

VI. Like His Brothers

November 28/29/30, 2017 Hebrews 2:10-18

Aim: To see the necessity of Christ taking upon Himself a human nature, in order to secure our salvation, propitiate the wrath of God, and sympathize with our human condition.

A. Jesus Identifies with Humanity (Hebrews 2:10-13)

Philips: Hebrews 2:10-13 tells us two great things about Jesus Christ: He is the elder brother of all the redeemed and the pioneer of our salvation. Jesus is the elder brother of every Christian. The most important blessing we gain by having Jesus as our elder brother is entry into the family of God. He is not only the elder brother, but He is also the natural-born Son of God. By grace we are adopted into the family to which Jesus belongs as the rightful Son. We are not His brothers and sisters because we are children of God; rather, we are children of God because we are His brothers and sisters. It is sometimes said that God is the father of all people. This is true only in the most general sense, since God is the creator of all. But God is not in a fatherly relationship with unreconciled sinners; they are rebels against Him, and His wrath abides on them (see Rom. 1:18). God has created a new family, a new humanity, a new and redeemed people through the Second Adam, who is the resurrected Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus Saves Humanity (2:10)

Hughes: As the writer of Hebrews pens his letter to the harried little church, having reminded them of this dangerous drift in thinking as he alluded to Christ's suffering death in 2:9, in verse 10 he turns the tables on the critics with an eloquent assertion that the cross is the most fitting and the most God-worthy way of salvation. The argument crowns and controls all that follows to the end of the chapter.

a) Creator (2:10a)

¹⁰*For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist...*

Philips: The opening verse of our passage makes the marvelous statement that all of Christ's redemptive activity 'was fitting.' What a wonderful statement this is—it was fitting for God to do this, it was appropriate to His glorious character. For here is a gospel, a way of salvation, that brings glory to God and draws our hearts to worship Him and Him alone. Yet there are people today who say the opposite thing altogether. They say, 'It is unworthy of God to slay an innocent man.' Or they say, 'This religion of blood and suffering is inappropriate for a God of love. The idea of a God who slays His Son is repulsive!' But we can never say this, when we realize it was all done for us, the forgiveness of our sins, to reconcile us to God through the crucified and risen Son of God. Such criticism fails to recognize the height and the depth, the length and the width of the love of God that is in Jesus Christ.

Schreiner: The author explains why it is fitting and appropriate for God to perfect Jesus through sufferings. Through Jesus' sufferings believers are glorified. In the Greco-Roman world to associate the divine with suffering and perfection with suffering would be utterly shocking. But this is precisely what Hebrews does in speaking of the sovereign God of the universe, of the one for whom and through whom all things exist.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

MacArthur: ‘It was fitting’ means that what God did through Jesus Christ was consistent with His character. It was consistent with God’s wisdom. The cross was a masterpiece of wisdom. God solved the problem which no human or angelic mind could have solved. What He did was also consistent with His holiness, for God showed on the cross His hatred for sin. It was consistent with His power, being the greatest display of power ever manifested. Christ endured for a few hours what will take an eternity for unrepentant sinners to endure. It was consistent with His love, in that He loved the world so much that He gave his only Son for its redemption. Finally, what He did was consistent with His grace, because Christ’s sacrifice was substitutionary. The work of salvation was totally consistent with God’s nature. It was entirely fitting for Him to have done what He did.

Hughes: The writer begins by asserting that the work of salvation fits God’s creative relationship to the universe. In other words, the way of salvation is not arbitrary but rather befits the character of the God we know, the God ‘for whom and by whom all things exist.’ God is the goal and author of all that exists, and correspondingly Jesus is the author and goal of salvation. As the *work of creation* is totally of God, so also is the *work of salvation*. Just as God poured Himself into the work of creation, even so the author of salvation poured Himself into it through suffering. Everything is of Him!

Bruce: The one ‘for whom and by whom all things exist’ must here be God the Father, of whose perfecting work the Son is object. We may be sure that all that God does is worthy of Himself, but here our author singles out one of God’s actions and tells us that it was a fitting thing for Him to do. And what was that? It was His making Jesus, through His sufferings, perfectly qualified to be the Savior of His people. It is in the passion of our Lord that we see the very heart of God laid bare; nowhere is God more fully or more worthily revealed as God than when we see Him ‘in Christ reconciling the world to Himself’ (2 Cor. 5:19).

b) Savior (2:10b)

...in bringing many sons to glory...

Schreiner: One of God’s primary goals in history is to bring ‘many sons to glory.’ The glory destined for human beings includes the rule over all described in the previous verses, and it also refers to God’s own being and presence. We should not miss that God is the one who brings man sons to glory. The same Lord who led Israel in the exodus, freeing them from Egypt, is leading His people to glory through Jesus Christ. The author does not say that ‘all’ are glorified but ‘many.’ The tasting of death for everyone does not lead to universalism, to the salvation of everyone without exception, but to the salvation of those who are God’s sons and daughters.

Philips: With Jesus as our elder brother, we are children of God. Regarding this new family, it is a brotherhood of those destined for glory. God, in Christ, is ‘bringing many sons to glory.’ This is the goal of the Christian life, the destination for which we are headed. God created man to share in His glory.

Bruce: He is the Savior who blazed the trail of salvation along which alone God’s ‘many sons’ could be brought to glory. Man, created by God for his glory, was prevented by sin from attaining that glory until the Son of Man came and opened up by His death a new way by which humanity might reach the goal for which it was made. As His people’s representative and forerunner He has now entered into the presence of God to secure *their* entry there.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

Hughes: Seeing now that suffering befitted Christ as our Savior, first, because it was congruent with God’s display of power as sovereign Creator and, second, because Jesus became a perfect pioneer of salvation, we now note that it is fitting because of what it achieves for lost humanity—‘in bringing many sons to glory.’ The picture is of a great family procession as it winds its way through this life and moves ever upward to ‘glory.’ Leading the procession is the pioneer, the captain, the champion of our salvation. He has gone before us as perfect man—living a perfect, sinless life—overcoming every temptation and hardship—dying as a perfect atonement for all our sins—resurrected to glory—and now leading us over His bloodstained path to the same glory.

Hughes: There are ‘many,’ not just a few, in the procession. The sense is that of an uncountable multitude. The endless procession follows its leader until they are before the throne. Those in the procession are not simply redeemed ‘units’ but ‘sons.’ The great train is made up of redeemed sons and daughters who are in family relation to the Father and the Son. Their hearts’ cry is, ‘*Abba!* Father!’ They are brothers and sisters, ‘fellow heirs with Christ,’ the pioneer of their salvation (Rom. 8:15-17; cp. Gal. 4:5-6; Eph. 1:5). The vast train arrives in ‘glory.’ They are not only there—they are sharing in the pioneer’s glory. The prophecy of Psalm 8 that the author has just quoted is thus fulfilled.

Hughes: In one sublime sentence the author of Hebrews has taken the detractor’s objection (that suffering is unbecoming to a Savior) and demonstrated that suffering has instead produced a perfect, pioneer Savior who can save to the uttermost because He was perfected by the sufferings engendered by His incarnation. Suffering outfitted Him to be a perfect pioneer of salvation. His suffering has blazed the way for the great multitudes of His redeemed to follow. How fitting a suffering Savior is!

c) Pioneer (2:10c)

...should make the founder of their salvation...

Schreiner: Jesus is described as the ‘source’ (*αρχηγος, archēgos*) of salvation for the many sons who are brought to glory. This word is also translated as ‘pioneer’ (NIV, NRSV) or ‘founder’ (ESV), indicating that Jesus is the pathfinder of salvation for the sons whom God brings to glory. He is the trailblazer who secures salvation for His brothers, but the word also carries the idea of leader, and hence ‘pioneer’ is perhaps the best rendering for the term. The reference to Jesus as a pioneer forecasts the comparison with Moses in 3:6, for Moses was the ‘pioneer’ (cp. Num. 14:4) who led Israel out of Egypt. It also anticipates Joshua, who led Israel into the promised land (Num. 13:2-3).

Hughes: Next we observe that what God did is fitting because of the kind of Savior it has given us, as is revealed in the phrase, ‘the founder of their salvation.’ The word translated ‘founder,’ *archēgos*, can be rendered in various ways according to the context that surrounds it. It contains the ideas of supremacy, personal participation, originating. The thought of originating is capsulized in the picture of a mountain climber who goes ahead of the others, chipping away footholds, inserting pitons, and extending the rope to his partners. This central idea has spawned many translations for this verse: *leader* of salvation, *author* of salvation, *founder* of salvation, *hero* of salvation. But the top three renderings are *captain*, *champion*, and *pioneer*. *Captain* carries the idea of ‘champion of a cause.’ But to modern ears it has the misleading idea of the boxing ring or a great athlete. *Pioneer* is the best translation, for Christ our Savior blazed the

Hebrews – Lesson 6

trail of salvation that we can now follow. God has given us Jesus as the divine hero/pioneer of our salvation.

