

Explore the Bible Series for September 10: Without faith, it is impossible to please God

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Without faith, it is impossible to please God

- Hebrews 2:5-18

By Howard Anderson

Baptist University of the Americas, San Antonio

As we listen to God's word, we are challenged to grow in faith. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. Faith is the substance of things hoped for. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. Faith is trust in an unknown future. Faith is the life-blood of the just. Faith is the shield of Christian armor. Faith is the guarantee of answered prayer.

Through faith, we can see Christ is perfectly qualified to be High Priest to all humanity. We can be certain Christ shares our circumstances, feelings and humanity in order to be the sacrifice for our sins.

God's intentions for humanity (Hebrews 2:5-8)

The superiority of Christ to the angels is urged not only because Scripture testifies to it but also because of what Christ was and did during the days of his flesh. Psalm 8 speaks of the wonder of humankind as compared with the majesty of the heavens; God has made us a little less than divine and subjected all things to us. God gave humanity the dominion over all the earth; however that dominion can become tragically demonic if exercised out of relationship with Christ. This is God's original design—giving humanity complete control of all God has created.

Some part of God's creation is subjected to every individual, regardless of social status, race, ethnicity and gender. Each of us has authority over 168 hours each week. Each of us has an opportunity to tell someone about the goodness of God. You are somebody! At times, we probably doubt that by the way we feel.

God has a personal interest in you, and that is why he sent his Son not only as priest but also the sacrifice. Jesus becoming human is both psychological and sacrificial.

Our design as seen from a New Testament point of view is more meaningful. John writes concerning Jesus: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Jesus' identification with humanity (Hebrews 2:9-13)

Jesus, the Son of God, indeed was "made a little lower than the angels" for a time, because of the suffering of death. Angels are immortal and cannot die. It was necessary for Jesus to be capable of death that he might taste death for every human being. As a result of his death, we are cleansed in our consciences. Jesus Christ appears in the presence of God for us, on our

behalf and in our stead, in human form, and his experience becomes effective for every person on this earth.

The people of faith must realize that glory is in the suffering and death of Jesus. It was suitable to divine wisdom, justice and the program of grace to offer Jesus as a sacrifice in order to bring many sons and daughters to “glory.”

Jesus is the great Sanctifier, who sets apart and consecrates men and women to the service of God. They, who are consecrated and set apart to the service of God, are all one, in the same family, and called brothers and sisters.

The use of Old Testament quotations is interesting and instructive. Jesus Christ, as the fulfillment of God’s revelation, is seen as the speaker of the prophetic word through the psalmist and the prophet. When the author of Hebrews listens to the prophetic word of the Old Testament it is really the voice of Jesus that he is hearing.

Jesus' intervention for humanity (Hebrews 2:14-18)

The Son of God was not by nature “flesh and blood.” He took upon himself that nature for the sake of providing redemption for humanity. “Power of death” is the ultimate purpose of the incarnation—Jesus came to earth to die. By dying, he was able to conquer death in his resurrection. By conquering death, he rendered Satan powerless against all who are saved.

For the believer, “death is swallowed up in victory.” The fear of death and its spiritual bondage was brought to an end through the work of Christ.

In verse 16, the author sums up his argument about Jesus being better than angels, declaring he did not take on the nature of angels, but became the

natural seed of Abraham. It was necessary that he be made in all things like unto his brethren that He might be a merciful and faithful high-priest in the things of God, to remit their sins by his own atonement, and to represent them in time of temptation (vv.17-18)

The author shows the Hebrew people that Jesus had to be made a human being. He came from Abraham according to the flesh, and was one of their own people. Redemption could not have been possible otherwise. Jesus has to suffer to redeem, and he now is able to help and deliver all humankind who are tempted.

Prophetic preaching must portray Jesus as the one who overcomes the demonic host. His power to cast out demons, heal the sick, and cleanse lepers must be seen as the assurance that he has both authority and power to overcome the forces that hold humans in slavery. As High Priest, he not only represents God's purpose in rescuing his creation, but also has undergone temptation and suffering and "is able to help" men and women who are subject to these afflictions.

Discussion questions

- How often in the course of a day do you realize your importance to God? Would that realization becoming constant in your life change the way you live?
- How does Jesus' willingness to release his divinity change the way you live each day?
- Jesus came to earth to die that we might live. What do you need to "die" to so that others might have a clearer picture of the abundant life available through Jesus Christ?

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