

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 6 June 2021. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced, and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

Christ Our Brother (Part 2)

Hebrews 2:14-18

In last week's message, we studied a section of **Hebrews 2** in which the Apostle Paul teaches us **that Jesus Christ is our Brother**.

It is extremely important that we know, believe, and receive the truth about who Jesus is. No part of Jesus' Person, or His saving work, can be denied without rejecting God's offer of salvation, and missing heaven! To say that Jesus was anyone less than Almighty God is blasphemy. Yet, at the same time, to say that Jesus was *not a true Man* (and thus, not our real, flesh-and-blood Brother) is also blasphemy. This is exactly why the Apostle John warned us, ***“Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God” (1 John 4:3)***. Almost every cult in the world rejects either Christ's Godhead, or His full humanity.

Those of us who know Christ as Saviour know these things to be true; and we have placed our trust in the true Christ of the Bible. If we hadn't done so, we wouldn't be saved! We believe that Jesus is 100% God, and 100% Man. We believe that He died to pay the full penalty for our sins, and that He arose bodily from the grave in order to save us. However, God wants us to learn more and more about *who He is*. He wants us to understand the *full implications* of the fact that He is a Man, and our Brother.

As you know, many of the Christians to whom Paul wrote this letter were being persecuted for their faith in Jesus; and Paul wrote this letter so that they would not be shaken in mind or heart. He wanted them to be fully grounded in the truth of who their Saviour is, and to be ready to suffer for His name. Paul had good reason to do so, because even believers can be shaken in moments of crisis. **Remember the two believers whom Jesus met on the road to Emmaus** after His resurrection? They thought it was all over, and that their Saviour was gone from them forever; and Christ had to call them ***“fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.”*** He then showed them prophecy after prophecy about His death, burial, and resurrection, from the Scriptures; and as He did so, their “hearts burned within them.” By the way, God withheld their eyes from recognising Christ until *after* He had persuaded them *from Scripture!* God didn't want them to “see” His Son with their eyes until they “saw” Him in the pages of God's Word. This shows how important the written word of God is! The written testimony in Scripture is even more important than your own personal experience.

Even though the two men from Emmaus were genuine believers, they were shaken to the core on account of the terrible things that had happened over the past week. Such was the case with the weak and anxious Jewish Christians to whom Paul was writing. **Such can be the case with us, as well, if we be not rooted and grounded in the truth.** That is why we need to know our Saviour's portrait in Scripture, inside and out.

The title of this message is ***Christ Our Brother (Part 2)***.

Read Hebrews 2:14-18.

I. Christ is our Deliverer (vv. 14-15).

You may remember, from last week's message, that Paul ended **verse 13** by saying, "***Behold I and the children which God hath given me.***" These words of Isaiah, (which were written 700 years before Christ) had an immediate application in Isaiah's day. Isaiah was saying that he and his two sons were "signs," or "living testimonies," for God. However, Paul is pointing out that this statement has an even deeper prophetic meaning: it is a prophecy about Jesus. Jesus himself is the One speaking in this prophecy. And what is He saying? He is calling those who are saved (those who have believed on Him) the "***children which God hath given me.***" At the moment a person is saved, God the Father takes that new child of His, and gives him to Jesus for safekeeping. That person becomes Christ's. He now bears Christ's name. Christ is that child's elder Brother; and Christ promises *never* to let him go! Jesus said, "***All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.***"

Now, continuing with that thought, Paul tells us, here in **verse 14**, that since the children (those who are saved) are flesh and blood, it was necessary for Christ to take "***part of the same***" (in other words, to become flesh and blood also). By becoming a Man, Jesus was able to die for us, and thereby deliver us from Satan's grasp.

If Christ were not real flesh and blood (and, therefore, our Brother), we would have no hope of being saved. Christ had to become a true member of humanity in order to deliver humanity. Notice what Paul says. He says that Jesus "***also himself likewise took part of the same***" (meaning, "He took part of human flesh"). Christ didn't merely *seem* to be a man: He was the real thing! He became a Man in the same way that every other man does—by way of conception and birth. He also died as a Man.

