

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

STUDY NUMBER THREE - Hebrews 2:10-18

TEXT:

v.10 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 originator of their salvation through sufferings.

v.11 For both He who is sanctifying and those who are being sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to be calling them brethren,

v.12 saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brethren, in the midst of the church I will sing your praise."

v.13 And again, "I will put my trust in Him." And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God gave me."

v.14 Since then the children have shared blood and flesh, He Himself also in just the same way partook of the same, in order that through death He might render powerless the one who is having the power of death, that is, the devil;

v.15 and might release those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

v.16 For of course He is not giving help to angels but He is giving help to the offspring of Abraham.

v.17 Therefore, He was obligated to be made like His brethren in all things, in order 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.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 being tempted.

INTRODUCTION:

(A Marriage Made in Heaven . . . Or Too Tired for an Affair
by Erma Bombeck)

(When someone just happened to ask her if she was my mother, she would answer dryly, "Someone had to do it!")

Before closing the doors on these walls of silence to visit her at the hospital, I remember thinking how often we look, but never see . . . we listen, but never hear . . . we exist, but never feel. We take our relationships for granted.

p. 231

All anyone talked about were biological clocks. The whiners on TV's "Thirtysomething" chewed it over like a piece of tough meat every week.

They talked openly of artificial insemination, surrogate mothers, and frozen sperm. (Giving new meaning to designer genes.)

I didn't care about any of this. I wanted to be a grandmother and I was teetering between senility and death. My interest span was becoming limited, patience was in short supply, and I was beginning to forget all the cute games and nursery rhymes. I was out of touch with new toys and TV shows for children. In a few years, I'd throw the baby up into the air and forget to catch him.

All my friends had grandchildren. Me? I was as out-of-sync with my contemporaries as I had been in the '50s when they were dropping babies like lottery balls and I was burning candles to Our Lady of Impossible Conception.

I didn't want to labor it or put pressure on my kids. I just called them every day and left a message on their answering machines, "Why are you punishing your mother?"

It wasn't like I was asking for major sacrifices. All I wanted was for them to get married, live in borderline poverty, drag around for nine months with a little nausea and eight pounds of stomach to stuff under a steering wheel, and surrender two weeks of pay to present me with a small bundle I could play patty-cake with and buy cute presents for when we travelled.

pp. 235-36

As he leaves, his brother is coming up the walk with his two children in tow, Velcro Fingers and Terminator II. Within thirty seconds, they have taken the bathroom door off the hinges, clogged up the toilet with a shoe, put meal worm in the refrigerator for their hamster, which is in the middle of the coffee table, crayoned on the fireplace, flooded the patio, and sold me two chances on a pony.

My teenage granddaughter stops by to tell me she wants to move in with us where she'll have more freedom. Besides, my car isn't run often enough and she'll take care of that. It's okay with her mom if it's all right with me. She introduces me to her boyfriend who wears an earring and has a four-letter word on the bumper of his pickup truck.

The baby falls off the hobby horse. Velcro Fingers wants to know if he can keep the wax apple he has already taken a bite out of and Terminator II has drawn a picture of his hand on the wall behind the sofa.
p. 238

The reality is the first child to place a baby in my arms that grabs my finger, stuffs its foot in its mouth, and smiles at me when I say, "This is your grandma"--gets it all.
p. 239

(Fresh Elastic for Stretched Out Moms by Barbara Johnson)

LOVE IS . . .

Slow to suspect . . . quick to trust.
Slow to condemn . . . quick to justify.
Slow to offend . . . quick to defend.
Slow to reprimand . . . quick to forbear.
Slow to belittle . . . quick to appreciate.
Slow to demand . . . quick to give.
Slow to provoke . . . quick to conciliate.
Slow to hinder . . . quick to help.
Slow to resent . . . quick to forgive.

After I thought I had really learned these truths, I took them down from my cupboard door and replaced them with other words of wisdom, which I still get a charge out of each time I read.

LOVE'S ABC'S

You'll have your hands full and your heart filled trying to live out Love's ABC's.

Love **A**ccepts, **B**ehaves, **C**heers, **D**efends, **E**nriches, **F**orgives, **G**rows, and **H**elps.

Love **I**ncludes, **J**oins, **K**neels, **L**istens, **M**otivates, **N**otices, **O**verlooks, and **P**rovides.

Love **Q**uiets, **R**espects, **S**urprises, **T**ries, **U**nderstands, **V**olunteers, **W**arms, **eX**pects, and **Y**ields.

Love in Action breaks the code that adds **Z**ip to your life!

YOUR LIFE WILL BE RICHER--IF

On this day: You will make an effort to:
 Mend a quarrel.
 Search for a forgotten friend.
 Dismiss a suspicion and replace it with trust.
 Write a letter to someone who misses you.
 Encourage someone who has lost faith.
 Keep a promise.
 Forget an old grudge.
 Examine your demands on others, and vow to reduce them.
 Fight for a principle.
 Express your gratitude.
 Overcome an old fear.
 Take two minutes to appreciate the beauty of nature.
 Tell someone you love him.
 Tell him again.
 And again.
 And again.

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

pp. 46-47

Wiersbe titles these verses:

Trust Him (10-18)

Persons who trust Christ are God's children (v. 13) on their way to glory (v. 10). The Redeemer has defeated death and the devil, and He understands how His people feel as they face the temptations and trials of life. When you come to Him by faith, you come to a sympathetic High Priest who can meet your every need. Trust Him!

p. 814

English says:

. . . knowing what questions would plague them, the writer goes on to show the congruity and appropriateness of those sufferings in view of the divine purpose of "bringing many sons unto glory," an intent that could not be accomplished apart from the incarnation of the Son of God and His death for sin.

p. 74

Richards says:

These few verses emphasize truths that are stunning in their vast impact. They tell of an amazing transaction, an amazing transmutation. They tell us first that Jesus, determined to rescue us, took a full share of our humanity and through His death released us from our slavery. They tell us that, in that identification with us, Jesus also identified us with Him. He, the Son of God, became a man, that you and I might become sons of God! He entered the family of man that we might enter the family of God!

Because of what Jesus accomplished, we now must learn to see ourselves for who we are: the very brothers of Jesus Christ and through our relationship with Him the children of God the Father.

p. 23

Hughes begins his exposition with these statements:

Anytime one sits in judgment on God, he or she is in big trouble. Leo Tolstoy is a prime example. Many Christians have unwisely assumed he was a believer because of his much publicized admiration of the Sermon on the Mount and the elevated sentiments in such stories as Where Love Is, There God Is Also. In actuality, Tolstoy was no Christian at all, for he actually felt himself to be Christ's older brother and thus assumed he could judge the appropriateness of Christ's actions. Tolstoy saw himself as part of a kind of elite apostolic succession of minds that included Moses, Isaiah, Confucius, Socrates, and others who thought and spoke sincerely on the meaning of life.

As such, he declared that to call Christ God or to pray to him was "the greatest blasphemy." This is why the Orthodox Church properly excommunicated him in 1901.

Christianity has always had its critics who, using their self-generated ideas, have judged what a proper God should be like. The early Jewish Christians certainly encountered such critics among fellow-countrymen who viewed the idea of a suffering-Savior-God as a completely inappropriate way to regard the God of the universe. Paul himself evidently encountered this thinking because he said, "But we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 1:23). To many minds a suffering Savior was not a God-worthy concept.

Such thinking was exacting its toll on the storm-tossed little church as it struggled amidst the rising waves of persecution.

p. 63

v.10 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 originator of their salvation through sufferings.

The word "FOR" ties back in to the preceding verses and answers the question, "WHY MUST HE DIE?"

Here then is the REASON for why he must die:

"FOR IT WAS FITTING"

In other words there is an "inner fitness in God's dealings" in this way.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The author here continued to think of Psalm 8, as his reference to everything reveals. Thus the glory he mentioned here is also the glory referred to in the psalm, that is, the glory of dominion over the created order.

English says:

Here he is simply stating that it was consistent with God the Father to allow these sufferings in connection with His bringing many sons unto glory.
p. 75

Bruce points out:

The person who says, "I could not have a high opinion of a God who would (or would not) do this or that," is not adding anything to our knowledge of God; he is simply telling us something about himself. We may be sure that all God does is worthy of himself, but here our author singles out one of God's actions and tells us that it was a fitting thing for him to do.
p. 79

Pink has this comment:

First, then, the special character in which God is here viewed. "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things." This expression sets forth the high sovereignty of God in the most unqualified and absolute manner: "all things" without exception, that is, all creatures, all events. "For whom are all things" affirms that the Most High God is the Final Cause of everything: "The Lord hath made all things for Himself" (Prov. 16:4), i.e., to fulfill His own designs, to accomplish His own purpose, to redound to His own glory. So again we read in Rev. 4:11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."
p. 111

Lane says:

The writer's intention is to provide a commentary on the last clause of v 9 and more particularly on the expression "by the grace of God."
p. 55

Here it affirms that what has taken place in the experience of Jesus was consistent with God's known character and purpose. The divine intention to lead human beings to the goal for which they had been created appeared to be mocked by human experience. It was entirely congruous with the primal intention celebrated in Ps 8 that God should graciously decree that his Son identify himself with the human condition and rescue humanity through his own humiliation and death. The sufferings of Jesus were appropriate to the goal to be attained and were experienced in accordance with God's fixed purpose.
p. 55

MacArthur says:

It was fitting means that what God did through Jesus Christ was consistent with His character. It was consistent with God's wisdom. The cross was a masterpiece of wisdom. God solved the problem which no human or angelic mind could have solved. What He did was also consistent with His holiness, for God showed on the cross His hatred for sin. It was consistent with His power, being the greatest display of power ever manifested. Christ endured for a few hours what will take an eternity for unrepentant sinners to endure. It was consistent with His love, in that He loved the world so much that He gave His only son for its redemption. Finally, what He did was consistent with His grace, because Christ's sacrifice was substitutionary. The work of salvation was totally consistent with God's nature. It was entirely fitting for Him to have done what He did.
pp. 65-66

DeHaan points out:

The purpose of this incarnation was that as a man He might pay man's debt. Notice that it was for the "suffering of death" that He who was crowned with glory and honor became a little lower than the angels and should taste death for every man (2:7). The goal of Jesus becoming a little lower than the angels was the Cross. There the redemption would be consummated. This was all in perfect harmony with the character of Christ. It was just like Him, and in harmony with His great love for them, to do so.
p. 43

Wuest says:

The inspired writer seeks to justify his bold assertion of verse 9. He senses the recoil which his readers would have from the thought of a suffering Messiah, and he now shows that Jesus's suffering and death were according to the divine fitness of things.
p. 59

Black says:

Since God had created man, it was fitting that God should take steps to enable man to reach the goal for which he had been created, for the route to this goal had become blocked by sin. The suffering of Christ was not fortuitous, but part of God's providence (cf. Mark viii. 31). It was appropriate that the action taken to help man should include suffering, since suffering is mankind's common lot.

p. 59

A. T. Robertson points out:

The voluntary humiliation or incarnation of Christ the Son a little lower than the angels was a seemly thing to God the Father as the writer now shows in a great passage (2:10-18) worthy to go beside Phil. 2:5-11.

pp. 346-7

"FOR IT WAS FITTING FOR HIM."

