

Sermon 6: Hebrews 2:10-13: 'It Was the Will of the Lord to Crush Him'

OUTLINE

God wills many sinful sons to a glorified humanity
God wills His glorious Son to a suffering humanity

INTRODUCTION

What are some reasons people find it impossible to believe in Jesus today? For some it is the fact that He affirmed the special creation of Adam and Eve, that God brought them into being miraculously not by evolution. For others it is the fact that Jesus spoke more about hell than any other person in the Bible. Different things will be stumbling blocks to faith at different times, many ancient religions believed in a final judgement and punishment in the afterlife, this is more distasteful to our modern sensibilities. The author of Hebrews in Hebrews 2:10-13 is anticipating and answering some of the stumbling blocks which would have made Jesus unpopular in that context. So far in Hebrews we have seen that the Son is also God, first stumbling block to monotheistic Jews; that this Son is not only God but also human; second major hurdle; not only that this one who is greater than angels, who was incarnate and made lower than the angels in His incarnation, and who is now seated as both God and man above them, also tasted death. It is at this point that all credulity has gone out the window, this would be stretching the bounds of what could be considered reasonable. God has a Son, He has become a man, and not only can this God-man suffer but He can also die! It is no wonder as we think of the Jewish mindset, of the Greek mindset, of the proto-gnosticism and its rejection of the flesh as good that this collection of ideas was seen as folly to those who are perishing, 1 Cor. 1:18. 1 Cor. 1:23, 'but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles.' So having made some hard statements and crowning them with the claim that God the Son who was also human also suffered and also died, 2:9, '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.' 2:10-18 goes on to explain why this was necessary. V10 begins with 'for it was fitting.'

This section is critical for an interesting set of questions in theology. Here are two basic questions that the thinking behind this portion answers. Why the God-man? Was this the only way for God to save a people for Himself? If you get into theology we are looking at the doctrine of the necessity of the atonement. Could God have gotten a people for Himself in any other way? What made it necessary that this had to be the way? If God had decided not to create satan, and did not allow a fall, Adam could have hypothetically obeyed and we would all have access to the true of life. So it was not absolutely necessary that this is the way things had to be. However, once we recognize that God did will to create satan and will to allow the fall, now that God seeks a people for Himself, He cannot simply click His fingers and save them, He needs to satisfy His justice. Angels or animals cant die to pay for human sin, a human being alone can be the suitable substitute. But a sinful human can't be a sacrifice so that human must be sinless. This leads us to the doctrine of consequent absolute necessity, consequent to the fact that God willed to allow man to sin and sought to save them from sin, the only way that God could save us while not denying Himself was through the God-man, Jesus Christ. v10-18 gives us the exegetical grounds for having such a discussion and drawing that conclusion. V10-13 spell out that

because God willed to bring many sinful sons to glory, it was fitting that the Son had to be made lower than the angels and die and be made fit to serve as our heavenly high priest, glorifying us with Him by what He suffered. This meant that He needed to share a human nature with us, and He did this willingly. So our two points are: God wills many sinful sons to a glorified humanity; God wills His glorious Son to a suffering humanity. The point of the author is that the expectations and assumptions that make some points of faith seem impossible are overwhelmed and undone by the reality of God's saving work in incarnation, resurrection and ascension of the Son.

God wills many sinful sons to a glorified humanity

V10a, 'For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory'. The author begins seeking to assure us that the impossible things we want to instinctively doubt as unlikely are part of God's will and are true. Firstly, he tells us that it was fitting, it was appropriate, it was not out of character; in fact we will see that it was a necessity. That God would send His Son to suffer and die to save sinners. To further help us see that the impossible things we are discussing are in fact true, the author grounds them in the perfect will of God whose will plans, drives and consummates history, 'for whom and by whom all things exist.' The idea of God the Son becoming human, and suffering and dying was not a creative solution invented by the apostles it was part of God's plan from the beginning.

