

Christ Superior Person – Part 1

Hebrews 2:1-18

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If I were going to summarize the theme of the book of Hebrews, I would summarize it the superiority of Christ, that Christ is superior. Now, the theme of Hebrews, being 'the superiority of Christ,' is written for this purpose. I'm going to keep it before you as we go through the book of Hebrews, and every section that we go through we need to keep it in mind, that the writer of Hebrews, and we don't know who the human author was, we know it was written by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (I personally believe the writer was Paul, but I'll do my best not to say Paul) to Hebrew Christians. Two things: 1) they were Jews, 2) they were Christians.

Most of the early church Christians and most of the early church believers were Jewish. Where they were located, we don't know; but we know that they were believers, we'll see that as we go through the book of Hebrews, and they were Hebrews. They were being persecuted severely. They were going through difficult times. They were getting discouraged following Christ and were being tempted to go back to Judaism. It's that simple. The book is actually written to tell them not to go back but to go forward—not to go back to Judaism but to continue to follow Jesus Christ.

The book of Hebrews sets forth the superiority of Christ over the Old Testament covenant, the things of the law, and the things of the Jewish religion. We see that "Christ Is Better Than The Prophets," we saw that last week in Hebrews 1:1-3; we'll see that "Christ Is Better Than The Angels," we begin that in Hebrews 1:4, and it goes all the way to the end of Hebrews 2:18. Beginning in Hebrews 1:4 going all the way to Hebrews 2 is Christ is superior to angels. In just a moment I'll explain more as to why angels are seen as being inferior to Messiah Jesus Christ. Then, we see "Christ Is Better Than Moses And Joshua," "Christ Is Better Than Aaron And The Levitical Priesthood," and that following Jesus Christ is a better system that we live by faith. We get the whole hall of faith in Hebrews 11, and how we live the Christian life by faith. Each section, as we go through week by week, I'll set the context.

Why was it written? It was written to Hebrews to tell them not to go back to the shadows—not to go back to the law—but to keep their eyes on Jesus Christ, to be strengthened and to follow Him as they serve the Lord. As I said, last week we saw in Hebrews 1:1-3 the superiority of Christ over the prophets, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners," different times and different ways, "spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son," and then we saw the seven statements about who Jesus was and His superiority. Beginning in Hebrews 1:4, as I've already mentioned, running all the way down to Hebrews 2:18, the end of the chapter, we actually see Christ superior to angels.

What we have, beginning in Hebrews 2:1-4, and I want you to see this section, is what's called the first of five warning sections of Hebrews. I want you to get them as we go through. I won't give them to you all right now, but there are going to be five places in the book of Hebrews where there is a warning or an exhortation. He lays down the doctrine of Christ superior to the

old covenant, then he warns them, “Don’t go back.” He warns them of the consequences of what will happen if they go back. In Hebrews 2:1-4 we have the first warning section. In Hebrews 2:5-9, we have “Christ Is Better Than The Angels, in His human nature.” There’s an interesting contrast at the end of Hebrews 1, when we saw “Christ Is Better Than The Angels,” we saw that He was better than angels because He’s divine. We saw His deity. Now, in Hebrews 2, we see that “Christ Is Better Than The Angels,” even though He was a man, so in His humanity He’s still superior, even to angels. When we get to Hebrews 2:10-18, we’re going to see “Christ Is Better Than The Angels, in His redemptive work and nature.” Because He became a man, He was able to die, and what He was able to do in His death, His incarnation and His death, we’re going to see the blessings of the incarnation and some marvelous truths that we can discover.

You might be saying, “Well, what does that have to do with me? I know Christ is superior to angels.” The fact that he set forth Christ’s superiority as believers, we begin to understand His nature and His work. Understanding who Jesus is and what He’s come to do will help us to grow and keep our eyes on Him and to move forward in our Christian life.