Philips: There is a second description given to Jesus in this passage, and it is, if anything, even more striking than the first one. Verse 10 speaks of Him as ‘the founder of their salvation,’ or, in the NIV, ‘the author of their salvation.’ The Greek word here is *archēgos*, which is best translated as ‘forerunner’ or ‘pioneer.’ The idea of a pioneer is appropriate to the work of Jesus Christ for our salvation. Like those stalwart settlers who followed Lewis and Clark into the fertile West, we follow a path blazed only by Jesus Christ, who leads us into the promised land of salvation and eternal life. He has gone where we could not go; by His own resources of righteousness and truth and an all-conquering life, He has opened up the way to heaven for us (cp. Jn. 14:2-4). The writer of Hebrews identified Jesus as the way, the pioneer and trailblazer whom we must trust and follow.

Bruce: For the great salvation which the gospel proclaims was not only ‘first announced through the Lord,’ as we have been told above, but was procured for us by Him through His passion. He is the Pathfinder, the Pioneer of our salvation; this is the meaning of the word *archēgos*, rendered ‘author’ here in the ERV/ARV and ‘captain’ in the AV/KJV.

MacArthur: The Greek word for ‘author’ is *archēgos*, literally, a ‘pioneer’ or ‘leader.’ In Acts 3:15 and 5:31 the term, used both times of Christ, is translated ‘Prince.’ It always refers to someone who involves others in his endeavor. For example, it is used of a man who starts and heads a family, into which others are born or married. It is used of a man who founds a city, in which others come to live. It was commonly used of a pioneer who blazed a trail for others to follow. The *archēgos* never stood at the rear giving orders. He was always out in front, leading and setting the example. As the supreme *Archēgos*, Christ does not stand at the rear giving orders. He is always before us, as perfect Leader and perfect Example.

d) Perfected (2:10d)

...perfect through suffering.

Philips: If Jesus is our trailblazer, what was the wilderness, or the barrier, that He traversed and opened for us? The answer is given in Genesis 3, which recalls mankind’s fall into sin and the curse of God’s wrath, causing a barrier that stands between holy God and sinful man. This was a barrier far higher and more deadly than any range of mountains, for it signified God’s holy wrath against sin. This is the wilderness through which Jesus opened a way for us; by His cross He broke through the desert of God’s curse and wrath. This is what the writer of Hebrews is getting at when He says that Christ was made ‘perfect through suffering.’ People sometimes balk at the idea of God’s Son having to be made perfect, since He was without spot or blemish from the first.

Hughes: Perhaps, like me, you have read this verse scores of times, passing through the mysteries of the opening clauses to the amazing ending—that Jesus was made perfect through sufferings—and you have sat in wonder. How could Jesus, the eternal Son of God who has always existed in perfection, who ‘is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature’ (1:3), be made perfect? How do you make the perfect more perfect? One thing is for sure; it cannot mean the addition of anything of the purging of anything from His moral nature. Christ has always been the quintessence or moral perfection in that He was absolute sinless.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

Bruce: But what is meant by His being made ‘perfect’ through His sufferings? How can He be thought of as falling short of perfection? The answer is this: the perfect Son of God has become His people’s perfect Savior, opening up their way to God; and in order to become that, He must endure suffering and death. The pathway of perfection which His people must tread must first be trodden by the Pathfinder; only so could He be their adequate representative and high priest in the presence of God. (‘The many sons in being brought to glory are perfected through suffering; and so it is in accord with the divine method of dealing that the pioneer of salvation should pass through the same experience.’) There is much in this epistle about the attainment of perfection in the sense of unimpeded access to God and unbroken communication with Him, but in this as in other things it is Christ who leads the way.

Schreiner: Jesus as the source and pioneer is perfected through His sufferings. Perfection here does not denote, given the insistence on Jesus’ sinlessness elsewhere in Hebrews (4:15; 7:26-27), that Jesus was perfected morally in the sense that He was deficient previously. The word ‘perfect’ in the OT is used of the consecration of priests to indicate that they are qualified for office (cp. Ex. 29:22, 26; Lev. 7:37; 8:22). Jesus is perfected in that He reaches God’s intended goal by His obedience, suffering, death, and exaltation. Perfection, then is best characterized as *vocational* so that, like the priests in the OT, He is qualified for His office as priest-king. Even though perfection is not Jesus’ moral improvement, it has an experiential and existential dimension and in that sense includes the obedience and sufferings that qualified Jesus to serve as high priest.

Philips: But He was perfected not in character but in His office as Christ. The language of ‘perfecting’ also has the connotation of ‘consecrating’; priests in the temple ‘perfected’ or ‘consecrated’ themselves for service before God on behalf of the people, cleansing their bodies and donning priestly clothes. Likewise, as William Lane points out, Jesus ‘was fully equipped for His office. God qualified Jesus to come before Him in priestly action. He perfected Him as a priest of His people through His sufferings, which permitted Him to accomplish His redemptive mission.’ The writer of Hebrews here begins a theme that will dominate much of this book. Jesus, the true high priest to whom all the others pointed, offered His own life and gave his own blood to open the way for sinners to come to God.

Hughes: His being made ‘perfect through suffering’ has reference to His being made a *perfect pioneer of salvation*. The idea is that He was perfectly equipped to do the job. His perfection was rooted in the Incarnation. Man was created in the image of God, the *imago Dei*, but when Christ came He took on the *imago homini*—He became man. Incarnate, Christ underwent a series of perfections (cp. 5:8-9). He became perfect (complete) in experiencing obedience in human flesh. Likewise, we believe he learned such things as patience and faith. Jesus became perfect in regard to temptation by suffering temptation and putting the tempter to flight (Mt. 4:11). Christ’s suffering through His atoning death on the cross when ‘He himself bore our sins in His body on the tree’ (1 Pe. 2:24), taking all the sins of the world so that they were on Him and in Him, so that He became sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21)—rendered Him horribly perfect as our atonement.

Hughes: And finally, all of this—His perfection in incarnation, temptation, and atonement—rendered in our pioneer a perfect identification with us. It was impossible for God to *fully* identify and thus *fully* sympathize with mankind apart from Christ’s incarnation and human experience. But now Christ’s perfection makes possible an unlimited capacity to sympathize with those exposed to troubles and temptations in this life.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

2. Jesus Sanctifies Humanity (2:11-13)

a) *One Source (2:11a)*

¹¹*For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.*

Schreiner: The ‘for’ introducing the verse explains further why it is appropriate for Jesus to be perfected through sufferings. Both Jesus and those being sanctified, i.e., those being brought to glory, share the same nature. The author literally says, ‘They are all of one.’ A reference to God as Father is the most probable since Adam isn’t mentioned in the text and Abraham doesn’t crop up until verse 16. In any case those who have the same Father belong to the same family and have the same source and origin.

Hughes: Verse 10 which crowns and controls this section, assumes the solidarity of believers with Christ, the pioneer of their salvation. But now in verse 11 the author boldly states the fact of solidarity. The phrase ‘one source’ is literally, ‘out of one’ or ‘from one.’ In the present context, which emphasizes shared humanity (cp. v. 14), ‘one’ is best understood as a reference to Adam. Both Christ and the human race come *out of one man, Adam*. Jesus and all humanity share the same human ancestor. Jesus Christ was 100 percent *homo sapiens*, as are all descendants of Adam. But His relationship to humanity was different than that of any other man, because He imparts holiness to those who are in Him, the second Adam. Sin came to all humanity through ‘one man,’ Adam. But righteousness came through the ‘one man,’ Jesus Christ (cp. Rom. 5:12, 19).

Bruce: This is a general truth, and in this supreme instance it is exemplified by the fact that not only do He who consecrates and those who are consecrated share a common humanity, but also He is the Son of God and they are sons and daughters of God. By His death they are consecrated to God for His worship and service and set apart for God as His holy people, destined to enter into His glory. For sanctification is glory begun, and glory is sanctification completed.

Schreiner: The common origin between Jesus and His brothers and sisters doesn’t mean all distinctions between Jesus and others are erased, for Jesus does the sanctifying, and the rest of the human race is sanctified. All other human beings, as those subject to death and sin (2:17), need to be sanctified, for they are unholy and have given themselves over to evil. Indeed, the author states here that Jesus is the one who sanctifies them.

