

## Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

### Why God Became Man

Scripture: Hebrews 2:9-18

Code: 80-210

All very familiar with the phrase that gets repeated so often at this time of the year, people say may you experience the spirit of Christmas. I don't know how many times I've heard it. I don't know how many times I've seen it on cards and other expressions of sentiment. I suppose enough times to ask the question what do you think people mean by that? Well, for Scrooge, the spirit of Christmas was a ghost. To the liquor industry, it should be the spirits of Christmas. They are going to be spending tens of millions of dollars, already are, to sell all the alcohol they can so that people can enjoy the spirits of Christmas. For some, the spirit of Christmas is going home. It's sort of togetherness, nostalgia, memories and calling a truce in all of the cases of conflict and quarrel that often tear up families. And for some people the spirit of Christmas is to let Hallmark say what you can't say very well to people you'd like to say it to or feel obligated to say it to, to get all those cards to send to people you know are going to send you cards because they know you are going to send them a card.

And there will be about four billion of those exchanged. One little boy said that the spirit of Christmas was good sportsmanship and that was true because he needed to learn how to be a good sport because he never got what he asked for. For some people, the spirit of Christmas is fun. It's a party. For some people though on the other hand, it's just the opposite. It's a very, very sad time because Christmas seems to surface all of the sorrow and suffering and pain of life. Earl Willer, some years ago, wrote of such sadness. He wrote a little poem that goes like this, *Christmas is a bitter day for mothers who are poor, the wistful eyes of children are daggers to endure. Though shops are crammed with playthings, enough for everyone, if a mother's purse is empty, it might as well be none. My purse is full of money but I cannot buy a toy, only a wreath of holly for the grave of little boy.*

For some people Christmas is a very hard time. And for others, it's a time when you say thanks for just simple basic things. G.K. Chesterton said many years ago when we're children, we're grateful for those who fill our stockings with toys. Now that we are adults, we ought to be grateful to God for filling our stockings with legs. Not everybody is so privileged. Mostly though, the spirit of Christmas is about giving and I think when people talk about the spirit of Christmas they probably refer to giving. It's a time for giving everything from the simplest piece of five-cent candy to the most extravagant kind of gift and everything in between. And I think that's probably what people mean. It's kind of a giving spirit but that isn't really the true spirit of Christmas either, certainly not from a Christian standpoint. The true spirit of Christmas, I think was understood by Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, the forerunner to Jesus who when she met Mary and new that Mary had in her womb the Messiah, said blessed is the fruit of your womb and she blessed the Christ child still in the womb of Mary. And

certainly Mary understood the spirit of Christmas when she said my soul exalts the Lord. My spirit rejoices in God, my Savior. And Zachariah the father of John understood the spirit of Christmas when he said blessed be the Lord, God who has raised up the horn of salvation for us. And even the angel of the Lord who said there is born for you a savior who is Christ the Lord, understood the spirit of Christmas and then suddenly the Bible says a multitude of angels praising God and glorifying God, saying glory to God in the highest. They understood the spirit of Christmas.

And Simeon, the old man who blessed God and said mine eyes have seen thy salvation as he looked into the face of the baby Jesus. He understood the spirit of Christmas. And Anna, the old lady in the temple who gave thanks to God for the redeemer, she understood it. The spirit of Christmas is to thank God for the gift of Jesus Christ. That's the right spirit of Christmas. Praise for the gift of the Savior. Even the wise men came to worship him, it says in Matthew 2:2. Worshipping the Savior is the spirit of Christmas. That's the only true attitude towards this great event. As we think about that, being thankful to God for the Savior, turning the Bible to Hebrews 2 and I want to kind of continue a little in the vein in which I've spoken at the concert each time, talking about Christ as Savior and I want to do it in a very simple and clear and straightforward way.

And I find a wonderful text of Scripture. This is a portion of the Bible written by God to us. And in this particular section in Hebrews 2:9, down to the end of the chapter, you have God's own statement on the identity of the Savior, Jesus Christ and understanding this will put us in the true spirit of Christmas, which is to thank God for sending us the Savior. No discussion of the Christmastime, no discussion of the birth of Christ the Savior is complete without understanding what it means that he is the Savior. What it means that he came to save his people from their sins. And this particular portion of Scripture helps us through that understanding.

