

The Humiliation of Christ

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[0 : 00] We're in Hebrews chapter 2.

We'll start in verse 9. In the entire history of the universe, Lord Jesus Christ, sent to this earth by the Father, sent to die for the sins of His people.

The Scriptures today are lengthy and instructive and in fact going to take two weeks. But we are going to consider these truths from the inerrant Word of God.

Let me read to you what we're going to be covering this time and the next time we meet for study.

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 by the grace of God, He might taste death for everyone. And I think it would be accurate to put a parenthesis there and say everyone who believes.

[1 : 36] 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 He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, I will tell of your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation.

I will sing your praise. And again, I will put my trust in Him. And again, behold, I and the children God has given me.

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.

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.

[3 : 10] For because He Himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those who are also being tempted. Three words there toward the end of that chapter where it talks about faithful high priest.

We're going to be returning many times to the concept of a high priest. That's what Hebrews is about. And we're going to be returning to that many times.

And as a result, we'll also be looking at a number of passages when we get there in the book of Leviticus where we learn about the high priest.

There it's mostly about the earthly high priest, which was only a weak example of the heavenly high priest, the Lord Jesus. We do not know where this Christian church made up exclusively of Jews, apparently, was located.

Some have suggested Greece, but that has not been established. Theologians are almost universally in agreement that this Jewish congregation was not located in Israel.

[4 : 34] That means they most likely existed in the midst of the Gentile world because in those days, everything else was the Gentile world. Verse 5, which we actually studied last time and will do so again briefly, is clear that the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, came to this earth in what is called the Incarnation where He suffered and died.

Further, His death was based upon the grace of God so that Jesus might taste death for everyone who would believe down through the centuries.

Also, down through the centuries, men in various religions have mocked the idea that God would or even could come to this earth in the person of Christ Jesus only to suffer and die.

That very thought that He would be the victim of death was repugnant to human reasoning. Many today spurn that idea, laugh at that idea, mock the idea.

Probably the most blasphemous treatment I ever heard from unbelievers concerning the death of Christ was that makes God the Father a cosmic child abuser.

[6 : 05] It's almost difficult for me to form those words. But the Father is a child abuser because He sent His Son to the cross. And religion mocks this whole concept of the atonement.

I remember when we had a nice lady here Penny Ferris. Mike remembers him. And when Penny was still a single girl in our church, she played the organ and the piano.

She got invited to spend the summer in Norman, Oklahoma and play for a church down there, a Methodist church. And paid her pretty handsomely so she went down there and played for them. And when she arrived, the committee, made up exclusively of women, said, now, there's certain things you can't play. Don't play anything that mentions God as a Father.

And don't mention anything about Jesus as a Son. And don't ever talk about, play any songs about the blood. We don't practice a bloody religion in our church.

[7 : 19] And she said, well, what do you want me to play? And they said, oh, just don't play those things. You can play anything you want to. So she always opened with a Catholic mass on the piano. It was a mass put to music.

And they loved it. Boy, that's just wonderful music. That's really good. What a deal. I always remember her telling me that. But in our day, people spurned the idea of the atonement and the death of Christ.

This was one of the reasons that the Apostle Paul and other New Testament authors spent time explaining why the Messiah had to die.

They had to explain that. And it's clearly pointed out in Paul's message to the Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath in Acts chapter 17.

Acts chapter 17, verses 2 and 3. And Paul went, of course, this is written by Dr. Luke. Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three Sabbath days, he reasoned with them from the Scriptures explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead and saying, this Jesus whom I proclaim to you is the Christ.

[8 : 51] Even with this explanation, many hearers down to our day were not and are not convinced. The Scriptures have explained that Jesus came to the earth and became for a time lower than the angels.

So what did Christ accomplish that no angel could ever accomplish? Well, He became our substitute.

We believe in the substitutionary atonement. He took our place on the cross. He never did anything ever by which He deserved to be on that cross.

I do stuff every day by which I deserve to be on the cross. Jesus suffered death that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone who would believe.

That, my brothers, is substitutionary atonement. He tasted death for every believer. He tasted death.

[10 : 09] Christ died in our place. This is a fundamental truth of the gospel that is preached to this very day. And dare I say this, it's one of the essentials.

This is an essential. The atoning sacrifice is an essential. That stands as the reason for the incarnation of Christ.

