

Jesus is Our Champion and Brother

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Date: 14 February 2021

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[0 : 00] All right, good morning, everybody. Again, like Bear said, I'm Jesse. So glad that you're here. Those of you who are new with us, glad that you came. We are in our second installment of our Hebrew series, so great time to join and jump in.

So if you have your Bibles, go ahead and turn to Hebrews 2, verse 5. We're gonna start reading from there. If not, verses are up behind me. So we're gonna jump right into it, guys.

We've got a lot of ground to cover, a lot of good ground to cover, so let's go for it. Hebrews 2, verse 5 starts out this way. For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.

It has been testified somewhere. What is man that you are mindful of him, or the son of man that you care for him? You made him for a little while lower than the angels.

You have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet. Now, in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control.

[1 : 00] At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him, but we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, I will tell of your name to my brothers.

In the midst of the congregation, I will sing your praise. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, behold, I and the children God has given me. Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

[2 : 29] For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. This is God's word. So last week, we started out looking at Hebrews, and it talked about Jesus as being greater than everything.

It shows that he was greater than all the prophets that were before him, greater than all the great spiritual men that preceded him, greater even than the angels. And it wasn't that Jesus wasn't God.

It actually went on to say that Jesus is God. And so we saw that he was the original word. He was the final word. He's the sustaining word in our lives.

In every way, he is superior to everything. But when we look and we consider the text that we just read, it gives us another side of Jesus and who he is. And so even though Jesus is this ultimate exalted son of God seated on the throne over everything, right?

He is God. He's the ultimate VIP. He chooses not to behave like one. Even though Jesus is greater than us, he chose to be there right with us.

[3 : 40] We are familiar with the phrase, don't let success go to your head, right? We kind of like, it's a familiar idea. The implication there is that the more accomplished we become, or the more wealthy, or the more educated, whatever it is, whatever that more is that we attain to, right, climbing that ladder of success, what happens is that we start to see ourselves a little bit differently, kind of as better than those that we used to be like.

So I remember my first promotion in the business world. I went from a data entry guy, right, to an entry-level programming position in this company. And so all of my friends on the data entry floor were telling me, hey, you know, don't forget about us.

Don't change. The assumption being, you know, don't turn into this snob that thinks he's too good for us. And of course, I promised I wouldn't do that, but I did. I moved upstairs to the programming floor, and over time stopped coming down to say hi, never ate lunch with them again.

And to be honest, I began to think I was better than them. I had moved up, and I had moved on. And that's exactly the opposite of Jesus. From what we see in these verses, he actually moved down and in.

Verse 9 says, But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus. Jesus. So Jesus is God, right? We all agree with that. You can't get higher than that.

[5 : 01] There's nowhere else to go. But for a little while, what did he do? He lowered himself. He humbled himself. He chose to be underneath and equivalent to creation.

You know, he's creator. He came and humbled himself to that level. So why did Jesus do that? Why did Jesus humble himself? And this is where Christianity is unlike any other religion.

See, in every other religion, in many other religions, like their gods that came to earth, they did it for self-interest, right? Their lives were kind of, they were here on earth, but they lived above the human experience.

They came for glory, or they came for passion and to experience lust, or to do these great exploits. So they got all the best kind of what the human experience is, but avoided all the worst part of the human experience.

So what Jesus, what was Jesus' motivation then? Was he like that? What was his motivation to leave the riches of heaven and come to earth? What was his angle? What does he get out of doing that?

[6 : 04] Well, we find in Hebrews 9, the rest of that verse, and then again in verses 14 and 15. But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that, so that by the grace of God, he might taste death for everyone.

Since therefore, it says in verse, picking up in verse 14, Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of those same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.

So this tells us why Jesus came. Why did he humble himself? Well, he came to set us free. Jesus is our champion who fought and won our victory. Now, that is an interesting concept, but it actually makes more sense.

If you're a Hebrew, the ancient world and how battles worked in those days, that was quite a common thing called a contest of champions. So what would happen? You'd have these two armies show up of opposing sides, and instead of the whole army fighting in a battle, what they would do is that each side would pick their best warrior for a face-off, right?

Little one-on-one, the ultimate one-on-one to the death. So if your champion was killed, if he lost, that meant your side lost, which means you had to surrender or run like you know what.

[7 : 38] The Hebrews, they were familiar with this concept. You remember the story of David and Goliath, right? Those of you familiar with the Bible, this is, you know, that's what's happening here.

Goliath, the Philistines' greatest warrior at the time, was challenging Israel to send out their best fighting man to face him one-on-one.

It was a contest of champions. And Israel's army, we read for days upon days upon days, Goliath comes out and says, hey, pick your champion to face me.