Let’s read the first section, Hebrews 2:1-4, where we have the first warning not to go back. The warning here is not to drift from the Word of God or not to forget or slip from the things which you heard at the beginning. Follow with me, verse 1. The writer says, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 How shall we,” that would be the writer of the book of Hebrews and the recipients who were believers, “escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

The writer starts with “therefore” in verse 1. The reason he does that is because he’s still on the subject of Christ superior to angels, and he shows us in Hebrews 1:4-14 that Christ was superior to angels and He was the Son of God. Beginning in verse 5, in just a moment, I know I’m doing a lot of outlining here, he gets into Christ is superior to angels in His humanity. In a general sense, and I think it’s important to know, Hebrews 1, Christ’s deity is declared; Hebrews 2, Christ’s humanity is declared. We hear a lot of talk today about the importance of the deity of Christ, but it is of equal importance—listen to me carefully—that we understand the humanity of Christ. Jesus was truly a man, sinless and born of a virgin, but He was also truly God. It’s what theologians call the hypostatic union. The word “hypostatic” means two natures. There’s the full humanity of Christ and the deity of Christ, two natures but not two people—listen to me very carefully—one Person, two natures; fully human, fully divine.

I know you’re starting to blow a fuse right now, right? How does that work? I don’t know, but isn’t it awesome? It means that no one is like Jesus, so we can worship Him, praise Him, and He can identify with us as our sympathetic and compassionate High Priest. He also calls us “brethren” because of His incarnation, and we became one with Him in our humanity.

In Hebrews 2:1-4 we have a parenthesis or a parenthetical section which is called the warning or an exhortation passage. In Hebrews 13, the writer referred to his book as a "word of exhortation." What he says is there's something, "...we ought to give the more earnest heed to," verse 1, "the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip." What we heard at the beginning was the gospel preached by Christ, the gospel preached by the apostles, the gospel preached by those who came after Him, and the gospel we find in the Scriptures; so don't go away from the gospel, continue to follow Jesus Christ and the good news. What you heard, don't let it slip.

I've always thought the word "slip" was kind of cool. It actually means to slowly drift away from. It's actually the concept of backsliding, we use that term. I like to think of what happens sometimes if you've ever been in a pool on a warm summer day lying on an air mattress reclining in a pool, and you close your eyes and almost go to sleep as you lie there on the water. You started maybe in the shallow end of the pool, and you open your eyes a few minutes later at the other end of the pool. Have you ever had that happen where you just kind of drift on the water and aren't really aware or conscious of it. You don't say, "I'm moving," or "I'm going from shallow water to deep water," you just wake up and, "Whoa! I'm at the other end of the swimming pool," and you didn't realize it. That's what's being conveyed here, you drift slowly away. They were drifting from Christ back into the things of the old covenant. They were drifting away.

Why does this happen? It's because we do not listen to God's Word, we don't pray, we don't fellowship, we're not keeping our eyes on Jesus Christ. We are going backwards instead of forward or drifting back.

The writer tells us the danger of drifting back. He says, "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 How shall we," believers or Christians, "escape," the judgment, chastisement, or discipline of God (he's not talking about necessarily a loss of salvation), "if we neglect," or make light of, "so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?" We need to be careful, we need to give heed, we need to pay attention that we not slowly drift away from the Word of God and the things of Christ. If so, he says in verse 2, that "the word spoken by angels," he's still in the section dealing with angels.

The issue was that to the Jews angels were very, very instrumental and important and key in the transmission of the law in the old covenant. When God came down on Sinai and gave Moses the Ten Commandments, the Decalogue, we studied that on Sunday morning, they actually believe, and I think rightfully so from Scripture, that it was transmitted to them by angels. Angels, many times, were the way God would send dreams or visions to them. Angels were all important to them. Angels still exist. They're created by God. They're here today, and they're a wonderful thing, but we need to realize that Christ is superior to angels. I fear that some people, and it's sad and tragic, would get so enamored by angels that they forget the Son

of God, Jesus Christ. Angels, yes, but let's keep our focus on Jesus. Amen? They were so enamored by angels.

I remember as a young Christian years ago I and was wanting to have an experience with Christ, an experience with the Lord. I was up on a mountain with a friend of mine. We were just kind of sitting out in a bush area praying, "God, send us an angel." We'd been reading about angels in the Bible, and I just thought, Let's just pray and ask God to send us an angel. We were actually doing that. The moment we started praying that, a lizard rustled in the bush behind me. I'll never forget this. We both almost had a heart attack! Completely freaked out, "Waaaaaaah!" and we saw a lizard go walking away, "Lord, never mind. We don't want to see an angel." I thought, if we freak out at a lizard in a bush, can you imagine how terrifying it would be to see an angel?