Now, let's dig deeper. Here in **verses 14 and 15**, Paul tells us that by becoming a true Man and dying for us, Christ did two things. First, **He destroyed the Devil, who once had the power of death.** This doesn't mean that the Devil was annihilated, or that he doesn't exist anymore; it simply means that the Devil's plan of trying to keep redemption from happening was utterly ruined. Secondly, Christ **delivered those who, all their lives, had been bound by the fear of death.** We who once lived in fear of death are no longer bound by that fear, because we know that we have passed from spiritual death to spiritual life in Christ!

Yet, what, exactly, does Paul mean when he says that Satan had the "***power***" of death? Isn't God the One who gives and takes life? Yes, He is. Isn't God the One who has the power and authority to kill and make alive? Yes, He is. Weren't the believers who died before Christ *safe* from Satan's grasp? Didn't they go to Paradise when they died? Yes, they were safe, and they did go to Paradise.

How, then, did Satan have the "***power***" of death before Jesus died on the cross? Well, you've got to understand that *legally*, mankind was, in a very real way, handed over to Satan when our father Adam sinned. God *was* "Father" to mankind in the beginning; but when man sinned, he became dead to God. Satan then became man's spiritual father. By rights, man belonged to Satan. That is why Jesus told those who rejected them, "***Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do***" (**John 8:44**). They didn't have to do anything really bad to get into Satan's family: they already belonged to him! Their rejection of Jesus was simply outward evidence of the fact that they already belonged to Satan's family.

Now, all the believers of Old Testament times (including the first sinners, Adam and Eve) were truly redeemed. They placed their faith in God's promise of the coming Messiah; and their sins were "covered" until the future day when the Messiah would take their sins away, on the cross. Nonetheless, **Satan seemed to have a solid case against all of them.** After all, did not God say, "***The soul that sinneth, it shall die***"? Yes, He did. *That* is the reason Satan appeared to have power over death. God's justice demands the *death* of the sinner. His judgment demands our eternal separation from God, in the place that is prepared for the Devil and His angels. How, then, could God receive those who believed on Him into His abode of Heaven? By all rights, it would seem that *all* men should have belonged to Satan, full stop. Why? Because all have sinned!

This question must have puzzled Old Testament believers. They *knew* that God had promised to redeem them; they *knew* that they would go to be with God one day; and they *knew* that a resurrection of their bodies was promised in the future. However, they couldn't understand *how* this could come about. They knew that "***The wages of sin is death.***" How, then, could they be redeemed from death, hell, and the grave? To all appearances, death reigned.

As for Satan, he didn't really understand this mystery, either. Paul says that if Satan and his minions *had* understood this, he would "***not have crucified the Lord of glory.***" How could God take these miserable sinners from his grasp? No doubt, in Satan's demented mind, it wasn't "fair" that the Old Testament believers went to Paradise, instead of to hell. To this day, he *still* doesn't think it's fair. To this day, Satan is *still* going before the throne of God to accuse His saints. However, Jesus is ever there to intercede for His people. He points to His nail-scarred hands and says, "They are mine!"

Read Romans 5:12-18.

To us, it's all clear. We are looking *back* at the cross, with perfect vision of what God has already done. However, it wasn't so clear in the long centuries before the cross. Generation after generation died; and death *seemed* to have the last say. However, when Christ arose from the dead, the question of who held the keys of death was no longer obscure: it was as plain as the noonday. Christ had defeated Satan and death!

Read 2 Timothy 1:8-10.

Please notice what the Lord has done. First, He has "***abolished death***"; and secondly, He has brought life and immortality "***to light.***" In other words, it is no longer a mystery. God's plan of salvation is accomplished, and it is now out in the open, for both men and angels to see. Now *everyone* can know that God has destroyed death, and has given us eternal life.

