

Hebrews 2 Questions

1. Heb 2:1 begins with the word *therefore*. So we must ask what it is there for?
 - a. So the first question to ask is therefore we must do what? Lest what?
 - b. What is it that “we have heard”? (Hint: If something is heard, then someone has spoken. Go back and look at chapter 1.)
 - c. So 2:1 is telling us that we should have a certain response (the “therefore”) because what?
2. Heb 2:2 begins with the word *for* (think *reason!*). Besides all the reasons in chapter one that built up to the *therefore* of verse 1, why else should the hearers pay “much closer attention” to what they heard?
 - a. One of my friends asked a great question on the blog last week. She asked why the author was so intent on proving that Jesus was superior to angels. It seems that this verse gives part of the answer. What did angels do? Look up the cross-references for this verse to help you figure out a little more clearly what that message was. Why do you think the author was so keen to prove Jesus as superior to angels based on your findings?
 - b. What did every transgression or disobedience concerning the message delivered by angels result in?
3. Notice the comparative manner in which the author speaks in this section. 2:1 says the hearers must pay “*much closer attention.*” Another use of grammar to watch out for are phrases like “since. . . [assumed *then*] how shall” (2:2-3). If disobedience to the angels’ message resulted in punishment, what would the result be for those that neglect *great* salvation? How does 2:3 describe “a great salvation”?
4. 2:5 gives another argument for the superiority of another over angels. This other is named in 2:10; who is he? What is true of him and untrue of angels?
5. In this next section, I think we have another reason for the author’s spending so much time in the first chapter proving the superiority of the Son to angels. What is said in 2:7 of Jesus in comparison to angels? What do you think, then, could be another reason the author spent time proving that Jesus is greater than angels?
 - a. Use a cross-reference to figure out the source of the quotation in 2:6b-8a. Read that text.

- b. Whether or not the original text was talking about Jesus, the author here applies it to him. What is true about the Son according to these verses?

- 6. 2:8b restates what truth about the Son's rule?
 - a. When you read a text, another clue to help figure out the meaning is noting references to time. Notice the phrase "God subjected the world *to come*" in verse 5. Now look at 2:8c; note the time reference "at *present*." In the future world, what is true of the Son?
 - b. In the "present" world, what do we *not* see? *But* what *do* we see?

- 7. With what was Jesus crowned?
 - a. Why was Jesus crowned as he was?
 - b. Why did Jesus suffer death?
 - c. How could Jesus taste death for everyone?

- 8. 2:10 begins with *for*. Why was it that Jesus suffered death to taste death for everyone?
 - a. What was fitting?
 - b. Who is the "he for whom and by whom all things exist"?
 - c. What did the above "he" do to bring many sons to glory?
 - d. What title does Jesus have in 2:10?
 - e. There are 3 people/groups of people mentioned in 2:11: 1) he who sanctifies, 2) those who are sanctified, and 3) their one source. Try to identify these three.

{To help me figure out all the pronouns and nouns in this section, I boxed references (and pronouns) to God the Father, circled references (and pronouns) to Jesus the Son, and underlined all references (many various terms) to those who are being saved.}

- 9. Why is "he" not ashamed to call "them" brothers?
 - a. 3 quotations are given supporting this statement. Use cross-references to look them up.
 - b. How do these quotes support this statement?

10. 2:14 has another “since. . .” statement. What is true of “the children”?

- a. Since the above is true, then what did Jesus do? What are the “same things”?
- b. Why did he partake of the same?
- c. How did partaking of flesh and blood enable him to destroy the devil and deliver all who fear death?
- d. Whom did Jesus’ death destroy? What is the destroyed one’s power?
- e. Whom did Jesus deliver? How were these delivered ones previously subject to lifelong slavery?

{ I made a curvy underline with a colored pen all the references to any act of salvation/help in this chapter. }

- f. Who is it that Jesus does not and does help?
- g. Because he did not save angels, Jesus did not become an angel. Instead (therefore!) he became like whom? To what extent did he become like them?
- h. Why did he become like them?

{At the end of each section, the author often gives a “hook” word, giving a clue to what the next section is going to focus on. At the end of introduction in Heb 1:1-4, he mentioned angels. The entire next section is devoted to comparing Jesus to angels. Here we see another “hook” phrase, “merciful and faithful high priest,” giving us clues about the next section. }

11. What was the point of Jesus’ becoming a merciful and faithful high priest, in regard to God and to people?

12. What does *propitiation* mean? Look up the word in an English dictionary and write it down if you don’t know.

13. It seems that the “for” of v16 and the “for” of v18 both point back to what?

- a. What is true of Jesus in v18?
- b. Because of that truth, what is he able to do?