He's actually arguing from the lesser to the greater and says, "Well, if under the old covenant, verse 2, which was transmitted by angels, if you transgressed or were disobedient, you "received a just recompense of reward," he's actually saying, "Under this inferior system of the old covenant, if you disobeyed," and the word "transgression" means to willfully, deliberately, intentionally step over the line to transgress, which is disobedience, again a willingly not hearing God's Word, then you will receive your judgment, "a just recompense of reward," a judgment. Then, he goes to the greater issue, verse 3, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation," he's comparing the old covenant with the new. If under the old covenant you disobeyed, there was judgment. What do you think is going to happen under the new dispensation or covenant of grace if you go back? You don't think you're going to be chastened by the Lord? Most certainly you will be. "How shall we escape, if we neglect," or make light of, "so great salvation."

If you have the liberty to mark your Bible, you might want to underline this phrase, "...so great salvation." The salvation we have in Jesus Christ is a great salvation. Amen? It was provided by a great love of God. It was provided by Him sending His Son, Jesus Christ. We're going to see all that tonight in our text, by Jesus dying on the cross, by Jesus rising from the dead, by Jesus ascending back into heaven, by Jesus seated at the right hand of God the Father. So, once having come to Christ, why would you turn around and go back? If the old covenant was just anticipating the coming of Messiah, then you're going back into the shadows rather than into the substance, which is Jesus Christ, and there will be swift judgment brought upon you.

When he speaks of this "great salvation," which is our new covenant of grace in Christ, he says, "...which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord." You have the old covenant which was transmitted by angels to Moses and to the prophets and to the people of Israel, but God Himself, the LORD, which would be Jehovah or Yahweh, first began to bring it to us. Jesus came with the good news of salvation to man. Those that heard Christ and the gospel—what a blessing that must have been—were hearing the good news from heaven by the very Son of God.

Secondly, notice how the writer breaks it down, "...was confirmed unto us by them that heard

him,” so this is a historic event, the incarnation. Jesus actually was born, He actually lived, He actually preached, He actually died, He actually rose. Then, there were the apostles and the followers of Christ who heard them. John says, “That which...we have heard, which we have seen...and our hands have handled, of the Word of life...and declare we unto you,” so it came directly from Jesus the Lord and was transmitted by the apostles, and then “...was confirmed unto us by...both signs and wonders.”

The phrase “signs” means miracles that point to the deity of Christ—that’s why they’re called signs, they point to something. The word “wonders” means the effect it had on those who saw the miracle, there was awe and wonder and worship, “and with divers miracles,” different miracles. We read all the miracles that Jesus performed in the gospels—the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, Lazarus is raised from the dead—all the confirmation that was brought about by the miracles. Then, in the book of Acts, the miracles of the apostles that they performed. There were also, verse 4, “...gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will,” so at that time God was pouring out His Spirit confirming to the Jews, which primarily wanted signs to see, to confirm, that it was true.

I do believe that today God still performs miracles, but we need to make sure that we always base what we believe on the Scriptures not just on experience. You never want to judge the Scriptures by your experience, you want to judge your experience by the Scriptures. Notice also that it was done according to the will of God. I love it. At the end of verse 4, “...according to his own will,” so if God wills and God wants, He can still do signs and wonders and different miracles. He still gives the gifts of the Holy Spirit, but it’s all according to His own will.

Verses 1-4, don’t drift away from God’s Word. Someone once said, “Backsliding generally begins at the closet door.” That’s a fancy way for saying that you know you’re backsliding when you no longer pray. It also involves that you don’t read the Bible anymore. Wake up! Give heed. Be careful. Don’t drift away from prayer. Don’t drift away from the Bible, the Word of God. Don’t drift away, we’re going to see one of the warning passages, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some,” some of them had already stopped going to fellowship, “...as ye see the day approaching,” that’s the passage in Hebrews warning these Jews who were forsaking fellowship and going back to Judaism. They weren’t getting together with other Christians. Here he says, “Don’t drift away from the Word of God. Don’t drift away from the people of God. Don’t drift away from praying to God. Don’t drift away from fellowship with God and other believers. You will be chastened by the Lord.” “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.”

We’re going to see as we go through Hebrews that if you’re a Christian, I don’t believe you’re going to lose your salvation, but you’re going to lose a sense of God’s blessings in your life, you’re going to lose fruitfulness because you’re not in fellowship with Christ, and you may be chastened of the Lord to bring you back to fellowship with Christ where you need to be. Did you ever notice how sometimes when you do drift away from the Lord that the Lord lets something bad happen in your life? We call it bad, God says it’s good because it was allowed by God to get us on our knees and back into the Scriptures. That’s why you should, “Thank God for the

bitter things; They can be a 'friend to grace'; They can drive you from the path of ease, To storm the secret place. You should thank God for the friends who have failed, To fill your heart's deep need; They can drive you to the Savior's feet, Upon His love to feed. You can thank God through all life's way, No one can satisfy, because then you find in God alone, you're full and rich supply." Amen? That's what happens when we drift away.

