

## The Epistle to the Hebrews

## Hebrews 2:10-18

Lesson # 7

August 21, 2016

## Bringing Many Sons to Glory

## The Pioneer of Salvation

vv. 10-11

This section flows out of and is tightly connected to what precedes it in vv. 5-9, by the conjunction “for”. So v. 10 and what follows it are really an explanation of Christ’s incarnation as related to v. 9 – “...because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” In I Cor. 1:23, Paul tells us that he “preaches Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles...”. So this section of Hebrews is providing an argument against the mindset of the first century that saw Jesus that way. How could that humiliation save anyone? “So, the purpose of this and the following verses is to show how fitting this method of salvation is, and by implication, how totally inappropriate any other notion must be.”<sup>i</sup>

The first part of the explanation, “it was fitting that he...”, means that God ( God is the “he” in this phrase ) operated here consistent with His character and wisdom. “*The cross stands in history as a masterpiece of God’s wisdom!*”<sup>ii</sup> cf. I Cor. 1:18,24

MacArthur explains why this is “fitting” ( Heb. 2:10 ),

“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.”<sup>iii</sup>

Furthermore, since this verse also displays God’s power, “*for whom and by whom all things exist*” – cf. Rom. 11:33-36; Col. 1:16-17 – the entire created order ( all things ) expresses God’s will ( Rev. 4:11 ), and in fact, according to Rom. 1:20, the created order renders everyone on earth at any time to be “*without excuse*” for not worshipping God.

Consider passages like Acts 2:23 & 4:28 here. The incarnation, the main purpose of which was to bring Christ as the Lamb of God to a cross just outside of Jerusalem at Calvary some 33 years into His earthly life, ended in this execution which was performed by wicked people, but was exactly according to God’s design, plan, providence and intention! Hence, the repeated mention of “the hour” throughout the Gospel of John, and the “before time began” or “before the foundation of the world” passages.

With this in mind, Philip Hughes makes this comment:

“The incarnation and death of Christ were fitting as the effective means to the achievement of the Creator’s grand design, namely, the restoration of all things. If all things are not only by but also for God, it is inconceivable, and it would be in the highest degree unfitting, that He should allow everything to lapse away from Himself into a state of lostness and ruin instead of sovereignly taking action to bring about the rehabilitation of all things. The divine purposes are indefectible and the mediation of Christ is the means of their fulfillment.”<sup>iv</sup>

God, much to the chagrin of many both inside and outside of Evangelicalism, is the center of the universe. This verse plus Rom. 11:36 & Col. 1:16-17 prove that one of God’s main goals in history [ which is really redemptive history ] is “*to bring many sons to glory*”, and it is God who achieves this. Note too, that here in v. 10, immediately on the heels of the Arminian seeing v. 9 and “*everyone*”, is the limiter of whom this death was really for, “*many sons*”, bringing them to glory. Not all, but many. Cf. Romans 8:29-30.

Thomas Schreiner says:

“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.”<sup>v</sup>

Now, let’s move on to the remainder of v. 10. You could read it like this, “It was fitting that he [ the explanation of God’s ability & purpose ] should make the founder of their [ many sons’ ] salvation perfect through suffering.”

The author calls Christ the “founder of their salvation”, the same term he uses in Heb. 12:2 – “*the founder and perfecter of our faith*.” What does this mean that He is the “founder” of our salvation, and that God “made him” this? First, does it mean ( by made ) that God created Christ? No. But rather that God is the One who determined how the Godhead would operate within the history ( commonly known as His decrees ) the Godhead created and superintended from start to finish and beyond that into eternity future – Alpha & Omega. Note key verses like Eph. 1:11-14. Not only that, but God “*made*” this “*founder*” or “*pioneer*”, “*perfect through suffering*”.

Let’s determine what “founder” means, then examine the idea that this founder was made perfect through suffering. Both of these ideas are important for us to grasp the author’s argument. The word “founder” in the ESV is elsewhere translated “source” – HCSB; “pioneer” – NET, NIV, NRSV; “author” – NASB; “captain” – KJV, NKJV; “leader” – JB Phillips, Berkeley; “the one who leads” – New Century; & “the salvation pioneer” – the Message. Tom Schreiner is convinced that the correct translation is “pioneer” because the meaning that this word conveys is the best translation of the Greek word, but he also acknowledges that most of these other translations are also OK & do give us the sense of what the author intends us to see.