Philips: The second description of God’s new family makes essentially the same point. Verse 11 tells us that ‘He who sanctifies [or makes holy] and those who are sanctified [made holy] all have one origin.’ If we are saved, that means we have been born again (cp. Jn. 1:13). Jesus is God’s Son, and we, His brothers, are born again of God. Every family has distinguishing characteristics. In some families it is brains, in others it is wealth; in still others it is sloth or dishonesty or violence. So what is the defining trait of God’s family? Holiness. This means that Christians are in the business of becoming holy (cp. Eph. 1:4). How few Christians have this perspective! What we see in this passage is something far greater than a desire for material affluence and personal peace, a higher and more wonderful destiny and calling. We were reborn in Christ as His fellow brothers and sisters for the glory that is His in the heavenly realms, and the holiness that distinguishes God and His children. This is what the Christian life is all about—growth in holiness. This involves the progressive removal of the old man, leaving sin behind us, while we are putting on the new man. We call this process *sanctification*, and it is our calling and our destiny and our duty (cp. Eph. 4:21-24). Life is not about climbing up the corporate ladder, amassing money, or accumulating fun experiences. It is about growing in

Hebrews – Lesson 6

holiness; this is why God allows us to go through trials, since they tend to further our reliance on Him and pursuit of holiness. All of us want to know God's will for our life; Paul answers in 1 Th. 4:3, 'This is the will of God, your sanctification.'

MacArthur: We were made holy through His sacrifice, and have become 'those who are sanctified.' Christ has removed the possibility of positional sinfulness. We are therefore as pure positionally as God is pure, as righteous positionally as Christ is righteous, and we are entitled to be called a brother of Jesus Christ because we now share in His righteousness. Such are the wonder and kindness of God's grace.

b) Brothers (2:11b)

That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers...

Hughes: Jesus 'is not ashamed to call them brothers.' This is a stupendous declaration in light of the cosmic greatness of Christ with which the book of Hebrews begins when it asserts, 'He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of His nature, and He upholds the universe by the word of His power' (1:3). The amazing fact is, this cosmic Son, this Jesus, is not reluctant or ashamed to call the redeemed His 'brothers'! On the contrary, He calls them brothers with all His heart, with the fervor of love, with the eloquence of earnest conviction. He, in fact, rejoices to call us 'brothers.' He glories in the family designation, 'These are my brothers and sisters!'

Philips: Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers because our salvation is unto holiness. In order to make us holy, He took up our nature, so that we might share in His nature and His inheritance. He became like us so that we might become like Him. He came to where we were to take us to where He came from so that we might become like Him in His glory. This explains why Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers. He is not ashamed because our salvation brings glory to God His Father. He is not ashamed because He took up our humanity that we might see and even share in His glory. He is not ashamed because we are so beloved to Him that He died for us, so that by the power of God's resurrection He might live with us forever. Even now He is bringing many sons to glory, children of God through union with Himself.

Schreiner: Because Jesus and those being sanctified by Him have the same Father, He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. We should not fail to note that the word 'brothers' includes 'sisters' since the term 'brothers' is generic referring to both 'brothers and sisters', to all those who belong to the family of God. Shame, which played a significant role in the ancient world, could prevent someone from acknowledging a father, a son, a wife, or a daughter. But Jesus is not ashamed of His brothers and sisters. He gladly acknowledges that they belong to the same family. Clearly 'brothers' here does not refer to all human beings, for not all human beings have God as their Father in the sense that they are saved. Not all human beings are brought to glory. Not all human beings are sanctified. The family is restricted here to those who are consecrated and dedicated to God through the sanctifying work of Jesus, through His atoning death that freed them from the fear of death.

Bruce: And since those who are sanctified to God through His death are sons and daughters of God, the Son of God is not ashamed to acknowledge them as His brothers and sisters—not only as those whose nature He took upon Himself, but those whose trials He endured, for whose sins He made atonement, that they might follow Him to glory on the path of salvation which He Himself cut.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

c) *Old Testament (2:12-13)*

Hughes: Having established the fact of the communion of human nature shared by Christ and His suffering people, the preacher now proceeds to extend further encouragement by explaining the privilege and character of Christ's solidarity with His people. He does so by summoning three quotations from famous messianic passages in the Greek Old Testament. These passages form a subtly nuanced testimony to the profoundly deep identification of Christ with His suffering people. Significantly, all the passages feature persecution as their backdrop. They are Psalm 22:22 and Isaiah 8:17 and 8:18, respectively.

(1) Psalm 22:22 (2:12)

...¹²saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."

(a) *Psalm 22 Background*

Philips: As was his custom, the writer of Hebrews proves his point with Old Testament citations. The first is from Psalm 22, which so accurately anticipates Jesus' death on the cross. These words come after the suffering, when the psalmist was sure of deliverance, just as Jesus praised God after His resurrection from the dead.

Hughes: The first quotation is from a psalm that every first-century Christian knew, clearly understanding Christ to be the speaker. Almost all the first twenty-one verses were used in the early church as a *testimonium* of Christ's crucifixion. In its opening words ('My God, my God, why have You forsaken Me?') were quoted by Christ as He neared death on the cross (Mt. 27:47; Mk. 15:34). Verses 6-8 of Psalm 22 record His experience of being mocked by the callous crowd (cp. Mt. 27:39-44). Psalm 22:14-15 describe His agonies. Finally, verses 16-18 of the twenty-second psalm give explicit details of the crucifixion (cp. Jn. 19:23ff.; Mt. 27:35).

Bruce: the first quotation (Ps. 22:22) is taken from a psalm in which no Christian of the first century would have failed to recognize Christ as the speaker. It is the psalm whose opening words Jesus took upon His lips as the expression of His own experience in the hour of dereliction on the cross: 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Practically the whole of the lament to which the first part of the psalm is devoted was used in the church from very early times as a *testimonium* of the crucifixion of Christ; not only is it expressly quoted, but its language has been worked into the very fabric of the New Testament passion narratives, especially in the First and Fourth Gospels. It is most natural, then, that when the psalmist's lament gives way to the public thanksgiving of which the second part of the psalm consists, the same speaker should be recognized, and the once crucified, now exalted Christ should be heard saying: 'I will declare your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.'

Schreiner: The citation comes from Psalm 22, a well-known messianic psalm. The citation accords with the LXX. Hebrews doesn't cite the verses that recount Jesus' sufferings. It is likely, however, that the sufferings rehearsed in the psalm are part of the furniture of his thought, for we have significant evidence that Psalm 22 was widely accepted as messianic. In addition, the context of Hebrews 2 calls attention to Jesus' suffering, emphasizing that through Jesus' death the power of the devil was broken. The story line of Psalm 22 calls attention to Jesus' suffering, emphasizing that through Jesus' death the power of the devil was broken. The story line of Psalm 22 is probably in the author's mind, for it fits with what Hebrews is doing. The

Hebrews – Lesson 6

suffering one has become the exalted one. Jesus, who suffered death for the sake of His brothers and sisters, is now crowned with glory and honor at God's right hand. The rule over the world promised to human beings has been realized through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Schreiner: Hebrews quote the key transitional verse in Psalm 22, the verse where the story changes. Throughout Psalm 22 the speaker, whom Hebrews identifies as Jesus, pleads with God to save Him from His overwhelming distress, from the suffering that is tearing Him apart. His pleas for help are punctuated by confessions of trust in God, which reaffirm God's faithfulness to deliver His own. When we come to verse 22, the corner is turned. The call for help has been answered. The psalmist (and Jesus!) for the remainder of the psalm praises the Lord for answering his prayer and for rescuing him from his enemies. The victory, however, is not reserved for Jesus alone; He shares it with those who are His family members, so we have a family celebration, a family feast (Ps. 22:26, 29).

(b) *Psalm 22 Application*

Schreiner: The notion that Jesus and believers belong to the same family is supported by Ps. 22:22. Hebrews understands the speaker in the verse to be Jesus Himself. Jesus will proclaim God's name to His brothers and sisters and will praise God in the assembly along with fellow believers. What particularly interests the author is that Jesus identifies fellow believers as 'My brothers.' The solidarity between Jesus and His brothers is emphasized, which supports the authors claim that the rule given to Jesus is not restricted to Him but also is granted to His brothers and sisters. Thus, Jesus' victory at His resurrection and exaltation means victory for all those who belong to Jesus, for His brothers and sisters. Hence, just as David praised Yahweh in the congregation of the saints, so too Jesus praises the Lord with His brothers and sisters. Indeed the victory for the king anticipates the final vanquishing of all foes.