It was the right thing for God to do.

"FOR IT WAS FITTING FOR HIM, FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND THROUGH WHOM ARE ALL THINGS."

We have the PHRASE "ALL THINGS":

in chapter 2:8,

twice in verse 10,

and again in verse 17.

Hewitt says:

The expressions for whom are all things, and by whom (or 'through whom') are all things reveal that all creatures come into being through God's creative agency; they exist for His glory; and they find their goal in Him in whom is found all creative and spiritual life.

p. 70

Hughes says:

In other words, the way of salvation is not arbitrary, but rather befits the character of the God we know, the God "for whom and through whom everything exists." God is the goal and author of all that exists, and correspondingly Jesus is the author and goal of salvation. As the work of creation is totally of God, so also is the work of salvation. Just as God poured himself into the work of creation, even so the author of salvation poured himself into it through suffering. Everything is of him!
p. 64

"FOR IT WAS FITTING FOR HIM, FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, AND THROUGH WHOM ARE ALL THINGS, IN BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY."

Here is the DIVINE OBJECTIVE:

"BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY."

And what is being described here is the only way God could "bring many sons to glory."

"BRINGING MANY SONS" involves:

SALVATION,
SANCTIFICATION,
and GLORIFICATION.

"SONS" speaks of relationship.

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,

John 3:3

Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is

born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Romans 8:16, 17

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Hughes says:

Do you want to see the character and power of God? Look at the cosmos. Turn your face like an astronomer to the Milky Way, and as your visage is illumined, let your mind go 600 trillion miles to the edge of our galaxy and visit our neighboring galaxy, the first of some hundred thousand million more "neighbors." Then you will see something of him "for whom and through whom everything exists." Do you want to see even more of God's character and power? Then look to his final word, Christ, for in him you have an even greater display of his power and moral character.

What God did through his suffering Son fits with his eternal power.
pp. 64-65

Wuest says:

Thus, the writer shows the sweet reasonableness of the Cross. And because only God can satisfy the demands of God, so only the Messiah who is one of the Persons of the Godhead, could in the great plan of salvation, provide the sacrifice. God the Father provides the salvation, God the Son procures it, and God the Holy Spirit applies it.
p. 60

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Jesus is the Son of Man, and His brothers and sisters are the many people who are linked with Him in both suffering and future glory. They will be the King's "companions" who share His joy in the world to come.

In 2:9 the writer had mentioned Jesus' death for the first time. Now he affirmed that such suffering was appropriate for the One who was to serve as the Captain of the many sons.

Since His brethren must suffer, so must He if He is to be the kind of Captain they need. By having done so, He can give them the help they require.

In verse 8 the writer says, "we are not yet seeing all things subjected to Him."

And by contrast in verse 9 he says, "but we are seeing Jesus."

And then he describes the incarnation and humiliation of Jesus Christ, "That He should taste death for every man."

When we come to verse 10 we have the REASON for this:

"IT WAS FITTING FOR HIM (Jesus), . . . IN BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY, TO PERFECT THE SOURCE OF THEIR SALVATION THROUGH SUFFERINGS."

The writer in describing Jesus Christ says of Him:

"FOR WHOM ARE ALL THINGS AND THROUGH WHOM ARE ALL THINGS."

In other words, everything is for Him and it all came into being through Him.

John 1:3

All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:10

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

Colossians 1:16

For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things have been created by Him and for Him.

Back in verse 9 it was:

"By the grace of God that He might taste death for everyone."

And the REASON for His coming and doing this was:

So He could be "BRINGING MANY SONS TO GLORY."

If you are planning on spending time in glory you are going to be brought there only through a relationship with Jesus Christ. This is salvation and salvation indeed.

"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 ORIGINATOR OF THEIR SALVATION THROUGH SUFFERINGS."

God perfects us through suffering.

Psalms 138:8

The Lord will fulfill [his purpose] for me;
your love, O Lord, endures forever--
do not abandon the works of your hands.

Draper says:

He was made "perfect through sufferings." The word "perfect" means that he fulfilled the purpose for which he was sent. He finished it. There is nothing else to do. There is no new ransom to pay. There is nothing else to be done, no barriers to be removed. He has done it all. We must choose between living our own lives or committing our lives to the One who can take us out of failure and into victory, to the One who can restore what God wants us to be. It is a choice that we must make. It is a choice of the mind, a selection of the heart. God stands ready to recreate us if we will let him.
p. 56

DeHaan says:

This is indeed a strange statement, that Christ was made "perfect through sufferings." Was not He perfect God and perfect Man? Certainly, but here we are dealing with Christ as the Redeemer. Without the suffering of death He could not "perfect" our salvation. If Jesus had been unable or unwilling to die in our place, He would be an imperfect Saviour, even though perfect God and Man. But He is perfect in all His attributes and so He proved Himself perfect in His love for us in redeeming us.
p. 44

Wiersbe says much the same thing:

If Jesus Christ had not come to earth and become man, He could not take us from earth to share in His glory. The incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection must go together. They all lead to glory.
p. 29

One phrase in 2:10 ought to be discussed before we move on: "make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." This statement does not suggest that Jesus Christ was imperfect when He was here on earth. The word translated "perfect" means complete, effective, adequate." Jesus could not have become an adequate Saviour and High Priest had He not become man and suffered and died.
p. 29

Lenski says:

The sense is: "by means of suffering to make the author of the salvation of the many sons, whom God intended to bring to glory, complete as this Author of their salvation." Expressed negatively: without suffering death as Jesus did he would not have been a complete Savior, could not have brought any men to glory as God's sons. He had to come as the High Priest with the blood of atonement even as this epistle in v. 17 of this chapter and in the following chapters unfolds at length. Only the suffering Savior could save, Isa. 53. p. 81

Ray Stedman puts it all together by saying:

The earthly life of Jesus is referred to in one phrase, made perfect through suffering. Was He not perfect when He came? When Jesus was a babe in Bethlehem's manger, was He not perfect even then? When he was tempted in the desert and Satan tried to turn Him from the cross, was He not already perfect? When He was feeding the five thousand, in compassionate ministry to the hungry multitudes, was He not perfect? Why then does it say He must be perfected by suffering?

There are, of course, two perfections involved. He was perfect in His person all along. The Scriptures make this abundantly clear. But He was not yet perfect in His work. Some of you young people may be perfect in health, perfect in body, perfect in strength, perfect in the soundness of your humanity, but you are not yet perfect in the work you are called to do. Suppose Jesus Christ had come full-grown into the world a week before He died. Suppose He had never been born as a baby, had never grown up into adult life, but had stepped into the earth full-grown as a man. Suppose He had uttered in one week's time the Sermon on the Mount, the Olivet discourse, the Upper Room discourse and all the teachings that we have from His lips recorded in Scripture. Imagine that He came on Monday and on Friday they took Him out and crucified Him, hanging Him on the cross, and that He died, just as it is recorded in the Scriptures, bearing the sins of the world. Would He still have been a perfect Saviour?

Certainly He would have been perfect as far as bearing our guilt is concerned: that only required a sinless Saviour. But He would not have been perfect as far as bearing our infirmities, our weaknesses, is concerned. He would have been able to fit us for heaven some day, but never able to make us ready for earth right now. In such a case we could always say (as too often we do say, anyway), "How can God expect me to live a perfect life in my situation? After all, I'm only human. Christ has never been where I am. What does He know of my pressures, what does He know of what I'm up against?" But He was made perfect through His suffering. He does know, He does know!

pp. 25-26

"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 ORIGINATOR OF THEIR SALVATION THROUGH SUFFERINGS."

The word we have translated "ORIGINATOR" here makes reference to the One who made it all possible.

He is the "One who goes first."

He is the Leader.

He is the Point Man.

Barclay says:

An archegos is some one who begins something in order that others may enter into it. He begins a family that some day others may be born into the family; he founds a city in order that others may some day dwell in the city; he founds a philosophic school that others may follow him into the truth and the peace that he himself has discovered; he is the author of blessings, or of penalties, into which others will also enter. An archegos is one who blazes the trail for others to follow. Someone has used this analogy. Suppose a ship was on the rocks, and suppose the only way to rescue was for someone to swim ashore with a line, in order that, once the line was secured, others might follow. The one who was first to swim ashore would be the archegos of the safety of the others. That is what the writer to the Hebrews means when he says that Jesus is the archegos of our salvation. Jesus was the pioneer who blazed the trail to God for us to follow.

pp. 18-19

Delitzsch in his commentary says:

. . . as Luther beautifully renders it),--as One who, being placed Himself in the forefront of humanity, leads on His followers to the appointed goal.
p. 117

In Black's commentaries we read:

Archegos can also be used to describe the head of a family or clan (Ex. vi. 14; Nu. x. 4), but here it has the added nuance of a leader who commands by going in front of his men and pioneering the way that leads to salvation (cf. v. 9).
p. 61

MacArthur says of the word "archegos":

It's literally a pioneer or leader.

It always refers to someone who involves others in his endeavor. For example, it is used of a man who starts and heads a family, into which others are born or married. It is used of a man who founds a city, in which others come to live. It was commonly used of a pioneer who blazed a trail for others to follow. The archegos never stood at the rear giving orders. He was always out front, leading and setting the example. As the supreme Archegos, Christ does not stand at the rear giving orders. He is always before us, as perfect Leader and perfect Example.
p. 66

God made Christ for a little while lower than the angels so that He could come down to us, be our Archegos--our spiritual Pioneer and Example--and bring us to the Father.
p. 67

Lane says:

Jesus is "the champion" who secured the salvation of his people through the sufferings he endured in his identification with them, and more particularly through his death.
p. 57

Pink says:

It needs to be borne in mind that in N.T. days the "captain" of a regiment did not remain in the rear issuing instructions to his officers, but took the lead, and by his own personal example encouraged and inspired his soldiers to deeds of valour. Thus the underlying thoughts of this title are, Christ's going before His people, leading His soldiers, and being in command of them. He has "gone before" them in three respects. First, in the way of obedience, see John 13:15. Second, in the way of suffering, see 1 Peter 2:21. Third, in the way of glory: He has entered heaven as our forerunner, so that faith says, "Thanks be unto God which giveth me the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Thus it will be seen that v. 10 continues the same thought as

v. 9.

"The Captain of their salvation." The plain and necessary implication of this title is that we are passing through a country full of difficulties, dangers, oppositions, like Israel in the Wilderness on their way to the promised inheritance; so that we need a Captain, Guide, Leader, to carry us safely through.

pp. 114-15

Bruce says:

He is the Savior who blazed the trail of salvation along which alone God's "many sons" could be brought to glory. Man, created by God for his glory, was prevented by sin from attaining that glory until the Son of Man came and opened up by his death a new way by which humanity might reach the goal for which it was made. As his people's representative and forerunner he has now entered into the presence of God to secure their entry there.

p. 80

Hughes says:

Pioneer is the best translation, for Christ our Savior blazed the trail of salvation that we can now follow. God has given us Jesus as the divine hero/pioneer of our salvation!