They produced nobody. They're all cowering in fear because none of them, all of them realized, man, we can't beat this giant. There is no way. And then David, this little shepherd boy, steps up to the plate.

And we see in that battle of champions, David defeats Goliath, keeping Israel from becoming slaves to the Philistines. But that battle, as cool as it is, it points to a greater battle for you and me.

[8 : 36] See, you and I and everybody have two undefeatable giants in our lives, sin and death, okay? And this is the power the devil wields over us. So the devil, interesting choice of words here.

The devil, literally the translation for the devil means the accuser. So the idea here is that he stands and accuses us, and he has power to accuse us because we are sinners who sin.

And his power comes from the law. So it's not like he's making stuff up. The power comes through the law. He's saying, man, you know, in the courtroom, in the divine courtroom, hey, Jesse broke these laws.

He got angry. He sinned against so-and-so. And I stand condemned because of that. He stands there and accuses us like an attorney in a courtroom, and we have to realize we are all guilty.

And what does the Bible say the wages of sin is? The wages of sin is death. All of this, what it means is we have no way of winning against these giants. Like that whole Israelite army in David versus Goliath, that scenario, we also cower in fear knowing we will be defeated.

[9 : 50] And then enters Jesus, our champion. Now, let's consider Jesus as champion because he's a champion like no other. See, the champions of old vanquish their foes by striking them down on the field of battle.

This was the fame of David. He struck down the Goliath. He killed him, chopped off his head. Or Achilles, right? He struck down Hector in the ancient Greek mythology, earning victory for his side.

But Jesus didn't win that way. Jesus won our victory through suffering and death. Our champion had to die to win, which seems a little bit backwards, right?

It seems like a lot of weakness. Not a very impressive champion, but actually it makes perfect sense. How else can one defeat death? How do you do that?

The only way to defeat death is to experience, is to go through resurrection from it. So to beat death, first you have to die.

[10 : 53] You have to be swallowed up in death. And that's what Jesus did, right? He died. Death swallowed him up, but it said the grave could not hold him.

He came out of the grave. But here's the funny thing, right? He didn't take the easiest route to dying. You know, if all he had to do was rise from the dead, why didn't he pick a more comfortable, quick way to die than being tortured and crucified, which by all accounts, across all of history, it was one of the worst possible ways to go through death.

Jesus didn't choose the easiest option. Anything would have been better than that. And there's a reason he had to endure such suffering. Because his death was also atoning for our sin.

See, it wasn't just enough for him to defeat death. Jesus had also to defeat the power of sin over you and me as well. And the only way for a man, for a human being to defeat sin is to be forgiven and have it removed.

Well, how does that happen? Well, the only way God has seen fit from the beginning of sin up till now and through the rest of time until Jesus returns, the only way that can happen for your sins to be forgiven is through a sacrifice of atonement.

[12 : 10] That's it. No other way. You can't work your way out of it. You have to have a sacrifice of atonement. So this is what Jesus did.

Verse 17 points it out. It says, He came to make propitiation for the sins of the people. Propitiation, what the heck is that, right? Big word. Let me explain.

That just means a propitiation is a form of a sacrifice. It is a sacrifice made on behalf of a guilty party to satisfy God's wrath toward their sin. So in the Old Testament, how that worked out, it was through the sacrifice of an animal, a lamb or a bull.

And when a person sacrificed them, what it did, it satisfied God's wrath over their sin and restored His favor toward them, right? He became propitious, which is favorable towards them again.

This is why Jesus had to die on the cross for us, guys. This is why Jesus had to die on the cross. And He was the once for all sacrifice for our sin. Once for all.

[13 : 15] This is why we don't need to sacrifice animals anymore, thankfully. Jesus died once for our sins. And that is why He's our champion, whose victory required suffering and death.

But like any champion, He also got the spoils of victory. It says He's crowned with glory and honor, right? It said in those verses, He went through it all.

Now He's crowned with glory and victory. Now we might be tempted to think, oh, now He's up there in heaven on the throne. Man, people are praising and worshiping Him. He's got like the great promotion, VIP status.

We are tempted to think that this victorious Jesus is somehow far away, removed, forgotten about us, basking in His glory. But the reality is He has not forgotten us at all.

I love this part, man. Verse 11, check it out, guys. For He, Jesus, who sanctifies, who makes holy, those who are sanctified. He's talking about us disciples, right?

[14 : 17] We all have one source, God the Father. And that is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers. Jesus hasn't left us behind.

Jesus hasn't forgotten about us. In fact, it's quite the opposite. He seems to be proud of us. He boasts in the fact that we are family.