Hughes: Thus Christ prophetically agonizes throughout the crucifixion, interspersing His agony with prayers. But in Psalm 22:22—as the crucifixion is over and He is resurrected and exalted—Jesus cries triumphantly to God His Father, 'I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise' (as quoted in 2:12). Note well that it is only to His brothers, or put another way, in the presence of the congregation (which is today the church), that Jesus declares and extols the Father's name. Therefore, Christians and Christians alone are the ones to whom Jesus opens God's 'name'—that is, the character of God the Father! The world can get a glimpse of God in the cosmos. It can understand even more about God if its people will still humbly examine the Holy Scriptures. But Christ declares and explains the character of God only to His brothers and sisters. 'I will tell of your name,' says Jesus, 'to my brothers.'

Philips: This reminds us that Jesus is the true singer of the Psalms; they were written first and foremost for Him, and it is always with Him in mind that we sing them most truly. But this psalm also makes an important theological point: Christ died and rose again not merely to save us but also to make us worshipers of His Father. This is fulfilled in our churches today; literally, Hebrews 2:12 concludes, 'I will sing hymns in the church.'

Bruce: Following the Septuagint, our author uses the word *ekklēsia* for 'congregation.' The employment of this word in synonymous parallelism with 'brothers' in a Christian context indicates that those whom the Son of God is pleased to call His brothers are the members of His church. By virtue of His suffering He has now become the representative Head of a new mankind.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

Hughes: Even more, as the congregation meets, Christ joins his ‘brothers’ (and sisters) in singing the praises of God the Father, for He says, ‘In the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.’ Jesus is proud to call His redeemed ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’ and then to declare to His brothers and sisters what God is like—even leading them in singing God’s praises. What privileged knowledge and intimate solidarity with Him gives the church.

(2) Isaiah 8:17b (2:13a)

¹³*And again, “I will put my trust in him.”*

(a) *Isaiah 8:17b Background*

The two quotations in 2:13 come from a section of Isaiah (chapters 7-12) where Judah is threatened by Israel and Syria, who are attempting to put a rival on the throne of Ahaz. The Lord promises Ahaz that the plot will not succeed. God’s covenant is with the Davidic dynasty, not with these upstart kings who are trying to overthrow the Davidic ruler. The futility of their attempt to displace Ahaz will soon become evident, for Assyria will sweep in and conquer both Syria and Israel. Indeed, the real threat here is Assyria (not Israel and Syria), for Assyria will almost succeed in capturing Judah as well, but Jerusalem and Judah will be spared. On the basis of God’s promises, Isaiah summons the people not to fear political and military contrivances. God’s kingdom will triumph through a Davidic ruler (Is. 9:2-7; 11:1-10), while the Lord’s enemies will face judgment (cp. Is. 10:5-34). The righteous kingdom promised through David will ultimately triumph, a new world of peace and justice will dawn under the rule of a son of David.

Schreiner: It is instructive to see that Hebrews, cites words spoken by the prophet Isaiah in chapter 8. In the midst of political turmoil in which Ahaz and Judah are terrified of Syria and Israel, Isaiah summons the people to fear the Lord instead of worrying about the conspiracy hatched against their kingdom (Is. 8:11-13). The Lord is a ‘sanctuary’ for those who trust in Him (Is. 8:14), and hence there is no need to turn to the dead to decipher the future (Is. 8:19). Isaiah says he will wait for and hope in the Lord (Is. 8:17), for He has promised that the enemies poised against Judah will not succeed. An interesting parallel exists between Isaiah and Jesus, for just as Isaiah was rejected by his contemporaries, so too Jesus was rejected by His. Still, Isaiah became a rallying point for faith, and Jesus functions supremely as such. Indeed, the children God has given to Isaiah function as ‘signs and wonders in Israel’ (Is. 8:18), for they represent the remnant that belongs to the Lord. Isaiah’s children testify to ultimate victory, to the promise that the Lord’s rule and blessing for His people will become a reality.

Hughes: The second Old Testament quotation—‘I will put my trust in him’—is taken from Isaiah 8:17b, which is again a fragrant messianic passage. Isaiah 8 is sandwiched between chapters of immense messianic teaching. Chapter 7 of Isaiah is decidedly messianic, containing the famous prophecy of Christ’s virgin birth (Is. 7:14). And chapter 9 is likewise messianic with its equally famous prophecy of Christ’s names (Is. 9:6). But most of all, chapter 8 itself is a well-mined quarry of messianic prophecies. The whole of Isaiah 8 (though it is by and about Isaiah) has a rich messianic aroma!

Philips: Verse 12 presents two verses from the eighth chapter of Isaiah (vv. 17-18). The prophet had exhorted the people to trust the Lord but had been rejected by his own evil generation. However, God had promised him sons who would follow in his faith, pointing ultimately to a

Hebrews – Lesson 6

virgin who would be with child. In light of those promises, Isaiah cried out, ‘I will put my trust in Him...I and the children God has given me.’

Bruce: If it is easy to see the relevance of the quotation of Psalm 22:22 here, it is less easy to see the relevance of the quotation which follows it. ‘I will place my trust in him’ is taken from the Septuagint of Isaiah 8:17b. In the context of this quotation, Isaiah, finding that his oracles of salvation and judgment meet with no response from either king or people, seals them up and hands them over to his disciples for safekeeping, in order that, when their fulfillment comes, it may be apparent that what he had spoken was the true word of God. Meanwhile, he says, ‘I will wait for Yahweh, who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in Him.’

(b) *Isaiah 8:17b Application*

Bruce: God’s hiding of His face from the house of Jacob provides the link with Ps. 22, where His face is hidden from the righteous sufferer who (in the Christian interpretation) is the representative of the whole house of Jacob, enduring the dereliction which was due to them. If Isaiah, one of the prophets through whom God of old time spoke to the fathers, was rejected by those to whom he came, so was the Son in whom God more recently spoke His final word; If Isaiah nonetheless maintained his trust in God and waited for vindication from Him, so did the Son of God.

Schreiner: Now we turn to what Hebrews does with this citation. Jesus is the one who trusts in God, as Isaiah turned to Him of old. Isaiah trusted that the Lord would triumph even though Judah was imperiled by foes on every side. Jesus trusted that God would rescue and deliver Him in His suffering even though He faced the greatest peril of all: death.

Hughes: Now then, how is Isaiah’s declaration ‘I will put my trust in him’ used to describe Christ? In Isaiah 8 we see that as Isaiah realizes that his message gets no response, he seals it up (v. 16) and declares, ‘I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him’ (v. 17). Isaiah would have to depend on God. So it was with Christ as He shared the solidarity of our humanity. Isaiah’s words in the mouth of Christ—‘I will put My trust in Him,’ quoted in 2:1)—show that while undergoing persecution in the flesh *Jesus depended on God*. While in the frailty of human flesh, Jesus exercised faith! What solidarity—what communion of nature—Jesus shares with the suffering church. They suffered? So did He! They were weak? So was He! They must depend on God—just as He did!

(3) *Isaiah 8:18 (2:13b)*

And again, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

(a) *Isaiah 8:18 Background*

Hughes: The third and final Old Testament quotation immediately follows in Isaiah 8:18, though the author of Hebrews introduces it with the formula, ‘And again....’ This is because he wants to make a further point, this time about the confidence that Christ’s solidarity with His own brings. When Isaiah originally said, ‘Behold I and the children whom the LORD has given me,’ he was referring to his own two *physical sons*. Isaiah 8:18 gives a vivid picture of confidence. I envision Isaiah (‘Yahweh is salvation’) standing between his two boys. He places his hand on Maher-shalal-hash-baz, whose name predicts the removal of his oppressors—‘the spoil speeds, the prey hastes.’ Then he places his hand on Shear-jashub—‘a remnant shall return.’ Now, with both hands on his prophetically named sons, he confidently says, ‘Behold, I and the children

Hebrews – Lesson 6

whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.’ His sons have given him the confidence that he and those sons (and, indeed, all of God’s people) have a future.

Bruce: Isaiah’s family is referred to directly in the third quotation, which comes from Isaiah 8:18a, and in the Old Testament text follows immediately upon the second quotation. One may wonder then, why the two quotations are separated by ‘And again,’ but the reason no doubt is that two separate points are being made. The people might pay no heed to Isaiah’s oracles, but so long as Isaiah himself went about in Jerusalem, he was an abiding witness to the message of God which had been conveyed through him. Not only so, but his own significant name (‘Yahweh is salvation’) and the equally significant names of his two sons—Shear-jashub (‘Remnant will return’) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (‘Hasten boot, speed spoil’)—reminded the people of the dominant themes of his message. Indeed, his sons’ names were the expression of his own obedient trust in God, his confidence that what God had said would surely come to pass.

