

THE EPISTLES TO THE HEBREWS

HEBREWS 1:1-4:13, THE SUPERIORITY OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

A. Outline of Hebrews (to be finalized at completion of Hebrews study)

1. The superiority of the person of Christ (1:1-4:13)
 - a. Christ has the superior message (1:1-2a)
 - b. Christ is the superior person (1:2b-3)
 - c. Christ is superior to angels (1:4-2:18)
 - 1) Evidence from His deity (1:4-14)
 - 2) First warning passage (2:1-4)
 - 3) Evidence from His humanity (2:5-18)
 - a) His humiliation and exaltation (2:5-9)
 - b) His solidarity with humanity (2:10-18)

B. Review

1. William Barclay, *The writer to the Hebrews shows us three things. (1) He shows us the ideal of what we should be—kin to God and rulers of the universe. (2) He shows us the actual human condition—the frustration instead of the control, the failure instead of the glory. (3) He shows us how the actual can be changed into the ideal through Christ. The writer to the Hebrews sees in Christ the one who by his sufferings and his glory can make us what we were meant to be and what, without him, we could never be.*
2. Charles Spurgeon, *Oh, how glorious it is to realize our position in Christ, and to see how He has lifted us up, not merely to the place from which the first Adam fell, but He has made us stand so securely there that we shall not again descend among the ruins of the Fall! Glory be to His holy name!*

C. Comments on Hebrews 2:10-18

1. Buist Fanning, *The three thoughts quickly made in Hebrews 2:9 are . . . filled in by further theological reflection in 2:10–18. . . The first theme . . . is that Jesus as God’s Son came to earth to share fully in our humanity and thus to establish His solidarity with all people. . . The second theme . . . is that in God’s plan Jesus had to undergo suffering and death in order to provide salvation for humankind. . . The third theme . . . is that because of His obedience in carrying out God’s redemptive plan despite severe temptation, Jesus has been exalted to the honored position in God’s very presence as the believers’ perfected High Priest.*
2. Donald Hagner, *Pursuing his argument that Christ’s humanity makes possible the fulfillment of God’s saving plan and therefore involves no inferiority of Jesus to the angels, the author now focuses on the full reality and benefits of the Son’s humanity.*

HEBREWS 1:4-2:18, JESUS CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO ANGELS

HEBREWS 2:10-18, THE SON’S SOLIDARITY WITH HUMANITY

A. His unique relationship to humanity (10-13)

1. The Son through His suffering brought many to glory (10), ***For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.***
 - a. *For it was fitting*
 - 1) The introductory clause of verse 10 looks back to the last two clauses of verse 9, *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) *The suffering of death* by Christ made Him the perfect, once-for-all sacrifice for those He leads to glory.
 - 3) Luke 24:26, *Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?*
 - 4) William L. Lane, *Here it affirms that what has taken place in the experience of Jesus was consistent with God’s known character and purpose...The sufferings of Jesus were appropriate to the goal to be attained and were experienced in accordance with God’s fixed purpose.*
 - 5) R. Kent Hughes, *Christianity has always had its critics who, using their self-generated ideas, have judged what a proper God should be like. The early Jewish Christians certainly encountered such critics among fellow-countrymen who viewed the idea of a suffering-Savior-God as a completely inappropriate way to regard the God of the universe.*

