

Mystery of the God-Man

Have you ever had doubts about Jesus? That is the reason God gave us the book of Hebrews. Some Jewish “Christians” were starting to have doubts about Jesus. They apparently believed they were Christians and they probably told everyone that they were Christians. They were suffering persecution by their government and the leaders of their community because they were spending time with Christians. Some of these folks were thinking about returning to Judaism because they had a low view of Jesus. They considered angels to be superior to men including Jesus. So the Holy Spirit uses scripture to show them that Jesus is the One who is, in fact, superior to angels because He is God (Heb. 1:5-12) and because He is our Ruler. So why did Jesus become a man? This is the next mystery the Holy Spirit will talk about.

JESUS THE MYSTERY. After warning these Jewish “Christians” to listen to Jesus (Heb. 2:1-4), the Holy Spirit now returns to talking about the angels, Jesus, and the future. Listen . . .

For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking. But one has testified somewhere, saying, “WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU REMEMBEREST HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU ART CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? THOU HAST MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE LOWER THAN THE ANGELS; THOU HAST CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAST APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS; THOU HAST PUT ALL THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET.” For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him. (NASB) Heb. 2:5-8.

What a statement! Jesus was made a little lower than angels for only a short period of time. He was given the rule over everything and crowned with glory. It appears these Jewish “Christians” had a difficult time understanding Jesus since He was a man. They did not know the Old Testament scriptures and so they had doubts. They did not understand the mystery of the God-man.

WHY A MAN? The Holy Spirit explains.

But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. (NASB) Heb. 2:9.

Jesus was made lower for a short time so that “He might taste death” for all of us. Did they wonder how Jesus could die since they knew God could not die? The answer is found in the New Testament - Jesus is presented as both man and God. Romans 1:2-4 is a great example of this. Verse 2-3 says that He was born a man of the line of David; then in verse 4, we find that Jesus is also the Son of God, which means He was God (see Study 3). The mystery of Jesus is that He is both God and man. In scripture we find that sometimes He is presented as God. At other times we see Him presented as man. In one place we find that He calms the sea. Then we find that He does not know when the world will be destroyed (Matt. 24:36). How can Jesus be hungry and yet be God? How can Jesus make wine out of water and forgive sins and yet be man? This is a mystery. It is a key spiritual truth to realize that Jesus is sometimes viewed as a man and at other times as God. Why? Because He is both.

The Holy Spirit uses this fact and the magnifying glass of scripture to show us what Jesus experienced as a man - death! Yes, He was lower than the angels for a short time so that he could suffer and die for everyone. Jesus as God did

not die, but Jesus the man died. It is in that sense that He tasted death.

THE FATHER'S PLAN. God the Father's plan said that if Jesus was to rule over everything, including those who would be saved, then it was also right for Him to die for all of us. It "was fitting" or the right thing for God the Father to cause this to happen.

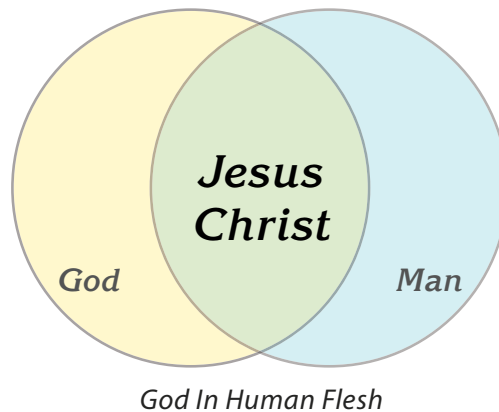
For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM THY NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING THY PRAISE." And again, "I WILL PUT MY TRUST IN HIM." And again, "BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME." (NASB) Heb. 2:10-13

This was the Father's plan. He planned for Jesus to die through suffering and then declare those who trust in Jesus to be holy or sanctified.

HOW DID JESUS FEEL? About a year ago I met with a friend for breakfast at a local restaurant. I had arrived early and as I was waiting, I saw a homeless man sitting at the restaurant counter drinking coffee. That is all he could afford. I approached him and asked him if I could buy him breakfast. He eagerly accepted. I went to the waitress and explained that I wanted to pay for whatever he ordered. As I talked with the waitress I was surprised at my embarrassment. Was it because of her look of surprise? I do not know. I was glad that I was helping a homeless man physically and spiritually. So I purposed that I would keep doing it as the Lord gave me opportunity. The Lord gave me the opportunity to buy the man breakfast and share Jesus Christ.

How did Jesus feel when He came to help us? When He looked like us? - when He suffered as He died for us? Hebrews 2:11 says he was not ashamed to look like us in order to help us!

Since then 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; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. (NASB) Hebrews 2:14-16



The Holy Spirit makes another point about angels. Jesus did not come to help them, but the human race. Fallen angels cannot be saved, and holy angels are servants to those who inherit salvation! What a statement! Jesus IS greatly superior to angels.

FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST. Here is a new view of Jesus. We believe that He is our Savior. We believe that He was the God-man. We

believe that He was a prophet, but He is also our merciful and faithful high priest.

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. (NASB) Heb. 2:17

An Old Testament high priest was one who offered animal sacrifices so that the sins of individuals would be forgiven. Jesus is a high priest because He offered Himself as an eternal sacrifice for the sins of all of us. He is merciful because He was willing to become like us and willing to die for us. Here we can see His precious heart for us. He was also faithful to follow through and complete the Father's plan by dying for us.

Jesus is also merciful and faithful in another way. He can help us when we are tempted to sin. Human priests can offer a sacrifice for our sins but they cannot empower us for victory over our sins. Jesus can!

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. (NASB) Heb. 2:18

CONCLUSION. Jesus understands our struggle with sin by personal experience. Just before Jesus was betrayed, He went to the garden of Gethsemane. The gospels tell us that while He was there, He struggled with the reality of the suffering He would have to experience. The God-man was going to experience the reality of human suffering. He struggled and so He was tempted to flee death. Yet He never gave in. He never sinned. He suffered temptation in the extreme. But He did not give in to sin. When we are tempted, we often eventually give in to it. But Jesus has promised to help us.

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. (NASB) 1 Corinthians 10:13

He has also promised to help against the tempter - Satan,

But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one. (NASB) 2 Thess 3:3

But this victory over sin is not something we do on our own. The Holy Spirit is the One who gives the victory as we submit ourselves to His control of us (Gal. 5:16; Eph. 5:18). All that we must do is to start by admitting our sins to Him.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (NASB) 1 John 1:9

Then we should ask the Holy Spirit to take control of our lives. If we are sincere, our merciful and faithful high priest will bring victory.

Jesus is God. He is man. He became a man in order to become our merciful and faithful high priest - to forgive our sins and help us in our struggle against sin. This is the precious heart of a loving God!