

Text: Heb 5.8-9

Before we move into the next section of Hebrews, I want to take one more look at a detail in the first 10 verses of Heb 5.

We touched on this in my message a couple of weeks ago, but I want to concentrate our attention on this one point today.

My objective is to instill a sense of worship in you. Jesus Christ is our God, he is worthy of all our worship and devotion. We owe him everything.

If you don't know the Lord, I'd like you to consider this message very carefully. He has given you this life by creating you, but he can give you eternal life if you call on him for salvation.

Here is our title for the message:

Son Though He Was, He Learned

This is my translation of the first phrase of our text. Our English Bibles translate it like this, "Although he was a son ..." This is a fine translation, but the way I am putting it emphasizes the dramatic statement our text makes about our Saviour.

Read Heb 5.1-10, text 9-10

I think I might have given this quote before, but it bears repeating:

"It is the most natural thing in the world for a son to learn obedience by suffering; indeed, our author makes this very point in 12:5ff. But it is not any ordinary son that he is speaking about here, but the Son of God: 'Son though he was'—that is to say, Son of God though he was—even he was granted no exemption from the common law that learning comes by suffering."¹

Christian doctrine is unified on this point: you can't be a Christian if you don't accept it: the eternal God the Son became a man.

This is the plain reading of Scripture, including the verses that form our text.

This teaching isn't just some kind of mystical magic or legend that we tell ourselves to puff up Jesus in our minds. It is one of the keys to salvation.

¹ F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Rev. ed., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 130.

If this teaching is true, men can have eternal life. If it is not true, there is no way men can overcome their sin and enter heaven.

Proposition: The obedient suffering of the Son produced a Saviour for all mankind.

I. The eternal Son

A. Hebrews on the Son (so far)

1. The opening statement (1.1-4)

- a. Uses the same construction in v. 2, inarticulate υἱός
- b. Elevated language (2-4) elevate our understanding

2. The contrast with angels (1.5-8ff.)

- a. Angels are mighty spiritual beings
- b. Yet angels are subordinate in stature, rank, power, and authority to the Son
- c. The Son is expressly addressed as God (8)

3. The contrast with Moses (3.1-6)

- a. Moses is a dominant human figure, the conduit of God's OT revelation
 - 1) Moses writes first five books
 - 2) All the prophets (incl hist and poets) are consequences and meditations on Moses
- b. Christ as Son (inarticulate) is faithful over all his house, surpassing Moses

4. The major body of Hebrews begins in 4.14: identifying Jesus, the Son of God as our great high priest who passed through the heavens

B. Son though he was ... or ... is

1. The participle is present tense, not past tense

“At the very least it refers to the eternal nature of Jesus as Son, as has already been established in the epistle.”²

2. Millard Erickson in *Christian Theology* speaks of this as God’s infinity

“God is infinite. This means not only that God is unlimited, but that he is unlimitable.”³

a. In terms of space: God is not confined to space

1) We think of greatness of space in terms of size

Jupiter is the greatest planet, huge among planets, yet dwarfed by the Sun, which in turn is only a dot in the universe.

2) God existed before space and time

a) We cannot locate God in a specific place

b) We cannot locate a place where God cannot be found

b. In terms of time: God existed before time

1) We can’t even say “before” time because that would add something to time — better, God is outside of time

2) God always is, always will be: God is eternal

So, this is the Son, with these exact attributes.

Although he was a Son, he learned...

How can the infinite Son learn?

II. The obedient Servant

A. He learned obedience through suffering

1. We already quoted Bruce saying that Son though he was, he was not exempted from learning through obedience

2. We all know what it is to learn through obedience (or disobedience)

² David Allen, *Hebrews*, The New American Commentary 35 (Nashville, Tenn: B & H Publ. Group, 2010), 322.

³ Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1998), 298.

- a. You learn that authorities are authorities
- b. You learn that you cannot just do as you wish
- c. True of Human laws and of Natural [divine] laws

I cannot fly. I learned that as I dropped off the monkey bars in the park and put my upper teeth through my lower lip, resulting in much blood and stitches. (took two lessons, at least)

B. The ways Jesus learned

1. Submitting to authorities

Lk 2.52 ¶ And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

2. Submitting to suffering

Isa 50.5-6 The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not disobedient Nor did I turn back. ⁶ I gave My back to those who strike Me, And My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting.

3. Submitting to God

Heb 10.7 "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK IT IS WRITTEN OF ME) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'"

"He set out from the start on the path of obedience to God, and learned by the sufferings which came his way in consequence just what obedience to God involved in practice in the conditions of human life on earth."⁴

C. The purpose of obedience

1. Not merely to set an example (though he did set an example)
2. To fulfill the will of God
 - a. The will of God against sin is "the soul that sinneth, it shall die"

⁴ Bruce, *Hebrews*, 1990, 131.

- b. The infinite, perfect Son obeyed God's will to offer himself as a substitute for sinning men
 - 1) His infinite life offered to receive God's wrath against sin
 - 2) His infinite life taken up again to offer eternal life to believing sinners

But one more thing about our Lord's suffering – it made him perfect! v. 9 (What does that mean?)

III. The complete Saviour

A. "Having been made perfect"

1. Meaning of the word

- a. Same word as Jesus uttered on the cross: "It is finished"
- b. Has the idea of completeness, coming to the end, filling up to the full (sometimes maturity)

"The verbal form broadly signifies bringing something to completion, its proper end or goal."⁵

2. We can think of this as his sufferings and resurrection brought his humanity to completion

- a. He limited himself to become a man ("emptied himself" Philippians)

Phil 2.6-7 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.

- b. Every human life is subject to death, even Jesus as a mortal man
- c. With Jesus, he completed his human experience, not merely by death, but also by resurrection — *made perfect* (9)

3. The goal of his life

⁵ Allen, 324–25.

Lk 13.32 And He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third *day I reach My goal.*' [τῆ τρίτῃ τελειοῦμαι]

- The third day he would be "perfected" (same word)
- What is the third day? The Resurrection

B. Through his obedience, he became the source of eternal salvation

KJV: "author"

- To those who obey him

Ac 16.30-31 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"³¹ They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

- To those who don't draw back...

This was a direct message to the Hebrew Christians

Conclusion:

Proposition: The obedient suffering of the Son produced a Saviour for all mankind.

The Hebrew Christians were tempted to turn back.

Many non-Christians today might hear this message and see the appeal of Christ but count the cost and turn away.

Don't turn away!

Turn towards him in faith.

Believe him.

Worship him.

Live for him.