

Hebrews 2:16-18

Hebrews 2:16 (NOTES)

- "descendant of Abraham" - This verse is somewhat controversial, and more than most of the commentaries get it wrong, mainly because they both ignore Paul's declaration of who is in view here, and they ignore the actual Greek text. To get it right, we must first correctly identify the "descendant of Abraham" - Who is in view here? Christ, the hypostatic union of God and man. Galatians 3:16, Matthew 1:1, Luke 3:34
- See ESV, KJV, and NIV. Only NIV gets the translation wrong by rendering "seed" in the plural as "descendants."
- "He does not give help to angels" - Most translations get the Greek wrong, but in this rare case, it is the KJV that gets it the most accurate among the major English translations. It is not, "He does not give help to," but rather it is, "He did not take on the nature of" (so as to give help to). The meaning is that God did not take on the nature of angels so as to become one of them to save them (give help to). Rather, He took on the nature of human beings so as to save them (give help to).
- Now, if we say that the correct translation and interpretation is that "He took on the nature of man to become one to save them," how is it that the text, correctly translated and properly understood, indicates that He took on the nature of human beings (man) to save Himself, since He is the seed of Abraham? How can it be that Jesus became a man to save Himself, and in doing so, saved others? It seems an odd way to say it, but it is correct to say that Jesus took on the nature of man to become one to save them. The question on this point is, which human being(s) did He come to save? If the descendant or seed of Abraham is Christ, then He came to save those that were and are a part of who He was, those who were and are a part of the Body of Christ; a part of His body. The term *Body of Christ* refers to all those who place their faith in Him (before and after the cross). If Jesus saved the members of the Body of Christ, in a sense, He saved Himself, since He saved those who became a part of Him.
- Jesus is both the Son of Man (a person born with the same nature possessed by all human beings; a human nature) and the son of a man (the descendant of an actual person, namely, Abraham). So, Jesus is the son/descendant/seed of Abraham, but so are all those who have placed their faith in Christ. Each of them is a spiritual child/descendant/seed of Abraham, and thus, a member of the Body of Christ. Galatians 3:6-9, 29

Hebrews 2:17 (NOTES)

- Since God's anger is always righteous and just (so often unlike our own), there is a principle at work in His anger: the principle of wrath. Wrath is not mere anger. It is fierce fury; destructive rage. Wrath is a condition of the innocent heart that demands violence be done to the one who wronged it or to the one who wronged an innocent other. There is no sin in wrath that righteously and justly seeks vengeance on the one causing the heart of the innocent to suffer. Ephesians 4:26, 31, Romans 12:19

- "propitiation" - to appease or satisfy the demands of God's wrath. Isaiah 53:11, Genesis 42:21
- "high priest" - If Jesus was to save human beings from the wrath of God through faith in Him, then had to become a man. But, not only to offer a perfect man as a substitutionary sacrifice for sinful men to appease God and satisfy the demands of His wrath, but He also had to become a man to be able to represent men (those for whom He died) to God as both a human and a divine mediator. 1Timothy 2:5
- "merciful and faithful" - As mediator between us and God, Jesus is merciful and faithful. He lived as we live. He suffered as we suffer. He died as we will die. He knows our condition, and thus is merciful and faithful when He represents us to the Father. His representation amounts to defending us in the face of our accuser, Satan, whose name means "accuser." Revelation 12:10, Hebrews 7:25, Revelation 19:13

Hebrews 2:18 (NOTES)

- "He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered" - This simply means that Jesus suffered temptation to sin. He lived as we live. He suffered as we suffer. He was tempted as we are tempted. He died as we will die. Jesus had the full human experience. Hebrews 4:15, Matthew 4:1-11
- "He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted" - Jesus is available to us when we are tempted, to strengthen us against temptation and sin. If we are tempted to sin, we can pray and ask Him to step in, turn our thinking toward His will, and give us the power of His Holy Spirit to resist. Sin is an option for a Christians. We don't have to. We have a way of escape, and it is the calling upon of Christ. Matthew 6:13, 1Corinthians 10:13
- The Bible teaches that we, as born-again believers indwelt by the Spirit of Christ can, in fact, resist the temptation to sin. We can never say, "The devil made me do it!" The devil can't make us sin; he can only tempt us, or setup situations where we are exposed to the risk of sin. Sin is always a choice for believers. Too often, the problem is that we don't try to resist temptation at all, or if we do, our attempt at resistance is pretty anemic. 1Peter 5:7-9, James 4:7, Job 2:1-5, Hebrews 12:4
- Not only can we call on Jesus to help us when we are tempted, but there is a preparation that we too often are guilty of neglecting, and that is the study of Scripture. The more we study God's Word, the harder it is to sin against God. Psalms 119:11, 1:1-6, Matthew 26:41