Beginning in verse 5, down to verse 9, we come back to the clear teaching of Christ superior to angels. Again, the reason it was an issue was twofold for the Jews: 1) they saw the old covenant is transmitted by angels, and the writer says, "No, Jesus is better than angels because He's God," and 2) they would say, "Well, isn't He also a man? The Messiah is a man? He's a human?" The writer of Hebrews does a masterful job here (this is a challenging section to interpret) in showing us the values, the blessings, the benefits of the humanity of Christ. In Hebrews 1 He's God, superior to angels. "Well, okay," says the Jew, "but He is a man, you know that." He is a man, but I want you to know the blessings that are ours because of His humanity. I'll give them to you as we go through.

In this section, he's talking more about the blessings of Christ's humanity and not so much as they pertain to our redemption. That begins in verse 10. Let's read it, verse 5, "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. 6 But one in a certain place testified, saying," let me give you the reference. In Hebrews 2:6, he's quoting from the Old Testament, Psalm 8:4-6. By the way, when he does quote from the Old Testament, it's interesting that Hebrews is quoting what's called the Septuagint, which is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. Sometimes it has a little different variation than if they were quoting from the Hebrew. The writer of Hebrews is quoting from the Septuagint, but he's quoting Psalm 8:4-6, "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: 8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," taken from Genesis 1:28, "For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he," that is, Christ, "by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

The writer starts with a quote from Psalm 8, when the psalmist said, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers...what is man, that thou art mindful of him?" He's talking about Christ's humanity, but he does admit from that psalm that man is in some aspect insignificant and unimportant. Have you ever thought about the vastness of the cosmos? All the billions of galaxies with billions of stars. When Frank Turek was here a couple of weeks ago on Sunday night, he was doing all those distances and the speed of light, the size of the planets and everything. I mean, I fused out real early on that. I couldn't keep up with it. Have you ever gone out at night and looked up into the sky and saw the stars and think with the billions of galaxies and billions of stars, Who am I? This little tiny speck on this little tiny piece of earth. "What is man, that thou art mindful of him?" He talks about the fact that even though man in this respect of God's vastness and greatness, is insignificant, but God also created man in His

image and His likeness and that Christ came in this lowly state of Christ coming as a man, yet God used Him to redeem man because of His incarnation. It's kind of a round about way to argue the superiority of Christ's humanity in His salvation of redemption.

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" How is it that man has dignity? Notice the end of verse 6, "that thou visitest him?" This would be the reference to God becoming a man in the Person of Jesus Christ. John 1:18 says, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," the word means explained Him. We get our word "exegete" from it. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.)" You have little, puny, insignificant man, which is so funny today in our humanistic culture that we live in.

America has become more humanistic. We've forgotten more about God. When man becomes the center and the circumference of all things, we become like little gods and forget the God of the Bible. We are in huge trouble. Believe me, in America right now, we are in big trouble because we've forgotten God. What we need to realize is that we are insignificant and unimportant, but God has given to us dignity in that He made us in His image and His likeness, and that we are redeemable and we will be with Him in heaven for all eternity in glorified bodies. What a marvelous truth that is!

Verse 6, "What is man...that thou visitest him? 7 Thou madest him a little lower than the angels," this is the idea of that angels are spirit beings. They are very powerful and intelligent. They can travel at great speed and great distances, so I wouldn't want to have a fight with an angel. If one angel can slay 185,000 of the Assyrian army in one night, don't mess with angels. By the way, demons are fallen angels, so don't go looking for a fight with demons. If you encounter one, "...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." Don't go out on an escapade trying to find demons to deal with, just leave them up to God to deal with.

He says, "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands." He's talking about mankind. We have man's dignity questioned in verse 6; we have man's purpose explained in verses 7-8. God created man, Adam and Eve, put them in the Garden of Eden, and gave them "...dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air." God gave them dominion. When Adam fell (I'll try to keep it as simple as I can) with Eve and sinned, they lost their dominion over the animals. We still have to some degree dominion over the animals, but they lost that dominion that was originally given in the Garden of Eden, so we have the results of the fall.

