

SERMON  
SERIESAND WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE  
TO PLEASE HIM, FOR WHOEVER  
WOULD DRAW NEAR TO GOD  
MUST BELIEVE THAT HE EXISTS  
AND THAT HE REWARDS THOSE  
WHO SEEK HIM.

## HEBREW'S



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HEBREW'S  
VERSE BY  
VERSE STUDYLET US DRAW NEAR IN  
*Faith***SESSION OBJECTIVE: HEBREWS 2:10-18**

To understand what the Son accomplished by becoming human.

**Read the Text:**

*"For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, 12 saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." 13 And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me." 14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 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, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." (Hebrews 2:10-18, ESV)*

**Study the Text:****Made Like His Brothers**

Hebrews 2:10-18 continues the theme of the previous passage but shifts to the necessity of Jesus becoming human and to what He endured to bring redemption and sanctification to His people. Below is a breakdown of the key details and concepts throughout this text.

**THE NECESSITY OF SUFFERING (v.10)**

One often avoided topic within the evangelical Christian faith is the prominence of Christ's suffering as a means of identifying with us. Humanity suffers. It's that simple. We live in a fallen world full of loss, grief, and confusion. As a result, for Christ to become fully human means He must identify with every aspect of humanity. Therefore, He must suffer. His suffering is not to somehow "pay" for our sins. This is accomplished through His death and resurrection (which involves suffering, but the degree of suffering does not strengthen nor weaken His work). His suffering "perfects" Him as a human, and thus we are perfected and share in the

life of Christ as we suffer as well (Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 5:10; 2 Tim. 2:12). To suffer as a Christian is to share in the sufferings of Christ. Suffering, then, is something Christians ought to see as redemptive. No one wants to suffer, but when we realize that it draws us into deeper intimacy with our Savior, it can bring some comfort.

### **GOD WITH US (VS. 12-13)**

One of the major themes in this text is Jesus Christ's willingness to identify as one of His own people. Three Old Testament passages are employed to make this case. The first quotation in verse 12 comes from Psalm 22:22. Psalm 22 is a Psalm of David, and David is the one speaking in the original context. Therefore, in the application of this Psalm to Christ, Christ is the Davidic king who will speak of God among His people that He leads. This is precisely what Jesus does in His earthly ministry. The next two quotations come from Isaiah 8:17-18, an especially interesting passage. In Isaiah 8, Isaiah recognizes that his oracles will not be received by his people, and thus he demands that they be bound up and sealed, reserved only for his disciples at a later time. Again, Jesus routinely is rejected by His own people, and His testimony is eventually made known to His disciples through the helper, the Spirit of God (Jn. 16:12-15). Jesus is in every way human, and in every way God. Great, indeed, is this mystery (1 Tim. 3:16).

## **Models of Atonement**

One important aspect of Hebrews 2:10-18, specifically within verses 14 through 17, is that it presents a “mosaic” of what the atonement accomplished. As it turns out, there are multiple ideas, or “models,” of atonement throughout church history that various groups have espoused. In the modern evangelical tradition, we mostly advocate for a model of atonement known as *Penal Substitutionary Atonement (PSA)*. However, there are at least two other models worth mentioning, both of which work well in conjunction with the PSA model. Below is a brief breakdown of each.

### **CHRISTUS VICTOR**

The *Christus Victor* model teaches that Christ's death and resurrection are a decisive victory over the powers of evil, especially sin, death, and the devil. In as early as the second century, Irenaeus wrote: “By His own power He destroyed death, and brought life to light, and abolished the power of the devil.”<sup>1</sup> This model, of all the models, is most explicit in Hebrews 2. The author explains the work of Christ in His atonement: “Through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” Hebrews emphasizes both the decisive victory of Christ on the cross over sin and Satan, as well as His liberating power for the believer.

### **RANSOM THEORY**

There are also elements of the model known as the *Ransom Theory*. This model teaches that Christ's death liberates humanity from bondage to sin, death, and the devil. Salvation is described as rescue from captivity, not merely as legal acquittal, and emphasizes a debt or ransom paid, although the earliest iterations of this theory do not specify to whom the ransom is paid. The Cappodocian father Gregory of Nyssa wrote: “The enemy, having deceived man, held him in bondage; therefore it was necessary that the price should be paid to free him from captivity.”<sup>2</sup> This theory is grounded in Matthew 20:28, where Jesus says: “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a **ransom** for many.” While the term for “ransom” (Gk.

