

Shawn Brummund: Hello, and welcome to another edition of the "Sabbath School Study Hour," right here in the greater Sacramento area of California, in the Granite Bay Hilltop Seventh Day Adventist Church. It is always good to be able to have you join us. For those of you who are rejoining us again this morning online, on the various television networks, and for those of you who are joining us locally, we also are just so thankful to be able to have our local church family come here on the first year of 2022. And of course, that's for those of us who are here in person or watching live.

For those of you who are watching a little bit later on, want to wish you a belated Happy New Year as well. Want to pray that the Lord will bless you and keep you, and that you will keep your eyes fixed on the only real hope that we have, lasting hope, and that is Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. My name is Pastor Shawn, and it's my privilege to be able to host our--be the host for today's edition. And today, we're going to be looking at the quarterly that we started just a couple of weeks ago, which is entitled "These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews." And so, we're going to continue to dig into this very pertinent book. In fact, in this point in history and in Bible prophecy, the book of Hebrews is more important than ever before in understanding the times in which we live and the agenda that God has as he wraps things up and Jesus is coming soon. So, please stay with us as we continue to worship and study.

Before we invite our musicians out, though, I do want to encourage you and invite you to take advantage of our free gift offer today, which is entitled "Christ's Human Nature" by Joe Crews, "Christ's Human Nature." Now, if you'd like a free copy of this, you're in North America or any of the US territories, just simply dial the toll-free number, 1-866-788-3966, and we'll be happy to be able to get that out to you. If you'd like to get a digital copy of that and download that to your phone or to your tablet and such, your device, just go ahead and text the code SH017, and you want to dial that to 40544. And that'll get you to that link that'll help you to be able to download that. Again, if you are in the United States, we're happy to offer that to you. So, please take advantage of that. We have some musicians that are going to be leading us in worship and song. And then we're going to invite our teacher, Pastor Doug Batchelor, to join us here as well.

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Shawn: Want to invite you to join me as we ask the Lord to be with us in prayer. Father in heaven, we want to thank You so much for the opportunity to be able to worship You here this morning. We thank You for this opportunity to be able to come together and open up Your Bible, to be able to further understand it. But God, we also understand that spiritual things are spiritually discerned. And so, we want to stop, we want to pray for Your Holy Spirit to guide us and to lead us, to fulfill Your promise to guide us and lead us into all truth. To open our eyes, open our hearts, to be able to help us, to be able to understand things the way that You understand them.

We thank You for the light in which You have given to us through the study and preparation by Pastor Doug today. Want to pray, God in heaven, that You will be with his heart and his mind as he speaks and teaches and brings Your Word to life again today. We thank You for offering us this promise. In Jesus's name we pray, amen.

Doug Batchelor: Good morning, friends. Want to welcome everybody. Blessed Sabbath. Happy New Year. At least for those who are here today, this is the first--the first day in the new year, and also happens to be Sabbath, so I don't know if you claim a double blessing for that. But we're glad that you're here. Again, want to welcome those who I know are watching online or via some satellite station around the world. And we're just so thankful for our extended class. We're continuing today in our series on Hebrews, one of the just profound books in the New Testament. And today's lesson is dealing with the subject, it's lesson number four, dealing with the subject of Jesus as our older brother.

And we've got a lot to cover today, so I want to delve into it, but first we have a memory verse. If you've got your lesson, you can open it up. We usually like to quote it right out of the lesson guide. They're

using the New King James version here. Memory verse is from Hebrews chapter 2, verse 14. Hebrews 2, verse 14. You ready? "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil."

That verse is going to come up again later on in our study. So, when we think about Jesus and His relationship to us, the Bible gives us a lot of analogies. For example, the Bible tells us that Jesus can be identified with almost every earthly tender relationship. He's called a child, a Son is given. You can read there in Isaiah 9, verse 6, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government will be upon His shoulders, and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father."

So, it's not only the father/child--or it's not only the child relationship, it's the father relationship. Jesus said, "In this manner therefore pray." What's the next words? Our Father. So, I don't think anyone's going to question that one of the ways that we relate to Jesus is as our heavenly Father. And then you can find places in the Bible where, believe it or not, Jesus says that he compares himself to a servant. And He says in John 15:15, "No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master's doing. But I call you friends."

He not only says He's a servant, He says He's our friend. And a lot of people really love that analogy. And then you read in Isaiah 49:15, "Can a woman forget her nursing child and not have compassion on the son of her womb?" Now what is Jesus comparing himself to? I know it already sounds a little strange that Jesus would say it's a mother/child relationship. He actually says this several places. You can look in Isaiah 66:13, "As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you." And when Jesus talks about--remember when He wept over Jerusalem? Said, "Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem." And during that time, said, "How often I would have gathered you together as a hen," a mother chicken, "does her chicks." And so, sometimes Jesus uses the analogy of the love of a mother for us.