By paying the penalty for our sins in full, Christ has removed the *death penalty that sin requires*; and in so doing, he has destroyed the destructive work that the Devil began when he tempted Adam to sin. Satan no longer has any "case" that he can wage against us. It's as though Satan were the prosecuting attorney, railing against us, and demanding the eternal death of our souls; but then Jesus, the Judge, stands up from His royal throne, assumes the role of Defending Attorney, and displays, as irrefutable evidence of our innocence, His nail-

pierced hands. He says, “These sinners’ sins are paid in full. They have placed their trust in me, and they are *not guilty*. I gave my life for them. Case dismissed!”

Read Revelation 1:17-18.

Immediately after identifying Himself as the one who died, but who is now alive forevermore, Christ then claimed to hold the keys of death and hell. It is *because of* Christ’s death for our sins, and His resurrection from the dead, that He now firmly, irrefutably holds the keys of death and hell. Satan’s seeming authority over death is broken. Satan *cannot* claim anyone who has gone to Jesus for safekeeping. In **Romans 8**, Paul made this statement about those who are saved: “*Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*”

There is no question that every soul that God has ever created will *exist forever* somewhere. However, never does the Bible say that the unsaved will “*live*” forever: rather, we are told that the unsaved will suffer the “second death.” The “second death” does *not* mean “blissful non-existence”; it means “an eternal state of separation from God, in hell.” Likewise, “Eternal life” does not mean *eternal existence*, because everyone will have eternal existence. Eternal life is a *relationship*. It is a restored and never-ending relationship with God.

Read John 17:1-3.

Those who of us are saved have already passed from “death” (spiritual death, or separation from God) into eternal life (an eternal relationship with God). God’s presence is already with us. We are indwelt by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit--the entire Godhead. However, some day we will *see* God in heaven, in our flesh; and we will be in the actual *physical* presence of the Member of the Godhead who took on human flesh, died for our sins, and rose again. For us, “death” is no longer *banishment* from God, as it is for the unsaved. Death (physical death) is now the *portal* by which we enter His very presence. To us, death is the “homecoming” from the foreign land in which we have been ambassadors for Christ since the day we were saved. *Physical death alone* touches us; and its temporary stroke will be reversed in the resurrection. Paul put it this way: “*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

Physical death is still coming to all of us (unless, of course, we live to the Rapture). However, for us, to die is to “*be with Christ*”--which, Paul says, “*is far better.*” By the way, while I’m on the topic of dying in the Lord (and *for* the Lord), believe me when I say that there are powerful people in this world who would love nothing more than to *deliver* God’s people to death. Consider these quotes from some very influential people:

Gus Hall, a former leader of the Communist Party in America, said: “I dream of a time when the last congressman is strangled to death on the guts of the last preacher; and since the Christians love to sing about the blood, why not give them a little of it?”¹

¹ Gus Hall, quoted in *The Coming Persecution* by Pastor Joe Schimmel; quoted in *Megiddo II: The New Age*, by Adullam Films.

Barbara Marx Hubbard (a spiritist with a vast financial empire, who had great influence upon world leaders until her death in 2019) published a book called **“Happy Birthday, Planet Earth,”** back in 1986. In this book, she shared some of the “revelations” that had been given to her by her “spirit guides” (i.e., “demons”). She wrote, “The choice is: Do you wish to become a natural christ, a universal human? Or do you wish to die? People will either change or die. That is the choice.” Her spirit guides also told her, “There have always been defective seeds. In the past, they were permitted to die a ‘natural death.’ We, the elders, have been patiently waiting...to take action—to cut out this corrupted and corrupting element in the body of humanity.” “Now as we approach the quantum shift from the creature-human to the co-creative human—the human who is the inheritor of god-like power—the destructive one-fourth [meaning, those stubborn, Bible-believing Christians who resist the change] must be eliminated from the social body. Fortunately, you are not responsible for this act. We are.....We are the riders of the pale horse, death.”