This is a title and a person to cherish. Significantly, the name bears a remarkable correspondence to the second of the four Messianic names prophesied of Christ in Isaiah 9:6

--"Mighty God"--El Gibbor, which literally means "mighty hero God." As the courageous pioneer of our salvation, Christ certainly was that!

p. 65

"TO PERFECT THE ORIGINATOR (the source, the pioneer) OF THEIR SALVATION THROUGH SUFFERINGS."

God also does the same with us.

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Philippians 1:29

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,

1 Thessalonians 3:3, 4

So that no man may be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. For indeed when we were with you, we kept telling you in advance that we were going to suffer affliction; and so it came to pass, as you know.

Acts 9:15, 16

But the Lord said to him, "Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine, to bear My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for My name's sake."

2 Corinthians 4:17

For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison.

We are presently in the TRAINING PROGRAM of the greatest leader the world has ever known, being prepared to share in the rulership over the kingdom which is to come. This explains many of the answers regarding the sufferings of the present life. If we were on a sailing vessel captained by an inexperienced captain, we would be very frightened and anxious. Not so with our Lord, who has become our perfect captain.

This captain is Christ. Thus the first view we have here of Christ connected with these sons being brought to glory is as the file leader of the company. It is as if God were saying, Hebrew believers, do not stumble as most of your nation are doing at a suffering Messiah. Your lot is now far above that of mere Hebrews. You partake of a heavenly calling. You are journeying to heaven, home to God, who is bringing you as sons into glory. Do you not see from all Scripture that the blessed One who should become the captain of sons, going forth from earth to heaven, must have suffered; yea, has been made perfect through sufferings. They were to be sons and we're to be brought unto glory. Who was to bring them and how? One must go where they were, have their guilt charged to Him, bear the wrath due to them. Our Lord's course from Bethlehem to Calvary is looked at in the words "made perfect through sufferings." Yes, such a journey from the glory that he had with the Father down to earth and back to that glory would involve on the part of that great captain of their salvation, emptying himself, taking the form of a servant, becoming in the likeness of men, humbling himself unto death, yea, the death of the cross. But think who He was. Is not this the carpenter, the people of Nazareth asked? Yes, but He was the creator also and he was in a path that would shortly make him an alien to his mother's children, despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; in all these sufferings learned obedience.

Andrew Murray points out:

The work of a leader supposes three things:

1. He must himself lead the way, passing through all its difficulties and dangers, knowing and showing it to those who follow.
2. Those who follow must yield themselves wholly to his guidance, walking even as he walked.
3. He must take charge of his follows, seeing that all hindrances are removed and providing for all their needs. Let us see how blessedly this is fulfilled in Jesus and what a comfort it brings us to know that Jesus bears this name too, the leader of our salvation.

F. B. Meyer points out:

But all these sons must tread the path of suffering. Since the first sin brought suffering to our first parents and bloodshed into the first home, there has been but one lot for those who will live godly. Their road leads to glory but every inch of it is stained with their blood and watered by their tears. It climbs to Hermon's summit but it descends immediately into somber and devil-haunted plains. It conducts to the Mount of Olives with its ascension light but it first traverses the glades of Gethsemane, the winepress of Golgotha, the solitude and darkness of the grave. The path of sorrow, and that path alone, leads to the land where sorrow is unknown. What true soul has not its wilderness of temptation, its conflicts with Sadducees and scribes, its hour of weariness and watching, its tears over cities full of rebellious men, its disappointments from friends, its persecutions from foes, rejection, agony, friendlessness, loneliness, denials, trails, treacheries, deaths and burials. Such is the draught which the noblest and saintliest have drunk from the golden chalice of life. . . . So suffering is rough and hard to bear. But it hides beneath its discipline educational possibilities which not only leave us nobler but perfect us to help others. Do not fret or set your teeth or wait doggedly for the suffering to pass but get out of it all you can, both for yourself and for your service to your generation according to the will of God. Suffering educates sympathy. It softens the spirit, lights the touch, hushes the tread. It accustoms the spirit to read from afar the symptoms of an unspoken grief.

John Claypool in his book Tracks of a Fellow Struggler says:

We do feel a certain kinship with those who have experienced what we are experiencing. And the God who came in Christ established just such a bond of closeness. During World War II, just after word had arrived that an only son had been killed in battle, a minister was called to the home of his parents. The father, half in grief and half in rage, blurted out as soon as the minister arrived, "I want to know--where was God when my son was being killed." The minister thought a long time and then replied softly, "I guess where He was when His own son was being killed." This word had a revolutionary impact on the distraught man, for it brought God out of the remoteness into that circle as a grieving companion.

Guy King in his book Brought In says:

It is a loving Father's hand that will not cause his child a needless tear. It is an intensely careful hand that never makes a mistake. It is a marvelously skillful hand that gets the most beautiful results from his pruning. Years ago I used to sit on the old religious tract society committee long side the late Professor Albert Carless, master of surgery, and I confess that out of the corner of my eye I often stole a glance at his hands. Hands that had often to wound in order to heal. So when our heavenly surgeon thinks it well to have us in his theater and there to take the scalpel or the saw, we shall remember that though it may hurt, it never will harm. Who is he or what is it that will harm you if you be followers of that which is good? If it is real, true, deep, lasting good that you are seeking, then don't shrink from the pruning knife, for therein lies one of the greatest secrets of the producing of the fruit.

Wuest says:

The words "to make perfect" are literally "to carry to the goal or consummation." The word is teleioo. This does not imply any moral imperfection in the Lord Jesus, but speaks of the consummation of the human experience of suffering the death of the Cross, through which He must pass if He is to become the Captain of our salvation. The word "captain" is the translation of archegos, a word compounded of ago "to lead or go," and arche, "first," thus, "one who goes first," a "leader." The Son precedes the saved on the road to heaven. He says, "I am the road (hodos), . . . No man cometh to the Father but by Me" (John 14:60). And the writer to the Hebrews speaks of "the freshly slain and living road" ([Hebrews] 10:20) into the presence of God, the road sprinkled with the blood of Jesus. Our blessed Lord is, therefore, not only the leader on the road to God, but the road itself, and that by reason of His precious blood.

p. 60

Barclay says:

The basic meaning of teleios in the New Testament is always that the thing or person so described fully carries out the purpose or the plan for which he or it was purposed and designed. In the New Testament sense a person is teleios when he fully carries out the purpose for which God designed him and sent him into the world. Therefore the verb teleioun will mean in English, not so much to make perfect, as to make fully adequate for, able for, the task for which the person is designed. So, then, what the writer to the Hebrews is saying is that through suffering Jesus was made fully able for the task of being the pioneer of our salvation. It was His suffering which made Him able to blaze the trail to salvation for others.

pp. 19-20

Delitzsch says:

In order to raise humanity from the depths of misery, in which it is so unlike its ultimate destination, to the heights of glory for which it is destined, God must first lead up His only Son to glory through deeps of human suffering, that thus by Him, the Son made perfect through suffering, He might make of us also glorious sons of God. This is what was God-befitting in the work of salvation.

p. 120

Phillips says:

His sufferings were fruitful, for as a result of them He brings "many sons unto glory" (2:10b). Believers have an astounding place in the family: they are sons! They have an equally astounding place in the future: they will be in glory. Heaven, after all, is a prepared place for a prepared people. The Lord's finished work on Golgotha prepared the people; in glory today He is preparing the place.

p. 58

Galatians 4:6, 7

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging
by Brennan Manning)

With a graciousness and an understanding of human weakness that only God can exhibit, Jesus liberates us from alienation and self-condemnation and offers each of us a new possibility. He is the Savior who saves us from ourselves. His Word is freedom. The Master says to us:

Burn the old tapes spinning 'round in your head that bind you up and lock you into a self-centered stereotype. Listen to the new song of salvation written for those who know that they are poor. Let go of your fear of the Father and your dislike of yourself. Remember the play "Don Quixote"? The Knight of the Mirrors lied to him when he said, "See yourself as you really are. Discover that you are not a noble knight, but an idiotic scarecrow of a man." And the Enchanter lies to you when he says, "Thou art no knight but a foolish pretender. Look in the mirror of reality. Behold things as they really are. What dost thou see? Naught but an aging fool." The Father of Lies twists the truth and distorts reality. He is the author of cynicism and skepticism, mistrust and despair, sick thinking and self-hatred. I am the Son of compassion. You belong to Me and no one will tear you from My hand.

p. 42

GOD COLLAPSED

"God collapsed, somewhere in the narrow, winding street leading out of the city, His bloodied back gave way under the weight of a large wooden cross . . . Nowhere can we see God more with us, more immanent. . . . Here was evil at its most flagrant. The destruction of the best. And God didn't move a muscle. . . . The cross was a weapon Christ wielded. He attacked the darkest heart of evil. He walked into hell as a man swinging wildly, laying people out with His stunning sacrifice. He still uses it to pierce hearts. . . . Justice asked so much. Behind the mercy that flows so extravagantly towards us lies an extravagant cost. . . . On the cross Christ displays the fire of justice, the warmth of mercy, melded into one act of atonement."

"God collapsed" by Steven R. Mosley (Excerpted from *God: A Biography*)
Christian Herald, Mar 1989. Pages 16-20.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

CLEANSED AND REMOLDED

A piece of wood bitterly complained because its owner kept whittling, cutting, and filling it with rifts and holes; but the master quietly replied, "What I am doing may make you think I am destroying you, but soon you will see it is the MAKING of you. I am changing you from a worthless black stick of ebony into a lovely flute whose music will charm the souls of men." So, too, God the Master Craftsman uses the knife, file, and drill of trial upon us, that we may produce tones of testimony to bless others, and be made fit to blend our sweet music with the orchestra of Heaven. It is God's plan to conform us to the image of His own dear Son who also was made "perfect through sufferings."

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

THE GAME ISN'T UP

George Washington nearly abandoned all hope in the winter of 1776 when he and his men suffered from the bitter cold and were confronted by the dreadful prospect of starvation. He sent a letter to his brother in which he said, "I think the game is up! . . . I believe no man has ever had greater difficulties and less means to extricate himself from them." But subsequent events proved him wrong! He and his army survived, and later they were victorious over the enemy. He would have made a terrible mistake if he had yielded to despair.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

You will notice, it is "IN BRINGING--not everybody but--"MANY SONS INTO GLORY."

It is only by being born again by the Spirit of God into God's family that we will be brought into glory.

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

There is nothing more tragic, however, than to see a professing Christian become disgruntled and self-centered in later years. It is true that we simply bring into full bloom the traits that were begun in our early years. If we wish to have positive and productive attitudes in our senior years, we must begin to develop these traits while we are still young.

Author and composer Mrs. Lelia Morris was an active worker in the Methodist church. She continued to write gospel songs during the last 15 years of her life, even after going blind in her early fifties. "Sweeter as the Years Go By" was written during the early years of her blindness. It is said that during this difficult time in her life, Mrs. Morris used a 28-foot long blackboard with music lines on it to help her hymn writing. In all, Lelia Morris wrote more than 1,000 hymn texts, as well as many of the tunes. Her handicap never deterred her from being effective and productive for God. Even in blindness she found her Lord sweeter as the years went by.

