

¹⁴ Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers 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.

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus, the God-man, our Savior,

We live in a do-it-yourself society, don’t we? Because the cost of labor escalated more and more people try to do the job themselves whether that’s fixing the brakes on their car or remodeling their homes, etc. This has led to the industry of “How to…” books, magazines and videos. And now all you have to do is google what you want to learn how to do and you will find plenty of literature and videos showing how to do the job. Many of us take great pride in doing it ourself.

There is something, however, that we can’t do ourselves. We can’t save ourselves from God’s judgment against our sins. Only God can save us. He has done so through his Son Jesus Christ. Faith in Jesus can save us from God’s judgment, but we can’t even come to faith in Jesus on our own. We can’t do it, we can’t do anything spiritual, ourselves. We can’t because we are dead spiritually. (Ephesians 2:1-5) The Bible says, “**No one can say that Jesus is Lord but by the Holy Spirit.**”

Last Sunday we took a look at what this section of Scripture (Hebrews 2:14a) said about the person of Christ. This week let’s see what the writer of the Book of Hebrews says about **the Work of Christ**. Let’s note again also that it is only because of *who* Christ is that he can accomplish what the Heavenly Father sent him to do.

1.

First, the writer says that the God-man Jesus came “**so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.**” (2:14b)

1. As a man, a human being, Jesus could die.

“In the Garden of Eden human beings received the Word of God and fell when they rejected it in unbelief. Their state of innocence could not be restored without a human being who could serve as their champion and defeat as a human being the foe who had seduced them. So God promised a Savior who would do just that, a Savior who would be the Seed of the woman and whose heel would be bruised when he crushed the head of Satan (Gen. 3:15).” (Deutschlander) **“When the time fully came God faithfully as promised, sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law.”** (Gal. 4:4)

2. Because Jesus was God he could overcome the devil, destroying the one who holds the power over death.

He did this by living a perfect life in our place which he could do only as true God and then by giving that spiritually unblemished life as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Only because Jesus was God was his death able to be an atonement for the all the sins of all the world. *“The blood of a mere man could never accomplish such a thing, but the blood with which God himself is personally united, the blood therefore which has divine worth and holiness and merit, that blood and none other is sufficient to purify us from all sin.”* (Deutschlander) God showed us that He accepted that sacrifice as a full payment for our sins and all the sins of every human being by raising him from the dead! (1 Corinthians 15)

2.

Secondly, Jesus came so that he might **“free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”** (v. 15)

1. Our conscience reminds us that God demands a payment for sin. God’s Word tells us that “the wages of sin is death! Fear of death (God’s punishment for our sins) makes us slaves to fear. We fear the unknown. We fear God’s punishment, (eternal pain). We fear hell! We fear the separation. *“Only a human being can suffer physical death and only a human being or a fallen angel can suffer the torment of separation from God’s grace and goodness that is the essence of hell. If we are to have a Savior, then he must be a human being in order to suffer in our place that physical death and that separation from God’s grace and goodness that is the penalty for sin. He must be one who has kept the law and is therefore himself innocent and then one who offers himself freely and willingly to endure the penalty of sin as the substitute for another.”* (Deutschlander) Jesus was this substitute. His words on the cross show this. **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.”** (Mark 15:34)

2. But because Jesus paid for our sins and there now is no condemnation to those who believe in him (Romans 8:1) and because Jesus overcame death by rising from the dead and promises us that because he lives we will also (John 11:25) live eternally in heaven with him there is no longer any fear of death.

3.

Thirdly, the writer says, ¹⁷ **For this reason he had to be made like his brothers 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.** (v. 16)

1. Jesus is a merciful (loving) and faithful (perfect) high priest serving God. What did High Priests do to serve God?
2. High Priests make sacrifices to God to make atonement for the sins of the people.
3. Jesus is both the High Priest and the sacrifice that made atonement for our sins.
 - a. As a man he could die for our sins.
 - b. As true God his innocent life and death was so valuable that his holy, precious blood could atone for the sins of the whole world.

Have you ever tried to do something yourself, but after getting into the job you soon realized you were over your head and needed help to get the job done. Accomplishing our salvation is that way. Only Jesus can do it. Only the person of Christ, the God Man can accomplish our salvation. Jesus, our merciful and faithful High Priest gave his life as a sacrifice to free us from God’s punishment of sin because we couldn’t do it ourselves. We can’t take the credit for our salvation ourselves. God did it all in Christ Jesus. All glory be to God! Amen.