But what does “*make...perfect through suffering*” mean? Does it mean that Christ was somehow imperfect and had to learn through suffering to be perfect? I consulted

almost every commentary I have to see how this question was answered, and at the time I wrote these notes ( Oct. – Nov. 2015 ) Tom Schreiner had said what I believe is a most helpful explanation from an actual commentary;

“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 were qualified for office ( cf. 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.”<sup>vi</sup>

He then quotes David Peterson,

“Jesus’ perfection consists in “his proving in temptation, his death as a sacrifice for sins and his heavenly exaltation. By His obedience in the anguish of his sufferings Jesus proved that he always trusted God.”<sup>vii</sup>

Elyse Fitzpatrick cites John Murray;

“It was through this course of obedience and learning obedience that he was made perfect as our Savior, that is to say, became fully equipped so as to be constituted a perfect Savior...And this is just saying that it was the obedience learned through the whole course of humiliation that made him perfect as the captain of salvation. It is obedience learned through suffering, perfected through suffering, and consummated in the suffering and death upon the cross that defines his work and accomplishment as the author of salvation.”<sup>viii</sup>

So, perfection in v. 10 is described as making Him suitable by His experiences ( all of His experiences ) as a human being so that His actions to save His people from their sins ( MT 1:21 ) would be 100% successful. In addition, I have added an excursus to this lesson to exegete what this verse and others like it are saying about Jesus.

v. 11 – Now, whereas the first “he” in v. 10 refers to God, the “he” in v. 11 now refers to Jesus Christ. If you don’t get that, this verse will be misinterpreted, but the flow of thought here precludes that error. It is without a doubt talking about Jesus Christ.

In fact, the definition of ‘*he who sanctifies*’ is narrower than simply Christ. It refers to the incarnate Son – to Jesus, the human, so that when the verse says “*all have one source*” ( sanctifier and sanctified ), we can understand the connection. If this were talking about the pre-incarnate Son, the 2<sup>nd</sup> person of the Trinity, to say He had a source would be to say He was created. But since the Father sent the Son ( JN 3:16; Rom. 8:32 ), this now makes sense. The argument has been made that the same source here, since it refers to Jesus in His humanity, is Abraham or Adam, but that is very unlikely as it is God who sent Christ and created His people ( and draws them to Christ ). It is true of Jesus that His human descent is tied to Adam and to Abraham

( and many others ) as ancestors, but that is not the author's intention here. This paragraph calls for a better explanation, and I cannot do better than to quote rather extensively from Philip E. Hughes here:

“There is no question that *“those who are sanctified”* are the company of the redeemed, but to whom precisely does the designation *“he who sanctifies”* refer? Certainly, the work of ‘sanctifying’ spoken of here is performed by God on man’s behalf; the context, however, demands a more narrow definition of ‘the sanctifier’. It may be said at one that it is not the Third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who is intended here, for, although it is the special function of him who is the Spirit of Holiness to lead believers into the progressive experience of sanctification or personal holiness, our context is not concerned with the question of sanctification as distinct from justification. The “sanctifying” spoken of here ( and elsewhere in the epistle ) is descriptive not of the total experience, from regeneration to glorification, of the setting apart of a people ( “those who are sanctified” ) for the praise and service of God; and while this too cannot be known apart from the operation of God the Holy Spirit, it is not the Third Person of the Trinity with whom our author is concerned in this passage. Nor is it the First Person, God the Father, whom he has in mind as the one who sanctifies, though it is true that it is not otherwise inappropriate to describe the Father in this way, since, for example, Christ Himself prayed the Father to sanctify the apostles in the truth ( JN 17:17 ), and, in the OT, Yahweh assured the people of Israel that it was he who sanctified them ( Ex. 31:13; Lev. 20:8; 22:32; Ezek. 37:28 ). Plainly it is the Second Person, namely, the Son, who is intended, and even more particularly the incarnate Son, who is the subject of this whole passage. So also in the present verse, “he who sanctifies” is one and the same with “he who is not ashamed to call them [ the sanctified ] brethren.”<sup>ix</sup>

