



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

Hebrews 2:10

Summer 2026

"Christ Our Captain"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Seth, and good morning. We are continuing our studies in the Book of Hebrews, and we have one verse this morning. One verse, but it is full of theology and practical implications. Hebrews 2:10;

"For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings."

Hebrews 2:10

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word, and bless our time of study in it together. Let's bow together in prayer.

Father, once again it is a great privilege to gather together with the saints on this, the Lord's Day and to do what we're doing, read Scripture, then consider the meaning of it and the application of it, the implications of it—and how great You are and how glorious You are and how dependent upon You that we are.

And Father, we thank You for the great gift of salvation that is spoken of here that was accomplished through Your Son that we have by grace—and grace alone.

Help us to understand that, help us to be moved as we consider it to live a life that is obedient, a life of godliness, holiness—and that will please You.

Build us up in the faith this morning, Father...We have that, we develop that by doing what we're going to be doing in a moment, and what we do every Sunday morning—and that is reading and teaching the Scriptures. They sanctify us, they build us up in the faith through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. And so we pray for His ministry through the Word, that it will affect each and every one of us in the proper way. Encourage those that need encouragement, and admonish those of us who need admonishment. We pray for that.

And we pray Your blessing upon us spiritually this morning and as we take the Lord's Supper together afterwards, that You would bless us with that, and then bless the time of fellowship that will follow.

And LORD, we pray for our material needs, as well. We are material beings as well as spiritual—and the material affects the soul so directly; we thank You for all this that we have.

We thank You for the great privilege that we have of coming directly to the throne of grace as we do at this moment, and pray that You would bless our prayers.

Now LORD,

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart

Be acceptable in Your sight,

O LORD, my rock and my Redeemer.”

Psa 19:14

I pray in Christ's name. Amen.

(Message) There's a story about Alexander the Great that illustrates leadership and explains why his soldiers left their homes and followed him halfway across the world. His army was crossing the hot Persian desert, and at the point of giving up from thirst and fatigue when scouts found water—just enough for one person. They brought it to Alexander in a helmet. He was choking from dust and dehydration, but, when he looked around and saw the men he was leading, thirsty and without water, he poured it out in the sight of all. He wouldn't drink until they all had water, until they all drank together. He disadvantaged himself to suffer with his men.

We have a leader like that. He's experienced the tests and the trials of life that we all go through, and He knows how to lead us through them and to victory and our eternal home. That's the picture the author of Hebrews gives of Jesus in chapter 2, verse 10—that of a great leader, or pathfinder who went before us to establish the way of salvation. He calls Him, "the author", or 'originator' of salvation. But, the word can also mean 'captain', or 'pioneer' of our salvation.

The word used of Him here is wide in its meaning, and it's a lesson on Christ's greatness. The author has been describing Him as 'greater than the angels'; He is 'the Son of Man' who fulfills Psalm 8, and 'obtained a great salvation' for us.

But for some, His sufferings and death didn't seem "fitting", (vs10), for the Son of Man. In fact for them, Jesus suffering didn't show how He was greater than the angels—but rather, less.

The objection may have come from some Orthodox Jews in Rome, who challenged the Hebrew Christians at this point: 'That the idea of a suffering Messiah was abhorrent.' They looked for a Messiah who could come in triumph and vanquish the enemy—then defeat the pagans by force and power...and not some humble carpenter who died like a common criminal.

The objection weighed on these Hebrew Christians; they didn't know how to respond to it. And it even seemed to carry some weight, some conviction, and perhaps began to sway them.

So, verse 10 answers the critics by showing that far from being an objection to Christ's greatness, His suffering was part of His greatness—the very *means* of making Him our Savior. He had to come as He did.

He had to become a man,
And be made like those that He came to save,
And suffer and die in order to be the Savior.

That's the explanation. In fact, the author begins by saying, "It was fitting..."

Still, even today, people find the Lord's sufferings and violent death not at all 'fitting', but offensive.

F.F. Bruce observed how ready people are to, "Tell us confidently what would and would not be worthy of God. But, in fact, the only way to discover what a worthy thing for God to do is, is to consider what God has actually done."

And he's right. What God does is right! He is omniscient; He's perfect, pure; He knows everything. He is all-wise—what He does is right. And people who object to that and want to bend God's will to fit their own, tell us nothing at all about God and tell us everything about themselves.

If we want to know what is "fitting" for God to do, all we need to do is read the Scriptures. It is God's revelation and teaches, 'There is no forgiveness apart from an atoning blood sacrifice.'

