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HOW CHRIST BECAME OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST FOREVER

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 10
HEBREWS 2:15-18

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Let's look again at a correct translation of verse 14--
"Since therefore the children share blood and flesh, he also himself (Jesus Christ) in the same manner took hold of the same (blood and flesh) that he (Christ) through death (spiritual death) might neutralize the one having the ruling power of death (the devil)."

It is important to remember that there are seven kinds of death spoken of in the Bible. Back in the Garden of Eden Christ warned Adam and Eve that if they ate of the forbidden fruit, they would die, and it was spiritual death to which he referred. They didn't die physically for about 900 years, so it is quite obvious that he was not referring to physical death. They ate and died spiritually the second they ate the fruit. The day Adam ate of the fruit he lost the rulership of the world and on that day, Satan took over the rulership of the world and that rulership has continued all through human history. We are born spiritually dead, and therefore, are born into the kingdom of Satan and the kingdom of darkness. In the first chapter of Luke the unbeliever is described as "sitting in darkness." Christ is the light of the world in contrast to that darkness. When we are converted we are removed from the darkness of Satan's kingdom and we are put into the kingdom of his love. So understanding spiritual death is the key to the understanding of this passage. Spiritual death is the sign of citizenship in Satan's kingdom. Christ was tempted at all points to enter Satan's kingdom. Every time he was tempted it was a temptation to enter Satan's kingdom. On the cross Christ was sinless and this is why he had the power in his death to lift us from Satan's kingdom. Those words "forsaken me" described Christ's spiritual death and this is the way whereby he could provide for us eternal life. When the Bible says, "Christ died for us" it is his spiritual death to which the statement refers. The physical death of Christ had nothing to do with salvation. Salvation was finished before he died physically. It is true that men are afraid to die physically, but the real fear behind it all is that they are afraid of spiritual death.

HEBREWS 2:15 "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The word "deliver" is an aorist, active, subjunctive of "apallasso." This means to provide the release of someone and set someone free. This is a nomic aorist and not the culminative aorist. The culminative aorist looks at the end result, but the nomic aorist looks at an act as axiomatic and dogmatic. It means Jesus Christ did the delivering. The subjunctive mood means that Jesus carried out the purpose of God in doing this.

The Devil's Way Of Ruling

The devil rules the world by means of spiritual death. A ruler always has a scepter and the devil's scepter is spiritual death. Spiritual death means no relationship, no fellowship with God. So Jesus Christ did something about this. The believer is set free from Satan's rule to become a member of Christ's kingdom and to become a servant of Jesus Christ. But we become servants with dignity. "Them" is the masculine accusative plural of "houtos" and includes all believers. So this means Christ brought about the release of all them from Satan's kingdom.

The word "who" here really means "as many as." "Through fear" is the instrumental singular of "phobos" and it means "by means of fear." "Of death" and this refers to spiritual death. It is an ablative singular of "thanatos" and it refers "to the source of death." These are the people who are cut off from God. In other words, all people are under fear until they have the proper relationship with God. We know that "perfect love casteth out fear," but this is not human love. Perfect love is the love of the super-grace believer occupied with Christ. The Psalmist said, "What time I could be afraid, I will trust in the Lord."

So this says "from the source of death."

But remember this--there is no difference in the fear or the unbeliever and the fear of the believer who is void of doctrine.

Satan is Limited

Satan can never take a believer out of the top circle. Once he is saved, he is saved forever. He can never take the believer out of Christ's hand, but he can neutralize him through fear. Satan wants to fill every believer with just as much fear as he can. You begin by claiming promises, but then you move up a step higher and you become occupied with Christ and eventually Christ becomes so real to you that that relationship solves every problem. This is the best way to limit the power of Satan in your daily living.

The writer of Hebrews is addressing himself to a lot of spiritual babies. Faith-rest is the starting point to move the believer into mature doctrine. Faith-rest is to get you off the ground and get you airborne. Hebrews finds one in reversionism and he leads you to super-grace. Then we have the word "were" and it is the imperfect, active, indicative of "eimi" and this means this was their condition in all time past. They had always been this way. "Lifetime" here is a present, active, infinitive of "zao" and it means through all the functions of life. Then it says "kept on being subjective to bondage." "Bondage" is from "enochos" and it means to be liable to, to be held in by some force. It means spiritual slavery.

A correct translation of verse 15--

"And released from Satan's kingdom those persons, as many as by means of fear from the source of death (spiritual death) through all the functions of life were held in slavery."

So the unbeliever is in slavery in every function of life. They are in the kingdom of Satan and in fear in every area of their lives.