Verse 8, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But," notice the end of verse 8, "now we see not yet all things put under him." It's kind of confusing when you read it. You say, "Well, He creates man and puts all things under him, but now we don't see all things under him. Which is it? Are they under him or not?" Starting with the fall of man in the book of Genesis, Genesis 1:28, he's talking about losing dominion over the earth and now says, "But now we see not yet

all things put under him.”

What we do see, this is what Jesus came to do, He was incarnate, He became a man, “...who was made a little lower than the angels,” so there are ways in which the man is lower than the angels, and Jesus became a man for a time in His humility while on earth before His resurrection, ascension, and exaltation, He was made lower than the angels. Even the Son of God when He was here on earth, in agony in the Garden of Gethsemane sweating great drops of blood, angels had to come and help strengthen Him. Angels assisted Christ. I don’t know about you, but this is one of the things that just touches my heart so deeply to think that the Creator of angels, the infinite God who made the heavens and the earth would become a humble, dependent man and that He would have to be strengthened and encouraged and protected and helped by the angels in His humanity.

All this is saying, and it kind of comes to a conclusion in the second half of the chapter, that Jesus became a man to become what’s called the last Adam. The first Adam failed, lost dominion. The last Adam, Christ, came and was successful where Adam failed in His sinless life, substitutionary death, and His resurrection; and He’s going to restore the earth and restore mankind on the earth. There will be a new heaven and a new earth. There’ll be the new Kingdom Age. We will have dominion over the animals in a way that we don’t now. They will be friendly, and it’ll be awesome. You can go pet lions and tigers and bears.

I was watching all these crazy videos of bear attacks on YouTube the other day. This is what the pastor does on his pastime. This is why I go to the beach. I don’t go to the mountains because bears can eat you. “Don’t you worry about sharks?” I don’t worry about sharks. Some day we will reign with Christ in glorified bodies because of His humanity, because of what He did for us on the cross, and we will reign over the earth. All things will be brought under His subjection.

Verse 9, “But we see Jesus,” I love that, “who was made a little lower than the angels,” that’s the humble humanity of Christ. He was thirsty, tired, He wept, was weary, He groaned in spirit. He was truly man. Why did He become a man? “for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.” This is a great verse that ought to be underlined and noted in your Bible. This is talking about the incarnation of Jesus Christ that God then would raise Him from the dead, crown Him with glory and honor, it goes along with Philippians 2, “...and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow...And that every tongue should confess,” “...that he by the grace of God,” I love that, “should taste death for every man.”

A couple of things, quickly. Notice He died for man. This is what’s called the substitutionary death of Christ. One of the purposes of the incarnation was that He could die on the cross in our place. Jesus couldn’t just come from heaven, couldn’t just be born of a virgin, couldn’t just live a sinless life, couldn’t say, “I’m the way, the truth, and the life,” talk nice to us and tell us to be good and then go back to heaven, He had to actually die. This will go with my message this Sunday on the holiness of God. Do you know why there’s a cross? Because God is holy and

God is righteous and sin must be judged and paid for. He became a man so that He could taste death for every one of us.

I believe that also this indicates that the atonement is not limited. You ask, "What do you mean by that?" I don't believe it's limited just to the elect, for those who have believed and been born again. I believe in unlimited atonement that, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever," and I believe the word "whosoever" means whosoever, "believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He does say here that He "...taste death for every man." I don't know how you can read into that every man is every elect man. I believe that's every man just as much as "the world" is in John 3:16, so no limited atonement, and Christ was the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins. He came to reveal God, He came to redeem man, and we also know He came to reign on the throne of David to set up the Davidic Kingdom keeping God's promise to David.

Beginning in Hebrews 2:10, and we won't tarry on this section, down to verse 18, we have "Christ Is Better Than The Angels" in that redemptive work. Verse 9 transitions us into the next section showing us that those Jews who would say, "Well, how can Jesus be better than angels? Jesus was a man, man was made lower than the angels?" He's saying that Jesus came to be man to redeem us. This is where I'm going to give you some more reasons for Jesus becoming a man or what we call the incarnation. Verse 10, "For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation," this is a reference to Jesus Christ, "perfect through sufferings." What a great title for Jesus, "captain of their salvation." I love that. It behoved Him, "for whom are all things, and by whom are all things," God is the source of all things, and all things exist for Him. Everything came from Him and is going back to Him, and God's purpose and plan was "in bringing many sons unto glory," that's a fancy way of saying that God sent Jesus to become a man and die for us so that lots and lots and lots of people could go to heaven.

