

JOHN. D. BARRY

Facing Today

WITH THE BOOK OF HEBREWS · WEEKS 9–16

In our eight week study of Hebrews 1 in the Nov–Dec 2008 issue of *Bible Study Magazine*, we encountered a community of Christians living in a time of trial, a community not so different from yours or mine. They, like us, struggled to understand God in the midst of suffering. A sermon (“word of exhortation”;

Heb 13:22), was delivered to this struggling group, a sermon which we now have in the book of Hebrews. We have much to learn from the ancient message of Hebrews. Like the group of people the author addressed, we too suffer from temptations and pain. The message of the book is our message—their story is our story.

WEEK 9

What we have Heard—The Great Salvation

PRAY THAT GOD WOULD REVEAL HOW HE HAS BROUGHT HIS GREAT SALVATION.

Read Heb 1:1–2:18. Reflect on 2:1–3 and answer the following questions:

What are we to “pay much closer attention to,” and why? What is the significance of this phrase? Does it provide a theme for the chapter?

Whose message “proved to be reliable”? In what verses are these messengers previously referenced, and why?

What verse does the entire statement in 2:2 and the first statement in 2:3 provide support for?

The author uses the plural “we,” referring to all of us in 2:3. In light of this, what does the author’s rhetorical question about the “great salvation” indicate? Reread 1:1–14, and see who the bringer of the great salvation is.

How was the “great salvation” declared, and by whom? When was it attested, and by whom? Note the similarities of 2:3 with 1:1.

Does it feel like we have stopped paying “attention to what we have heard”? How can we pay better attention?

CONTINUE TO REFLECT AND PRAY THROUGH THESE QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT YOUR WEEK.

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ² For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. ⁵ Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere, “What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? ⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸ putting everything in subjection under his feet.” 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. ⁹ 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. ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹² saying, “I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.” ¹³ And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.” ¹⁴ 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, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷ 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. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

COMPARE THE NIV ON PG. 31.

WEEK 10

How God Reveals Himself

PRAY THAT THE MULTIPLICITY OF WAYS GOD REVEALS HIMSELF WOULD BE MADE REAL TO YOU.

Read Heb 2:1-18. Reflect on 2:1-5 and answer the following questions:

2:4 tells us of four things God has done to reveal Himself. What are these four things?

2:5 is a supporting point to 2:1, and the overall argument of 1:1. In light of this, what is the point of 2:1-5?

What is the impact of recognizing who the ultimate ruler of the world is?

In what ways can we allow the Word of God and the work of God's Son to penetrate more parts of our life?

CONTINUE TO REFLECT AND PRAY THROUGH THESE QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT YOUR WEEK.

WEEK 11

The One Crowned with Glory and Honor

PRAY THAT GOD WOULD REVEAL TO YOU HIS SON AND THE POWER OF HIS REIGN.

Read Heb 2:1-18. Reflect on 2:6-8 and answer the following questions:

2:6b-8a is a quote from Ps 8:4-6. Read Ps 8. What is the primary theme of the psalm? What light does this psalm shed on the author's argument about the Son's place in the world, and among the heavenly beings?

The author uses “son of God” terminology in chapter 1. What is the author's intention in using a quote which refers to the “son of man” in this passage?

The author views Ps 8:4-6 as prophetic. What does this prophecy emphasize about the Son? What is He “crowned” with? What is subjected to Him?

The author draws a conclusion in 2:8b from Ps 8:4-6, what is this conclusion?

Does the Son's reign consist of power over your life? If so, what does this look like? Could you allow for him to reign more?

CONTINUE TO REFLECT AND PRAY THROUGH THESE QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT YOUR WEEK.

WEEK 12

The Things We Do Not See

PRAY THAT GOD WOULD REVEAL TO YOU HOW HE ACCOMPLISHED HIS PURPOSES IN HIS SON.

Read Heb 2:1-18. Reflect on 2:8-10 and answer the following questions:

2:8 states that we currently do not see “everything in subjection to him.” (He rules over currently present things, and will rule in the future). What is the significance of the Son reigning over what we do not see?

The Son is named for the first time in the book of Hebrews in 2:9. What is the significance of this?