Of Jesus' love that sought me, when I was lost in sin; of wondrous grace that brought me back to His fold again; of heights and depths of mercy, far deeper than the sea, and higher than the heavens, my theme shall ever be.

He trod in old Judea life's pathway long ago; the people thronged about Him His saving grace to know; He healed the broken hearted, and caused the blind to see; and still His great heart yearneth in love for even me.

'Twas wondrous love which led Him for us to suffer loss--to bear without a murmur the anguish of the cross; with saints redeemed in glory let us our voices raise, till heaven and earth re-echo with our Redeemer's praise.

Refrain: Sweeter as the years go by, sweeter as the years go by; richer, fuller, deeper, Jesus' love is sweeter, sweeter as the years go by.

p. 69

v.11 For both He who is sanctifying and those who are being sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to be calling them brethren,

You will notice the emphasis upon the FAMILY:

Back in verse 10 it was "SONS"

and now in verse 11 it is "BRETHREN."

Christ's walk through the valley of suffering was so that He might be a perfect leader, he might be one who can relate to us as we are being made holy when we too walk through the vale of tears.

2 Corinthians 7:1

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

1 Peter 4:19

Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

1 Peter 1:16

Because it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."

1 John 3:3

And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

The "many sons" are both the brethren and the children being trained of the Messiah.

MacArthur points out:

In addition to becoming our Substitute and Author of salvation, He became our Sanctifier, the One who makes us holy. From our own perspective and experience, of course, it is difficult to think of ourselves as holy. Sin is too much with us. In thought and practice we are far from holy. But in the new nature we are perfectly holy. Before God, those who are in His Son are holy. We may not act holy, but we are holy--just as a child who often does not act like his father or please his father is still his father's child. We are holy in the sense that before God the righteousness of Christ has been applied and imputed in our behalf. "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10). We are made holy through His sacrifice, and have become **those who are sanctified**.
p. 67

English says:

And now we are brought to see some of the results of Christ's sufferings.
p. 76

Macaulay says:

When Abraham received the news that Lot had been taken in battle with all his household and his substance, the patriarch did not stop to consider his nephew's selfishness, inordinate ambition, and ingratitude. The bond of blood left no place for recrimination or revenge in the day of affliction, but demanded instant action for the release of his brother and the recovery of his goods. Such a bond unites us and Christ, that all consideration of our unworthiness must be swept aside. His brethren need Him--that is the great imperative that fastens upon Him.

The nature of this bond which holds our Lord under obligation to us is declared in these remarkable words: "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are [being] sanctified are all of one" (Heb. 2:11).
p. 36

Griffith Thomas says:

He was made perfect through sufferings, in order that He might accomplish His work of redemption. This oneness between leader and led is further emphasized in the following verses (11-13).
p. 35

Westcott points out:

The present participles mark the continuous, personal application of Christ's work. . . .
. . . The thought is of the continual process at once in the individual soul and in the whole body of the Church
(c. x. 14).
p. 50

Back in verse 10 we noted the phrase:

"to perfect the originator of their salvation through sufferings."

And now in verse 11:

"FOR BOTH HE WHO IS SANCTIFYING AND THOSE WHO ARE BEING
SANCTIFIED ARE ALL FROM ONE FATHER."

The QUESTION we raise at this point is:

DOES SANCTIFICATION INVOLVE SUFFERING?

Probably the ANSWER to that question is:

YES!

Philippians 1:29

For to you it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake.

1 Peter 2:21

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for

you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps.

"FOR WHICH REASON HE IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLING THEM BRETHREN."

Psalm 22:22

I will declare your name to my brothers;
in the congregation I will praise you.

Matthew 12:47-50

And someone said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You."

But He answered the one who was telling Him and said, "Who is My mother and who are My brothers?" And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers! "For whoever shall do the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother."

In the family of God He is not ashamed to call us brothers. Now, of course, I would not dare call Him brother, but He has brought us into the family of God. He is the firstborn among many brethren. He is the head of the family, and He calls us brethren because we all become sons of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

How fantastic it is to know that Jesus Christ is not ashamed of the relationship which He sustains with us. How precious is that thought.

Wonder of wonders! "HE IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLING THEM BRETHREN."

Westcott says:

. . . in spite of the Fall, and of the essential difference of the sonship of men from His own Sonship.
p. 50

Wuest:

What condescension on the part of our glorious Lord! Notwithstanding His superior and exalted dignity, He is not ashamed to call us His brethren.
p. 61

MacArthur says:

The Lord Jesus never called His people brothers on the other side of the cross. Before Calvary He called them disciples or friends or sheep, but never brothers. Why? Because they could not truly be brothers until after the cross, when their sin was paid for and His righteousness was imputed to them. Only then did they become spiritual brothers of the Lord. As soon as Jesus was risen from the dead, He said to Mary, "Go to My brethren." For the first time He called His disciples brothers.
p. 68

DeHaan says:

Of all the precious lessons in these verses, there is one prominent, outstanding revelation. Jesus the Son of God, Creator of the worlds, was not ashamed to identify Himself with miserable, unworthy, helpless, hopeless, filthy sinners, but was willing to die for all such. 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.
pp. 45-46

G. Campbell Morgan says:

This quotation is taken from the twenty-second Psalm, which begins with the cry which was uttered by our Lord on the Cross:

"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

In that Psalm the Messianic sorrows are set forth, but they are revealed as leading to the declaration of victory wherein the suffering One will declare God's name to His brethren, with the result of the song of praise which will ascend to God.

Thus God's final speech to man through the Son, Who is higher than the angels, has come to him because He descended on to the human level, and passed through the bitterness of death, the ultimate dereliction; in order that He Himself might ascend to His place higher than the angels, making a way by which man who had fallen from his high estate, might regain everything that he had lost.

This is the perpetual message of the New Testament concerning the Son. The music is heard throughout in varying tones, sometimes major and sometimes minor; all merging in the ultimate speech of God, which tells man of His eternal love, and of the way by which man may be redeemed.
pp. 34-35

v.12 saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brethren, in the midst of the church I will sing your praise."

Lane says:

The quotations in vv 12 and 13 illustrate that Jesus does not blush to identify himself with the people of God. The three biblical passages have been brought together because they share the common perspective of personal affirmation ("I will proclaim . . . I will sing hymns to you," "I will place my trust," "Here am I and the children whom God has given to me").
p. 59

Bruce observes:

Three Old Testament quotations are introduced here, in which his solidarity with his people is set forth.
p. 81

Lenski says:

The writer of Hebrews again lets the Old Testament speak to his Jewish Christian readers with its convincing power. This our sanctifier, who is one with us through Adam, is for this very reason "not ashamed to call us brothers," for instance in the great Messianic psalm (22:22): "I will announce thy name to my brothers." The point is in the words "my brothers."
p. 86

Hewitt observes:

Three proofs are here brought forward from the Old Testament to show that Christ is not ashamed to call those who are sanctified--brethren.
p. 71

A. T. Robertson says:

To prove his point the writer quotes Psa. 22:22 when the Messiah is presented as speaking "unto my brethren." Congregation (ekklesias). The word came to mean the local church and also the general church or kingdom (Matt. 16:18; Heb. 12:23). Here we have the picture of public worship and the Messiah sharing it with others as we know Jesus often did.
p. 348

v.13 And again, "I will put my trust in Him." And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God gave me."

These 3 OLD TESTAMENT REFERENCES are the basis of His oneness with men. These references are from:

- 1.Psalm 22
- 2.Isaiah 8:17
- 3.Isaiah 8:18

Westcott points out:

The thought of 'brotherhood' is extended into the two following quotations and placed in its essential connexion with the thoughts of 'fatherhood' and 'sonship.' Brothers are supported by the trust in which they repose on one above them and by the love which meets the trust.
p. 51

The 4-FOLD FOCUS on these Old Testament quotations is upon the words:

- 1.PROCLAIM
- 2.SING
- 3.TRUST
- 4.GAVE

The Lord Jesus is pictured as:

"not being ashamed to be calling them brethren"

He, the Messiah, will proclaim the name of God the Father to the brethren.

He will sing His praise to the brethren.

And like the brethren, He will put His trust in Him.

And He puts them on display:

"BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD GAVE ME."

Hughes says:

Taken together, these three Messianic quotations provide huge comfort to the fearful little church because they reveal rich benefits coming from Christ's solidarity with His people. First, Jesus proclaims the character of God to His brothers and sisters alone and to no one else. He even leads them in hymns to the Father. What amazing knowledge and intimacy comes from their solidarity with Christ. Second, as their real human brothers sharing their human frailty He had to put His trust in God. He had to have faith in the midst of suffering just as He calls them to do. Finally, the fact that He is in relationship with them that He can say, "Here am I and the children God has given me," means they can confidently await a great future.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary summarizes these quotations by saying:

Like an elder brother in the midst of a circle of younger children, the Captain of their salvation can teach them the lessons of faith along the pathway of suffering.

v.14 Since then the children have shared blood and flesh,
He Himself also in just the same way partook of the same, in order that
through death He might render powerless the one who is having the
power of death, that is, the devil;

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

These children, however, were once held in servitude by their enemy, Satan. Since they were human, their Captain had to become human and die for them, in order to rescue them. But by doing so He was able to destroy . . . the devil.

"SINCE THEN THE CHILDREN HAVE SHARED BLOOD AND FLESH."

The word "SHARED" has the idea to have a share in common with someone else.

He Himself also, in just the same way, partook of the same--That is, flesh and blood.

The word "PARTOOK" could be translated "to hold with." This is a picture of:

John 1:14

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The PURPOSE OF THE INCARNATION is seen in the next phrase:

"IN ORDER THAT THROUGH DEATH (and what a cost) HE MIGHT
RENDER POWERLESS THE ONE WHO IS HAVING THE POWER OF
DEATH, THAT IS, THE DEVIL."

Satan's power is still in existence, but we are relieved of the necessary obligation to obey him.

Draper observes:

Satan's power has been broken: "That through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (2:14, 15). Satan has been described as the prince of this world. He is an angel of light. Before Jesus Christ broke through in the Incarnation and in his death upon the cross, Satan had dominion in this world and had death as his ultimate weapon. He threatened and intimidated man with death. He had the power, the control over death. It was a threat, an instrument of torment used against man. Jesus Christ came and, through it is a paradox, by death he defeated death. By his death he rendered death ineffective. He broke the power of Satan.

p. 60

Pink says:

This stripping Satan of his power of death was accomplished by the laying down of the Saviour's life, "that through death He might destroy." "The means whereby Christ overcame Satan, is expressly said to be death. To achieve this great and glorious victory against so mighty an enemy, Christ did not assemble troops of angels, as He could have done (Matt. 26:53), nor did He array Himself with majesty and terror, as in Exodus 19:16; but He did it by taking part of weak flesh and blood, and therein humbling Himself to death. In this respect the apostle saith, that Christ 'having spoiled principalities and powers, made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in the cross' (Col. 2:15), meaning thereby, His death. The apostle there resembleth the cross of Christ to a trophy whereon the spoils of enemies were hanged. Of old conquerors were wont to hang the armour and weapons of enemies vanquished on the walls of forts and towers."

pp. 136-7

Macaulay says:

Our text is simply telling us that the devil's occupation as holder of the dominion of death is over by the death of Christ.

