**Lent Talks 2022**

**Talk 3**

**Hebrews 2**

**Holding fast to the faith and Christ’s humanity**

Welcome back:

We have seen in the last two weeks how, according to the Writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in chapter 1 Christ is God’s son and heir: the creator and sustainer of the universe; God’s reflection and imprint; the successful purifier from sin and the one who sits at the place of honour at the father’s right hand; the one who is superior to prophets, angels and, at the beginning of chapter 3, Moses.

We will move now to take a look at chapter 2 where after a few verses in which the recipients are urged not to abandon the Christ whom they have embraced and about whom our author has written, the author turns to is on Christ’s humanity.

I will first read chapter 2 from the Message Version to get an overview and then read the NRSV text section by section.

Read The Message [texts are at the end of the talk]

The second chapter begins, ‘therefore’. It is said that whenever when you see ‘*therefore’* you must ask, ‘what is the *therefore* there for’. Here ‘therefore’ indicates that the author is going to unfold the consequences of the superiority of Christ, especially over angels, which he established in chapter 1.

We will first read verses 1- 4.

***2****Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it**.****2****For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty,****3****how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him,****4****while God added his testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will.*

Whilst the Old Testament does not say that the law on Sinai was given via angels,this was part of Jewish tradition. For how, it was reasoned, could God speak directly to sinful people? He must have used an angelic intermediary. It was envisaged that God communicated with mankind through a process of Chinese whispers.

Our author goes on to argue that since every transgression of the old covenant received a penalty, what will be the consequences of rejecting ‘so great a salvation’.?

The author then briefly explains why the new covenant is greater. It is because:

*It was declared at first through the Lord.*

This new covenant was not announced by angels but ‘the Lord’. The use of ‘the Lord’ on its own can be contrasted with the use of ‘Jesus’ on its own, which as we saw last week emphasises the humanity of Christ.. Adonai – the Hebrew for Lord - was used in order to avoid use of the divine name in the Old Testament (we have thought of this previously) Adonai was translated as Kyrie – as here – in the LXX. To say that the new covenant was declared through ‘the Lord’ referring to Christ. comes close to saying it was declared by God. This is not surprising as we have already seen how our author understands Jesus’ divine status.

What *‘the Lord’* *‘declared’* was *‘salvation’*. This is equivalent to the reference to ‘*purification of sins’* at the beginning of the epistle. But what is ‘salvation’? The root of this word is ‘save’ or ‘rescue. One quick definition of salvation in the Christian context is:

 ‘deliverance from sin and its consequences, believed by Christians to be brought about by faith in Christ.’

Later we will look at how our author thinks this takes place.

The author goes on to say that this message:

*‘was attested to us by those who heard him,’*

The clear implication is that those who heard it directly did not include our author as an eye, or should we say, ear witness.

***‘Those*** *who heard him.*’

‘*Those*’, is plural, the ‘great salvation’, was not whispered in secret to a few, but pronounced publicly to many, it was a matter of public record.

And more than this:

*‘God added his testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles’*

The author has in mind the wonderful actions which Jesus wrought during his ministry. ‘The great salvation’ was not a matter of mere words, there were mighty deeds, deeds which confirmed that Jesus’ words were not mere words.

Peter refers to this Acts 2:22

**22**‘You that are Israelites, listen to what I have to say: Jesus of Nazareth,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts+2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-26961b)] a man attested to you by God with deeds of power, wonders, and signs that God did through him among you, as you yourselves know.

Peter emphases the public nature of these deeds ‘as you yourselves know’.

But the witness of the Father wasn’t restricted to the past, even the recent past of ‘these last days’. No, God gave continuing witness to the salvation:

*by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will.*

God bears continuing witness to the salvation of the Son, through the work and gifts of the Spirit among those who continue the Son’s work of declaring salvation.

***2****For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty,****3****how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?*

*On the basis of a greater salvation declared by the Son rather than angels, our author urges his recipients to remain steadfast in their faith in Christ and his salvation.*

Our author then recalls that the first covenant came with penalties for its transgression and warns those to whom he writes how much greater must the consequences of transgressing the greater salvation through the Son.