Why was the Son “made lower than the angels” “for a little while”? Who did the Son do this for?

2:10 makes a statement about why it was fitting for the Son to accomplish God's purposes. What is the author's reasoning here?

“For whom and by whom [do] all things exist”? (Read carefully, this is a bit tricky).

Through the scriptural quotations in Heb 1, the “sons” became a subject of interest in the book. What does Jesus accomplish for the “sons”? What is the Son the “founder of,” and how does He “perfect” it?

How does the Son's ultimate control over heaven and earth impact our lives?

Why should we allow for the Son to have control over our lives?

CONTINUE TO REFLECT AND PRAY THROUGH THESE QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT YOUR WEEK.



We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. 2 For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3 how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. 5 It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. 6 But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? 7 You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor 8 and put everything under his feet.” In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. 9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. 10 In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. 11 Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. 12 He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises.” 13 And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me.” 14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil— 15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. 17 For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. 18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

COMPARE THE ESV ON PG. 30.

The Source of Satisfaction

WEEK 13
PRAY THAT GOD WOULD REVEAL TO YOU WHAT IT MEANS FOR HIM TO CALL YOU “BROTHER” OR “SISTER.”

Read Heb 2:1-18. Reflect on 2:11-13 and answer the following questions:

The first statement in 2:11 is support for an above point, what point is it supporting?

What, or who, is the “source” of “He who sanctifies” and “those who are sanctified”? What are the implications of “He who sanctifies” and “those who are sanctified” having the same source?¹

Who is the “He” and the “them” in the phrase “That is why He is not ashamed to call them brothers”?

The quotation in 2:11 is from Ps 22:22. The author attributes those words to Jesus. What does this tell us about the role of the Son prior to His coming to earth? Is Jesus a co-author of Ps 22? Read and reflect upon Ps 22. Who is the “congregation” in Ps 22:22? (The idea of the angels is also present here, so think about who gathers around God in the heavens). A different verse from this psalm is quoted by Jesus—what verse is quoted and where? What are the implications of this psalm being so widely quoted by Jesus? What does it tell us about His character and divine role?

In 2:13 there are quotations from Isa 8:17 and Isa 8:18. Read and reflect upon Isa 8. What group of people is referenced in Isa 8:16? What is the connection between this passage and Ps 22:22? Who is doing the “trusting” and who is being “trusted in,” in Isa 8:17 and in Heb 2:13? (They may not be the same people in both passages).

How can your actions towards God better show your appreciation for the tremendous things He has done for you in His Son?

CONTINUE TO REFLECT AND PRAY THROUGH THESE QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT YOUR WEEK.

The Divine One Who Frees Us From Slavery

WEEK 14
PRAY THAT GOD WOULD REVEAL TO YOU WHY HE SENT HIS SON.

Read Heb 2:1-18. Reflect on 2:14-15 and answer the following questions:

In the end of 2:13 there is a quotation from Isa 8:18. By using this quote, the author refers to the people of God as the “children” of Jesus. What are the implications of us being both Jesus’ brothers and sisters, as well as His children? (There are two different theological meanings at work here, both are worth pondering). Is it possible that the Son, when He becomes flesh, gets temporarily demoted to the level of His children (those born of the creation which was made through Him)? In what ways does Heb 2:7 explain 2:14? What is the role of sanctification in all of this?

Why did the Son become “flesh and blood?” What happened through the Son’s death?

Does 2:14 indicate that the Son has destroyed the devil?

How does “fear of death” enslave us? Is death itself a form of “slavery”? Could both “slavery” and “death” be metaphors in this passage for something else? (Read Rom 6).

How can we be free from the things that enslave us? What has the Son brought us that nobody else can?

CONTINUE TO REFLECT AND PRAY THROUGH THESE QUESTIONS THROUGHOUT YOUR WEEK.

Want more out of your study of the book of Hebrews? Find the resources you need at Logos.com/Hebrews

¹For more on sanctification see Arnold G. Fruchtenbaum, “What does the Bible teach About ... Justification and Sanctification” (BSM Nov-Dec 2008).

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