Paul makes that clear in Galatians chapter 2, verse 21, that if there had been any other way to gain our salvation than the sacrifice of His Son, His only begotten Son, He would have done it!

He didn't, because there isn't any other way. So, in almost an understatement, the author answers any objection to the atonement, to the sacrifice of Christ, by saying, 'It was fitting for God to perfect the Savior through sufferings.' (vs10).

God's not careless about what He does. He is described here as the One, "...for whom are all things, and through whom are all things...", (vs10b). He is the designer and creator of everything. He is sufficient for every task. He is the Almighty. All things were made by Him. All things exist for Him and for His glory. That is Romans 11:36, "For from Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things...". 'To Him alone be the glory.' (ibid.).

And that gives true perspective because the One who designed and created "all things" designed salvation. Redemption is as much His work as the universe His creation.

That's where we must begin if we are to understand salvation, and because it is God's work, we can be confident 'it is' and it was "fitting" ...right that Christ be the Savior through suffering.

In fact, because God is who He is, holy and wise, there could be no other way of salvation than the one that He established through His Son.

Nothing happens by chance. Everything has its place in God's eternal plan and purpose. That's true of salvation. It is all by His wise design and His sovereign will. God does it; we don't save ourselves. We see that here, He is described as the One who is "bringing many sons to glory". (vs10). We're not bringing ourselves to glory, He is "bringing many sons to glory"...it's His work!

And you see that all through the Word of God; "Salvation is of the LORD", (Jon 2:9), and "Salvation is glory". (Psa 62:7). Think of that...God is 'bringing us to glory'! Now, you can think about that now, you can think about that all day long, you can think about that all week long, and you won't begin to fathom what that means.

In verse 9 we're told, 'that because of His death', Christ was "crowned with glory and honor". And here we're told that the saved will share in that "glory"...so what must it be? What must that glory be like?

Well this, in part, is one reason that the author calls our salvation in verse 3, "...so great a salvation." We will share in Christ's glory in a place of glory. We're going to a place and to things which, as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2, verse 9, "...eye has not seen and ear has not heard..." We have no way to draw an analogy, a comparison. We have no experience with what's before us and what's coming—it is so great and so glorious. And it is all because Christ suffered for us and in our place.

Now, that's the real focus of the verse. It is to show how "fitting" this way of salvation is. It was 'fitting for Christ to suffer', first, because it occurred, both His incarnation and His death, both His birth, His coming into this world and the cross, according to God's will—and His will is always wise, His will is always right. That's the clear suggestion here.

And the writer learned this from the apostles. Peter declared on the day of Pentecost that 'Christ suffered and died by the hands of wicked men'. (Act 2:19). It was an evil thing that was done; it was sin. The nation rejected its Messiah. The Romans put Him to death.

Still, Peter said it was according to the pre-determined plan and "foreknowledge of God." (Act 2:23). The death of Christ was the plan of God; it was no mistake of history. It was a sin that they rejected Him, but it was the plan of God for our salvation. Therefore, it is right, and it was effective. That alone shows that it was "fitting" for Christ to suffer. He saved us through His suffering. In that way, He became, "the author of our salvation". (vs10). Again, the word *author* can be translated to 'captain', as it is in the King James Version. It means 'leader' and 'source'. *Pioneer* and *pathfinder* are good translations.

Early in our American history, when people were moving west, there were men like Daniel Boone, who opened up the Wilderness Road through the Appalachian Mountains. He led settlers from the east over dangerous and bloody territory, through the Cumberland Gap and into the beautiful Bluegrass Region of the west. He was a *pathfinder*.

Christ is that for us; He is our 'pathfinder'. The Lord is leading us to Canaan, to spiritual Canaan, to the Promised Land, and to our destiny; and as Psalm 8 makes plain and clear, to our destiny as rulers for all eternity. Ruling in fellowship and with Christ for all eternity. We were created for that and for glory, as Psalm 8 teaches.

But men fell when the man, our representative, Adam, fell—and our sin that we inherited from him, and that we commit every day, separates us from God and His glory. It was like a barrier of impassable mountains between us and Him.

But Christ opened up the way by His death, and is presently, "bringing many sons to glory", so that we fulfill the promise and the purpose of God that He has for us.

But what is meant by, "It was fitting for Him...to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings"? Christ is not only the Son of Man, He is the Son of God, the eternal Son of God. He is the effulgence—the radiance of the Father's glory. How can He, who has always existed in perfection, be perfected?