Let us now move on from these first 4 verses.

In order to steady the faith of his recipients our author needed to make clear Christ’s superiority as the divine Son (as he did in chapter 1 and the first few verses of chapter 3) but he also had to make clear Christ’s humanity.

It is to this that he, and we, now turn.

***5****Now God[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29966a)*] did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels.****6****But someone has testified somewhere,*

*‘What are human beings that you are mindful of them,[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29967b)*]
    or mortals, that you care for them?[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29967c)*]****7****You have made them for a little while lower[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29968d)*] than the angels;
    you have crowned them with glory and honour,[*[*e*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29968e)*]****8****subjecting all things under their feet.’* Psalm 8:4-6 LXX

*Now in subjecting all things to them, God[*[*f*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29969f)*] left nothing outside their control.*

As we have commented, according to Jewish theology God communicated with mankind through successive ranks of angels. Nor did God rule over the world directly but, again, through angels. Hebrews here claims that in ‘*the coming world’* angels and men would change places; mankind would then be on top. Our author again puts angels in their place. Paul likewise claimed that in the world to come humanity would rule over angels. But this is not yet the case, as our author comments:

*As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them,* (that is to man)

The author then turns his attention again to Jesus.

***9****but we do see Jesus.*

I commented last time on our author’s use of Jesus last week from the verses we looked at from chapter 3. That was the second use by our author, this is the first of the fifteen times he uses Jesus on its own. He uses it here, as I mentioned last week, to focus on Christ’s humanity.

***9*** *we do see Jesus who for a little while was made lower[*[*g*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29970g)*] than the angels*,

If Jesus was ‘**made** lower than angels’

the implication is that Jesus was previously **superior** to angels before he was made l***owe*r** to them. This fits in with what our author has already said about the Son’s divinity and therefore what is called his ‘pre-existence’. This term is used to indicate that the Son existed before he became human in Jesus.

But the Son was only made lower than angels for a *‘a little while’.* The author has in mind the time between conception and exaltation, ‘the days of his flesh’ as we sometimes call it. During that time Jesus was in a certain way lower than angels; he was lower than angels in regard to his humanity.

We need to be clear about Christ’s full divinity and full humanity, which our author does not dwell on here but which would occupy Christian thinkers for some centuries. In short, for eternal ages past (if you can have ‘ages’ and ‘past’ in eternity) the Son shared his Father’s divinity. At the incarnation he assumed humanity, he was both fully divine and fully human. Because he really became human, it was not an act or a superficial veneer, the church came to understand that this humanity continued beyond his time on earth. He did not slough off his humanity at the resurrection or ascension but his humanity, though now glorified humanity, continues forever. He came to share our lowly humanity; through his salvation we shall come to share his glorified humanity. Because he assumed and retains humanity, as Christians we make the audacious claim that ‘there is a man at the right hand of the father’. We will return to this thought on another occasion as we look at a later passage.

For a little while Christ was lower than angels – but no longer. He is now:

*crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death,*

He sits at the Father’s right hand (as we learnt in our first session), indeed as John makes clear in Revelation, he shares the Father’s throne. There is just one shared throne not two separate ones. Seated on **the** throne he is now crowned with glory and honour. Our author does not see this as the glory that belonged to him as ‘the eternal Son of the Father’ (as the Nicene Creed would later put it)

No, this glory is a result of his:

*‘suffering of death’*.

This is not a Greek turn of phrase, but a Hebrew phrase rather literally translated into Greek in a way which betrays its non Greek origin. The emphasis here is on the suffering nature rather than mere fact of the death. Christ did not just sample death in a token way (if that were possible) but experienced the bitterness of death; he drank the cup of death to its dregs.

This suffering of death by Christ was:

*for everyone.*

The late Hugh Montefiore, a former Bishop of Birmingham writes in his commentary about this:

‘..the argument requires that Jesus, being a man, was all men’s representative .. Jesus *died* on behalf of all mankind as their representative. He did for man what no other man was qualified to do. His salvation avails for all men, *if* they are willing to accept it. Universalism is qualified by man’s obedience to the message of salvation.’