In fact, the writer lays out for us five perfections of Jesus, five ways to view him as Savior. It's not, while clear, it's not just a simplistic thought to understand Jesus as Savior but rather it is a rich, rich thought filled with all kinds of meaning. And the writer here gives us five perfections of Jesus that prove to us he is the only savior and the perfect savior. As I said in the message at the concert, if you didn't hear it you'll hear it tonight. There have been many through history and even some today who claim to be the savior of the world. But only one qualifies and that one is Jesus Christ because of the very perfections that are indicated in this portion of Scripture. He proves himself here to be the only savior, the only one who can save us from our sins, who can rescue us from hell, from the curse that is on us because of our violation of the law of God. Only he is the perfect savior. No one else and the perfections that make him so are given to us in this wonderful text.

I'm going to put it under several simple terms that you can remember I hope. Number one, he is the perfect savior because he is our substitute. He is the perfect savior because he is our substitute. Let's start in verse 9. *But we do see him that is Jesus, who has been made for a little while, lower than the angels. Because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor that by the grace of God, he*

*might taste death for everyone.* Now here is the first reason why Jesus is a perfect savior. Because he is our substitute, that is he tasted death for everyone. That is the heart of the Christian gospel. And what does that statement mean? It means everything to us. It embodies the whole of our gospel message - the Good News to the world. Jesus died for everyone. That's what it's saying.

He became our substitute. He died in our place. That is the essence of the Christian message. The good news is you should die for your sin. You can't without spending eternity in hell and in eternal death, but Jesus sent by God died in your place, paid the penalty for your sin in full and thus you can be reconciled to God, sins forgiven and have the hope of eternal heaven. That's the Christian good news.

Now let's look at it a little more carefully. What does it mean that he might taste death for every man? Well first of all, let's look at the fact of his humiliation. His humiliation is described in verse 9. The fact of it, it says *he was made for a little while, lower than the angels* was Jesus. A little while - that's exactly a proper translation here. *He was made for a little while, lower than the angels.* Some translations say he was made a little lower than the angels but the actual term in the Greek means for a little while.

His nature was not changed. He did not cease to become God. He was not lowered in terms of his essential nature. He is always the eternal God, the second person of the trinity. But he was for a little while made lower or for actually 33 years. He was made lower than the angels. Always he had been higher than the angels. He is the creator of the angels. He is the ruler of the angels. He is the one worshipped by the angels. The one adored by the angels. The one served by the angels. But for a little while, he became lower than the angels. And when you go lower than the angels, you come to humanity. He became a man.

Back in chapter 1 of Hebrews, it tells us that in verse 4, he was much better than the angels. He had inherited a more excellent name than the angels. Namely the Son of God as verse 5 indicates. And verse 6 says, all the angels of God worshipped him and verse 7 says he is the creator of angels. He made his angels wings. He made them flames of fire. So he is the creator of angels. He is the ruler of angels. He has a better name than angels. He is superior to angels and yet for a little while he became lower than angels and that means he took upon himself the form of a man. Lower than the angels, you get to humanity. Infinitely greater than the created holy angels, he became less than the angels for a while.

And in the end, as we will see, it made him all the more glorious. So the fact of his humiliation is indicated in this statement, for a little while he was made lower than the angels. The extent of that humiliation is indicated in the fact that it says because of the suffering of death. He came down lower than the angels and when you come below the angels, you get to humanity, he became a man but it didn't end there. The extent of his humiliation went all the way to death. And that indicates to us that

he indeed became lower than the angels. He was not some angel masked as a man as some religions teach. He was a man. He came down for a little while lower than the angels and that is proven by the fact that he did something angels cannot do and that is he died. Angels don't die. They were created as spirits and they were created to dwell eternally as spirits somewhere, either in heaven or because of their rebellion against God, in the lake of fire prepared for them.

But they do not die. They have no bodies. They have no corporeal form. They have nothing that is subject to the material curse of the universe. They are spirits who live eternally, either in the presence of God as holy angels or as demons forever in the lake of fire. Jesus was lower than angels. He did something that angels can't do. In Luke 20:36, Scripture is talking about glorified saints who have died and gone to heaven and it says, *neither can they die anymore. They are like angels.* Angels can't die. Jesus is our substitute. He came down became a man. Came all the way down to do what angels cannot do and die.