So, you got the love of a father, the love of a child. And then the part that just is really amazing is the brother relationship. That's, of course, the theme of our study today. Hebrews 2:17, "Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and a faithful high priest in things pertaining to God to make propitiation for the sins of the people." He became like our brother. You look in Romans 8:29, "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

So, Jesus says that He is our elder brother, He loves us like a mother, more than a mother loves her child. He says, "Even these may forget, but I will not forget you." And he tells us that He loves us as a friend, a father. And so God, you know, He uses these different relationships to help us understand his love for us. Now, I don't know, how many of you in our congregation today had a brother? How many had an older brother? Did he kind of watch out for you? Anybody had several older brothers? I had one real older brother, and then I have a step brother, who is even two years older than Falcon. So, I was--you know, you think I'd get a lot of leadership. I felt like I got picked on a lot. But older brothers are supposed to protect, kind of watch out for. How often in the old days, when the kids went out to play, the parent would say to the oldest, "Keep an eye on them," right? The more responsible brother or sister, they keep an eye on the kids. And so, Jesus is called in Hebrews our older brother.

And so, in the Bible, keep in mind one reason it uses that analogy is because the firstborn son had special privileges, the firstborn. Why was it that Jacob strove with Esau about who would be getting the blessing? It's because, it's interesting, they were twins, but Esau was born a few minutes before Jacob. And so all--he was supposed to get a double portion of the father's inheritance, and all he had was five minutes on Jacob or whatever it was. I'm sure they were born on the same day. But he got a double portion. The other thing is a firstborn usually had a lot of responsibility in the family.

When you read the story of the prodigal son, which one is footloose and fancy free? It's the younger. Which one stays home and works with dad? It's the firstborn. And so, the firstborn had a little more responsibility. The firstborn had the ability to serve as the kinsman redeemer for the family. Now, what

that means is--well, let's read it. If you look in Leviticus 25, verse 25 through 27, and this is under the first section where it talks about Jesus the brother as a redeemer. It tells us, "If one of your brethren becomes poor and he's had to sell some of his possession," meaning his land, "and if his redeeming relatives come to redeem it, they may redeem it what his brother sold." And so, one of the things about being a brother is you had then the right to redeem what was lost by this taskmaster or this creditor that had taken it.

You look also in Leviticus 25, verse 47, "Now if a sojourner," meaning a non-Jew, "if a sojourner or a stranger close to you becomes rich--" Can you think of examples in the Bible of non-Jews that became rich in Israel? You didn't ever have that question before, did you? How many of you remember it says there was a certain woman, she was a great woman, a Shunamite woman? She was very wealthy, so much so that she said to her husband, "Let's build an extra apartment on the house for Elisha when he comes by." And so, there's examples in the Bible of people who weren't necessarily Jews, they lived in the land, but they were very wealthy.

And you've got some cases of that where you had the Kenites that lived among the Israelites and others. So, they're non-Jews, they become very wealthy. The poor Jew, who's Jew by blood, he now needs to borrow money, and he sells his inheritance to a non-Jew, so this is the scenario. "Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor and sells himself to the stranger or the sojourner close to you, or a member of the stranger's family, after he is sold, he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him."

Now, not anybody could do it. But if--you know, I remember only once--I've gone to pawn shops to shop before, but I only had to pawn something once. I had a clarinet and needed some money. Clarinet may have been worth \$80, but if you go to a pawn shop, what are they going to give you? Ten. But the thing is that I have an opportunity, and it varies, I had an opportunity to redeem my clarinet with interest, but I only had 30 days. After that 30 day period, anybody could buy it. And they, of course they would sell it for \$80 or \$100. Pawn shops are--it's a very lucrative business. But supposedly that's how the Rothschilds started out and became so wealthy. But there was a period of time when it could be redeemed, and I was the only one that could redeem it. People might come in the shop and they'd see the clarinet, and they said, "You can't buy that. The only one who can buy that now is the one who first sold it."

Well, in the Hebrew culture, they had something where if a stranger bought some property, or bought some land or a house from someone who was poor that was a neighbor living near them, that if they had a brother that could pay the price, the stranger had to sell it back to them. That was the land of Israel, and they understood that. And then of course, the Jubilee was a time when everything automatically went back to those that were in debt. All the debts were cancelled during that time. So, if you were a creditor, you didn't want to do a lot of lending just before the Jubilee because you were going to--and they used to measure how much they would lend percentage based on how close the Jubilee was.