Is this disconcerting? Not really. Do Christians need to be terrified of such people? Absolutely not. As Christians, we need have no fear of death, or of those who kill the body, *because they cannot kill the soul*. Before we were saved, we lived all our lives in fear of death (and for good reason); but not anymore. If we die in a car accident on the way home today, we have no fear of what lies beyond death. Even if the bloodbath that these globalist psychopaths are planning for Christians should begin to unfold before the Rapture, we need not fear. If we must die for the name of Jesus, we need not fear. Death has no terror. Death is our passage home, where we will meet our elder Brother, Jesus Christ.

II. Christ is our merciful High Priest (vv. 16-18).

(Read verses 16-18 again.) As you can see, Paul still is not completely finished with his discussion of angels, which he began in **chapter one**. As we come to the end of **chapter 2**, Paul gives us one more reason why Jesus, and not any angel, is our Hope.

In chapter one, Paul had pointed out that Christ is *superior* to the angels in His *Person*, because He is God. But now, he is pointing out that Christ, in order to redeem us, had to become *lower* than the angels in *position*, by taking on *human* flesh. Paul had already pointed this out in **verse 9**, when he said that Christ was made **“a little lower than the angels.”** Now, in **verse 16**, he says it again. He says that when Christ came to earth, He did *not* take upon Him the nature of angels. In other words, He wasn’t an angel, nor did He *become* an angel. He had to be one of *us*. Jesus wasn’t some kind of spirit, or phantom, who only *looked* like a man: He was a real, flesh-and-blood Man. Furthermore, Christ joined Himself to a *particular* branch of the human family. He **“took on him the seed of Abraham.”** He became a *Jew*.

The reason Jesus could not have taken on an angelic nature is simple: if He were an angelic being, He could not have satisfied God’s wrath against man’s sin. If He had been merely a spirit, He couldn’t have died for our sins, because spirits don’t bodily die! Also, He couldn’t have been our Substitute for sin, because He wouldn’t have been a member of our race. He had to be a “living soul,” complete with human flesh and a human spirit. He had to become a true Man, and die on the cross, and thus bear man’s penalty for sin.

Once again, we see that Christ had to become our Brother. With that thought in mind, Paul goes on to say that by being made **“like unto His brethren”** (in other words, by joining the human family), He was able to be **“a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God.”** **(Read verse 17 again.)** Being a Man enabled Christ to be our High Priest—our “go-

between” between man and God. Yet, there is one way that Christ, in His *humanity*, was *not* like other men. Let’s look at the Old Testament to get the sense of this truth.

Read Exodus 28:36-38.

Just as the high priest in the Old Testament was the “brother” of the Jewish people whom he represented, so Christ is of the Brother of those whom He represents. As a Man, he represents all mankind. In that sense, Christ was like the Old Testament high priest. However, **there is one huge difference** between Christ and the Old Testament high priest. What is that difference? Well, think about those words “Holiness to the Lord,” which were engraved on the high priest’s crown. Was the high priest actually “holy”? Well, he was *ritualistically* pure and undefiled when he entered into the Holy of Holies to represent the nation of Israel; but this ritualistic purity was only symbolic. The Old Testament priest was, himself, *a sinner*. Though He was of the stock of Israel, He could not, in fact, cleanse them of their sin and make them acceptable to God. He, in his role as high priest, was only a *picture* of the *truly sinless* High Priest that was to come—the Lord Jesus Christ.

Read Hebrews 7:26-28.