Philippians 2 says, *he took upon him the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of man. Humbled himself unto death, even the death of the cross. He died.* And it's not enough to say because of his death. It says because of the suffering of death. It was not an easy exit from the land of living for Jesus. No gentle one. It was accompanied with outward torture and inward agony. His death was an excruciating and painful experience for him. So when we think about Jesus as the substitute, we have to remember that he as God above the angels became for a little while, lower than the angels. Came all the way down to do what no angel has ever done and that is to do what only men do and all men do it - that it to die. That's the extent of his humiliation.

The purpose of his humiliation, end of the verse, *to taste death for everyone* and that's the heart of it. To taste death for everyone, like a taster that a king might have who would taste his food and taste his drink so that nobody could poison the king, the taster would literally put his life on the line, suffering the death that poison would bring, rather than having the monarch die. Jesus tasted the poison that we should have consumed. He took our place. He took the poison meant for us and drank it all. He bore our sins in his own body on the cross. He was our substitute. God punished him instead of us. He bore the wrath of God. He took the curse in our place. He drank the cup of God's vengeance. He paid the penalty for our having broken God's law. He drank the cup of judgment down to the very dregs. Though he was guilty of nothing, he tasted death for everyone who would ever believe in him.

The word tasted is probably used here, even though we could argue that he drank the cup. He literally consumed it all. He took it all. Why the word taste? The answer to that is because even though he literally drank the cup of judgment to the very dregs, took the full wrath of God for all who would ever believe, even though he suffered the full vengeance of God and completely paid the price for sin, it was only a brief experience at that. His experience of dying lasted only a matter of hours. You will remember it was in the morning when they put him on the cross. It was in the afternoon when

he gave up his life. And it was only during those hours that he suffered for sin, suffered the wrath of God. Only for those hours, did he drink the cup of poison, the cup of judgment. And because he drank it for hours, we don't have to drink it forever.

He's our substitute. Because he tasted death for me, I can escape it all together. Because he took the full judgment in a few hours, I can escape having to feel it forever. What was the motive of this? The motive of this humiliation is indicated there. *Because of the grace of God or by the grace of God* - it was just because God wanted to do it. The word that I love to use when I talk about God planning salvation is uninfluenced. God when he planned salvation was uninfluenced because it was only God. God the father, God the son, God the holy spirit existing in one as the trinity, existing in eternity passed before the creation of anything and God determines that he is going to create and redeem sinners purely as a result of his grace. Uninfluenced. Free loving kindness. Uninfluenced. Free good pleasure. God just determined on his own that he would save sinners.

It was his plan. That's why on the day of Pentecost when Peter preached he said Jesus was crucified by the determined council and foreknowledge of God. It was God's plan from before the foundation of the world. Jesus in John 10:18 said nobody takes my life from me. I lay it down of myself. And he said to Pilate, John 19:11, 12, he said you have no authority over me. You may be the Roman prefect, you may be ruling in the area. You have absolutely no authority over me except what is given you from above. That is from God. God was in charge of the whole thing. It's a gracious act of God by which He chose to redeem sinners based on no merit of their own, no worthiness, no deserving. God just simply demonstrated His love towards us, His gracious love in giving His son to die in our place.

The fact of humiliation, Jesus is made lower than the angels for a little while. He's brought down. The extent of it all the way down to death. Dying in our place. He does that in order that he might truly and genuinely be our substitute. The purpose of that, to taste death for every person, to pay the penalty for sin for all who would ever believe. And the motive behind it all was pure grace. You might think at this point, well you know Jesus did that but boy what a shameful thing to have to do, hang half naked in front of a gaping mob looking at him with their mouths hanging open, watching him embarrassed beyond all possible definitions of the word embarrassment; being humiliated to be put between two thieves; to be chosen over Barabas who was a well known and dangerous criminal. What a humiliating experience. The fact of the matter is however the result of his humiliation indicated in verse 9, in the middle of the verse, is that he was crowned with glory and honor. It did just the opposite. Satan wanted to humiliate him. The leaders of Israel wanted to humiliate him. The Romans wanted to humiliate him. The world of people who cried for his blood wanted to humiliate him but the fact of the matter was that hanging on the cross was the means by which he was crowned with all honor and glory.

