

## The Greatest Gift - Ever!

After giving a Christmas gift to someone, it brings us great joy to hear them say, "That's just what I needed." We derive more pleasure when they say, "It's just what I wanted." We derive even greater pleasure when we see them put our gift into regular use. So it is also with the Father's pleasure in our response to the many gifts He gives us. In our text today we see multiples gifts being given to us.

### Hebrews 2:14-18

**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.

In this text there are a series of amazing gifts that are given to us through the Incarnation of Jesus Christ.

#### I. **He partakes of our flesh and blood (v. 14a)**

We are not alone in this universe. Jesus Christ has come to earth to take on our very nature. He is fully God and fully human, which is essential for the efficacy of His sacrifice on our behalf. We do not suffer one thing that He has not already experienced Himself. And most blessed of all, even though we be sinners in every respect, He is "not ashamed to call us brothers" (v. 11).

#### II. **He destroyed the devil (v. 14b)**

We have a chief adversary in this world—the devil himself—who seeks to destroy us. Jesus came to take on our very nature that by His death on Calvary's cross He may destroy the powers arrayed against us. One need only look at the end of the book of Revelation to behold this great adversary thrown into the lake of fire.

#### III. **He delivers us from the fear of death (v. 15, 16)**

Death has amazing power over us. No one escapes the power of death, therefore, by our very nature we fear death. Somerset Maugham put it this way: "Death is a very dull, dreary affair, and my advice to you is to have nothing whatsoever to do with it." Or as William Shakespeare once said: "Death is a fearful thing." Jesus delivers us from the fear of death, precisely because He has defeated death on our behalf. We, therefore, can live life dangerously, taking risks for the Kingdom of God, knowing that one day we shall see Him as He is for we shall be like Him.

#### IV. **He made propitiation for our sins (v. 17)**

Propitiation is a very important word in Scripture. Confer Romans 3:25. To propitiate someone is to please or satisfy them. Because God is a holy God and must punish every sin, His justice must be satisfied relative to every sin committed against Him. We could never pay for our sins short of our own death and condemnation; therefore, if we are to be rescued, there must be a sufficient sacrifice offered in our place to satisfy or propitiate the justice of God. That is precisely what Jesus has done. What a gift! As Keith Getty says in his famous hymn,

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,  
Fullness of God in helpless babe!

This gift of love and righteousness,  
 Scorned by the ones He came to save.  
 Till on that cross as Jesus died,  
 The wrath of God was satisfied;  
 For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—  
 Here in the death of Christ I live.

#### V. **He helps us when we are tempted (v. 18)**

This gifts He has given us, revealed in this text, are already so extraordinary, we would no think of asking for another present from the Lord; but He amazes us. Knowing that temptations are liable to turn into sins, and sins are liable to turn into full blown rebellion, He assures us that by the Incarnation of Jesus we will have One who will help us when we are being tempted.

What an array of gifts He has given us.

It would be good of us to say, "That's what I always needed." It would be even better for us to say, "That's what I've always wanted." It would be the best response to receive these gifts and to put them into practice. As Christina Rossetti said in her famous hymn,

What can I give Him, poor as I am?  
 If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;  
 If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;  
 Yet what I can I give Him: give my heart.

#### **Discussion Questions**

1. What does it mean that Christ partook of flesh and blood?
2. How does Christ destroy Satan? If he destroyed him, why is he still harassing us?
3. Describe our "slavery" in verse 15. How does Christ deliver us from this slavery?
4. What is the meaning of the word "propitiation" in verse 17? Why must God be propitiated? How did Christ propitiate God on our behalf?
5. Why does verse 18 bring the Christian such comfort?

#### **Going Deeper**

1. Have you personally received each of the gifts from God revealed in this text? How do you know?
2. What response do you want to make to Him for His good and gracious gifts to you?