

**JESUS, OUR GREAT DELIVERER**

Hebrews 2:14-16

**Intro:** Today I want to bring the third message in a series of four which have to do with “The Ministries of Jesus.” In speaking of our Lord’s ministries, I am thinking especially of His ministries which are mentioned in connection with His coming to the earth in Hebrews, chapter 2.

But to begin this series, we looked, first of all, at the first four verses of Hebrews 1 where we see our Lord’s qualifications to act in our behalf. There we learn that God, Who in OT times had been revealing Himself little by little, had in the first advent of our Lord completed that revelation. In those four verses our Lord is spoken of as God’s Son, and that same emphasis follows twice in verse 5. He is called “the first begotten” in verse 6, and then “the Son” again in verse 8.

(Review the statements made about our Lord in Heb. 1:1-4.)

But then in chapter 2 our Savior is called “the Lord,” but then when we get to verse 9 of chapter 2 for the first time in this epistle, but by no means the only time, He is called “Jesus.” Most of you know that this was the Name given to our Lord by the Angel Gabriel, when he spoke to Mary before the Lord was conceived in her by the Holy Spirit, and after Joseph discovered that Mary was expecting a child. The Name “Jesus” was a very common name in Israel, but it had special significance in connection with Mary’s Child. He was to be named “Jesus,” for He would “save His people from their sins.” As far as God was concerned, our Lord came to do His will; as far as His people were concerned, He came to save them from their sins.

This required His death. It was by His death that He has saved us from our sins, but His death was also required that He might deal with “the Devil” (and that is what we are going to be thinking about today). Next Sunday, the Lord willing, we will see that He had to become a Man so as our High Priest, having suffered temptation, He could help us when we are tempted. And it is about His work as our great High Priest that we are taught in this epistle to the Hebrews.

As the title of this epistle suggests, It was written originally for Hebrew Christians, and probably they were the Hebrew Christians who lived in

Jerusalem. But those of us who are Gentile believers need to know these truths also because it took the same sacrifice of Jesus to save Gentiles as it did to save Jews. Christ died specifically to guarantee the salvation of those many chosen people in every generation who, according to verse 10 of chapter 2, are the sons for whom our Lord died in order to bring them to glory.

Note the words that the writer of this epistle used to identify us who have been saved. We are “sons” of God in verse 10, “brethren” of our Lord Himself in verses 11 and 12. And then “children” in verse 13, and the same word, “children,” carries over into the first verse of our text for today, verse 14.

Now you didn’t need to come here this morning to learn from me that “sons,” “brethren” (or *brothers*), and “children” are family words. If someone asks those of us who are parents how many children we have, we tell them the number of children that the Lord has given us. “Sons” here is used of *sons and daughters*, and “brethren,” or *brothers*, means *brothers and sisters*.

So all of these words mean that in saving us, God has brought us into His family through faith in Christ, and even the Lord is not ashamed to call us *His brothers and sisters*. That is almost too good to be true, isn’t it? But it is true. It was John the Apostle who was designated by the Holy Spirit to teach us that we are members of the family of God, “born of God.” In 1 John 3:1 and 2 we read these words:

1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons (Gk., *children*) of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons (Gk., *children*) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

Now with that background we come to verse 14. And the first statement that greets us is:

## **I. A DESCRIPTION OF US, THE PEOPLE OF GOD.**

“Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood” (Heb. 2:14a). “Forasmuch then” ties verse 14 with the preceding verses.

“Flesh and blood” is an expression which is used five times in the NT, and it always speaks of humanity. When Peter made his great confession of Christ, recorded for us in Matthew 16, the Lord told him that he had not understood this through “flesh and blood,” that is, from people, but that it had been revealed to him by the Father. See Matt. 16:17. And Paul taught that mere “flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God,” he meant that we are going to have to be changed before we can enter into the fulness of our salvation when the Lord comes. Cf. 1 Cor. 15:50. And in Paul’s epistle to the Galatians he told them that right after he was saved he did not confer with “flesh and blood” (Gal. 1:16) to show how the Lord had taught him the truth from the very beginning of his salvation. And then we all remember that verse which actually is related to our text here in Hebrews, Paul’s words about our spiritual warfare in Eph. 6:12:

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

This means that our conflict in the Christian life is not basically with people, although people are often involved in our spiritual warfare, but our conflict is with Satan and his evil demons.

By birth, by nature, we are “flesh and blood,” mere humanity. We do not possess the power nor the wisdom nor the desire beyond what mere “flesh and blood.” can do, and so we are not capable of saving ourselves. The picture that we have here of humanity is one of inadequacy and weakness. We share the same nature that has been and will continue to be common among all people as long as time shall last. So we can’t look to ourselves, nor can we look to anyone else who is merely “flesh and blood.” Apart from help outside of the human realm, our condition is hopeless.

But notice the next statement. It is:

## **II. A DESCRIPTION OF THE SON OF GOD IN HUMAN FLESH.**

“He also Himself likewise took part of the same” (Heb. 2:14m).

