

**Tuesday Evening Bible Study at Tokyo Baptist Church**  
**The Letter to the Hebrews – Chapter 2, Verses 10 - 18**  
**Notes From Class on August 18, 2009**  
**Last Revised on (August 17, 2009)**

Good evening everyone.

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Welcome to our continuing study of the New Testament book of Hebrews.

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Before we get started, I'd like to make sure you have everything you will need.

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You will need a Bible and, if you are not using the English Standard Version ("ESV") of the Bible, it may also help you to have a copy of the handout with the ESV text for Chapters 2. If you don't still have that handout from before, there are extra copies on the table by the door.

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Please note that there is also coffee and tea back there.

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Please get what you need. Then we'll get started.

**Hebrews**

As we have been discussing, Hebrews is an inspired text, written in Greek around the end of the First Century A.D.

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It appears to be the text of a sermon, written by a Christian preacher, to be given to a congregation of Christian believers.

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The preacher and the congregation which first heard him apparently knew each other but we do not know who any of them were.

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We know about them only what can be inferred from the text.

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We can infer for example (2:3) that neither the preacher nor the congregation were Apostles or had heard Jesus speak, except through the testimony of the Apostles and other original witnesses.

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It is this apostolic testimony that the preacher is urging the congregation to pay closer attention to.

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In particular he is trying to help them understand the unqualified supremacy of Christ.

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This probably means that they had failed to appreciate just how great and important Christ is.

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It is easy to underestimate the One who is greatest in all creation!

## **Chapter 1**

Hebrews begins with one long sentence in Greek which is one of the most beautiful and profound statements of the supremacy of Christ which is to be found anywhere. This is followed by a string of seven supporting citations from the Old Testament, which make it clear from the beginning that our preacher structures his rhetoric carefully and skillfully and grounds his teachings in the Old Testament in a certain way.

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What is most important about Chapter 1 is that we be convinced that nothing is higher than the risen Lord Jesus Christ who sits at God's right hand. We need to make sure that Jesus stays all the way up there, throughout our study of Hebrews, or we will not understand what the author is saying.

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And we will need to make sure that Jesus stays all the way up there throughout our lives, lest we slip away from what the author calls in Chapter 2, "such a great salvation."

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For a detailed review of Chapter 1, please use the class notes and reference materials posted to the Google group site.

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Does anyone have any questions at all about Chapter 1?

## **Chapter 2: Verses 1-4**

Because Jesus is so incomparably great, our author tells the congregation at the beginning of Chapter 2, that they need to pay much closer attention to what they have heard, through the apostolic witnesses.

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He reminds them of how the gospel came to be heard among them, which is essentially the same way that the gospel has been heard by Christians at all times and places, including us.

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We learn through the original witnesses to what Jesus said and did with the help of the Holy Spirit.

## **Chapter 2: Verse 5**

In Verse 5 of Chapter 2, our author deals with an issue that all Christians have.

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Jesus work is finished. He is already seated eternally at the right hand of God. We are already saved.

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But this world is not subject to Christians. Like all men Christians continue to suffer and finally we die.

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So it is important to understand about "the world to come." That is what we are speaking about!

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The world to come shall be subject to Man, who shall then be perfect and complete, like Christ and under his lordship

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Meanwhile we shall continue to suffer and die in a world that rejects Christ and, therefore, God, and our great salvation shall be present to us only as a promise and seen only with eyes of faith.

### **Chapter 2: Verses 6 - 8a**

But this is nothing new! This has always been true for God's people in this world.

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"It has been testified somewhere..." our author says in verse 6, before quoting part of Psalm 8.

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Suddenly we are reminded of the author of this song, King David, and of his life story, which we know so well, and of all the words of this song and of the many others songs which David sang, happy and sad, almost all of which demonstrated his willingness to trust in God despite the difficulty of current circumstances and to see things with the eyes of faith.

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With the eyes of faith, almost 1000 years before Christ was born, David could see that God was mindful of man and would not allow David, or his descendants, or mankind to ... simply ... die... and pass into nothingness. He somehow knew of the resurrection of the dead.

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Likewise Able, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and countless other men of faith from days gone by, were commended and earned their place in the world to come by remaining faithful to God and believing in his promises.

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Yet we have an advantage, even over David, and even over Moses and Abraham and these other great men of faith. We have the testimony by and about Jesus Christ.