“It should be emphasized that, as the NT consistently shows, and not least, this epistle, our brotherhood with Christ rests not solely on the fact of his incarnation, but much more precisely on the redemption which that incarnation enabled him to accomplish at the cross. Our brotherhood is first with him and then and therefore with each other, for it is the brotherhood of the redeemed. Hence the risen Lord refers to his disciples as “My brethren” ( MT 28:10; JN 20:17 ). With him, and through him, who is “the first-born among many brethren ( Rom. 8:29 ), we are now able to address God as “our Father.” It is indeed a matter of amazement and rejoicing that the beloved and only Son should not have been ashamed to call us brethren!”<sup>x</sup>

The verse says *“he who sanctifies”*, and we think of verses like JN. 17:17 where Jesus asks God the Father to sanctify His people ( by the truth ), and JN 17:19, where Jesus says He sanctifies Himself for that same purpose; or Lev. 20:8 where the Lord ( Jahweh ) is said to sanctify His people. However, just as Jesus shares in God’s glory ( Heb. 2:9; JN 17:5, 24 ), He is also set apart as One who sanctifies as seen throughout Hebrews – cf. 10:10; 14:13,12; 9:13-14. By the way, God the father calls us His children, but never calls us brothers as Jesus does.

Philip Hughes comments, citing C. Spicq,

“Verse 10 declares that the Savior could not be perfect apart from sufferings, while verse 11 adds that it is impossible for Him to be Savior apart from incarnation.”<sup>xi</sup>

This leads us to v. 11b – *“that is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers...”*. Jesus is human as a result of the incarnation, but “He stands apart in the sense that He does the sanctifying, and they are sanctified”.<sup>xii</sup> Though He stands apart, He is not ashamed to call them brothers ( generically, that includes sisters ) – all those who belong to God’s family. This obviously does not refer to everyone in the world, but to those “many sons” being brought to glory. The family of God is limited to those who are saved, consecrated and dedicated to God through Christ’s sanctifying work.

John MacArthur points out that Jesus never called His disciples “brothers” or “brethren” prior to His resurrection. He called them disciples, friends, sheep, but never brothers. One possible exception is MK 3:35, but there He is making a theological, symbolic point. The first time they are called brothers by Christ is in MT 28:10,<sup>xiii</sup> after the resurrection.

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He is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters, but all too often, we are ashamed of Him. Note these startling words of Jesus Christ from LK 9:23-26, and let’s rejoice with Paul in Romans 1:16-17 as one of our life-long anthems.

## Brothers and Children

vv. 12 -13

This thought segues into v. 12 and another series of OT citations from the OT: Ps. 22:22; 18:2; Isa. 8:17; 12:2; 8:18.

One point of interest is how the author introduces these OT quotes – *“That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying...”*. In other words, David wrote Psalm 22, but these words are attributed to Christ! Psalm 22 is well-known as a Messianic Psalm having to do with Jesus’ crucifixion in particular. In fact, it may be the primary psalm to convey that concept hundreds of years before it actually took place. The author selects Ps. 22:22 as his first argument of support for what he said in vv. 10-11.

But here it is used to support the contention that those Jesus saves become His brothers. And the way that all 3 of these OT quotes combine to support the argument is masterful.

A.W Pink picks up on the connection between God, Christ & His children;

“Those whom God had given to Christ were referred to by Him, again and again, during the days of His public ministry. “All that the Father gives Me will come to Me” ( JN 6:37 ). “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world...I pray for them: I pray not for the world but for them which Thou has given Me” ( JN 17:6,9 ). They were given to Christ before the foundation of the world ( Eph. 1:4 ). These ‘children’ are God’s elect, sovereignly singled out by Him, and from the beginning by Him, and “from the beginning chosen unto salvation” ( I Thess. 2:13 ). God’s elect having been given to Christ before the foundation of the world and therefore from all eternity, throws light upon a title of the Saviour’s found in Isa. 9:6: “The everlasting Father.” This has puzzled many. It need not. Christ is the everlasting Father because from eternity past, He has had “children.””<sup>xv</sup>