The writer has stated the fact of Jesus death. He now goes on to explain why Jesus needed to suffer and to die:

***10****It was fitting that God,[*[*i*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29971i)*] for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

Given that God had made man and that he had made man for a relationship for himself, *it was fitting* that he should enable men to reach the goal for which they had been created, a relationship with him, which had been blocked by sin. In this the suffering of Christ was no accident, but part of the deliberate purpose of God. For it was appropriate that, given the universal human experience of suffering, the means of salvation should include the sharing of suffering. Salvation could not be done from the outside to man, but rather from the inside.

We should note here that the author says that it is God, we should understand Father, *‘for whom and through whom all things exist’.* Earlier he had said something similar about the Son, *‘whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds.’* Perhaps in the light of this we could do with aword about the relationship between the members of the godhead. The persons of the Trinity do not form some kind of divine committee, dividing tasks among themselves; say creation to the Father and redemption to the Son. The church teaches that when one member of the Trinity acts all act – though not in the same way. So Father and Son were involved in creation, the father created through the son. Father and Son were both involved in the work of redemption. But each was involved in his own way. For instance it was the Son who died on the cross not the Father. Indeed it is a heresy to hold that the Father became directly incarnate in Christ and died on the cross. It even has its own name ‘patripassianism’ from Latin *patri*- "father" and *passim* "suffering".

However the church most certainly understands that the Father suffered in the suffering of the Son. It was not that the Father stood apart and indifferent to the suffering of the Son. Paul makes this clear in *2* Corinthians 5:19

*God (we understand the Father) was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.*

If it’s not too irreverent, we might say that you cannot fit a credit card between Father and Son. This intimate connection is called in theology ‘coinherence’, from the Latin literally meaning ‘being together’. This is vital when it comes to the work of redemption. There is a grotesque caricature of what happened on the cross in which an angry Father takes out his wrath on an unwilling Son. This was not the case. The whole godhead, the three persons, were all involved in creation, so they were in redemption, each in his proper way.

In the quotation I have used from Paul to indicate the joint working of Father and Son, Paul indicates that the initiative in salvation belongs to God.

***God*** *was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.*

Our author makes the same point:

*God,.. in bringing many children to glory..*

Professor Caird, whose lectures I was privileged to attend at Oxford, wrote in his New Testament Theology p50

‘Here the author of Hebrews comes very close to Paul: *salvation* all depends not on human effort or human will but on the eternal nature of God.’

Salvation was, from beginning to end, the work of God. We could not save ourselves but, out of his great love, he reached out to save us.

As Paul writes in Romans 3:23

‘the wages of sin is death but the **gift of God** is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.’

***10****It was fitting that God… should make* ***the pioneer of their salvation*** *perfect through sufferings.*

Christ is here called:

*the pioneer of their salvation*

The Greek word for *‘pioneer’* is ‘archegos’. This is used four times in the New Testament; twice in Acts, both in speeches of Peter, and twice in our letter. Its literal meaning is ‘first leader’, hence here ‘pioneer’. It can also be used as ‘prince’ of a nation, ‘author’ of a book, or ‘founder’ of a city, according to context, each indicating source or leader. William Barclay in his classic little book, ‘Jesus as they saw him’, wrote, p344

*‘The archegos is the first to do something or discover something, but the characteristic of his action and his discovery is that* ***it opens a way for others to enter into the same benefits and the same greatness****’.*

Our author later in the epistle says of Christ Heb 10:20 that he:

*‘opened for us a new and living way.’*

Into the presence of God.

I think it was Professor Caird who in a lecture likened this pioneering role to the first person who out walking found himself, as it were, by accident at the peak of Mont Blanc without going out kitted out for the purpose. Once he did it, others found they could do it too. Or take Roger Bannister, by breaking the 4 minute mile in a way he enabled others to do so too. Knowing that it could be done enabled them also to do it.