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We know that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whomsoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life!"

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And we know that this son, Jesus, was a man just like us, who died, making purification for our sins, and then was alive! Therefore we can be certain that we will live with him.

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This is the great salvation that we dare not neglect. We do not need to fear anything in this world. We can wait patiently for the world to come. We know for certain that David, in Psalm 8, sings for us too!

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Indeed the Gospel of Jesus Christ is hidden, and therefore revealed, in David's song!

### **Hebrews, Chapter 2: Verses 8b-9**

Will somebody please reread verses 8b-9 in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku)

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Thank you. Will somebody please read that same passage in English (ESV).

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

Thank you. The author of Hebrews is here making the same points that we discovered for ourselves last week in reading Psalm 8.

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He notes that whatever is said about Man in the psalm, is said first and foremost of Christ.

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Just as Adam was the first man, Jesus is the first redeemed man, and the Redeemer and Lord of men.

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Even he to whom everything in all creation is eternally subject was made a little (while) lower than the angels. And this is part of his crown and glory and honor, and certainly not his shame.

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Because his death was an atonement for sins, suffered once on behalf of everyone, his resurrection proclaims that death has been overcome. It has been used up.

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And that we may all live and rule with Christ in the world to come, if only we will listen closely to what we have heard and not neglect such a great salvation.

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That completes my review of what we have read and discussed before tonight.

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Does anyone have any questions to this point?

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OK, then. Let's read on

## **Chapter 2: Verses 10 - 11**

Will somebody please read verses 10-11 in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku)

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Thank you. Will somebody please read that same passage in English (ESV).

**For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering.<sup>11</sup> For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,**

This passage begins with the word "for" which tells us that what follows will be an explanation of what went before.

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Q. And what has gone before?

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A. the thought that Jesus' suffering and death flowed from the grace of God and were the crown and glory and honor of Jesus

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But how could that possibly be? How could the horror of the cross be an honor for Jesus or evidence of the grace of God?!

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Our author proceeds to explain, starting in verse 10.

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Verse 10 begins: "For it was fitting that he..."

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Q. Who is "he"

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A. God

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Right, it was fitting that God, the One "for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering," it is God he is talking about.

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Q. Does the author of Hebrews presume to judge what is "fitting for God?!"

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A. Of course not! Nobody can judge God. Everything that God does and everything that God is, is fitting.

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The author of Hebrews would be the first one to agree with that.

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It is because everything that God does is fitting, that the passion of Christ must also somehow be fitting.

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Even if we cannot understand why this is fitting, we may know that it is fitting, because it is God's plan.

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But it is better to understand why the crucifixion is a manifestation of God's perfection

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Some additional explanation is therefore being offered.

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I think everyone understands now what is happening with the grammar in verse 10, but let's just be sure.

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The one who suffers and who is the founder of their salvation is who?

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A. Jesus That would seem to be the only possibility.

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The word here translated "founder" was used to describe those who founded cities, for example.

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Q. And whose salvation are we talking about?

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A. Ours, hopefully. The many sons who are brought to glory. Those whom Jesus saves.

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Q. How was Jesus made perfect through suffering?

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A. There has never has been or ever will be a time when the eternal son of God is not perfect.

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But part of his eternal perfection is the astonishing fact that he entered human history for a time.

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He began as a normal human embryo in the womb of his mother, Mary. He was born in a stable in Bethlehem. He progressed through childhood and adolescence. As a young man he had a brief teaching ministry, and then he suffered on the cross and died. Then on the third day he rose again, and later ascended to heaven.

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Had Jesus career ever been stopped at any point during this process, then he would not have been made perfect as he now is and has always been.

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Had he died in childbirth, for example, he would not have been made perfect.

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Had the men of King Herod found him and put him to death as an infant or young child, he would not have been made perfect.

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Had he succumbed to the temptation of Satan in the desert or finally lost his courage in the Garden of Gethsemane, then he would not have been made perfect.

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Had Jesus ever sinned in any way, he would not have been made perfect;

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and from this we can clearly see that the fact that he was "made perfect" does not mean that there was ever any sin or imperfection in Jesus; rather it speaks to the process that he was bound to complete.

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Had Jesus been crucified and then remained dead, he would not have been made perfect. (But death could not hold him.)