Well, of course He can't be made morally perfect, you can't perfect perfection, and He is that. The idea here is 'perfect' in the sense of *complete*. Suffering made His character as the God-Man *complete*—and it made His task as Savior *complete*. I think there are three ways in which Christ's sufferings made Him the perfect Savior. I say, 'I think'...it's what scholars think, as well.

But **first**, He suffered by temptation, and He suffered those temptations and trials perfectly—victoriously, never yielding. And in that way, He proved that He was perfect and qualified to offer Himself up as a sacrifice for sinners as, 'the spotless Lamb of God', as Peter puts it in 1 Peter 1:19. Christ's triumph over temptation publicly demonstrated that His life was impeccable, (sinless), and not only sinless, but incapable of sin. He was 'fit' to be our substitute in judgment.

Secondly, His sufferings were the *means* of removing our guilt and delivering us from the justice of God, (which we all deserve). Of course, that is another truth that

people hate to hear. As Michael said this morning, "It is pride that keeps people from recognizing that, and leads to rebelling against it." But we are all naturally guilty, we were born that way.

David makes that very clear in Psalm 51, verse 5, 'I was born in sin and brought forth in iniquity.' We cannot enter Heaven in that condition. We cannot enter Heaven stained with sin. We need to be washed—and that happens only by the sacrifice of Christ. We can think of sin as a debit, we can think of sin as a debt that must be paid—and the only payment is death. That's what the Word of God says, "The wages of sin is death", (*Rom 6:23*). And that was made known to Adam from the very beginning in Genesis chapter 2, verses 16-17, 'You can eat of all of the trees in the garden...', (and a vast garden I think it was), '...just don't eat of that particular tree.' And he willfully did so, and rebelled. "The wages of sin is death."

But for us to escape that death, which we've all inherited from him, (it's been imputed to us, our guilt, and we carry it out in our fallen nature)...the only way for us to escape that death and live is to have someone to take our place in it...to die in our place. In other words, 'To pay our debt in our place', 'To take our penalty in our place.' We needed a substitute—and He became that; Christ is our substitute.

There would be no salvation apart from His sufferings for sin in our place. He would have been an incomplete savior, apart from the cross, which is to say, 'He would be no savior at all.' So, it was "fitting", it was *proper*, it was *necessary* for the Father to make His Son perfect, 'complete', as the Savior through suffering.

Thirdly, it was fitting because His own experience of human suffering in the body, (and He is a true man, with a true body and a reasonable soul), that His suffering in that human nature and in that body allows Him to understand our plight and be a compassionate Savior and priest.

And that's one of the main lessons of this letter, that Christ is our "great high priest". At the end of this chapter, in verses 17 and 18, He is called "a merciful and faithful high priest", and then in chapter 4, we are assured that, as our "great high

priest", (*Heb 4:14*), He can sympathize with us because of His sufferings in this life so that we can draw near to Him with confidence. He understands us, He knows us, He has been where we go.

A priest represents God's people before God. A prophet would speak, 'for God to the people'; the priest represents 'the people to God'. He prays for the people, as well as make sacrifice for them. And Christ is able to do that, to intercede for us, constantly, always, because of His experiences. He knows our condition. He knows our condition better than we do. He has been tempted as we have, but to the fullest extent, (and none of us have really experienced that). He knows the fullness of temptation. And so He knows what we experience, and He knows how to come to our aid in those experiences—every circumstance of life, because He has been there, been there before any of us, and so He can lead us through it. Suffering completed His character; it always does. There is no growth in human nature apart from struggles, apart from tests and challenges in life.

So in Hebrews chapter 5, verse 8, we're told that, "Although He was a Son..." (that is, 'Although He was and is the Son of God'), "...He learned obedience from the things which He suffered.", as a man, as one of us.

It's one of the great truths that we have from this book, (and from all of the Word of God), that we have a man representing us in Heaven sitting on the throne, interceding for us. He is one of us completely, a true man to perfection.

Leon Morris illustrated this from 'the flower and its bud.' The bud may be perfect, but there is a difference between the perfection of the bud and the blossom...it is the *completion* of it. The flower is the full expression of the plant...and through trials and testing, the Lord's character as a man developed, expanded, it 'bloomed', it 'blossomed'...it was made full and complete and perfect.

Now, that answers the objection that Christ's suffering annulled, or disproved, His greatness. Those very things prove His greatness...they complete His greatness. They are the *means* for His being the Savior.

