

**~Other Speakers S-Z: David Servant:**

Today we are introduced to the author's primary concern for his Hebrew Christian readers. He did not want them to "drift away" (2:1) from the truth they had embraced about Jesus. So he returns to his comparison of the old and new covenants, endorsing both but emphasizing the superiority of the latter, reminding his readers that the consequences were dire for those who ignored God's old covenant revelation delivered by angels. Thus how much more true would that be for those who ignored God's new covenant revelation delivered by His own Son, to whom, unlike angels, He has exalted to rule "the world to come" (2:5-8)? To stress its importance, God confirmed that same message through apostles anointed with signs and wonders (2:3-4). It was not meant to be ignored!

The author again appeals to old covenant scripture to make his new covenant point, citing Psalm 8, where David spoke prophetically of Christ's incarnation, a time when He was made "a little lower than the angels" and of His subsequent exaltation and still-future reign over the world. He declares that Jesus "tasted death for everyone" (2:9). (I'm sure you noticed that he wrote, "everyone," and not "the alleged pre-selected few," so I won't mention it!)

When the author writes that Jesus was perfected through sufferings, he does not mean that Jesus had any need to become morally perfect, but that He became the perfect substitute and Savior through His sufferings. It was by that act that He met the requirements of God's justice. His sufferings and death were credited to our account, and the end result will be His "bringing many sons to glory" (2:10). Now we have become members of His family, and we share His Father! He not only provided our forgiveness, but He now works in us to sanctify us (2:11). We're spiritual brothers of the Son of God (2:11-13)! No wonder the author refers to all of this as "so great a salvation" (2:3). It is amazingly, incredibly wonderful. To drift away from it would be criminal.

What was one of the reasons that Jesus became a man? "Since then the children [that is, we who believe] share in flesh and blood [we have physical bodies], He Himself likewise also partook of the same [a physical body], that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil" (2:14). In order to render Satan powerless by His death, Jesus had to have a physical body that could die, because God can't die.

How has Satan been rendered powerless over us by Jesus' death? Satan has the God-given right to rule all those who are not submitted to God. He serves as a subordinate instrument of God's wrath upon rebels. By Jesus' death for our sins, however, we've been set free from God's wrath and thus also from Satan's power, which the author refers to as "the power of death" (2:14). The spiritual death that resides within every unsaved person is Satan's very nature (see Eph. 2:2). We could almost say that anyone who is not born again is mildly devil-possessed, but when he believes in Jesus he undergoes an immediate exorcism. Satan's nature is eradicated from his inner man!

Another reason that the Son of God became a man was so He could become our high priest (2:17). The Hebrew Christians could certainly understand that analogy, because it was only through the mediation of the high priest and the blood sacrifice that their sins could be covered under the old covenant. It was through the sacrifice of Himself that Jesus made "propitiation for the sins of the people" (2:17). To propitiate means to "turn away wrath," and that's what Jesus did for us. He turned away God's righteous wrath by bearing the penalty we deserved.

Jesus is a compassionate high priest, because He knows from experience what it's like to be tempted as a human being, and "He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted" (2:18). To the persecuted Hebrew Christians who were being tempted to drift away from Christ and revert to Judaism, that would have been especially encouraging news.