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Had he risen from the dead and ascended to heaven without first showing himself to his disciples or later sending the Holy Spirit to be with them and his church, so as to remind and teach us all about him, he would not have been made perfect.

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His eternal perfection includes every single aspect of his perfect, sinless life among men, as he actually lived, died, and rose again in it. Since all of this process is part of God's perfect plan, it goes without saying that this is all fitting.

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But can we yet see why such a process, including the crucifixion of the perfectly innocent Son of God would be "fitting."

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We must not assume that this is easy to see.

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It is a mystery so wonderful and surprising that the angels long to look into it!

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It is precisely their failure to see how the cross can be fitting, in view of God's perfection that had kept many godly Jews from believing in Christ to this day. They find this idea offensive, just as unbelieving gentiles find it foolish, as Paul pointed out. The crucifixion of Christ is a stone of stumbling.

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The author of Hebrew is trying to help us here, and anyone who needs to see this, the fitness of the cross.

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In verse 11 he says, "for he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified, all have one source.

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Q. What does it mean to be sanctified?

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A. To be sanctified means to be made holy?

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Q. How is someone made holy?

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A. Under the Law there were ceremonies for that which God had ordained.

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Q. Who administered these ceremonies?

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A. The priests, often the High Priest in particular.

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Q. Was the high priest a heavenly being?

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A. No. And he was certainly not a fish, or a bird, or an animal.

A. He was a man from among the people, whom God had ordained for this purpose.

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A. Which is to say that an ordinary man was ordained by God to sanctify other men.

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Q. Where do men come from?

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A. Women, actually. Jesus was born from the womb of Mary just as every man and woman who has ever lived has been born from the womb of a human female.

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It is fitting, we are told, that, in order to sanctify fallen man, God should likewise send a man, born of woman, and not, say, an inanimate object, or an especially intelligent animal, or an angel in the semblance of a man. These were not the beings that required sanctification and, so, could not sanctify. It was man who had fallen into sin and man who required sanctification and therefore the one who sanctifies Man would need to be a man born of woman. That is only fitting, we are told.

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That seems reasonable to me.

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Q. But why couldn't the one who sanctifies be God? God created Man in his own image and likeness, didn't he?!

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A. The answer, of course, is that Jesus is God too!

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Jesus is the only true and perfect man, created in God's image and likeness but without any hint of sin.

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And he is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of God's nature (1:3).

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It is the Man-God Jesus who has tasted death for everyone, thus bringing many sons of God to glory.

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And surely this is fitting....that he who is both Man and God should sanctify we men who are to bear God's image and likeness.

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Is it not an incomparable blessing for we who must now suffer and die to know that He who saves us from this fate is like us and has gone through suffering and death and resurrection before us, to prepare a place for us in his Father's house, just as he told his disciples he would do.

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Praise be to God the Father and his Son our Lord Jesus Christ: They are our family and they are waiting for us!!! Just as we are now waiting to be with them!!!

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I cannot resist quoting a bit from Romans, Chapter 8, starting in verse 31, where the Apostle Paul asks:

**What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies.34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died---more than that, who was raised---who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered."37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers,39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

And does this not lay God's heart open to us in a way that makes it impossible to refuse to love and trust him?

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What else could he do that would more effectively communicate his forbearance and loving-kindness and help us to put our trust in him?

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God had no greater price that he could pay for our salvation, than his only begotten son, so we can know that he values nothing more highly.

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And Jesus, the God-Man himself, is not ashamed to call us his brothers --- we who were fallen and lost in impurity and whom he has himself sanctified with his blood and filled with his Holy Spirit!

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This all seems very fitting, does it not?

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Now follow three quotations from the Old Testament which he uses to illustrate the solidarity of Christ and his people, and how he treats them as his brothers.

## Chapter 2: Verses 11b - 13

Will somebody please read verses 11b-13 in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku)

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Thank you. Will somebody please read that same passage in English (ESV).

**That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,<sup>12</sup> saying,  
 "I will tell of your name to my brothers;  
 in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."  
<sup>13</sup> And again,  
 "I will put my trust in him."  
 And again,  
 "Behold, I and the children God has given me."**

Thank you. The first passage that our author cites, in Verse 12, is from Psalm 22.

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This is another Psalm of David as perhaps no First Century Christian could have failed to recognize.

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Because it is fairly long, we will not take the time in class to read the whole of Psalm 22. But please do so at home.

