

Hebrews 2:10-18 – Brothers and Children

Jesus, God's Son, is superior to the angels, so if the Jews paid attention to the law, delivered by angels, they should especially pay attention to what God has said through His Son. The Gospel must be held onto with fervent attention. After this exhortation and warning, chapter 2 continued to focus on the fact that God's Son is superior to the angels. Psalm 8:4-6 was interpreted as a passage which Jesus uniquely fulfilled. All things will be put in subjection under Jesus' feet. The themes of Jesus' suffering, tasting of death for everyone, and subsequent glory are the launching pad for the rest of the chapter.

Read Hebrews 2:10-13.

Verse 10 continues the themes of Jesus' suffering and subsequent glory mentioned in verse 9. The subjects of verses 10 and 11 are effectively "he". ESV has "it was fitting that he" while NIV has "it was fitting that God". NIV answers the question for you. Does "he" refer to "God" (by the grace of God) in verse 9 or "he" (he might taste death for everyone) in verse 9? He who tasted death for everyone is Jesus. God the Father did not taste death and never will. The root structure of verse 10 is that "it was fitting that God made the founder of salvation perfect". How was God described in verse 10? Besides making Jesus perfect, what else did God do? How was Jesus made perfect? Jesus was already sinless so what does it mean that God made Jesus perfect? Notice that "many sons" clarifies the "everyone" of verse 9. (2:10)

In verse 11, who is "he who sanctifies"? We know that God the Father sanctifies, but if God the Father is in view then it does not fit later that he "is not ashamed to call them brothers". In verse 1:3, it stated that Jesus made "purification for sins" and after that he sat down at the right hand of God the Father. What do "those who are sanctified" and "he who sanctifies" have in common? ESV has "all have one source". KJV has "all of one". NASB has "all from one *father*". NIV "of the same family". The wooden translation is "all from one". "From" can mean "to denote origin as to family, race, city, people, district, etc" according to BDAG. What was the result of this commonality? (2:11)

Verse 12 backs up the assertion at the end of verse 11. What Old Testament verse was quoted in 2:12? See Psalm 22:22. What was the context of this Old Testament passage? The significance of Jesus calling us brothers is explained later in the chapter and also in later chapters. What personal response do you have when you hear that Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters? (2:12)

In verse 13, what two Old Testament passages were quoted? See Isaiah 8:17-18. The passage which follows, Isaiah 9, is a well known Messianic passage which includes "for to us a child is born". What is the significance of verse 2:13? How are we both brothers of Christ and children of Christ? What other passage or passages do you think of when you read "the children God has given me"? See John 6:39-40. (2:13)

Read Hebrews 2:14-18.

In verse 14, the reference to “children” goes back to verse 13. The children all have flesh and blood. ESV follows with “he himself likewise partook of the same things”. KJV has “he also himself likewise took part of the same”. NASB is similar to the ESV and KJV. NIV has “he too shared in their humanity”. “He” is Jesus. The NIV answers the question for you, “what are the same [things]” referring to? What is the significance of the statement in 2:14a? Two good questions to ask are “why did Jesus become flesh and blood?” “Why did Jesus die?” What is the answer to these questions from 2:14? (2:14)

Verse 15 continues the answer to the questions of why Jesus was born and why did he die. What is the second part of the answer found in verse 15? The word “deliver” in the ESV is defined in BDAG as “to set free from a controlling state or entity, free, release”. How does this verse describe those who are not saved by faith in Christ? Before you were delivered and set free by Jesus, did you fear death? (2:15)

Your understanding of verse 16 will be very different depending on your translation; the KJV or another translation like the ESV, NASB or NIV. The difference concerns how one word should be translated. In the context of 2:16, BDAG says the word means “be concerned with/about”. It “suggests the rendering *take an interest in*, probably in the sense *help*”. KJV seems to look back to verse 14 for the meaning of the word while other translations look back to verse 15 for the meaning of the word. Which translation do you think is better, “helps” or “took on the nature of”? Notice that instead of saying “the children” it says “the offspring/seed of Abraham”. If the “seed of Abraham” are the physical descendants of Abraham, surely the writer of Hebrews is not saying that Jesus only helps Jews and not Gentiles. The tension is resolved if the “seed of Abraham” are those who like Abraham believed God and are righteousness by grace through faith. (2:16)

Verse 17 has “brothers” like verses 11 and 12. Verses 13 and 14 refer to us as “children”. Verse 16 mentioned “the seed of Abraham”. Are these all the same groups of people? How does this verse further the point of verse 14a? Because Jesus was made like us, how is he able to help us? 2:17 introduces us to the concept of Jesus as our high priest who offers a sin sacrifice on our behalf. Later in the book, this theme is explored in greater detail. (2:17)

What does verse 18 mean? ESV/NIV have “suffered when [he was] tempted”. KJV has “suffered being tempted”. NASB has “tempted in that which He has suffered”. The word “help” in this verse is a different word for “help” than that in verse 16. The RSV has strongly biased me with “has suffered and been tempted”. Their newer versions align with the ESV, NIV, KJV and NASB. “Tempted” is a participle. ESV/NIV take it as a participle indicating time (when). KJV is a wooden translation and leaves the interpretation of the participle mostly open. Is the focus of this verse on Jesus’ help only when we are tempted in the midst of suffering? The end of the verse only mentions that he is able to help those who are tempted. It doesn’t explicitly state that he is able to help those who have suffered. Did Jesus always suffer when he was tempted? Was Jesus always tempted when he suffered? Was Jesus only tempted when he suffered? (2:18)