There would be no other way to know the grace of God. There would be no other way to know his saving power if Jesus didn't die. There would be no other way to reclaim lost sinners and bring them

to glory. There would be no other way to bring about the new birth, forgiveness, transformation, conversion, new life, except through the death of Jesus Christ so that lowering himself became the means of exalting himself. And Philippians 2 says that he went all the way down and died the death on the cross and then it says in verse 9, the very next verse that God highly exalted him and gave him a name, which is above every name, which is the name Lord, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow. He was exalted because he was humbled. He went down in order that he might go up. And when come to Revelation 5 and you get a glimpse into heaven, you are going to hear the angels and the saints all saying, worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive and what is he to receive? A number of things but among them glory and honor.

He is glorified forever because of the salvation provided and the humiliating death that he died on the cross. Rather than the cross causing Christ to have to apologize for the shame and embarrassment, it has magnified him as savior. Far from Christ's death being something of which he should be ashamed, it is the very reason for which he has been exalted and it is the reason for which he will be praised and is being praised forever and ever and ever by saints and angels. Now all of that in verse 9 indicates the significance of him as our substitute. He is our substitute. He came as man, lower than the angels to die in man's place because of the grace of God and as a result of that he has paid the penalty for our sins and is our savior, to be crowned with glory and honor forever.

There is another wonderful way to view him as our perfect savior and that is not only as our substitute, but as our sovereign. As our sovereign, look at verse 10. *For it was fitting for him, for whom are all things and through whom are all things and bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.* Now I want you to notice that little title there, the author of their salvation, the author particularly. There are a number of ways to translate this word. That is one way. The word in the Greek is archebas. It's a familiar word to anybody who knows Greek. It's a word basically that refers to somebody who begins something. An author would be a legitimate translation of that. An author is somebody who inaugurates or initiates, who is the beginner of something. It also means a pioneer, somebody who opened up a new territory; somebody who opened up a new land so others could follow. It is a word that could refer to a trailblazer, somebody who blazed a trail on which trail others could then come. It is somebody who founds a city. It's used of a person who founded a city in which people then can come and live. It is also used of one who is the patriarch of a family, the founder of a family into which many others are eventually born. It is a word used to speak of somebody who inaugurates a new kind of life, a new kind of existence into which others come to enjoy that new level of life. It could be somebody who invented some new medication. It could be somebody on an entrepreneurial level. We like that word entrepreneur today. And in the truest and purest sense, that's somebody who really does blaze a new trail in terms of the world, in terms of human experience and life. That's what the word archebas means. It's not somebody standing at the rear giving orders. It's somebody at the head blazing the trail, opening the gates, starting a new city, leading to a new country, a new land, a new way of life, a new level of life. It's somebody who literally invents the wheel; somebody who begins something that others can enter in to. And he is the

archegas of what, of their what? Salvation. It is Jesus who alone authored salvation. He is the trailblazer who opened the trail to God. He is the founder of the heavenly city. He threw the gates open, invited us to come in. He is the one that began the family as it were, the children of God and who brings us into that family. He is the one who inaugurated a new kind of life and ushers into that life to be enjoyed forever. He is the archegas. He is the sovereign in the sense that he is the ruler. He is the consummate one, the great one, the general.

That word is sometimes translated captain. And sometimes even in the Bible it's called the captain of our salvation, the great leader, the great sovereign. He opened the family of God to us. He opened the gates of the city of heaven to us. He blazed the trail to God for us. He gave us a new land. The land as it were called Canaan, the great promised land of blessing. He gives us new life and eternal joy. He is our sovereign leader. And notice what it says, *it was fitting, suitable for him (who's that?) for whom all things and through whom all things* (that's God). It suited God. It's suitable for God in His desire to bring many sons to glory, to perfect the archegas of their salvation through sufferings. Wow. It suited God, suited His purpose, suited His wisdom, suited His holiness, suited His justice, suited His grace, suited His power, His love. It fit perfectly into God's plan because He wanted to bring many, many sons to glory. It suited Him to perfect the trailblazer of that salvation through sufferings.