He came to die. I opened with that in the first paragraph. He came to die. He came to die a Savior's death, a perfect death, a sinless death. Let me put it to you this way.

Jesus, who was for eternity higher than angels, became for a time lower than angels, that He might die a substitutionary death for sinners like us.

Now, He didn't die for angels. No one has ever atoned for an angel. And there's a group of angels that are going to spend eternity in the lake of fire, and that's the fallen angels that threw their lot in with Luther, and other angels that are holy angels serving God.

[11 : 20] They will spend eternity with God in heaven, but they're not atoned for. Someone suggested one time that angels will come up to us and glory said, what was it like to have the Savior die for you?

That they're going to ask us that. So formulate your answer now so when you get there.

Substitutionary atonement is an amazing accomplishment.

And in my mind, it is proof positive that the Bible is divinely inspired and true. What Dr. Schaefer called true truth.

Follow my reasoning here. No mere man could make this up. If you were going to write a novel, you wouldn't have God come to earth and die in the place of His people so He could forgive them. We couldn't come up with that concept. I guarantee you that the Jewish converts in this Hebrew church grappled with this idea.

[12:37] This was tough. It was tough for them. Just like when Paul would go into synagogues and preach this message. I mean, a lot of times they wanted to stone Him to death.

Jesus, when He preached in His hometown, they wanted to throw Him off the brow of a hill. Passed right through them. But we couldn't make this up.

How could Jesus be greater than angels if angels never die? How could Jesus be greater than angels that don't taste death?

How can Jesus be our Savior if He Himself was killed? Could He not even save Himself from the Roman soldiers or the Jewish leaders that condemned Him?

Of course not. That's why He came. But that Jewish congregation, new Christians now, undoubtedly, they had a lot of thoughts and a lot of questions.

[13:46] A lot of questions. Jesus accomplished much as our substitute. He not only suffered death along the way, He suffered humiliation.

Dr. MacArthur and I came up with five lessons we can learn concerning the humiliation of Christ. He did the majority of the work. Talk about the recipients of His humiliation, the extent of His humiliation, the purpose of His humiliation, the motive of His humiliation, and the result of His humiliation.

And tonight, we're going to briefly consider all five of these truths concerning the humiliation of Christ. And the first one is the recipients of His humiliation.

The heart of redemption is God becoming a man so that He might become a substitute for man's death. This was necessary because the wages of sin is death.

Romans 6.23 Every man is a sinner. Therefore, every man owes a sin debt that can only be paid in one of two ways.

[15:24] Either that man must suffer for eternity an eternal death of separation from God, or that man must have a suitable substitute to take his place who was sinless.

that narrows down the field of candidates. Consider this. Christ created angels.

Christ was Lord over the angels. Christ was worshipped by angels. Christ for a time chose to be lower than angels.

Now there you have an expression of amazing humility and it was done on our behalf. Christ Jesus suffered humiliation Himself by coming to this earth and dying the death.

You know, not just a sinner, the worst sinner that ever was. He took upon Himself the sins of His people. All of the accumulated sins of people though He was sinless.

[16:34] He Himself never committed one sin. As the Scriptures say in 2 Corinthians 5.21, for our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

There you have the purpose of the atoning sacrifice. the substitution. What about the extent of His humiliation? When Jesus came to this earth He did something that angels have never done and can never do.

He died. Holy angels can't die. Fallen angels can't die. They wish they could. They'd rather be annihilated I'm sure than spend eternity in the lake of fire.

But angels never die. Angels cannot die. They were created as eternal beings by the Lord Jesus the Creator and will not experience death.

The Lord went so far below angels during the incarnation that He suffered a death that they can never suffer. They can never experience that. when we speak in terms of the death of Christ on the cross we should always inject the verb suffered to precede the word death.

[18:07] He suffered death. Additionally it was a gruesome death. We've studied that. We know that. He suffered unparalleled torture especially given the fact that He was the very unique God-man.

He tasted death because of sin. It was not His sin but rather the sins of His people. It can be said that Jesus suffered my just penalty of eternity in hell.

He suffered that penalty for all who would believe. He was guilty of no sin but He suffered for all sin. Now what was the extent of His humiliation?

For the first and only time He was separated from the Father and the Spirit. There's the torture of the cross. He became separated.

