

OVERCOMING DEATH THROUGH THE DEATH OF THE MESSIAH | HEBREWS 2:14-18

- Jesus took on flesh and blood *nearly* (not likewise) as we did. The Greek precisely conveys that he *partook* of flesh and blood but His incarnation was not like that of man. This is a testimony of the virgin birth.
- His purpose in doing so was to remove all the strength of the devil, and thus conquer death.
- The help of the Messiah (v. 16)
 - **He took not** is, more literally, "He (or it) did not take hold of."
 - **NASB** incorrectly translates as "He does not give help to." The word for *help* is found in v. 18 ("to come to the aid") but not in v. 16.
 - The Greek word is used 19 times in the New Testament, and only here does NASB translate in a sense of giving help.
 - Since it is in the 3rd person singular it is either "**he** takes hold of" or "**it** takes hold of." To determine which it is, one must look to context.
 - The "fear of death" is the best possibility for "it takes hold."
 - Christ is the most likely for "he takes hold." However, the devil is also a possibility.
 - Young's Literal Translation of vv. 15-16: "and might deliver those, whoever, with fear of death, throughout all their life, were subjects of bondage, for, doubtless, of messengers it doth not lay hold, but of seed of Abraham it layeth hold,¹
 - Thus, the options are:
 - The **fear of death** does not take hold of messengers, but does take hold of the seed of Abraham.
 - This is the sense of Young's Literal.
 - If *messengers* are angelic beings, it makes sense.
 - If *messengers* are prophets, it makes sense in light of Hebrews 11:32-38
 - **Christ** does not take hold of messengers, but does take hold of the seed of Abraham.
 - This only makes sense if messengers are angelic beings.
 - This is the sense of the King James Version.
 - The **devil** does not take hold of messengers, but does take hold of the seed of Abraham.
 - This makes more sense for prophets than for angelic beings, since 1/3 of the angels went with the Devil, yet the prophets, in comparison with Israel, held firm in faith.
 - There is also the possibility that "Seed of Abraham" is Christ, and the verse would then say that the Devil doesn't take hold of the messengers, but does take hold of Christ (in warfare, since take hold does not necessitate victory).
 - My personal preference: *the fear of death* (as in Young's), but both Young's translation and the KJV translation are accurate theologically.
- Verse 17 should begin with "wherefore" not "therefore" (as in NASB). It is a word describing the *location*, not the *foundation* of the action. The location of this action is "in flesh and blood" (v. 14).
 - **To make** reconciliation is the concept of Propitiation. In contrast to the Old Testament sacrificial atonement system, propitiation is a complete payment, once for all.

¹ Young, Robert. *Young's Literal Translation*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 1997. Print.

- Verse 18: In the flesh, the Lord was "tested" in that which He suffered. He therefore is able to come to the aid of others who are tested / tempted.