Jesus is proud to be our brother. That is an amazing thing. Let's stop and really reckon and consider that, how amazing that is. Because I don't know about you, I know myself, I am not the A student, captain of the football team, serving in soup kitchens on the weekend, who joined the Marine Corps, right?

Like, I'm not the poster boy in the wall that everyone's like, oh, look at this, look at my amazing son, we're so proud of him. Right? We all have those family members that everyone's kind of proud of. But like, hey, we're happy to own this guy.

And then we have the ones that are just way over here, we're just like, yeah, this, you know. Uncle Fred, he's just, you know, he's there. We don't need to talk about him. So if I'm honest, I'm more like the black sheep.

[15 : 33] I know the things I do. I know the things I think. And Jesus, he knows all those things as well, every single one of them. He knows all my screw-ups. He knows my bad intentions.

He knows my jealousy, my pettiness. He knows my lusts. He knows my angers. He knows my greed. He knows my prejudice. And yet he is proud to call me brother.

You know, parents sometimes will joke with each other, right? When one of our kids is misbehaving, we kind of say like, hey, that's your kid, not mine right now. Jesus never jokes like that.

There is never one time where he says, and there is not one time where he ever thinks, whoa, whoa, whoa. The way he's acting right now, not claiming him, not claiming him as a brother.

No, he's too invested in us. He loves us too much to give up on us like that, which is why he fights for us all the time. And Jesus isn't just our champion who left and went away.

[16 : 35] He is our brother in the trenches with us. Now, you might be thinking, why does Jesus need to fight for us still, though?

I thought you said he was our champion, right? One and done. It's all good. All finished. That's a good question. Great observation. And there's a great answer for it as well.

Right here in Hebrews verse 8, it says, now in putting everything in subjection to him, talking about Jesus, so everything is in subjection to him. He's king of kings, right?

Lord over all. He left nothing outside of his control, it says. And then he makes this little like a side statement, but at the present, at the present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him.

So the author of Hebrews is pointing out the obvious, but it's something we need to realize and accept. Jesus is sovereign, right? He is Lord over all. Everything has been put in subjection to him already.

[17 : 36] However, at the same time, we do not see everything subjected to him. Not yet, at least. And this is commonly referred to as the already, but not yet of the kingdom of God.

Jesus is already sovereign over all things, but not yet everything is subjected to him or surrendered to him. Jesus is our champion, defeated the kingdom ruled by Satan, sin, and death.

He won the war. Their power's broken. Their power has been severely weakened. So his kingdom prevailed over theirs. But while they are subjected to Jesus underneath them, they are not yet surrendered.

And there is a huge difference between subjection and surrender. We have to realize that. Take the story of David and Goliath. David killed Goliath, right? So the Philistines lost that battle.

But what did they do? They didn't surrender. In fact, they fled. They ran away. And they had to, Israel had to chase them down and strike them down as much as they could. But still, even after that, the Philistines, even though they were under subjection to Israel, they had not yet really surrendered.

[18 : 47] They were still fighting against the Israelites. And that's the same as God's kingdom. Satan, sin, and death, they are still out there waging war. And it's not a battle they're going to win.

We know that. We know who wins in the end. But they're going to fight to the end. And we can still see darkness and evil running rampant throughout the world. And here's the thing, God, that the church, God's people, you and me, his redeemed, we are God's army that fights back against this darkness.

We're called to, as we say, push back darkness. But it's not a war waged like typical warfare. It's not waged against flesh and blood. We don't use physical weapons. We fight a spiritual battle.

There's this great hymn called O Church Arise. And it describes this with great clarity. It says this, O church, arise, put your armor on. Hear the call of Christ, our captain.

For now the weak can say that they are strong in the strength that God has given. With shield of faith and belt of truth, we'll stand against the devil's lies.

[19 : 54] An army bold, whose battle cry is love, reaching out to those in darkness. Our call to war, to love the captive soul, but to rage against the captor.

And with the sword that makes the wounded whole, we will fight with faith and valor. I love the beginning of that second verse. Our call to war, to love the captive soul, but to rage against the captor with the sword that makes the wounded whole.

Beautiful imagery. Our weapons bring healing. They bring hope. They bring freedom for all souls ravaged by sin and enslaved to it.

And Jesus is our captain. He leads us on. He is our champion. And he is our brother in the trenches with us.

He fights with us. He goes before us and he empowers us to fight. He gives us everything that we need to fight with him by sending the Holy Spirit, by giving us gifts from the Holy Spirit to wage this war with him.