The first citation is Ps. 22:22, so let’s turn there to see the context of this verse. Pick it up at 22:11-22. Notice the segue from the cries for help ( especially vv. 20-21 ), then the beginning of victory & the assurance of faith in v. 22.V. Verse 21b says, “You have rescued me...”. We know He was not saved from death, but out of death / through death – cf. Heb. 5:7. When v. 22 is now cited by the author of Hebrews, it can only be seen as an answer in the resurrection. He could only tell of God’s name ( i.e. in praise ) as One alive, and could only call them brothers because, per Eph. 2:5 – God made them ( us ) alive together in Christ, who were dead in our trespasses and sins.<sup>xvi</sup>

The second OT quote is from Isaiah 8:17 ( & note v. 18 ). See Isa 8:12-18. The people are exhorted to give God a true place in their heart, to highly exalt Him, to honor Him as holy and to submit to His sovereignty – to fear Him. In v. 14, where He is described as a “*sanctuary...a stone of offence and a rock of stumbling...a trap and a snare to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem...*” – cf. I Cor. 1:23ff. To the elect, a sanctuary and refuge; to the reprobates, an offense & a rock to trip them up or to stumble over. Notice Isa. 12:2 where a similar sentence is found to “*I will put my trust in him.*” + cf. Ps. 16:1,8-11.

As this is used in Heb. 2:13, it reveals the explicit confidence of Christ in His Father. It is the sentiment of Gethsemane as the shadow of the Cross falls across Christ’s praying form, and as the clock ticks down and “the hour” arrives – cf. Matt. 26:38-39, 42-44. There is no flinching in the face of death and separation because He completely trusted the will of God His Father.

This then brings us to the 3<sup>rd</sup> citation, now from Isa. 8:18 – the verse that follows the above citation. This is referring to Jesus taking His place as Mediator, owning the elect as those God had given to Him ( cf. JN 17:2,6,6,9,11,12,24 ). He had done what He was sent to do – cf. JN 6:37-40.

## Destroying the Power of Death

vv. 14-16

“Therefore”, as usual, shows us there is a logical link between what precedes and what follows. “Children” is again used, and enhanced to show a direct connection between

Jesus and those He saves. Here, Jesus' human nature is explicitly confirmed by the phrase, "flesh and blood"; of which His 'children' consist by nature, and now this is the nature He has taken on ( partook ) in His incarnation. "Likewise" depicts in identical fashion, and is stated in a similar way in Phil. 2:6-8. To say He partook of this nature is to confirm in no uncertain terms that He became a real man, a real human.

Perhaps the most critical point here is stated next... "*that through death he might destroy the one who has the power death, that is, the devil.*" I was reminded here of Col. 2:13-15. Jesus truly was, as a Christmas song we enjoy singing here states – "Born to Die".

Philip E. Hughes points out that the incarnation is a key;

"As incarnate then, Christ was able to die; and it was his incarnation that set the stage for the performance of that great cosmic drama which is at the center of human history and the means of man's deliverance from his fearsome enemy. At the cross, the place of death, the decisive encounter between God and Satan occurred. The Son came into the world precisely for this purpose, that through death, his death, he might render ineffective our enemy the devil who wields the power of death. This has the appearance of a strange and paradoxical statement; for death is the great and inexorable destroyer, and he who has death in his control holds the power of destruction. How can the suffering of death result in the overthrow of that tyrant who is the prince of death? How can the death of the incarnate Son be anything other than his destruction and the devil's victory?"<sup>xvii</sup>

By His death, Christ destroyed the devil's power over death, although it must be stated here that the devil holds this authority only in a secondary sense because God is ultimately sovereign over everything, and anything, including Satan and death. Scripture is clear that God controls death – [ Gen. 2:17; Deut. 32:39; I KGS 2:6; MT 10:28; LK 12:5; I Cor. 15:25ff; Rev. 1:18; Acts 5:5,9,10; Job 1:12; 2:6; 2 Cor. 4:4 – a strong case can be made that 2 Corinthians 4:4 is a reference to God rather than Satan, and even if it is Satan, he is under God's full control. If it is Satan, it is the only place where he is called "the god of this world" ]<sup>xviii</sup>

