

On Hebrews 2

by John Nelson Darby

Christ's death is a means to associate us with Himself, provide a complete propitiation for our sins, and be able to sympathise with us.

Scripture: Hebrews 2:1

Topics: "Great Salvation", "The Humanity of Christ"

Description

John Nelson Darby expounds on Hebrews 2, contrasting Christ's divine nature in chapter 1 with His humanity in chapter 2. He emphasizes the significance of not neglecting the great salvation offered through Christ, who, as the Man of God's purpose, is the Head over all creation. Darby outlines four reasons for Christ's incarnation and death: for God's glory, to conquer the power of evil, to provide a perfect propitiation for our sins, and to offer sympathy in our struggles. He highlights the unity of believers with Christ and the importance of recognizing His presence in the church. Ultimately, Darby encourages believers to embrace the constant love of God revealed through Christ's sacrifice.

Transcript

The first four verses refer to the previous chapter. Christ's divine nature is looked at in Hebrews 1, then in Hebrews 2 He is looked at as Man. In chapter 1 it is the divinity of His Person, in chapter 2 His humanity. In these first four verses the apostle warns us not only not to disobey, but not to neglect so great salvation. You get in them the word of God, the heavenly thing brought down into this world, and applied to our consciences, so that everything in the natural state is judged; for the Word reveals what is heavenly and divine, but then it is by bringing in what is heavenly and divine that it judges me.

He goes on to say that everything will be made subject to a man, not to angels; they were used as instruments of His power. "What is man?" And yet God has all these wonderful thoughts about him. "What is man?" And then we get the answer - it is Christ; He is the Man of God's purpose; He created everything, and so when He takes it up, He must be the centre and Head over it. You find three reasons for this given in Scripture. First, He has created all things, and so He must be the Head of it when He comes and takes His place as Man (Col. 1); secondly, in Hebrews 1, because He is Son, He is Heir; and then, thirdly, in Hebrews 2, because the purpose of God is to Man. In Psalm 2 you get Him as Son of God and King of Israel; in Psalm 8 He says, "What is man?" You will find a remarkable illustration of the difference between these two psalms in the end of John 1. Nathanael bows to Christ, and owns Him as the One they expected, according to Psalm 2; then the Lord says to him, "You have believed me to be the Messiah, but

you will see greater things than that; the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." It is a Man now that all these glorious creatures of heaven are ministering to. He did not take up angels, but the seed of Abraham. You get Psalm 8 quoted in the end of Ephesians 1, and quoted more fully in 1 Cor. 15; but in Heb. 2 you get it more developed as to the place that He takes. Verse 9 is half the Psalm fulfilled; He is crowned with glory and honour, gone back as Man into the glory. He is put as Man in the place of Lord over everything.

We see Him as regards His Person, everything accomplished, but not as regards the things; they are not under Him yet. And that is what we find in Rev. 11. - "We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty . . . because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned;" and then we get in our chapter how He associates us with Himself. Our proper blessedness is to be with Him and like Him. All through the Hebrews we never find the Father's name, nor the Church either, except in chapter 12; but you find saints walking down here, and Christ as a divine Person up there as Priest. It is the dependence of a weak individual on the priesthood of Christ. There is no priesthood for our sins now (He was Priest and Victim on the cross), but it is now "present grace to help in time of need." He is an Advocate with the Father for sin. Now He is sitting up there, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool; and we ought to be expecting too, with the blessed knowledge that He is expecting us. He became a Man in order to be able to die. We taste death for sin, but by the grace of God He tasted it in obedience.

There are four reasons in this chapter why He came down to taste death. First, for God's glory. (v. 10) It became God so to deal with Christ. In Christ's holiness (and it was absolute) He knew what it was to be made sin; in His love He knew what it was to be forsaken. There is not an instant that I am not perfect before God in virtue of the blood. The blood under God's eye never alters in its value; it is perfect and constant. The second reason is, because the power of evil was rampant there. (v. 14) He takes out the sting of death for the believer. What is death to a person who knows the value of Christ's death? Why, it is simply, "Absent from the body, present with the Lord." The very things that would be my ruin - death and judgment - are the very things that have saved me; for Christ has borne them for me. The Red Sea was death and judgment to the Egyptians, but it saved the Israelites. It is not merely the fear of sin or the fear of judgment, but it is the "fear of death," and Christ has been through it, and taken the sting out of it. "All things are yours . . . life or death." (1 Cor. 3:21, 22) The third reason is, our sins required it. (v. 17) A complete, perfect propitiation. I get to feel my sins the moment I am converted, but I had not committed one of them when Christ bore them. It is all one to God when I committed them. It is the value of the work itself before God. I come to know it at a given moment. God would slight the blood of His own Son, if He imputed sin to me. He gave it (the propitiation) in love, and accepted it in righteousness. A person never has guile out of his heart till he knows forgiveness; till then he never overcomes the tendency to excuse himself. I do not mean wilful guile. Aaron, for instance, "There came out this calf." (Ex. 32) Adam again, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me." (Gen. 2) Supposing a man comes to pay my debts, I tell him every farthing I owe - all that is in my heart. When I see what God is going to do, I am glad for Him to know it all. "I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (Ps. 32) Trusting God's love, we come and confess our sins, and find they are all gone. Perfect forgiveness was never known till the gospel came in; forbearance there was. Now we know absolute, perfect forgiveness, and an eternal redemption, as the fruit of Christ's eternal work.

The fourth reason is, He is able to sympathise. (v. 18) I do not want sympathy for my sins; I want the hatchet of God's word applied to them. "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted." (Chap. 4:12.) With Him there is an experimental knowledge of all the

difficulties the saints pass through. I know Christ's power, of course; but then I know the sympathy of His heart. I cannot be in a trouble that Christ is not with me, and that He does not understand, and has felt more deeply than me, for a good deal of pride and selfishness often carry us through; but "He suffered being tempted," but never gave way. Here we are, walking through this world, but there is not a single thing that Christ does not see, and know, and feel. His disciples were compassed with infirmity; but He went through infirmity, and felt it, and is now on high. We have first in this chapter where Christ is - at the right hand of God, but not all things put under Him yet; and then these four reasons for which Christ took the capacity of dying.

There is another thing which we find in this chapter, and that is, the positive blessing in verse 11. It is not the unity of the body here, but Christ; and they who are sanctified "are all of one," all one thing or piece, so to speak, but He the Head. Christ and all the saints are one set. It does not say that He came down as one of us, for He was totally alone till His death. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." He has brought us to Himself. As we were one with Adam, we are much more really one with Christ, joined by the Holy Ghost. We do not believe in His love enough, and the full reality and present exercise of it towards us; I mean in Him, of course.

"In the midst of the Church will I sing praise unto thee." (v. 12.) We ought to feel, each time we meet as an assembly, that Christ is there, and leads the praise. Think what it is that Christ should be there, and raising the song, so to speak! It is a wonderful thing, the present way He holds us as identified with Himself.

The Lord give us to taste and know that constant and exercised love of God towards us, shown in His death, but not all spent in His death, but exercised constantly toward us.

There is nothing so petty as the human heart, but nothing on which God, by His grace, can compose such lovely and transcendent music, because man is the subject of redemption through Christ.

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