

## **Jesus Reveals Both Divine and Human Nature**

(All Scripture References are to the Book of Hebrews)

The letter to the Hebrews opens immediately with the author's emphasizing the superiority of Jesus as the most important of all the means by which God has spoken to humans: "Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son . . ." (1:1-2). Citing a number of Old Testament texts and concepts, the author describes the Son of God as agent of creation, to be worshipped and served by angels, anointed to sit at God's right hand on an eternal throne of righteousness, until all enemies shall have been put under his feet (1:3-14). The strong impression of this description of Jesus is one of overwhelming power.

Yet in 2:5-8 the author quotes from Psalm 8, which describes the dignity and worth of humankind in general, as being little less than God, made lower than angels, crowned with glory and honor, and given dominion over all things. As of now, however, we do not yet see all things subjected to us. "But we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone" (2:9). As fully human Jesus partakes of the dignity and worth God gives to all the rest of us. By his sacrificial death for all, Jesus has already received the glory and honor that is God's purpose for all.

Jesus has attained the exalted status described in the opening of the letter to the Hebrews *not* by means of the imposition of overwhelming power from outside. Instead he entered this world, took his place side by side with humankind, accepted all the limitations inherent in authentic human existence, including suffering and death, and he did it willingly on behalf of all.

As the full and final revealer of God, Jesus draws our attention away from demonstrations of fearsome irresistible force, to the grace and mercy of God. Through Jesus we know the effectiveness of powerful love in contrast to loveless power. Contrary to popular belief, we are least like God when we impose power on others, and most like God when we persuade through love. In like manner, the more we thus act like God, the more we become truly human, after the pattern of our Savior Jesus, the Son of God.

Arch Taylor