
 - (2) What this means is that there are a number of angels (believed by many Bible scholars to be 1/3 of the angels) who are in a situation similar to ours when it comes to their relationship with God and their eternal destiny. Yet Jesus did not become one of them in order to help them.
 - b. But, Jesus did become one of us in order to help us. Now the fact that he only gives help to the descendants of Abraham – that is, those who live by faith in God as Abraham did – verifies that his help is conditional rather than unconditionally universal.
 - (1) Think about this. God, through Jesus Christ, has not as yet and, according to the scriptures, will not ever come to the aid of fallen angels.
 - (2) Yet God, through Jesus Christ, has come to our aid – that is, to the aid of every human being who will repent of their rebellion against God, put their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation from their sin, and become like Christ in how they live day-to-day. This is a marvelous truth! Consider:
 - (a) God made us in His own image, not the angels. We read in **Genesis 1:27** . . . God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.
 - (b) God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life – **John 3:16**. Nowhere in scripture does it say God loved the angels in this way.
 - c. Now I suppose this truth could make us feel special,
 - (1) for as we see from this verse in Hebrews, we have something from God the angels don't have and never will have.

- (2) We're on God's "A" list – and the angels aren't.
- (3) God wants to adopt us back into His family – whereas He is turning His back on the angels.
- (4) Sure, God has made us a little lower than the angels for a time, but one day we will sit side-by-side with Christ and rule with him – and that includes ruling over the angels.
- (5) All this must mean we are pretty special to God! So why shouldn't we enjoy this exalted position since we have it?
- d. We should enjoy this exalted position – at least we who have repented of our rebellion against God and have put our faith in Christ for salvation and are pressing forward at becoming like Christ in our day-to-day living.
 - (1) However, I want to caution us against the kind of "feeling special" that seems to be prevalent in our day –
 - (a) a kind of "feeling special" that has more to do with pride (*I'm somebody*) than humility,
 - (b) or with feeling good about ourselves (*I'm special to someone who is very important*) rather than feeling good about God.
 - (2) Instead, let us speak of being special as those who know we are loved and saved by the **grace** and **mercy** of God, and not because of some unique worthiness of our own.
 - (a) When we speak of God choosing us over the angels, may we do so with a genuine recognition of our unworthiness to be chosen,
 - (b) and a genuine sense of compassion and sadness for the plight of the angels rather than a righteous condemnation over them getting what they deserve.
 - (3) So what is my point? We have every reason to rejoice that God has chosen to save us and that we have an exalted position in Christ with God – and rejoice we ought. But may we always rejoice with a healthy sense of humility and heartfelt sense of gratitude toward God for giving us what we don't deserve.

B. **Hebrews 2:17-18** . . . 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.

1. [17a] Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things
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 - a. We might want to ask **WHY** the omnipotent, omniscient God “**HAD**” to be made like us in all things in order to fulfill His purposes for us?
 - b. For whatever reason, and I don’t know the reason, God decided that we should be saved by means similar to the way we got lost – a willful human activity.
 - (1) In Adam and Eve’s case, their willful human activity was the result of rebellion against God.
 - (2) In Christ’s case, his willful human activity was in submission to the will and word of God.
 - (3) Both Adam, Eve, and Christ were born without sin.
 - (a) Adam and Eve’s willful rebellion against God turned them into sinners and made all who came after them born sinners. Their sin separated them and us from God.
 - (b) Christ’s willful submission to God meant that when he died, he bore the sin of the world. Yet in his death he made a way for us to be reconciled to God.
 - c. And the great truth I want us to see here is that God chose to bring us back to Himself through a human being just as the devil chose to turn us against God through a human being. This was first prophesied in **Genesis 3:14-15**. Therefore, it was by God’s choosing that Jesus had to be made like His brethren in all things.
2. [17b] 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.
 - a. This is the first mention here in Hebrews of Christ being our high priest. But this is another one of the themes that shows up again and again in the book of Hebrews.
 - b. Notice the words “so that.” God is telling us here that
 - (1) Christ took on our humanity so that he would become the kind of high priest we could identify with and find comfort in
 - (2) as well as being the one who would go before God on our behalf and deal with our sin problem so that we could be reconciled to God.

- c. As the kind of high priest we can identify with and find comfort in, God points out here that Christ was both merciful and faithful.
 - (1) **Merciful** points to Christ's compassion, sympathy, gentleness, and humbleness in dealing with us. As is so clearly stated in John 3:17, God did not send Jesus into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.
 - (2) **Faithful** speaks of Christ's steadfastness, reliability, and unwavering trustworthiness in carrying out his duties. As the writer of Hebrews says in **7:25** . . . Jesus Christ is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He **always lives** to make intercession for them.
 - d. As the kind of high priest who represents us before God, he went before God to make **propitiation** for our sins. This word propitiation is found four other times in the NT (Romans 3:25, Hebrews 9:5, I John 2:2, 4:10). Every time it appears it speaks of Christ's work of restoring our broken relationship with God. As Paul writes in **II Corinthians 5:18-19** . . . Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, [19] namely, that **God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.
3. [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.
- a. In this statement, God goes a step further in giving us reason to identify with Christ as our high priest. Jesus not only took on our humanity, he experienced the full impact of our humanity.
 - (1) Consider: Jesus experienced physical, mental and emotional suffering. He experienced tiredness, hunger, thirst, misunderstanding, rejection, criticism, degrading comments, scorn, verbal abuse, lies about his character and family lineage, physical attacks, disrespect, hatred, abandonment, loneliness, and persecution. **In all these things and in many more ways he was tempted to reject God's way and look out for his own interests his own way.**

- (2) And I suspect most of us know little of the level of temptation or the power of the temptations he had to face and say no to. Why? Because we know little of the level of holiness and obedience to God he practiced – day in and day out.
 - (3) And yet, it was Christ's humanity that made him vulnerable to temptation. It was Christ's temptations that brought him to that place where he understands how we feel and think and want to respond when tempted. And it was Christ's refusal to give in to these temptations, that is his victory over every temptation, that enables him to help us gain the victory when we are tempted.
 - (a) As the **Psalmist** said in **Psalms 46:1**, he is our refuge and our strength, abundantly available to give help when we are in trouble.
 - (b) And as Paul wrote in **Romans 8:37**, in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.
4. Is there anyone to help us, one who understands our hearts
When the thorns of life have pierced them till they bleed:
One who sympathizes with us, and in wondrous love imparts
Just the very, very blessing that we need?

Yes, there's one, only one,
The blessed, blessed Jesus, He's the one.
When afflictions crush the soul,
And waves of trouble roll,
And you need a friend to help you, He's the one!

5. In every temptation, Christ resisted and came out victorious. And in gaining the victory, he became our Conquering leader. Therefore, he is not only able to sympathize – he is able to give the kind of aid we need to be victorious over temptation and sin.

III. Conclusion

- A. Jesus was made like us in all things so that we might be made like him. He took on our humanity so we could take on his likeness – imperfectly in this life and perfectly in the next. He became weak so we

could become strong. He endured suffering, affliction, and pain so that we might have eternal joy. He died so we could live forever.

- B. Do you love Jesus? Are you awed by him? Do you speak of your love and awe to others? Magnify the Lord with me. Lift him high for all to see. Let them know that our mighty God makes His home in you and me. Live your life in holiness. Show for love and faithfulness. Speak God's truth to everyone so that all may know of Him.