

Sabbath School Lesson #4 – Jesus, Our Faithful Brother – 15-21 January 2022

Christ is not ashamed to identify Himself as our faithful brother. “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Hebrews 2:14). Christ took part of flesh and blood, in order that He might have power to redeem man. This does not in any way limit His power before He came to earth; but it is a simple fact that man could not have been redeemed except by the blood of Christ. “Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God” (1 John 4:3). It does not say that every spirit that openly denies it, but every spirit that does not confess it. Bearing in mind what is meant by confession, we learn from these verses in John’s epistle that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a fact, whether we confess it or not. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). “For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:16-18). The Apostle Peter exhorts us by this fact. “Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God” (1 Peter 4:1-2). He who arms himself with the same mind as Christ, will not, even while remaining in the flesh, live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of the flesh; because although Christ suffered in the flesh, being tempted in all points like as we are, yet it was without sin. He the Son of God, coming in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, “condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3).

Sunday: The Brother as a Redeemer – The Catholic dogma puts Jesus Christ away from men, by giving Mary a nature infinitely beyond any likeness or relationship to mankind, and teaching that from her Jesus received the same nature, totally unlike mankind. This is absolutely the opposite of truth. Instead of its being true that Jesus in His human nature is so far away from men, as they really are, that he has no real likeness nor relationship to us, it is true that He is in very deed our kin in flesh and blood relation – even our brother in blood-relationship. For it is written: “Both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is *not ashamed to call them brethren*, saying, I will declare they name unto My brethren” (Hebrews 2:11-12). This great truth of the blood-relationship between our Redeemer and ourselves is clearly taught also in the Gospel in Leviticus. There was the law of redemption of men and their inheritance. When any one of the children of Israel had lost his inheritance, or himself had been brought into bondage, there was redemption provided. If he were able of himself to redeem himself or his inheritance, he could do it. But if he were not able of himself to redeem, then the right of redemption fell to his nearest of kin in blood-relationship. It fell not merely to *one* who was *near* of kin among his brethren, but to *the* one who was *nearest* of kin who was able (Leviticus 25:24-28, 47-49; Ruth 2:20; 3:12-13; 4:1-12). Thus there has been taught through these ages the very truth which we have found taught here in the second chapter of Hebrews: the truth that man has lost his inheritance and is himself also in bondage. And as he himself can not redeem himself nor his inheritance, the right of redemption falls to the nearest of kin who is able. And Jesus Christ is the only one in all the universe who is able. He must also be, not only *near* of kin, but the *nearest* of kin; and the nearest of kin by blood-relationship. And therefore He took our very flesh and blood, and so became our nearest of kin. And so also, instead of being farther away from us than are the angels and cherubim and seraphim, He is the very nearest to us of all persons in the universe. He is so near to us that He is actually one with us. For so it is written: “Both He which sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are *all of one*.” And He and we being one, He being one with mankind, it is impossible to have a mediator between Him and men, because He and mankind are one and “a mediator is not a mediator of one” (Galatians 3:20). And as certainly as Jesus Christ is one with mankind and “a

mediator is not a mediator of one,” so certainly this truth at once annihilates the dogma of “intercessions” of Catholic saints even if they were alive in heaven instead of being all dead.

Monday: Not Ashamed to Call Them Brothers – “Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see” (John 1:45-46). A whole encyclopaedia could be written and still not describe the standing of Nazareth any better than Nathanael’s question of astonishment. It had a bad reputation. It was so bad that nobody expected any good thing from it. Yet Jesus was all His earthly life associated with Nazareth, and He is still known as “Jesus of Nazareth.” It would have been according to human nature to associate His name with some more renowned place. Any ordinary man would have taken care that he should be announced as from Jerusalem, or from Capernaum: but Jesus was content to be heralded as “Jesus of Nazareth.” He “made Himself of no reputation” (Philippians 2:7), for our sakes. From this simple fact we may derive both comfort and instruction. We may be comforted by the knowledge that Jesus identifies Himself with the humblest and the most despised. No matter how poor and despised people are, nor how degraded they are, if they but come to Him in faith, “He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” This is most comforting. And we should learn also from “Jesus of Nazareth,” not to despise any person because of his birth. Many a man who has lived all his life in a hovel, and had only shabby clothing, will yet dwell in a mansion, and be clothed in light as the brightness of the firmament. Luther was a miner’s son, John Bunyan was a tinker, and one of the grandest titles of the Lord of all worlds is “Jesus of Nazareth.”

Tuesday: Flesh and Blood Like Us – The false dogma that Jesus did not take upon Himself our nature is totally annihilated by Hebrews 2:14. Yet this blessed saving truth is even more plainly stated, thus: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also Himself likewise took part of the same.” He, in His human nature, took the same flesh and blood that we have. All the words that could be used to make this plain and positive are here put together in a single sentence. See: The children are partakers of flesh and blood. Because of this He took part of the same. But that is not all: He also took part of the same flesh and blood as the children have. Nor is this all: He also Himself took part of the same flesh and blood as we. Nor yet is this all: He also Himself likewise took part of the same flesh and blood as man. Thus the Spirit of inspiration so much desires that this truth shall be made plain and emphatic that He is not content to use any fewer than all the words that could be used in the telling of it. And therefore it is declared that just as, and just as certainly as, the children of men are partakers of flesh and blood, He also, Himself, likewise, took part of the same flesh and blood as we have in the bondage of sin and the fear of death. He took same flesh and blood that we have, in order “that through death He might ... deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (verse 15).

Wednesday: Perfected Through Sufferings – “Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which he suffered” (Hebrews 5:7-10). Jesus spent whole nights in prayer to the Father. Why should this be, if He had not been oppressed by the enemy, through the inherited weakness of the flesh? He “learned obedience by the things which He suffered.” Not that He was ever disobedient, for He “knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21); but by the things which He suffered in the flesh, He learned what men have to contend against in their efforts to be obedient. And, “in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” “For we have not a High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in the time of need” (see Hebrews 4:15-16).

Thursday: The Brother as a Model – The exhortation to consider Jesus and the reason are in Hebrews 12:1-3. He is the Author and Finisher of faith. Let us consider Him lest we be wearied and faint. It is by constantly and prayerfully considering Jesus as He is revealed in the Bible that we can keep from becoming weary in well-doing and from fainting by the way.