Something else about borrowing and lending with the Jews, you're not supposed to charge your brother interest. You could charge interest of a non-Jew. How many of you knew that? The laws regarding interest, yeah. So, one more time, back in Leviticus 25. "So, if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor and sells himself to the stranger or the sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger's family, after he is sold, he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him, or his uncle, or his uncle's son may redeem him, or anyone who is near kin to him in the family may redeem him." And if he's able to redeem--if he's not able to redeem--or and if he can, he can redeem himself as well if he gets the money.

Can you think of a story in the Bible that's all built around this principle of redemption? It's four chapters. Ruth, the whole story of Ruth is about Elimelech. And he goes to the land of Moab during a time of famine in Bethlehem. And then, you know, when he dies there and his sons die, and Naomi comes back. But when he was gone, he sold everything he had to somebody to get the money to make

the move. And now, Naomi comes back with Ruth, and she's destitute. And what she needs is a kinsman redeemer to buy back the land. But it can only be a brother. And when Ruth comes back from gleaning one day, she says, "Yeah, I was gleaning in the field of this guy named Boaz." And Naomi, she says, "Praise the Lord, blessed be the Lord. This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives. He can redeem us."

But in that case, the way to redeem was through marriage. And he would then buy back all of Elimelech's land. And so, you know, that turned into a love story and they got married. But it's the principle of redemption, buying back what had been lost and sold to a stranger. Now, how does that relate to Jesus as our elder brother? In Hebrews 2:14 through 16, it says, "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood." This is coming from our Scripture reading. "The children have partaken of flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared in the same." Jesus shared in the same, this comes up later. "That through death, He," Jesus, "might destroy him who has the power of death." Now, Jesus destroys him who has the power of the death, who is that? The devil. "And releases those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Jesus redeems us from death because he is our brother. He said, "I will pay the price. I will take your death for you, and I will redeem you from death."

The devil is demanding a death penalty. You remember when you read in the Bible, it says in the book of Jude verse 9, when Jesus comes, Michel comes to resurrect Moses, and the devil protests it, "He sinned. He deserves death." And Michael says, "The Lord rebuke thee," because the Messiah was going to take his death penalty, Moses, as redeemed. So, the devil stands around as the accuser of the brethren, and he demands his due. And the only way that he will let us go is the price is paid. And Jesus is the one who pays that redemption price.

So, this passage describes us as slaves of the devil, but Jesus as our redeemer according from the lesson here. When Adam sinned, human beings fell under the power of Satan. As a result, we do not have power to resist sin, Romans 7:14. Worse, there was a death penalty that our transgression required, which we could not pay. Romans 6:23, penalty for sin is death. Thus our situation was apparently hopeless. Jesus, however, adopted our human nature, became flesh and blood like us. He became our nearest relative and redeemed us. He was not ashamed to call us brothers.

That's just really something when you think about Jesus being your friend and being your brother. Some people have brothers that aren't friends. Some of you have sisters that aren't friends. But Jesus is a friendly brother. He cares for us as our elder brother. And then the next section, which is similar, it says, "Not ashamed to call them brothers," Hebrews 11:24.

Now, we're jumping. Have you noticed that what they're doing in this quarterly, when we're studying Hebrews, it doesn't just go continuously through the book. It is jumping around in the book of Hebrews, covering different themes. And today's a theme of Jesus as our brother. That appears in several chapters, so that's why it seems like we're jumping from chapter 2 to chapter 11 or chapter 12. So, if you look here in chapter 11, verse 24 of Hebrews, "By faith Moses, when he was become of age, he refused to be called the son of pharaoh's daughter."

Now, why did he refuse that? Do you think Moses knew he was Jewish? I mean, how old was he when-- does the Bible tell us how old Moses was when the princess found his basket? It's like three months old. Talk about couldn't hide him anymore, he's crying, he's loud, he's wanting to play. And did he know very much back then about his ancestry? No. But somehow, it says he went out among his brethren later. He knew the Jews were his brethren. I don't know if his mother revealed it, but if not, there's another very clear way for him to know that. What happened to every Jewish boy when he was eight days old? Would that kind of be a clue that he had been adopted? And so, of course, you know, he was circumcised. But so he knew that he was of the Jewish nation. And he had to make a choice. Am I going to associated with these nice Egyptian families that adopted me and saved me from slavery and, you know, gave me a good life and a good education, a lot of comforts? And he lived with them for 40 years. Or am I going to associate with my people that are ground down in poverty and slavery? And it tells us that he refused to

be called the son of pharaoh's daughter.

Now, there's a quote, it's in your lesson from "Patriarchs and Prophets," page 245. It says that, "Moses was a favorite with the armies of Egypt, and that pharaoh determined to make his adopted grandson his successor on the throne." Moses was highly esteemed, just like Joseph when he was among the Egyptians, highly esteemed and promoted. And because of Moses, his intelligence and his skill, and I think Moses also was probably strong. The soldiers in the army admired him. You remember when Moses met Zipporah, that he fought off seven shepherds as one man to deliver the girls. And so, I don't know if it says there were seven. There were seven daughters, but he fought off these shepherds that were taking their water and not letting them water their sheep. So, he was strong and he was intelligent and he was educated, he was 40 years old. And the king of Egypt was saying, "I'm going to make my grandson the successor, the next pharaoh."

Thinking about that, turning down being the king of the largest empire in the world back then, certainly the most sophisticated empire in the world back then. He instead decided to associate with his poor brothers. Now, isn't this a type of what Jesus did? He said, "I am going to associate with you." And you and I can't comprehend, just only vaguely. I mean, if you're in heaven, you're Jesus, you're surrounded by all the adoration of the angels. You live in these--this heavenly palatial environment. Everything is clean and pure and holy, and you're just surrounded with the most beautiful music. To say that, "I am going to associate with this fallen, sinful, wicked human race, and treat them as brothers," that's quite a condescension to make that decision, but that's what he did. "He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin." I think King James says to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

By the way, is there pleasure in sin? You're a quiet group today. You weren't up late last night celebrating, were you? How many of you heard, like, gunshots and fireworks going off last night? Yeah, did it keep you up? All right, so. It tells us here that he chose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin. Is there pleasure in sin? Yeah, there'd be no attraction to sin at all if it hurt, if there was no pleasure in it. But how long do the pleasures of sin last? A season. A person might, you know, have the woozy feeling of a drink, but then they got the hangover in the morning. It just doesn't last.

So, "He chose to deny those temporary pleasures, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than all the treasures in Egypt, for he looked to the reward to suffer the reproach of Christ." Acts 7:22, Stephen in his closing sermon, he said, "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was mighty in words and in deed." He had such a promising future by the world's standard. He turned away from the promising of the world's standard to suffer affliction with the people of God. People could not understand why Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who is highly esteemed in Europe as a musician and then went to medical school and was a successful doctor, would walk away from such a comfortable, promising career to go do mission work in Africa. They said, "Are you crazy? You've got it made, you've got what everybody wants."

Karen and I have been listening to a lot of stories of missionaries, and it was amazing how some of these missionaries had to fight with their own families, some of them Christians. And they said, "You've got the best pastorate in North America, and you're going to walk away from that to go to the jungle somewhere?" But you know, this is what a lot of young people have to decide. Am I willing to deny earthly security and earthly success to suffer for Christ, to suffer reproach for Christ? This is what Moses did and many others have. It's what Jesus did as our elder brother. Matthew 10:32, "Therefore, whoever confesses Me before men, I will confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will deny before My Father in heaven."

Here it's talking about being able to embrace the shame. Now, why is Paul--Paul wrote the book of Hebrews. Why is Paul saying these things? Because he's writing to Hebrews who accepted Christ, and some who are maybe thinking of accepting Christ. And he's appealing to them the reasons from a Hebrew perspective of why we should accept Jesus. Many of them were being persecuted by the others

Jews for having accepted Christ, and they were being made to feel ashamed. They're being told that you are denied.

You know that in more Orthodox Jewish families, if a Jew marries a Gentile, they are disinherited by their family. The Jehovah Witnesses also do that. If you--you know, if you leave the faith, you're shunned. They have no communication with you, even if it's a family member. It's pretty tough. And so, some of the Jews were going through that. And Paul said, "Don't be ashamed to suffer reproach for Christ's sake." Look in 2 Timothy 1, verse 8. "Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner." They're saying, "You're following that guy who's in prison?" "But share with me in the sufferings for the gospel according to the power of God. For this reason, I also suffer these things. Nevertheless, I'm not ashamed, for I know whom I believe, and I'm persuaded that He is able to keep what I've committed to Him until that day." Paul says, "I'm not ashamed."

Do not be ashamed to be a Christian. Do not be ashamed of the gospel. Can you say amen? Then you look in Hebrews 13, verse 12 through 15. "Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify his people with his own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go forth to Him outside the camp, bearing his reproach." You know, when Christ was first called, when Christ was first tried and crucified, it says the disciples beheld these things standing afar off. Why were they standing afar off? At first, that's what they were doing. They did not want to be associated with someone who was being mocked.

You know, somebody is the focal point of mocking and derision, if you stand too close to them and you act like they're your friend, you then absorb some of the blows, you absorb some of the shame. And so, when Jesus was first crucified, the disciples stood afar off. As the day wore on, we know that Mary His mother, Mary Magdalene, and John the apostle came and stood by the foot of the cross, willing to endure shame for His sake. But when they began to mock Peter and said, "Oh, you're one of His disciples." And Jesus is being tried, what did Peter do? He was afraid of the shame, right? He denied knowing Jesus.

Have you ever been afraid of standing up for Christ and bearing the shame? I have. There's times where I've kept quiet when I probably should've spoken up. Or you know, when you're eating in public and can you ask God to bless your food, you kind of look around, you wait until nobody's looking. And it's that we're intimidated by our culture about being Christians. Matter of fact, it's worse now than it's ever been. One of the worst things you can say today is--publicly is that I'm a Bible-believing Christian. Because by the world's standard, you are an uneducated ignoramus when you say that, or you're a bigot, or you're a zealot, or yeah, just uninformed. And you'll be mocked.

Jesus said, "If they persecuted Me, they'll persecute you." Paul is appealing to the Jews for being mocked for Christ's sake. Hebrews 13, verse 12 through 15, "Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go forth in." That means let us draw near to the cross, as they did later in the day, "Outside the camp bearing His reproach, for here we have no continuing city." Don't try to please the world. Says, "This earthly Jerusalem is not going to last. For we seek the world to come. Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God that is the fruit of our lips, giving thanks in His name."

And again, in Hebrews 6:6, it says, "If they fall away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put Him to an open shame." Did Jesus experience shame and spitting and mocking and reproach? He took what we deserve. Then we should not be ashamed. Jesus said, "If you're ashamed of Me and My words in this sinful generation, I will be ashamed of you. But if you confess Me before God and His angels in this sinful generation, I will confess you before My Father in heaven." Can you think of an example in the Bible where that happened? When God said to the devil, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there's none like him on earth who fears God and hates evil?" Here, you've got God before the angels. It says, "There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord." God before the angels is confessing Job because Job was not ashamed to confess God in a wicked world.

So, literally God brags about you in heaven when we stand up for him. But when you and I sin, what does the devil do? He comes and he accuses us before God. He says, "They say they're yours?" Like Zechariah pointing--or the devil pointing out the dirty garments of the high priest. And that's what the devil does. So, all right, let's go on here. Hebrews 4:4, "Seeing that we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession." Notice the emphasis through Hebrews in don't give up. Hold on, put your hand to the plow and don't let go. Here's another one, Hebrews 10:23, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful."

How many of us, you don't need to raise your hands, knew someone who, like that seed on the stony ground, they sprang up and they accepted Christ, may have even endured for a while, but then the rocky ground, the ravens either snatched them away, or the rocky ground or the thorns choked it out, and they no longer walk with us? Karen and I are very different in that I went to 14 different schools, Karen went to 12 years of Christian education. And she tries to say--including college 16, 16 years. No wonder she thinks she's so smart. All Christian education. And just over the process of time, I've often heard her say, "So few of my classmates are still walking with the Lord." So, that's a message not just for the Hebrews back in the Old Testament, it's a message for us today, hold fast, hold fast. He that endures to the end will be saved. A lot don't endure. They become distracted with the cares of life and the world. Some, like the prodigal son, will come home, praise the Lord.

Now, this next section, and I want to make sure and cover this well, flesh and blood like us. By the way, the free offer helps answer a lot of these things in this section here, "Christ's Human Nature." This is a much debated subject in Christianity, even within our own church. I was, you know, looking at the Bible Research Institute and some of the articles on this subject, and the jury is still out. But I think it's pretty important to understand this.

Here's the two positions, how did Jesus become human? Now, we are entering on holy ground right now, let's establish that. And I think we should be careful about not being too dogmatic. And we should love each other. One thing we all agree on is that Jesus was 100% human. I think we all agree on that. If doctors had examined Jesus and Jesus could've gone to a laboratory of today's physicians and they ran every exam on Him, they would've come back and said, "Yeah, He's human." He bleeds like we bleed, He's got respiration, and He's got, you know, all the attributes of a human body. Now, I'm sure they couldn't probe too deeply in His mind or they would've been amazed. But, so Jesus was human.

There is a problem that came into the Christian church years ago with original sin. I think Augustine was the one who generated that. You know what original sin is? Because when Adam and Eve were first created, Adam and Eve were motivated by love. They were not selfish creatures, they were loving creatures. They had the Spirit of God. Because they had the Spirit of God, fruits of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, so they loved. It was natural to think of others and love God, and they were giving. After sin, the compass needle was reversed. Instead of pointing away and loving, it pointed to self. First thing that Adam does is he blames Eve, and then she blames the snake, and they blame God, and they were afraid, and selfishness came into the human race.

Now, Adam was the same human both times. The big question is, when Jesus was incarnate, when Christ came into humanity, did he have the nature of Adam before Adam fell? Or did he have the nature of Adam after Adam fell? Now, here's what the ramifications of that are. In the doctrine of original sin, which we don't believe, Augustine taught that everybody is born sinful and guilty and deserving of death.

Now, are we born with selfish natures? Yes. Are we born deserving of death? No. Does a baby--has a baby done anything to deserve sin? Doesn't the Bible say, "You do not charge the child for the sins of the father"? Problem is that baby may not have committed any sin, but because there's something in its nature that has now become selfish, if it lives long enough, it will reach the age of accountability and it'll behave selfishly. That's why the Catholics baptize babies. They say, "If that baby dies before its baptized, it's going to go to the lake of fire." That's what they teach. We don't believe that. It's important to

understand that. So, the idea that Jesus was born sinful and guilty, you can't have that.

By the way, the doctrine of the immaculate conception, which is talking about the sinlessness of Mary, they said in order for Jesus to be 100% sinless, his mother had to be sinless. And so, they even got Mary being born by immaculate conception, which of course is nowhere in the Bible. That is a totally manmade doctrine, and the church actually admits that it's something that the church got by revelation, not by the Scripture.

So, with that lengthy background, there are two views that are proposed by people in the church. Some who believe that Jesus took Adam's unfallen nature before the lapse into sin are called prelapsarians. Those who believe that Jesus assumed the nature of fallen man are called postlapsarians. I lean more towards the other, meaning that when you look at the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew, why does it go through all this time to describe the heritage of Jesus if Jesus received nothing through His ancestors? If Jesus had the same nature as Adam before Adam fell, why isn't Jesus 19 feet tall? Jesus actually had the nature, he was called the Son of David.

Was David human? Did David struggle with some of those issues of sin? But Jesus was born born-again. That's why I say this is mysterious, and we're again on holy ground, but it's important to understand this. Not understanding that Christ became 100% human is dangerous. Doesn't John tell us that any man does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, he is antichrist? Even back in the days of the Apostle John, people were saying, "Well, it wasn't really God in the flesh." John said, "If you believe that, that's antichrist."

So, let's look at some verses from Hebrews that help us understand this. For example, look in Hebrews chapter 4:15, "We do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness, but was in all points tempted," how? "As we are." How was He tempted? As we are tempted, yet without sin. The reason it's important for us to believe that Jesus had the same struggles as a mortal is because in order for Him to be a faithful high priest and to be our example on how to overcome, He had to be tempted the way we're tempted. Does that make sense?

So, the tools that Jesus used to overcome are the same tools that are available to you and me. Otherwise, if you say, "Well, Jesus had the nature of Adam before the Fall," well, He basically has a great advantage there in that He's not tempted the way we're tempted, and he's basically saying don't expect yourself to be holy. But the Bible's pretty clear God does expect us to be holy. The Bible said, "Be holy even as I am holy." That's a pretty high calling. But--and nobody here, if I was to ask you to raise your hand, how many believe they're sinless? I don't think a hand would go up. But don't ever make the mistake of thinking our goal is not the holiness of Christ. A Christian is to continually wrestle, fight, strive, run, war for the nature of Christ. We are to be Christ-like. And do not be satisfied by saying, "Well, you know, we inherited Adam's fallen nature. Jesus didn't, and so *que será, será*, we're all sinners." But I meet a lot of people that that's their attitude, and what ends up happening is the standard of the church tends to go down. That's why this doctrine I think has big ramifications.

Let me give you a few more verses on this subject. Hebrews 2, verse 11, "For both He that sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all one. Christ the sanctifier is one with us." You read again in Hebrews 2:16 through 18, it says, "Therefore, in all things He was made--in all things He had to be made like his brethren." He's our brother, He was made like His brethren. Look in Philippians 2:8, "And being found in the appearance of a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." He humbled himself and became like us. Romans 8:3 says, "He came in the likeness of sinful flesh." Now, is that clear? What kind of flesh did He have? He came in the likeness of sinful flesh, but doesn't say He's sinful. But He came. Jesus was, you know, maybe 6 feet tall. He probably had characteristics, if you'd done a DNA test on Jesus, it would've had some of the DNA of David and Mary in there.

Now again, this is a mystery, but I think there's things we should understand. Here's a quote from EG White manuscript 166, "Christ did in reality unite the offending nature of man with His own sinless



nature because by this act of condescension, He would be able to pour out His blood on behalf of the fallen race." And again in Hebrews 2:14, "For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part in the same, that through death He might destroy the devil." I'll give you another passage on that. And this is from the book, this is a devotional called "Lift Him Up," page 74. "The doctrine of the incarnation of Christ in human flesh is a mystery. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Christ did not make-believe take human nature, He did verily take it. He did in reality possess human nature. As the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also likewise took part of the same. He was the son of Mary. He was the seed of David according to human descent."

It's pretty clear. Here's a quote from the book "Desire of Ages," page 49. "It would've been almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature even when Adam stood in his innocence." Now, listen very carefully. "It would've been an infinite humiliation for Jesus to take the nature of Adam even when he stood in his innocence," before the lapse, before sin. "But Jesus accepted humanity when the race had been weakened by 4,000 years of sin like every child of Adam. He accepted the working of the great law of heredity."

That to me is pretty clear that says it would've been--it would've been a great sacrifice for Him to take the unfallen nature, but He went beyond that, he took the fallen nature of Adam. But He did it without sin. You know, this is one of those things where there's some great mysteries in Christianity that Christians have been debating for years, and it's fun to exercise our minds with these things. If you've been around other Christians, you know that there's many dear Christians believe, Calvin, in predestination. And then you've got Christians that are Arminian free will Christians. And there's been, you know, the Methodists and the Baptists have been going head to head over that for a long time.

I remember hearing one pastor say on the radio, he made a real strong argument for one, then he made a real strong argument for the other, and he said, "You know, there's actually some truth in both." Meaning it is true that God is sovereign, but it has to be true that we have a free will, otherwise God becomes an accomplice to our sin if He makes us sinful on purpose. See what I'm saying? Same thing with this business of what kind of nature did Jesus have.

Jesus took the fallen nature of Adam. Read Matthew chapter 1, tells about His family tree. Tells us that He overcame as we overcome. And you know, certainly during the garden of Gethsemane, He's suffering for the sins of the world. He bore sin for us, right? But you can't deny there was something different. Because if you have a baby, if the world should last, do you know that baby's going to sin? How many of you know that baby's going to sin if he lives long enough? But Jesus didn't.

So, would we agree something was different? He lived a holy life. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And so, that's a wonderful thing about Christ is, in Jesus, you've got divinity merging somehow mysteriously with humanity so that he could be our elder brother, our example, and our friend. He's our pattern, which is our last section here. And I got about a minute to cover this. Jesus is our brother as our model. In Hebrews 6:19 and 20, "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, which enters the presence of the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us. Jesus, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek." The high priest for the Israelites was an Israelite. Our high priest is a human before Christ. 1 John 2:6, "He who says, 'Abide in Him,' ought himself to walk as He walked." He's our example, he's our model. 1 Peter 2, verse 21 and 22.

Now, this to me I think is a great Scripture to sum up what we said earlier about the type of Christ and His holiness. Notice 1 Peter 2, verse 21, "For to you--for to this you were called because Christ also suffered for us, leading us in example that you should follow in His steps." We should follow in His steps, we all together so far? How should we follow in His steps? "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth." Jesus was sinless. We are being called to follow in His steps. You might be thinking, "How could I ever do that?" You can't unless you're born again. You can't walk on water unless you keep your eyes on Jesus. And said if we are born again, if we're walking in the Spirit, we become new creatures, old things are passed away, all things are become new. Can you say amen? That's a message of the gospel.

Okay, well, we're out of time, but I'm saving enough time to remind those who didn't hear at the beginning that we are offering a free book that gives a lot more information on this. And it's called "Christ's Human Nature." And this is by Joe Crews. If you'd like a copy of this, you can call 866-788-3966. That's 866-STUDY-MORE. And you can also text in US, you could text SH017, text that to 40544. Outside of North America, you can go to [study.aftv.org](http://study.aftv.org), and you can read it anywhere in the country, anywhere in the world for free. Well, thank you very much for studying with us, friends. God willing, we'll do this again next Sabbath.

And for those who are visiting today, we're so thankful that you joined us here at the Granite Bay Hilltop Church. We're gonna have a few minutes for prayer and meditation as we--and music as we prepare for our worship service.

Announcer: Don't forget to request today's life-changing free resource. Not only can you receive this free gift in the mail, you can download a digital copy straight to your computer or mobile device. To get your digital copy of today's free gift, simply text the keyword on your screen to 40544, or visit the web address shown on your screen. and be sure to select the digital download option on the request page. It's now easier than ever for you to study God's Word with Amazing Facts wherever and whenever you want, and most important, to share it with others.

Announcer: Amazing Facts, changed lives.

Male: I met my ex-wife, and her family were real big into drugs. And it started out with them wanting me to go to the doctor to help get them drugs. And you know, I'm noticing they're going to the doctor, they're coming back with, like, 60 pills, and they're selling these pills for like 1,000 bucks. And I'm thinking, "Wow, this is a lot of money I'm giving these people, so I'm just going to start selling it myself."

My problem with that was now we had all this money but we was absolutely miserable. She would go out and sleep with other guys to get drugs, and that ended my marriage. But during this time, I have to get a job to build back up to where I was at, to open my shop again, so I get a job at Food City.

And when I get this job at Food City, there's my wife now, Rebecca, she's a cashier there. And when I walk in, she's the most beautiful girl I've ever seen in my life. I was like, "Man, I could never have a girl like that. Wow, she's so beautiful." But as I'm working with her, she's actually kind of mean to me. And she's saying, "I don't want anything to do with you. Get away from me," stuff like that. But you know, I just keep being nice to her and keep trying to give her my phone number. And it's around Christmas Eve, we'd just been dating for a little while, moved in together, my ex-wife shows up with my three children that I had by her. And she's like, "Here's your kids, here's their birth certificates, here's their Social Security cards. I'm done." And we were starting a family, we already have three kids.

During this time, we spent the next year watching nothing but Amazing Facts on YouTube. I didn't even know they even had a website at this time. I just knew that this little guy on YouTube was super smart, was teaching Bible, and I wanted to follow him, I wanted to be a Christian. I gave my life to God now because of these truths that I'm learning from Doug Batchelor.

Just because Doug taught it didn't make me real sure about going to this church. I really didn't want anything to do with it, but I called the guy up and I'm telling him, and I'm not very nice about it actually. I'm telling him, "Look, we was thinking about coming to your church." And he's really nice, and he's like, "Well, you're more than welcome to. We'd like to have you come." And I'm like, "Well, hold on, I'm going to lay down some ground rules." I'm telling him, I said, "Look here, I'm covered in tattoos and I'm a tattoo artist." And he don't say, "Well, you know, wow, I didn't know all that; don't come to my church." He says, "You're more than welcome. We would love to have you. Please come."

He asked me what I want to do, and I said, "Well, I want to preach." I said, "I have all these truths, I have all this knowledge, stuff I've never known before, stuff if I'd have had when I was younger that would've been life-changing to me." I said, "I got to share this with the world." I said, "I want to preach, I want to teach." He gives me the book, says, "Study that."

Well, now that I'm a Bible worker, I'm able to go reach people that most of the normal churches wouldn't even bother to even speak to. I'm able to go out and reach the people who have lived the life that I've lived. I'm able to let them know that I am like you. I've been there, I've done that. I want to show you what my life is like now. I want to teach you this Bible. I want to show you what Jesus can do for you. It's not too late.

Announcer: Amazing Facts changed lives.

Male: Well, I actually grew up in a loving home. I had no religious background, my parents were completely secular. I had questions in my life like most young people do. What does my future hold for me, and what is my purpose in even being here? They were questions that my parents couldn't answer. Because of moving around a lot, I found it kind of hard to adjust at times. By the time I made it into high school, my grades were really terrible, and I had a problem with authority. I started smoking at the age of 14 and drinking by the age of 15. I really started getting involved with crime, break and enter, selling drugs, stealing cars.

At one point, I had overdosed on ecstasy, and I was doing anything I could just to find some sort of excitement or something that reflected some version of happiness in my life. Didn't want to be alone, and I was looking for some sort of a relationship. I had found myself in Australia, and I met a girl down there who was a Christian girl, and we really started to hit it off. We ended up in a long, fairly long relationship. We were together for about seven years. Neither one of us were having a relationship with God. We kind of excluded him out of what we were doing, and we were just trying to do everything on our own.

When we came out of that relationship, I ended up in a really deep depression. I was so depressed that I was coming home, and as soon as the door would close behind me, I would drop down to my knees and just start crying. I couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel. I tried to take my life at one point with pills, and it wasn't because I wanted to die, I just didn't want to feel this way anymore. It hurt so bad, and I'd never felt so lonely. I would end up in my bedroom, and I was praying for hours each day, and that was kind of my life. I was alone and unhappy, and I really needed answers.

I had started studying the Bible and found Amazing Facts online, and was watching hours of sermons each day. Spending more time with Pastor Doug Batchelor and really getting a lot of the answers to the questions that I was seeking out. I felt that there was hope that was coming through that, and that was kind of pulling me out of--gradually pulling me out of the darkness that I was in. So, eventually I decided I was going to go to church. I would drive to the church, and I would sit in the parking lot for about half an hour, and then I would drive home.

Eventually, I found myself inside the church. They were all quite amazed that I kind of found my own way there. I started building relationships with people there, and my life really started changing. Eventually, I was baptized. I still, I couldn't get enough. I wanted to read more, I wanted to study more, and all these new things that I was learning were--it all made sense to me.

I had prayed to God specifically for two things at this point. I prayed for a new job, and I prayed for an opportunity in my life, some direction. And within one week, He had answered the prayer. I got a new job and I was going to be starting right away. But He had also answered the other prayer. Two ladies in my church came up to me and offered to send me to go to AFSCOE. My life has changed so much since I started following God's path for me. I'm just so much happier in my life, and I realize that there's so much more in this world that I can do to help others, and I look forward to a life of service to God.