

Jesus, One of Us



SAB
PM

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Hebrews 2.

MEMORY VERSE: “This means that he [Jesus] had to become like his brothers [and sisters] in every way, in order to be their faithful¹ and merciful² High Priest in his service to God, so that the people’s sins would be forgiven” (Hebrews 2:17, TEV).

IMPORTANT THOUGHT: Jesus came in human form. He was tempted in human form. He suffered in human form. And He died in human form. But never once did He sin as a human. Now He is our High Priest in heaven.

CONDUCTOR³ AND MUSIC WRITER LEONARD BERNSTEIN was once asked: “Mr. Bernstein, which is the most difficult musical instrument?” Bernstein answered: “The second violin. Many people want to play first violin,⁴ but to find someone who plays second violin as well as the person who plays first violin is a real problem. If nobody would play second violin, we would not have beautiful music.”

It is not always easy to be second, especially if you deserve to be first. It is even more difficult to step down after having been first. It is more difficult still to be humbled and laughed at after having stepped down from being first.

But this is exactly what Jesus did. Our lesson this week takes a look at what it means to us that Jesus stepped down for our sake and was humbled and laughed at.

¹faithful—full of faith.

²merciful—full of kindness we do not deserve.

³conductor—the person who tells the musicians how to play the music.

⁴first violin—The person who plays the first violin is a very important person because she or he assists the conductor of an orchestra.

THE WEEK AT A GLANCE: Why is Jesus being human important? Why does the Bible give such a cruel picture of Jesus' sufferings? How is Jesus being human connected with His work as High Priest?

* Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, July 19.

SUN JESUS' HUMBLENESS.

Hebrews 1 shows that Jesus was higher than the angels (Hebrews 1:5-14). Hebrews 2:9 says that Jesus "for a little while was made lower than the angels."

What is the message of Hebrews 2:5-18?



Jesus can help us when we are tempted, because He was tempted and suffered too.

Hebrews 2:5-18 makes a strong point about Jesus being human. He was King and greater than the angels. But He took upon Himself human form. He tasted death for every person (Hebrews 2:9). He also became a "merci-

ful and faithful high priest" for our sake (Hebrews 2:17).

Notice, too, that Hebrews 1 speaks of Jesus' honor and glory in heaven. But Hebrews 2 speaks of His suffering on earth. In His work of saving us, humiliation came first. The honor and glory came next. Perhaps the author of Hebrews wanted to picture Jesus in His role (position) as King so the readers would quickly believe in Him and be strengthened in their faith.

The position of Jesus as the Creator points to His life with the Father in heaven before He put on human form. The position of Jesus as King points to His going to heaven after His work on earth. Jesus' life, work, and death as a human on earth is very important. But we must remember Jesus' eternal⁵ life as God. Only then can we fully understand and appreciate the suffering Jesus went through as a human.

Jesus is God. Jesus is the Creator and the King of the universe. But He took upon Himself human form. He suffered more than any of us ever will. Keep in mind what this means. Ask the Lord to help you understand the hope, the promise, and the good news in the wonderful truth that our God became one of us to save us.

⁵eternal—forever; without beginning or end; lasting forever.

MON JESUS, BEST HUMAN.

How does the author of Hebrews use Psalm 8:5-7? Hebrews 2:6-8. What point does he make by interpreting Psalm 8:5-7 as he does?

“The use of Psalm 8 is . . . interesting. These verses were never thought to be a prophecy about Jesus. The original meaning is for humanity⁶ in the ideal (perfect) condition. . . . At Creation, Adam and Eve were given control over the earth. But ever since the Fall that authority (control) has been lacking. The psalm is only perfectly fulfilled in the ideal Person, Jesus. He alone has that authority. The writer of Hebrews sees that Psalm 8 was fulfilled in such a way that the Jews never imagined. Psalm 8 is mentioned by Jesus (Matthew 21:16) and by Paul (1 Corinthians 15:27). Both Jesus and Paul show that the prophecy in Psalm 8 was fulfilled in Jesus.”—Adapted from Donald Guthrie, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1993), pp. 84, 85.