(b) *Isaiah 8:18 Application*

Hughes: These words, applied to Christ, are a sublime statement of confidence. It is as if He places His arms around the sons and daughters of the suffering church and says, ‘Behold, I and the children God has given me’—‘The fact that I have family—brothers and sisters—is a prophecy of the future. This blessed remnant will survive the onslaught, whatever comes.’

Philips: By putting these words in the mouth of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit is telling us that like Isaiah’s children we are the testimony to God’s faithfulness in this present generation. We are children of God given to Jesus Christ, called to testify among the present generation to the reality of salvation that comes through Jesus Christ.

Schreiner: The second citation from Is. 8:18 also plays a key role in Hebrews. The victory for which Jesus trusts God is not His alone. It also belongs to His brothers and sisters, to the children whom God has given Him. They will share with Jesus the rule over death and exercise the dominion promised in Psalm 8 to human beings. It is remarkable that the children are described as those whom God gave to Jesus. Their salvation and liberation is God’s work and cannot be attributed to their own moral capacities. The author emphasizes here that the reconciliation of human beings is the work of God and of Jesus the high priest.

Bruce: That the Son of God’s confidence in His Father had been vindicated by His exaltation was not yet a matter of public manifestation; it had been revealed to believers and was proclaimed by them as part of their witness. But the life and witness of these believers—members of the family of Christ—was a token to the world that it had not seen or heard the last of Jesus of Nazareth. If He represented His people at the right hand of God, they represented Him on earth, Isaiah’s words about his children might therefore be understood in an extended sense as the words of Christ about His people. Once again His solidarity with them is affirmed, not now by the means of the term ‘brothers,’ as in vv. 11 and 12, but means of the term ‘children.’ The description of Christians as ‘children’ of Christ is peculiar to this epistle among the New Testament writings (but cp. Is. 53:10).

3. Jesus – Summary on His Humanity

Hughes: Taken together, these three messianic quotations provide huge comfort to the fearful little church because they reveal rich benefits coming from Christ’s solidarity with His people. First, Jesus proclaims the character of God to His brothers and sisters alone—and to no one else.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

He even leads them in hymns to the Father. What amazing knowledge and intimacy comes from their solidarity in Christ! Second, as their real human brother, sharing their human frailty, He had to put His trust in God. He had to have faith in the midst of suffering, just as He calls them to do. Finally, the fact that He is in relationship with them, that He can say, ‘Behold, I and the children God has given Me,’ means they can confidently await a great future!

Philips: If it was fitting for God to send His Son to die on a cross, how fitting is it for us to be His witnesses in our generation. How fitting it is for us to bear the scorn of the world the way Jesus did, by the power of the Holy Spirit. How fitting it is for us to sing His praises out of the fullness of our hearts, and to declare His name not only before our brothers, but before all the world as He brings countless others into His and our family. Christ is not ashamed to call us brothers, and He has sent His gospel to us to declare open the way to God. Are we ashamed of Him? Are we ashamed to tell the world? May we be unashamed in our testimony to Christ and His gospel, for through our witness He will bring many other sons to glory—both men and women—to the praise of His name.

B. Jesus Puts on Humanity (Hebrews 2:14-18)

Philips: Most of the heresies of the early church had to do in one way or another with the person of Jesus Christ. On the one hand, there were those who denied the full divinity of Jesus, a view most closely identified with Arius, a preacher from Alexandria in Egypt. The Arians held that however great Jesus was, He was still less than the eternal and almighty God. On the other hand were the Docetists, so called for the Greek word *dokeō*, which means ‘to seem’ or ‘to appear.’ These held that while the divine Christ may have appeared as a man, He nonetheless was not. It would have been unworthy for the divine to take up flesh, they argued, much less to die in shame and weakness upon a cross.

Philips: Both aspects of this ancient controversy have already been answered in the Letter to the Hebrews. Christ’s fully divinity featured prominently in chapter 1, where verse 8 said of Jesus: ‘Your throne, O God, is forever and ever.’ This is about as clear a statement of deity as you can find. Chapter 2 speaks very deliberately to the other side of the equation. Hebrews 2:10-13 showed how thoroughly Jesus identified Himself with mankind, making Himself of one family with those He saves and even equipping Himself for office by means of suffering. Hebrews 2:14-18 goes on to give proof-texts that are and have been devastating to any who would deny the full humanity of Jesus Christ.

Philips: This is the great theme of these verses before us: the full humanity of Jesus Christ in His work as divine Savior. Assuming this truth, the writer of Hebrews draws forth its implications, making clear the reasons why God’s Son became man and also detailing the final results of that work begun by His humble birth in the Bethlehem stable. The author highlights here three great aspects of Christ’s saving work: first, He broke the devil’s hold and liberated captive humanity. Second, He made propitiation for God’s holy wrath against our sin; and third, He became a merciful and compassionate minister who is able to help us who now are suffering under the trial of temptation.

1. Jesus Saves Humanity (2:14-16)

Philips: The reason Christ came into the world as a man is defined by two key verbs. The first is ‘to destroy’ (v. 14b). Jesus came to destroy the power of a tyrant who held mankind in slavery,

Hebrews – Lesson 6

namely, the devil. The second verb is ‘to deliver’ (v. 15). Like Moses in the exodus, Jesus came to set His people free. This was the purpose of the incarnation. These verses also show the means by which He gained this victory: through His death. Altogether this is a wonderfully succinct statement of Jesus’ mission in this world. If someone asks, ‘Why did Jesus come into this world?’ here is the answer: He came to die, that He might overthrow Satan’s dominion, and set captive humanity free.

a) *Jesus Destroys Death (2:14)*

(1) *Flesh and Blood (2:14a)*

¹⁴*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things...*

Bruce: Who are those ‘children’ whom God has given to Christ? Men and women, creatures of flesh and blood. But if His solidarity with them is to be real, He also must be a true human being, a genuine partaker of flesh and blood. Moreover, He must partake of flesh and blood ‘in like manner’ with them—that is to say, by the gateway of birth. No Docetic or Apollinarian Christ will satisfy their need of a Savior or God’s determination to supply that need. And if they, entering this earthly life by birth, leave it in due course by death, it was divinely fitting that He too should die. Indeed, this is stated here as the purpose of His incarnation—that He should die, and in the very act of dying draw the sting of death.

Schreiner: Since the children God gave to Jesus share in flesh and blood, Jesus does the same. He is fully and truly human, beset by the physical weaknesses and mortality that characterize human existence. We saw in Hebrews 1 some of the strongest statements in the NT on the deity of Christ. Chapter 2, on the other hand, contains some of the most profound verses on Christ’s humanity. He identifies totally and completely with the children God gave to Him since He shares the same human nature with them. There is no basis for the complaint that God does not truly understand the human predicament since Jesus experienced fully the travails of mortal existence.

MacArthur: ‘Share’ is from the Greek *koinōnia*, meaning to have fellowship, communion, or partnership. It involves having something in common with others. All human beings have ‘flesh and blood.’ In this we are all alike. It is our common nature. But ‘partook’ is from a very different word, *metechō*, which has to do with taking hold of something that is not naturally one’s own kind. We by nature are flesh and blood; Christ was not. Yet He willingly took hold of something which did naturally belong to Him. He added to Himself our nature in order that He might die in our place, and that we might take hold of the divine nature that did not belong to us (cp. 2 Pe. 1:4).

(2) *Death Destroyed (2:14b)*

...that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil...

MacArthur: So why did Christ become man? Why did He die? ‘That through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.’ The only way to destroy Satan was to rob him of his weapon, ‘death’—physical death, spiritual death, eternal death. Satan knew that God required death for us because of sin. Death had become the most certain fact of life. Satan knew that men, if they remained as they are, would die and go out of God’s presence into hell forever. Satan wants to hold onto men until they die, because once they are

Hebrews – Lesson 6

dead the opportunity for salvation is gone forever. Men cannot escape after death. So God had to wrest from Satan the power of death. And for just that purpose Jesus came.

Philips: He names our great oppressor, the devil, and says he ‘has the power of death’ (v. 14b). When the devil seduced our first parents into sin, he brought them under the curse of death. Hopeless subjection to death characterizes earthly existence apart from the intervention of God.

Bruce: The prince or angel of death is here identified with the devil—that is, Satan. ‘The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil’ (1 Jn. 3:8), and while the particular work of the devil most prominent in that context is sin, the association between sin and death is close enough for the destruction of death to be included in the purpose of the Son of God’s appearance.