In other words, it fit into God's plan for Jesus to blaze the trail, to open the city, to bring the new life, to inaugurate the family through suffering. Now that tells us more about salvation. Salvation is not just the forgiveness of sin. It's a new city. It's a new life. It's a new family. It's a new land. It's a new everything and Jesus blazed the trail into that newness of life. And he did it by being perfected through suffering. God made His son, for a little while, lower than the angels. Brought him down into the realm of humans so that he could do what no angel has ever done or will ever do, die. Die in our place as our substitute and by that death become the perfect leader, the perfect trailblazer, the perfect pioneer, the perfect general, the perfect sovereign, who would open the path of salvation and lead us to God and to eternal glory.

Chapter 5, verse 9 says *he became to all those who obey him, the source of eternal salvation*. He alone is the trailblazer. He alone is the source, the leader, the one who brings us to God. What a great savior.

Thirdly he is not only our substitute and sovereign, he is our sanctifier and this is just stunning truth. Verse 11, *for both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one father* (you'll notice in italics, I'll comment on that in a moment) *for which reason he is not ashamed to call them brothers*. Now this, as I said, is a rather staggering reality here. We are not just forgiven of our sin. We are not just ushered in by the trailblazer himself to the glories of new life, to the glories of a heavenly city and a heavenly land, but we are sanctified. That means made righteous, made holy or free from sin. It means to be separated the word sanctified.

*And both he who sanctifies* - that's Jesus - *and those who are sanctified* - that's all believers. He is the sanctifier. We are the sanctified. He literally made us holy. He made us holy. How did he do that? By paying the penalty for our sins, by being our substitute and then by living a perfectly righteous life, which we talked about a couple of weeks ago. And God took his righteousness and covered us with it. That's how he sanctified us. It doesn't mean that we are sinless now. It simply means God treats us as if we are because our sins have all been paid for and the righteousness of Christ credited to our account. I said two weeks ago on the cross, God treated Jesus as if he lived your life and now he can treat you as if you lived his. When God looks at you, He sees the perfect life of Christ. So it is Christ's perfect righteousness applied to you that makes him the sanctifier and you the sanctified. This is really, this is wonder of wonders. When God sees you, He sees the perfect life of Jesus Christ. Sins are paid for. They're gone. Full satisfaction. The vengeance of God is complete. Justice has been settled. And we are now given the righteousness of Christ. It's applied to our lives as if it were our own. And God treats us as if we are holy because we are covered by the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. That's why Hebrews 10 has two very, very powerful statements.

Hebrews 10:10 *by this will, we have been sanctified.* How? Through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Verse 14 *for by one offering, he has perfected for all time or forever, those who are sanctified.* Because his death on the cross, paying the penalty for our sin, because of the application of his perfect righteous life to us, we are sanctified before God. When God looks at us, He declared us holy. We aren't in practice what we are in position. Positionally before God, we are holy. We are still grappling in practice obviously to be what we are in position. But God has declared us holy. That is His declaration and that is because of the perfect work of Jesus Christ. But notice this, he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified and the Greek says are all literally out of one. Are all out of one and the translator rightly puts in italics father because this is saying something that is just really astonishing to particularly the Jews to whom this letter was written in Hebrews. That is the idea that both the Messiah, the son of God, God incarnate and the ones He sanctifies are out of the same source, namely from one father, God. That is to say that because of the gracious gift of holiness, we are both from out of God. We literally share the very righteousness of God with Christ. Staggering statement.

No Jew would presume to even think such a thought. In fact, the Jewish people throughout their history and still today, even those that are committed to the Old Testament seriously, will not even say the name God. They have invented things to substitute for speaking the name God because they would never presume to be familiar with the name of God. And yet we are so familiar that we can say we are with the Messiah, who is God, out of one God. We literally bare the same righteousness as does Messiah and it is the righteousness of God. This is a stunning, stunning truth.

And to make it even more impactful, verse 11 says *for which reason he* (being Christ) *is not ashamed to call us brothers.* Amazing. We would be called brothers because we share the same life. We are



called brothers here because we share the same righteousness. We share the same privilege. We are the Bible says Romans 8 joint heirs with Christ, joint heirs with Christ. He is not ashamed to call us brothers. He is Son of God. We have become sons of God, covered by his very righteousness and in that sense, we are his brother.