In what respect did Satan ever hold the dominion of death? "The wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23), and so long as he kept men sinning, and so long as the atoning death of Jesus had not been accomplished, Satan could rightly demand the payment of the wages. Perhaps he could be likened to the paymaster. At any rate, while he held the dominion of death, he did not spare its terror. His minions who had served him in sin must feel its sting, its bitterness, its blackness, its hopelessness, and even life itself was tormented by the haunting terror of what lay at the end.

p. 38

Griffith Thomas points out:

Satan uses death to frighten God's children, but Christ through His death has robbed the devil of this power, for by dying He broke the association between sin and death. The subjects of the Incarnation are then shown to be not angels but men, the seed of Abraham.

p. 36

Wuest says:

Satan was not annihilated at the Cross. His power was broken. Spiritual death cannot hold the person who puts his faith in the Saviour. Physical death cannot keep his body in the grave. The resurrection of the Lord Jesus provides the believer with eternal life, and his body with glorification at the Rapture. Thus, Jesus conquered death, and brought to naught the Devil. Satan had the power of death, not in the sense that he had power over death, but that he had the sovereignty or dominion of death. He had a sovereignty of which death is the realm. The word for "power" in the Greek text here is kratos, which means "power in the sense of dominion." His dominion over the human race was in the form of death. That dominion is now broken.

pp. 63-64

MacArthur observes on this verse:

We by nature are flesh and blood; Christ was not. Yet He willingly took hold of something which did not naturally belong to Him. He added to Himself our nature in order that He might die in our place, and that we might take hold of the divine nature that did not belong to us (cf. 2 Pet. 1:4).

p. 69

The only way to destroy Satan was to rob him of his weapon, **death**--physical death, spiritual death, eternal death. Satan knew that God required death for us because of sin. Death had become the most certain fact of life. Satan knew that man, if they remained as they were, would die and go out of God's presence into hell forever. Satan wants to hold onto men until they die, because once they are dead the opportunity for salvation is gone forever. Men cannot escape after death. So God had to wrest from Satan the power of death. And for just that purpose Jesus came.

If you have a more powerful weapon than your enemy, his weapon becomes useless. You cannot fight against a machine gun with a bow and arrow. Satan's weapon is extremely powerful. But God has a weapon even more powerful--eternal life--and with it Jesus destroyed death. The way to eternal life is through resurrection, but the way to resurrection is through death. So Jesus had to experience death before He could be resurrected and thereby give us life. Jesus' dying destroyed death. How? He went into death, through death, and came out on the other side, thereby conquering it. Then He could say, "Because I live, you shall live also" (John 14:19). The resurrection of Jesus Christ provides the believer with eternal life. It is the only thing that could ever have done it. Death is the power of Satan's dominion, and when Jesus shattered Satan's power He also shattered his dominion.

pp. 69-70

Owen points out:

Let us observe here, 1. That the Lord Christ, out of His inexpressible love, willingly submitted Himself unto every condition of the children to be saved by Him, and to everything in every condition of them, sin only excepted.

p. 31

It was "through death" that Jesus Christ destroyed the devil. The death of Christ is here put as the end of one thing and the means or cause of another--the end of His own incarnation and the means of the children's deliverance. The first and principal end of the Lord Christ's assumption of human nature was not to reign in it, but to suffer and die in it. He was indeed from of old designed unto a kingdom; but He was to "suffer," and so to enter into His glory. Glory was to follow, a kingdom to ensue; but suffering and dying were the principal work He came about.
pp. 32-33

J. Vernon McGee summarizes it this way:

Because we were made of flesh and blood, He took upon Himself flesh and blood. And He came into this world by human birth just like you and I came into the world.

"That through death he might destroy him." Christ Jesus came not only through birth--His birth didn't save anyone--but through death. It is by His death He saves us, not by His birth or by His life. His death brought to us salvation and deliverance from spiritual and eternal death.
p. 519

I have translated the word "destroy" as "RENDER POWERLESS."

Ray Stedman makes this comment:

The word means "to render impotent; to nullify; to render inoperative, inconsequential." That is the idea. The devil has not been eliminated, but the devil has been rendered impotent. Not to everyone! Not to everyone! Only under certain conditions is this true, but those conditions are available to all men in Jesus Christ. That is what he is saying. When we enter into the conditions we discover that what he says is thrillingly true: there is a freeing from lifelong bondage.

The devil does not have the power of death in the sense of determining who dies and when life shall end. Only God has that power. But the phrase, "the power of death" means the grip of death, its fearsomeness, its terrible quality. Bondage therefore is that of the reign of sin, the flesh. This is what Paul means in Romans 8 when he says, To set the mind on the flesh is death (v. 6). Death is the absence of life. Death is not something in itself, it is simply the absence of something.
p. 29

Not by His life, not by His example, not by His teachings, not by His miracles did Christ bring the devil to naught. But as the word says, "He partook of blood and flesh, that through death He might bring to naught him that hath the might of death, that is, the devil." This glorious truth, that through death Christ brought to naught the devil, is emphasized throughout Paul's epistles. In Romans we see Christ having become a propitiation through faith in His blood, bearing our sin, putting its guilt away; and we read, "He died to sin." Our old man was crucified with Him. The body of sin might be done away, that so we should no longer be in bondage to sin.

The king puts political prisoners in jail. If the king is overthrown, the right of the jailer to hold that political prisoner ceases. If he continues to hold him, he does it without a right. When Satan held us, it was by his authority. But Satan's right to hold us in jail was broken when his power was broken at the cross. So we have a right to be set free. This is the picture, not that we are released from jail, but our right to be held in jail was broken when Satan was defeated at the cross.

(31 Days of Praise: Enjoying God Anew by Ruth Myers)

As someone has put it, "It's a serious mistake to underestimate the power of Satan; it's a tragedy to overestimate it"--or to be overly occupied with it.
p. 142

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

'Even on the brink of Jordan,' said a dying saint, 'I find Satan nibbling at my heels.' We must fight till we die.
p. 55

(When Counseling Is Not Enough by J. Kirk Johnston)

Years ago when I was just beginning pastoral ministry a very disturbed woman began attending our church. This woman was extremely angry about her lot in life, in particular, the husband she felt stuck with. She was also clinically depressed. I never saw her smile or laugh; her face was always expressionless. I counseled with her on a number of occasions and tried to encourage her to see a Christian psychiatrist, which I believe she did. But neither my efforts nor anyone else's seemed to have any effect on her. Then one day she unexpectedly burst into my office. She was radiant! She was smiling from ear to ear. At first I was eager to learn what had changed, but after she told me what had transpired, I was reluctant to accept her explanation.

The woman explained that she had been under tremendous demonic oppression for some time and that the previous night she had been released from Satan's bondage. She said her problems were now behind her, and she was praising God for her deliverance.

As she relayed all this to me the woman could tell I was skeptical. I did not share her enthusiasm because I had little confidence in this so-called "deliverance." My response disappointed her a little, but I think she expected it. As she left, she encouraged me not to simply dismiss her account of what had happened to her--but I did.

While I fully expected her to lapse back into depression in the days and weeks that followed, she never did. Finally she landed a job and moved with her family to another part of the city, and I never saw her again.

As I reflect on this incident, I realize that I was like a lot of pastors and Christian counselors today. I believed that Satan is a real person and that he is waging war against God and His people. I also believed that Satan had deployed thousands of fallen angels to do his bidding and wreak havoc in this world. I did not believe, however, that Satan and his demons could be a serious threat to genuine believers, nor did I believe that satanic attacks were a common occurrence. I underestimated Satan's power and influence and assumed that when a believer was having problems they were due to sin, emotional trauma, or physical problems. I was wrong, and so are many pastors and counselors today who still view Satan as a minor or infrequent foe.

pp. 61-62

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

(When Counseling Is Not Enough by J. Kirk Johnston)

The word struggle here refers to hand-to-hand combat where any means of inflicting a wound is acceptable, or to a wrestling match where all the rules of fair play have been tossed out. Satan has no intention of playing fair. He cannot have us once we have trusted Christ. He cannot tear us out of God's powerful hand (John 10:28). However, he can do tremendous damage to us.
p. 63

The problem today is that even if people understand that Satan is heavily involved in the struggles that Christians have, most believers and Christian counselors do not really know how to deal with him. There is a lot of confusion in the area of spiritual warfare. The truth is that we are never commanded in the New Testament to exorcise demons, rebuke or bind Satan, or rid believers of ancestral curses. What the Bible does command us to do is to "resist" Satan by putting on the whole armor of God (Eph. 6:13).
p. 64

v.15 and might release those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Whereas in verse 14 the death of Christ rendered powerless Satan, it also effected the release of the one who appropriates that death to himself personally by faith.

The word translated "RELEASE" here is found in the papyri and used of a wife who desired to be divorced from a marriage contract. It is a technical word for divorce.

I'm sure you read the "Dear Abby" column from the lady who wrote:

My husband and I are slowly drifting apart. How can I speed up the process?

Revelation 1:17, 18

And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

Often people make wrong moral choices out of their intense desire for self-preservation. The readers were reminded that they were no longer subject to such slavery and that they could face death with the same confidence in God their Captain had.

DELIVERED FROM FEARS

A large old Bible, frequently used by Abraham Lincoln during the critical years of the Civil War, falls open easily to the 34th Psalm. If you examine that page, you will note that it is smudged at one spot. It seems obvious that the long, tapering fingers of the great emancipator often rested heavily on the fourth verse, which reads: "I sought the Lord, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Lincoln had obviously come to realize that God is a mighty refuge. The awareness of His presence had undoubtedly garrisoned the President's heart during his most severe difficulties and trials.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

A VISIT FROM GOD!

Charles Spurgeon wrote, "This great Prince entered our abode. This little planet of ours was made to burn with a superior light among its sister stars while the Creator sojourned here in human form. If for the first time you had heard of the visit of the Incarnate God to this world, you would be struck with a wonder which would last throughout eternity. This is the heart of the Gospel--the incomparable fact of the incarnation of the Son of God, His dwelling upon the earth, and His presentation of Himself as a sacrifice unto God for the sins of mankind."

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

THE LAST ENEMY

One Christian greatly feared dying. But the terrible death struggle he had anticipated never came. He died in his sleep so peacefully that those with him did not even realize he had left them. His sister remarked, "I believe that the Savior, knowing how much George dreaded dying, said to him, 'Come on home, George, there is nothing to fear. I will go with you through the valley.' So I believe he walked calmly, hand-in-hand with Jesus, into the Father's many mansions!"

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

THE DING-DONG PRINCIPLE

Corrie Ten Boom wrote: "In Holland we have many churches with belfries. The bells in the steeples are rung by hand, with a rope that is pulled from the vestibule of the church.

"One day a young Flemish girl, who had repented and received deliverance from lust and impurity, came to me while I was speaking in one of the churches.

"Even though I've been delivered,' she said, 'at night I still keep dreaming of my old way of life. I am afraid I will slip back into Satan's grasp.'

