

Hebrews 2:14-18

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Christ became a human to save humankind from the power of sin and death. By becoming a human and liberating us, He now acts as a high priest. He knows and has experienced the temptations humans suffer, and He is available to help those who ask for it.

The Pauline Author says that *since the children share in flesh and blood, He [Jesus] Himself likewise also partook of the same flesh and blood* (v 14). Jesus was fully human. That is why He can call us family (Hebrews 2:11). He took on everything that an earthly life had to offer: temptations, physical illnesses, hunger, thirst, exhaustion, and even death, in order to conquer Satan's greatest weapon: Death (Hebrews 4:15).

Death was brought into the world through Satan tempting Eve and Adam to disobey God's only command (Genesis 3). This sin brought into the world both physical death as well as spiritual death (separation) from God. Because of Jesus's sacrifice, we no longer have to fear separation from God through our own deaths, because that sacrifice solidifies our future in eternity when we receive the gift of God through faith.

Furthermore, Christ saves us from the power and fear of death, so that we do not have to live as slaves to sin in our daily lives. Jesus took on *flesh and blood so that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives* (vv 14–15).

Jesus took on *flesh and blood*, meaning He became human. He became human *so that through death He might render powerless Satan, that is, the devil*. Satan is *he who had the power of death*. The earlier part of this chapter quotes Psalm 8:4–6. In Psalm 8:2 it says that God appointed humans to reign over the earth, even though humans were initially made lower than the angels, for the purpose of silencing Satan, who is the enemy and avenger (Psalm 8:2).

Even though Satan apparently gained authority to rule over the earth through inducing Adam and Eve to sin (John 12:31), through His obedience Jesus set *free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives*. This would apply to anyone who has received the free gift of eternal life through faith in Jesus (John 3:14–15).

We can live free from the power of sin through the resurrection power of Jesus. Sin harms our abiding fellowship with God, but Jesus frees us from that loss of fellowship. This echoes what Paul wrote in Galatians 5:1: "It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery."

The Pauline Author notes that Jesus's redemptive mission was not intended to save the angels, so He did not take on the form of an angel. Rather Jesus took on the form of a human, again emphasizing the humanity of Christ: *For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham* (v 16). The point here is that Jesus became a man because He came to offer a path for mankind toward full restoration with God—a complete restoration back to our original design to reign over a harmonious earth.

In doing so, Jesus became our *high priest*. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people (v 17).

Those who have believed in Jesus are again called *His brethren*, emphasizing that all who believe are placed into the forever family of God. The Father is their inheritance, and that is an unconditional gift (Romans 8:17a). None of us can atone for our own sin. Jesus atoned for us, making *propitiation for the sins of the people*.

To make *propitiation* means to atone for, or make the full payment of sins. The Levitical priests continually made sacrifices of animals in order to atone for the sins of the people (Hebrews 10:11). This showed that their sacrifice was insufficient. But Jesus made one sacrifice for all, and fully atoned for the sins of all people. Because He did this faithfully, He “sat down at the right hand of God” again emphasizing that Jesus restored humanity’s right to reign over the earth (Hebrews 10:12).

God is the inheritance of all who believe, without condition (Romans 8:17a). But there is another inheritance available for all who follow in faithful obedience, and fulfill His sufferings (Romans 8:17b). And Jesus as a *high priest* who has experienced all we endure is available to help us along the way.

Jesus is man’s representative to God; this is something that can only be accomplished if He knows what it is truly like to be a man *in all things*. Verse 18 says that *since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered* (and triumphed over it), Jesus is able to show us mercy, *come to the aid of those who are tempted*, and intercede *for the sins of the people* on our behalf.

Becoming a child of God is a wonderful gift, but Jesus does not want us to stay children. He wants us to move on to maturity and join Him in gaining the reward of being crowned a Son. That requires faithfulness, the suffering of obedience, and dying to ourselves. Suffering is not easy; as the Pauline Author noted at the beginning of the chapter, it is easy to drift from God’s calling in our lives (Hebrews 2:1).

It is important to note that scripture promises God will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able (1 Corinthians 10:13). He further will *come to the aid of those who are tempted*. Perhaps this is why Jesus instructed His disciples to pray “do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil” (Matthew 6:13).

The Pauline Author ends this chapter by revisiting Christ’s work on earth, as a man. He is hoping to show his Jewish audience that Christ suffered, was rewarded for it by receiving dominion over the earth, and that He calls us, His brothers, to no longer be slaves but to join in sharing His reward by following His example of faithful obedience to God, even to the point of suffering. If we do this, we can also receive the title of being a “son” and share Christ’s authority to reign.

Christ is both *merciful and faithful* and can *come to the aid of those who are tempted* to drift away. He has already saved us from Hell, but He can continue to save us from missing out on fulfilling our design. He saves us, brings us daily salvation, from the power of sin which separates us from our purpose, our design; Christ can continue to save us from squandering and

losing our inheritance of becoming “sons.” He is our brother, our *high priest*, our king, and our rescuer.

Biblical Text

14 Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. 16 For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. 17 Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.