

Daily Bread with Brother Hwa-Chi (Not reviewed by the speaker, for personal use only)

Hebrews 2: 14-18

Brothers and sisters, peace be with you, this is Hwa-Chi. Thank the Lord, it's time to read the Bible again. Let's continue to read Hebrews chapter 2. We will read verses 14-18 today.

Christ, as the Son of Man, took on a body of flesh and blood and became a little lower than the angels; yet in accomplishing God's eternal purpose, He far surpasses the angels. This being made lower was temporary. In His lowliness, He suffered persecution and humiliation and was even crucified in the most brutal manner. It is precisely through what He endured in His lowliness that He was able to fulfill God's plan of redemption, opening a way for all humanity to receive grace and salvation. He became the captain of salvation to lead many sons of God, who are also Christ's many brothers, into glory.

Therefore, Paul encourages us in 2 Corinthians 5 not to lose heart, because on the path to glory, we will experience suffering just as Christ did. However, Paul confidently states in 2 Corinthians 4:17, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Like Christ, we must go through suffering on the way to glory, and these sufferings will become part of our eternal glory.

How then does Christ, by taking on body of flesh and blood, save us? Since the first man, Adam, disobeyed God's command in the Garden of Eden, as stated in Romans 5:12, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned." We see that because of Adam's sin, sin entered the world, and the wages of sin is death. Thus, death spread to all men. Not one descendant of Adam can escape the power of death; everyone lives under its shadow. The problem began with Adam, so the solution must also begin with Adam. God sent His only begotten Son into the world to become the last Adam.

Verse 14-15: "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."

The children of God all share in flesh and blood, and Christ, as the last Adam, likewise took on human flesh and blood. He, who was originally the infinite and eternal God, was now confined within a human body of flesh and blood. This meant that He would endure all kinds of suffering and face every kind of temptation, just as humans do. In His earthly life, Jesus Christ demonstrated a character that was gentle, pure, upright, and perfect, qualifying Him to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

When Jesus was hung on the cross, God placed the sins of every person throughout history, every type of sin, upon Him. Not only that, but God Himself carried out judgment, leading Jesus to cry out on the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Satan employed every method, causing the Jewish religion, Greek culture, and Roman politics to join forces and crucify Jesus. Yet Satan did not anticipate that God would lay all sins upon Jesus and personally execute judgment. The source of sin is Satan, and when Jesus was judged by God on the cross, the very source of sin—Satan—was also judged.

After the judgment, Jesus experienced death in His humanity and descended into Hades. During this process, His divinity supplied the power of resurrection to His humanity, so that after three days, He rose from the dead. His humanity was exalted, enabling Him to break free from the dominion of Hades and take on a glorified body in His resurrection. Do not think that resurrection from the dead is something difficult to believe—nature is filled with examples of this. Jesus Himself said in John 12:24, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain." Jesus is that grain of wheat sown into the earth, with the outer shell of the wheat being His body. Though it died and even decayed, the life within the wheat came alive—it sprouted, grew, produced stalks, heads of grain, and finally yielded many grains. This is the best illustration of resurrection from the dead.

Jesus Christ, through His death, destroyed the devil who had the power of death. The word "destroy" here originally means to abolish or make something inoperative—it means to nullify, rendering it powerless. Satan once held the power of death, using it to rule the world. Since everyone faces death and fears it, he used death to govern the world, becoming the ruler of this world. But in His death, Jesus Christ nullified Satan's power of death. Death is no longer the inevitable end, because Christ has risen from the dead, and all who believe in Jesus Christ will also rise from the dead when Christ returns.

Those who were once enslaved by Satan all their lives because of their fear of death can also be set free through faith in Jesus Christ, for death is no longer the end. Christ, as the captain of salvation, has risen from the dead, and all who follow Him will also rise. However, those who do not believe in the salvation of Christ remain under the power of death, without hope.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is the core of the Christian faith. We have been freed from the power of death and no longer need to live as slaves to it. This is also the truth we must declare to others when we preach the Gospel. If a person does not know where they will go after death, they live their entire life under the shadow of death—how pitiful that is. We, who have been delivered from the power of death, have passed from death into life. We can live boldly and freely because we are no longer under the dominion of death.

Verse 16: "For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham."

The word "salvation" in Greek is composed of two words: *epi* and *lambano*. *Epi* means "intensify" or "strengthen," and *lambano* means "seize," "hold," or "take hold of." So, the original meaning of salvation is to hold on tightly. This emphasizes the reliability and stability of Christ's salvation. Christ not only saves us from the power of death, but He also holds onto us tightly, never letting go, so that we can confidently follow Him.

He does not save angels; angels are ministering spirits, and their purpose is to serve God and carry out His will. Obedience to God is the most important requirement for them. If they do not obey God and rebel against Him, they have no opportunity for repentance. 2 Peter 2:4 says, "For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment." God does not save angels; rather, He saves the descendants of Abraham. Abraham was the first Hebrew, the first person to cross over.

Abraham is the father of faith, meaning that this salvation is for all who are of faith; that is, those who, like Abraham, cross over in faith. Initially, Abraham crossed the Euphrates River in faith and entered the Promised Land of Canaan. After that, God repeatedly promised that his descendants would be exceedingly numerous. In Genesis 13:16-17, it says, "And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth; so that if a man could number the dust of the earth, then your descendants also could be numbered. Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you." So, this verse speaks of Abraham's descendants being as numerous as the dust of the earth, referring to those descendants who dwelt in the land of Canaan. Therefore, this refers to Abraham's physical descendants, the Israelites.