- b. *that he, for whom and by whom all things exist*
- 1) *He speaks of God the Father which is made clear by declaring God the Father as the source of everything.*
 - 2) *Romans 11:36, For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*
 - 3) *William L. Lane, God who creates and preserves all things is precisely the one who is able to act in such a way that his design for humankind will be achieved.*
 - 4) *Donald Hagner, It was indeed the will of God, the sovereign creator of all, that brought about the incarnation and death of his Son. The creator thereby becomes also the redeemer of his creation.*
- c. *in bringing many sons to glory*
- 1) *This is the purpose statement for God's sending His Son into humanity.*
 - 2) *Raymond Brown, Christ came not only to share our humanity, but to transform it. On account of sin man is not crowned; he is degraded. Creation is not subject to him; he is in subjection to it, dominated by its immense power and under its sovereign control. But God has a brighter prospect for his people. Things can be different.*
 - 3) *Ray Stedman, ...a text such as 2:10 reveals that behind the suffering and sacrifice of Jesus is the heart of a Father who longs to bring many sons to glory...it was love for the lost human race that drove both Father and Son to choose that process.*
 - 4) *William L. Lane, The writer envisions the great host of those for whom Jesus secured the fulfillment of the divine intention and whose "sonship" is established by virtue of his relationship to them.*
- d. *should make the founder of their salvation*
- 1) *Founder means originator, author, pioneer, even captain.*
 - 2) *Verses to note*
 - a) *Acts 3:15, and you killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses.*
 - b) *Acts 5:31, God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.*
 - c) *Hebrews 12:2, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.*
 - 3) *William Barclay, The word is used to describe the person who begins a family so that some day others may be born into it, who founds a city in order that others may some day live in it, who founds a philosophic school so that others may follow into the truth and the peace that that person has already discovered; someone who is the author of blessings into which others may also enter.*
 - 4) *Zane Hodges, The Lord Jesus, the writer will try to show, is the Captain of that loyal band of people whom God is preparing for glory.*
 - 5) *Raymond Brown, The file-leader, the pioneer of our salvation, endures the bitter experience of death for us in order to lead us up to the throne of God. He goes in front of us and clearly marks out the way that leads to salvation.*
 - 6) *Ray Stedman, Jesus, our (Founder), opened up a completely new spiritual country, the realm of universal dominion for the human race, which was originally intended for us but was lost by Adam. Those who follow Jesus now are fitted and trained to live in that new world as they walk in the footsteps of him who has gone before.*
- e. *perfect through suffering*
- 1) *Everett F. Harrison, Since His sinlessness is an accepted fact, it is clear that the perfection is viewed as a fitness for the fulfilling of the office assigned to Him.*
 - 2) *Verses to note*
 - a) *Hebrews 5:8, Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.*
 - b) *Matthew 4:8-10, Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, " 'You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"*
 - c) *1 Peter 2:24, He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*
 - d) *2 Corinthians 5:21, For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*
 - e) *Hebrews 7:28, For the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect forever.*