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For now, if you would, please, open up your Bibles to Psalm 22, I will just point out a few things.

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First, you will notice that the opening verse are words which Jesus quoted from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

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These words are recorded by Matthew (27:46) and Mark (15:34).

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Some who are unable to see how the cross is "fitting," how it honors Christ and displays the perfect goodness of God, have pointed to these very words as evidence that the Gospel is empty; that Jesus had realized his mistake in the end.

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Nothing could be farther from the truth. At the end of his life in agony on the cross Jesus quoted a Psalm of David which had perhaps foreseen prophetically, and certainly was fulfilled, by his passion and, furthermore, which was and is a fitting expression of both the depth of his suffering, on behalf of both God and Man, and the heights of his unwavering faith in God, and love for Man. May he be praised forever!

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This Psalm would be aptly quoted by any saint of God who is being ridiculed, persecuted, or put to death for his faith in God.

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Because Jesus himself quoted from Psalm 22 and because it resonates with several of the well known events in his life, the early church tended to hear all the words in this Psalm as spoken by and about Christ.

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See especially verses 8a (He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;), 16b (they have pierced my hands and feet), and 18 (they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots).

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The passion narratives of Matthew and John are especially aware of Psalm 22.

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So when the author of Hebrews reaches into this Psalm for verse 22 ("I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you") he may be hearing the distant voice of David, a type and fore bearer of Christ. but basically, I think, he is hearing the words of Christ Himself, speaking to God, saying that he, Jesus, will tell of the name of God to his brothers. Jesus himself will take responsibility for us before God and for our edification concerning God!

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Remember what sets up this quotation from Psalm 22. It is the preceding thought that we ourselves are sons of man and sons of God, just like Christ who sanctifies us, so he is not ashamed to call us his brothers,

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And then this Psalm jumps into our author's head and he hears Christ saying to God that he will proclaim God's name in the congregation of believers.

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Following the Greek Old Testament (LXX) our author uses the word *ekklesia*, here translated as congregation.

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The use of the terms brothers and congregation together in synonymous parallelism means that the Christian church is in view.

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To me at least, this looks back to the opening lines of Chapter 2 where our author is admonishing his hearers to pay closer attention what they had heard, which had been declared at first by the Lord.

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Verse 13 continues the thought which is already being reinforced with Psalm 22 --- i.e. the thought of Jesus witnessing to his brothers within the church concerning the perfection of God. This continuation is signaled by the repeated use of the expression "And again."

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This is an astonishing thought, isn't it, that Jesus himself is the one leading the praises of God within the congregation? He is our worship leader!

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And who has suffered more than Christ, or been more innocent and less deserving of suffering?!

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And he certainly never drifted away, although his provocation to do so was beyond what we can imagine.

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And so what excuse have we for complaining against God when we are made to suffer?

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Verse 13 quotes from Isaiah.

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Please open your Bibles now to Isaiah, Chapter 8, Verses 16-18.

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Notice that here it is the prophet Isaiah himself who is speaking --- one who like David in his psalms is often heard speaking the words of God, which may be heard as the words of Christ with no distortion or diminution.

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Isaiah was speaking at a time when his predictions and pronouncements, which were of course the predictions and pronouncements of God, were being ignored by the king and the people. It is much the same voice as we hear in Psalm 22 --- the faithful man of God being persecuted and ridiculed for his faithfulness but proclaiming the name of God to his brothers within the church.

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In this instance Isaiah binds up the testimony and seals the teaching among his disciples puts his trust in YHVH. He then says that he and the children God has given him will be signs and portents in Israel from YHVH.

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I am not sure if Isaiah speaks literally of his natural children, or of his disciples, referred to in verse 16 with which the testimony and teaching are bound up, or of both.

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Jesus of course had no natural children but he did have the disciples which God had given him. These too were signs and portents in Israel from the LORD of hosts. It is the church of Jesus Christ where his testimony and teaching have been sealed, in a world where the leaders and the people generally ignore God.

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The situation described in the passage from Isaiah and the situation of the Christian church in the late First Century A.D. are very similar and similar also to the situation of the church today. It is the same word, sealed in the same church, within the same world. It is the same picture of the solidarity of God, Father and Son, with those redeemed men and women whom they have called out of the world and sanctified.

