

JESUS, OUR VICTOR

Hebrews 2:14-16

Scripture Reading: Luke 2:1-14

Intro: As I mentioned to those of you who were here last Sunday, in Hebrews, chapter 2, we have three reasons given for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the flesh. This event in the life of our Lord is called *His incarnation*. He existed eternally as the Son of God, with all of the attributes, or characteristics, of God the Father. Thus, in His incarnation, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary, He did not cease to be Deity, but He received a human body and a human nature, but without sin. So He was still God, and perfect Man.

In verse 9 of Hebrews 2 it is stated that “Jesus . . . was made a little lower than the angels. If you look back to verse 7 where the writer was speaking of man, we are told that God in creation made man “a little lower than the angels.” So the order in creation was angels first, man second, and then the animals last. But man by creation was “crowned with glory and honor” because man was created in the image and likeness of God.

So when it is said in verse 9 that our Lord “was made a little lower than the angels,” it means that He became a Man.

In our text for today we read concerning Jesus that since those He came to save were “children,” that is, human beings, or “partakers of flesh and blood,” that “He Himself likewise took part of the same.” This means that He became a human being because He came to save human beings.

The Lord willing, next Sunday we will be considering the third reason for the incarnation of the Son of God. It was, as you can see in verse 17, that “in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren,” His brethren, or brothers, meaning again, those He came to save. “Behoved” is an old English way of spelling b-e-h-o-o-v-e-d, and that is the way it should be pronounced. It means to make something necessary. So if the Lord was to save human beings, He had to become a human being.

The Bible teaches us that we are all sinners, and because we are sinners we are under the sentence of death – not just physical death, but spiritual and eternal death. The Son of God became a Man, a perfect Man, so that He could die for sinners. “The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23). Every person who has ever lived, or who will live in the future, must die for

their own sins *unless* a perfect substitute would take his or her place. Jesus was and is that Substitute. He could die for sinners because He was totally without sin.

The prophet Isaiah, who lived some 700 years before Jesus was born in Bethlehem, was enabled by the Holy Spirit to speak of the coming Messiah in these inspired words:

3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all (Isa. 53:3-6).

We can all read the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John and shudder to think of what the Lord suffered for us, that we might be forgiven. But there was a suffering that our Lord endured which could not be seen by human eyes. It was another kind of suffering which the Lord experienced as He was dying on the Cross. Again referring to Isaiah 53, we read in verse 10 God made the soul of our Lord “an offering for sin.” No man has ever been able to tell what those words mean.

But if we are thinking correctly about what the Bible tells us in describing the sufferings of Jesus, we all would say, “But I am not worthy that He should die for me.” And we would be right! Why did He do it? John 3:16 is one verse which tells us why. Romans 5:8 is another. But we have the answer also right here in Hebrews 2. Look again at verse 9, the latter part of the verse where we read, “that He by the grace of God might taste death for every man.” As Jerry Bridges has taught us more than once, “grace,” “the grace of God,” means two things: first, that God didn’t give me what I deserved, which was death, eternal death, but, second, that He did give me what I could never deserve, never pay for, never work for, and that is eternal life.

I hope we all understand this because this is the Gospel which is “the power of God unto salvation.” There is just one Gospel, one way of

salvation, and that is through faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I would not be telling you the truth if I told you that there are even two ways to have your sins forgiven. There is only one. And it is a gift from God. As the Apostle Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8 and 9:

8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.

This is the message that needs to be spread around the world, to every nation, in every generation, that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners” (1 Tim. 1:15). And the Paul rightly said that this is a true saying, and worthy to be accepted by all. And it is the only way of salvation.

The Exposition of our Text: Hebrews 2:14-16.

But this morning as we move on to verse 14, 15, and 16 in this second chapter of Hebrews, in addition to our ignorance of our need to be saved, and the one way to be saved, we faced another problem that stands in the way of people being saved. Let me read these verses to you. **(Read Heb. 2:14-16.)**

I hope you believe that there is a Devil because he has been living as long as the world has been in existence. He is our Enemy; he is not our friend. He is an angel who led a rebellion against God in heaven, and many, many angels joined with him in their rebellion against God. The name given to him here is just one of his names. He is the Devil. This means that he is our Accuser. In the book of the Revelation, we are told who he accuses, and where he accuses us, and how often he accuses us. He is “the accuser of the brethren,” meaning he accuses Christians. He accuses us before God. And he does this “day and night,” that is, incessantly. He does that after we are saved, whenever we sin. He claims before God that if we sin after we are saved, God should cast us away and send us to hell.

