

Why One of Us?
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Hebrews 2:14–18

When you were a young child, did your parents take you to funerals and visitations? Opinion question (no right or wrong answer), should young children be shielded from death?

This website attempts to estimate what only God knows. Would you even want to plug in your information to see what comes out?

<http://www.death-clock.org/>

Thursday, 6th December, 2046...84 years, 3 months and 22 days old!

Nobody wants to think about death, except an undertaker. At some level we all fear death. Jesus came to earth in human flesh to free us from our fear of death.

So far in Hebrews we've learned several important truths: In chapter one we learned that Jesus is our Prophet, Priest, and King. Jesus is superior to the angels, and sits at God's right hand speaking to God the Father on our behalf. In chapter two we were warned if we don't pay close attention to Jesus, through prayer, His word, and His presence, we can DRIFT and NEGLECT His wonderful gift of salvation. Today we look at Jesus' INCARNATION. **What does that mean?** (John 1:14; meaning "to make into flesh" or "to be made flesh".)

Today's passage addresses the question: WHY was it necessary that Jesus come to earth in human flesh? And HOW does that encourage me as His follower?

Hebrews 2:14–18 (ESV)

14 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, 15 and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. 16 For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. 17 Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

- Verse 14: **WHY was it necessary for Jesus to come to earth in human flesh?**
- Verse 14: **Who are "the children?"** (Look back at verses 10-13; jump to verses 16 & 17)
- Verse 14: **How does Satan hold the "power of death?" What are his limitations in the "power of death?"** (Job 2:6 - The Father told Satan, you can hurt Job but you can't kill him.)
- Verse 15 says, the fear of death leads to lifelong slavery for all humans. **Any thoughts on what that means?**

The Bible Knowledge Commentary:

In speaking of the devil as wielding the power of death, the writer meant that Satan uses people's fear of death to enslave them to his will. The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Ed.) (Heb 2:14–15). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

Warren Wiersbe gets more specific:

“...because Satan is the author of sin (John 8:44), and sin brings death (Rom. 6:23), in this sense Satan exercises power in the realm of death. Jesus called him a murderer (John 8:44). Satan uses the fear of death as a terrible weapon to gain control over the lives of people.”

- To clarify, the writer of Hebrews doesn't say we've been delivered from death, but from the fear of death. We're all going to die, we don't have to fear death if we are a follower of Christ.
- Verse 14 says Jesus came to “destroy” Satan. **Does it feel like Satan has been destroyed?** He seems to be very busy! In the end Satan WILL be wiped out. But the Greek word here means: *“render inoperative, make of none effect.” Satan is not destroyed, but he is disarmed.* (Bible Knowledge Commentary)
- **What does that mean for those of us who are followers of Christ?**
- Verse 17 says Jesus “had to be made like His brothers in every respect.” Do you ever really think about the fact that Jesus was FULLY HUMAN and FULLY DIVINE? Fully human like you and me!

Max Lucado writes in his down-to-earth style, *we get a bit uncomfortable imagining the “exalted Lord of glory” as truly one of us: Angels watched as Mary changed God's diaper. The universe watched with wonder as The Almighty learned to walk. Children played in the street with him. And had the synagogue leader in Nazareth known who was listening to his sermons.... Jesus may have had pimples. He may have been tone-deaf. Perhaps a girl down the street had a crush on him or vice-versa. It could be that his knees were bony. One thing's for sure: He was, while completely divine, completely human. For thirty-three years he would feel everything you and I have ever felt. He felt weak. He grew weary. He was afraid of failure. He was susceptible to wooing women. He got colds, burped, and had body odor. His feelings got hurt. His feet got tired. And his head ached. To think of Jesus in such a light is—well, it seems almost irreverent, doesn't it? It's not something we like to do; it's uncomfortable. It is much easier to keep the humanity out of the incarnation. Clean the manure from around the manger. Wipe the sweat out of his eyes. Pretend he never snored or blew his nose or hit his thumb with a hammer.*

(Max Lucado - God Came Near via the NIV Application Commentary)

- Look at verse 17 again. WHY does it say Jesus had to be fully human?
- What does “make PROPITIATION” mean? - *to make (someone) pleased or less angry by giving or saying something desired* (Merriam Webster Dictionary)
- Jesus didn't just free us from the FEAR of DEATH. He freed us from the POWER of DEATH.
- Here are some simple statements that summarize the reality of Jesus' INCARNATION:
 - ADAM & EVE - Because Adam and Eve sinned, all humans inherit their sin nature.
 - A HOLY GOD - Cannot tolerate sin.
 - HUMANITY = DEATH - We came into this world as humans, condemned to die.
 - JESUS' MISSION - Jesus came to die so we could live.
 - JESUS' SACRIFICE - Only by dying could Christ defeat the fear of death, the power of sin, and give eternal life.
 - JESUS' HUMANITY - God cannot die, Jesus had to become human in order to die.
 - JESUS' the GOD-MAN - If Jesus wasn't God He couldn't save us. If He didn't become a man, He couldn't die for us. So, He had to be BOTH God and Man for us to be saved.
- As if all that good news was not enough, look at verse 18. **What does verse 18 tell us Jesus' INCARNATION means for His followers TODAY?**

- **What is the difference between empathy and sympathy? Why do we call Jesus our “sympathizing Savior?”** (We don't just need sympathy we need someone to do something about our problem.) **How does Jesus do MORE than just sympathize?**
- We often hear or say: Been there, done that. No matter what pain, trial, or temptation we face, Jesus is saying, *“Been there, felt that...I have the SCARS to prove it. And because of my scars, you can be comforted in this life, and live with me forever.”*

So, What's the Takeaway?

JC Ryle wrote:

“Had my Savior been God only – I might perhaps have trusted him – but I never could have come near to him without fear. Had my Savior been Man only – I might have loved him – but I never could have felt sure that he was able to take away my sins. But, ...my Savior is God as well as Man – and Man as well as God. God, and so able to deliver me – Man, and so able to feel with me. Almighty power and deepest sympathy are met together in one glorious person, Jesus Christ, my Lord.” (Holiness - By J.C. Ryle)

We asked, “Why did Jesus come to earth in human flesh? The NIV translation of verses 17 and 18 says it simply:

Hebrews 2:17–18 (NIV)

17 For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

What does that mean for me today and this week?

- He came to die so we could live.
- He became like us, so we can become like Him.
- He suffered and was tempted, so he can help me in my suffering and temptation.
- Jesus had to come into the prison in order to free the captives.*
- This week, let's serve Him like the freed prisoners we are!

*Adapted from Dave Guzik - commentary on Hebrews