This means that while man could not make himself more than man, or better than what he was by nature; he could not become like the angels, and certainly not like God, yet there was another possibility: God could become a Man! The Son of God voluntarily accepted our humanity! And so in this statement, “He also Himself likewise took part of the same,” we have a description of the incarnation of Christ.

Charles Simeon, one of England's great preachers in the late 1700's and early 1800's, said this in explaining this text:

Is it so indeed, that He who was the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His Person; that He Who created and upholdeth all things by the word of His power; that He whom all the angels in heaven adore, became a man, and was made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted? Yes, . . . the mighty God Himself was a child born, and a Son given.

And then Simeon asked this:

And shall God be manifest in the flesh, and we not inquire into the reasons of such a stupendous mystery? Shall we profess to believe this truth; and yet pay no more attention to it, than if it was a cunningly-devised fable? Let us inquire what occasion there was for it, and what ends God designed to accomplish by it. . .

The children, whom He designed to redeem from death and hell, were in such a state, that nothing short of this would avail for their final happiness: They were subjected to death, and could be delivered from it only by One dying in their stead: They were in bondage to Satan, and could only be rescued from his dominion by One Who Should overcome this great adversary, in their nature, and in their behalf; in a word, by one who should both suffer what they merited [deserved], and gain the victories which they needed (Vol. 19, pp. 170, 171).

And all of this was entirely in accord with the Scriptures of the OT.

Isaiah the Gospel-preaching prophet had predicted, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given" (Isa. 9:6). In the child born we have His humanity; in the Son given, His Deity. And earlier in Isaiah's prophecy he had said, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His Name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). We have His humanity in that He was born of a virgin, "flesh and blood." His Deity is expressed in His Name, Immanuel, which means *God with us*.

So it was to be expected that in God's own time these promises would be fulfilled. Never in all of the OT was it suggested that man could make his own way into salvation. The animal sacrifices of the OT indicated that when the Savior would come He would not only be the priest, but also the Sacrifice. For example, Isa. 53:1-6:

1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?

2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root

out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

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.

Remember that these words were not written *after* the Lord Jesus had been born, lived, and died, *but about 700 year before He came*. And yet it reads like a firsthand account of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But now let us see what was:

### **III. THE SECOND MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF THE INCARNATION OF THE SON OF GOD.**

When I say “second,” I do not mean “second” in the order of what our Lord did, but the “second” objective mentioned in this chapter. Actually it was by His death that He accomplished all that is mentioned here.

But this is the way that it is stated:

That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2:14b-15).

When Satan tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden, his purpose was to bring the whole human race into bondage under his authority.

Satan’s objectives are laid out for us in Isaiah’s prophecy, chapter 14, verses 12 through 14. Note the “I will’s.”

12 How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven,

I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north:

14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High (Isa. 14:12-14).

No earthly monarch ever had such ambitions as are here ascribed to “Lucifer, the son of the morning.”

This purpose of the coming of Christ was twofold: 1) to deal with the Devil; 2) to deliver those who were in bondage to him. And the cost to our Lord Jesus was His death.

Let us always remember that the main purpose of the death of Christ was to satisfy the righteous demands of a holy God. Our Lord Jesus in offering Himself “made a perfect atonement for sin and so brought to nought the power of the Devil” (Westcott, p. 53).

The word translated “destroy” in the Greek Testament is used twenty-five times by the Apostle Paul, and one of its primary meanings is as we have it here in the KJV – “destroy.” Our Lord sealed the doom of Satan. He brought his power to an end. And so we see here one of the needs that any deliverer would have to meet: He would have to conquer the one who had the power of death. The enemy in any warfare has to be overcome before there can be a complete victory. This is what the Lord was talking about when He said to the people shortly before His arrest:

31 Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me (John 12:31-32).

Satan’s power has never gone beyond the power of God. His power cannot even equal the power of God. But his power is, and always has been, greater than “flesh and blood.” He 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). But for those sons whom the Lord is bringing to glory, “God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Cor. 4:6).

Man can be very self-confident when everything is going well, and he is not faced with the immediate prospect of death. But here we learn that by nature men without Christ live with the “fear of death” and are “all their

lifetime subject to bondage.” Only Christ can deliver us from this fear, and He has done it by His death, satisfying a holy God, so that while we do not seek death, yet we know that for those of us who have been saved by the grace of God, for us “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21).

**Concl:** So today as we remember in particular the birth of the Lord Jesus, we know that He took our “flesh and blood” that He might be our Substitute, taking upon Himself the penalty which we should have suffered, paying our debt before God, setting us free from the Devil and from the bondage of sin, and even in death making us “more than conquerors through Him that loved us”(Rom. 8:37). And, as the Lord Jesus Himself said, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, you shall be free indeed” (John 8:36) – really free, free from Satan’s power, free from the bondage of sin, free from the penalty of sin, free from the fear of death, free to serve and love God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ is the One guilty sinners need. He is the only Savior that there is, and the only One there ever will be. When you know Him, then you will know the meaning of that hymn which declares,

My hope is built on nothing less  
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;  
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,  
But wholly lean on Jesus’ Name.

On Christ the solid Rock, I stand,  
All other ground is sinking sand.

Make sure that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior.