Title: Why Jesus Came in the Flesh

Text: Heb 2:14-18

Date: 6-5-16

Introduction:

This morning we are going to look at least at the second of the four reasons Hebrews lists for why Jesus came in the flesh.

1. To taste death for everyone 2:9

2. To destroy ( render powerless) the devil 2:14

3. To make propitiation for sin 2:17

4. To empathize with and come to the aid of humans 2:18

2. To destroy the devil 2:14

Heb 2:14-15

14 Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

Verse 14 looks back to verses 11-13: emphasizing the unity between Jesus and those who are His brethren and God’s children (quoting from Ps 22:22 and Isa 8:17-18)

V. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one Father; for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying, "I will proclaim Thy name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise."

13 And again, "I will put My trust in Him." And again, "Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me." NASB

The BBE renders v.14 And because the children are flesh and blood, he took a body himself and became like them. We understand two things from that verse:

(a) the children share a common human nature with one another, which is different and distinct from angels, and (b) Jesus assumed or added this nature to relate to them. You’ve heard it before but I’ll repeat it, Jesus not half human half God but fully both. He did so for the express purpose: “that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.” Here the second purpose of the incarnation is clearly stated.

Think about what that means. I used the illustration of ants last week, about how they are so insignificant in relationship to us we don’t consider them they are so insignificant we don’t think about them until we have issues with them. Think about that in relation to what Hebrews tells us. Max Lucado actually used a form of this illustration in his Life Lessons Study Bible. Think about the ant it spends its life digging in the dirt eating whatever ants eat at the mercy of the elements, to be stepped on by people who just don’t like you or don’t pay any attention to you. You spend your entire life working without ever taking a day off or having a vacation. We sometimes complain about people sticking their nose in our business but if you were an ant you might have to worry about Giant Ant Eater sticking it’s nose in your house and scarfing down the entire family. Imagine you look down on the ants and being willing give up what you have now to become an ant; rather than enjoying hot dogs and hamburgers and BBQ you step away from all the wonders of being human and become an ant. That’s what Jesus did for us.

Php 2:5-9 says:

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. NASB

Scripture repeatedly affirms Jesus identity as creator and sustainer of creation not only to reveal His divine nature but also so we will have some perspective of how much He loves and cares for us. Think about becoming an ant when you read Jn 3:16-18

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. 17 "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him.

NASB. Not only that but we also get a perspective of the uniqueness of our relationship with Him because verse 16 tells us what He did for us He did not do for angelic beings.

What was it He did for us? V. 14 that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. “through death” or "By means of death" (his own death) Christ broke the power of the devil over death.

Let’s first of all talk briefly what we know about the devil from Scripture. The word devil is the Greek word, diabolos, which means “accuser.” He is known by a number of other names perhaps the most common is Satan, which means “adversary. “ He is our adversary or our enemy and more so God’s adversary, He is our accuser. The book of job gives us a brief glimpse of that role as accuser.

He is referred to in other ways in the NT which reveals his character to us: "the evil one" (1 Jn 2:13). He is the "tempter" (Mt 4:3; 1 Th 3:5) tempting us to follow a path other than God. He is "the enemy" (Mt 13:39); the "god of this world" (2 Co 4:4; cf. Jn 12:31); the "power of darkness" (Lk 22:53); "prince of the power of the air" (Eph 2:2); the "father of lies" and a "murderer" (Jn 8:44)." It’s not until Revelation chapter 12 we see him specifically identified with the serpent of Genesis, Rv 12:9 And the great dragon was thrown down, the serpent of old who is called the devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; NASB

Satan seeks to undo the work of God (Mark 4:15) and to cause evil (John 13:2, 27).

We see all of these hideous and ugly renditions of Satan’s image which induce fear and we would think how could he induce anyone to follow him but 2 Cor.11:14 He can disguise himself as an angel of light; the picture is that which is ugly and evil can be disguised as something beautiful and good. He use various schemes to deceive people he can use or misuse Scripture to induce people to sin as he tried in Matt. 4:6 and in fact he can use false prophets to do that as well. Satan can take away the good seed of God's Word (Mark 4:15), and hinder missionary work (1 Thess. 2:18). Scripture says Satan rules in the hearts of all those who are not "born of God" (1 Jn 3:8). John in fact called those who oppose Jesus "children of the devil" in 1 Jn 3:10 and refers to him as their father of in Jn 8:44 . Prior to salvation we understand that all humanity is influenced and motivated by the spirit of Satan according to Eph 2:2; Ac 26:18. My point is that Satan is evil, he is powerful and as Peter tells us he is a roaring lion (1 Pet 5:8) and we are to be very wary of him.

There are two mistaken notions prevalent about the devil we need dispel. I know I have said this a number of times but it’s important for us to understand (1) the idea that the devil is not a real being. Most if not all unbelievers would deny the existence of the devil just as they deny the existence of God. There are, however, any number of surveys that indicate a large and growing percentage of Christians also don’t believe the devil is real. Many hold a false view of him as simply an allegorical or fictional figure used as a personification of evil in the world or that in the same way the devil is used simply to describe the immoral part of human nature.

The Bible teaches the devil is a real being. Certainly in the book of Job Satan is presented as a real being. His description as the tempter of Jesus in the wilderness is that of an actual being and in Lk 22:31 the Bible says: quotes Jesus saying to Peter: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded permission to sift you like wheat;

NASB. As a side note, the word you in that verse is plural, in Southern it would be you all or y’all indicates Jesus wasn’t just referring to Peter but all the apostles. It’s paraphrased like this in the Amplified version: Lk 22: 31 Simon, Simon (Peter), listen! Satan has asked excessively that [all of] you be given up to him [out of the power and keeping of God], that he might sift [all of] you like grain, AMP

The point is the devil is a real being. He is a spiritual being rather than a human being but none the less an actual being. The Bible doesn’t fully explain his existence but Is 14, Ezk 28 from the OT along with Lk 10:18 and Rev 12 reveal that Satan was created by God with power and beauty as one of the highest angelic beings but opposed God and was thrown down from heaven and a third of the angelic beings with him. Again the point is the devil is a powerful being, he should never be taken for granted or dismissed. Jude 1:9 tells us Michael the archangel, when he disputed with the devil and argued about the body of Moses, did not dare pronounce against him a railing judgment, but said, "The Lord rebuke you." NASB obviously he is a real being.

The second misunderstanding is that while the devil is powerful sometimes people mistakenly believe he is the coequal opposite of God. The devil is powerful but he is not omnipotent, omniscient, nor omnipresent. He is not all powerful, all knowing nor all present. God in His sovereignty has allowed Satan limited power in the world. I can’t speak to why God has allowed it to be that way, there are philosophical and theological explanations men have come up with to explain why. I find those explanations while good inadequate to fully explain why Satan came to be Satan. But, I know God is smarter than I am and in his infinite wisdom He has chosen things to be the way they are. I know God chose creation to be the way it is including humans; flesh and blood like me and you; God chose to become flesh and blood like me and you and God chose to face death for me and you.

Verse 14 says He did so that through His death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. NASB

Some translations use the word destroy here in v. 14, I used in my sermon point. That obviously doesn’t mean Satan ceased to exist or to be active. Satan, along with all the fallen angels, have been judged (John 16:11). They face a future where they will be cast into Hell or the eternal lake of fire (Matt. 25:41, Rev. 20:10). The word translated "destroy" in this verse is more accurately translated as in the NASB render powerless. It indicates the elimination of the devil’s power over those whom Christ redeems. Believers are no longer in bondage to him, he no longer has the power of death over us because we have been set free from sin and death by the death and resurrection of Christ.

We know God is the one who ultimately has power over both life and death so in what sense then does it mean the devil had the power of death? We saw last week death was not a part of original creation. God warned in Gen 2:17 it was the penalty for transgression. Because the devil seduced man to disobedience and transgression which resulted in death he was the means of introducing "death into the world, and thus had power of death. "Death" is a part of the devil’s dominion; because all men without Christ are under his dominion (Acts 26:18) thus under the curse of death.

The fear of death seems to refer to more of an OT concept but it seems here the idea is the fear of judgement by God that death brings. The Bible continually reminds us that without Christ we are in bondage to sin and thus to the devil and death. Death is a mystery. As believers are certain of our eternal security in Christ, we believe with certainty heaven is real and when this life is over we will spend eternity in heaven with the Lord, but we have never experienced it ourselves we don’t exactly how it works. But what the writer refers to is the fear of unbelief. Even if a person believes there is nothing beyond death there is the uncertainty. There is the very real fear of standing before God. And without Christ mean live under that constant fear.

Redemption, however, cast a new light on the gloom of death. Christ’s death paid for our sin, Christ’s resurrection proves that this life is not all there is, that there is certain hope and life beyond the grave. The defeat of Satan and death is the hope and victory of faith.

Christ came through His death and resurrection rendered Satan powerless over death for believers that we might have no fear but only hope and experience victory in life and over death. Because of that there is Victory in Jesus for you today.