



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Hebrews 2:14-16

"The Man Christ Jesus: The Commonalities"

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee again for the privilege of the study of the Scriptures. We constantly, Lord, are amazed at the riches of the truth that is contained in Thy word. We especially thank Thee for the revelation concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. And we thank Thee for what we have learned in the teaching of the word of God concerning the names that have been attached to him, concerning his deity, and now, as we consider, Lord, his true humanity, enable us to understand and also to appreciate the divine reasoning that lies behind the true humanity of the Lord Jesus.

We thank Thee, too, for the assurance that since he has become one of us, we therefore have a great high priest to whom we may go with the assurance that he fully understands all of the trials of life to which we are exposed. And now, Lord, we commit this hour to Thee. We pray that it may be an hour of spiritual blessing for each one of us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] Tonight we are continuing our series of studies in the Christology of the Bible with special reference to the exegesis of some passages that have to do with that great topic. The subject for tonight is "The Man Christ Jesus: The Commonalities." And then next Wednesday night, the Lord willing, will be "The Man Christ Jesus: The

Peculiarities." And so we are in these two studies dealing with the humanity of Christ and in accordance with our style for this series, I am looking not here and there primarily throughout the Bible, because this is the common way in which the Christology of our Lord is studied, but rather looking at some of the key passages that deal with some of the topics and dealing a little more exegetically with the question of the Christology. Then after that we will be looking at the union of the two natures in our Lord, and going on into the further aspects of the Christology of Christ.

Now tonight I'm going to ask you if you will to turn with me to Hebrews chapter 2, verse 14 through verse 16, which will form the basis of the exegesis that we will be doing in just a moment, Hebrews chapter 2, verse 14 through verse 16. Now, just for a general orientation, I'll give you more of a special one a little later, in the first two chapters, remember, of the Epistle to the Hebrews it is the aim of the author to demonstrate the superiority of the Lord Jesus to the angels. The Jewish people thought very highly of angels and angelic beings, and consequently this author, dealing with the greatness of Jesus Christ, begins by showing that the Lord Jesus is greater than the angels. In that magnificent period, it is a true Greek period which begins the Epistle to the Hebrews. He concludes it by saying, "Having come to be so much better than the angels, as he has inherited a more excellent name than they." And then in the remaining verses of chapters 1 and 2 he demonstrates the greatness of the Son of God in comparison with the angels. And so in chapter 2, in the section that we are dealing with, we are dealing with the greatness of the Son of God in connection with the angels. So beginning at verse 14 we read, and I'm going to be reading from the Greek text tonight, so if there is a slight difference from every text that you may have, it's for that reason:

"Since then the children have shared in blood and flesh (You notice in the Greek text the order is reversed. Most of the older translations have flesh and blood. There is, as far as I can tell, no essential reason for this, but the original text reads blood and flesh.), he

himself also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might annul the one who had the might of death, that is, the devil; And free these (Or divorce these, it is a word that is used of divorce.) As many as by reason of fear of death all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Incidentally, that "all their lifetime" means that this fear of death is something that encompasses the whole of an individual's life, not just the end of his days, but the whole of his life he fears death. Now then the 16th verse,) for of course he does not take hold of angels to help them; but he takes hold of the seed of Abraham to help them."

"The Man Christ Jesus: The Commonalities." Now we have completed our study of the deity of Christ by an exegetical approach to John 1:1-18. And if we are asked why do we Christians assert that Jesus Christ alone is the redeemer, then perhaps as a result of our study of John chapter 1 verse 18 we will no longer stutter when we make our reply. The reason that we believe that Jesus Christ alone is the redeemer is because he alone is the divine person and therefore able to accomplish a redemption for us. It surely should be obvious to us that we cannot be redeemed by a man, because men are sinful. And we could not be redeemed by one who was simply a sinless man, for we might conceivably think of him as dying for one, but one sinless man could not die for all. His death would not have the value that would be necessary in order to cover the value of all. So we believe, as Christians have believed, that the Lord Jesus being the God man, being not only man and therefore able to die, but the God man and therefore his death has infinite value with the Father. That sacrifice is able to cover the sins of sinners so that because he is the God man he is able to accomplish the work of redemption.

The Council at Chalcedon, at the conclusion of the council, offered a creed or a definition as it has been called. And in that creed, which has had great significance in the Christian church down to the present day, it was affirmed that our Lord Jesus was "at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also

of a reasonable soul and body with one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead and at the same time with one substance with us as regards his manhood, like us in all respects apart from sin." Now that's a beautiful statement, and I'm going to read it again, because I think it's important for us to be acquainted with some of these classic statements. "At once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body with one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead and at the same time with one substance with us as regards his manhood, like us in all respects apart from sin."

The denials of the humanity of the Lord Jesus have made it necessary to defend his humanity also. You might think that we should only have to defend his deity, but it is not so. We have to defend his humanity as well, because his humanity has been denied in the history of the Christian church just as his deity has. In fact, there have been trends. In the earliest times of the Christian church it was much more common to deny his humanity than his deity. In other words, the doubt about his deity was much less than the doubt about his true humanity. And so, there have been men who have, down through the years, fostered movements that denied the humanity of the Lord Jesus. Some of them, of these errorists, have denied his humanity all together such as the Docetics of the 1st and 2nd centuries. The Docetics taught that really the Lord Jesus did not have a true humanity, that his body was a kind of phantom and that when men looked at him they were not really seeing a true human body. They saw something that looked like a body and then some of the Docetics had other theories with reference of the relationship of the body to our Lord. But nevertheless they did not believe that he possessed a true humanity. They had no question about his deity. They were called Docetics, because the Greek work dokeo means not on "to think" but it also means "to seem." So the Docetics were those that affirm that our Lord seemed to be a man but was not really a man.

Then some errorists have denied the humanity of the Lord Jesus in part, such as the Arians who said that the logos or the person of our Lord took the place of his soul,

and thus they denied that the Lord Jesus had a soul. The Apollinarians, the followers of Apollinarus, they affirm that the logos or the person of our Lord took the place of his spirit. So he had no human spirit. For example, in the New Testament where we read that the Lord Jesus said as he died, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit." They denied that he had a true human spirit. The monothelites and this is a term derived from the Greek word that means "will, fellow," and also *monos*, which means "only." So the monothelites believed that the Lord Jesus had a divine will, but he had no human will. Christians have affirmed, the orthodox have affirmed down through the years, that he had both a divine will and a human will, and he had to have these two will because he had the two natures. Gnostics and Valentinus and others said he had no true human birth, that his body was of celestial origin. So you can see in the history of the Christian church there have been those who have denied the humanity of our Lord Jesus all together, and then there are some who have denied it in part.

Now, in this study we want to deal with some of the things that he has in common with us, but not all of them because that would make it necessary for us to do this in a different methodology. I'm not going to deal with the obvious points that most of us in this room are acquainted with, such as he had human names. His name was Jesus, for example. He is called the "man Christ Jesus." "There is one mediator between God and man," the Apostle Paul says in 1 Timothy 2:5, "the man Christ Jesus." He also is in the New Testament pictured as having a human descent. His genealogy is given in the Bible, and it is traceable to Adam in the gospel of Luke and traced back to Abraham in the gospel of Matthew. He also had a human, though miraculous, conception.

Now, it was true that the Holy Spirit conceived him in miraculous fashion, but nevertheless he was also in the fullest sense of Mary so far as his human nature was concerned. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. So he had a human, though miraculous conception. He possessed a true human nature. He was born

just as you and I are born. His conception was different, but he was born just as you and I are born.

He also has other human constituent parts of his being. We needn't go into those things. He had human emotions. We read even in the New Testament that he was tired. He had physical wants. He was thirsty. He was hungry. He also had human suffering and ultimately he died as a human and breathed his last. The Bible does not teach that God can die, so that our Lord Jesus when he died died with respect to his human nature not his divine nature. Now, of course, all of the things that happened in his two natures pertain to his divine personality. But nevertheless the death was in that aspect of his being that was human.

We want to concentrate on this passage in Hebrews chapter 2 in which he is said to have human flesh and blood or blood and flesh. Now, let's turn then to Hebrews chapter 2 verse 14 where we read, "Since then the children have partaken of blood and flesh, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Now, if we were to get a true background of Hebrews chapter 2 we would have to go all the way back to the Book of Genesis, and it just so happens it is a total coincidence that this coming Sunday the subject in our exposition of the Book of Genesis will be the passage in Genesis chapter 1 in which we have the Godhead saying, "Let us make man in our image after our own likeness." And further, man is given the divine imperative to fill the earth, subdue it, and roll over it.

Now, that's the background of Hebrews chapter 2, because later on the Psalmist in the 8th Psalm in a lyrical way speaks about the creation of man. And that Psalm is cited just above in verse 5 through verse 8 of this 2nd chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Now, you know the story of the Book of Genesis chapter 1, 2, and 3. It is simply this, we are not trying to expound this, but just remind you for the background. Man was created. He was given this divine imperative to subdue the earth and rule over it. Sunday we are calling this "The Cultural Mandate." It is something that belongs to us as human beings.

It is one of the things that we as men are supposed to do. We are to bring this earth into subjection, to subdue it, to fill it, to subdue it, and to rule over it. And all of the aspects of human knowledge pertain ultimately to the completion of that task of the cultural mandate.

Now, we know, of course, that in the 3rd chapter man fell, and consequently man, who was supposed to be the king of the creation, is no longer the king of the creation but is actually cast out of the Garden of Eden. All things are different after that, and the story of the Bible is the story of the means whereby Jesus Christ as the last Adam comes to undo the work of the first Adam and restore the relationship that exists between man and God.

Now, coming to Hebrews chapter 2, which is a passage built on that as the background, we have the divine intention expressed in verses 5 and following. Look at them for just a moment. He says, "For not to the angels," you see he's still thinking about the relationship of the Son to the angels. "For not to the angels did subject the inhabited the world to come, concerning which we are speaking, but someone testified somewhere saying," you can tell he was not a member of the Navigators who insist that if you cite a verse you must cite the reference fore and aft. You know how the Navigators used to cite verses John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." John 3:16. That's the way you learned. You cite the text for and aft. This fellow would not have been a good Navigator. He says, "Someone testified somewhere." [Laughter]

Now, I'm sure this fellow knows the Bible well enough to know exactly where it is, of course, because he's going to quote it in some detail. But he didn't think too much of that method of citing before and aft. It's obvious. "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man that Thou shouldst visit him? Thou hast made him for a little lower than the angels; with glory and honor, thou crownedst him. All things Thou hast put in subjection under his feet." So you can see, he is writing a Psalm, this is a citation

from the 8th Psalm, he's writing a Psalm about the commandments that God gave Adam in the Garden of Eden. He's a poet, and he's put in Hebrew poetry what he read when he looked over those opening chapters.

Now, the author goes on to say, "For in that he subjected all things to him, he left nothing not in subjection to him. But now," and here he talks about the Father. "But now we see not yet all things subjected to him. But we see Jesus, made for little while lower than the angels on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every one." Now, you can see that the divine intention from the citation of Psalm 8 is man is to be the master of creation. But the present condition is entirely different from the divine intention. "Now we see not yet all things subjected to him," the 8th verse says. So instead of being the master of the creation, man is mastered by sin and by Satan.

The Westminster confession of faith, in answering the question "What is man's chief end?" says "Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever." But of course, in the present situation such is really impossible. G.K. Chesterton once said, and he was right, "Whatever else is or is not true, this one thing is certain. Man is not what he was meant to be. So instead of having the mastery over all things, he's mastered. Instead of ruling over the earth, he's in slavery to his sin. Instead of being strong in the strength of God, he is weak because of his rebellion against God. Instead of being an ally of God, he is a rebel against God. Instead of manifesting the glory of God, he is a reproach to his creator. But nevertheless he seeks his destiny, but he seeks it by tyranny and cruelty." That's why we do have such tyrants, and why we have such monarchs and presidents, and others in the world who take advantage of the people, because there is still within human nature that which God placed there by the creation. That is, the position of ruler over creation.

But now, being twisted and corrupted by sin, while he still pursues his goal of having authority, it is goal and authority in sin. And the result is the human history that

we know about, the Pharaohs, Alexander, the Caesars, Attila the Hun, Mao, Hitler, et cetera. There is a lust for power in all of these wicked men, which is a faint resemblance of God's original grant of dominion to men. The liberal preacher who is preaching at the present day has said, "The Bible pages are bloody, because men are violent." So as the result of sin they are not able to fulfill the divine intention.

Well, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says there is a divine solution, however. He says in the 9th, "But we see Jesus, made a little lower than the angels," or for a little time lower than the angels, "on account of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man." In other words, he says the fact that Lord Jesus Christ has come and has died, and has now been glorified is evidence of the fact that God is going to accomplish his original intention to have man as the ruler of his creation as a steward under him. So the divine solution then is a Savior, sovereign by virtue of sufferings. He is the pledge and the guarantee of the fulfillment of the plans of God.

But now, the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, being no doubt a Jewish man, very well acquainted with Jewish things, knew that the idea of a suffering Savior, of a suffering king of creation is contrary to all that they had understood. So they naturally would ask the question, "But why must he suffer? Why is it necessary for him to suffer?" And so verse 10 through verse 18 of Hebrews chapter 2 gives the answer "Why" to the question "Why must he suffer?" He must suffer because it is only by suffering that he can become a perfected author of salvation. Listen to what he says in verse 10. "For it became him, on account of whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to perfect the file leader of their salvation," notice he doesn't need salvation. It's their salvation "through sufferings."

He also then speaks about the fact that he must suffer if we are to have a deliverer from the devil, for the devil holds us in his power by virtue of our sin. And finally, he says that he must suffer in order that he might be an advocate for sin, in the last two

verses. The key here, you can see, is representative suffering, representative suffering. He must suffer, but by his suffering he stands for others who are delivered and ultimately shall be glorified and established in their rightful position over the creation by virtue of identification with him. This writer knows the same doctrines that the Apostle Paul knows. And they are the doctrines of the representation by the Lord Jesus of all of his people. Look at that 10th verse again. "For it became him, on account of whom are all things, and through whom are all things," that's in the Father, "in bringing many sons unto glory, to perfect the file leader of their salvation, the representative man, "through sufferings." So in order for us to be delivered there must be someone to stand for us, and to win back what Adam lost, and that the Lord Jesus Christ has done by virtue of the shedding of his blood.

Well, with that now as the background, let's look at some of the statements of these three verses. "Since then," now he has said in verse 10 "It became him." He talks about fitness. It was very fit that he should be a suffering Savior. Well now, if he's going to be a suffering Savior, then this fitness of suffering demands incarnation. It also demands some other things, but it demands incarnation, then it will demand death, and then it will demand the nullification of Satan, for we are in the power of Satan by virtue of our sin. And it will demand our freedom. Well, that's what he speaks about. "Since then," now that then or therefore is a reference to the fitness of things. "Since then the children have partaken of blood and flesh." Did you notice that statement, "the children"? What's he talking about? Why, up in verse 10 did he not say he tasted death for every man. Now he talks about children. He talked about many sons in verse 10. And he talks about brethren in verse 11, verse 12. And then in verse 13 he cited a text from Isaiah, "Behold I and the children whom God has given to me." Don't you see what he's saying? He's saying the "every one" that we're talking about is every one of the children, every one of the brethren, every one, in a moment, of the seed of Abraham. He will point out.

So when he says he tastes death for everyone, that everyone is to be understood in the light of the context. It is every one of the sons, verse 10, every one of the brethren in verse 11, every one of the brethren in verse 12, every one of the children in verse 13, and finally in verse 16, "He does not take hold of angels to help them; but he takes hold of the seed of Abraham to help them." So then the every one is a reference to all the children, all the brethren, all the sons, all the seed of Abraham. He's not going to lose a single one of his elect people. He stands as representative for every one of them and not a one is going to be left out. Now, you know that is great doctrine. That is great doctrine, to know that since he is my representative he has taken it upon himself to guarantee that every one of us shall enter into the blessings that the word of God has set forth for us. Isn't it a great thing to know that he stands for us?

You know, if you were in business and you had need of sums of money to carry on your business, it would be great to have some word from the First National Bank, well I don't want to be partial, or the Republic National Bank. It would be great to have some written guarantee from them that they would stand behind you in all of your business. Now, that would be great, but it's much greater to know that the Lord Jesus stands behind all of the saints and guarantees that they shall reach what the Father intends for them to reach. You see, this passage has a very definite connection to the doctrine of the definite atonement of the saints.

Now he says, "Since then the children share in," that verb is a very interesting word. It really means to have a share in, to have in common with someone, and it's in the perfect tense, which means that since the children have taken a share in and have at the present time a share in. Now, we all know this to be true, since the children share flesh and blood. That's what we have. We are human beings. Every one of us is alike in that respect. We share in common our nature. And every one in this room shares that one thing in common. Some of us are poor. Some of us are rich, perhaps. Some are highly intellectual. Some of us are just ordinary people. Some have influence in the

community. Some have relatively little influence in the community. Some are males. Some are females and so on. But there is one thing that we all share, human nature. We have a share in blood and flesh, and that's a common lot. And it's always shared. We never lose that, incidentally.

Now then, having said that he says, "He also himself likewise took part of the same." Now this verse means "to share in." The one translated "partook" this means "to share in or to hold with." But in our Lord's case, the construction in the verbs are different. He does not use the word that means "to share in common" *koinoneo*, but he uses the term that means to have a share in or to hold with, which is much more suitable for our Lord taking to himself and additional nature, which up until that time he did not share with every one. And furthermore, in the first case it says that we share in human nature and still share in it, whereas, the aorist tense is used here to suggest the incarnation, the time when he took that additional nature to himself. He partook of the same at a point in history. So it's an additional nature for him, something with which he, by nature, did not have anything in common. So the connection with humanity remains the connection with humanity under the condition of blood and flesh was historical.

One of the preachers has expressed this very beautifully. He has said, "The Lord Jesus betrothed himself to the human race for better, for worse." Isn't that a wonderful way to put it? "He has betrothed himself to the human race for better, for worse." You know, when two people marry, it's forever. As long as conditions of humanity are the same, that marriage persists. Marriage was intended to be permanent. Our Lord Jesus, in the greatest act of condescension in all of the Bible, has taken to himself an additional nature, a human nature, forever. Isn't that an astounding thing, that he should of himself marry himself to the human race forever? The second person of the trinity, who could, of course, have dwelt in the blessedness of the relationship with the Father and the Spirit throughout all eternity, has determined to take to himself an additional nature forever.

That's an amazing thing. It shows you the importance of the redemptive work, and the importance of the plan of God for the Son of God.

Now, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews is a remarkable writer. But I must say that here he has done something which rather startles you. He overemphasizes, if you can over emphasize anything, because after all, when he says, "He himself also likewise took part of the same," why, you're just repeating things which mean essentially the same thing. He also took part of it, we might say. But he says, "He himself also likewise took part of the same." It's obvious that he wants to, if anything, overstate the significance of the incarnation, this taking to himself another nature, for likeness and same repeat the same thing. And I gather from this that he must have been exposed to some people like the docetics who denied the humanity of our Lord. And so he just lays it on, "He himself also likewise took part of the same." Blood and flesh, Docetics are ruled out.

Now, why did he do this? He says "That through death he might render powerless, annul," the Authorized Version says destroy. Wouldn't it be nice to know that the Devil was destroyed, but of course the Devil is not destroyed? But he has been rendered powerless. How has he been rendered powerless, by the fact that our Lord Jesus becomes a man? No, that didn't render him powerless. It wasn't enough for our Lord to become incarnate. He must also die, and it is only through the death that the ground shall be laid by which he will be rendered powerless forever. So the death of death by death gives death his death. It was by virtue of our Lord Jesus coming and dying that the ground by which Satan holds us in his power is destroyed, for he holds us in his power on account of our sin. Because we have sinned, we have given ourselves over into the power of sin. And therefore he holds us within his power because of sin, other Scriptures make this plain. The Lord Jesus came and died in order that he might destroy the grounds of Satan's hold over us. It wasn't enough for him to become a man. The alabaster box must be broken.

In the Renaissance there were people who arose who said the "incarnation was a divine tribute to the surpassing dignity of man." You know, that reminds me of 1978. There are lots of preachers who talk about the dignity of man today. And strange to say, you will find even evangelicals talking about the dignity of man. Can you imagine a person interpreting the incarnation as "the incarnation is a divine tribute to the surpassing dignity of man?" No, it's not a tribute to the surpassing dignity of man. It's not because of our dignity that he came to die for us. It's because of our indignity that it was necessary for him to come and die. It's because of what he would make of us, not of anything that was in us. Love is sovereign. Love loves in spite of its object. We've said this so many, many times. It is not necessary to say it any more. We do not love people because of certain things that they have, or certain things that they do. We love them sovereignly. And anyone who knows anything about true love knows that that is true. How often have people come into my office and talked to me about their relationship with their wife or with their husband. And as I listen I constantly say, "Well, what in the world is it in this woman that this man could possibly like?" [Laughter] And vice versa, "What in the world is it in this scoundrel that this woman could be so entranced with that she sits and weeps over him?" Well of course, the answer is love, sovereign love. And that's the kind of love that God has shown to us. What in the world is there in this scoundrel that God could possibly have loved? Well, there is nothing there in him that commends us to the Lord. It is purely his sovereign love. You can't explain it. You can only weep over it in gratitude and thanksgiving for what he has done.

Now, he says that he had the power of death. Now, the meaning of that I think is, and I take this present participle to refer to the past, because of the well known Greek usage in which participles, generally speaking, take the time of the main verb. There is no, I don't think there is any grammatical problem with this. I'm not suggesting that there are different view points here. It is, "to him that had the power of death," but it's a present participle. The New American Standard Bible has rendered it correctly. The

meaning is that Satan had the power of death, but as the result of our Lord's shedding of his blood on the cross, the power of death now rests in our Lord who has the keys of death and Hades at the present moment. He has regained them as a result of his death. The devil's power was always secondary anyway. It was given to God, because he was a steward of God in heaven to carry out the will of God, and it was his responsibility to execute death. But the Lord Jesus has the power of death at the present time, and as a result of the blood that was shed, Satan has been rendered powerless. God's purposes shall be accomplished.

Now, in the 15th verse he speaks of the deliverance of man. He says, "And reconcile these as many as by fear of death, through all their living, were guilty of bondage," or were liable to bondage. The fear death, what is the fear of death? Generally speaking, the fear of death is the fear of what comes after death. So we were in the bonds of sin, but he bound the strong man by the bonds of his passion, as a result we are able to go free and death no longer is that which we fear. Luther has said something like this, "He who fears death, or is not willing to die, is not sufficiently Christian." Calvin says this, "Although we must still meet death, let us nevertheless be calm and serene in living and dying when we have Christ going before us. If any one cannot set his mind at rest by disregarding death, that man should know that he has not gone far enough in the face of Christ." Death is no longer an enemy. Death is the means by which we enter the presence of God. We may fear the physical experience of death, but death, for the Christian, is the means for the entrance into the presence of God. It's not something that we fear. Paul says in 1 Corinthians chapter 4, "Death belongs to us now" as a result of what Christ has done.

And finally, in the 16th verse he says, "For of course he does not take hold of angels to help them, but he takes hold of the seed of Abraham." Now that word "to take hold of" is a word that means to take hold of in order to help. It's the word, incidentally, that was used when Peter was walking on the water. And as he walked toward the Lord

he suddenly looked about and he saw the winds and the waves that were boisterous and he began to sink, and he cried out, "Lord save me." And Jesus stretched forth his hand and took him, saved him. And that's the word that's used here. This text, in my opinion, does not pertain to the incarnation directly, but indirectly. He's saying he didn't come here in order to redeem angels. He came here in order to redeem the seed of Abraham. It was his intention to come and help a specific group of people that he calls the seed of Abraham. It's they that he came to help. The proof that this is not the incarnation is that that word take here is in the present tense. So he's referring to what he's doing. "He does not, of course, take hold of angels to save them. He takes hold of the seed of Abraham to save them."

Well, let me conclude by saying, you know there's a hymn that we often sing. I don't think we really sing it in Believers Chapel. When I say we often sing it, I mean we Christians sing. It's a lovely hymn in some ways, and it has a stanza that I really like. It goes like this. "Holy, holy is what the angels sing. And I expect to help them make, the courts of heaven ring. But when I sing redemption's story, they will fold their wings, for angels never felt the joys that our salvation brings." That's what this means. "He did not come to take hold of angels to help them; he came to take hold of the seed of Abraham to save them." And for this reason he took blood and flesh, just as we have blood and flesh. He took part of the same, in order that he might annul the one who held us in his power and free us from the fear of death forever. You see how important it is that our Lord Jesus be the man Christ Jesus. Times up. Let's close with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are thankful to Thee for this important section from Thy word. How wonderful it is to know that we belong to the seed of Abraham. And we thank Thee that the incarnation is one step along the way to the accomplishment of all of the blessings of the covenant made with Abraham, in which we as Gentiles have a share in by virtue of Thy grace. All the families of the earth shall be blessed in deed, Thou didst say

to Abraham centuries ago. How wonderful it is, Lord, to know that we were included, as the apostle points out several places. And we give Thee thanks and praise for the Redeemer who has delivered us from the bondage of sin, has delivered us from the fear of death's consequences, and has brought us into this relationship of love to Thee. We worship Thy name...