Schreiner: The reason Jesus shared human nature is so that he could destroy through death the one who has the power of death, i.e., the devil. One of the fascinating statements here is the claim that the devil exercises authority (*το κρατος, to kratos*) over death. We might expect the author to say that God has the power of death as the Creator and Sovereign over all. As Lane rightly says, ‘The devil did not possess control over death inherently but gained his power when he seduced humankind to rebel against God.’

Schreiner: What Hebrews teaches here is that death is only undone through death. Death dies only through the death of Jesus. Or, more precisely, the one who has the power of death is dethroned through the death of Jesus. The devil’s reign over death has been removed through the death of Christ. The word ‘destroy’ (*καταργησι, katargēsē*) does not mean that the devil has been annihilated or obliterated. His power has been removed; the overthrow of death and the devil has begun but is not yet complete. Jesus’ sharing in humanity does not exempt Him from death and all its terrors. Indeed, by subjecting Himself to death, He conquers the one who enjoys dominion over death.

MacArthur: Satan’s weapon is extremely powerful. But God has a weapon even more powerful—eternal life—and with it Jesus destroyed death. The way to eternal life is through resurrection, but the way to resurrection is through death. So Jesus had to experience death before He could be resurrected and thereby give us life. Jesus’ dying destroyed death. How? He went into death, through death, and came out on the other side, thereby conquering it.

b) Jesus Delivers from Death (2:15-16)

(1) Delivered from Death (2:15)

...¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

Schreiner: The second purpose for Jesus’ becoming a human being is explained here. He became a man to dethrone the devil who had the power of death. But the Son also took on humanity so that through His death He would free those who were captive to the fear of death all their lives. Psalm 8 proclaims that human beings were made to rule the world for God, but instead of exercising dominion over the world, they are subject to slavery (*δουλειας, douleias*). For death casts a shadow over the entirety of life, hovering like a specter over every dimension of existence. Death means that the human beings do not reign but are ruled over by a foreign power, for they fear their eventual demise that comes inexorably over them.

Philips: Several great statements are made here, beginning with a description of man’s condition under sin. The writer of Hebrews says that all men ‘through fear of death were subject to

Hebrews – Lesson 6

lifelong slavery.’ The fear of death is something mankind still faces today. How much of our busyness, or our frenzy for entertainment, is mainly an attempt to divert our gaze from the shadow death casts across our lives? Death is not merely an event that awaits us, but a power that rules us now, the leaven of futility that permeates all our achievements and denies our souls peace and contentment.

MacArthur: The thing that terrifies people more than anything else is death. It is a horrible fear, ‘the king of terrors’ (Job 18:14). But when we receive Jesus Christ, death holds no more fear. We have been released from bondage to the fear of death, and, instead, actually look forward to it (Phil. 1:21; cp. 1 Cor. 15:55). Death no longer holds any fear, for it simply releases us into the presence of our Lord. Why? Because we have placed our hands into the hands of the Conqueror of death.

Bruce: Only by becoming a human being could the Son of God conquer death, which mankind without Him could never have done; until His conquest of death, death seemed to have the last word. The fear of death is a most potent fear. Through fear of death many will consent to do things that nothing else could compel them to do. Some braver souls, it is true, will accept death sooner than dishonor; but for the majority the fear of death can be a tyrannous instrument of coercion. And death is indeed the king of terrors to those who recognize in it the penalty of sin. But by the death of their Sanctifier, Christ’s brothers and sisters are sanctified; His death has transformed the meaning of death for them. To them His death means not judgment, but blessing; not bondage, but liberation. And their own death, when it comes, takes its character from His death. If, then, death itself cannot separate the people of Christ from God’s love which has been revealed in Him, it can no longer be held over their heads by the devil or any other malign power as a means of intimidation.

Schreiner: Jesus, however, has freed those who are His brothers and sisters from the fear of death. The author doesn’t fully unpack his argument here, but he apparently believes that death can only be defeated through a human being. Hence, Jesus had to become a human being to destroy death. It wasn’t enough for Jesus to become human. He had to endure death Himself. Death would only die through the death of a human being. Through Jesus’ death those who are part of Jesus’ family are freed from the fear of death. If Jesus’ death frees His brothers and sisters from the dominion and fear of death, it seems that He dies in their place. The death they deserve He took upon Himself so that they are no free from the fear of death that haunts human existence.

Philips: This then, is a clear statement of the problem our Lord Jesus came to solve. It is from this that He saves us—not merely from unhappiness or dysfunction or failure in life. What we need to be saved from is far greater, the comprehensive reign of death because of sin—a reign that now holds us in bondage through fear, that at the end of our lives afflicts us with the experience of death, and that beyond the grave sees us damned before the judgment throne of the holy God. Death is the problem from which we must be saved. Death is the rod of Satan’s rule and the source of his laughter at our expense. Death is also what Christ overcomes by His saving work. He breaks the devil’s power and sets us free by means of His own death on the cross. Taking our sins upon Himself, Jesus endured the wrath of God that we deserve.

(2) Who Is Delivered (2:16)

¹⁶*For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.*

Hebrews – Lesson 6

Schreiner: Suddenly angels come back into the argument. Jesus does not help angels but only those who are part of Abraham's family. The reference to angels is not entirely unexpected, of they have played a major role in chapters 1-2. Rule over the world has not been promised to angels but to human beings, and Christ came to free human beings from the devil and from the fear of death. Actually, the author doesn't speak of human beings in general. Release from the tyranny of death is limited to those who belong to the offspring of Abraham (*σπερματος Αβρααμ, spermatos Abraham*). The offspring of Abraham here isn't limited to Jewish Christians; all who believe in Jesus are children of Abraham. Here Hebrews accords with Pauline teaching (cp. Rom. 4:9-12; Gal. 3:6-9).

Bruce: No one, moreover, can become a human being without thereby becoming a member of some particular human group or family. So when the Son of God took our nature upon Himself, He became 'the son of Abraham' (Mt. 1:1). In doing that, however, He became the helper and liberator of all the children of Abraham, and here quite certainly we are not to confine the scope of 'the offspring of Abraham' to his natural descendants; we are rather to understand the whole family of faith (cp. Gal. 3:7).

Schreiner: Rule over the world will not be given to all those who are the children of Adam. Jesus came to take hold of the children of promise, to those who are the offspring of Abraham. The blessing is limited to the sons brought to glory (2:10), to those being sanctified (2:11), to those who are Jesus' brothers and sisters (2:11-12, 17), and to 'the children God gave Me' (2:13). The promises made to Abraham are fulfilled for those who are Jesus' brothers and sisters. The world translated 'help' (*επιλαμβάνεται, epilambanetai*) doesn't typically have such a meaning; it usually means to 'take hold' or 'grasp.' Still, the word 'help' makes good sense in context, for Jesus took hold of Abraham's offspring to help them. The author probably draws on Is. 41:8-10, where it seems that He takes hold of the children of Abraham to help them.

Bruce: He became man, then, in order to save men and women. When the Son of God, the Creator and Lord of angels, humbled Himself, He passed by angelic estate and stooped lower still, taking to Himself human nature for the redemption of the human family. Not of angels but of human beings he 'takes hold'; the verb is the same as that used in 8:9 when God recalls how He 'took hold' of His people Israel by the hand to bring them out of Egypt, and in both places the 'taking hold' carries with it the idea of help and deliverance.

2. Jesus Understands Humanity (2:17-18)

Hughes: Verses 17-18 tell us how Christ's perfect solidarity with the Church (His perfect communion of spirit with believers) makes Him a perfect high priest and, by implication, the great anchor in the storms of life. Here, then, is the greatest of comforts—the oneness of our high priest with us and His ministry in us and for us. This, taken to heart, will give any believer a solid foundation.

a) Perfect Priestly Mediator (2:17a)

*17*Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God...

(1) Like His Brothers

Bruce: Having thus emphasized our Lord's solidarity with His brethren, our author now introduces that particular aspect of His solidarity with them which he is especially concerned to

Hebrews – Lesson 6

expound—His high-priestly ministry on their behalf. Any priest must be one with those whom he represents before God, and this is equally so with Christ as His people’s high priest. In order to serve them in this capacity, He was obliged to become completely like His brothers and sisters—apart from sin, of course, as is pointed out below (4:15).

Schreiner: The author started this section (2:5) by emphasizing from Psalm 8 that dominion over the world was granted to human beings. Jesus now rules over the world at God’s right hand, being crowned with glory and honor. He is qualified to rule, for He is fully human. He is flesh and blood like all other human beings (2:14). Or as the author says here, ‘He had to be like His brothers in every way.’ Jesus wasn’t partially human but fully human. And it had to be this way, for the rule promised to human beings can only be restored through a human being.