He would have every reason to be ashamed of us wouldn't he? If he were looking merely at our practical lives, but he is not ashamed of us because we are covered with the very righteousness of God. So Christ came down to our level to redeem us, to make us into brothers and bring us back up to his very level of holiness. What a complete savior. Some Jewish people might say well this is certainly foreign to the Old Testament. So just to solve that problem, verses 12 and 13, quote two passages from the Old Testament to show that even in the Old Testament, the Messiah anticipated such a brotherhood. First of all, verse 12 is from Psalm 22 and verse 12 says, *I will proclaim thy name to my brothers. In the midst of the congregation, I will sing thy praise.* That's right out of Psalm 22 and it is the second person of the trinity, the son of God talking to the father and he says, father I'm going to proclaim your name to my brothers, indicating that the Messiah even that far back anticipated that there would be those who would be his brothers.

He is speaking to the father about his brothers. Because of his death on the cross that he can call us brothers. By the way, interesting in my years of studying the New Testament, I have discovered that before the cross, before Jesus died on the cross, he never called his followers brothers. Never. He called them disciples. He called them friends. He called them sheep but he never called them brothers. But when he died and came out of the grave, the first thing he said when he came out of the grave to Mary was go to my brothers. It is only possible to be a brother of Jesus Christ when sin has been paid for. And when his righteousness has been credited to your account. The psalmist then saw that. And the spirit of God inspired the psalmist to see the Messiah and acknowledge that he was to have human brothers and that's what the phrase *in the midst of the congregation* mean. He is going to take his place among his brothers and sing his praise to God. What an amazing statement. That literally salvation causes us to become brothers of the perfect Messiah, the son of God, who stands with us to sing his praise to God and is not ashamed to call us his brothers.

We aren't worthy of that but that's what grace does. Then verse 13 is taken out of Isaiah, the prophet. So he takes something from the Psalms and something from the prophets. Isaiah 8:17 and 18 and he quotes *I will put my trust in him and behold I and the children whom God has given me.* Again, there is another text from the Old Testament showing that the Messiah would accept the children of God given to him as brothers.

He trusted God. He said I'll put my trust in him. It's a messianic statement in Isaiah. And so do we. And so we share in common that he trusted God. When he came into this world, he trusted the Lord in the time of his incarnation and we trust the Lord as well. And so we are alike those who trust God and we are the children whom God has given him to be identified as his brothers. What a great

statement, perfect savior. He is our substitute. He pays the penalty for our sins. He is our sovereign. He blazes the trail to God. And we follow into the celestial city and the glories of the heavenly land. He is our sanctifier. He pays the price for our sin and completely covers us with his righteousness so that we are one with him as a brother in the congregation worshipping the Father. But even that wouldn't have been complete. There's a fourth element of his perfection as our Savior. He is our Satan conqueror, our Satan conqueror.

Verse 14 *since then the children share in flesh and blood, he himself 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.* You know people do live in the fear of death, that death is called the king of terrors. There is nothing as frightening as death. We do everything we can to try mask death, to try to avoid death. We live a long life today. I was reading an article a week or so ago, a fascinating article about if you just go back - well you go back 50 years - people didn't live as long as they do now. But try going back 100 years, go into Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and you'll find a most astonishing mortality rate. Somebody having eight children might see one of them; maybe two at the most, survive to adulthood. Life was very short. People were plagued by horrible diseases and things that killed masses of people and life was very, very brief in those times.

We live today in a time when we sort of have pushed off death and we don't deal with it. We don't see the reality of death. Very few people see anybody die. I'd imagine that probably most of you have never seen a person die. You don't live with death. You don't see death. People die at the hospital. They die under circumstances that are sort of sterile and antiseptic and medically controlled. We rarely see someone actually die. We've pushed that off and doing so, we don't deal with that and it becomes more and more terrifying to us.

Death, we try to mask it as well as we possibly can. One writer said when you go to a funeral, look at somebody in a casket, you think you're looking at a horizontal member of a cocktail party. As we try to make them look as if they were dressed up for some special occasion. Death is the great, great fear of man. In verse 15 says *Satan has held men in slavery to the fear of death all their lives.* People are terrified by death.