[21 : 07] We fight together as his church. We fight with our captain and our king and our champion. Now, that is awesome. And it's like, man, we want to run out here and take the nations, right?

But it's important. As important that is, and that's awesome, and that should rev us up. It's important to remember that the darkness isn't just out there. The darkness is in us as well, right?

We also fight the remaining sin in our own hearts. Christians, we too are those that are under subjection. We are under the lordship of Jesus.

He's our king. And yet, we know that we are not totally and fully surrendered in every area of our life, right? We are also growing in surrender. But guess what, guys?

This doesn't make Jesus our enemy. It makes him even more of our ally because he's our brother. Check out what verse 17 and 18 says, Therefore, he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

[22 : 18] For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. Jesus is the brother that never gives up on us because he understands our weakness.

It says he was made like us in every respect. Every respect. And we used to say, Yeah, but, but, but.

No, every respect. This means he experienced life just like we do, right? He got hungry like we do. He got thirsty. He got cold. He got sunburned.

His body got infections, flu, diarrhea, coughs, you name it. I'm sure as a teenager, a young man growing up with hormones, he burned with desire like every other young man and woman experiences.

He was tempted in every way just like us, yet he was without sin. There is nothing that you face that Jesus doesn't understand.

[23 : 23] Nothing. There's nothing that you face that Jesus does not understand. If you've been abused, betrayed, maligned, slandered, gossiped, Jesus experienced that too.

If you feel worn out, weary, ready to give up, ready to throw in the towel, Jesus lived that to the uttermost. If you've ever felt like God's forgotten you, Jesus literally experienced that on the cross.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why did he have to endure such sorrows? Verse 17, so that he could become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God.

God, every Hebrew that read that ears would have perked up because the high priest played a significant role in their lives in relationship to God.

The high priest was the highest representative of an Israelite before God. The high priest was the one man allowed to come into the very presence of God in a place called the Holy of Holies.

[24 : 39] And he came to plead for God's favor, for his mercy and grace over his Israelite brothers. But that would happen only one time a year on the day of atonement.

So in Jesus, we have a brother who was our faithful and merciful high priest. He understands our weakness. He understands your weakness because he lived them.

And this means he is always fighting for us. Hebrews 7, 24 says this, but he, talking about Jesus, holds his priesthood permanently.

Never have to worry about Jesus not being a high priest. He's always going to hold that priesthood permanently because he continues forever. Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Dane Ortlund has a brilliant explanation for what these verses mean. He says this, Christ's present heavenly intercession on our behalf is a reflection of the fullness and victory and completeness of his earthly work.

[25 : 59] Not a reflection of anything lacking in his earthly work. The atonement accomplished our salvation. Intercession is the moment-by-moment application of that atoning work.

In the past, Jesus did what he now talks about. In the present, Jesus talks about what he then did. Intercession is the constant hitting refresh of our justification in the court of heaven.

That's a beautiful thing. Jesus never stops interceding for us, ever. If I could have the band come up.

Jesus is able to save us to the uttermost. He is able to save us to the uttermost. Even if our sinning goes to the uttermost, his grace goes further.

Jesus, as our brother high priest, means grace and salvation always outpace our sinfulness. Like the song says, before the throne of God above, I have a strong and perfect plea.

[27 : 09] A great high priest, whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. If you're here and you haven't put your faith in Jesus before, man, Jesus is the champion, brother, high priest, and he's calling you to repent and believe.

That is his salvation that he holds out to you. That is what faith in Jesus leads us to. And if you're asking right now, man, what must I do to be saved? That's all it takes.

It's repent and believe. He is who he is. And I'll invite you to do that today. For those of us who are Christians, we do the same thing.

We repent and believe all the time. Luther famously said, birds fly, fish swim, Christians repent. And it's so easy for us to take our eyes off Jesus.

It's so easy to put our hope for salvation in the wrong things, in our own abilities. It's so easy for us to get downcast, actually, when we mess up and think somehow we've gone outside of God's grace.

[28 : 24] But Jesus, our champion, he's won the victory. We don't have to fight for it. Jesus, our brother, he's proud of you. He puts you on his wall, right?

He's not hiding you away. He boasts in you. He loves you. And he intercedes for you. All the time, nonstop.

He fights for us. Let's pray. Father, I pray for us today. Our hearts would really, really believe this. Really believe this.

For those of you, for those of us in the room that are just coming into faith, I pray this would captivate our hearts. For those of us who are Christians, this would captivate our hearts afresh and anew.

That we would be so thankful that you, Jesus, are our champion, that you call us brothers and sisters. You brought us into your family and that you never stop interceding for us.

[29 : 29] Thank you. Amen. Amen.