Satan has significant power. Numerous NT passages lay out for us this fact. Note I JN 5:19; JN 12:31; 14:30; Eph. 2:2; 2 Cor. 4:4 ( see above ); and OT passages like Job 1 & 2). God's ultimate authority notwithstanding, we must acknowledge that he is authorized ( by God ) to create calamity, destruction and death. [ cf. 1 Samuel 24:1 & II Chron. 21:1; Isaiah 45:5-7 ]

What this verse teaches us is that death is defeated only by the death of Jesus Christ, who, by dying, takes Satan off the throne ( Col. 2:15 ) and allows Paul to say, "*O death, where is your victory? O death where is your sting?*" ( I Cor. 15:55 ). Satan's power over us was death, but his reign over death because of Christ's victory at Calvary is stripped from him cf. Col. 2:13-15 ). Jesus has conquered him; Jesus paid it all, as His death took the place of our ( believer's ) deaths.

This is the only way this victory could have been accomplished. Remember Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane? Three times – cf MT. 26:39. Is there any other way? If so, let

this cup pass. God's answer? Silence – so we must conclude that there was no other way!

The evidence of Christ's victorious death and His defeat of Satan is that Jesus entered into the purview of Satan – the realm of death – and was raised from death to life.

“It must be plain to all that if Good Friday had not been followed by Easter, that is, if Christ were still dead and buried, then he would be no savior, for Satan, not he, would have been the victor and the power of death would have remained in full force. But the victory is Christ's and, as the next verse declares, He is indeed our all-powerful deliverer.”<sup>xix</sup>

V. 15 – Once a tyrant is defeated, those he holds in bondage are set free. In this case, as our verse says, “who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.” Note Romans 6:1-23.

Natural man fears death. He knows it will eventually claim him, and there is no stopping it. But does the fear of death stifle pleasure or joy? Well, deep down it might, when people realise that a second death follows it. But Romans 1:18 tells us they suppress that truth. LK 12:16-8 tells us what man does. He strives for wealth, never having enough, then he tries to enjoy it and take his ease, not realising the truth of Prov. 27:1; Eccl. 9:1-10; 12:13-14. The world's mad clamouring after all sorts of pleasure, much of it sinful, is as a result of the fear of death. It could strike at any time ( it always does to 'someone else' ), so the philosophy of the world says, “grab for all the gusto you can – you only go around once!” In general terms, man is enslaved to sin, expecting and hoping there is no God and no judgment. Evolution, as a religion, is the perfect solution. It seems like science and wisdom. Sin all you want, because we are animals anyway. Morality is subjective because death is coming.

One reason people reject the “offer of the gospel” is that they know life is only so long, and they suspect that following Christ amounts to a series of “No's” and “Do Nots”, and they don't want to change the lives they love to live for some eternal reward they can't envision right now; unless a tragic accident occurs or some demeaning disease overtakes them, leaving them paralyzed, or cancer or ALS comes upon them, promising a shortened and painful existence till death comes. But God can use that. He often does.

This verse says that He delivers them from that lifelong slavery, and recall Rom. 6:4-11,17,18,22. Being a slave of God is something virtually every epistle writer in the NT rejoices over – Paul, Peter, John, Jude, James...just look the greeting on most NT epistles.

V. 16 – Angels again enter the author's argument. Perhaps he is thinking of the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the angels who fell with Lucifer as he sinned. They are slaves of Satan, but there is no relief for them ever. However, the larger point he makes here is that the “help” Christ gives / that God gives is to “the offspring of Abraham”. Notice, not the offspring of Adam. In other words, those who are under the covenant, the elect. Paul, in Romans



4:9-12 & Gal. 3:6-9 emphasizes that those who trust in Christ are Abraham's children, as does Jesus in JN 8:39-41,44.

Interestingly, as so often occurs in translating from one language to another, here the Greek word translated "help" in v. 16 means literally "to take hold of" ( like by taking one's hand to lead them ). Yet, a different Greek word is also translated "help" in v. 18. Schreiner points to Isaiah 41:8-10 to resolve this. The word "help" in Isa. 41:10, is the same Greek word as used in v. 18, where He takes hold of Abraham and helps him by upholding him. Jesus helps people by taking on flesh and becoming one of us, then dying in our place.

