

Sunday June 12th 2011
The Letter to the Hebrews
Part Seven

1). Heb 2:11 *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, 12 saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." 13 And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me." 14 ¶ 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, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

a). We had seen last week that with respect to the process that leads to the salvation of the soul, the One who provides the means for the process, our Lord Jesus Christ, and those who are engaged in the process, both have their source in God the Father.

b). And with respect to ourselves we see this - 1Th 5:23 ¶ *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.*

c). God is faithful to do that which He has said and so if we remain faithful, faithfully obedient to His word there is only one possible outcome – the salvation of our souls.

d). And it is here in our faithful obedience to the word; trusting God in the midst of and despite our circumstances that we come to the heart of the reason why the Lord would not be ashamed to call us brethren.

e). And we can see this from the flip side so to speak in that which the Lord says recorded in - Lu 9:26 *"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels.*

f). For those then who would experience shame because of Christ and His words when they stand before Him, just as Adam and the Woman experienced shame in realizing that they could no longer fulfill God's purpose for them, so the Lord will be ashamed of them – there will be a just reward.

g). But for those who will not be ashamed in that Day, who will have been faithfully obedient – Christ will not be ashamed to call them brethren – and their just reward will be glorious.

h). And we should also not forget that encompassed within the whole scope of faithful obedience is suffering. Christ in faithful obedience to the Father ‘endured the cross, despising the shame’ and we, in following the example He has set for us, will also suffer with Him as we take up our cross daily. Paul says this about it - *Php 3:10 that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death,*

i). It is also within the context of ‘the fellowship of His sufferings’ and ‘being conformed to His death’ that Christ would not be ashamed of His companions as not only do they share the same source, but the process for both has its completion, its end result, in the same place – the salvation of the soul.

j). In the meantime as we continue to run our race with endurance and continue to suffer with Him, let’s remember the astounding promise given by the Lord, recorded in - *Joh 15:7 "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.*

k). A promise that would no doubt remind us of an event we see recorded in the Book of Ruth - *Ru 3:8 Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. 9 And he said, "Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative." 10 Then he said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. 11 "And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.*

And as we consider this just remember that which we just read in 1 Thessalonians 5:24 *He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.*

l). And to add to the enormity of this let’s also remember –
2Pe 1:2 Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, 3 as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

2). Following on from the OT quotations in Hebrews 2:13, in which we find recorded the words of David and those of Isaiah, both of whom unequivocally demonstrate the faithfulness of God, we find this in - *Heb 2:14 ¶ Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same,*

a). The ‘children’ here of course would be the same ‘children’ referenced in v13, who within the context of our letter would be the many sons being brought to

glory, those who are about to inherit salvation – and would include both those who have already successfully finished their race who are now awaiting adoption and those of us who are still running with endurance the race that is set before us.

b). And just in case we might overlook the obvious, we are dealing here with those who are human beings, people just like us – with all that implies.

c). In the first part of this verse then we see that the ‘children have partaken of flesh and blood’.

d). Partaken = Greek – ‘koinoneo, *koy-no-neh'-o* = to share with others (objectively or subjectively):--communicate, distribute, be partaker.

e). In other words then the ‘children’, the members of the human race who are to be brought to glory share in common ‘flesh and blood’ with the rest of humanity - there is no choice in this for us, this is something we all have in common because of the very fact of being human – and we need to understand the phrase ‘flesh and blood’ in two interconnected ways.

f). Firstly that we are literally physical beings who have bodies of flesh and blood as does every other human being and secondly because we are physical beings after this fashion we all have a human nature – a nature that is common to all human beings and would of course encompass our sin nature.

g). Now here is the remarkable thing – the next part of our verse in Hebrews 2:14 tells us that ‘He Himself [the Lord Jesus] likewise shared in the same’.

h). The word translated ‘likewise’ is a translation of a compound word in the Greek language combining the word for ‘alongside’ and the word for ‘nearby’ – and so we would see here that our Lord took His place alongside and nearby the human race. In other words He took His place in the world in like manner to the rest of humanity.

i). Now v14 also tells us that He ‘shared in the same’ – He shared in ‘flesh and blood’.

j). The word translated ‘shared’ here is not the word ‘koinoneo’ that we saw earlier – Shared = Greek – ‘metecho’, *met-ekh'-o* = to hold with

k). Which means that at His incarnation our Lord took to Himself a physical body of flesh and blood and He took to Himself our human nature but apart from sin – *Php 2:5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

l). And here is one of the remarkable things of the incarnation – the Son remained entirely God, and as God held to Himself, took to Himself, both the form and the nature of His creation – His was a voluntary acceptance of humanity; a

voluntary embracing of the outworking of the curse from the Garden on the human condition – poverty, temptation and violent, unmerited death.

3). Now the Lord embraced a physical body and the human condition after this fashion for a specifically stated reason - Heb 2:14 ¶ *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, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

a). And we would need to connect the second half of v14 back to an earlier verse – Heb 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.*

b). So let's look carefully at what is being said here – the reason our Lord became incarnate, the reason He voluntarily embraced 'flesh and blood' was in order to die and subsequently be resurrected, so that He 'might taste death for everyone', and in so doing to destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, thereby effecting a release for those who were in bondage to the fear of death.

c). Now God cannot experience separation from God, he cannot be divided from Himself, but that which Christ had voluntarily taken to Himself, 'the likeness of men', the form and nature of human beings, could experience that separation and did experience it. We might remember that which we read in Psalm 22 last week that graphically described this.

d). Just as the first Man, the first Adam, 'died' because of sin, so did the second Man, the last Adam die to deal with sin – As a result of the death of the first Adam all mankind is born dead in trespasses and sins – As a result of the death of second Man, the last Adam, all Mankind can be born again into everlasting life free from the bondage of sin and death – 1Co 15:22 *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive.*

e). Not only this, but from a Kingdom perspective, to die in Adam means to be separated from the purpose for our creation, but to die in Christ means to have life for the age to come thereby fulfilling God's purpose for our creation – Heb 5:8 *though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal[age lasting] salvation to all who obey Him,*

f). Ro 8:13 *For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

4). Now that which has always separated Man from God is sin and that which has always separated eternally redeemed Man from God's purpose for him is sin and sin and death go hand in hand with one another – We will remember again from Ephesians 2:1 that we were born dead in trespasses and sins and in that condition had nothing to expect other than death, which would be our just reward –
Ro 6:20 *For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.*
21 *What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.....*
23 *For the wages of sin is death,.....*

a). Sin then, that finds its end in death, is inextricably connected with our first birth and therefore inextricably connected to this age and the rulers of this age. And it is in this sense that we would understand Satan having the power of death. He does not have power over death, but death is rather an inseparable part of the domain over which he has dominion. The physical world is under a curse because of sin and every human being possesses a nature of sin and here is where Satan finds his dominion. And in a perversion of God bringing many sons to glory we would see Satan who is bringing many sons to death and destruction –
Php 3:18 *For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame--who set their mind on earthly things.*

b). The Lord spoke of the same thing this way - Mt 7:13 *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it.*

5). But the good news here is this – we read in our scripture from Hebrews 2:14-15 *that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*

a). Now before we get too excited here the word translated 'destroy' doesn't say what our English word may picture for us, but rather means 'to render inoperative'. In other words, as a result of Christ's death and resurrection the power to hold us as slaves to sin in the kingdom of Satan is broken. Satan and his kingdom continue, but we no longer have to be in bondage to it - Ro 8:1 ¶ *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. 3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk*

according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

b). *Ro 6:5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, 6 knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. 7 For he who has died has been freed from sin.*

c). And again, keeping a Kingdom perspective, the reason we are no longer in bondage to sin and death beyond the point of our eternal salvation is because we have a High Priest - Heb 8:1 ¶ *Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this One also have something to offer.*

d). Now as we know to receive eternal forgiveness for our sin and consequently have eternal life is a truly remarkable gift from God, but the receiving of the free gift does not eradicate our sin nature; our sin nature remains intact throughout the entire course of our earthly existence and we continue to sin, much more than we would really like. And if we were to live out of our sin nature unabated, then we would find ourselves separated from Christ and His Kingdom following our appearance at the Judgment Seat – 1Co 6:9 ¶ *Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God.*

e). In such a case, through our own choice, sin and death would still have dominion over us - Ro 6:16 *Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?*

f). We would also remember that just as before our eternal salvation we could do nothing of ourselves to deal with our sin, so after our eternal salvation we can do nothing of ourselves to deal with our sin – God is the only One who is able to provide a cleansing from sin.

g). And in order to provide for the cleansing of sin there needs to be a High Priest to offer sacrifices on behalf of the sinner.

