



## 7: A Better Captain

"For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying:

"I will declare Your name to My brethren;  
In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

And again:

"I will put My trust in Him."

And again:

"Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

Hebrews 2:10 – 18

Man was made to rule over everything God has made but we don't see that happening yet. What we do see is Jesus who became a man and died in our place crowned with glory and honour and reigning with all authority. Jesus is the trailblazer. Jesus is the pioneer. Jesus is our leader. Jesus is our captain. Jesus has opened up the way for us to become what God always intended us to be.

- ◆ *What thoughts does the image of Jesus as the captain of our salvation bring to mind?*

The writer of the Book of Hebrews is building a case. He's demonstrating that to follow Jesus is the better way, the best way, the only way that works. In verse 10 of chapter 2, he puts another block in place by pointing out that it was fitting — it was right — that Jesus should suffer as He did, and He's going to tell us in verses 11 to 18 why it was fitting.

### It Was Fitting That Jesus Suffered

"Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things." is of course God, the Father. That way of mentioning Him is consistent with the reluctance all Jews have to mention God's name. His name is too holy to cross their lips or to appear in print so they often allude to Him with phrases like that. But as we'll be introducing God as the One who is bringing many sons to glory, it tells us that everything exists for Him — He is the reason it's all there — and everything was made by Him.

- ◆ *All things are for God. What are the implications of that?*

God is "bringing many sons to glory." He's in the business of lifting many out of their fallen mess, crowning them with glory and honour and setting them over the works of His hands. Jesus is our captain on that journey to glory and God made Him perfect for the job through what He suffered. And, by the way, to say that Jesus was made perfect doesn't imply that there was ever any kind of imperfection in Him. What it means is that He had to suffer what He suffered so He could become the captain of our salvation. Had He not suffered what He did He would not have been qualified for the job.

So it was fitting that God should expose His Son to suffering.

### He Had To Be A Man Like Us

Why was it fitting? How did that suffering qualify Jesus for the job? The writer begins to give his answer in verse 11.

*"For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren."*

Hebrews 2:11

He who sanctifies — Jesus — and those who are being sanctified (made holy) — we who are being saved — are all one. What does that mean? It means we are all human. That is, after all, what this whole section of the Book is about. Although Jesus is the Eternal Son of God, He has become a man: He became for a little while lower than angels. And since He shares our humanness He is not ashamed to call us His brothers.

In verses 12 and 13 the writer confirms that thought with some more quotes from the Old Testament. The first one is Psalm 22:22. Psalm 22 is unmistakably a messianic Psalm. In this verse Jesus, the Messiah, is seen as the praise leader in the congregation of His people and He calls them brothers.

The second quote is Psalm 18:2. Psalm 18 is about the troubles David met with and how in all of them he put his trust in God. This Psalm too would have been understood to be Messianic. David would have been seen as representing the Messiah in it, so these words depict the Messiah in His time of suffering doing a very human thing: needing God's help and putting His trust in God, just as we do.

The third quote is derived from Isaiah 8:18. In the original passage Isaiah is speaking about himself and his two sons. The writer of Hebrews is putting Isaiah in Jesus' place and His children are the people He came to save. The point that we are meant to get is that Jesus and His people share the same nature just like parents and children share the same nature.

So, with three Old Testament references it is established that Jesus and those He came to save are brothers: they share the same human nature. It's summed up in the first part of verse 14:

*"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same."*

Hebrews 2:14

The word "partaken" means to share or have fellowship. The NIV puts it more succinctly:

*"Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity."*

Hebrews 2:14 [NIV]

### He Had To Die

The writer now goes on to explain that Jesus' humanness and His suffering as a man qualified Him to be our captain on the road to glory in two ways. First, according to the second part of verse 14 and verse 15:

“That through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”

Hebrews 2:14 – 15

As a man Jesus could die. That was something that as God He could not do. And He did die so that by dying he could destroy the power of death by rendering Satan — the devil — powerless. This doesn't mean that Satan was annihilated when Jesus died. The word translated to destroy means to make powerless: One of Satan's most powerful weapons was taken from him when Jesus died on our behalf. No longer could he use the fear of death to hold us in bondage.

◆ *In what sense has Jesus destroyed the power of death?*

Jesus became man, then, in order to help men, not angels, and the men He came to help are identified in verse 18 as "the seed of Abraham" not, of course, Abraham's physical descendants but all those who by faith are Abraham's children. "They that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham" (Galatians 3:7). They are the "many sons" whom God is bringing to glory."

### **He Had To Be A Priest**

The last three verses of chapter 2 focus on Jesus' High Priesthood and show us a second way Jesus humanness and suffering qualified Him to be our captain. By becoming like us Jesus not only became qualified to set us free from the fear of death He also became qualified to be our High Priest. He "had to be made like His brethren in all things" so that He could represent us before God, serving God and making propitiation for our sins.

The order of the words the writer originally used emphasises the fact that Jesus became a merciful and faithful High Priest (literally he wrote, "that a merciful he might become and faithful high priest").

To make propitiation is to do with the putting away of God's wrath by satisfying it. It's what the High Priest of Old Testament times did, symbolically, when he offered his sacrifice on behalf of the people and it's something that the writer of Hebrews will have more to say about.

The word "tempted" (verse 18) can also mean "tested", or simply "tried". It includes all three of those ideas. Having become a man Jesus was tempted and can therefore sympathise with the experience of every man who has also been tempted except, of course, that Jesus never sinned.

The word "help" doesn't really capture what the writer of Hebrews originally intended, the thought is "to run to the cry of those in danger to bring them assistance."

By becoming a man Jesus qualified to represent us before God, to make propitiation for our sins. He qualified not just to be our High Priest but to be a merciful, sympathetic High Priest who is rushes to our aid.

◆ *In what practical ways do you find the thought of Jesus as your High priest helpful?*

### **In Summary**

It was fitting then that Jesus became a man and suffered what He did. As a man He could to die. By dying He could set us free from the fear of death. By becoming a man Jesus qualified to represent us before God and make propitiation for us. By becoming a man He could suffer not only death but all the trials and temptations we suffer: He qualified to help us when we face trials and temptations.