To return to Barclay he comments of the use of Pioneer here:

*‘He (Jesus) is the Pioneer of Salvation. Salvation is the state of the man who is at peace with God, and who is safe in this or in any other life. Jesus is the Pioneer who showed men the way to peace and friendship with God.’*

Our author will later develop the way in which Christ’s priesthood and sacrifice enabled him to do this. We will now move on to another aspect of verse 10.

***10****It was fitting that God… should make the pioneer of their salvation* ***perfect through sufferings.***

What does it mean for God to make Christ:

*‘perfect through sufferings’.*

I feel that in explaining this I cannot do better than precis what Hugh Montefiore reflects on this.

*This does not imply that Jesus, before his passion, was morally imperfect. Indeed this is explicitly rejected in chapter 4. It refers to the full development of Jesus’ human character in response to his intense sufferings. It was his perfectly unified response which completed his work of salvation. Jesus’ death is seen as completing and perfecting his life. According to our author this stern discipline schooled Jesus to offer his obedience and faithfulness to the full, so that death rendered him incapable of further sacrifice. Because of this perfect and completed sacrifice, he now exercises his priesthood in heaven as the perfected Son.*

Montefiori p 61.

Our author now goes on to reflect further on what it meant for Jesus to be made:

*‘for a little while lower than angels’.*

*As Montefiore heads these next verses our author addresses the topic of:*

‘Jesus full humanity’

Our author is as convinced of Christ’s full humanity as he is of his full divinity.

Because of time constraints I will need to address these verses more selectively.

***11****For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father.[[j](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA" \l "fen-NRSVA-29972j" \o "See footnote j)] For this reason Jesus[*[*k*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29972k)*] is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,[*[*l*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29972l)*]****12****saying,*

*‘I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,[*[*m*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29973m)*]
    in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.’*

*Psalm 22:23 LXX (with slight alteration)*

***13****And again,*

*‘I will put my trust in him.’*

*Isaiah 8:17,*

*And again,*

*‘Here am I and the children whom God has given me.’*

*Isaiah 8:18 (the following one to the one above)*

***14****Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,****15****and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.****16****For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham.****17****Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters[*[*n*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29978n)*] in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.****18****Because he himself was tested by what he suffered; he is able to help those who are being tested.*

Our author having spoken of the redeemed as sons of God, now explains their relationship to the **Son** of God.

***11****For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father.*

The word for *sanctify* could also be translated *consecrate.* It is a word which is to do with the result or effect of sacrifice, a theme which becomes increasingly significant in this letter. Consecration, sanctification, making holy by Christ refers to the way that though his sacrifice humankind is restored to God by Christ removing the defiling effects of sin. Jesus here exercises a divine function as in the Old Testament it is God who sanctifies. Even as he is about to address the humanity of Christ he is again referring to his exalted status.

We now examine how our author argues for Christ’s humanity. He offers four proofs:

1 A common father.

Jesus and those he consecrates have:

*V11 ‘one father’.*

The Son of God and those who he saves through his sacrifice have one father. This is not Adam the father of all, nor of Abraham the father of the people of God. No, this common father is God himself. Even though Christ is, uniquely, the begotten Son he does not thereby look down on adopted sons. So it is that Christ :

2 speaks of those he redeems as brothers and sisters

*V12 He is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters, saying (to the father),*

*‘I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters’*

The risen Christ calls his disciples ‘brothers’ in John and Matthew but here our author quotes Psalm 22, the psalm which we use on Good Friday.

Christ affirms his common humanity with those he redeems by calling them brothers and sisters.

3 Christ and those he redeems both put their trust in the Father.

Jesus declares of God the Father:

*V13a ‘I will put my trust in him.’*

*Isaiah 8:17,*

Speaking of Jesus putting his trust in his heavenly Father as those whom he has saved, indicates a common sonship. We speak of the redeemed as being justified by faith. In a very real way Christ too was justified by his faith in his Father. That trust which led him to the cross.

