

“Made Like Unto His Brethren”

The Hebrew writer has devoted the major portion of his second chapter to a proof of the humanity of Jesus. He has shown that Jesus was, for a little while, *“made lower than angels”* (vs. 9). He has shown that in God’s mind that in bringing many sons to glory the Captain of their salvation should be made perfect through suffering, thereby necessitating that He robe himself with flesh and experience the death of the cross (vs. 9f). He has affirmed that both He who sanctifieth (Christ) and those whom are sanctified (man) are of one (humanity) (vs. 11). Because Christ and those whom He sanctifies are of one humanity, He is not ashamed to call them brethren (vs. 11f). Further, He has shown that by His death Christ was able to deliver all those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (vs. 14f). He has shown that it was not to angels to whom He gave help, rather it was to those who are sons of Abraham and this He could not do without sharing their nature (vs. 16). This brings the writer to the conclusion of vss. 17-18: *“Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation for the sins of the people.”*

Here, for the first time (but not the last) the word “priest” appears and is applied to Jesus. In this passage is introduced the high priesthood of Jesus. Jesus was manifested in the flesh, that, among other things already noted, He might function as a high priest. The priesthood of Christ will be referred to many times in the next eight chapters. Jesus is not called here a *“mediator”* (although He is in Paul’s letters, 1 Tim. 2:5); but the role of Jesus as a high priest is precisely that -- a mediator. For God, He serves as a propitiation for the sins of the people: for the people He functions as a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. It was necessary He robe Himself in flesh to function on man’s part; it was necessary that He might offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the people. *“For in that he hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted”* (2:18). Later the writer will say, *“We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with our infirmities, but one that hath in all points been tempted like we are, yet without sin”* (Heb. 4:15). NEXT: Christ, Our Faithful High Priest.

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