**A Better Adam, An Elder Brother, a Faithful Priest**

**Hebrews 2:5–18**

**A Better Adam: Made Lower to Be Raised Up (vv. 5–9)**

5 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.  **A Angels**

It has been testified somewhere,

What is man, that you are mindful of him,

or the son of man, that you care for him? **B Psalm 8**

You made him for a little while lower than the angels = Incarnation

you have crowned him with glory and honor, = In Heaven

putting everything in subjection under his feet.” [Psalm 8:4–6] = On Earth / Under Feet

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. **C Exaltation**

At present, we do not yet **see** everything in subjection to him.

But we **see** him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, **B’ Psalm 8**

namely Jesus,

crowned with glory and honor

Reason \ because of the suffering of death, = Crucifixion

Purpose \ so that . . . he might taste death for **everyone**. **A All**

by the grace of God

**Why the mention of angels?**

* Contextually, this connects 2:5–18 with what came before.
* Theologically and redemptively, angels could not redeem the world, reclaim the world. A false angel had stolen the world and it would required a man to come and retake the place of ruler.
* Grammatically, this verse contrasts with the “everyone” of verse 9. Jesus came to serve his covenant people, not the angels. He did not become an incarnate angel; he only became a man to save men.

**What is the world to come?**

This is not the world in its originally creation, but the world in the new creation. The “last days” (1:2) are pointing to this reality, as are all the exaltation passages. The resurrection of Christ has brought the world to come, and yet it has not come in its fullness (as v. 8).

**Why does he quote from Psalm 8?**

This passage recalls the original glory of Adam; Psalm 2 is a commentary on Genesis 1–2. Only now the passage is being applied to the new creation. This glory that was lost is being restored.

**What does he do with Psalm 8?**

* He expounds it – here’s an example of biblical exposition.
* He picks up three phrases in these verses and applies them to the situation.
* He takes this first creation passage and applies it to Christ and the new creation. **What does this teach about how the Bible interprets the Bible? (It reads it in time . . .)**

**What does he say?**

1. All things have been put under man’s feet – this fits the positionally reality of Christ seated at God’s right hand . . . and yet
2. Not all things are presently under his feet – this verse espouses “inaugurated eschatology” – **What’s that.**
3. The crowning identifies who Jesus is and how he has done it
   1. He is the king of creation, the new Adam, the son of God who has all rule and authority (exaltation)
   2. He is the king of creation because he suffered and died (suffering = death)
   3. He suffered and died because he became incarnate (lower than the angels)
   4. That God the Son was made lower than the angels highlights his pre-existence and his mission – he became a man to die for his people and to lead them to glory

**Taste death?**

“A Semitic expression which captures vividly the reality of the violent death on the cross which Jesus endured for others” (William Lane, *Holy Spirit,* 45)

**For everyone?**

Did Christ die for everyone? This is the age-old debate between particular and general Baptists, Arminian and Calvinists, Calvinists and Hypothetical Universalists, . . .

You shouldn’t make a decision from any one verse or any collection of verses; you should seek to understand what the whole Bible says, especially what it says about Christ, his priesthood and his covenant relationship with his people.

And in this context, the everyone is first set in distinction with angels. That is to say, Christ died for humanity, not angels. Second, the everyone is defined by the covenant relationship of Christ to his people in verses 10–18.

So who is described in verses 10–18?

* Sons
* Brothers
* Children
* Those he delivered from slavery
* Offspring of Abraham
* Brothers
* People
* Those who are being tempted (and don’t want to be)

**So is “everyone” everyone?**

**What do we learn about humanity? About being human?**

**An Elder Brother Who Suffers to Lead Us to Glory (vv. 10–16)**

FOR . . . it was fitting that he,

for whom and by whom all things exist, **A Salvation**

in bringing many **sons** to glory,

should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.

FOR he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.

That is why he is not ashamed to call them **brothers**, saying, **B Identification (Bros)**

*I will tell of your name to my* ***brothers****;*

*in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise. [Psalm 22:22]*

13 And again,

*I will put my trust in him. [Psalm 18:2; Isaiah 8:17]* **C Obedience**

And again,

*“Behold, I and the* ***children*** *God has given me.” [Isaiah 8:18]* **B’ Identification (Kids)**

14  Since therefore the **children** share in flesh and blood,

he himself likewise partook of the same things,

\ that . . . through death . . . **A’ Salvation**

he might destroy the one who has the power of death = the devil, and deliver **all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery**.

