



The Message of Hebrews
ENDURANCE

JESUS LIKE US Hebrews 2:5-3:6

Discuss—who is a humble person that you have known? What makes them humble? It could be a family member, an old friend, or someone in public life – politics, sport, the armed forces, etc.

In our second study on the New Testament book of Hebrews, we're going to see that the writer of this letter continues with a comparison between Jesus and angels. Jesus far exceeds the position of any angelic being. Yet at the same time as making this point, the writer tells us that Jesus has incredibly, almost unbelievably - humbled himself to such a low level.

Read Hebrews 2:5-3:6

Now read Psalm 8 which is quoted in Hebrews 2:6-8. According to the Psalm, who is made to be a ruler ie. made to have dominion?

It seems that Psalm 8 is most directly about the majesty of 'man'. But if the writer of Hebrews has been making a comparison and saying that it's not to angels that God has subjected the world to come (v5), then the one who will have everything put under his feet is the 'ultimate man', Jesus. What we're seeing is that the writer of Hebrews has taken Psalm 8 and given it a fresh application.

What stops us seeing everything subject to Jesus at the moment? v8-9

Psalm 8 is about Jesus because it's a Psalm about someone who is crowned with honour and rules, but it's also about Jesus because it's about someone, made lower than the angels. According to verse 9, how low has Jesus gone?

Those who the letter of Hebrews was originally meant for those who were probably being pressured to return to their Jewish heritage, their old Jewish ways, and not to think that Jesus is 'the be-all and end-all'. According to these false teachers, it should be Jesus plus Jewish religious devotion. So the writer of Hebrews wants to impress on his readers just how elevated and grand, Jesus the Son of God is. What else do you need when you have this Jesus! But to be so great and glorious, there was first of all a path Jesus had to walk, a path of lowly, awful humiliation. And it is only by walking that path that Jesus can be the 'founder' or 'author' of salvation, v10.

In what sense do you think Jesus has been made 'perfect' v10? If Jesus was always morally perfect – without sin (see 7:26), then in what sense was Jesus made perfect through suffering?

In verse 10 believers in Jesus Christ are described as 'sons'. How are they also described in verses 12-13?

For anyone who would say you need 'Jesus plus' what could you say from this part of Hebrews?

Describe the ways that Jesus is human according to verses 9, 14 and 18?

What answer does verse 17 give us for how human Jesus was made?

What does Jesus' death do for us? v14-15

Put it in your own words, how have we been made free?

Is that hard to believe sometimes? Why?

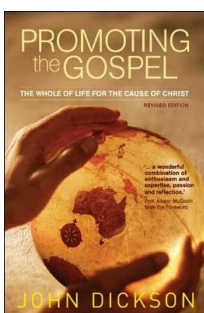


Verse 16 returns to the subject of angels. This topic of angels is very foreign to us, but it obviously was a point worth making at the time! But the main message here is that Jesus had to be humbled, had to be made human, had to suffer - to deal with our problem - fear, the devil, and his power over death. But also have a look at verse 17. Jesus' suffering is described in another way - in being made like his brothers (Christian believers) he was able to act like a priest (more of this to come in chapters 4-10) and make sacrifice for sin. The word in the NIV is 'atonement'. It's the English translation of a word that has also been variously translated as *propitiation* - 'turn aside God's wrath' or *expiation* - 'take away sin'. Both these options are in the NIV footnotes at the bottom of the page. But both are descriptions of what was achieved through sacrifices in the Old Testament. Both describe how a person gets to enjoy, 'at-one-ment' with God.

Do you ever think that Jesus isn't sufficient to make you right with God? Why?

We don't have time to focus on the detail of 3:1-5, but it begins with the phrase, 'fix your thoughts on Jesus'. What do you think this means?

What stops us think rightly about Jesus? What will it mean for us to fix our eyes on him?



Next week we're going to discuss the Introduction and Chapter 1 of 'Promoting the Gospel'. Read that section in advance and bring along your book.