



Links Players

A Gift Exchange

As a result, He had to be made in human likeness as His brothers in everything so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in all respects, interacting with God, in order to provide forgiveness on behalf of all wrong actions committed by the people. (Hebrews 2:17, Heritage Hebrew Bible New Testament)

I smiled as I glanced around at familiar and new faces among the thirteen men gathered. I have sat in this seat before with the Desert Forest Men's Links Fellowship. I felt welcomed and honored to be with them again.

Our beloved Lewis Greer sat to my left with a laptop open and ready to facilitate a conversation. This week, they were in Hebrews chapter two.

The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians who knew the Jewish practices in the Torah and Old Testament writings. Because of the persecution and social pressure experienced for following Jesus, some of these Christians were tempted to drift back to Judaism.

Throughout the book of Hebrews, the author (unknown) uses Old Testament imagery of the Priesthood and sacrificial system; the tabernacle and Temple, the veil that only the High Priest could pass once a year; the Mosaic covenant; the exodus and wilderness; Mount Sinai; and the promised land.

All this imagery was to help the people understand that the old way of relationship with God was only a shadow (Hebrews 10:1), and Jesus was/is the fulfillment of the final revelation of God (Hebrews 10:10).

As I listened to Jim read Hebrews chapter 2 to the group, I was struck by verse seventeen, "He had to be made in human likeness." Isn't this the reason we celebrate Christmas?

Jesus came as a humble and needy baby. He lived. He breathed. He loved. He suffered.

The hearers of Hebrews would have immediately understood the imagery of the High Priest, the one who entered the Holy of Holies (beyond the veil), one time a year to offer sacrifices for forgiveness on behalf of all the people.)

The author compares Jesus to this High Priest of the Old Testament, "He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in all respects, interacting with God, in order to provide forgiveness on behalf of all wrong actions committed by the people."

The best gift of Christmas is Jesus coming in human likeness—Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23).

What gift does Jesus want in return?

C.S. Lewis has the answer:

I don't want so much of your time, so much of your money, so much of your work: I want you... Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked—the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. I will give you myself.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for the gift of yourself to the world. Help me to continue to give you my whole self to you.

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