"Up in the church tower,' I said, nodding toward the belfry, 'is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the sexton lets go the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First, ding, then dong. Slower and slower until there's a final dong and it stops. I believe the same thing is true of deliverance. When the demons are cast out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, or when sin is confessed and renounced, then Satan's hand is removed from the rope. But if we worry about our past bondage, Satan will use this opportunity to keep the echoes ringing in our minds.'

"A sweet light spread across the girl's face. 'You mean even though I sometimes have temptations, that I am still free, that Satan is no longer pulling the rope which controls my life?'

"The purity of your life is evidence of your deliverance,' I said. 'You should not worry about the dings and the dongs, they are nothing but echoes.'

"Demons seldom leave without leaving behind vibrations--dings and dongs. It is as though they give the clapper one big swing on the way out, scaring us into thinking that they are still there. They know that, even though they have to flee at the name of Jesus, if we grow fearful over the remaining echoes, other demons can come in and take their place.

"The same is true of forgiveness. When we forgive someone, we take our hand off the rope. But if we've been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn't be surprised when the old angry thoughts keep coming up for a while. They're just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down."

[Tramp for the Lord, Fleming H. Revell, 1974. Pages 179-180.]

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once.

William Shakespeare

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

Man weeps to think that he will die so soon; woman, that she was born so long ago.

H. L. Mencken

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

Macaulay points out:

A missionary in China, J. W. Vinson, one of the noble army of martyrs, was asked by his captors if he were afraid. He replied, "No! If you shoot, I go straight to heaven." His heroic testimony inspired the pen of a fellow missionary, a Mr. Hamilton. Two verses of the poem which he wrote express our thought here:

Afraid? Of what?
To feel the spirit's glad release?
To pass from pain to perfect peace,
The strife and strain of life to cease?
Afraid?--of that?

Afraid? Of what?
Afraid to see the Saviour's face,
To hear His welcome, and to trace
The glory gleam from wounds of grace?
Afraid?--of that?

p. 39

Draper observes:

When Peter described Satan he said, "He prowls around like a hungry, roaring lion" (2 Peter 5:8, TLB). He did not say he was a roaring lion, he said Satan is like a roaring lion. Many of us never realize that Satan is a counterfeit. He is a phony. He is impersonating a lion. He has a great act. He goes about roaring and looking like a lion, and we bow before him. He has some similarities to a lion, but Jesus Christ broke his power. Jesus Christ does not want us to live under the power of Satan. He does not want us to live defeated by sin in our lives. He does not want us to be driven by the cheap attitudes and passions of this world.

Death is not God's desire for man. It is not God's plan. God never intended man to die. We die because we sin. We die because we rebelled against God. We die because we have given place to Satan in our lives. Satan is the one who has death in his repertoire, not God. God wants to remove it. So he declares that Jesus Christ came in order to break Satan's power. Those who are enslaved to the fear of death can be free. That is what God wants for us.

p. 61

The word "deliver" in 2:15 would be really popular today. It is a word used by a woman who is granted a divorce. She finally gets loose from her husband. She is free from the marriage contract. That's the way we are delivered from our contractual arrangement with Satan. The contract has been nullified, and we have been turned loose. God has taken care of it. We have been delivered from bondage. Jesus came so we could be delivered from Satan's hold on us and from the enslaving grip of the fear of death upon our lives. Jesus came and because he came, Satan's power has been broken.

p. 61

Hughes points out:

The fear of death is real and universal. All our lives are, as Mike Mason has suggested, "like the unfolding of a murder mystery in which we ourselves turn out to be the victim."

p. 77

Richards says:

But with Jesus' death, that fear and Satan who wielded its power have been done away. We need no longer fear death, because we now have been given life--eternal life. And this not only promises endless existence, but also promises the power to live now.

p. 26

Phillips says:

Satan is a defeated and disarmed foe. His sword, "the power of death," has been torn from his grasp. No Christian need fear death, for Satan has been vanquished and death is one of the things God actually gives to His people

(1 Co 3:21-22)! What an unpleasant gift, we think. That's one gift we could do without. But look at it this way. As a young man in the British armed forces, I was one time assigned to work in a prisoner-of-war camp. The place was full of German officers and men, all behind barbed wire. Now, nobody in Britain wanted German prisoners of war, but we had them and at least they couldn't harm anyone. They had been defeated and disarmed and placed out of harm's way. It is the same with death! We may not want it, but it is one of God's gifts to us and it cannot harm us. It can only "promote us to glory," as the Salvationists say.

pp. 60-61

Death would still try to frighten us, but, as Spurgeon put it, since death is "the last enemy" (1 Co 15:26) we should leave him till last. We are not given dying grace for living, only for dying. When the time comes to make our exodus, we shall pass over on dry ground.

It was part of the genius of John Bunyan to depict his hero, Christian, having a difficult time when it came time to die, for not all saints pass over easily. But Christian's companion, Hopeful, had a word of encouragement. "Be of good cheer, my brother," he said, "I feel the bottom, and it is good." Then Hopeful gave away the secret. "You shall find it deeper or shallower as you believe in the King of the place," he said.

p. 61

Charles Swindoll in his book Improving Your Serve, speaking on the subject of death, says:

It was a well-known author and pastor Charles Allen who first told the story of a little lad named John Todd, born in Rutland, Vermont, in the autumn of 1800. Shortly after the boy's birth, the Todd family moved to the little village of Killingsworth. It was there, when John was only six, that both his parents died. All the children had to be parceled out among relatives--and a kind-hearted aunt who lived ten miles away agreed to take John, to love him, to care for him, and to give him a home.

The boy lived there for some fifteen years and finally left as he went on to school to study for the ministry. Time passed gently as he began and later excelled in his work as a pastor. While he was in middle life, his elderly aunt fell desperately ill. Realizing death was not far off, in great distress she wrote her nephew. The pitiful letter included some of the same questions all of us must one day ask: "What will death be like? Will it mean the end of everything?" Fear and uncertainty were easily traced in the quivering lines of her letter.

Moved with compassion and swamped with the memories of yesteryear, he wrote her words of reassurance:

It is now thirty-five years since I, a little boy of six, was left quite alone in the world. You sent me word you would give me a home and be a kind mother to me. I have never forgotten the day when I made the long journey of ten miles to your house in North Killingsworth. I can still recall my disappointment when, instead of coming for me yourself, you sent your colored man, Caesar, to fetch me. I well remember my tears and my anxiety as, perched high on your horse and clinging tight to Caesar, I rode off to my new home. Night fell before we finished the journey and as it grew dark, I became lonely and afraid.

"Do you think she'll go to bed before I get there?" I asked Caesar anxiously. "O no," he said reassuringly. "She'll sure stay up FOR YOU.

When we get out of these here woods you'll see her candle shining in the window." Presently we did ride out in the clearing and there, sure enough, was your candle. I remember you were waiting at the door, that you put your arms close about me and that you lifted me--a tired and bewildered little boy--down from the horse. You had a big fire burning on the hearth, a hot supper waiting for me on the stove. After supper, you took me to my new room, you heard me say my prayers and then you sat beside me until I fell asleep.

You probably realize why I am recalling all this to your memory. Some day, soon God will send for you, to take you to a new home. Don't fear the summons--the strange journey--or the dark messenger of death. God can be trusted to do as much for you as you were kind enough to do for me so many years ago. At the end of the road you will find love and a welcome waiting, and you will be safe in God's care. I shall watch you and pray for you until you are out of sight, and then wait for the day when I shall make the journey myself and find you waiting at the end of the road to greet me.

pp. 207-9

In the book Terry Fox: His Story, Leslie Scrivener points out the following in speaking of Terry:

He also spoke of his faith and admitted it was difficult to tell a room full of reporters that he believed in God.

He told me he still felt he was "in the woods" and wanted to become closer to God: "I think of the world and what's going on. Because man's gone through history with so much death, killing, stealing, I don't think man can do it on his own. It's obvious what's going to happen on this earth unless man changes. I, for one, need something to grab onto, to hold onto. I haven't been told I'm going to die of cancer. When that happens, I want to have so much faith I won't have any fears at all. At the press conference in Thunder Bay the last question was: 'Is Terry Fox afraid?' Of course, I'm afraid. You'd be afraid, too, if you were in my position. Now, if my doctor tells me I'm going to die, I want to be able to say I'm not afraid."

p. 168

Joyce Landorf in her work The Mourning Song tells the following story:

Nurses carry out their various duties with callous indifference. They listen as little as possible and touch only when necessary. How sad but such is the force of denial.

It is as if they do indeed hear the mourning song, but they run blindly from the sound, holding their ears as they run, and hoping none of the messages will get through their carefully structured blockades.

I have seen the terminally ill children in several hospitals and I can fully appreciate how soul-tearing it is to try and work around them. However, it still is tragic to let denial rob us of feeling, caring and loving the dying child.

My co-worker Dr. James Dobson told me of a mother who was willing to put down her denial, pick up her own acceptance, and then beautifully prepare her little son for his death.

She was a large black woman, as picturesque as the plantation mammies of years ago. She came every day to the hospital to visit her little five-year-old son who was dying of the painful disease of lung cancer.

One morning before the mother got there, a nurse heard the little boy saying, "I hear the bells! I hear the bells! They're ringing!" Over and over that morning nurses and staff heard him.

When the mother arrived, she asked one of the nurses how her son had been that day. The nurse replied, "Oh, he's hallucinating today--it's probably the medication, but he's not making any sense. He keeps on saying he hears bells."

Then that beautiful mother's face came alive with understanding, and she shook her finger at the nurse and said, "You listen to me. He is not hallucinating and he's not out of his head because of any medicine. I told him weeks ago that when the pain in his chest got bad and it was hard to breathe, it meant he was going to leave us. It meant he was going to heaven--and that when the pain got really bad he was to look into the corner of his room--towards heaven--and listen for the bells of heaven--because they'd be ringing for him!" With that, she marched down that hall, swept into her little son's room, swooped him out of his bed, and rocked him in her arms until the sounds of ringing bells were only quiet echoes, and he was gone.

(The Forever Feast by Dr. Paul Brand)

I remember sitting with my mother on the steps of the Guest House at a leprosy hospital in India. We were facing east and the sun was rising over the mountains opposite us, flooding us with early light. I was soon to leave India, and Mother had a prophetic sense that she would not see me again. At ninety-five, Mother knew she would not live much longer and was giving me instructions about the way she wanted to be buried: "Don't let them make a coffin for me," she pleaded. "Too many trees are being cut down on the hills. There's no sense in making a box for me to be buried in. It is just a waste of wood. Tell them to wrap me in an old sheet--not a new one--and let them scatter flowers over my body before they lower me into the ground.

"I know they will want to cry, because they love me. But tell them to choose joyful hymns to sing, and hymns of victory. It's not me that they will be burying, but just my old body. I am going to be with my Lord. I may even be able to see them singing. I shall not be crying, and will not regret to see my body return to the earth. It has been a good body, but it has been getting weak and stiff lately, and it is time to put it away."