Summary

1. In other words, while they were alive physically, in every function of their lives, they were enslaved spiritually. Absolutely no relationship with God. The unbeliever who talks about God is a name dropper. We call them "deists" in theology. They just use God as a whipping post or a crutch.
2. Spiritual death is a set of chains that shackles every unbeliever in slavery, while they continue the ordinary functions of life. All unbelievers wear a set of heavy chains called spiritual death. No fellowship with God.

3. Jesus Christ came into the world to break those chains and to release those shackles and establish relationship with God. Now that's the emphasis of this verse. He became blood and flesh so he might go to the cross and do this. Jesus Christ really made you free when he was on that cross. Every bit of unbelief puts shackles on you. And even after salvation believers continue to wear shackles of legalism and doubt.
4. The result of the cross was the breaking of those shackles--slavery and fear and spiritual death.
5. In this way, through the cross, Jesus Christ has delivered us from the sovereignty of Satan while we still live in the devil's world.
6. The cross not only provides salvation, but freedom from the bondage of Satan's kingdom.

Therefore we shall know the truth (true doctrine) and true doctrine will make you free.

In verse 16 we have the choice of the incarnation.

HEBREWS 2:16 "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham." "For" is the particle "gar" which here denotes explanation. The word "depou" is here translated "verily" and it means obviously. "He took not on" is a present, middle, indicative of "epilambano." It means he himself did not receive upon himself the nature of an angel.

But, and the word is "alla" and it means a sharp contrast. He took on himself the seed of Abraham.

Summary

1. Since man was created to resolve the Angelic Conflict, God stays right with the plan and doesn't change horses in the middle of the stream. Therefore Christ didn't become an angel but a man.
2. Since the first Adam lost the victory through the fall, the last Adam must win the victory at the cross.
3. Abraham is mentioned as the human illustration here because Abraham was born a Gentile and became a Jew. Jesus is going to save both Jews and Gentiles.
4. Abraham is the founder of the Jewish race and the pattern for all Jewish regeneration. (Genesis 15:6 and Romans 9:6-15 amplifies this idea.)
5. Therefore Jesus Christ is born humanly of the Jewish race in order to fulfill all the four covenants to Israel. All of these covenants will be fulfilled for born again Jews by Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ made a choice while he was Deity. He had to choose and he chose to become a man and not an angel. This was a choice from his sovereignty. He decided it on his own and it was a perfect decision. He bypassed the super-race of angels. It was the right decision. He

didn't sin in becoming a man. He provided man with salvation and this is the only way the Angelic Conflict could be dissolved. God created man and gave him freedom and he blew it wide open. Then Christ had to come and die, and he did two things at once. He broke the back of Satan and he provided salvation for man in the same act. He killed two birds with one stone. After the cross, it was resurrection, then ascension, then session at God's right hand. When he sat down, he was superior (in his humanity) to all the angelic creatures. "Sit down" and that was spoken to his humanity. In that moment resurrected humanity was superior to angels. Born lower than angels, now through Christ, man is superior to angels.

HEBREWS 2:17 "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Now meet this celebrity.

He is the merciful and faithful high priest. The High Priest was God's highest official. The people demanded a king and God gave them King Saul. But it was God's original intention that they be a theocracy and not have a king. God himself would rule them through the High Priest. But they wanted a king and God allowed it. The greatest celebrity, by design, in Israel was the High Priest. But doctrine never had its proper place and the High Priest never functioned as God had designed. Because of the apostasy of Israel, God had to raise up prophets and judges. Men like Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel were raised up to fill in the gap. So we will see Jesus Christ here as the celebrity of Israel. Not since the 5th cycle of discipline to Israel in 586 B.C. has anyone ever sat on David's throne, or ever will sit on it until Jesus Christ sits there and he will do so as the great High Priest of Israel and also as the descendant of David and his name is Jesus Christ. In the meantime, Israel, "You have rejected your celebrity." The Lord raised up the church and gave them doctrine to sustain them in their life.

So verse 17 introduces us to the celebrity-ship of Jesus Christ. "Wherefore" is a relative adverb from "hothen" and it here refers to the circumstances of the incarnation. "In all things" is from "kata pas" and it means he was obligated according to the standard of all things. This refers to the fact that he had to become a man to save us, and also to satisfy the demands of God the Father. "It behoved him" is an imperfect, active, indicative of "opheilo" and this includes in it his willful purpose to do this very thing. "To be made like" is an aorist, passive, infinitive of "Homoioo" and this is a culminative aorist. The Angelic Conflict is to be resolved in the realm of humanity. The plan of God was completed when Christ was a baby in Bethlehem and in this plan, God would win. The devil thought he could win but he would later discover he couldn't.

"To be made like" involved---The providing of salvation
 The resolution of the Angelic Conflict
 The making of humanity higher than angels
 All to be accomplished in the human realm

The words "The brethren" is the dative plural of "adelphos" and it refers to the human race, both Jews and Gentiles.