Hughes: Jesus did not merely resemble humanity in *some* qualities of human nature, but ‘in every respect’—‘in all things’ (NASB). Christ’s likeness to us was not simulated but absolute (Phil. 2:7)—except for sin (4:15). Many Christians do not actually understand this, though they think they do, because nestled in their understanding of the Incarnation is the thought that though Christ had a human body, He did not have a completely human mind. Some imagine, for example, that He possessed a divine awareness as an infant, so that His smiling and cooing in His mother’s arms were an accommodation of feigned infancy, and that actually He could have been thinking, *You imagine I’m a helpless baby, but actually I created the universe!* Such thinking is a ‘man on the street’ version of an ancient heresy called *Docetism*—that Christ only *seemed* to be man.

Hughes: The point we are making is that through the infinite creative power of the Godhead, the Son remained ontologically God in the Incarnation, while at the same time being absolutely human in body, mind, and emotions. This means that Christ grew from infancy, through childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and into maturity—in both body and mind. His body developed, as did His mind and emotions. Not only that, but both as a child and through adulthood He experienced human emotions—anger and joy and sorrow. May we reverently understand that the Incarnation meant that Christ progressively smelled like an infant, a boy, and a man—He thought like a child before He thought like a man—He knew the same range of human emotions as we did as He grew to maturity. So it is imperative that we understand that the incarnation of Christ means that He was perfectly human in body, mind, and emotions. Even more, the language of our text that says, ‘Therefore He had to be made like His brothers in every respect’ suggests that the writer viewed the completeness of Christ’s identification with His own as a moral obligation in becoming a perfect redeemer and mediator.

(2) Merciful and Faithful High Priest

Bruce: He suffered with them and for them, and through His sufferings was made perfect—qualified in every way to be their high priest. He is merciful because through His own sufferings and trials He can sympathize with theirs; He is faithful because He endured to the end without faltering.

Schreiner: The full humanity of Jesus qualifies Him to serve as the high priest. This is the first of 17 times that ‘high priest’ (*αρχιερεως, archiereus*) occurs in Hebrews. The author anticipates his future discussion of Jesus’ high priesthood (cp. 3:1; 4:14-15), which is explained in some detail in 5:1-10 and 7:1-10:18. To be a high priest one must be fully human (cp. 5:1), and Jesus meets that prerequisite. Jesus is merciful to human beings, offering them forgiveness for their sins. But He is also faithful to God in that He invariably did the will of God instead of pursuing

Hebrews – Lesson 6

His own desires. He was faithful to God and to His people, showing mercy through His sacrifice.

Hughes: Jesus' experiences in human flesh made Him a mediator who is first and foremost 'merciful.' Mercy is more than an emotion. To be merciful, one must act to alleviate another's pain. Jesus repeatedly modeled this in the Gospels when he had *compassion* on the hungry or the ill or the grieving and then *mercy* in meeting their needs (cp. Mk. 1:41; 8:2-3; Lk. 7:13). So we understand that in being our 'merciful...high priest' Jesus emotionally gathers up our needs to Himself and then in mercy does something about them. This is a stupendous revelation—a God who has personal emotion at our miserable plight and then springs into action. Even more, our Lord's compassion and mercy are sensitized by the fact that He was really one of us and experienced like miseries; He knows how it feels.

Hughes: But not only is Jesus a merciful mediator, He is also faithful—'a faithful high priest in the service of God.' There is an intentional contrast here: Jesus is '*merciful*' in His priestly relationship to His people and '*faithful*' in His priestly mediation to God the Father. His faithfulness To God is seen in two ways. First, He was faithful as mankind's sin-bearer. He did everything required. Nothing deterred Him from the cross. He drank the bitter cup to its dregs. Never has there been such faithfulness! Second, He is faithful in representing us to the Father. At God's right hand His blood is applied to man's sins. There He faithfully prays for His own with compassion and tender mercy, honed by His human experience.

Hughes: What an anchor the author offers the storm-tossed church! God's people have a priestly mediator who, because He was made like them 'in every respect' (in body, mind, and emotions), is compassionate. Christ our mediator actually feels the pangs of human existence in Himself. And thus His compassion is not simulated but perfectly real. Even more, from the depth of Christ's compassion springs mercy as He acts to meet our needs. This in turn involves His faithful priestly mediation between us and God as He bears our sins and infirmities, interceding for us with tender mercy.

b) Perfect Priestly Propitiator (2:17b)

...to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

Bruce: The purpose of His incarnation was that through His death He might 'make atonement for the people's sins'—do in effective reality what the sacrificial ritual of Old Testament times could do only in a token form. A high priest who has actually, and not merely in symbolism, removed his people's sins, and therewith the barrier which their sins erected between themselves and God, is a high priest worth having.

Philips: Whenever we talk about Christ's death on the cross, we need to understand that there are two parties to whom His work was directed—both the sinner and God. We have already seen one reason why Jesus became man, namely, to die and thus to free us from death. In that sense, we are the objects of His saving work. But there is also God the Father to be considered, who in His holiness cannot accept people who have stained themselves with sin, who are corrupted as an entire race and as individuals. Verse 17 deals with that aspect of Christ's death of which God is the object. This verse gives a classic explanation as to why the Christ had to become fully man; namely, so that He might perform priestly service to God on man's behalf and thus propitiate—that is, turn aside—God's wrath against our sin.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

Hughes: The writer introduces the next major element in his thought, shifting from his emphasis on Christ's being a perfect priestly mediator to Christ's perfection as a priestly *propitiator*. We see this in the final phrase of verse 17—'to make propitiation for the sins of the people.' Some recent translations render 'make propitiation' as 'make atonement,' but this dilutes the specific meaning of the Greek texts. 'Make atonement' is a curious rendering. The word *hilaskesthai* means 'to propitiate,' not 'to make atonement,' and relates to putting away the divine wrath. The problem is that when translations substitute an easier word such as 'atonement' or 'expiate,' they obscure the emphasis the writer is making—namely, that Christ propitiated God's personal wrath, fully meeting it and putting it away.

Schreiner: He made 'propitiation for the sins of the people.' Scholars dispute the meaning of the word 'propitiated' (*λασκεισθαι, hilaskesthai*). Some argue that it means 'expiated' so the focus is on the forgiveness of sins. The object of the verb, after all, is 'sins' (*τας αμαρτιας, tas amartias*), fitting with the idea that sins are erased or wiped away. It is likely, however, that there is also the notion of the appeasement of God's wrath. The word designates both forgiveness of sins and appeasement and satisfaction of God's wrath. In the OT, if sins aren't expiated (wiped away), God pours out His holy and just wrath on those who have transgressed.

Hughes: When people sin, they arouse the wrath of God (Rom. 1:18) and become enemies of God (Rom. 5:10). The Old and New Testaments reveal an utterly holy God whose holy nature demands wrath against all sin. Wrath is the reverse side of His holiness. God cannot set aside His wrath toward our sin and remain holy. This is where the propitiating love of God comes in. To obtain our salvation for us, God Himself met the demands of His holiness in Christ, which, because of the oneness of the Trinity, means He met the demands of His holiness Himself. He has, in a manner of speaking, propitiated Himself in our place!

Philips: The Old Testament priests represented God before man, which was why they were garbed with glory and honor (Ex. 28:2). Their priestly apparel gleamed, to portray the righteousness of God before the people. But just as importantly, the priest represented man before God. This is why the high priest wore an ephod of gold, upon which were fastened twelve stones, bearing the names of the twelve tribes of Israel (Ex. 28:9-12). Christ became man so that He might bear our names upon His shoulders. The true high priest, He is garbed in His own perfect righteousness, which He presents on our behalf. He went forth as our minister and representative, offering His precious blood—His divine and infinitely valuable life, which alone could atone for the sins of the world—to pay the debt of our sin. His work was one of propitiation, turning aside God's wrath from our sin. This is why Jesus was born into this world, so that by His death as both God and man He might break the hold of death and set us free, while making propitiation to the holy wrath of God against our sins.

Schreiner: Jesus atoned for the sins of 'the people' (*του λαου, tou laou*). In the OT sacrifices were offered for the people of Israel. According to Hebrews the people of God consists of those members of the new covenant who have been cleansed of their sins through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (cp. 4:9; 7:27; 8:10; 13:12). Those who enjoy forgiveness of sins are described here as 'sons' brought to glory (v. 10), as those 'who are sanctified' (v. 11), as Jesus' brothers (vv. 11-12), as 'the children God gave' Jesus (v. 13), and as 'Abraham's offspring' (v. 16). We see, then, that the 'everyone' of verse 9 should be interpreted to refer to everyone without distinction instead of everyone without exception. Jesus' propitiatory sacrifice is limited to His people, to the children given to Him by God, to the offspring of Abraham.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

c) *Perfect Priestly Helper (2:18)*

¹⁸*For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*

(1) He Suffered Temptation

Hughes: The writer's comforting progression of thought has presented a being who is a perfect priestly *mediator*, then *propitiator*, and now *helper*. How did Jesus suffer when He was tempted? Common sense tells us He experienced the general temptations we all know—pride, envy, hatred, self-gratification, to name a few. But there was one great difference—he was sinless. And this is exactly why He suffered. Being the sinless Son of God, temptations repulsed Him far more than they could us. Many are tempted, but never *suffer* when tempted. The terrible truth is, multitudes find daily temptations to be a perverted source of pleasure.

Philips: I said there are three reasons why God the Son had to become a man. The first was to free us from slavery to death, while the second was to propitiate God's just wrath. But there is a third reason given in this passage, set forth in verse 18: 'Because He Himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.' Jesus is ideally suited to help us in our struggle with temptation to sin and despair, because He has been through it all Himself. Here again is a great proof of Christ's full humanity, that 'He Himself has suffered when tempted.' We naturally think of Jesus' temptations in the wilderness at the hands of the devil. There Jesus was afflicted with great hunger and the temptation to accept the crown without the cross. Surely those were great temptations, and Jesus overcame them. But we mustn't overlook the whole range of temptations to which He was exposed during all His earthly existence, temptations that would have interacted with every aspect of His human nature. Because of them, Jesus knows exactly what we are going through. He knows what it is to be tempted because He experienced it Himself. Our high priest has real sympathy and compassion for what we are going through.

Hughes: But His greatest suffering occurred, as the Scriptures specifically point out, when He was tempted to forsake His calling and take an easy way out (Mt. 4:11; cp. Mk. 3:21; 8:33; 14:36). These famous temptations to take the easy way out were real, and they brought massive suffering to Christ's soul. He knew the horror that awaited Him—He knew He would endure the unmitigated pain of sin and wrath with the full feeling and consciousness that comes from purity. What a temptation to escape! What suffering! But He bore it all. And even more significantly, He bore it as a *man*. He was tempted and suffered and endured with a human mind, body, and emotions—and He never turned away from the cross. What is more, as a man He endured greater temptation and suffering than any other man because He never gave in to sin.

Philips: Some people object that Jesus does not know the full human experience because He was not a sinner. Without the experience of sin's corruption, they say, He cannot have full sympathy with us. The answer to this is that far from Jesus knowing less than we do about temptation because He never fell into sin, the opposite is the case. Jesus knows far more about temptation than we do, because He endured far beyond the point where the strongest of us give in to trial.

Bruce: He endured keen trials and temptations Himself, not only the trials incidental to our human lot, but those subtle temptations which attended His messianic calling. Time and again the temptation came to Him from many directions to choose some less costly way of fulfilling that calling than the way of suffering and death, but He resisted it to the end and set His face steadfastly to accomplish the purpose for which He had come into the world.

Hebrews – Lesson 6

Schreiner: Jesus' priestly qualifications are presented here, for He is a merciful high priest who knows what it is like to be tempted and to suffer. His solidarity with human beings is not an abstraction, for He knows first-hand the anguish of human existence, and thus He can grant help to those who are suffering. The author doesn't focus on Jesus' temptation in general but Jesus' temptation to sin in suffering. Jesus knows the angst and sorrow of human experience. The temptation we face He has encountered as well.

(2) He Helps Those in Temptation

Bruce: Now His people were not only enduring those trials which are common to mankind, but were being tempted in their turn to be disloyal to God and give up their Christian profession. What a source of strength it was to them to be assured that in the presence of God they had as their champion and intercessor one who had known similar and even sorer temptations, and had withstood them victoriously!

Schreiner: The 'help' (*βοηθησαι, boēthēsai*) envision in this context refers to Jesus' high priestly work, His atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people. We have seen throughout that Jesus' death is the means by which the rule of human beings over the world is restored. He helps His people by nullifying the power of death and freeing them from the slavery entailed in death. The help provided for Jesus' brothers can only be given because He too is fully human. He also suffered and was tempted to depart from God.

Philips: Jesus has real and knowledgeable sympathy with those who are tempted. Therefore, the Scripture says, He is able to help. What a wonderful combination we have before us. ON the one hand we have One who is mighty to save. In this respect, Jesus is not 'just like us.' He is the Redeemer and we are the sinners in so great a need for a champion. And yet His work is hardly impersonal or mechanical; it is heartfelt and sensitive. He was like us in His experience of pain and suffering and temptation. He felt nails as they were driven into His hands and His feet so that He might rescue us from the power of death. Thus there is a quality of mercy to Christ's work that is intimate, personal, and knowing. It calls us to love Him as an intimate Savior, the God who has gone to such lengths to know us in our trials, to have the fellowship of our suffering even as He calls us into the fellowship of His.

Hughes: But what does this mean to us? Sublimely, this: 'He is able to help those who are being tempted.' He is able to help because He understands. A person who has always had a strong body and is physically fit has no conception of what it is like to be handicapped. Those who are mentally quick find it difficult to understand and empathize with those who find learning difficult. Person who has never grieved cannot fully identify with the grieving. Jesus never sinned, but He did suffer immense temptation. And His heart bears the blessed scars of sympathy. The people in the little church under siege were not only experiencing the temptations that are common to all, but they were being tempted to be unfaithful to God and to give up their calling. What an encouragement to know that their Savior and high priest had known similar but far greater temptations, and that He had suffered more, endured, and was victorious. He understood! He empathized! He was interceding for them! He forgave them! And He wanted to empower them to persevere in their calling, come what may.

Philips: What all this means is that Jesus is able. He is able to understand what you are going through. He is able to hear you with a sympathetic and merciful heart when you cry out. What an encouragement that is for you in all sorts of trials and temptations to turn to the Lord in prayer. More importantly, Jesus is able to deliver you. You can trust Him, therefore, knowing

Hebrews – Lesson 6

that death will not bring you harm but will bring you to Jesus. You can also trust Him for today, for your present temptations and struggles. He is able to help us, by praying for us at the throne of His Father in heaven and by sending the Holy Spirit into our hearts, giving us strength that is of Him.

3. Jesus – Summary on His Humanity

Schreiner: The full humanity of Jesus leaps out to readers in this text. Believers are His brothers and sisters, for Jesus lived a flesh-and-blood life. He knew the agony of temptation and the pain of suffering. Most important, He died for our sake so that we would be freed from the power of death. Jesus is our elder brother, and His victory over death and sin means we have conquered death and sin through Him. As C. S. Lewis said, ‘The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God.’ Indeed, believers no longer fear death because of the atoning work of their great high priest.

Philips: Jesus Christ, God’s own Son, became like us to be a total Savior, sufficient for the whole range of our need. How hollow, then, ring the world’s complaints against our God. People are saying all the time today, lamenting this world of woe, ‘Where is God? Why doesn’t He do something?’ Meanwhile, He has done everything, indeed, more than ever we could ask or imagine. God has entered into our world. He has walked through the dust of this earth. He who is life has wept before the grave, and He who is the Bread of Life has felt the aching of hunger in His belly. Is there anything more lovely in all of Scripture than the scenes of Jesus supping with the weak and weary, the sinners and publicans? He has taken the thorns that afflict the sin-scarred world and woven them into a crown to be pressed upon His head. And He has stretched open His arms in love, that the hands that wove creation might be nailed to a wooden cross. Then He rose from the dead, conquering all that would conquer us, setting us free to live in peace and joy before the face of God. All this God has done, in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, was done not for angels but for you. It was *like you* that He became, and it was *for you* that He died. It is *with you* that He sympathizes now, knowing well your struggle. He is able—but are you willing?

Hughes: We are anchored by a perfect priestly *mediator* who, because He was made like us in every way (not simulated humanity but real humanity), is *merciful* to us and *faithful* as He ministers to the Father on our behalf. Let His priestly mercy and faithfulness anchor your soul. We are anchored by a perfect priestly *propitiator* who propitiated His own wrath on the cross, so that we are no longer under the wrath of God. We may experience hardship, even discipline, but never the wrath of God. Because of Jesus’ great propitiating work, we are ever under love. Let this be an anchor for your soul. We are anchored by a perfect priestly *helper* whose sufferings in the course of temptation scarred His soul with sympathy. And thus ‘He is able to help those who are being tempted’ to take the easy way out. Let this be an anchor for your soul.

For next time: Read Hebrews 3:1-6.