I couldn't reply. We just sat together, holding hands, until the sun became too hot for comfort. We went indoors and had breakfast, and I left the hospital, never to see her again. A month or two later she died. It fell to my beloved student and fellow worker, Dr Ernest Fritschi, to fulfill the functions of a son, and take my mother's body up to the mountains, and to preside over the arrangements for her burial.
pp. 55-56

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

He looks downward to the grave and he does it without fear. Hear what he says: 'I am ready to be offered.' I am like an animal brought to the place of sacrifice and bound with cords to the very horns of the altar. The drink offering, which generally accompanies the oblation, is already being poured out. The last ceremonies have been gone through. Every preparation has been made. It only remains to receive the death-blow, and then all is over.

'The time of my departure is at hand.' I am like a ship about to unmoor and put to sea. All on board is ready. I only wait to have the moorings cast off that fasten me to the shore, and I shall then set sail, and begin my voyage.

These are remarkable words to come from the lips of a child of Adam like ourselves! Death is a solemn thing, and never so much so as when we see it close at hand. The grave is a chilling, heart-sickening place, and it is vain to pretend it has no terrors. Yet here is a mortal man, who can look calmly into the narrow 'house appointed for all living', and say, while he stands upon the brink, 'I see it all, and am not afraid.'

p. 98

(When Heaven Is Silent by Ronald Dunn)

Dr. Vance Havner was a traveling preacher for forty years. He didn't marry until he was forty--said he wanted to think about it first. He never learned to drive a car. But his wife, Sara, drove them to his meetings in the Buick when they didn't fly or ride the train. The two of them were inseparable. Until 1973, when Sara died.

Occasionally someone would say to Dr. Havner afterward, "I hear you lost your wife."

"No," Dr. Havner would say, "I didn't lose her. I know right where she is. You haven't lost someone if you know where they are."

And then he would quote this poem:

Death can hide but not divide;

She is but on Christ's other side.

She with Christ and Christ with me,

United still in Christ are we.

pp. 119-120

(They Walked With God by James S. Bell, Jr.)

The grave has lost its terror. As I go on toward heaven I can shout--"O death! Where is thy sting?" and I hear the answer rolling down from Calvary--"buried in the bosom of the Son of God." He took the sting right out of death for me and received it into His own bosom. Take a hornet and pluck the sting out; you are not afraid of it after that any more than of a fly. So death has lost its sting. That last enemy has been overcome, and I can look on death as a crushed victim. All that death can get now is this old Adam, and I do not care how quickly I get rid of it. I shall get a glorified body, a resurrection body, a body much better than this.

D. L. Moody

06/23

(Final Call by Steven J. Lawson)

A little boy was to appear in his school's play. His one line was, "It is I; be not afraid." But he became so full of stage fright that when he came out on stage, all he blurted out was, "It's me and I'm scared to death!"
p. 57

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

Edward Hopper died at the age of 70 as he was sitting peacefully in his study, pencil in hand, working on a new poem about heaven. At his funeral this tribute was given: "Suddenly the gentle, affectionate spirit of Edward Hopper entered the heavenly port, as he had requested--safely piloted by that never-failing friend, Jesus, whose divine voice was still tenderly whispering to him, 'Fear not, I will pilot thee.'"

Jesus, Savior, pilot me over life's tempestuous sea; unknown waves
before me roll, hiding rocks and treach'rous shoal; chart and compass
come from Thee--Jesus, Savior, pilot me!

As a mother stills her child, Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
boist'rous waves obey Thy will when Thou say'st to them, "Be still."
Wondrous Sov'reign of the sea, Jesus, Savior, pilot me!

When at last I near the shore, and the fearful breakers roar 'twixt
me and the peaceful rest--then, while leaning on Thy breast, may I hear
Thee say to me, "Fear not--I will pilot thee."

p. 21

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging
by Brennan Manning)

Several years ago, I directed a parish renewal in Clearwater, Florida. The morning after it ended, the pastor invited me to his home for breakfast. Sitting on my plate was an envelope containing a brief note from a member of the church. It brought tears to my eyes: "Dear Brennan, In all my eighty-three years, I have never had an experience like this. During your week of renewal here at Saint Cecelia's, you promised that if we attended each night, our lives would be changed. Mine has. Last week I was terrified at the prospect of dying; tonight I am homesick for the house of my Abba."
p. 61

v.16 For of course He is not giving help to angels but He is giving help to the offspring of Abraham.

Here again we have a STATEMENT OF REASON.

It is a NEGATIVE and a POSITIVE statement:

Negatively,

"HE IS NOT TAKING AN INTEREST IN ANGELS."

"BUT" is the word of contrast.

Positively,

"HE IS TAKING AN INTEREST IN THE SEED OF ABRAHAM."

Galatians 3:6, 7

Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith that are sons of Abraham.

McGee points out:

In the Old Testament Christ took on the nature of angels. He did that when He appeared as the angel of the Lord, and these Hebrews understood that. When Christ left heaven and came to earth, He came past the angels and came to fallen man. He took on Him the seed of Abraham. He came in the line of Abraham. God began the preparation at the very beginning with Adam and Eve. At that time God said that there would come the seed of the woman (see Gen. 3:15). Then God said He would come in the line of Abraham, and a little farther along we learn that He would be born in the tribe of Judah, of the family of David, of the nation Israel.
p. 519

Wuest says:

The idea here is that the Lord Jesus, in His work on Calvary's Cross, did not provide for the salvation of fallen angels but for the salvation of fallen human beings. In perfect righteousness He passed by fallen angels, and in infinite mercy and condescension, stooped to provide salvation for man. He passed by the superior being to save an inferior being. He gets more glory in taking an inferior being and raising him to an exalted position in Christ Jesus, than in saving a superior being and raising him to those heights of blessedness.
p. 64

We learn from this verse that there is no salvation for fallen angels.

"HE IS GIVING HELP TO THE OFFSPRING OF ABRAHAM."

This emphasizes His humanity and takes us back to verse 14:

Since then the children have shared blood and flesh, He Himself also in just the same way partook of the same.

Believers, both Jews and Gentiles, are of the seed of Abraham.

v.17 Therefore, He was obligated to be made like His brethren in all things, in order that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

"Since then the children have shared blood and flesh" . . . "HE WAS OBLIGATED TO BE MADE LIKE HIS BRETHREN IN ALL THINGS."

Wuest says:

The incarnation made possible, therefore, His becoming a merciful high priest. The Greek word "merciful" speaks of that feeling of sympathy with the misery of another that leads one to act in his behalf to relieve that misery. The idea is that of a compassionate heart leading one to acts of mercy, the purpose of which is to relieve the suffering and misery of the object of that compassion. The Lord Jesus, being such a compassionate high priest, is, therefore, a faithful one, the word "faithful" here having the idea of fidelity.

p. 65

Phillips says:

The Lord Jesus has been made like His brethren so that He can be to us all that we need. We need Someone to intercede for us compassionately. He is merciful. We need Someone to intercede for us continuously. He is faithful. He can take care of our needs in God's presence.

p. 62

Griffith Thomas says:

The words "merciful and faithful" are important, because both are needed. Christ is at once "merciful" to man and "faithful" to God. The word "propitiation" is very important. It means "that which makes it consistent for God to pardon." It is sometimes said that propitiation in the New Testament is never directed to God, as though it were necessary to "propitiate" Him. But the question at once arises as to the real object of the word. How could man be propitiated? There must be one who appropriates and another who is appropriated; and when the publican offered his prayer it was: "God be propitious to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

The true idea seems to be, as Dr. Forsyth has well put it, that God offers to Himself the sacrifice of Christ, so that He is at once the One who propitiates and the One who is propitiated. This sets aside all idea of anything unworthy in God, like anger or offense, and refers to His righteous attitude against sin. His justice could not overlook sin and His love could not be indifferent to the sinner, and so what His righteousness demanded, His love provided (John 3:16), and Christ, God's gift to the world, is "the propitiation for our sins."
pp. 36-37

Westcott says:

Our High-priest is 'merciful' in considering the needs of each sinful man, and 'faithful' ('one in whom the believer can trust') in applying the means which He administers. It has been supposed that the one epithet expresses mainly the relation towards men and the other the relation toward God (c. iii. 2, 5); but here the relation towards men is alone in question, so that the faithfulness of Christ expresses that wherein men can trust with absolute confidence.
pp. 56-57

Hewitt says:

Wherefore may look backward; if so, its force would be, 'Since He is the Saviour not of angels but of men, it behoved Him to be made like unto the brethren'. If it looks forward, its force would be 'For this reason it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for the sin of His people'.
p. 75

Wiersbe says:

Jesus Christ is both merciful and faithful: He is merciful toward people and faithful toward God. He can never fail in His priestly ministries. He made the necessary sacrifice for our sins so that we might be reconciled to God. He did not need to make a sacrifice for Himself, because He is sinless.
p. 31

F. B. Meyer says:

When we are in need, we want help wedded with mercy. The patient in the infirmary does not like to be treated as a broken watch. Oh that he were at home again, to be nursed by the soft hands of his mother, which always seemed so skillful, and gentle, and soft! We need merciful help, which does not upbraid, is not in too great a hurry to listen, and gladly takes all extenuating circumstances into account. Such mercy is in the heart of Jesus. And his help is ever faithful, too. This word has a fine tint of meaning, almost lost in our translation, giving the idea of one who runs up at the first cry of distress. He neither slumbers nor sleeps. He watches us with a gaze which is not for a moment diverted from us. He sees us through the storm. He sits beside the molten metal. He will help us right early--i.e., when the day breaks. You may be bereft of all power of consecutive thought, unable to utter a single intelligible sentence, frantic with agony and remorse; but, if you only moan, He will instantly respond. "He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry."

p. 20

Sin is one of the greatest facts in our history. It is impossible to ignore it. You cannot explain man unless you take it into account. For this the world has been covered with the apparatus of sacrifice; and the cry has rung in a monotone of despair, "How shall man be just with God?"

But Jesus met the demands of conscience, echoing those of a broken law, when on Calvary, as High Priest, He offered Himself as victim, and made an all-sufficient, satisfactory, and complete sacrifice for the sin of the world.

Burdened one, groaning under the load of sin, remember that He bare thy sins in his own body on the tree. Approach the Holy God, reminding Him of that fact, and daring on account of it to stand unabashed and accepted in his sight.

pp. 20-21

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

By becoming incarnate and suffering he becomes our high priest. This is the first mention of priesthood. His priesthood is characterized by mercy and fidelity in service to God.

Montefiore in Black's commentary says:

Jesus is merciful in his relationship to men, and faithful in his relationship to God. He is not faithful because he is merciful: the two epithets describe different facets of his character. Nor is he called faithful because he is in principle trustworthy, but because he was in fact found faithful despite temptation. This point is further explained in the next chapter.
p. 67

"TO MAKE PROPITIATION" is in the PRESENT TENSE.

1 John 2:1, 2

My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;
and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

There are 4 R'S that spell out the fabulous work of our great High Priest in making a sacrifice of Himself:

- 1.RENDERED powerless Satan
- 2.He RELEASED from the fear of death
- 3.He provided REDEMPTION
- 4.He paid the RANSOM

He did this in making:

"PROPTIATION FOR THE SINS OF THE PEOPLE."

v.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 being tempted.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The Captain has indeed been made perfect for His role in leading them into participation in His future glory.

