

THE CRUX OF JESUS BECOMING MAN—THE CRUCIFIXION

Powerful song (referring to solo), isn't it? It reminds us that although we weren't **physically** at the cross, our sins helped nail Jesus there...and caused His blood to be spilt...and crucified Him. It also goes hand in hand with the song we sang together just a little while ago: *Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?* The song asks the question—but doesn't answer it. Were **we there** when Jesus was crucified? Yes—and no! We weren't there physically, but thankfully our sin was paid for by Jesus when He died on the cross!

My original intent was to preach on the resurrection this morning. The passage God laid on my heart, though, has both the crucifixion and the resurrection in it. So I had two options: 1) preach the whole sermon and probably have an hour long sermon; or 2) break it up into two. I opted to break it up in two.

Please take your Bibles and turn to Hebrews 2; follow along as I read verses 10-18. The passage I just read could easily be used for a **Christmas** message because it talks about Jesus taking on “flesh and blood.” **Why** did Jesus take on flesh and blood? There are many reasons, but we are going to focus on the two found here in verses 14 and 15. Next week—unless the Lord leads otherwise—we will look at the two found in verses 17 and 18.

Before we look at **why** Jesus took on flesh and blood—and died and rose again—let's consider...

1. The declaration that Jesus became man

Three times in the passage I just read we have a declaration that Jesus became like us!

--Vs 14 “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, **He also Himself likewise took part of the same;**”

--Vs 16 “...but **He took on Him the seed** of Abraham.”

--Vs 17 “Wherefore in all things **it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren...**”

Let's think through that a little bit. **We** are flesh and blood; Jesus **became like us!** But **what** does that mean?

--First, it does not mean that Jesus had a **sin nature!** Jesus did not have within Him a “tug” to do wrong like we do. It is in a **cat's nature** to claw on things—and it is in a **pig's nature** to enjoy mud! It is in **our nature**—as humans—to do **wrong!** No one has to give children **sinning lessons**—they already know how to do that! Jesus **did not have a sin nature**, though, because He was miraculously conceived.

--So how was Jesus **like us?** He took on flesh—He became man—and placed Himself under the same **human limitations** we face. I think we have to be careful how far we let our imagination go with this because the Bible doesn't tell us much about the life of Jesus until He was 30 years old.

As a child, Jesus had to learn **to walk—and talk**. We don't read of Jesus **talking to the shepherds** when they visited Him as an infant...or **talking to Simeon** when He was brought to the temple at roughly 40 days old. And we don't read of Him **talking to the wise men** when they came to visit Him—or **running on ahead** of Joseph and Mary when they all had to flee to Egypt!

How quickly was Jesus **“potty-trained?”** We don't know, but probably at the **toddler stage** like most children. Did Mary go through “the terrible two's”—or three's—with Jesus? She **didn't**, did she! Why? Because Jesus didn't have a sin nature and **never disobeyed** Mary, Joseph, or God!

Did Jesus have **“zits”** as a teenager? We don't know! Did He have **“girl”** problems? Probably not! --Did Jesus have **family** problems? Probably! Why? Because He **had siblings!** Mary and Joseph had other children—at least 4 boys and two girls according to Mt 13:55-56—so there was probably some jealousy. --Did His brothers **beat up Jesus** for being a “goody-two-shoes”? We don't know because the Bible doesn't say! Imagine how challenging it would be for Mary and Joseph to have a sin-free first-born son—then have normal, sinful children after that. “Why can't you just be like your brother” surely would cause problems!

As an adult, we know that Jesus was hungry...and thirsty...and tired. We also know that He felt physical pain when whipped—and crucified. And we know He felt rejection and sorrow.

Isaiah 53:3 says Jesus was a “man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief...” We’ll talk about this more next week when we get to vs 17-18.

We have **the declaration** that Jesus became like us; let’s consider next **why** He became like us. As mentioned earlier, there are 4 reasons given in verses 14-18. We will look at just two this morning.

2. Jesus became man to destroy the power of the devil

Look at vs 14: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”

We **have the declaration** that Jesus became man like we just talked about: “He also Himself likewise took part of the same...” We also have **the reason**. **Why** did Jesus take on flesh? What does it say? “that through **death**...”

A. The reason Jesus became man was to die!

Put your theological thinking caps on. **Can God die?** No; God always has been—and God always will be!

Is Jesus God? Yes; He is God the Son...Emmanuel...God with us!

But if Jesus **is God**—and God **can’t die**—**how** can Jesus die?

He can’t—unless He becomes “flesh and blood” like us! And so He became man—in order to die!

That’s not exactly **new news**, is it? It’s common knowledge—if you know and believe the Bible.

--We have it here in this verse.