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<sup>1</sup> Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 3.18.7, in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 448.

<sup>2</sup> Gregory of Nyssa, *The Great Catechism*, §22, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, Second Series*, vol. 5 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 495.

λύτρον) is not used here as it is in Matthew 20:28, the idea of this theory is evident, especially with regard to the idea of liberating humanity from “lifelong slavery” (Heb. 2:15).

### ***SUBSTITUTIONARY ATONEMENT (V.17)***

Verse 17 emphasizes the “propitiation” of Christ, which is clear priestly language. Penal Substitutionary Atonement teaches that Christ, as our substitutionary representative, bears the penalty for sin, satisfying divine justice so that sinners may be forgiven and receive Christ’s righteousness. Jesus accomplishes this by standing in our place to receive the full wrath of God (propitiation), thereby atoning for our sins and granting us fellowship with God. The Genevan Reformer, John Calvin, wrote: “He bore in His soul the dreadful torments of a condemned and ruined man.”<sup>3</sup>

### ***A MOSAIC***

Why examine the various models? Because all three models are developed in Scripture and historically grounded, they are all important. Atonement need not be reduced to “one or the other.” Various models include Scriptural aspects that the other models do not. PSA does not necessarily speak to the victory of Christ over cosmic powers. It implies a ransom was paid, but the focus is more clearly on satisfying God’s wrath, not on paying a debt. Christus Victor emphasizes cosmic victory over Satan and sin, but does not necessarily include a means by which the wrath of God is dealt with. Ransom Theory emphasizes payment of debt, but fails to satisfactorily account for propitiation and cosmic victory. Hebrews 2 does not choose a single model but rather implies at least three (there are more we did not cover). This is an important detail that should be acknowledged!

## **What About Now?**

The major takeaway of this passage is the importance of Christ becoming human. Jesus didn’t merely become human so He could relate to us better, but redeem us more fully. He suffered so that through suffering, we might identify with His life and death. He died so that, through death, we might live with Him in resurrection. Christ is not changed by His becoming human; He changes humanity.

## **Study Questions**

### **Day One**

1. Read Hebrews 2:10. What was “fitting” for Christ to experience? Why?

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2. Read Hebrews 2:11-13. Why is Jesus not ashamed to call us brothers? What passages are quoted?

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### **Day Two**

1. Read Psalm 22:22. What is the context of this Psalm? How is it being applied in Hebrews 2?

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<sup>3</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* II.16.10, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:508.

2. Read Isaiah 8:17-18. What is the context of Isaiah 8? How is it being applied in Hebrews 2?
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### Day Three

1. Read Hebrews 2:14-15. What does Christ's assumption of humanity accomplish? Who does it destroy? Who does it set free? What models of atonement do these verses support? (Hint: See above notes)
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2. Read Hebrews 2:16. Who does Jesus *not* help? Who *does* He help?
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### Day Four

1. Read Hebrews 2:17. Why did Jesus need to be like us in every way? What does propitiation mean?
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2. Read Hebrews 2:18. What does being tempted allow Jesus to do for us?
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### Discuss the Text!

## Session 5 Discussion: The Glory of Suffering

The theme of suffering is prevalent in Hebrews 2:10-18. Christ suffered as a human, and thus, when we suffer as humans, we share in His suffering and will be glorified as a result of it. Talk as a group about how you deal with suffering in your lives, and how changing your perspective on it might bring you comfort.

- Icebreaker: What's the worst thing you've suffered from?
- Is suffering something Christians should rejoice in? Why or why not? (Hint: read Romans 5:3-5)
- Read James 1:2-4. What does James say suffering produces? Has this been true in your own life?
- Should we care about the suffering of others around us? Why or why not?
- Read 1 Peter 5:10. What will the "God of grace" do for those who suffer one day?
- Kid Talk (For Home): Talk about something that happened to your child that, for them, felt like suffering. Ask them what they learned? Did they get stronger or wiser as a result? Then talk to them about how suffering does produce good things in us, and explain that Jesus suffered in order to comfort us when we suffer.

## Takeaways:

- It was necessary for Jesus to become human in order to perfect humanity through suffering and death.
- Jesus' death was a cosmic victory, paid our debt, and was a substitutionary sacrifice that received the full wrath of God in our place.