Why? Because it's so final. And it is a weapon that Satan uses. It's called the power of death and wields it. Powers the word dominion. His real dominion over the world is the power of death. You say why? Because when somebody dies they are catapulted immediately into eternal punishment. If the devil can just hold men in sin, if he can just continue to work the world's system so that it keeps men captive, he can continue to be the ruler of the darkness of this world, the prince of the power of the air as in Ephesians. If he can continue to control men, if he can continue to be as Jesus said, the father over people that is the figure of authority of them, you are of your father the devil he said in John 8. If he can continue to control people and hold them in sin, they eventually die and are catapulted into

hell, apart from God.

Satan's hold on men is death. And no one escapes it. It's appointed unto men once they die and after that is judgment. Death leads to judgment. Well that had to be conquered. There had to be a way for the power of death held by Satan to be broken. There was no death if you remember in the original creation right? If Adam and Eve hadn't sinned, they wouldn't have died. And you could argue that they wouldn't have sinned if Satan hadn't fallen and tempted them.

Satan really then brought man into the realm of death and he has maintained a dominion over that although subject to the power of God. God has allowed him to maintain that dominion but God has broken the power of death. And how did he do it? Back to verse 14, *since the children share in flesh and blood*, since that is the children of God, the brothers of Jesus those who belong to him are human then he himself likewise had to become human in order that through death, he might render powerless him who had the power of death that is the devil. What happened is Jesus had to become a man, meet Satan on his own ground, man dealing with death, dealing with the power of death. Jesus had to become a man. He had to face death and conquer death on its own ground. Satan's dominion is in the form of death. He's a killer. He's a murderer from the beginning. And by dying as a man, Jesus entered into death and when he got there, he destroyed death. And he destroyed the dominion of Satan.

Now for the believer, death has no fear, right? Death is an entrance into heaven. That's why Paul said for me to live is Christ to die is? Pain. By dying Jesus met death and conquered it. He had to do that. The perfect Savior had to conquer death and so for us, though we will die physically, that is simply the exit that leads us into the glorious presence of God and the wonders of eternal heaven. We have no fear of death. We can with the Apostle Paul, *Oh, death where is your stain? Oh grave, where is your stain? You can't intimidate me. Why? Because Christ has conquered death. He said because I live you'll live also. He went into death, did battle with death, came out the other side and he says because I live, you'll live also.*

Jesus conquered death. And so by dying as a man, he met death on a human level and destroyed it and took away the power that Satan had. He is our Satan conqueror. The fear of death is a potent force. A king of terrors but not for believers. It's simply the path to eternal glory.

Finally perfect savior - substitute, sovereign, sanctifier, Satan conqueror. Perfect savior also because he is our sympathizer. He is our sympathizer. This completes the portrait here. Verse 16 *for assuredly he doesn't give help to angels but he gives help to the descendant of Abraham*. You know why he doesn't give help to angels, talking about holy angels? You know why he doesn't give help to angels? They don't need help. Angels don't need help. You never read in the Bible, God understands angels and God is kind to them. They don't need kindness. They don't need help. They don't need anything we need because angels are holy beings. They are sinless. They are unaffected by the fall. They

aren't weakened by anything. Understand that?

They aren't weakened by anything. They are spirits. They are eternal spirits, living in eternal perfection. Therefore, there is no diminishing of their strength. Angels are perfect beings. They don't need help. Now humans? That's another story. Because of the fall, we need help. You say well I thought you said we were already made holy? We were already made sanctified? Well that's true positionally. That's true forensically in terms of the courtroom, God declaring us righteous. But in reality, we are weak and we are frail and fragile and we need help. And so He says, he doesn't give help to angels but he gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Now he's writing here of course to Hebrews, writing to Jews and he says he helps people like you. He helps Jews. Not only could we interpret that that the descendant of Abraham is a physical descendant of Abraham, Jews but it is the spiritual descendant of Abraham. All who believe, who show the same kind of faith in God that Abraham showed by which he was justified, he helps them. In other words, he helps people who come to him and believe.