Jesus is the true Representative of humanity. In Jesus, Psalm 8 finds true fulfillment. As humanity’s representative, Jesus must share in the same conditions as humanity. To truly represent us, He had to be one of us. Only then could Jesus open the way for our salvation and to be our High Priest in heaven.

⁶humanity—all the people of the world.

Hebrews 1 and 2 show that Jesus is both fully God and fully human. It is difficult to understand this miracle. But what does it tell us about the connection between heaven and earth? How does Jesus being both a person and God help us trust in the salvation we can receive from Him?



Jesus is the Bridge between earth and heaven.

TUE JESUS’ SUFFERING.

Hebrews 2 says strong things about Jesus’ suffering. The author talks about “the suffering of death.” He says that by the grace of God, Jesus should taste death for everyone (Hebrews 2:9). Hebrews 2:14, 18; Hebrews 5:8; Hebrews 9:26; Hebrews 12:2; and Hebrews 13:12 also mention Jesus’ suffering and death.

The innocent Son of God suffering for the sins of the world is a cruel

picture. Jesus accepted the punishment of God for sins He never did. He tasted death for every person, even for people who will never accept salvation.

Jesus suffering and dying for us was cruel and shows us what it cost God to save us from sin.

What are the results of Jesus' suffering?

Hebrews 2:9-11 _____

Hebrews 2:14-16 _____

Hebrews 2:17, 18 _____

Jesus suffered greatly. But look at what His suffering has done for us. His suffering and death are more than we will experience and understand. We can only wonder about the results of His death. The results of His death include (1) the exaltation⁷ of Jesus, (2) the defeat of Satan, (3) the sureness of salvation for us, (4) the closeness of Jesus

to people, (5) His successful work as our High Priest, (6) and His help for us now when we face temptation. We need nothing else. Our salvation is complete.

Hebrews 2:14 says that Jesus came so that through His death He might destroy Satan, who now has the power over death. How do you understand Hebrews 2:14, especially when we still die?

Some psychologists believe that the fear of death has a powerful influence on our lives. Much of what we do comes from our fear of death. According to Hebrews 2:15, what has Jesus done that should help us not to fear death?



Jesus died to save us from sin.

WED JESUS, OUR BROTHER.

Read all of Hebrews 2. Focus on Hebrews 2:11. With all of He-

⁷exaltation—to put in a higher position. Jesus was exalted to King; praising, honoring, glorifying.

brews 2 in mind, what does the word *brother* in Hebrews 2:11 show?

It is amazing that Jesus calls Himself our Brother. As the Creator and the King of the universe, He is still willing to be the Brother of His fallen creatures!

The word *brother* points to a very close relationship. Jesus and His followers are one family. He suffered so much for us. For this reason, Jesus is one of us. He will stay one of us, even though He is God. Hebrews 2:14 shows that He became flesh and blood to experience what we experience. By having become one of us, Jesus can relate to us, and we can relate to Him. He could not relate to us in the same way if He never lived as a human. There was no better way for God to come closer to us than by becoming one of us.



Jesus became one of us so God could be close to us.

Jesus having become one of us may hold certain dangers. For example, we can turn Jesus into nothing but our buddy (pal). We should be friends with Jesus (John 15:15). But friendship is not the only way to describe our relationship with Him. How else does the Bible describe our relationship with Jesus? Matthew 22:36; John 10:11; John 20:28; 1 Timothy 1:1.

We often talk in paradoxes,⁸ or in opposites, when we talk about the Bible and God. For example, God comes in Three Persons, but there is one Godhead. God is far away, but still close to us. God is not limited to time, but He shows Himself in time. We are already saved, and we still will be saved.

It is not either/or but one and the other. We must keep these different truths together and balanced with each other the best we can. Let us not see Jesus just as the far-off Ruler of the universe. But let us treat Him not just as a pal. Let us go to Him as our Brother in all due respect and love. We may be close. But He is still our Creator, and we are still His created people.

Caroline grew up in a home where her brothers abused her. So she does not think positively of Jesus as her “Brother.” What could you say to someone like her?

