



# 10 | HEBREWS 2:16-18

## THE PEOPLE CHRIST DIED FOR

*When you feel discourage realize Christ has come to rescue you from your sin and give you a new family as the spiritual offspring of Abraham.*

### Outline

- 1. CHRIST'S WORK WAS NOT FOR ANGELS (2:16)**  
Christ Became Man to Overcome Sin  
Christ Became Like Man, Not Angels
- 2. CHRIST'S WORK WAS FOR MANKIND (2:17-18)**  
The Necessity of Christ's Incarnation  
The Necessity of Christ's Vicarious Death  
The Necessity of Christ's Sinless Life

### Introduction

Christ's work on the cross was not for angels, such a mighty race, but for the weak, sinful, rebellious race of mankind.

**Hebrews 2:15-18** | For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. <sup>17</sup>Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup>For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Jesus has come to help the race of Abraham, the new humanity, the church of the living God.

Key thought: When you feel discourage realize Christ has come to rescue you from your sin and give you a new family as the spiritual offspring of Abraham.

## 1. CHRIST'S WORK WAS NOT FOR ANGELS (2:16)

**Hebrews 2:16a** | For surely it is not angels that he helps...

We are made alive in Christ and empowered to resist sin and temptation.

### CHRIST BECAME MAN TO OVERCOME SIN

Let's read **1Cor 15:21-26** 'For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. **22** For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. **23** But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming

those who belong to Christ. **24** Then comes the end, when he delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. **25** For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. **26** The last enemy to be destroyed is death.'

Can you see the relationship in these verses to **Gen 3** and the curse?

- Christ overcame the curse by undergoing the curse in our place.
- He defeats death by dying for His people and bearing their curse.
- This was the greatest demonstration of love God could display.
- As a result, not only is death defeated for the believer, but God has crowned us with glory and righteousness.
- Christ took our sins and our curse upon himself on the cross, and in exchange, clothed us in His righteousness, and there is far more to come.

**See 1Jn 3:1-3** 'See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so, we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. **2** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. **3** And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.'

**John 8:34-36**, "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. <sup>35</sup> The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. <sup>36</sup> So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."

**Heb. 2:16** makes it clear that Christ did not die to redeem the angels who fell from heaven. It was God's plan from the beginning that Christ would die for sinful men so that the curse would be lifted from Adam's race and God's redeemed would once again be given dominion and reign in the new kingdom as a result of the finished work of the second Adam, Jesus Christ. **The second Adam accomplished what the first Adam could not.** It's also important to note that Christ willingly took on this role.

**See John 10:17-18**, "For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. **18** No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

Christ gives us victory over death as well as the devil. The gospel provides hope in the face of death.

**John 3:16** says 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life'.

## **CHRIST BECAME LIKE MAN, NOT ANGELS**

To summarize **Heb. 2:10-15**, these verses demonstrate how Christ brings sinners into a portion of Sonship with the Father. To save those who were 'flesh and blood', Christ himself had to become flesh and blood. To save the race of Adam, Jesus became the last Adam. In His incarnation, Jesus took on human nature. Through His incarnation He became the same flesh we are made of and shared in our same experiences, yet He remained without sin. Through He was the Creator of all, He became hungry, He grew tired, He ate, drank, slept, ached, and 'shared in these' things that all humanity knows and experiences. This is the first and one of the most fundamental truths of the gospel story. God became a man. He became like us.

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## 2. CHRIST'S WORK WAS FOR MANKIND (2:17-18)

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When you are discouraged, turn to the cross, on which hangs your Savior. He became like you to deliver you from sin. He is the great conqueror. He will deliver you.

**Hebrews 2:17-18** | Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

It's important to grasp the fact that when Christ was born into the world, He became just like you and me, yet without sin. The things you experience in life, He experienced during His life and far more. But where we are weak in giving into our fleshly desires, He was strong, never giving into His fleshly desires.

**Heb. 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

It's important to understand the foundational theology of these verses, particularly as we proceed through the following chapters of Hebrews.

### THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S INCARNATION

**Hebrews 2:17** | Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God...

Notice in **vs. 17** the author says Christ 'had to be' incarnated and sacrificed in order to forgive the sins of God's people. Some people wonder if God could have secured our salvation in any other way. These verses indicate that the answer is no. God only acts in the way that corresponds with His character and most displays His glory. Therefore, in order to both satisfy His justice and display His immeasurable mercy, God put Christ forward as a propitiatory sacrifice. God is always consistent with His own character.

Consequently, Christ 'had to be' made 'like His brothers and sisters'. In order to conquer death through death, the Son of God became a human being. Yet, Hebrews also explains that Christ became a man in order to become a 'high priest' on our behalf. The writer of Hebrews knew his Jewish readers understood the OT teachings regarding the priesthood. Jewish readers recognized the need for a priest specifically in matters of sacrifice. In the OT, the people of Israel looked to the priests for mediation before God. On the Day of Atonement, the high priest represented all the people before God and offered a substitutionary sacrifice on their behalf.

Hebrews fully explains the relationship between Jesus and the priesthood in the chapters to come, but in these verses the author simply introduces us to the relationship. He presents the notion that in order to make a propitiatory sacrifice for the people Jesus had to function as a priest; and in order to be a priest the Son of God had to become a man. Notice the relationship or integration of the OT with the NT.

### THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S VICARIOUS DEATH

**Hebrews 2:17b** | Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect...to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

As I've discussed before, **atonement is an extremely important word which encapsulates the meaning of Jesus's work on the cross.** The word propitiation means an

atonement sacrifice. Propitiation refers to the satisfaction of God's justice. At the cross, God poured out His wrath against sinners on Jesus Christ, thereby satisfying God's demand for the just punishment of sin. Thus, God's wrath was satisfied.

There is a price for sin! If you look back at the Old Testament in Deuteronomy, people were put to death by stoning for disobeying God's word. God takes sin seriously. There needed to be a sacrifice. The blood of bulls and goats could not atone, so they waited for the suffering Servant, the Messiah! "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (Jn 2:29).

Paul describes the atoning sacrifice of Christ with the same language in another important passage on the meaning of the cross in Romans chapter 3.

Let's read **Rom. 3:21-26** 'But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it **22** the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: **23** for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. **26** It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.'

Propitiation enables God to be both just and justifier. Without the satisfaction of God's righteousness in the punishment of sin, He could not justly declare sinners righteous through faith in Jesus Christ. Today he justifies us through his blood! Hallelujah!

## THE NECESSITY OF CHRIST'S SINLESS LIFE

**Hebrews 2:18** | For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

How do you deal with temptation? What causes you to fail when you fall or give in to temptation? When we give in to temptation, it's usually because we put our desires above all else. Whether it's gratifying the flesh or doing the right thing for the wrong reason, it usually boils down to doing whatever it takes to get our way. Christ put the will of the Father above His own. His greatest desire was to please God the Father above all else. Therefore, God has said 'this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.' In order to please God the Father, we must place His will above our own at all times, even in the midst of the most severe temptations.

**Hebrews 2:18** reminds us to look backward to the temptation and sufferings of Christ to find encouragement in overcoming our own temptations. This is a regular pattern throughout Hebrews. The Christian faith continuously alternates between looking backward and looking forward. We look forward to the hope of our resurrection and the perfections of our salvation, but we look backward at the life and ministry of Christ. In so doing, we look back to the source of our salvation.

### Conclusion

Be encouraged! When we pray to Christ for rescue from sin, we pray to One who has Himself walked through suffering and temptation. He is no stranger to our afflictions and difficulties. He truly has been made like His brother and sister 'in every way' (**2:17**).