--We have it in vs 9. “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels **for the suffering of death**, crowned with glory and honour; that He by the grace of God should **taste death for every man.**”

--We have it in Jesus’ own words. **Mark 10:45** “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to **give His life** a ransom for many.”

--And it’s why we celebrate Christmas—and Easter. And yet many people “celebrate” these holidays without knowing that both center around the truth that God came to earth—in the form of man—so He could die!

Next, let’s consider... B. The way Jesus died

Although we don’t have the details of **how** Jesus died in this passage like we do in the 4 gospels, there are a couple of passing references. The middle of vs 9 refers to “the suffering of death;” vs 18 states “He Himself hath suffered...”

Jesus’ death was no ordinary death, was it? He didn’t come to earth, live a happy life, and die of old age, did He? Much could be said regarding the death of Jesus; here are just a few thoughts.

1) It was physically **painful**. Without getting into too much detail, crucifixion was one of the cruelest forms of death at that time and was usually reserved for the worst criminals. The medical cause of was asphyxiation.

2) It was purely **substitutionary**. Jesus did not die for His Himself and His sins because He had none. It was a matter of the just dying for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.

3) It was **perplexingly profound**. What do I mean by that? How can God the Son—cry out to God the Father—“My, God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” How can God forsake God? How can God the Father pour out His wrath on Himself? I don’t know—and neither do you—but that’s what happened!

4) It was totally **voluntary**. Jesus didn’t have to come to earth—He chose to! And He didn’t have to die when He came to earth—He chose to do that, too! “He could have called 10,000 angels—but He died alone, for you and me!”

C. The result of Jesus’ death

What did the death of Jesus do? What does our verse say? “...that through death He might **destroy him** that had the power of death, that is, the devil.” Some of you might be thinking—and rightly so—“Wait a minute, Pastor! I thought **God** had power over death—not **the devil!** Not only that, the devil seems to be “large and in charge” right now—not **destroyed!**”

So how do we answer these objections? God obviously doesn’t contradict Himself, so what does it mean?

1) First, in what sense does the devil have the **power of death**? Does it mean that the **devil decides** when you and I die? No; it doesn't mean that at all. That is **God's decision**—and God's decision **alone!**

The devil has the power **of death**—not the power **over death!**

I found it interesting to discover that the word “power” does not mean “might or physical force;” nor does it mean “authority.” Instead, it means “dominion”—and one of the definitions of dominion is “territory.”

Does the devil operate under the “territory” of death? He certainly does!

--The devil **brought** death into the world by sinning—and by tempting Adam and Eve to sin.

--The devil **delights in death**. God delights in people **turning to Him** and being rescued from hell—but the devil doesn't want that!

--And the devil **continues to operate** in the territory of death by **deceiving people** into believing that God is not real...or that God will let everyone into heaven...or that people can get rid of their own sin.

2) What about the other part of the verse? What is meant by “destroying” him that had the power of death, meaning the devil? Satan certainly **hasn't been destroyed!** In fact, “Satan is Alive and Well on Planet Earth” as much now as when Hal Lindsey wrote the book in 1972! **Destroy** here does not mean “annihilate or kill.” It means to “render powerless; to deprive of the power to hurt; to subdue.”

So how does Jesus' death defeat—render powerless—the dominion of death? Death **has not** been crushed...it has not been subdued. We still die **physically**—there is still cancer...and car accidents...and cardiac arrest! So what is it that Jesus' death defeated? I believe I Corinthians 15:56 helps us answer that question.

I Corinthians 15:56 “The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.”

First, notice “The sting of death is sin.” What makes death bad? **Sin!**

Would death be bad if you were perfect? I don't think so! Your body would die, but your soul would head on up to heaven after you took your last breath.

But...we are **not perfect**—and we know it! And—if we are at all honest—we have an **awareness in us** that meeting God as an **unforgiven sinner** will not be a good thing! “The sting of death is sin...”

Second—back to your outline—“the strength of sin is the law.” What does that mean? Does the law—God's commandments as found in His Word—make sin “strong?” That's what it says, right? But **how?**

Here's what I believe this means. If there was **only one** commandment in God's Word—like “thou shalt not kill”—most people would **not be** lawbreakers! You would look at mankind and say, “Oh, sin isn't very strong because **not too many people** are disobeying God and killing one another!”

But God's Word doesn't have just **one commandment**—and God's commandments are not just **about actions**, are they? God's commandments address **our attitudes**...our affections...our **heart**. God's commandments reveal **just how strong sin** is in each of us. Remember what Jesus' response was when asked what the **greatest commandment** of the law was? **Mt 22:37** “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with **all thy heart**, and with **all thy soul**, and with **all thy mind**.”

