

Christ, Our High Priest and Helper in Temptation

C. Stephen David | Ekklesia Evangelical Fellowship | September 25, 2022

1. **In His humanity, Christ became a little while lower than the angels (Hebrews 2:5-8)**
2. **Christ suffered death to taste death for us (Hebrews 2:9)**
3. **Christ suffered death to bring us to glory (Hebrews 2:10)**
4. **Christ suffered death to become perfect through suffering (Hebrews 2:10)**
5. **Christ, in His humanity and suffering, united God's children and became our elder brother (Hebrews 2:11-13)**
6. **Christ suffered death to destroy the devil and the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14-15)**

1. **Christ suffered death to become a merciful and faithful high priest to make propitiation for our sins**

Hebrews 2:16-17, For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 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.

The significance of Christ's humanity:

- ▶ **2:14**, Since therefore **the children share in flesh and blood**, he himself likewise **partook of the same things...**
- ▶ **2:15**, Therefore he had to be **made like his brothers in every respect** (fully human),

The Heresy of Gnosticism: Spiritual salvation was of preeminence to the Gnostics because they thought the human spirit was naturally good and was entrapped or imprisoned in the body, which was naturally evil or merely an illusion. They saw Jesus as a messenger bringing the special knowledge of salvation to humanity's imprisoned soul. They believed that when Jesus came to earth He didn't possess a body like our own; instead, the Gnostics taught that He only seemed to have a physical body (known as the heresy of "docetism," from the Greek verb "to seem"). This was a denial of the Christian doctrine of the incarnation—the belief that Jesus was both fully God and fully human.

- ▶ **1 John 4:1-2**, Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: **every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God...**

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**, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

- The high priest for Christ is used for the first time.
- ❖ It was necessary for Christ to share in the humanity **to become our high priest**.
- ❖ Christ is a merciful high priest. What is the meaning of mercy?
 - **Illustration:** The Parable of the Good Samaritan [Luke 10, Helping the Helpless]
 - Christ had mercy on our sinful state. Rather than executing His justice, Christ showed mercy [not obligated] and came to save us.
- ❖ Christ is a faithful high priest **because He faithfully accomplished the work of salvation despite cruel suffering. He was committed to the task.**
 - ❖ **Matthew 27:40-43**, If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the Son of God.'"
- ❖ This is the ultimate purpose of Christ to become a human and a high priest, that is, **to make propitiation** for the SINS of the people to God.
 - ❖ **Expiation** refers to the washing away of sin. It cancels the debt of sin and closely relates to the forgiveness of sins.
 - ❖ **Atonement** refers to the process of reconciliation (estranged relationships) because sin damaged relationship with God.
 - ❖ **Propitiation** refers to turning aside of divine wrath, and satisfying the divine judgment.

USA Today, The Washington Post, and The Economist: The committee putting together a new Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) hymnal dropped the popular modern hymn "In Christ Alone" because the song's authors refused to change a phrase about the wrath of God. The original lyrics say that "on that cross, as Jesus died, the

wrath of God was satisfied." The Presbyterian Committee on Congregational Song wanted to substitute the words, "the love of God was magnified." The song's authors, Stuart Townend and Nashville resident Keith Getty, objected. So the committee voted to drop the song.

Timothy George, the dean of Beeson Divinity School at Samford University, recently said he believes the hymn is well on its way to becoming the "Amazing Grace" of this generation.

- ❖ **Romans 5:8-9**, "but **God shows his love** for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him **from the wrath of God.**"

- **GOD SAVED US FROM HIMSELF (WRATH)**

- ❖ **1 Thessalonians 1:10**, "Jesus who delivers us **from the wrath** to come."

Albert Mohler: Propitiation stands at the very heart of the gospel. The logic of propitiation makes the good news good. Without propitiation, there is no gospel.

Without this propitiation for our sins,

- ❖ there is no "world to come" (2:5);
- ❖ no "bringing many sons to glory" (2:10);
- ❖ no sanctification (2:11)
- ❖ no "call them brothers" (2:11);
- ❖ no destruction of the devil (2:14);
- ❖ no deliverance from the fear of death (2:14).

2. Christ suffered death to identify Himself to human suffering and help us in our temptation

Hebrews 2:16, For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham (Jews and Gentiles through faith in Christ).

"Help": Taking hold of His followers (until we attain glory)—"He will hold me fast"

C H Spurgeon was right when he said, "I believe not so much in the perseverance of the saints as in the perseverance of the Savior."

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

Why did Jesus suffer temptation?

- Christ suffered temptation **as a human**

- Christ suffered temptation **to model victory** over temptation
- Christ suffered temptation **to help us** in our temptation

Suffered when tempted: The suffering on the cross was the source of His temptation. **Here the temptation is discouragement in suffering from following God/walking in His ways chosen for us.**

“Jesus has suffered when tempted” He no more suffers temptation now. The time is coming we no more suffer temptation. He is able to help those who are tempted (through suffering).

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

Being tempted: This temptation is particularly related to following God and remaining faithful to Him in trials (which the Hebrews were going through)

Illustration: I hate to hear this statement from customer service executives, “I UNDERSTAND.”

Christ can genuinely say, “I UNDERSTAND YOUR SUFFERING.”

Alexander Maclaren (1826-1910), Scottish Baptist Pastor: Comfort drops but coldly from lips that have never uttered a sigh or a groan, and for our poor human hearts...We need a Christ who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities before we can come boldly to the Throne of Grace, assured of there finding grace in time of need.

Do you find it hard to follow God’s Will, which invokes suffering?

- ❖ **Luke 22:42,** “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.”

Do you have immense physical and emotional pain in suffering?

The word “excruciating” (intense pain) comes from the Latin word “excruciare”, and it was a Roman word meaning “as painful as a crucifixion or from/out of the cross.”

Do you face rejection and humiliation by people?

- ❖ **Isaiah 50:6,** I gave my back to those who strike, and my cheeks to those who pull out the beard; I hid not my face from disgrace and spitting.

Do you feel betrayed?

- ❖ **Luke 22:4,** He [Judas called Iscariot] went away and conferred with the chief priests and officers how he might betray him to them.

Do you feel alone in suffering?

- ❖ **Mark 14:50**, And they all left him and fled.

Do you feel abandoned by God in your suffering?

- ❖ **Mark 15:34**, And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Do you face unjust suffering?

- ❖ **1 Peter 2:21-24**, For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

As **Philip Hughes** explains regarding Christ: “He knows the full force of temptation in a manner that we who have not withstood it to the end cannot know.”

Do you feel helpless in suffering?

- ❖ **Hebrews 2:18**, For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.
- ▶ Christ doesn't always save you from going through suffering, for He Himself did not escape suffering. He strengthens you to persevere in suffering.

Illustration: Nokseng, a Garo man (1800s)

- ▶ Two sons were shot with arrows— “I have decided to follow Jesus and there is no turning back.”
- ▶ Wife was shot with arrows— “Though no one is here to go with me, still I follow Jesus.”
- ▶ Then the man was executed.

C H Spurgeon: Christ has conquered every foe that obstructed the way. Cheer up now you faint-hearted warrior. Not only has Christ travelled the road, but he has slain your enemies. Do you dread sin? He has nailed it to his cross. Do you fear death? He has been the death of Death. Are you afraid of hell? He has barred it against the advent of any of his children; they shall never see the gulf of perdition. Whatever foes may be before the Christian, they are all overcome.