

It was Fitting and Necessary for Christ to Suffer

Hebrews 2:10-18

Hebrews 2:10-18 - “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. ¹¹ For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹² saying: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You.” ¹³ And again: “I will put My trust in Him.” And again: “Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.” ¹⁴ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ¹⁶ For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.”

Background Notes

In Jewish thought, the idea of a “suffering Messiah” did not fit with their idea of a “conquering king Messiah.” It was hard enough for them to fully grasp the truths that were already presented in this epistle - that Christ was superior to the greatest of the prophets, and that He was greater than the angels, even though He was a Man. These concepts were mind-boggling to the Jewish way of thinking.

But the idea of a suffering Messiah was too much! If Jesus was the promised Messiah, why did He have to suffer? The author of Hebrews now discussed this problem. In the last section of Hebrews 2, the inspired writer showed that it was fitting and necessary for Messiah to suffer.

First of all, it was fitting and appropriate for **God** to decide that Messiah should suffer. If God, “for whom are all things and by whom are all things” (v 10), decreed that Messiah must suffer, then it was fitting. Why? Because **whatever God decrees is fitting**.

Furthermore, it was necessary for Christ to suffer because of the problem of sin, and this was the only possible solution to the problem of sin.

Doctrinal Points

The sufferings of Christ were necessary.

a. The sufferings of Christ were necessary in order to bring many sons to glory (v10-13).

Verse 10: *“For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.”* God’s original plan called for man, created in the image of God, to share in God’s glory forever. What a wonderful plan - and what a wonderful God! But because of man’s sin, fellowship with God was lost. For that fellowship to be restored, it was necessary for someone to pay the penalty for mankind’s sin. In God’s moral universe, the penalty for sin is death. So, in His grace, God sent His beloved Son to suffer and die as man’s substitute. The Captain of our salvation was *“made perfect through suffering.”*

At this point you may say, “But wasn’t Jesus Christ perfect and sinless throughout His life?” Yes! Our Lord Jesus was indeed perfect. The word *“perfect”* here in Hebrews 2 means “attaining the goal” of being our Savior. You see, Jesus could not be our Savior without suffering and without dying. But He is now the ***perfect Savior*** - because He did suffer and because He did die.

The result of Christ’s suffering and death is that God is able to *“bring many sons to glory.”* What an amazing fact – that believers are sons of God! The term *“son”* means that we are in a position of status and privilege. We are heirs of God and brethren of Christ!

Verse 11: *“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren.”* The fact that the Son of God became Man means that together, we are human. *“Both He who sanctifies,”* that’s the Lord Jesus and *“those who are being sanctified,”* that’s us. Together we are human - and therefore He is not ashamed to call us brethren.

In verses 12-13 the author quoted from the Old Testament - from Psalm 22 and Isaiah 8. The point of all three quotes is to show that Jesus Christ is closely identified with His people, so close that we are actually the brethren of Christ! What a place of privilege! And this privileged position is attained only because Christ suffered. The sufferings of Christ were necessary in order to bring many sons to glory.

b. The sufferings of Christ were necessary in order to take away the devil’s power.

Verses 14-16: ¹⁴*Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,* ¹⁵*and release those who through*

fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. ¹⁶ For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham.

“...that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil.” What does it mean that the devil had the power of death? Death is Satan’s sphere of operation. Until the work of Christ on the cross, Satan really could command death. Death is the penalty for sin, and as God’s adversary the devil could use death to terrify people. In addition, Satan could actually demand the death of people - because the penalty of sin is death, and that penalty had not yet been paid.

But the Son of God took on flesh and blood in order to suffer and to die for our sins as our Substitute. Through death, He defeated Satan. The Lord used Satan’s own weapon, death, to destroy the devil. The word “*destroy*” here does not mean to be annihilated or to cease to exist, but to be made powerless. Satan no longer has the power of death. **Jesus Christ now has the keys of death** and Hades (Revelation 1:18). Anyone and everyone who trusts the Lord no longer faces eternal death.

The fear of death is now gone! The bondage of living with the fear of death is over. That doesn’t mean that death is a pleasant experience, and it doesn’t mean that death will be painless for some believers. But it does mean **we no longer have to fear death**. For the Christian, death is a stepping-stone into the presence of the Lord. “*Absent from the body, present with the Lord*” (2 Corinthians 5:8). The sting of death is gone, and death is swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54).

Jesus Christ did not come to earth to help angels (v16). The Lord suffered and died to redeem all of mankind, but there’s no plan of redemption for the fallen angels. The author of Hebrews drove this point home to his Jewish readers by reminding them that Christ’s suffering was not for angels but for them, the seed of Abraham. And Galatians 3:29 teaches us that all believers are, in a spiritual sense, the “seed of Abraham.”

c. The sufferings of Christ were necessary in order for Christ to become our High Priest.

Verses 17-18: “*Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.* ¹⁸ *For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.*”

Do you know the difference between a prophet and a priest? A prophet speaks to the people for God; a priest speaks to God for the people. So a priest is a mediator between God and people.

In order for Christ to bridge the gap between a holy God and an unholy people, Jesus Christ, our Mediator, had to become like us. He had to become human so that He could die. But He had to be sinless so He could be the perfect sacrifice for sin, and make propitiation for our sins. “*Propitiation*” for sin satisfies the wrath of God against sin, and the death of the Lord Jesus for our sin propitiated, or satisfied, the wrath of God toward sin.

So the Lord Jesus is the perfect Mediator and the perfect High Priest. He is merciful toward us and yet faithful towards God (v17). Being a merciful High Priest for us in no way compromises His faithfulness to God.

And our Lord continues His ministry as our High Priest today. That is the great theme of the epistle to the Hebrews. Jesus Christ is a perfect High Priest because He has been through our experiences - He can empathize with us. He knows what human feelings and human emotions are all about. He’s been there Himself!

This is all part of God’s gracious plans for the redemption of mankind. Our Lord even faced temptation with this one exception – He never sinned! When the Lord Jesus was tempted, there was no yielding whatsoever to the temptation. Unfortunately, in our case we so often yield when we are tempted.

But just because He didn’t yield does not mean He did not feel the full force of the temptation. Here’s an illustration of that statement: During a hurricane, the strong tree that doesn’t fall still feels the full force of the storm – in fact, the tree that doesn’t fall feels the full force even more than the weak tree that falls.

As our High Priest, the Lord Jesus helps us through the suffering of temptation (v18). He understands our sufferings because He’s been there Himself.

Practical Application

Be careful about calling the Lord “Brother.”

Verse 11 says that the Lord “*is not ashamed to call us brethren.*” But that does not give us the right to address Him as Brother Jesus, as some Christians do. There is no such precedent anywhere in Scripture.

We need to be careful in our theological terminology. The Lord Jesus Christ has raised us to the position of His brethren, praise His name. However, referring to the Lord Jesus as “Brother Jesus” tends to lower Him to our level. **To us, He is Lord.** Let’s be very careful not lower His position by failing to address His as **Lord**.

So let’s address Him as the **Lord Jesus**, not Brother Jesus. Be careful about calling the Lord our “Brother.”