Well what about the purpose of His humiliation? The Lord Jesus came to this earth to be the Redeemer of mankind. All who have faith He redeemed.

[19 : 21] And may I say He's the only Redeemer of mankind. People say sometimes I'm looking for more. I'm looking for something else.

Well pity them because they're not going to find anyone. He's it. Paul wrote about this in the great book of Galatians chapter 4 verses 4 and 5.

But when the fullness of time had come God sent forth His Son born of a woman born under the law to redeem those who are under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

now we studied those great truths some time ago of redemption adoption remember calling there were so many there in Romans chapter 8 we called that salvation God's way and we spent two years in that the Lord died as a substitute for all who would believe put it another way for all the elect of God down through the ages we are freed from eternal death which is separation from God by the actions of Christ Jesus on the cross we call that the atonement in the atonement Jesus satisfied completely all of the wrath that God the father had stored up for those who ever sinned and how many sins do you have to commit to be under the father's wrath just one look at the look at the length and breadth of

Adam's sin it plunged the whole human race into into lostness and judgment and if no one had sinned until I came along I would have plunged the human race into the same lostness God looks at Christ at the cross and he's satisfied this satisfaction is reserved for those who believe God is satisfied based solely upon the sacrifice of Christ we call that by the word when we use the fancy word we call that propitiation which we don't use much in the Americanized language anymore but propitiation means a satisfaction or an appeasement when God sees the blood applied he is satisfied his wrath is appeased what about the motive of his humiliation what prompted

[22 : 21] Christ to come to the earth and suffer humiliation at the hands of sinful men these were Christ rejecting men the only sufficient answer to that question is the pure grace of God what else can you say about that it was grace that brought him here by grace Jesus suffered death that we would not put another way what we did not deserve namely salvation we received what we did deserve namely death and eternal separation from God we did not receive the short name for that is grace the grace of God now we can certainly argue that man played a role in

Christ's death there were soldiers that put him on the cross that put the nails in him there were Jewish leaders that condemned him to death Pilate that horrible coward declared him to be innocent and sentenced him to death read that closely in your Bibles he said I find no fault with this man take him out and execute him certainly Satan played a role in Christ's death but primarily the Lord died based upon the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God the Father this concept is captured in the apostle John's writings in John 10 18 Jesus talking no one takes my life from me but I lay it down of my own accord I have authority to lay it down

I have authority to take it up again this charge I have received from my Father and then in 1 John chapter 4 verse 10 and this is love not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation the atoning sacrifice for our sins that's that's the centerpiece of Christianity of all we believe well what about the result of his humiliation the result of his humiliation is Christ receive exaltation when Christ Jesus became our substitute he was crowned with glory and honor he was exalted at the right hand of the father it is from this throne that the Lord reigns forever we will study this later in the book of Hebrews but consider this passage in Hebrews chapter 5 verses 4 to 5 and no one takes this honor for himself but only when called by God just as Aaron was so also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest but was appointed by him who said to him you are my son today I have begotten you so where is Jesus now Ephesians 121 he is far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come you know when you read that passage about

Jesus it makes sense we ought to start our day with him and end our day with him and another one Philippians chapter 2 verses 9 to 11 therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name so that the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father I've taught that many times and I always say there as believers we don't have to wait for a

future time to get on our knees and confess him as the

[27 : 32] Lord of glory to the honor of the Father we can do that now we don't have to wait for some future time the day will come when everyone is going to be brought out of the grave and out of the oceans where they drown everyone and everyone is going to bow and proclaim that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father everyone as we study this great book we need to keep in mind that the author is writing this to men and women who have come out of Judaism and embrace Christ and Christianity that was not easy for them the Jews have been around 1600 years and to depart and come out of that was not easy he's also writing to some in that congregation who are not yet committed believers and you can bet they were both skeptical and even scandalized at the thought that Jesus is God in human flesh and died for the sins of his people

I remember traveling in the Middle East with a good friend of mine from Morocco and I mentioned God as my father and he was he just he almost fainted he's Muslim and they can't refer to Allah as father it's too personal and we talked a little bit about that the fact is that God offers no apologies for the cross it is for that purpose that Jesus came God does not hide the cross we shouldn't either the cross of Christ magnifies and glorifies the Lord we are to glory in the humiliation and death of Jesus why he is our substitute and we thank him and praise him and we're going to thank him and praise him for all eternity for all eternity you