"That he might be" is the aorist, middle, subjunctive of "ginomai" and it means he would become something he was not before. This is a culminative aorist. Christ himself and only himself could do this.

So now we meet the only celebrity--The MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST. The word for merciful is "eleemon" and it means compassionate. Merciful means grace in action. Now Jesus Christ was not born a priest. He was not of the Tribe of Levi. He became a priest on the cross and became a priest through sacrifice and not through birth. In the Old Testament the king would sometimes try to offer a sacrifice and would be disciplined for doing so. (King Saul tried this and was disciplined.) But Jesus Christ himself was the exception. He offered himself. He is the unique person of the universe. The only celebrity. He was a super-grace person before he became the Great High Priest. The word faithful is from "pistos" and it means consistency and stability. The High Priest is the central theme of Hebrews and he had to become a man to become the Great High Priest. "In things pertaining to God" really means "The face to face things with God."

A correct translation of this verse so far is this--

"From which circumstance he was obligated according to the standard of all things, to be made like to the brethren (the Jews) that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the things face to face with God." The high priest must be able to stand face to face with God. Jesus Christ was able to do this.

See The Point Of Propitiation

The first high priest of Israel was Aaron. He was appointed by God and then it became a matter of descendants. His oldest son became high priest and so on down. Now here is Jesus Christ not being a high priest from birth, but received this appointment from God. When was he appointed? We have it here. "To make reconciliation" is a present, middle, infinitive of "hilaskomai" and it means to make propitiation. This is the point where the celebrity-ship became a reality. He was appointed at the time of the cross. The present tense is dramatic. Middle voice means he and he only could die and do this. Infinitive means it was the purpose of God for him to do this. The word for sin is the genitive plural of "harmatia" and it means all the sins that belonged to the people.

In this act God appointed Jesus, his own Son, as the Great High Priest. He is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was not Jesus Christ. He was a king as well as a priest and Jesus Christ was both.

Christ did two things in that act--

1. He cared for all of our sins.
2. He propitiated God The Father.

All sacrifices were fulfilled at the cross. Every sacrifice of the Mosaic code was fulfilled at the cross. Isaiah talks about the celebrity-ship of Jesus Christ as a king. Hebrews talks about the celebrity-ship of Jesus Christ as High Priest. He is the head of the church as Great High Priest. The kingdom of priests refers to the born again of the Church Age. The church will become his body of priests.

The last part of this verse says--

"In the things face to face with God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people." That's the point of his appointment by God the Father. His appointment will last forever. Since the High Priest was going to die, this appointment had to be confirmed by resurrection, ascension, and session at God's high hand.

The High Priest in Israel carried the blood into the holy of holies. But this is a new kind of priesthood, Jesus Christ was not a blood carrying priest. Jesus went in his resurrection body, not carrying blood.

HEBREWS 2:18 "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted." Now we have here the grace provision of the incarnation.

"Gar" is used here to explain. "En plus hos" should be translated "in that which." Then we have "autos" which means "himself." "Hath suffered" is a perfect, active, indicative of "pascho" and this refers to his spiritual death on the cross. It was done once and for all, that's the perfect tense. The results of that act go on forever. Active voice means that he himself did it and indicative mood means the reality of his act. He suffered on the cross with permanent results.

"Having been tested" is an aorist, active, participle of "peirazo." It means that Satan challenged Christ at every point. In Matthew four, Christ faced three temptations that we can never face and not once did he falter. "He was able" not because he was not tempted, but because as a perfect High Priest he was able to meet the test. As High Priest he is able to help us. "He is able" is the present, active, indicative of "dunamai." As God he was all powerful and as man he was the High Priest.

He can help man, as God, because he was omnipotent.

He can help man, as man, because he was High Priest.

"To succor" is an aorist, active, infinitive of "boetheo" and it means to come to the assistance of one. To run to the aid of someone who is crying for help. So it says, "He keeps on being able to help."

"Them that are tested" is a present, active, participle of "Peirazo" and it means he keeps on being able to help all of us who are tested and tempted.

Summary

1. Satan's kingdom is the kingdom of spiritual death. We are born into Satan's kingdom, therefore, spiritually dead.
2. Christ was born without an old sin nature and born free because of the Virgin Birth. The Virgin Birth made it possible for Christ to come into the world without coming into Satan's kingdom. He was born a free man, and thereby, could purchase our freedom.
3. Christ lived free from sin by resisting all temptations that came to him.
4. Therefore, he went to the cross and satisfied the Father, got himself appointed High Priest and purchased our freedom from Satan's kingdom.
5. Therefore, Christ as the Great High Priest is the only one who can help us.