Read Revelation 7:9 where John sees the redeemed around the throne. He says, "...a great multitude, which no man could number." There's going to be a lot of people in heaven because of what Jesus did for us. Verse 10, "...in bringing many sons unto glory," speaking here of His redemption work. What does he mean when he says, "...to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," I thought Jesus was the Son of God, sinless, born of a virgin. Why does He have to be made perfect? The perfecting here is in the realm of His work not His person. It wasn't improving His person, it was actually completing or finishing His work of redemption. The "perfection" here is not His person but it's His work of redemption on the cross.

Verse 11, "For both he that sanctifieth," which is Christ, "and they who are sanctified," which is the believer. Do you know that Jesus, God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, all three are those who sanctify you as a Christian, and they who are sanctified, that we're one with Christ, "for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren," so we become one with Christ and the fact that He was a man and we are men, even though we are sinners and we're redeemed.

Sanctification means to be set apart or made holy. Again, I'm preaching this Sunday on the holiness of God, so it's on my mind. It's another way of describing your salvation. When you become a Christian, it starts with the sanctifying conviction and work of the Holy Spirit drawing you to Jesus. When you repent and believe in Jesus Christ, then regeneration takes place in your heart and the indwelling sanctification of the Holy Spirit in your life. That's the process of walking with the Lord, so you're regenerated, then the Spirit of God is sanctifying you, making you more holy, and then one day when you go to heaven, you will be perfectly holy, sanctified, set apart, and like Christ. There's the pre-conversion sanctification of conviction; then there's the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit setting us apart as saved individuals; then there's the sanctification process in our lives, the work of the Spirit making us more like Christ; and then one day, when we're either raptured or go to be with the Lord in heaven, we will be, as Christians, perfectly holy and righteous, just like Jesus Christ. How marvelous that will be! We'll be free from sin. We won't be divine—we won't be gods—but we will be free from sin and righteous as He is righteous.

Now, verse 12, we have another quote from the Old Testament, Psalm 22:22, "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13 And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." He's talking about Christ becoming a man, calling us brethren. This is the point I want to make that Jesus in the incarnation became the last Adam. By the way, in verse 13, he's quoting from Isaiah 8:17-18.

Verse 14, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," it's referring to Christ becoming a man or His incarnation, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Here's the first reason that Jesus became a man, to become the last Adam so that He could reverse the curse. Secondly, so that He could destroy Satan's power. When it says, verse 14, "...that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil," that word "destroy" means to render inoperative. It's the Greek word *katargeo*. It means to render inoperative. It doesn't mean to annihilate the devil, he will actually be in hell for all eternity, but it means it makes him inoperative over the lives of believers to be sure.

An interesting statement, "...that had the power of death, that is, the devil." I'm not sure how to explain the idea that he has "power of death," but it is interesting that Satan tempted Adam and Eve to sin. What happened when Adam and Eve sinned? Death came into the world. Death is not God's original design or plan. It was introduced by the devil. He comes to kill, steal, and to destroy so that when the curse is reversed in heaven, we read in Revelation, "...and there shall be no more death," Amen? Death has its origin in the devil.

If you're a Christian, you're protected by God. Satan cannot kill you. Read the book of Job. He's got a hedge around you. That doesn't mean you drive recklessly, eat foolishly, and do stupid things thinking, I'm indestructible! Nothing can kill me! God might just allow you to die to come home to heaven. I do believe that we can rest assured that Satan cannot out of the will of God take our lives. It would have to be something that God allowed for His design and for His

purpose. What Jesus did in the incarnation was destroyed Satan's power, "that had the power of death, that is, the devil," and rendered him inoperative. One day death will be defeated.

Verse 15, "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Here's the third reason for the incarnation, He delivers us from the fear of death. First, He becomes the last Adam; secondly, He destroys Satan's power of death; and thirdly, He delivers us from the fear of death. When you become a Christian, you do not have to fear death. Someone once said, and I've never forgotten it, "You're not ready to live until you're ready to die."

Do you know why Christians can enjoy life? Because you're not afraid to die. You don't have to worry about dying. What did Jesus say? Don't be afraid of those who can kill the body. You say, "Okay. Right. Got it, Lord. No biggie, all they can do is kill me, okay?" He said, "After that, there's nothing more they can do." I love that. I'll tell you who to fear, fear God who can kill your body and after that has power to throw your soul into hell. Fear God. If you're a Christian, you don't need to be afraid of death. The incarnation where Christ became a man, died, rose from the dead, this is the Easter message. Because Christ rose from the dead...and I'm just thrilled in my heart to celebrate this at Easter to think about death has lost its sting, the grave has lost its victory, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? But thanks be to God," for Jesus Christ. That should put a song in your heart every day. Amen? The fact that I do not need to be afraid to die. Jesus has taken the sting out of death. He's defeated the devil and the grave. That's so marvelous!

Verse 16, "For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham," it means He actually became a man, and some believe that it's saying He became not only a man but became a Jewish man. Think about that. Think about anti-Semitism, how prevalent it has been in the world and history. And to think about the Savior of the world was a Jew. The God-man who came to earth to redeem mankind was a Jew. Now, I know some people that are anti-Semitic wouldn't like that, but that's true. I don't know who wrote the book of Hebrews, but most likely it was a Jew. I know Jesus was a Jew, and He's the Savior of the world. Whenever you meet a Jewish person, you ought shake their hand and say, "Thank you for having the Messiah come," and "Thank you for being Jewish. Thank you for the Bible. Thank you for the Ten Commandments. Thank you for Messiah. Thank you for the rich heritage I have in Christ." He became of the seed of Abraham specifically.

Verse 17, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren," this is referring to His humanity. Again, he's arguing with these Jews that even Jesus and His lowly, humble state of a man, is superior to angels because angels don't redeem mankind. As a matter of fact, did you know that fallen angels are not redeemable? Angels that rebelled against God and fell, Satan is not going to get to go to heaven. Demons are not going to go to heaven. They're not going to get saved and go to heaven. You're not going to meet a demon in heaven saying, "I accepted Jesus." But mankind can rebel against God and fall, and he's redeemable. This is why angels, when they see us in heaven, are blown away that God would save sinners. He's not ashamed "to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful

and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.”

Here's another reason for the incarnation. This one I've very rarely mentioned, but we find it developed later in the book of Hebrews, Jesus Christ became a man so that He could become a “faithful high priest,” and the priest had to be taken from men so that they could minister to men with compassion and understanding. It means that Jesus Christ, because of His humanity, and because He was tempted in all points like we are yet without sin, He understands your weakness. He understands your fears. He understands your grief and your sorrow.

If you've ever buried somebody that you love, lost a loved one and grieved over that, the Bible says Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus. I can't tell you how many times I've done funeral services at cemeteries and I look out at people with tears running down their faces. I say, “Do you know that Jesus wept just like you are right now?” Someone said, “In every pang that rends the heart, The Man of Sorrows had a part.” Every pain you feel, He feels. You say, “Well, how could God understand what it's like to lose a loved one?” Jesus lost loved ones. “How can God understand what it's like to be rejected and forgotten and abused?” Jesus knows, and He cares. He understands. Because He left heaven, came down to earth, Jesus knows, He cares, He understands; so He's become a faithful and compassionate High Priest. He's touched with all the feelings of our weaknesses.

Notice also in verse 17, “...to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” I won't tarry on that, but that's the fifth blessing. Literally the word “reconciliation” means propitiation, that Jesus died to satisfy the demands of God's holy, righteous law.

Lastly, verse 18, “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able,” this is marvelous, “to succour,” My King James Bible has succour which means to help. Do you know that literally means to run to for help. It means He runs to us for help, “...them that are tempted.” Verses 17 and 18 talk about Him becoming a “faithful high priest,” that He becomes a propitiation, “...for the sins of the people,” and verse 18, that He is a sympathetic, compassionate High Priest. He is able to help us in our time of need.

Does Jesus care when I'm sad or lonely? Yes. Does Jesus know? Yes. Will He run to me to help me? Do you know what the Holy Spirit is called? He's called the Helper. He's called the paraclete. He's called the Helper. It's the same word we use for a lawyer. If you're in a courtroom, you don't want to be there alone, you want a lawyer by your side to be with you, so the paraclete comes, the Holy Spirit, in the Person of Christ; and He comforts and strengthens and helps us.

We have these six blessings of the incarnation: He became the last Adam, He destroyed Satan's power, He took away the fear of death, He became a faithful High Priest, He became the propitiation for the sins of the people, and He helps us, the Helper, when we are tempted. Run to Him as He runs to you. Let's pray.