He is the author of our salvation because He is both the source of it, (or the originator of it), and the leader of it. So the description of Him as 'the Captain' and 'Pathfinder' of our salvation is appropriate. He opened up the way of salvation, and leads us in it, and through it, and to its goal. It is not an easy way that we travel; it involves suffering because, just as we will share His glory, we must also share His sufferings. That's part of what makes us complete or mature.

Later, in chapter 13, (*vs13*), the author urges, "Let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." They were doing that early on, but now they're hesitating and they're beaten down, but he's saying, 'No, let's keep going!', "Let us go out to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." That is part of the Christian life: reproach, rejection, hardship.

But the encouragement in all of this is, 'We don't go out alone. We have a leader who goes before us, and He never asks us to go anywhere that He Himself has not first gone.'

He is not like those generals who would sit back safely a mile behind lines at HQ, headquarters, sending men into harm's way, like they did at the Battle of the Somme in World War I. That was a terrible...terrible battle. The first day of the battle, July 1, 1916, 100,000 British soldiers went over the top and onto "No Man's Land".

By the end of the day, 60,000 were casualties cut down by German guns—and the response of the generals was to keep repeating the same order...day after day, sending men over the top back into withering machine gun fire.

It's different in the Israeli army. The officers never give the command, "Forward." They always give the command, "Follow me." 'The Father' of the IDF, the modern Israeli army, was Orde Wingate, a Scottish officer in the British army, and a Christian raised

Plymouth Brethren. He gave them, (*the officers*), that command. He demanded that they set an example by always leading their men into battle...and many of their young lieutenants have fallen in battle. But that's a true leader, a real captain. He isn't detached from his men, he is in the trenches with the troops, and he's fighting their battles with them.

David was that kind of leader. He once yearned for the water from the well in Bethlehem. He was just thinking out loud, and he expresses his desire for that. (It is in 2 Samuel 23:13-17.)

The problem was the Philistine army was there. Nevertheless, three of David's "mighty men" risked their lives to go there, through the enemy lines, to get the water he craved. When they brought it to him, he wouldn't drink it. The text says he, "poured it out to the LORD." He honored those three and treated their gift as an offering to the LORD and identified with his thirsty men. [I wonder if Alexander didn't learn that story when he was in Jerusalem speaking with the priests. It's possible...he was there.]

But we have a Captain like that. He doesn't sit safely back at headquarters, issuing orders, sending us into harm's way, sending us where He Himself has not gone. He has always been there first, He always says, "Follow Me", (*e.g. Mar 1:17*). And He leads us; we follow in His tracks. That is why He had to be perfected by suffering to become a complete, perfect Captain.

This was the encouragement that little band of Hebrew Christians in Rome needed. They had begun well, as I mentioned. They had at the first, suffered gladly and suffered much, (the seizure of their property and being placed in jail). But their zeal was weakening. They were on a difficult path, (as the Christian life is), and were thinking of turning back.

They "needed endurance", that's what the writer tells them in chapter 10, (*vs36*), 'You began well; remember those former days. Don't throw away your confidence. You have need of endurance.'

And so do we. One way we get endurance is by looking to Christ, thinking about Him. We'll do that in a moment. At the end of this sermon, we will take the Lord's Supper when we remember Him and think about Him, considering all that He has done for us and is presently doing for us, and understanding what it all means...that's the way to gain endurance from our standpoint.

But of course, it's a gift from Him, and so we look to Him to provide it. He didn't come as some great lawgiver standing on a mountaintop issuing commands to us down below. He came to us and became one of us, lived in the trenches with us. He knows our condition and needs and how best to supply them, and because He suffered in this world, He knows this world, He understands this world, its dangers and temptations, and how to escape them.

That early pathfinder, Daniel Boone, knew the way through the Appalachians because he had lived there, and he used to disappear into those mountains for months, and sometimes years. He knew the land. One writer said that, "the forest was his school". As a result, his skill in the ways of the woods was even greater than the Native Americans, and it's said he could even outfight them, so he was a good guide.

And Christ is well qualified to be our guide through the world and this life, and all of the ups and downs of it. So we're to look to Him; He is the LORD of Psalm 23;

"The LORD is my shepherd".

He's our Shepherd who is always with us. He goes before us, He is beside us, He is behind us, just as He was when He brought Israel out of Egypt.

When Pharaoh pursued them and caught the Israelites at the Red Sea, the people thought they were in peril. They panicked, they despaired, but they were absolutely safe. The Lord was before them and behind them. He was their vanguard and their rearguard. Moses said, "Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of the LORD. ...The LORD will fight for you while you keep silent." (*Exo 14:13-14*).