## Our High Priest / Overcoming Temptation vv. 17-18

That thought from v. 16 leads to the "therefore" of v. 17. In order to die for His people, He had to be one of those people. Way back in Heb. 2:5, as the author began this argument, which we've been taking up for 2 lessons now, by pointing out from Psalm 8 that man was given dominion over the world, and now Jesus rules from His Father's right hand and is fully human ( & fully God ). He was made lower than the angels for a time, but is now exalted and reigning.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> part of v. 17 tells us why "*he was made like his brothers in every respect.*" Back in Heb. 2:9 – notice the argument there again – "*made lower than the angels, so that, by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.*" What keeps coming up is the critical importance of the incarnation of God's Son. Verse 17 is the first mention specifically of Christ as High Priest, although Heb. 1:3 is certainly an allusion to His High Priestly activity. This will come up 17 times in Hebrews so it is not an unimportant concept in the epistle or in the NT. ( 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:1-10; 7:1-10:18 ) Yet, interestingly, it is never a topic in any other NT book! John 17 is the example of His High Priestly prayer, but it is not titled that in the Bible – we surmise that fact.

Schreiner makes this comment;

"To be a high priest one must be fully human ( cf. 5:1 ), and Jesus meets that prerequisite. Of course, as Hebrews makes clear, Jesus is a different type of high priest in that he is like Melchizedek. But he also distinguishes himself in that he is both the priest and the offering. He doesn't offer "other" sacrifices as OT priests did; rather, he offers himself. No priest in the OT ever imagined that he would be the priest and the offering."<sup>xx</sup>

As High Priest, He is merciful and faithful;

"While it has frequently and rightly been pointed out that he is merciful with reference to human need and faithful with reference to divine requirement, it may also be said that mercy defines the motivation of his high priestly office and faithfulness its execution. It was sheer grace that brought him to this world. His pity and compassion for us were not remote sentiments; they were expressed in action, and in our humanity. And the mercy he has for us was dispensed in particular on the cross, where his supreme high-priestly sacrifice was offered for our sakes. Moreover, this mercy of his was made effective by his faithfulness. Having put his hand to the plough, he did not turn back ( LK 9:62 ). He fulfilled

all that he had promised. Temptation and torment did not turn him aside from his gracious purpose ( MT 4:1ff; 16:21ff ). Faithful to the very end, he drained the bitter cup of suffering to its last dregs for our redemption ( MK 14:36 ). In bearing our sins, he even bore our forsakenness and our alienation ( MK 15:34 ). Our hell he made his, that his heaven might be ours. Never was there such mercy, never such faithfulness as this!”<sup>xxi</sup>

Verse 17 also says He operated “*in the service of God*”, or literally “*in the things that pertain to God*”. Either way, the verse says “to” ( with the force of ‘in order that’ ) “to make propitiation for the sins of the people”. The word “propitiation” carries the meaning of both the forgiveness ( stated here in this verse ) as well as the appeasement of or satisfaction of God’s wrath. Some argue that this word should simply be “expiation”, which means only the forgiveness of sin ( cf. RSV ), but if the ultimate end of one for whom Christ’s atoning death did not cover is hell under God’s wrath, then propitiation is the correct word. This word in the OT is “*mercy seat*”, and is found only 4 times in the NT ( here, Rom. 3:25; I JN 2:2; 4:10 ). With the exception of in the RSV, the word, “expiation” is never found in the NT.

What causes death? Sin. Here is God’s response to it – to avert it, Christ came as a man, yet still fully God to propitiate our sins, and again, Schreiner:

“The devil’s authority over death ended with the death of Jesus, but the nature of Jesus’ death should be explained. His death was the means by which sins were expiated and propitiated. The nature of Jesus’ death helps us with another important theological issue noted in v. 14. Jesus did not appease the devil in atoning for sins. God was appeased; God forgave sin through Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross.”<sup>xxii</sup>

Again, just as in v. 9, we must qualify that “the people” for whom Jesus’ death effectually propitiated God’s wrath is not ‘all without exception’, but instead, ‘all without distinction’. Notice v. 10 – these “*many sons*” brought to glory, and “*those sanctified*” ( v. 11 ); Jesus’ brothers ( v. 11-12 ); “*the children God gave Jesus*” ( v. 13 ), and “*Abraham’s offspring*” ( v. 16 ). It is these for whom the propitiation is made – those given to Christ by God [ cf. JN 17:2,6,9,11,12,24; 6:37,44,65 ].