He helps us. Now how is he going to help us? Well if he's going to help us in our - and what do we need help in? We need help in our temptations don't we? Everything that goes wrong in life goes wrong because we were tempted. All the issues of life go back to temptation. If we could just be impervious to temptation, we wouldn't have any problems. We need help in our temptation. We need understanding. We need strength at the right moment; grace at the right moment; mercy at the right moment; wisdom at the right moment. And he does that but in order to do that verse 17 says he's going to give us help. He's going to be made like his brother in all things. How could he help us if he didn't understand us? How could he help us if he was not one of us and didn't get in our skin and feel what we feel and suffer what we suffer at the onslaught of temptation and boy did he ever suffer that? All, as I've been saying, all of the temptations that come to a child, he experienced as a child. All the temptations that come to a young person as we understand that he experienced. All the temptations that come to an adult, he experienced and particularly, the escalating temptations that came towards the end of his ministry when everything was leading to the cross and all hell was breaking loose against him as they were plotting to kill him, people were betraying him, turning on him, it went all the way through physical abuse and finally to execution, these things were tremendous burdens testing his faith to do what God wanted him to do in the midst of all that suffering. To the degree that in the garden, he says, *let this cup pass from me. If there is any other way, Father, please let it happen, nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.* He was feeling the tremendous burden of this suffering. And that was by God's design.

You could have God sending Jesus into the world and he comes into the world and he dies on a cross and he goes back and that's it. Why all the suffering? Why all the pain? Why all the sorrow? Why all the grief, the hatred, the rejection, the bitterness, the hunger, the thirst, disappointment, tears? Why all that?

So that he would really know what life is like. And you say but he couldn't sin. That's right but that doesn't mean he couldn't feel the temptation. The fact that he never gave in to the temptation indicates that he took the full fury of it all the time because it never let up because he never gave in. He said in verse 17 he had to make his brother, he had to make him like his brother in all things so that he could be a merciful, faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. How's he going to be able to know what we need if he hasn't been there and so he let him suffer in his making propitiation of the sins for the people. Through all of that, he himself was tempted in that which he has suffered. And he's focusing on the temptations that came to Jesus in the time of his suffering at the end of his ministry. For a while in his ministry, things went along pretty smoothly and then the hostility and hatred and rejection began to mount and mount and mount and as it got closer to the end, it became aggressive and aggressive and aggressive until finally it exploded as you know. In the confrontations in the temple, it came to a head and then it was the scourging and the mockery and then finally was the execution and the father put him through all of that, a life of temptation but particularly an explosion of intensity at the end in order that he might suffer things that people suffer - rejection, hatred, animosity, bitterness.

Why? End of verse 18 *so that he can be able to come to the aid of those who are tempted*. So that he will understand us. This is our savior. He didn't just come and die. He didn't just arrive on a cloud and die and go back on a cloud. He was hungry, thirsty, weary, sad, angry, grieved, broken hearted, troubled, overcome by present events, overcome by the anticipation of future events. He sighed when he saw a lame person or a mute person. He wept when his heart ached. He was misjudged. He was rejected, hated, beaten and finally executed. He was according to Hebrews 4:15, tempted in all points. Tempted in all points, in every way, like we are. Yet without sin. He understands us. He knows what we need. He knows how to help us. What a perfect savior. Substitute, paid our penalty for sin. A sovereign, trailblazer, who opened the way to heaven. Sanctifier, who committed his perfect righteousness to us so that we call him brother and he is not ashamed of that and we both call God Father. Satan conqueror who broke the back of Satan's dominion when he destroyed death for us. And our sympathizer, the one who having been tempted at every point like we are tempted and even more powerfully than we could ever imagine and never sinned knows what temptation is like and knows how to be there to strengthen us and to provide all that we need.

There isn't any other savior in the world like this. This is the only savior. There is no other than Jesus Christ and the question as I asked it at the concert, is this your savior? Let's pray.

This is the greatest news the world will ever know. This is the greatest message that our ears have ever heard because this is the greatest, greatest need that human beings have - to escape hell for heaven; to escape eternal punishment, enter eternal joy.

Father, thank you for the perfect savior, Jesus Christ. Named Jesus because he would save his people from their sins. Jesus means Jehovah saves. We thank you that you gave us a savior. The Savior. The only Savior. Apart from whom there is no salvation. We pray that every heart will be turned to him today and acknowledge him as Lord and Savior. To that end, we pray for his glory. Amen.

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