4 Christ declares the redeemed as fellow sons of his father.

And then next verse from Isaiah:

*13b ‘Here am I and the children (the Greek has sons) whom God has given me.’*

*Isaiah 8:18*

This idea of God giving the redeemed to Christ is also to be found in John.

These four different proofs are given to show that Jesus asserts his kinship with other members of God’s family.

Now that the kinship and solidarity of Jesus with men has been established it remains to be shown that Jesus, at the incarnation, assumed human nature in its entirety.

***14****Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things,*

Jesus shared the same ‘flesh and blood’. We use this phrase as did the Jews of old to signify the frailty and dependence of men.

He did this, our author makes clear, in order to effect the work of redemption:

*so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,****15****and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.****16****For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham.****17****Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters[*[*n*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29978n)*] in every respect,*

The author reinforces what he has already argued. In order to save the descendants of father Abraham he had to become like them *in every respect.*

It is then argued that it was necessary that Christ become man so that he could act as high priest:

*he had to become like his brothers and sisters[*[*n*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29978n)*] in every respect,* ***so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God.***

A high priest is taken from his fellows and chosen for this role. As our author comments when he returns to this later in chapter 5:

***V1****Every high priest chosen from among men is put in charge of things pertaining to God on their behalf, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.*

People and priest need to be of the same kind, so that the priest could represent and embody those on behalf of whom he offered sacrifice. Thus it was necessary that Christ be fully man.

The distinctive sacrifice of the Jewish High Priest, the sacrifice which he alone could offer and that only on the most holy day of the year, Yom Kippur the day of atonement, was the sacrifice of atonement which is the sacrifice our author specifically mentions:

*so that he might… make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.*

He develops this later in the epistle and we will examine this then.

Sharing a common humanity has a further effect which our author makes in both this chapter and chapter 5:

*he had to become like his brothers and sisters[*[*n*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29978n)*] in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God…****18****Because he himself was tested by what he suffered; he is able to help those who are being tested.*

And chapter 5:22

*He is able to deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is subject to weakness;*

At the time of Jesus among many Jews and Gentiles there was something of a common phenomenon of thinking of God as very distant from creation and mankind as part of that. The Jews and Gentiles got to this position in rather different ways. Greek philosophy had reflected on the difference between God and the world. God was seen as immaterial spirit so very different from the physical universe. Spirit and matter were seen as incompatible as oil and water, there could be no direct contact. For Jews it was more a matter of incompatibility of holiness and sin rather then spirit and matter. How, Jews asked, could the holy God sully himself by getting in touch with sinful humans? For both Jews and Gentiles the development of theories of different ranks of angels seems to have developed in order to bridge this gap.

This idea of a remote God meant that God was not thought of as understanding, let alone sympathetic to, the plight of mankind. In Jewish thought however the belief that God was the direct creator of the world meant that a point of contact did remain between creator and creature.

That point of contact between Creator on the one side and creation, is the way in for God. In Christ, God the creator enters his creation and enters into human life. The creator bursts into the world. In Christ, God has experienced human life from the inside. He has smashed the idea that God is distant and remote. We can now turn to God knowing that he has walked in our shoes. We can turn to him knowing that he knows us and, knowing us, will be *merciful* to us.

The argument of our author is that no angel can do this, only Jesus the God-Man can do it. So he seeks to persuade his recipients to stick with Christ and not turn to angels. For however wonderful they are they cannot compete with Christ, who is greater than them in his divinity and, unlike them, can sympathise with man in his humanity, with us in our humanity.

So, having established Christ’s superiority over all beings earthly and heavenly in chapter 1 and 3, here in chapter 2 he argues eloquently, persuasively for the superiority of Christ over angels in his humanity. By living out a human life and experiencing to the depth, Christ is able fully and completely to save us and we are able to approach him knowing that he is one of us, one who knows our weaknesses and temptations. Jesus the one who is divine and human, Jesus who is the God-Man, wonderfully bridges and heals the gap between us and the one who made us.

Alleluia! What a saviour!

**The Message:**

**2 1-4**It’s crucial that we keep a firm grip on what we’ve heard so that we don’t drift off. If the old message delivered by the angels was valid and nobody got away with anything, do you think we can risk neglecting this latest message, this magnificent salvation? First of all, it was delivered in person by the Master, then accurately passed on to us by those who heard it from him. All the while God was validating it with gifts through the Holy Spirit, all sorts of signs and miracles, as he saw fit.

**The Salvation Pioneer**

**5-9**God didn’t put angels in charge of this business of salvation that we’re dealing with here. It says in Scripture,

What is man and woman that you bother with them;
    why take a second look their way?
You made them not quite as high as angels,
    bright with Eden’s dawn light;
Then you put them in charge
    of your entire handcrafted world.

When God put them in charge of everything, nothing was excluded. But we don’t see it yet, don’t see everything under human jurisdiction. What we do see is Jesus, made “not quite as high as angels,” and then, through the experience of death, crowned so much higher than any angel, with a glory “bright with Eden’s dawn light.” In that death, by God’s grace, he fully experienced death in every person’s place.

**10-13**It makes good sense that the God who got everything started and keeps everything going now completes the work by making the Salvation Pioneer perfect through suffering as he leads all these people to glory. Since the One who saves and those who are saved have a common origin, Jesus doesn’t hesitate to treat them as family, saying,

I’ll tell my good friends, my brothers and sisters, all I know
    about you;
I’ll join them in worship and praise to you.

Again, he puts himself in the same family circle when he says,

Even *I* live by placing my trust in God.

And yet again,

I’m here with the children God gave me.

**14-15**Since the children are made of flesh and blood, it’s logical that the Savior took on flesh and blood in order to rescue them by his death. By embracing death, taking it into himself, he destroyed the Devil’s hold on death and freed all who cower through life, scared to death of death.

**16-18**It’s obvious, of course, that he didn’t go to all this trouble for angels. It was for people like us, children of Abraham. That’s why he had to enter into every detail of human life. Then, when he came before God as high priest to get rid of the people’s sins, he would have already experienced it all himself—all the pain, all the testing—and would be able to help where help was needed.

***NRSV Hebrews 2***

***2****Therefore we must pay greater attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.****2****For if the message declared through angels was valid, and every transgression or disobedience received a just penalty,****3****how can we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him,****4****while God added his testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his will.*

***5****Now God[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29966a)*] did not subject the coming world, about which we are speaking, to angels.****6****But someone has testified somewhere,*

*‘What are human beings that you are mindful of them,[*[*b*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29967b)*]
    or mortals, that you care for them?[*[*c*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29967c)*]****7****You have made them for a little while lower[*[*d*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29968d)*] than the angels;
    you have crowned them with glory and honour,[*[*e*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29968e)*]****8****subjecting all things under their feet.’* Psalm 8:4-6 LXX

*Now in subjecting all things to them, God[*[*f*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29969f)*] left nothing outside their control.*

*As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to them,****9****but we do see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower[*[*g*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29970g)*] than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God[*[*h*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29970h)*] he might taste death for everyone.*

***10****It was fitting that God,[*[*i*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29971i)*] for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings*

***11****For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father.[*[*j*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29972j)*] For this reason Jesus[*[*k*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29972k)*] is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters,[*[*l*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29972l)*]****12****saying,*

*‘I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters,[*[*m*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29973m)*]
    in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.’*

*Psalm 22:23 LXX (with slight alteration)*

***13****And again,*

*‘I will put my trust in him.’*

*Isaiah 8:17,*

*And again,*

*‘Here am I and the children whom God has given me.’*

*Isaiah 8:18 (the following one to the one above)*

***14***  *Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,****15****and free those who all their lives were held in sla*

*very by the fear of death.****16****For it is clear that he did not come to help angels, but the descendants of Abraham.****17****Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters[*[*n*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews2&version=NRSVA#fen-NRSVA-29978n)*] in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.****18****Because he himself was tested by what he suffered; he is able to help those who are being tested.*