No one—and I mean no one—**except Jesus**—has ever kept that command! The truth is, **we can't** perfectly keep this commandment because we have a **sin nature!** God's commandments reveal **how sinful we are**—and how much we need a Savior! In fact, **Galatians 3:24** reminds us that “...the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ...”

Back to the question I asked earlier: How does Jesus' taking on flesh and blood—and dying—defeat the devil's power of death?

1) First, let's consider what Jesus did to the **strength** of sin. What is the strength of sin? The law—God's commandments. God's commandments reveal how strong sin is **in us**.

But what do God's commandments reveal about sin **in Jesus**? God's commandments found **no sin** in Jesus! Jesus fulfilled God's commandments **all** the time, **every** time!

--The law—which reveals to every one of us that we **are sinful**—was perfectly fulfilled in the life of Jesus! --So the strength of sin has been broken; it has crumbled under the **perfectness** of Jesus!

2) What about the **sting of death**? The sting of death **is sin!** What did Jesus' death do **to sin**?

It took away the sting of death by **paying the penalty** for our sins so that we don't have to pay!

I John 1:7b "...and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us **from all sin.**"

Rev 1:5b "Unto Him that loved us, and **washed us from our sins** in His own blood,"

So Jesus' life—and death—frees us from the devil's domain of death! According to **Col 1:13**, God has "delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son:"

There's a 2nd reason Jesus became man: **3. Jesus became man to deliver us from the fear of death**

We see that in vs 15 "And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Jesus' death didn't **just** take away the **penalty** for sin—it also takes away the **fear of death!**

Do people fear death? They certainly do! Why? Here are a few reasons:

1) Because **they've never died before!** And because they've never died before, they don't know what **to expect!** It is the **fear of the unknown** and even God's children can have that kind of fear sometimes.

2) Other people fear death **not** because they are dreading **the process** of taking their last breath, but because they have **no idea what happens** on the other side! Pretty safe to say that if they have **no idea** what's going to happen on the other side, they **aren't ready** for the other side!

3) Yet a third group would be those who understand they are sinful...and sense that guilt...and try and try and try to get rid of that guilt—**but can't!** This group is mentioned here at the end of vs 15. Their entire lifetime is spent in bondage—as slaves—to the fear of death.

--They were **baptized as an infant** (so they were told) but still feel guilt—and still fear death!

--They **join a church**—and give money to the church—but still feel guilt—and still fear death!

--They try to **keep the Golden Rule**—and 10 Commandments—but fail miserably, so they still feel guilt—and still fear death!

--No matter what **they do**—and no matter how hard **they try**—they still feel guilt—and still fear death!

And that's a **good thing!** They **should still feel guilt**—and they should still fear death—because none of the things **they do** will get them into heaven! But we don't have to live in the bondage of the fear of death! Why?

Because Jesus came to **deliver us** from that fear! How did He do that? We already know because we just looked at it. It is through **His death!** The one and only requirement for entrance into heaven is Jesus!

--Jesus left heaven, came to earth as a man, and lived a perfect life.

--Because He lived a perfect life, He could die for the sins of others; He could be their substitute.

--God was **satisfied with the payment Jesus** made and proved it by raising Him back to life—and giving Him a name above every name! And that is why Jesus said in **John 14:6** "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Notice on your outline **I John 5:12** "He that hath the Son **hath life**; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." At 12 yrs of age—maybe 13—I received Jesus as my Savior while at a Bible camp. On that day I "got" the Son and have "had" Him ever since. Question for you: Based on this verse—and what I told you—am I being arrogant if I say, "**I know** I am going to heaven?"

Not at all! I'm just taking God at His Word! I'm just believing what God says! Do I have any doubts about where I'm going after I die? I really don't! Why? Because I have the Son—Jesus is mine—and because God doesn't want me to doubt. How do I know God doesn't want me to doubt?

I John 5:13 "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may **know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."

What about you? Do you fear death? You don't have to! You can be 100% certain—here and now—that you are heaven bound.

How? By trusting what Jesus did on the cross to take away the penalty of your sins. Eternal life is a gift—offered to you by God. And just like any other gift, it needs to **be received**. Have you received Jesus? **John 1:12** “But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name:”

In just a moment, we are going to sing a closing song. Usually the songs we sing at the end of the service are somewhat somber and heart searching. Today we are singing a song of rejoicing.

Why? Because if we are a child of God, we should be rejoicing!

As we sing, though, I want you to consider these two things:

1. Are you serving Him? That is how the chorus starts: “I **serve** a risen Savior...”
2. Does Jesus live within your heart? That is another part of the chorus. “You ask me how I know He lives. He lives within my heart!”

I mentioned a moment ago that it is **not arrogant** to believe you are going to heaven if you **have** Jesus.

You know what **is arrogant**? Thinking you can get to heaven **without** Jesus!