**What do you notice about these verses? What’s the repeated theme?**

* The communion which Jesus shares with the saints – notice all the titles and comments
  + Titles – He is the chief son who is leading all other sons; He is our brother; He is our father
  + Comments – We have one source; we have same flesh; we worship in the same place
* **What effect would this have on the hearers? On you?**

**Fitting?**

It fits with the logic of God’s plan and purpose.

**Why is it fitting to make the Divine Son take on human flesh? What does that do?**

From the text . . .

* Experience death (v. 9)
* Share humanity; bring to glory (v. 10)
* Defeat our enemy (vv. 14–15)
* High priest (vv. 17–18)[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Bringing many sons to glory?**

* To raise us to the glory that Christ has in his resurrected position. We do not share in his divinity, but we will share in his human glory!
* And more, this process is what Jesus is doing now – this is the work that takes place between resurrection and return.

**Why these three quotations?**

* Corporate solidarity and worship in the congregation together
* God is not just above us, he is with us – in the Son and the Spirit

**“Make perfect”?**

Based on the work of David Peterson, I have typically understood “make perfect” in Hebrews as a reference to resurrection. However, William Lane makes a really cogent point (48–49):

This statement in verse 10 that it was appropriate for God to make the champion of their salvation *perfect* *through suffering* draws upon a special shade of meaning that the verb “to make perfect” [*teleioō*] has in the Pentateuch. The verve is used there to signify the act of consecrating a priest to his office (Exod. 29:9, 29, 33, 35; Lev. 4:5; 8:33; 16:32; 21:10; Num. 3:3). In Exodus 29:33, for example, the verb is clarified by a related verb meaning “to consecrate, or qualify someone for priestly service.” The “perfection” oh Jesus contemplated in verse 10 implies that God qualified Jesus to come before him in priestly action. He “perfected” Jesus as a priest for his people through his sufferings, which marked the accomplishment of his mission. The expression used in verse 10, “perfect through suffering,” thus anticipates the full development of the section, which progresses from the thought that Jesus is the champion of his people (vv. 10–16) to the presentation of Jesus as High priest (vv. 17–18).

When this priestly qualification is conjoined with the context of Hebrews, we see that made perfect through suffering must also include resurrection and hence resurrection and priesthood go together in this book.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**What do you make of the destruction of the devil?**

* This is a proof text for the doctrine of *Christus Victor* (cf. Gen 3:15; Isa 59:15–20; Luke 11:21–22; John 12:31; Col 2:13–15; 1 John 3:8)
* How does Jesus win the victory?
  + Colossians 1:20 = 1:21–23 + 2:13–15
  + Hebrews 2:14–15

**What does this teach you about your identity? Your relationship with Jesus?**

**A Faithful High Priest Who Propitiates Abraham’s Tempted Seed (vv. 17–18)**

16 FOR surely

he does not help angels, but A Help

he helps the **offspring of Abraham.**

17 Therefore

he had to be made like his **brothers** B Brothers

in every respect,

. . . a merciful and faithful

\ so that he might become **HIGH PRIEST** C Priest

. . . in the service of God,

\ to make propitiation

for the sins of the **people**. B’ People

18 FOR

/ because he himself has suffered when tempted,

he is able to help **those who are being tempted.**  A’ Help

**If verses 10–16 focus on the corporate solidarity, what do these verses contribute?**

They move from worshiping the Father together to how the Son functions as a high priest. He is more than just an example or a leader; he is the high priest who mediates our relationship.

Importantly, he’s not a third party . . . He is God and he is man!

**How does the shape of these verses stress the priesthood?**

A – B – C – B – A – Priest is at the center, surrounded by his priestly family, who are helped.

As high priest Jesus is like us and he is not; he intercedes for us (cf. Hebrews 4:14–16)

**What does propitiation mean?**

**Who is in Jesus family?**

From the text . . .

1. The sons of Abraham ­– What does that mean? (Four seeds: flesh, promise, Christ, faith)

2. Those who are tempted – Isn’t that encouraging!

**What role does suffering play in this section? What does that teach you?**

1. William Lane, *Hebrews,* 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See my, “[Resurrection and Priesthood](http://equip.sbts.edu/publications/journals/journal-of-theology/resurrection-and-priesthood-christological-soundings-from-the-book-of-hebrews/)” article. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)