- 3) William Barclay, *...the verb (to make perfect) will mean not so much to make perfect as to make fully adequate for the task for which designed. So, what the writer to the Hebrews is saying is that, through suffering, Jesus was made fully able to complete the task of being the pioneer of our salvation.*
 - 4) Charles Spurgeon, *He stooped to conquer. Not because there was any sin in Him, but that He might be a sympathetic Ruler over His people, He must experience sufferings like those of His subjects. And that He might be a mighty Savior, He must be Himself compassed with infirmity, that He might "deal gently with those who are ignorant and led astray" (Heb 5:2).*
 - 5) Zane Hodges, *In 2:9 the writer had mentioned Jesus' death for the first time. Now he affirmed that such suffering was appropriate for the One who was to serve as the Captain of the many sons. Before He could fittingly lead them to the salvation experience God had in mind for them (i.e., "to glory"), He must be made perfect for this role "through suffering."*
 - 6) R. Kent Hughes, *It was impossible for God to fully identify and thus fully sympathize with mankind apart from Christ's incarnation and human experience. But now Christ's perfection makes possible an unlimited capacity to sympathize with those exposed to troubles and temptations in this life.*
2. The Son's unity with believers (11-13)
- a. The Sanctifier and the sanctified are from God the Father (11), ***For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,***
 - 1) *he who sanctifies*
 - a) Sanctify means *to consecrate, to make holy, dedicate, to set apart.*
 - b) Hebrews 13:12, *So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.*
 - c) *He is referring to Jesus Christ.*
 - d) William L. Lane, *The reference here, however, is clearly to Jesus, who is named explicitly in 13:12 as the one who consecrates his people to the service of God through his own blood, even as 10:14 describes Christians as those who are being consecrated by his one sacrifice.*
 - 2) *those who are sanctified*
 - a) The sanctified are those who have placed faith in Christ alone.
 - b) The sacrifice of Christ was a one-time sacrifice accepted by the Father.
 - c) Verses to note
 - 1] Hebrews 10:10, *And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*
 - 2] Hebrews 10:14, *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*
 - d) Raymond Brown, *By his death our pioneer has not only prepared our way to glory, but has made us fit to tread that holy way. He sanctified us by becoming one of us in his humanity and by making us one with him (2:11).*
 - e) H. D. M. Spence, *...to sanctify...is not the idea, to us most familiar, of moral sanctification through the Holy Spirit, but that of the redeemed being brought into a new relation to God, hallowed for "glory," through redemption...As an atoning sacrifice, Christ thus hallowed himself (John 17:19), that thus he might hallow the "many sons."*
 - 3) *all have one source*
 - a) There are two options for *one source*.
 - 1] Adam
 - a] Some put emphasis on Adam as the *one source*.
 - b] R. Kent Hughes, *Jesus and all humanity share the same human ancestor.*
 - 2] God
 - a] The *one source* is God the Father.
 - b] Acts 17:28, for " 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, "'For we are indeed his offspring.'"
 - c] H. D. M. Spence, *The view is that the one Father sent the SON into the world to be the Firstborn of many sons.*
 - d] William L. Lane, *Both the Son and those who are sons share a common familial relationship that is rooted in the gracious determination of God to bring his children to their destiny through the redemptive mission of the Son...*
 - e] Douglas Mangum, *Both those who are being made holy and the one who—through his suffering and priestly service—is making them holy are from God.*

- b) I lean toward God the Father as the *one source* because the emphasis of this passage is not on human relationship alone but relationship at a spiritual level.
- 4) *not ashamed to call them brothers*
- a) William Barclay, *Through his sufferings, Jesus Christ identified himself with us.*
 - b) Zane Hodges, ... *there is a deep unity between the Son and the many sons. By His death He makes them holy, and those who are thus made holy are of the same family.*
 - c) Raymond Brown, *We are cleansed in order that we might 'serve the living God' (9:14). In this service we are one with Christ and he is pleased to call us 'brothers.'*
 - d) James Moffatt, *Since Jesus and Christians have the same spiritual origin, since they too in their own way are "sons" of God, he is proud to call them brothers and to share their lot (vv. 11–13).*
 - e) Ray Stedman, *Since he has made them holy by imparting his own life to them, he cannot deny the very holiness he has given.*
 - f) William L. Lane, *Although the writer's intention in v 11 is to speak of solidarity, the description of Jesus as "the one who consecrates" and of Christians as those who need consecration sufficiently defines the radical difference between the transcendent Son of God and those who are "sons."*
- b. Old Testament verses cited to affirm that unity (12-13)
- 1) Introductory notes
 - a) The following quotations are considered Messianic.
 - b) Concerning Psalm 22
 - 1] Ray Stedman, ...*Psalm 22, reflects the praise of the resurrected Lord as he shares with his brothers and sisters the glories of God's grace.*
 - 2] Donald Hagner, *The opening words of this psalm were quoted by Jesus from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34; Matt. 27:46).*
 - c) Concerning Isaiah 8
 - 1] Isaiah 8 is a Messianic passage placed after Isaiah 7 which proclaims Christ's birth and Isaiah 9 which declares descriptive names of Christ.
 - 2] Warren Wiersbe, *The immediate reference, of course, is to the Prophet Isaiah and his unique sons who were given significant names (see Isa. 7:3; 8:1–4). But the ultimate reference is to Jesus Christ.*
 - 3] Ray Stedman, *Isaiah 8, from which these verses are taken, is the prophet's prediction of a great invasion of Assyria into the land of Judea. Yet in the face of that terrible threat the people are exhorted to continue to trust the Lord Almighty and to wait for his deliverance, though it seem delayed.*
 - 2) The first citation is from Psalms (12) **saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."**
 - a) Psalm 22:22, *I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:*
 - b) This psalm identifies Jesus' attitude toward those He came to serve, *my brothers.*
 - c) Donald Hagner, *Certain details in the psalm correspond strikingly with the Gospel narratives concerning the crucifixion (e.g., the physical agony, vv. 14–17; the mocking, vv. 6–8; the gambling for and dividing of Jesus' clothes, v. 18); and the evangelists allude to the psalm in this connection. It is obvious that the early church regarded the whole of Psalm 22 as exceptionally appropriate on the lips of Jesus.*
 - d) R. Kent Hughes, *The world can get a glimpse of God in the cosmos. It can understand even more about God if its people will humbly examine the Holy Scriptures. But Christ declares and explains the character of God only to his brothers and sisters. "I will declare your name," says Jesus, "to my brothers."*
 - e) Ray Stedman, *The quotation suggests that his reason for not being ashamed of them is because they share with him the endless adventure of discovering the full meaning of the name of God.*
 - f) Charles Spurgeon, *He declared the name of God unto His brothers in familiar, loving, tender tones, always putting Himself side by side with them, sometimes speaking of "My Father and your Father, and my God and your God" (John 20:17), and always setting forth the great God as belonging as much to them as to Himself.*
 - g) John Calvin, *This teaching is the very strongest encouragement to us to bring yet more fervent zeal to the praise of God, when we hear that Christ leads our praise and is the Chief Conductor of our hymns.*

