

1

ANSWERING SOME FEW QUESTIONS IN THE BIBLE: EPISODE 5

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THE BRINGING OF MANY SONS TO GLORY THROUGH CHRIST'S SUFFERING BY GOD THE FATHER

INTRODUCTION

Why is the suffering of Christ important to the believers? What does it mean that Christ was made perfect through suffering? What does it mean that Christ is of the same family with us? In this article, we are going to answer those questions by studying Hebrews 2:10-11 and 1 Peter 2:20-25 and other selected passages.

Hebrews 2:10-11: In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the

author of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. -NIV



Figure 1 Hebrews 2:10-11

THE DESIRED AND SURE END OF GOD'S WORK IN CHRIST

"In bringing many sons to glory it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering v.10"

A. THE GOD FOR WHOM AND THROUGH WHOM EVERYTHING EXIST

The desired and sure end of the work of God in Christ is to bring many sons to glory. This act is sure because the foundation upon which it is built is a sure foundation which is Christ and His work of salvation. Now, the sufferings that Jesus (the author of our salvation) faced were ordained by God the Father that He should go through them for the purpose of bringing many sons to glory. We are going to look at these sufferings, for now, let us focus on *why God chose the means of sufferings to perfect the author of salvation*. The Bible says that "it was fitting," meaning it was the right thing for God to carry out.

*Now, if God is to carry out His plan in Christ, what is the **end goal** of that work?*

The author of Hebrews points out that God is the end goal because He is the “*God for whom and through whom everything exists:*” Therefore, this act of making the author of salvation perfect through suffering and bringing many sons to glory through it is both right and exists for Him.

B. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT CHRIST WAS PERFECTED THROUGH SUFFERING?

When the author says “*make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering,*” he does not mean that the Lord Jesus was sinful such that He needed to be perfected through suffering, but he shows how *suffering was God’s means for the Savior to accomplish His purposes.* So, let us look at the purposes of God which called for these sufferings:

I. THE FITTING OF CHRIST FOR THE ROLES SET BEFORE HIM

The idea that seems to fit what the author is saying concerning perfecting the author of salvation is the idea of “*fitting*” or “*to make Him fitting for the role.*” For perfection to be attained in every role God set before Christ (*Savior, High priest, etc.*)—that is meeting the standard thereof, He had to go through the suffering demanded by that role.

Example 1: Salvation is not attained if there is no Savior who suffers the wrath of God for the sins of the people. The perfection of salvation demands a suffering-Savior. For Christ to fit that role of being a Savior *in the sense of achieving salvation* and being able to offer the benefits of it to those who believe, it is necessary that He suffers by death and rise from the dead.

David G. Peterson’s comment is worth noting. He says,

Jesus is the *author* (Gk. *archēgon*, as in 12:2) *of their salvation*, or perhaps more accurately ‘the pioneer of their salvation’. He certainly accomplished something unique on behalf of others (9) and is rightly called ‘the source of eternal salvation’ in 5:9. But the writer also wishes to stress that Jesus is in some respects the leader who acted like a trail blazer, opening up the way for others to follow (*cf.* 6:20; 12:1–3). Three times we are told that he was made *perfect* (Gk. *teleiōsai*, *cf.* 5:9; 7:28). There is no sense in which he was morally imperfect, but by his suffering and temptation, his death and heavenly exaltation, he was ‘qualified’ or ‘made completely adequate’ as the saviour of his people.¹

Example 2: Christ was to live by the standard of righteousness in everything. If He was to suffer and fail to remain perfect by sinning against God the Father, He would not be our Savior because the death that He was to face on the cross required Him to be innocent. He would be condemned like any of us who are guilty before God.

So, the way He lived from which we derive our way of life matters to the whole work of salvation He came to accomplish.

In fulfilling this demand of living a righteous life before God the Father amid unjust treatment and temptations, Christ is fit to die for our sins. It also makes Him fit to serve as our High priest because He can sympathize with us when we are tempted for He too was tempted but without sin.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our

¹ David G. Peterson, “[Hebrews](#),” in *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition*, ed. D. A.

Carson et al., 4th ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), 1328.

weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need (Heb 4:15-16, NIV).

ABOUT THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST

The focus of the author of Hebrews in Heb 2:10 is to show those who have been justified that God is leading them *to glory* in which they will rule with Christ in the kingdom to come. Now, since they are heading there, God through Christ has paved a way for them when He perfected Christ through suffering.

In 2:9 the writer had mentioned Jesus' death for the first time. Now he affirmed that such suffering was appropriate for the One who was to serve as the Captain of the many sons. Before He could fittingly lead them to the salvation experience God had in mind for them (i.e., "to glory"), He must be made **perfect** for this role "through suffering." Since His brethren must suffer, so must He if He is to be the kind of Captain they need. By having done so, He can give them the help they require (cf. v. 18).²

The idea of being the 'Captain' is the same idea of the 'trail blazer' that David G. Peterson mentioned in his comment.

Now, how is Christ's captainship revealed? Zane says, "since His brethren must suffer, so must He if He is to be the kind of Captain they need."³ It is good, then, to look at the sufferings of Christ. After this, we are

going to look at how the Scripture exalts us to follow the '*Captain of our salvation.*' let us look at the sufferings of Christ from selected passages.

We can understand these sufferings in this way: **a)** the injustice that He faced from people and all temptations He faced in obedience to God. **b)** the suffering He faced because of the wrath of God for our sins.