⁸paradoxes—a statement that is true but seems to say two opposite things.

THU JESUS, OUR HIGH PRIEST.

“[Jesus] had to become like his brothers in every way, in order to be their faithful and merciful High Priest in his service to God, so that the people’s sins would be forgiven” (Hebrews 2:17).

Hebrews 2 describes the work of Jesus, our Brother, as High Priest. Hebrews 2 lists qualifications (requirements) for the office of High Priest. Hebrews 8:2 describes the work of Jesus as High Priest. To be our High Priest, Jesus had to face temptation to sin, the same as we have to. This is one of the qualifications for Him to be our High Priest.

Hebrews mentions two times that Jesus was tempted: Hebrews 2:18; Hebrews 4:15. Read these verses. How do they support each other? What does the second verse say that helps us understand what the first verse says? How can we understand that Jesus “was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin”? (Hebrews 4:15, TEV).

British author Oscar Wilde said that the only way to deal with sin is to fall into sin. But people have said that a person who falls into sin never knows the full force of temptation, because he or she fails before the temptation ends. So Jesus is the only One who has known the greatest amount of temptation, because He only remained “without sin.” Jesus never fell into sin.

Therefore, He felt temptation’s pull worse than any of us have.

Jesus faced all that we do and so much more. When was the last time any of us were tempted to turn stones into bread or order an army of angels to help us (Matthew 4:1-7)? And Satan must have been much more interested in causing Jesus to sin than he is interested in getting us to sin. But in the face of all this temptation, Jesus never sinned. That experience was one of the things that qualified Him to be our High Priest.

Read Hebrews 2:16-18 carefully and prayerfully. As we saw earlier in the week, Jesus’ personhood is connected with His high-priestly work. Look at the two words in Hebrews 2:17 that describe the kind of High Priest Jesus is. What did His personhood have to do with these two things about His character that help His work as High Priest?

FRI ADDITIONAL STUDY: Read “Gethsemane” in Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 685–697, about Jesus’ temptation and suffering.

“In Jesus were joined together the God and the human—the Creator and the created. The nature of God, whose perfect law was broken, and the nature of Adam, the law-breaker, meet in Jesus—the Son of God and the Son of man. Jesus has paid the price of salvation with His own blood. He has passed through our experience. He has met and conquered

temptation for our sake. Jesus was sinless.⁹ But He accepted the shame, guilt, and burden of sin. For these reasons, Jesus is our Advocate (Lawyer) in heaven. What a beautiful promise to the tempted and struggling soul. What a beautiful promise to the watching universe, that Jesus will be ‘a merciful and faithful high priest’ (manuscript 141, 1901)!” —Adapted from Ellen G. White Comments, *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 926.

“The personhood of Jesus is very important to us. Jesus’ personhood is the golden chain that unites our souls to Him and through Him to God. This is to be our study. Jesus was a real person. He gave proof of how He was humble by becoming a person. But He was God in human form. When we study this subject, we would do well to listen to Jesus’ words to Moses at the burning bush, ‘Take off your sandals [shoes], because you are standing on holy ground’ (Exodus 3:5, TEV). We should come to this study with the humble and contrite¹⁰ heart of a learner. The study of Jesus in hu-

man form is a rich topic that will pay well the student who studies for hidden truth.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 244.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Think about the idea that Jesus as a human never sinned. Imagine a whole life in which He never once fell into sin. What does this truth do to all our excuses for sin?
2. How do you understand Ellen G. White’s description that the personhood of Jesus is the “golden chain” that unites our souls to Jesus?

SUMMARY: Hebrews 2 pictures Jesus in His human form and describes His work. He has tasted death for us, so He could offer us salvation. He has conquered Satan and death. He has freed us from fear of eternal death. As our High Priest, He forgives us our sins and helps us when we are tempted. Hebrews 2 emphasizes our salvation and the closeness Jesus has with us. We can be sure of our salvation, because He is our Brother.

⁹sinless—without sin.

¹⁰contrite—being sorry for our sins and wanting to stop sinning.