Follow up Questions

V 10—What does it mean that Jesus was made *perfect* through suffering?

V11—Who sanctifies? What does it mean to sanctify? How does he sanctify? Look up cross references in Hebrews referring to “sanctify/sanctified.”

V16—Who does the “offspring of Abraham” refer to?

Here are my answers in summary form of what I’ve learned this week.

It seems that 2:1-4 gives the author’s possible reason for his argument that Jesus is superior to angels. Angels were apparently involved in the giving of the Law to Moses (cf. Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19). The author had to prove that Jesus was not just the latest prophetic or angelic spokesman/messenger—He is superior to them, being God, King, and Savior.

V 1 Because of Jesus’ superiority to angels (all of ch. 1. . . “therefore”. . .), we have a positive encouragement (“pay much closer attention”) and a negative warning (“lest we drift away from it”). What have “we heard”? We at least know *whom* we have heard from 1:2: “In these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son.” We will see what that Son spoke of in a couple of verses.

Vv 2-4 We should also pay close attention for another reason. If the Law—delivered by angels—proved reliable, that is, those who disobeyed it were punished as it said, how can we escape if we neglect such a great salvation. This salvation is what was spoken by the Lord (that to which we must pay much closer attention). Those who heard Jesus speak of this first hand told it to others (the author places himself in this category, again making it fairly certain the author is not Paul). God bore witness to Jesus’ message of salvation by signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

In verses 5 and following, it seems that we have another reason that the author strongly argued for Jesus’ superiority over angels. The emphasis on this section is that Jesus, the exalted one, was made *lower* than angels. We can more fully appreciate his humbling himself and lowering himself to be like us, because we know from ch. 1 the honor and exaltation he deserves.

V5-7a It is clear from 1:5-13, as verse 5 here reiterates, that God subjected the world to come to the Son, not angels. This is an emphasis in the book on a future world (cf. 4:1-11; 11:16; 13:14). The author supports this statement with another OT quotation, this time from Psa 8. This psalm originally explains man’s exalted position in God’s creation in an ideal world—an exalted position that the author here makes clear that the Son perfectly fulfills. The superior Son lowered himself for a time to be lower than angels (human), then was crowned with glory and honor at his resurrection and ascension, everything being placed in subjection to him.

Vv 8b-9 Verse 8 implies a question here. *Everything* is in subjection to the Son. At present we do not see that. In the future (v 5), we know everything will be visibly subject to him; in the present we don’t see it.

How can we be sure that everything is in his control? Well, what do we see now? “We see him who for a little while was made lower than angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone” (v 9).

“The ascension of the crucified Messiah to God’s right hand is the assurance that God will eventually *put everything under his feet*. Death was the pathway to such glory for him but, *by the grace of God*, it is also the means of salvation for us.”¹

V10 God is the one for whom and by whom all things exist, and to him it was fitting that he should make Jesus perfect through suffering to bring many sons (aka brothers, children, offspring of Abraham) to glory. Jesus is here called the Founder of their salvation who is perfected through suffering. With that title, “the writer also wishes to stress that Jesus is in some respects the leader who acted like a trail blazer, opening up the way for others to follow (*cf.* 6:20; 12:1–3). Three times we are told that he was made *perfect* (Gk. *teleiōsai*, *cf.* 5:9; 7:28). There is no sense in which he was morally imperfect, but by his suffering and temptation, his death and heavenly exaltation, he was ‘qualified’ or ‘made completely adequate’ as the saviour of his people.”²

Vv 11-13 Jesus is the one who sanctifies (through his blood—*cf.* 10:10, 14, 19; 13:12; sanctify = “to make holy/consecrate”). He is not ashamed to identify with those he sanctifies because their source is God. He uses 3 OT texts to back this statement up. He again uses OT texts to reinforce the “connection” between Jesus and those he saves—calling them brothers, trusting in the same God, and associating with them.

The first—v12—is from Psa 22:22. Psa 22 is a prayer of David when he was in distress, ending with a determination to speak of God’s goodness to “my brothers.” Jesus quoted from 22:1 at his death, and here the author uses verse 22 to refer to Jesus calling on his “brothers” to praise God’s name.