h). Now please understand the picture here – Israel was eternally redeemed on the night of the Passover and following Passover the nation was to keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread, providing a picture of the constant necessity to remove sin from their lives – with dire consequences for anyone who failed to do so – Ex 12:15 *'Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses. For whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel.*

i). The feast of Unleavened Bread provided the picture – the means of dealing with the nation's sin was the Tabernacle ministry of the Aaronic Priesthood - Le 1:1 ¶ *Now the LORD called to Moses, and spoke to him from the tabernacle of meeting, saying, 2 "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'When any one of you brings an offering to the LORD, you shall bring your offering of the livestock-of the herd and of the flock. 3 ¶ 'If his offering is a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own free will at the door of the tabernacle of meeting before the LORD. 4 'Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. 5 'He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting.*

j). Without God providing the means to deal with sin through this priesthood there would have been no way to deal with the nation's sin, and they would in this sense have been in bondage to death as separation from God's purpose for them would have been the only possible outcome.

k). Now for ourselves, as we have already noted, we continue to sin after our eternal salvation and if God had not provided the means to deal with our sin, through the Priesthood of His Son, then we would still have been in bondage to death as to be separated from God's purpose for us would be the only possible outcome.

l). And just as we see in Leviticus that the offering for atonement must be made by the person 'of his own free will' – so is our repentance of our own free will. We have a High Priest, but we have to choose to go to Him to seek forgiveness.

6). And all of this is exactly what the Lord taught to His disciples on the night of the last supper - Joh 13:3 *Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, 4 rose from supper and laid aside His garments, took a towel and girded Himself. 5 After that, He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded. 6 Then He came to Simon Peter. And Peter said to Him, "Lord, are You washing my feet?" 7 Jesus answered and*

said to him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this." 8 Peter said to Him, "You shall never wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me." 9 Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" 10 Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean; and you are clean, but not all of you."

a). The very thing that the Apostle John draws attention to recorded in – 1Jo 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 ¶ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

7). Now if we go back to the priesthood of Aaron for a moment we find this recorded in - Le 16:6 *"Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering, which is for himself, and make atonement for himself and for his house.*

a). Aaron is to offer a sin offering for himself, which really is not that surprising, but the commentary the scripture give on this is very interesting for us – Heb 5:1 ¶ *For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins.*

b). We see here that the high priest can have compassion on those who sin because he is also ‘subject to weakness’. The high priest can have compassion on the propensity of the people to sin because he himself has a sin nature just like theirs.

c). If we then look to the High Priestly ministry of Christ we will realize that He does not need to make a sin offering for Himself and nor does He have a sin nature, but what did we see at His incarnation? Heb 2:14 ¶ *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same,*

d). Christ took to Himself the human nature and through that nature, only without sin, experienced the human condition – and as a result of this – Heb 2:16 *For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. 17 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. 18 For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.*

e). The word translated ‘aid’ here means ‘to lay hold of, for the purpose of helping’.

f). He did not lay hold of angels for the purpose of helping them, but He does lay hold of the ‘seed of Abraham’ for the purpose of helping us. He then is merciful and faithful and makes propitiation for the sins of the people with compassion and understanding as ‘He himself has suffered, being tempted’.

g). And because He has experienced suffering through being tempted He is able to be the helper of those who are tempted – both in the midst of our testing and in dealing with our sin – and all this of course with a view to our being one of the many sons brought to glory for the age to come.

h). The writer of Hebrews says this very same thing again in this way in – Heb 4:14 *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

i). How encouraging this is, Jesus our High Priest has sympathy, literally ‘is touched by the feeling of’, our weaknesses, as, according to our scripture, he was ‘in all points tempted as we are’ – which means exactly what it says – only Christ’s temptation was apart from sin whereas ours often isn’t.

j). Because of this we should come ‘boldly to the throne of grace’.

k). Boldly = Greek – ‘parrhesia, *par-rhay-see’-ah* = all out-spokenness, i.e. frankness, bluntness, publicity; by implication, assurance:--bold (X -ly, -ness, -ness of speech), confidence, X freely, X openly, X plainly(-ness).

l). And we should do this to ‘obtain mercy’ when we sin and to ‘find grace’ to help us through our times of testing.

m). 2Co 12:9 *And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness."*

8). As we close for today we might consider that there is so much more to our Lord’s incarnation than maybe we have previously realized – and it is humbling beyond belief to think that this was done for our benefit. Let’s finish with one more scripture - Heb 9:13 *For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, 14 how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?*