THE PROPER STUDY OF JESUS | HEBREWS 3:1-6A

- The **holy brethren** are Jewish believers. These believers are "partakers," literally "sharers" or "companions" (as in Heb 1:9).
 - I maintain that *hagios* is always used in the New Testament as reference to the Jewish believers of the Messiah.
 - In this case, they are Christians (Hebrews being written after the revelation of the mystery and the proclamation of Paul's Gospel) but they also have the distinction of living in national Israel and being of the stock of Abraham, thus they have a part in both the calling of the church and the calling of Israel.
- Of this calling, note that
 - It is irrevocable (Rom 11:29)
 - It is to be contemplated (1 Cor 1:26)
 - It is to Jew and Gentile (1 Cor 7:18-20)
 - It demands a pure life (Eph 4:1, 2 Thes 1:11)
 - It has rewards (Phil 3:14)
 - The call was to be diligently guarded (2 Pet 1:10)
- The job of these *holy brethren* is to *consider Jesus*. (v. 1)
 - The word *katanoeo* is on the root *neos* (to think), with the prefix *kata*. This prefix means "take the following word to its ultimate degree."
 - If one is going to have a Biblical understanding of Jesus, it is going to take thinking, studying, and reasoning. The Jesus of your feelings is likely a false Jesus.
 - The KJV uses the term "Christ Jesus," and emphasis on the Messianic role of Jesus.
- Jesus had a two-fold role in the profession of the Jewish saints: the One Sent (apostle) and the High Priest.
 - Moses will be presented as the type of Christ (v. 2), yet a type which was broken because Moses insisted on Aaron's help. However, Aaron was never considered "High Priest" until after the deliverance of the Hebrew nation. Even so, Christ was not called our High Priest until after He had become the propitiation of our sins.
 - The High Priestly role in the Hebrew Scriptures was one of maintaining fellowship between God and people, not enabling fellowship. The Priesthood did not come about until after the Passover and the Covenant sacrifices had been given. In the same way, Christ became propitiation, and then began a priestly role.
- The illustration of Moses:
 - The text does not clearly state which house Moses was faithful in. In all God's house (as NASB implies with the capitalization) or in all of Moses' own house (as is possible with KJV)?
 - If faithful in his own house, is this the House of Israel or the family of Moses?
 - Was Moses faithful to his family in spite of the amazing change of life that came when he moved from Egypt? (Consider the disdain that Aaron and Miriam had toward Moses in Numbers 12:1 for evidence).
 - Was Moses faithful to Israel in spite of her disobedience? (Consider Exodus 32:32).
 - Either picture could be used to display faithfulness.
 - In making comparison with Moses, the writer ensures that the reader cannot construe an equality between Christ and Moses (v. 2).
 - The faithful servant hood of Moses (v 5) was a testimony to something that would only later be spoken, namely, Christ.
 - That is, Moses (in his faithfulness) was a type and Christ the antitype.

- Once again, the house of Moses is not clearly defined, but the point of the sentence is in his faithfulness, so nothing is lost.
- Note that the fact that Moses was a servant in the house does not eliminate his own family house as a possibility, because this is not *doulos* but *therapon*, which "approaches more closely the position of *oikonomos* (manager)" [Zodiahtes] than *doulos* (slave).
- The comparison is of Moses as *therapon* of his house, but Christ as *uios* (Son) of his house (v. 6). The Son inherits the house, the attendant does not.

THE NECESSARY JEWISH RESPONSE TO JESUS | HEBREWS 3:6B-11

- **Whose house we are** (v. 6b)
 - If one takes a standard Christian interpretation of this verse is "we, the church."
 - If "we" is the church, the Moses was a servant of the church. This is an unacceptable doctrine for anyone who rejects replacement theology in which the church becomes the new Israel.
 - However, using a more faithful interpretation, "**whose house we are**" does not refer to the church, but to the Hebrews, thus either "house" of Moses still fits the grammar and theological structure, since Israel is both the house of the Messiah (in potential) and of Moses, with Moses being the attendant and Christ being the Son.
- **"if we hold fast"** (v. 6)
 - An "if" conjunction with a subjunctive verb is a true "if/then" statement, not a declaration of actuality, but a contingency. That is, this "if" cannot be taken as a certainty.
 - Two things were to be held unto.
 - The *parresia*, a freedom to speak, thus, by extension, a confidence.
 - The *kauchema*, a boasting --not any boasting (compare 1 Cor 5:6), but a boasting in "our hope firm until the end."
 - If this is a message to the Christian concerning his or her personal faith, then "once saved always saved" cannot be true (or some creative interpretation must be given, one that ignores the plain sense of words).
 - These words clearly say, "we are His house if we are faithful, otherwise we are not his house."
 - If this is a message to Israel, it says to them, "We will be the house of the Messiah if we have a freely spoken confidence and boast in our "until the end" kind of hope."
 - That is, if we will confess Jesus as our Messiah, then His House will be established, and thus we will be established. (See Matthew 23:39).
 - Note: if this interpretation is correct, we would expect an instruction to call upon Jesus as Messiah to follow.
- The quote from Psalm 95:7-11 (vv. 7b-11) is a call to do what was called for in the contingency of v. 6, namely to speak confidently and boast, and if this is done, there is a promised rest. Read Psalm 95:1-11 in light of the confidence and boasting instructed in v. 6.