Jesus Christ is, *in truth*, sinless. That is how He is able to be our High Priest “*in things pertaining to God.*” Not only can He go to God on His *own* account, but He can also go to God on *our* account, and make us acceptable to God. He has, in actual truth, removed our sin. Christ, our High Priest, has “borne our iniquity,” and effectively removed it. Christian, doesn’t that make you joyful? It should! By the way, if your cup isn’t running over yet, there’s more. As we bring this message to a close, we will focus in on three descriptions of our High Priest. He is “*merciful,*” “*faithful,*” and “*able to succour them that are tempted.*”

First, our High Priest is **merciful**. As God, He is full of tender mercies. However, when He became a Man, He was not only merciful: He could actually *feel* our plight. He was able to *walk among* us poor, helpless sinners, and be surrounded by the pain and sorrow that sin had brought into the world. **Isaiah** prophesied of Christ, “*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.*” Don’t ever listen to the lie that the Lord can’t understand your sorrows. He knows our sorrow better than we do! He Himself never sinned; but He saw the grief that our sin had occasioned; and He is thus qualified to be our *merciful* High Priest.

Secondly, our High Priest is **faithful**. Unlike the Old Testament high priest, who was a sinner (and thus, was not always faithful), Jesus Christ is truly faithful. He is perfectly faithful and obedient to God, and He is perfectly faithful to the people whom He represents. This is incredibly important: and here’s why.

Read 2 Timothy 2:13.

Christian, have you ever “*believed not*” something that God has declared in His Word? Have you ever doubted God’s promises? Of course you have! Yet, what did Paul say that the Lord will do when we “*believe not*” (or, “*are unfaithful,*” as this verse could also read)? “*He abideth faithful!*” Aren’t you glad that your salvation doesn’t depend upon *your* faithfulness to *Him*? If it did, we wouldn’t have a chance of making it to Heaven! We still have a sin nature, and we do still sin. That’s why Christ died for us in the first place. We are sinners;

and we can't save ourselves. Because Jesus is faithful to His promise that he will "*in no wise cast out*" those whom the Father has given to Him for safekeeping, we who are saved can rest assured of our salvation. We no longer have to live in fear of where we stand with God.

Thirdly, Paul says that our High Priest is **able to succour those of us who are tempted**. As our High Priest, He is able to sympathise with us in our temptations, because He was (and still is) one of us. No, He never sinned; but He was faced with our same trials. He was also faced with the same ugly temptations that we face.

If you think that you are sorely tried when Satan tempts you with "shortcuts" to pleasure and self-gratification, just remember that your High Priest, Jesus Christ, was tempted with the biggest "short cut" ever! **Satan tried to get Jesus to "take a shortcut" to inheriting the kingdoms of this world**. Satan offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world (which, to all appearances, he controlled) *if* only He would only fall down and worship him. No 3 ½ years of rejection and grief. No going to the cross, and suffering incredible agony for a world that hated and despised Him. "You don't have to go through any of that," Satan said. "Just worship me now, and you will get those kingdoms that your Father promised you. (Of course, mankind won't be able to be redeemed; but, hey, that's just a little detail!)" By the way, Satan hit Christ with this temptation when He was at His most vulnerable point—while He was fasting in the wilderness, physically weakened, and alone. (Sound familiar?)

Do you think Christ doesn't understand what you're going through, Christian? He does. Do you think that He can't offer legitimate comfort to you? He can, because He has been there. Do you think that He doesn't understand what it's like to suffer for His name? He does. His life was constantly in danger because He bore witness of His Father; and in the end, He suffered the horrible death of the cross. He is our elder Brother; and He did all this for you!

Conclusion: Jesus Christ is, indeed, our Brother; and as our Brother, He was able to be our Deliverer, and our merciful, faithful High Priest. When you are unfaithful to Him, He is still faithful to you. He has paid the debt for all your sins. Doesn't love compel you to serve Him with all your heart? If you are not doing so, won't you get right with Him today?

If you have never personally placed your faith in Christ, you need to do so! You cannot save yourself. There is only one thing you can do: and that is to repent (have a change of mind and heart toward God about your sin), throw aside the worthless rags of your own self-righteousness, and believe on Jesus Christ. His deliverance—His salvation from sin—will then be personally applied to *you*. You will become part of God's family; and He, as your Brother, will be your merciful and faithful High Priest on your behalf. Won't you be saved today?