I had a harder time identifying and seeing the significance for the quotes in verse 13. I had to read a bit about the context of the source in Isaiah 8. Isaiah—a prophet—is rejected for his message. He chooses—like the distressed psalmist in Psa 22—to continue to trust God. Jesus also—in his earthly distress and rejection by those he gave the message of salvation to—chose to trust God.

“Isaiah’s family is referred to directly in the third quotation, which comes from Isa. 8:18a, and in the Old Testament text follows immediately upon the second quotation. One may wonder, then, why the two quotations are separated by ‘And again,’ but the reason no doubt is that two

¹ Peterson, D. G. (1994). [Hebrews](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 1327). Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

² *Ibid*, 1328

separate points are being made. . . . The people might pay no heed to Isaiah’s oracles, but so long as Isaiah himself went about in Jerusalem, he was an abiding witness to the message of God which had been conveyed through him. Not only so, but his own significant name (‘Yahweh is salvation’) and the equally significant names of his two sons—Shear-jashub (‘Remnant will return’) and Maher-shalal-hash-baz (‘Hasten booty, speed spoil’)—reminded the people of the dominant themes of his message. Indeed, his sons’ names were the expression of his own obedient trust in God, his confidence that what God had said would surely come to pass.”³

“That the Son of God’s confidence in his Father had been vindicated by his exaltation was not yet a matter of public manifestation; it had been revealed to believers and was proclaimed by them as part of their witness. But the life and witness of these believers—members of the family of Christ—was a token to the world that it had not seen or heard the last of Jesus of Nazareth. If he represented his people at the right hand of God, they represented him on earth. Isaiah’s words about his children might therefore be understood in an extended sense as the words of Christ about his people. Once again his solidarity with them is affirmed, not now by means of the term ‘brothers,’ as in vv. 11 and 12, but by means of the term ‘children.’”⁴

Vv 14-16 Since “the children” have human bodies, so Jesus took on flesh at his incarnation for the purpose of destroying the devil who has the power over death and holds men enslaved by their fear of death. Jesus delivers these; he helps them—not angels. This last comment about angels concludes the section on angels.

Jesus is said to help the “offspring of Abraham.” Who is this—just Israel? Heb 6:17-18 calls those who flee to Jesus for refuge as “heirs of promise.” The offspring of Abraham seems to be anyone who puts their trust in Christ (cf. Gal 3:17).

Vv 17-18 Now that the author has shown his “solidarity” with humans, to the point of becoming like them, he explains that the incarnation was for the purpose of becoming a merciful and faithful high priest (“hook” phrase cluing us in for the next section!), both to make propitiation for the people’s sins (through his death) and to help them when they are tempted (through his suffering).

Propitiation: “the act of gaining or regaining the favor or goodwill of something”; “something that appeases” (Webster’s Dictionary) Cf. Rom 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10

My thoughts in conclusion: As humans, we celebrate all of our advances in technology and science. We are amazed at the wonderful things that humanity can do. When it comes to pain, suffering, and death we try to avoid it in any way possible—and go to great lengths to do so. Jesus—sitting at the right hand of the Father and crowned with glory and honor, having

³ Bruce, F. F. (1990). [*The Epistle to the Hebrews*](#) (Rev. ed., pp. 83-84). Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

⁴ Ibid, 84.

everything subjected to him—had no need to become a human in order to gain those advantages that humanity boasts of. He *lowered* himself, lower than his exalted position—even lower than angels—in order to become human. If not for the advantages of humanity, than for what purpose did he take on flesh? He did it so that he could suffer and so that he could die. He is so merciful. To appease God's wrath over our sin, he had to die. To help those who are being tempted, he had to be tempted and suffer. *That* is what he came for.

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this, O my soul!
What wondrous love is this,
That caused the Lord of bliss,
To bear the dreadful curse,
For my soul, for my soul,
To bear the dreadful curse for my soul.

To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing!
To God and to the Lamb, I will sing, I will sing!
To God and to the Lamb, Who is the great "I AM, "
While millions join the theme, I will sing, I will sing!
While millions join the theme, I will sing.

And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on, I'll sing on!
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing on,
And when from death I'm free, I'll sing and joyful be,
And thro' eternity, I'll sing on, I'll sing on,
And thro' eternity, I'll sing on.