Hewitt says:

The power of sympathy lies not in the mere capacity for feeling but in the lessons of experience for, having suffered being tempted, our High Priest is able to succour them that are tempted. Furthermore, the power of sympathy does not depend on the experience of sin, but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity.
p. 76

Westcott says:

Christ's High-priestly work, which has been considered in the last clause of v. 17 in relation to God, is now considered in relation to man. In this respect the efficacy of His High-priesthood, of His mercy and faithfulness, is shewn in the power of its application to suffering men. Propitiation must not only be made for them but also applied to them. He who propitiates must enter into the experience of the sinner to support him in temptation. And this Christ can do; . . .
p. 58

The power of sympathy lies not in the mere capacity for feeling, but in the lessons of experience. And again, sympathy with the sinner in his trial does not depend on the experience of sin but on the experience of the strength of the temptation to sin which only the sinless can know in its full intensity.
p. 59

Griffith Thomas says:

There are some ten passages in the New Testament which declare that Christ is "able," culminating in the assurance that "God is able to make all grace abound" (II Cor. 9:8).
p. 37

Let us meditate for a moment on the fact that "HE IS ABLE."

Here the text says, "HE IS ABLE TO COME TO THE AID (or run to the cry, to run at a cry for help)."

Matthew 9:28

And after He had come into the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

Matthew 26:53

"Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?"

Matthew 26:61

And said, "This man stated, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to rebuild it in three days.'"

John 5:30

"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

Matthew 20:22

But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you are asking for. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They said to Him, "We are able."

Matthew 10:28

"And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul;
but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."

Hebrews 4:15

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 5:7

In the days of His flesh, He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears to the One able to save Him from death, and He was heard because of His piety.

Romans 16:25

Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past.

Jude 24, 25

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed.

Barclay says:

And because He sympathises Jesus can really help. He knows our need; He has met our sorrows; He has faced our temptations. And because of that He knows exactly what help we need and He can give it. The supreme truth of Jesus is that because He went through things Himself He can help others who are going through them.

p. 21

Draper says:

Jesus can do it, because he has been through all of this and even more. When Satan bombards us, take heart. Jesus Christ has been there. Jesus Christ has victory. He will rebuke Satan. He has broken Satan's power. Then he will use that experience to make us a blessing to others who experience testing. That is what the Apostle Paul meant when he wrote, "Blessed be God . . . who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (2 Corinthians 1:3, 4). Satan is defeated. He is a counterfeit. He is a fraud. His power has been broken. His penalty has been confirmed. His presence has been rebuked. If we will claim it, all that Jesus Christ is will be ours.

p. 66

Pink says:

Oh, what a Saviour is ours! The all-mighty God; yet the all-tender Man. One who is as far above us in His original nature and present glory as the heavens are above the earth; yet One who can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities." One who is the Creator of the universe; yet One who became Man, lived His life on the same plane ours is lived, passed through the same trials we experience, and suffered not only as we do, but far more acutely. How well-fitted is such a One to be our great High Priest! How self-sufficient He is to supply our every need! And how completely is the wisdom and grace of God vindicated for having appointed His blessed Son, to be made, for a season, lower than the angels! May our love for Him be strengthened and our worship deepened by the contemplation of what has been before us in these first two chapters of Hebrews.

p. 151

"HE IS ABLE TO COME TO THE AID OF THOSE WHO ARE BEING TEMPTED."

That is:

TEMPTED BY SUFFERING

and TEMPTED TO QUIT.

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

We may face situations beyond our reserves but never beyond God's resources.

p. 25

(The Book of Virtues by William J. Bennett)

Our Heroes

Phoebe Cary

Seeing what is right and doing it with firm resolve, despite the opinions of the crowd, is the mark of moral courage.

Here's a hand to the boy who has courage
 To do what he knows to be right;
 When he falls in the way of temptation,
 He has a hard battle to fight.
 Who strives against self and his comrades
 Will find a most powerful foe.
 All honor to him if he conquers.
 A cheer for the boy who says "NO!"

There's many a battle fought daily
 The world knows nothing about;
 There's many a brave little soldier
 Whose strength puts a legion to rout.
 And he who fights sin singlehanded
 Is more of a hero, I say,
 Than he who leads soldiers to battle
 And conquers by arms in the fray.

Be steadfast, my boy, when you're tempted,
 To do what you know to be right.
 Stand firm by the colors of manhood,
 And you will o'ercome in the fight.
 "The right," be your battle cry ever
 In waging the warfare of life,
 And God, who knows who are the heroes,
 Will give you strength for the strife.

p. 461

(In His Image by Dr. Paul Brand & Philip Yancey)

Somehow, by drawing on the resources of Christ, I become better equipped to meet temptation. Let me explain what happens, using the analogy of blood.

Some years ago an epidemic of measles struck Vellore and one of my daughters had a severe attack. We knew she would recover, but our other infant daughter, Estelle, was dangerously vulnerable because of her age. When the pediatrician explained our need for convalescent serum, word went around Vellore that the Brands needed the "blood of an overcomer." We did not actually use those words, but we called for someone who had contracted measles and had overcome it. Serum from such a person would protect our little girl.

It was no use finding somebody who had conquered chicken pox or had recovered from a broken leg. Such people, albeit healthy, could not give the specific help we needed to overcome measles. We needed someone who had experienced measles and had defeated that disease. We located such a person, withdrew some of his blood, let the cells settle out, and injected the convalescent serum. Equipped with "borrowed" antibodies, our daughter fought off the disease successfully. The serum gave her body enough time to manufacture her own antibodies. She overcame measles not by her own resistance or vitality, but as a result of a battle that had taken place previously within someone else.

There is a sense in which a person's blood becomes more valuable and potent as that person prevails in numerous battles with outside invaders. After antibodies have locked away the secret of defeating each disease, a second infection of the same type will normally do no harm. A protected person has "wise blood," to use a term Flannery O'Connor originated. Could this process cast light on the description of Christ being "made perfect through suffering" (Heb. 2:10)? Recall the just-quoted passage from Hebrews: "Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted" (2:18). And again, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin" (4:15).

The blood of Jesus Christ has overcome. It is as if He went out of His way to expose Himself to temptation, to encounter the stress and strain you and I will meet--to gain wise blood for our benefit. Beginning with His personal struggle with Satan in the wilderness, Jesus declined to use naked power to overcome temptations toward success, power, and an escape from the limitations of humanity. In the Garden of Gethsemane those temptations put Him to the ultimate test, but "for the joy set before him [he] endured the cross, scorning its shame" (Heb. 12:2).

Today, when we partake of Communion wine, it is as though our Lord is saying to us, This is My blood, which has been strengthened and prepared for you. This is My life which was lived for you and can now be shared by you. I was tired, frustrated, tempted, abandoned; tomorrow you may feel tired, frustrated, tempted, or abandoned. When you do, you may use My strength and share My spirit. I have overcome the world for you.
pp. 94-95

(The Life of God in the Soul of Man by Rev. Henry Scougal)

There is no slavery so base as that whereby a man becomes a drudge to his own lusts, or any victory so glorious as that which is obtained over them.
p. 77

(When Heaven Is Silent by Ronald Dunn)

My confidence lies in Him who loved me and gave Himself for me.

His love in times past
Forbids me to think,
He will leave me at last
In trouble to sink.

p. 203

(When Counseling Is Not Enough by J. Kirk Johnston)

As one person has stated:

No matter how well I come to know the Lord, until I actually see Him [in heaven], my life will still be a mess--and so will yours.
p. 102

(The Pleasures of God by John Piper)

God is not waiting for us, he is pursuing us. That, in fact, is the literal translation of Psalm 23:6, "Surely goodness and mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life." I have never forgotten how a great teacher once explained it to me. He said God is like a highway patrolman pursuing you down the interstate with lights flashing and siren blaring to get you to stop-- not to give you a ticket, but to give you a message so good it couldn't wait till you get home.

p. 191

(God Works the Night Shift by Ron Mehl)

What does this divine "calling card" look like? If it really was a printed card, it might say something like this on the front:

**GOD, YOUR FATHER
JESUS CHRIST, YOUR SHEPHERD
THE HOLY SPIRIT, YOUR COUNSELOR**
Alpha and Omega.
The Beginning and the End.

It would probably have a little note penned on the back in God's own handwriting. Something like, You may not have been this way before, but I have! I've gone on ahead of you now to scope things out and get things ready. See you soon. And by the way, I love you.

pp. 91-92

God is aware of your circumstances, and moves among them.

God is aware of your pain, and monitors every second of it.

God is aware of your emptiness, and seeks to fill it in a manner beyond your dreams.

God is aware of your wounds and scars, and knows how to draw forth a healing deeper than you can imagine.

p. 20

(They Walked With God by James S. Bell, Jr.)

This is one of the most precious words in the New Testament. If you have never tried it, I entreat you to begin to test it in daily experience. "Walk in the Spirit," hour by hour, by watchful obedience to His slightest promptings, and you will find that "you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh."

As soon as you are aware of temptation, look instantly to Jesus. Flee to Him quicker than a chicken runs beneath the shelter of its mother's wing when the falcon is in the air. In the morning, before you leave your room, put yourself definitely into His hands, persuaded He is able to keep that which you commit unto Him. Go from your home with the assurance that He will cover you with His feathers, and under His wings shall you trust. And when the tempter comes, look instantly up and say, "Jesus, I am trusting Thee to keep me."

7/22

F. B. Meyer

One is reminded of the words of AMY CARMICHAEL:

"O Lord Jesus, my Beloved, may I be a joy to thee. . . ."

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: It was fitting in the Father's plan for the Son to pay for our sins with His life.

LESSON #2: God matures and perfects us through suffering.

LESSON #3: Jesus Christ is our POINT MAN, our CHAMPION, our FILE LEADER.

LESSON #4: "HE IS NOT ASHAMED TO BE CALLING THEM BRETHREN."

LESSON #5: Through His death, Jesus Christ rendered Satan powerless.

LESSON #6: He has provided a release through His resurrection.

LESSON #7: He stepped past fallen angels and came to fallen man to provide eternal salvation.

LESSON #8: He is a "MERCIFUL AND FAITHFUL HIGH PRIEST."

LESSON #9: When He died upon the cross, He made a satisfactory sacrifice for sins past, present and future.

LESSON #10: "HE IS ABLE TO COME TO THE AID OF THOSE WHO ARE BEING TEMPTED."

(Holiness by J. C. Ryle)

Then see from these verses how near you are to home. Your salvation is nearer than when you first believed. A few more days of labour and sorrow, and the King of kings shall send for you, and in a moment your warfare shall be at end, and all shall be peace.

p. 189

'I have some of the best news to impart. One beloved by you has accomplished her warfare, has received an answer to her prayers, and everlasting joy rests upon her head. My dear wife, the source of my best earthly comfort for twenty years, departed on Tuesday.' (Venn's letter to Stillingfleet, announcing the death of his wife.)

p. 190

"O Lord Jesus, my Beloved, may I be a joy to thee. . . ."

Amy Carmichael

Dear Lord, take up the tangled strands,
Where we have wrought in vain,
That by the skill of Thy dear hands
Some beauty may remain. --Burroughs

(From Our Daily Bread, August 11, 1994)