

THE SUFFERING KING – PART TWO

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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**, But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.
- ▶ The name Jesus and His death are mentioned here for the first time
- ▶ Christ became a little while lower than the angels **because of his humanity and death**
- ▶ Crowned with glory and honor **because of the suffering of death** (the suffering King): Christ is exalted (incarnational exaltation) through suffering. **cf. Phi. 2:8-9**

Observe:

- ❖ so that **by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone**.
- ▶ **“Taste”** is a Hebrew metaphor that does not mean “to sample” but **“to partake fully”**. Tasting death means suffering death
- ▶ Christ tasted death, not for Himself, but for everyone (others are the reason for Christ’s death, you and I)
- ▶ **By the grace of God, Christ suffered death**: God provided Christ with the strength to taste death.
- ❖ **Luke 22:42-43**, “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done.” And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. **IF CHRIST REQUIRED GOD’S GRACE TO SUFFER, HOW MUCH MORE DO WE NEED GOD’S GRACE?**
- ▶ But why did Christ taste death for everyone? See the next factors.

3. Christ suffered death to bring us to glory

Hebrews 2:10, For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

- ❖ For it was fitting that he, **for whom** [purpose] and **by whom** [source] **all things exist** [the whole creation],

- ▶ All human beings and the whole creation exist by God and for His glory (Heb. 2:10; Col. 1:16—THIS IS THE MEANING AND PURPOSE OF LIFE)
- ▶ **Christ tasted death to bring His people to glory (salvation):** The glory that we have lost before the Fall.
- ❖ **Hebrews 2:7** quotes **Psalm 8:5-6**, "You have crowned him with glory and honor and appointed him over the works of your hands."
 - Man had an intimate fellowship with God
 - Man had dominion over the creation
 - But man, due to sin, has been separated from God and the creation was cursed and fallen under the dominion of satan.
- ▶ **Christ died to bring His people to glory, that is, Reconciliation to God and Reign with Christ** in the new heavens and the new earth (what was lost in Adam and regained in Christ)
- ▶ "Many sons/daughters to glory" Not all, **but only those** who repent of their sins and believe in Christ Jesus.
- ▶ Not just individuals but a community. **Peter T. O'Brien:** God's fitting action of perfecting the Son through suffering is closely tied in with his forming of a community of 'many sons and daughters'.
- ▶ **What is neglecting such a great salvation in 2:3?** Neglecting reconciliation to God and eternal reign with Christ. Hell is eternal separation from God and eternal suffering in the most unpleasant place.

4. Christ suffered death to become perfect through suffering

Hebrews 2:10, For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation **perfect through suffering**.

"For it was fitting": GOD HAD NOT ONLY CHOSEN THE DEATH CHRIST MUST DIE BUT ALSO THE MEANS OF HIS DEATH (crucifixion). Though it was a scandal to the watching world, God thought it fitting for Christ to die on the cross (the worst Roman execution) to save people.

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 1:22-25**, For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach **Christ crucified**, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, **Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God**. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

“Founder of their salvation”: Christ is the source of salvation by accomplishing the work of salvation. Apart from Him, there is no salvation

“Perfect through suffering”:

John Piper: Here being "made perfect" means "learning obedience" through suffering. This does not mean that he was once disobedient and then became obedient. It means that **Jesus moved from untested obedience into suffering and then through suffering into tested and proven obedience.** And this proving himself obedient through suffering was his "being perfected."

Note: In His humanity, Christ became an **unblemished lamb (proven perfect obedience in suffering)** to become a **perfect sacrifice** for people’s salvation.

5. Christ, in His humanity and suffering, united God’s children and became our elder brother

- ❖ **Hebrews 2:11**, For he who sanctifies (**Christ makes us holy**) and those who are sanctified (**believers who are made holy**) all have one source.
- ❖ **Hebrews 10:10 confirms**, “We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ (**humanity and death**) once for all.”

One source: Shared Humanity. We have sinned in our humanity. Christ had to become fully human like us to become our sanctification. The only difference between the humanity of Christ and believers is that Christ had no inherent sinful nature (born with depravity).