But even before we were saved, the Devil, who is also the god of this world, speaking of his great power, has “blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Who is the Image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:4). If there is one thing that the Devil does not want people to hear, and if they hear it, he does not want them to understand it, it is the Gospel. That is why there are millions of people in the world today who are not interested in hearing the Gospel, and if they do hear it, it is just so much foolishness to them.

Do you know that hell was not prepared for people? It was, according to the words of the Lord Jesus Himself, “prepared for the Devil and his angels.” You will find those words in Matthew 25:41. But the Devil and all of the angels who joined in his rebellion against God, now called *demons*, have been doing everything that they can do (and they have been very successful), to take as many people to hell with them as they possibly can. Now this is what makes the truth of Hebrews 2:14 and 15 so very important. When Jesus Christ died on the Cross, He died “that through death [His death] He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, that is, the devil, And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Now let me call your attention to the word “destroy.” We know that the Devil was not *destroyed* when Christ died. He is very much alive today, and doing all that he can to drag people into hell with him. In the book of the Revelation we are told in chapter 20 of the time after the reign of Christ upon the earth when, as we read in Revelation 20:10, “the devil . . . was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” This is his judgment, and it will be the judgment also of all those who have not repented of their sins, and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for their salvation.

By the way, let me make another very important point here. If you want to know the truth about the Bible, you don’t need to go beyond the Bible. You can read a lot of ridiculous things today that have been written about the Devil, things which are not true because they are not based upon what the Bible tells us. So don’t believe anything about the Devil that you can’t find in the Bible.

But what does it mean that our Lord died to “destroy the works of the Devil, and to deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage?”

We know that it does not mean that the Devil himself was destroyed at the Cross. Nor does our text say that. It speaks of the Lord destroying “the works of the Devil.” But neither does it mean that the Devil is no longer at work. He is very busy. He always has been, and he always will be until the new heaven and the new earth are established.

But it does mean that by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ the power, rule

and authority of the Devil was doomed. The Devil makes slaves out of people, a slavery from which no man is able to set himself free. We find in John 8:34 those words of the Lord Jesus, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.” The Lord used the word “verily” (Gk: ἀμῆν) to emphasize the certainty of what He was saying, doubling it for increased emphasis and to draw attention to what He was saying. “Committeth” is in the present tense in the Greek, and emphasizes continual sinning, or a life characterized by sin. This would be a person who does not know the Lord. He is not only a servant of sin, but a bondservant, one who does not have the power to set himself free from sin. The master of this bondservant is the Devil. The Devil makes people slaves of sin, unable to set themselves free, and often even taking away the desire to be free. But two verses later our Lord pointed out the only way of deliverance when He said, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36), that is, truly free. And freedom from sin and sinning can come in no other way but through our Lord Jesus Christ. But such a deliverance came only by the death of our Lord on the Cross.

In Romans 6 where the Apostle Paul was stressing our union with Christ in His death and in His resurrection, that when Christ died, we died in Him, when He arose, we arose. And so in the light of that great truth, Paul went on to say this:

11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace (Rom. 6:11-14).

Through our Lord’s death on the Cross He rendered the power that the Devil had with men over sin which leads to death, as brought to an end, abolished. The word that is used here in Hebrews 2:14 speaks of a relative power, not absolute power, nevertheless power which the Devil was able to exercise to a great degree. But it was not just death that the Devil used, but “the fear of death” which kept people in bondage to their sin.

We can see from the book of Job that the Devil had the ability to put Job to death, but he was restricted from God from doing it. Death is an enemy. No one naturally anticipates death. But those of us who know the Lord do not fear death as unregenerate people do. We know that for a child of God, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. We know, too, that the Lord numbers our days, that He sovereignly gave us life, and, as Job said, “The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21). It took the grace of God for him to be able to say that about his children.

Now it is basically the hope that we have beyond death that has delivered us from the bondage that unsaved people are under. The Apostle Paul expressed this in that great resurrection chapter, 1 Corinthians 15. I want to read to you what Paul said in that chapter, beginning with verse 51, which helps us to understand why we do not fear death. The time is coming for all of us when death will be a thing of the past. For those who do not know the Lord, an eternal death awaits them.

Read 1 Corinthians 15:51-58.

Notice very briefly what we are told in Hebrews 2:16.

Christ did not die for angels, but He died for the seed of Abraham, not the natural seed unless they are also the spiritual seed, the elect of God among both Jews and Gentiles.

Concl: We have victory over the fear of death, and ultimately over death itself, all because Jesus Christ by His death on the Cross, defeated our archenemy, the Devil, and has delivered us from the bondage of sin and the bondage which the fear of death brings, through the blessed hope that we have in our Lord Jesus Christ. Only when we get to heaven will we fully understand all that our Lord accomplished for us when He died on the Cross, and then was raised in total victory from the dead.