And He did. He defeated Pharaoh, He guided the nation through the wilderness on the other side of the sea, and ultimately brought the nation safely into the Promised Land. And He's doing the same for us.

But what do we do when we're in a crisis? [I say "we" because I'm not preaching at you, I'm preaching at myself.] What do we do? Well, we often do what Israel did, panic.

What we should do is, 'Stand and see!', 'Rest in the Lord'...do the things that we should do, take responsibility for the circumstances and be active, of course, it's not to deny that...but rest in Him, and believe His promises, and not despair. He knows our condition, He knows our frame...that we are just dust. He's been through it all. He knows how and when to help because He learned through suffering.

But first of all,

He is the **captain** of our salvation,

the **pioneer** of our salvation,

the **author** of our salvation

because He made atonement for our salvation. He suffered death for us. It was bloody, it was painful and shameful, but He did it for us.

It was that suffering that made Him the *complete* Savior...that *perfected* Him, *completed* Him as our Savior. And so He was able to suffer our penalty in our place, He was able to suffer hell in our place...and all of that was "fitting", all of that was *right*; it could not have been done in any other way. That was the only way for us to be saved.

He couldn't save us by His teaching, great as it was. He couldn't do it by His example, perfect as it was. [In fact, if we were to be saved by following His example, we would all be condemned because we can't meet that standard.] As Paul said, 'If it had been possible, He would not have gone to the cross.' He went to the cross because it is, and was, the only way of salvation—so it was the wisest way of salvation.

At the cross, divine love and divine justice met, and God's righteousness was satisfied. As a result, we have been saved. We have been 'loosed from our sins', 'washed in His blood', and someday we will stand before Him spotless, clean, and perfect.

And let's not overlook the fact that God has done that for a multitude. Through Christ, He is, "bringing many sons to glory". (vs10). "Many", not few. [Now that's the "everyone", by the way, of verse 9, the previous verse.]

God is the God of abundant grace. The One who created the world, the One from whom are all things and through whom are all things, was not about to lose the world He designed and created...lose it to sin and judgment. He reclaimed it, He redeemed it, He sent His Son to die for people, for *a vast multitude* of people.

John got a glimpse of them in Heaven. In Revelation chapter 7, (vs9), he said, "I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* the tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes..." —robes that they had washed in the blood of the Lamb. He made us clean.

And He has made us sons! We are in God's family with all the rights and the privileges of the sons of God, and an inheritance that is eternal and glorious. What a privilege. Again, we should reflect upon it, we should reflect deeply upon the glory that is ours and going to be ours. But again, we'll spend all eternity marveling over it and learning more about it.

Well, that's the inheritance that every one of you has who has *believed* in Jesus Christ, trusted in Him and Him alone for your salvation. But there may be someone here who isn't in that great multitude, who hasn't believed in Christ.

If so, do you want that privilege?

Do you want to be clean?

Do you want to be forgiven, have your guilt removed?

There is only one way, and that is through Christ by receiving Him as Savior...by believing in Him. Those who do are saved at that moment of faith.

Look to Him, believe in Him, and receive what the author calls, "So great a salvation." (Heb 2:3).

Now, I am going to read from Luke 22:14-19, make just a few brief comments, and then pray. This is the night of the Lord's betrayal and arrest;

¹⁴ When the hour had come, He reclined *at the table*, and the apostles with Him.
¹⁵ And He said to them, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer; ¹⁶ for I say to you, I shall never again eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God." ¹⁷ And when He had taken a cup *and* given thanks, He said, "Take this and share it among yourselves; ¹⁸ for I say to you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine from now on until the kingdom of God comes." ¹⁹ And when He had taken *some* bread *and* given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me." Luke 22: 14-19

That is what we do here at Believers Chapel. Every Sunday, we take the bread, we take the wine, not as some magical thing that transforms us, but in remembrance of Him. As you read through the Old Testament, you see one of the great commands of the Old Testament is, "Remember." Israel was told to "Remember", and when they didn't remember they drifted and fell into great sin. So it's so important that we remember Him.

So we think of Him—of who He is; the eternal Son of God who became a man, the God-Man, who died in our place. We think of that, who He is and what He did. May the LORD bless us as we do that in this hour.

(Closing prayer) Father, we give You thanks for Your Son, for the salvation that You designed from all eternity, and the effectiveness of it through the work of Your Son, who gladly came, "for the joy set before Him" of redeeming His people from sin. *(Heb 12:1)*.

We thank You for Him. May we remember Him properly and well.

And may You bless us as we do that.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

(End of Audio)