I. THE INJUSTICE CHRIST FACED FROM MEN

This is one of the kinds of suffering that Christ faced according to the Scripture. The emphasis of this suffering is the *blamelessness of Christ*. The Lord did not move away from the path of doing good even when people treated Him unjustly. In 1 Peter 2:20-25, Peter demonstrates the blamelessness of the Lord Jesus as a way to motivate believers to follow the footstep of Christ in doing good amid injustice.

But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹ To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ²² "He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth." ²³ When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly (1 Peter 2:20-23, NIV).

vv.20-21 Peter says that believing slaves are called to suffer for doing good and endure that suffering because God commends this. This instruction also applies to all believers. The foundation for this commendation is Christ who suffered for us, leaving us an

² Zane C. Hodges, "[Hebrews](#)," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 784.

³ Zane, "[Hebrews](#)," In *The Bible Knowledge commentary*.

example of how to live amid unjust suffering. Christ demonstrated this blameless life in this way:

a) *He remained blameless in unjust suffering*

Peter quotes Isaiah 53:9 showing that it was not for the injustice that Christ was killed because “He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in His mouth v.22.”

Application: Because of that, believers are to seek blamelessness in suffering that look to be unjust.

b) *He looked up to God for vindication*

v.23 This verse continues with the same point of doing good now with an encouragement to look up to God for justice. God is the one who vindicates us. We should not take vengeance into our own hands. Now, Jesus is the foundation for this way of living because “*when they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly (1 Peter 2:23, NIV).*”

Application: Believers are to look up to God who vindicates amid unjust treatment just as Christ looked to the Father for vindication.

So, in this act of Christ suffering unjustly for doing good, we see that God was pleased to have Christ reveal righteous living in suffering so that those of us who believe may pursue righteousness in suffering.

This is one way the Bible means that Christ was perfected through suffering: *suffering for doing good so as to pave a way for those who are led to glory in the way of suffering.* So, this is the road for Christianity as taught by Paul and Barnabas also: “*we must go*

through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God (Acts 14:22, NIV)” and this is how we should endure this hardship: “*remain true to the faith (Acts 14:22, NIV).*”

Let us look at another kind of suffering of Christ mentioned in the Bible.

II. THE SUFFERING THAT CAME FROM THE WRATH OF GOD FOR OUR SINS

This suffering is with regard to the work of Christ on the cross.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (1 Peter 2: 24-25, NIV)

Our Lord Jesus bore our sins: He faced the punishment for our sins. This punishment was decreed by God the Father so that by Christ’s death we might die to sins—that is no longer be governed by sin which led us to death. God did this so that we may be made to live for righteousness. Just as the law has no effect on the dead person, so sin does not have a rule over someone who has died to it.

How does sin rule? The rule of sin is understood in its power to control the lives of people. Because of its power, all sinners are condemned by God. This means that as long as sin claims one’s life through the condemnation that comes from God’s law it is ruling.

So, the only way one would be released from the rule of sin is to die to it. Now, if one dies while under its rule that is still under the condemnation of God’s law then that person is condemned forever. However, if Christ the righteous One dies

in the place of the sinner by taking that condemnation from God's law upon Himself and by faith giving life to the sinner, then the sinner who believes is considered to have participated in the death of Christ and is free from the condemnation of the law of God. Sin then cannot claim his life because the law from which it drew its power has been satisfied by Christ's death. Paul says, "*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*"⁵⁶ *The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. 57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor 15:55-57, KJV).*"

The purpose of Christ's death is that we may live for righteousness. This means that righteousness is the goal of our living. we are obligated to follow the one who saved us: "*For you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls (1 Peter 2:25, NIV).*"

Christ's death healed us from the curse of sin. God condemned us for our sins. No one was able to heal us by removing that curse apart from Christ.

Application: Now, we cannot imitate Christ in the manner that He suffered on the cross for our sins because none of us can die for one's sins. However, we can imitate Him by following His principle of laying His life for us by laying our lives for each other in this manner: Having all things done in love as Christ died for us in love: "*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters (1 John 3:16, NIV).*"

Paul instructs us in this way:

Rom 12:9-21, NIV

9 Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10 Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11 Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12 Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13 Share with God's people who are in need. Practice hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16 Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. 17 Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. 18 If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. 20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

C. WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT CHRIST IS OF THE SAME FAMILY WITH US?

"Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So, Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers v.11."

"*Same family*" implies the same human likeness or nature. Though Jesus did not have the sinful nature as those whom He came to make holy, He was truly human and He was also truly divine. **We can say from here that to be truly human as we have seen in the case of Christ does not necessitate that He should be sinful.**

It was necessary for Christ to take upon Himself the human likeness or nature so that He may make holy or purify or sanctify the sons. The sons are those who by faith

come or draw near to God through Jesus Christ and are led to glory.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Salvation with regard to the work of Christ in the matter to do with sin is understood in Scripture in this way: *justification*, *sanctification*, and *glorification*.

Justification is a “divine, forensic act of God, based on the work of Christ upon the cross, whereby a sinner is pronounced righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ”⁴ by faith (see Romans 3:28). The cup of death is removed from us who believe (see Romans 8:1).

Sanctification is a “process of being made holy resulting in a changed lifestyle for the believer.”⁵

Glorification is a Christian doctrine that anticipates the salvation of believers from *‘the presence of sin’*⁶ and the resurrection of their bodies in the likeness of Christ (1 John 3:2) and their rewards to rule with Christ in the Kingdom of God.

⁴ James White, “[Justification](#),” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 970.

⁵ Lorin L. Cranford, “[Sanctification](#),” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*

(Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003), 1443.

⁶ Jen Wilkin, “How Salvation brings freedom,” accessed on June 3, 2022, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/how-salvation-brings-freedom/>