But we have this most wonderful statement about God's intentions toward us, 'in bringing many sons to glory.' The point of God creating Adam was that through Adam's obedience He might bring many sons to glory. But Adam sinned and humanity was lost in sin and death, and still God persisted to bring even sinful humanity, not only out of the gutter, but all the way into the glorious inheritance Adam failed to achieve. God has not given up on His grand goal for our humanity. There are four key things to note in this plan. Firstly, the word 'bringing' reminds us that we are need bringing ourselves to this impossible goal, but He has stooped, He has paid, He has rescued, He is sustaining, like a shepherd He is bringing us to this great end. Secondly, notice that word 'many'. Not a few but many, Rev. 7:9-10, 'After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" Thirdly, notice that word 'sons.' We have stressed before that this is an inclusive word, but sons usually got greater privileges and shares in the father's household because daughters went to join another's household. Sinners, who are enemies deserving of death and not just made not enemies, nor even just friends, but sons. The text will go on to stress that our sonship is in solidarity with the sonship of Christ. He who was the Son took upon Himself a human adamic sonship, and obeyed fulfilling Adam's obedience and glorified taking our humanity to its intended end in full conformity to the glory of God; is rewarded with the kingly Davidic Sonship, and given authority, and we through union with Him are co-heirs in His reward and sealed for a participation in His resurrection glory when we are one day raised. Sons does not merely made close, but made glorious, partaking in the final goal God had for our humanity, made complete. Which is stressed in that fourth word we must notice, 'glory.' Not sons in Eden, or sons in Israel, or merely co-human sonship, but sons fully participating in the new creation glory where we will be glorious in ourselves, living in a glorious new

creation, beholding the glory of God directly, and all corruption, all incompleteness will be gone.

But how can God get us from where we are to where He intends for us?

God wills His glorious Son to a suffering humanity

V10b, 'should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.' It is fitting, that if God seeks to make sinners glorious sons, He must first make His glorious Son perfect through what He suffers. A few things to note here.

Firstly, the mechanism of how this is done is summed up in that word 'founder', a more precise translation is 'pioneer'. You see because Jesus is a covenant head like Adam, because He represents us in what He does. It is as He goes ahead of us as a trailblazer, as first undergoes the judgement we deserve paying for our sins; and then resurrects breaking death and securing our resurrection in His. It is this representative action where He goes ahead of us, and we become beneficiaries in Him, that the pathway that results in us being adopted sons in glory is accomplished.

Secondly, that word 'salvation' is an inclusive word. Jesus, by what He does, not only justifies us, or sanctifies us, no all that makes up salvation, justification, sanctification, adoption, glorification, regeneration, a new creation, etc, it is all secured by His actions on our behalf as the founder of our salvation.

Thirdly, the text tells us that the Son was made perfect through suffering. Let us be clear about what this does not mean. It does not mean that the Son was sinful or imperfect in some way. No, the word perfect here has to do with completion. The Son was not yet fully fitted to save human sinners until certain criteria were first met. Firstly, the Son had to become incarnate, without the incarnation the sons of Adam have no representative. Then, He had to live a full human life in obedience to God. As the second Adam He had to pass the probation, overcome temptation, and fulfill the positive requirements of the law on our behalf. But that is not all, He also then had to die the sinners death. The wages of sin is death, God does not simply forgive sins but He pays for them fully satisfying His justice in justifying sinners. When we ask the question the question did Jesus have to suffer the sinner's judgement day wrath and be God forsaken on the cross, the answer is an emphatic yes. Our sin problem cannot be solved by us stopping sinning, or us paying for our sins, only someone else taking our place as a perfect offerer and offering could secure what was necessary to take sinners and turn them into sons, enemies into family. But by dying He was still not fully fitted to save, He must needs also be resurrected from the dead, being the firstfruits from the dead for us, and raised for our justification, Rom. 4:25. And even then He is further fitted by being raised to God's right hand, given authority and is reigning and interceding for us fully applying all the benefits of His finished work. In this way He was perfected through suffering. Suffering is the one word summary that includes all these necessary parts making Christ a sufficient Saviour for us. I think that the author leaned into the most difficult part of Jesus work for us, His suffering, as far as Jews and Gentiles are concerned. The Jews wanted a ruling not suffering Messiah; and Gentiles did not envision a God who could suffer because He assumed a full human nature without diminishing His divinity. This unthinkable, paradoxical, way; this method that no human would dream up because it would be seen as so ludicrous is the very way God satisfies His will to glorify sinners as sons. 1 Cor. 1:25, 'For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.' And this is not true by its novelty, but it was revealed in the OT, Is. 53 is clear, v9b-10a, 'although he had done no

violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him.'

Fourthly, and this is a note that is struck several times in this letter. Suffering which for many makes it look like God is weak, unloving, or not real, is in fact a tool that God uses. We must not forget that the worst crime ever committed was against the most innocent person who has ever lived. Jesus Christ was crucified at the hands of lawless men; yet it was the will of the Lord to crush Him. Those wicked men were doing all their sin freely, God was not violating their will nor denying second causes, yet God was bringing His perfect plan to pass without being the author of sin. What appeared to look like defeat was in fact victory; what appeared to be the devil winning was the day of his defeat. He suffered and it was God's will and it worked out well, it is the same for us.

V11, 'For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.'

Here our author is going deeper into the mechanics of how His suffering makes for our salvation. It is because He who sanctifies/Jesus and those who are sanctified/us all have one source. What we have in common enables salvation to work in this fashion. The question is what does 'all have one source' mean?

There is more than one interpretation but I think the best is that we and Jesus all share a common humanity. He became human as we are human in order to identify with us and represent us, and share what He accomplishes with us. 2:14 will pick up this exact thought, '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.'

But mechanics aside, we must not miss the profound purpose of God in our salvation described by the word sanctified. Firstly, we must not miss that the function of Jesus sanctifying us is another affirmation of His deity, for in the OT it is YHWH who sanctifies, Lev. 20:8, 'Keep my statutes and do them; I am the Lord who sanctifies you.' But we must be reminded that the will of God for us is our sanctification, 1 Thess. 4:3. That, Eph. 1:4, 'he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.' 1 Pet. 1:15-16, 'but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶ since it is written, "You shall be holy, for I am holy."' As those who are positionally sanctified in that we have died and been raised with Him and died to the controlling power of sin; we must pursue progressive sanctification, not lowering God's standards to our abilities but striving expecting incremental progress as we put sin to death and cultivate the fruits of the Spirit. And one day we will be perfectly sanctified where we will not only be fully removed from the presence of sin in all of its forms, but the hearts that once lived hungering and thirsting will be satisfied. But until that time we fight, we strive, we do not excuse or redefine sin, we confess, we mortify, we discipline ourselves in the use of the means of grace, we keep our hearts, we set guards over our mouths, we set our minds on things good clean and pure, we watch the eyegate and the eargate, we pray, we hide the word of God in our hearts, we put on the spiritual armour.

V11b-13, 'That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹² 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." We come to a rather difficult section as the author quotes from the OT. But before we unpack these references notice what these quotes are here to support, that He is not ashamed to call us brothers. The God who made all things, who is worthy of all worship,

whom we have sinned against, who could rightly judge us does not only forgive us and restore us to Adam's position. No, we gain more in Christ than we lose in Adam. He does not only reconcile Himself to us and only call us friends. No, we become brothers. This is a tremendous reality where He who is God also assumes human flesh to identify Himself with us, and picking us up out of sin, uniting us with Himself we experience becoming adopted children of God. But instead of only being servants of a king, this King has taken us and made us co-heirs with Him. There are various ways in which the NT describes the bond between us and Christ, Bride and Bridegroom; head and body, master and disciples, but this one—brother has a peculiar sweetness. It reminds us that we have been drawn into His sonship before the Father and the Spirit of adoption has been given to us to reinforce what our fallen hearts tremble to believe, that we are children of God. When we talk about saying 'Our Father' we normally say the 'our' means the church, but we must not forget that Jesus invites us through His sonship into a unique relation to God as Father along with Him. As Jesus put it on the dawn of His resurrection, John 20:17, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." And look at that way of saying it, He is not ashamed, this is how one says, this is my greatest joy. Paul is not ashamed of the gospel, and Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers. Let look at the OT quotes.

There are 3, in all Christ is the speaker in the first person. In the first the Son is speaking to the Father about us owning us as brothers. In the second and third He is speaking to us. The first is from Ps. 22:22; the second and third are Is. 8:17 and 18 respectively. Ps. 22 is clearly a messianic psalm. Jesus Himself spoke v1 on the cross applying this psalm to Himself. V7-8 describe the mockery and verbal abuse He suffered; v14-15 the agonies of dying; v16-17 the realities of crucifixion; v18 the gambling for His clothing. The psalm was written by David who was being persecuted. V1-21 include a description of his trials and cries to God. But v22 is the turn around in the psalm where David praises God for hearing and delivering him. David's sufferings were a type of Christ's sufferings; and the author of Hebrews draws on that part of the psalm that would correspond to the victory of Christ's resurrection. The psalm goes on to talk about the whole earth partaking of this victory. Christ is speaking about us as His brothers by virtue of His finished work. It is a staggering psalm as it invites us to read the psalms in a Christological way; as we see Christ leading us in worship as a result of His finished work where we get to watch the best worshipper, the Son teaching us to praise the Father ourselves; where we get to hear Him own us when we disowned Him. Our understanding of brother is so profoundly deepened as we see it in this fashion.

The second set of quotes are from Is. 8:17-18. Chapter 8 is between two famous chapters that foretell of Christ, 7:14 and 9:6-7, 8:14 is famous for speaking of Christ as the rock of offense. What is surprising is that the author tunes us in to see that Isaiah like David is a type of Christ. And so rereading Isaiah we can see that both were sent to a hard hearted people. Isaiah was a prophet at a time when outside nations Israel and Syria were trying to unseat Ahaz and put a dummy king on the throne so that the threat of Assyria could be answered with a local coalition. God was calling on the people to exercise faith for God would deliver from their enemies, but Judah would not listen, so Isaiah seals up the words and affirms his own personal trust along with his disciples, the remnant, in God that He will deliver. Christ too had faith, and the words Isaiah sealed up have come to fruition. Not only do we see a wonderful fulfillment of God's promise to deliver, but we also have an example in suffering to trust in the Lord,

Jesus suffered and trusted showing us how we should do it. 8:18 follows directly, What did this mean to Isaiah? These 3 chapters in Isaiah emphasize names, Emmanuel; mighty God, Prince of Peace, Isaiah and his children are significant, Isaiah which means YHWH is salvation is the broad brushstroke fact; Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which has the meaning, "the spoil speeds, the prey hastes," signifying the speedy removal of Syria and Israel as enemies of Judah 8:1-4; and Shear-Jashub, 'a remnant shall return' God's long term restoration of His people. These three were word-signs of God's promises. How does this connect with Hebrews? Jesus is the word-sign, the Word made flesh, where Isaiah was only a type. We as His children are now signs of God's faithfulness too. We are a word for ourselves and for the world of God's faithfulness.

We began by saying that some things seem unbelievable, that God has a Son, who became a man, who suffered and who died. What many reject as impossible God has appointed as the necessary way by which we are saved. Because He is the Son He can communicate the Father, because He is human He can represent us, die for us and resurrect us. Because He identified Himself with us and took upon Himself what was ours we now gain a share in what is His. What appeared to be folly we see is indeed the wisdom of God.