Then in Genesis 15:5-6, it says, "Then He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be.' And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." Here we see that Abraham, in faith, believed that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky. This is also the passage that shows Abraham was justified by faith. Therefore, the stars in the sky refer to the descendants of Abraham who are of faith, which points to the saints of the New Testament.

We are all descendants of Abraham's faith, as Galatians 3:7 says, "Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham." In Genesis 22:17-18, it says, "Blessing, I will bless you, and multiplying, I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth

shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice." These two verses refer to the occasion when Abraham offered Isaac, which was the moment of God's approval. That event marked the peak of Abraham's life of faith. His faith was a model not only for his physical descendants but also for his spiritual descendants, those of faith.

Therefore, here, when God once again promises Abraham that his descendants will be numerous, it includes both his physical descendants, who will be as many as the sand by the seashore, and his spiritual descendants, who will be as numerous as the stars in the sky. The reference to the sand by the seashore may also hint at the physical descendants being limited to the land of Canaan, but eventually, they will spread out to the world. God does not save angels, but He saves the descendants of Abraham, including both his physical descendants—the Jews—and his spiritual descendants—the saints of the New Testament.

Verse 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."

He had to be made like His brethren in all things, meaning that when Jesus fulfilled His duties on earth, He was a complete human being, just like His brethren. He experienced all kinds of suffering and faced various temptations. However, He overcame all the trials and temptations, never sinning, so that He could represent us and bear our sins. He also became our example, the captain of our salvation. He was to be a merciful and faithful High Priest in matters concerning God.

When Jesus Christ fulfilled His mission on earth, everything was centered on the things of God. Although He endured great suffering, He remained resolute, carrying the cross toward Jerusalem. His singular focus was to accomplish the will of God. He was not only the sacrificial Lamb, offered on the altar, but also the merciful and faithful High Priest. The role of the priest was not only to offer sacrifices on behalf of the people; the most important responsibility of the priest was to bring God to the people and bring the people before God.

When Christ came to earth, He was Emmanuel, meaning "God with us." He brought God into the midst of the people, and through His ministry, He supplied God's grace to humanity. He helped people recognize and experience God's grace, and then brought those who were perfected by Him back to God. In the Gospels, we see that the disciples who were ministered to by Him each became strong soldiers of God's kingdom. After His ascension, they continued His earthly ministry, expanding God's kingdom. He is the most competent High Priest, and His priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek, which far surpasses the priesthood of Aaron. The author here lays a foundation, suggesting that Christ's priestly role will continue to develop in chapters 5-7, which we will not elaborate on here.

He is the merciful and faithful High Priest. These two adjectives perfectly correspond to His humanity and divinity. In His humanity, He experienced all the human trials, and He is full of compassion and mercy toward people. He understands human weakness and helplessness, and He knows how to encourage, comfort, restore, and help people regain strength. He is the merciful High Priest.

In His divinity, He is faithful to God, steadfast and true, completing all that God entrusted to Him with unwavering commitment, and there is no place for any accusation from the devil. He is the faithful High Priest. As the High Priest, He offers the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the people. Here, the word "sins" in the plural form refers to the sins that the people commit. In verses 14-15, He dealt with Satan, sin, and the power of death, enabling people to be liberated from the dominion of sin, addressing the inherent sinful nature of mankind. In this verse, as the merciful and faithful High Priest, He offered Himself as the atoning sacrifice for the people's sinful deeds, so that their sins could be forgiven by God, allowing them to be accepted before God and reconciled with Him.

Verse 18: "For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted."

When Jesus lived on earth, He underwent various temptations and knew the suffering that temptation brings. Being tempted is not sin; it is when one fails to

hold firm in the midst of temptation that sin occurs. He personally experienced all kinds of temptations, and though He did not sin, He understood the support needed in human weakness, the comfort required in helplessness, and the encouragement necessary in despair. Therefore, He is able to rescue those who are tempted. The word "rescue" originally comes from military terminology, referring to the immediate response to a distress signal and going to provide aid.

Jesus Christ's experience as a man on earth allows Him to understand human needs and provide timely rescue, helping people overcome temptation. He is the compassionate and faithful High Priest. In His compassion, He enters into the environment of human temptation, sympathizing with them, not condemning or judging, but standing alongside them. In His faithfulness, He provides grace, helping people gain strength to rise up against temptation and rescuing those who have fallen into it.

Though Jesus is made a little lower than the angels in His humanity, it is precisely because of this humility that He was able to fulfill the Father's plan of redemption. Through His death, He destroyed the one who holds the power of death, the devil, and rescued us from the dominion of death. He remains the compassionate and faithful High Priest, offering Himself as the atoning sacrifice for our sins, rescuing us from all forms of death.

Let us pray together: Dear Lord, thank You for willingly leaving the glory of Your heavenly throne and coming to earth as a humble man. Yet in Your humility, through Your death, You defeated the devil who had the power of death, freeing us who were held in bondage by the fear of death all our lives. You also offered Yourself as a propitiation for us, so that all the sins we have committed may be forgiven. Even today, You continue to rescue us, enabling us to escape from all kinds of temptation. We have received such a great salvation, and we should be filled with praise and joy as we follow You. Please grant me some companions, so that we can learn to serve together in the church, running together to follow You. Bless the church I belong to. We pray in the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ.