

“A Little While Lower Than the Angels”

Hebrews 2:5-18

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Today we will be in Hebrews 2:5 through the end of the chapter. This passage is all about Jesus. In this section you will find wonderful applications for our salvation. But there are also other applications for our lives. Keep looking for them. However, let's begin, not with Hebrews, but with Psalm 8. This Psalm will be quoted by the author of Hebrews and needs some introduction. *Take a moment to read this Psalm slowly.*

God gave Adam, Eve, and their descendants dominion over all the creatures He had created (Genesis 1:26). And this is referred to with these words from verse 6: “You have given him dominion over the works of your Hands.”

You can go down two different paths with this Psalm. Consider the term “son of man” in verse 4. The first way is to understand this Psalm as speaking about everyday people. The New Living Translation takes this path in its translation. The second path is to also understand this as a Messianic Psalm, focusing on the term “the son of man” in verse four as being the Messiah. Jesus, on many multiple occasions referred to Himself as “the Son of Man.” Here are two of those occasions (John 8:28; Matthew 16:13-16). But there are many more. The author of this Letter to the Hebrews also understands Psalm 8 this way.

Most of the first chapter of Hebrews is about Jesus being much superior to the angels. The message of salvation came from Him. Then the author of Hebrews gave us an application of this (Hebrews 2:3a). In the rest of this chapter the author, taking off from Psalm 8, wrote that Jesus (the one much superior to the angels) was made by the Father to be a little while lower than the angels. He flips his words on us. This was when Jesus took on human form.

Hebrews 2:5 The word “subjected” is a reference to Psalm 8:6:b, when David wrote that God put all things under the feet of the son of man. The word “world” literally means the inhabited earth. The same word is used in Luke 2:1.

Hebrews 2:6 This verse always brings a smile to my face. The author is clearly referring to Psalm 8. However, he begins the verse with only a vague reference to it.

Hebrews 2:7-8a

The author continues with his quote of Psalm 8:5-6. When David wrote Psalm 8, he defined that last line... “putting everything in subjection under his feet”... in the next two verses of his Psalm. It was dominion over all the other creatures God had created. But the author of Hebrews focuses on one word from that last line of Psalm 8:6... “everything”. This includes all of God's creatures, including man.

Hebrews 2:8b-9 Consider that description of “the suffering of death.” We are reminded that great passage in Philippians 2:5-11. Everyone will be in subjection to Him... one way or another. And don't miss the last words of Hebrews 2:9, “so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.” **This is one way Jesus suffered... He was obedient to the point of death.** And this is not just for the elect. Hebrews 2:9 says it was “for everyone.”

Hebrews 2:10 Think about this for a moment. The Father viewed Jesus' suffering as absolutely necessary for His perfection as our Savior.

Hebrews 2:11-12 Verse 12 is a quote from another Messianic Psalm (22:22).

The author is about to use the words of the prophet Isaiah as an illustration of the author's own emotions. He will be quoting from Isaiah 8:17-18. These verses are not Messianic. They clearly refer to the prophet Isaiah. But the author of Hebrews was using Isaiah's words to illustrate his own thoughts. We do the same thing regularly. So, here we go to Isaiah.

Hebrews 2:13a This is a reference to Isaiah 8:17. Another translation of the word "hope" is "trust."

Hebrews 2:13b This is a quote from Isaiah 8:18. The author of Hebrews is not saying that these verses are Messianic. But instead, with this illustration he has now introduced the thought of all people being God's children by virtue of creation. *This is not to say that all will be saved.*

Hebrews 2:14-15 The devil here reminds us of Psalm 8:2. The word translated "destroy" literally means to "render powerless." The NASB translates it this way. Christ's own death can deliver us from the "fear of death." I have seen this over and over again when a Christian is called home to God.

Hebrews 2:16 Jesus' death did not pay for the sin of fallen angels. So, who are the offspring of Abraham? Remember, the author is writing to Jewish people, some saved, some not. His using the term "offspring of Abraham" would resonate well with them. But by extension Christians too are children of Abraham (Galatians 3:29).

Hebrews 2:17 Jesus "had to" become like one of us so that He could be our Savior. Only in this way could he be our high priest. On "propitiation" read 1 John 2:2.

Then look at the last verse of chapter 2 for the second way the author of Hebrews mentioned that Jesus suffered.

Hebrews 2:18 Read Hebrews 4:15 with this verse.

There is a lot of great theology about our salvation in these verses. But look at other applications for life today. They come from Christ's example. Here is a passage from James that will bring one of these to life (James 1:12-13). As Jesus suffered when he was tempted, He is able to help us when we suffer temptation so that we will choose righteousness.

The second application for life today comes from verse 10. Suffering had the effect of perfecting Jesus in His earthly life. Think about the role suffering has played in your own life. Have you let it mature you? I think you will find that it has.

This is indeed a great passage in Hebrews!