Observation: Through the first man, Adam, sin came to us. Through the second man, Christ, sanctification came to us.

Because Christ shared in humanity and sanctified them by death (blood and body), the following Scripture says:

v.11, That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,

v.12, saying (Psalm 22:22), “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.”

v.13, And again (Isa. 8:17), “I will put my trust in him.”

And again (Isaiah 8:18), “Behold, I and the children God has given me.”

- ❖ **Matthew 28:10**, Then Jesus said to them (women, first time after His resurrection), “Do not be afraid; go and **tell my brothers** to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.”

Brother: “Familial bond” and “Sacrificial help”

Why not be ashamed to call brothers? If you have a criminal who is your brother, would you proudly call him your brother? Though we are wretched sinners, Christ loved us, saved us, and called us “brothers”. **Consider the cosmic Majesty (Creator, Heir, Redeemer) who calls us brothers.**

Martin Ralph DeHaan (1891-1965): "He endured the Cross and despised the shame. He now calls us "brethren." And can it be that we, lifted from the mire and slime of sin should be ashamed of Him, the Altogether Lovely One? How inconsistent for anyone washed in the blood to be ashamed of His Name! How ungrateful to be anything less than our best for Him! How awful to withhold anything of all we are and have from Him! It seems to me that once we realize what He did for us, we would never be satisfied until everything was on the altar for Him."

6. Christ suffered death to destroy the devil and the fear of death

Hebrews 2:14-15, Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that **through death he might destroy** the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and **deliver all those who through fear of death** were subject to lifelong slavery.

- ❖ **“Since therefore the children share (took upon Himself) in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things”:** The infinite Christ had to take humanity for the following reasons.
- ❖ **“that through death [His suffering of death] he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil”:**
 - Only God has the power over life and death: “I kill, and I make alive” (**Deut. 32:39; cf. Job 1:21**).
 - **Rom. 3:23**, “For the wages of sin is death” **1 Cor. 15:56**, “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law.” **1 Jn. 3:8**, “Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.” **BY CAUSING PEOPLE TO SIN AND LEADING THEM INTO HOPELESS ETERNITY, THE DEVIL HOLDS THE POWER OF DEATH.**
 - The devil is deprived of his power **at present**, and will suffer eternal damnation in hell **in the future**.
- ❖ **“and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery”:** paralysed by the fear of death (despair, hopeless reality) **WE ARE DELIVERED FROM THE FEAR OF DEATH, NOT FROM EXPERIENCING DEATH.**

The famous **French infidel VOLTAIRE** in 1764 wrote, "The Bible. That is what fools have written, what imbeciles commend, what rogues teach and young children are made to learn by heart" When he died in 1778, he said to his doctor, "**I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life.**"¹ The physician told him he could not live six weeks. His cries were desperate when his time was gone.

A couple of days before his death, **Martyn Lloyd Jones** (slept in 1981) wrote on a scrap of paper for the benefit of his family, '**Do not pray for healing. Do not hold me back from the glory.**'

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 15:54b-55**, "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"\
- ❖ **2 Timothy 1:10**, and which now has been manifested through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, **who abolished death** and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel...

7. 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 (through faith in Christ). 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,
- ▶ **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...**

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 **because He had mercy on our sinful state.**
- Christ is a faithful high priest **because He faithfully accomplished the work of salvation despite cruel suffering.**

¹ Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life, Donald Whitney, pg. 138

- This is the ultimate purpose of Christ to become a human and a high priest, that is, **to make propitiation (satisfying divine judgment)** for the SINS of the people.
- **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).

Questions for Discussion:

1. What does it mean that Christ has tasted death to bring us to glory? How does this truth encourage your heart?
2. What is the understanding of Christ becoming perfect through suffering? What do we learn from this truth about our own suffering?
3. If God alone holds the keys to life and death, how is the devil described as having the power of death? How did Christ destroy the devil? How is that encouraging to you as a believer?
4. Do you have the fear of death? What did Christ do and how should you apply the work of Christ in your practical Christian life?
5. From the illustrations of Voltaire, Martyn Lloyd Jones, and Donald Grey Barnhouse, what encouragement do you get from them?