- 3) The second citation is from Isaiah (13a), ***And again, “I will put my trust in him.”***
- Isaiah 8:17, *I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding his face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in him.*
 - Thomas Constable, *The point of the second quotation is that Jesus, as well as His followers, trusted God. This is the basis for intimate fellowship.*
 - William L. Lane, *The citation had immediate relevance for the hearers. The fact that Jesus’ confidence was fully vindicated after he had experienced suffering and affliction assured them that they could also trust God in difficult circumstances...*
 - R. Kent Hughes, *What solidarity—what communion of nature—Jesus shares with the suffering church. They suffered? So did he! They were weak? So was he! They must depend on God—just as he did!*
- 4) The third citation is from Isaiah (13b), ***And again, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.”***
- Isaiah 8:18, *Behold, I and the children whom the LORD has given me are signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts, who dwells on Mount Zion.*
 - Note John 17:6, *I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.*
 - Thomas Constable, *The point of the third quotation is that believers are Jesus Christ’s spiritual children. As such He will provide for us and prepare us for the future as a loving parent who has had greater experience traveling the same path (cf. John 14:1–3).*
 - Zane Hodges, *Like an elder brother in the midst of a circle of younger children, the Captain of their salvation can teach them the lessons of faith along the pathway of suffering.*
 - William L. Lane, *... the concept of the people of God as “the children,” of the exalted Son is not found elsewhere in the NT, the image of the family suggests an intimacy of relationship and a tenderness that broadens the concept of solidarity.*
 - R. Kent Hughes, *These words, applied to Christ, are a sublime statement of confidence. It is as if he places his arms around the sons and daughters of the suffering church and says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me” (v. 13).*
- c. Comments
- William Barclay, *Because he sympathizes, Jesus can really help. He has met our sorrows; he has faced our temptations. As a result, he knows exactly what help we need; and he can give it.*
 - R. Kent Hughes, *Taken together these three Messianic quotations provide huge comfort to the fearful little church because they reveal rich benefits coming from Christ’s solidarity with his people...If these truths penetrate our hearts, we will be strengthened to stand tall in life’s inevitable storms.*

The following outline will be the next lesson, Lord willing.

- B. The Son’s supreme service to humanity (14-18)
- He took on a human nature in order to free humanity from slavery (14-15), ***Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.***
 - His purpose was to serve humanity by making payment for the sins of others (16-17), ***For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.***
 - His victory over temptations enables Him to minister to those who are tempted (18), ***For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.***