## **Chapter 2: Verses 14-18**

Will somebody please read verses 14-18 in Japanese (Shin Kaiyaku)

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Thank you. Will somebody please read that same passage in English (ESV).

**Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,<sup>15</sup> and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.<sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham.<sup>17</sup> Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.<sup>18</sup> For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.**

Verse 14 continues the metaphor of believers being "the children."

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Last week, some of you asked whether these were the children of Christ or the children of God.

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Having given this some thought, as promised, I think it may be better to leave that question open.

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What is clear is that "the children" are the church, men and women whom God has called out of the world, and committed to the care of Christ, whom Christ has saved through his atoning death, and to whom Christ sings the praise of God the Father, and in whom the Holy Spirit lives.

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It would certainly be good to avoid the, all too common, mistake of supposing that Jesus somehow saves us from God.

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This conception is very wrong. The whole Godhead is involved in our salvation.,

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Perhaps it would be good to think of these men and women, the church, as children of the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

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In any case, it is because these children of God are flesh and blood, that Christ partook of the same things, became truly and completely human.

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He endured every difficulty which humans can endure, including temptation, suffering, and death.

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In this way his solidarity with man was made perfect and complete, as we discussed before.

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Surely this is all fitting: the very picture of the Grace of God, shining forth from the perfect Man, Jesus Christ.

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The author of Hebrews seems to be saying that one of the most important things that Jesus did, was to die; that this was especially his crown and glory, and certainly not his shame.

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This must be true if, as he says, it was through his death that Jesus destroyed the one who has the power of death, that is the devil.

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I read this to mean that death has been destroyed and, therefore, the devil's power has been taken away.

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At some point the devil himself may be put away someplace, but that is a detail about which we really don't need to concern ourselves. His power, that is the power of death over us, has already been taken away.

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Q. How did Jesus remove the power of death over us?

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A. By dying in as an atonement for our sins.

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A. By returning from the dead to show us that he himself survived the experience.

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Thus, because we know that sin and death cannot swallow us, and because we know that God and Jesus wait for us in the world to come, and because the Holy Spirit lives in us already, as a seal and token of things to come, we are free from fear in this life also.

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Surely, the author tells us (v.16) it is not angels who Jesus helps but the children of Abraham.

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Angles don't sin and, so, don't die and, so, do not fear death and, so, are not subject to the power of the devil, which is the power that has been given to him.

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Maybe we will not see angels in the world to come, if one must die to get there!

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It is the offspring of Abraham who Jesus helps. They do sin, they do die, they do fear death and so are subject to the power of the devil.

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Q. Who are the offspring of Abraham?

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A. Whomever they are, they are not angels but human beings, and this is perhaps the primary distinction in view here. This may include the literal offspring of Abraham, which is a larger category than Israel. Yet we are not told that all of the offspring of Abraham are saved, neither are we told that only the literal offspring of Abraham are in view. The Apostle Paul teaches that all who are in Christ are descendants of Abraham and heirs according to the promise. This makes the offspring of Abraham that Jesus helps a synonym for all men who are redeemed in Christ and so a synonym for all who believe God. Remember Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness!

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It is because the Son of God comes to honor God's promises to Abraham, Moses, David, and others who have believed him, that he came as a man, and in every respect.

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Thus he could become a "faithful high priest in the service of God." ( verse 17)

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Notice again that Jesus does not swoop in to "save us from God." Not at all.

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Jesus is how God chooses to save us from Satan and sin and death, how God honors his covenant vows to Abraham and the rest, and how he remains true to his own character and perfection in every respect.

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Jesus is how God reconciles the world with himself.

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Jesus is the helper that God gives us, and who is able to help us, because he is like us and has suffered when he was tempted.

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One thinks of his suffering in the desert as he was tempted by Satan (remember the Holy Spirit let him there) and of his prayer to God in the Garden of Gethsemane. And of all the times when he was tempted to avoid suffering and death by simply asserting his rights as the eternal Son of God, yet he never once did so.

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His perfection as our Lord, Savior, and "High Priest in the service of God" required that he suffer and die.

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And he was faithful and obedient to perform all these things, even death on a cross.

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Next week we will see at the beginning of Chapter 3, the remarkable sentence: "Therefore holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession..."

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By God's grace we are counted as the holy brothers and sisters of Jesus, who is our head --- the one who speaks for God to us and the one who represents us to God, like Moses did for Israel, only infinitely better.