

Hebrews

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Hebrews 2:5-9

- The heart of this passage is a quote from Psalms 8:4-6. Therefore, to begin to understand what the writer of Hebrews is saying here, we must look hard at Psalms 8. This makes understanding this passage a bit more difficult, but when we do we see that he is saying something tremendous! First, we start with the realization that the whole of Psalms 8 is written about humanity. It is entirely about the glory that God has given to humanity in His Kingdom. Second, there is the reference to “the son of man”, which we know is often used in the gospels as a reference to the Messiah. It was the favorite term Jesus used when referring to Himself in the third person (Luke 5:24). But in the Old Testament, the term was often used to just simply refer to people. In Ezekiel 21:2 and 30:2, God begins His speech to the prophet by addressing him as “son of man”.
- So the *psalm* quoted as it is here begins with the rhetorical questions concerning humanity’s status in God’s Kingdom. Hebrews 2:7-8 (Psalms 8:5-6) are the psalmist’s own answers to his questions. Here he harkens back to Genesis 1:28 where God sets man as ruler over His Creation where humanity has dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every other creature that moves upon the earth.
- The common translation of Psalms 8:5 is that humanity was made a little lower than the angels. That is the correct translation of the *Greek* Old Testament (the Septuagint or LXX written during the 2nd century BC), but it is not the correct translation of the ancient Hebrew. The word there is **Elohim**, the most common word for God. So Psalms 8:5 should read, “Yet, You have made him a little lower than God”. Hebrews 2:7 says “angels” because the Greek translation was the only translation available, the only one most everyone knew.
- So God created humanity just a bit lower than Himself and gave humanity dominion over all of His Creation. So says Psalms 8...but the writer of Hebrews is seeing the

Old Testament as he should, as we should, through the lens of Jesus Christ, so he sees more than the psalmist ever could.

- The problem is that that things have not worked out as God intended. When the infection of sin entered Creation what God intended was broken. GK Chesterton was the writer that influenced the young CS Lewis the most. Chesterton once pointed out that “whatever else is or is not true, this one thing is certain – man is not what he was meant to be.” Because of sin we abuse our authority concerning Creation and have become wicked stewards of all that God has given us. We are depressed and frustrated with life. We fall so easily into whatever temptations we encounter. We should be free, but we are chained. We should be royalty, but we are slaves to sin.
- Yet, into this filthy mire enters Jesus Christ. Verse 9 tells us that He was born into the world not as God, but as a person, like us a little lower than God. Jesus came to fix what was broken and overcame sin and its primary side-effect, death. So Christ comes to fix what was broken. By enduring the suffering of death, He received a crown of glory and honor. And all of this, the death and suffering as well as the glory and honor, was done entirely for humanity, all of humanity. Christ died to restore humanity to what it ought to be, to what it was created to be. Christ died to lift humanity out of depression and frustration and into hope and joy and to infuse humanity’s weakness with strength and restore humanity to its rightful dominion. Christ died so that we may be new creatures, so we may be the creatures God intended for us to be.
- To sum up: 1) God created us as being only a little less than Himself and to have dominion over all of God’s Creation 2) We blew it. We allowed sin into our lives and into Creation so that even now Creation groans awaiting its redemption (Romans 8:22) 3) Into our defeat and bondage and pain comes Jesus Christ and by His life and suffering and death and resurrection and glory, He is able to make us what we are supposed to be, what we were created to be.