“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 firsthand the anguish of human existence, and thus he can grant help to those who are suffering.”<sup>xxiii</sup>

Christ has withstood the full force of temptation – suffered through it, and yet remained sinless and faithful. We cannot possibly know the strength of a temptation that we cannot possibly succumb to. We have never sweated drops of blood in the agony of prayer to stay faithful to God’s will, nor reached the point described in Heb. 12:3-4! But He has. He has, by a perfect, sinless, completely obedient, law-fulfilling life, and atoning death has nullified sin and overcome death’s power and thus freed His people from the slavery of sin and of a death under God’s wrath. The focus of v. 18 is the cross, the place where our High Priest offered Himself as a sacrifice on our behalf to God. Note Heb. 7:24-26; 9:24-28 & 10:11-14, 19-23.

H.D. McDonald helpfully comments;

“the “in all things” of Hebrews 2:17 is followed by the “in all points” of Hebrews 4:15. The question is not whether it was possible for Him to sin, or even whether it was possible for Him not to sin. The question is did He who encountered the devil as man come out of the wilderness in full victory? The answer to that clear and unequivocal: He did.

He who had shown Himself to fulfill all righteousness now shows Himself to resist all temptations. And it must be well marked that He had no secret weapon. He did not call on special means to overcome the devil other than those at the disposal of us all. By the Spirit He was led into the wilderness – in the conflict He used the Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God ( Eph. 6:17 ). That was all he used, and that was enough.

Thus matured and thus assured he went forth to His ordained task to be for us the one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus.”<sup>xxiv</sup>

This was the start of His official Messianic ministry – the first huge temptation he faced in that ministry ( not the first one He had ever faced in His 30 years ). Now, in order to address the significance and meaning of verses like Heb. 2:10,17-18 and others like them in fuller detail, especially those that come up within the epistle to the Hebrews, I have added an excursus, which is our next lesson.

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<sup>i</sup> Philip E. Hughes, A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews, Eerdmans 1977 / 87, p. 98

<sup>ii</sup> John MacArthur, Hebrews, Moody, 1983, p. 65-66

<sup>iii</sup> IBID, p. 66

<sup>iv</sup> Hughes, p. 98

<sup>v</sup> Tom Schreiner, Commentary on Hebrews, Holman, 2015, p. 95

<sup>vi</sup> IBID, p. 96-97

<sup>vii</sup> IBID, David Peterson, p. 97

<sup>viii</sup> John Murray, cited in Elyse Fitzpatrick, Found in Him, Crossway, 2013, p. 63

<sup>ix</sup> Hughes, p. 103

<sup>x</sup> IBID, p. 106

<sup>xi</sup> Hughes, citing C. Spicq, p. 106

<sup>xii</sup> Schreiner, p. 99

<sup>xiii</sup> MacArthur, p. 68

<sup>xiv</sup> Hughes, p. 106

<sup>xv</sup> A.W Pink, An Exposition of Hebrews – Volume I; Baker, 1963, p.127

<sup>xvi</sup> Pink, p. 121-122

<sup>xvii</sup> Hughes, p. 111-112

<sup>xviii</sup> See a paper by Donald E. Hartley, PH.D. – “2 Corinthians 4:4: A Case for Yahweh as the God of this Age; Nov. 16-18, 2005, at the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Valley Forge, PA.

<sup>xix</sup> IBIB, p. 113

<sup>xx</sup> Schreiner, p. 108

<sup>xxi</sup> Hughes, p. 120

<sup>xxii</sup> Schreiner, p. 110

<sup>xxiii</sup> IBID, p. 110

<sup>xxiv</sup> H.D. McDonald; Jesus: Human and Divine, Zondervan, 1974; p. 32-33