

# Jesus, Our Elder Brother

## Hebrews 2:10-13

*Incarnation (Hebrews 1-2)*

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“We shall see our Elder Brother an outcast orphan too; if we be portionless and penniless, the Firstborn among many brethren must be portionless and penniless also, for with him we stand or we fall.” - **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

 Open your Bible to **Hebrews 2**. We are continuing a series from the Book of Hebrews entitled “Incarnation.” This morning we are looking at a message entitled: “Jesus, Our Elder Brother.”

### **Big Brothers**

How many of you have at least one big brother? I have four older brothers. I don’t have the best memories of them. Let’s see, I can remember them sitting on my chest giving me many tickle tortures. I can remember me lying my head to rest on my big brother’s shoulder, and instead of being inviting, my brother finger plucked me on my forehead!

### **William as a Big Brother**

I look at my son William as a very loving and compassionate big brother to his two younger siblings, Evan and Ava. I often see him running to comfort the little ones, letting them know everything is alright!

### **The Humiliation of Jesus**

**Hebrews 2:9**, "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."

Jesus set aside the active use of His divine attributes and took on our nature. Angels worshipped Him, but He willingly became "for a little while" - about 33 years - lower than the angels.

### **Because Jesus is our Elder Brother...**

#### **I. We share in Jesus' perfections (vs. 10). “pioneer made perfect”**

### **The Cross Did Not Seem Fitting for a King**

As we turn to Hebrews 2:9-18, we find out that Jesus Christ is our Elder Brother. As the writer of Hebrews pens his letter to this persecuted little church, the Roman Emperor Nero was spreading rumors about Christians everywhere. Nero said Christians were cannibals since Jesus

commanded us: “Eat my flesh and drink my blood.” Nero believed the Cross was foolishness and nothing to glory in. Why would the Savior of the world choose to be nailed to a cross? Why would He choose to suffer death? It seemed very unfitting to Nero and to the entire Roman world. A King should wear a crown, not die on a cross!

So the writer of Hebrews turns the tables on the critics with an eloquent assertion that the cross is the most fitting and the most God-worthy way of salvation.<sup>1</sup> Why? Because it displays who God is.

### **It was Fitting**

The writer begins by asserting that the work of salvation fits God’s creative relationship to the universe: **Heb. 2:10**, “It was fitting:” he says, “that God, for whom and by whom all things exist [i.e., the sovereign God of creation], should make the founder [PIONEER] of their salvation perfect through suffering.” The way of salvation is not arbitrary, but rather fits the character of the Creator God we know, the God “for whom and through whom everything exists.”<sup>2</sup>

### **The Cross, a Masterpiece of wisdom**

In other words, the Cross of Jesus Christ was a masterpiece of wisdom! The one who flung the stars in space became a human being. He was made perfect for us. He did this on our behalf. “It was fitting!” It displayed who God is!

### **Pioneers**

**Heb. 2:10**, “It was fitting that God, for whom and by whom all things should make the founder [PIONEER] of their salvation perfect through suffering.”

Two things, first what is a pioneer? And why is Jesus called a pioneer. A pioneer leads the way for those who would never make it otherwise.

### **The Pioneer of our Salvation**

The phrase, “the founder of their salvation” - *archegos*, is a very difficult term to translate into English. It has the idea of supremacy, heroism, founding, fighting, as well as authoring something. The KJV translates it “Captain.” That’s go but it doesn’t capture it. How do we put all that rich meaning into one? Many theologians believe that perhaps *Pioneer* might be the best English translation, for Christ was the Divine Pioneer did something no one else could do. He battled the evil one and won! He blazed the trail of salvation that we can now follow. No one else could have done it! God has given us Jesus as our divine hero and pioneer of our salvation!

Significantly, the name “Pioneer” bears a remarkable correspondence to one of the Messianic Hebrew names in Isaiah 9:6—“Mighty God”—*El Gibbor*, which literally means “Mighty or Heroic God.” As the courageous pioneer of our salvation, Christ is certainly our Mighty, Heroic God who has come to do what we could not! He has come to save us.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hughes, R. K. (1993). *Hebrews: an anchor for the soul* (Vol. 1, p. 64). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

<sup>2</sup> Leon Morris, *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Vol. 12 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 26.

<sup>3</sup> Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 337.

## How Was Jesus Made Perfect Through Suffering?

Now we come to a peculiar part of the verse in **Heb. 2:10**, “It was fitting that God, for whom and by whom all things **should make the founder [PIONEER] of their salvation perfect through suffering.**”

Perhaps, like me, you have read this verse scores of times—that Jesus was made perfect through sufferings—and you have sat in wonder. How could Jesus, the eternal Son of God who has always existed in perfection, who “is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being” (Heb. 1:3), be made perfect? Isn’t He already absolutely and infinitely perfect? Yes He is, and aren’t you glad?!

But He was not gaining His own perfections, He was gaining OUR perfections! We forfeited our perfection in the garden in Adam. In Adam we became sinful and cursed.

## Imputation is the Gospel

That Jesus became perfect through suffering is the Gospel! Theologians call this imputation! In Jesus’ suffering, your sin was imputed to Jesus, and Jesus’ righteousness was imputed to you.

## Big Brother Clothing [SLIDE]

So as an older brother Christ gives us His perfections, we might reckon it to the clothing of our Elder brother. Now, growing up I didn’t always like hand-me-downs. But here is a **slide** of me wearing my “big brother” clothing. This was a silk shirt my brother grew out of in the disco era. I loved it. You remember those crazy patterns? That’s the solar system on my shirt. And this was in fashion!

I’m so thankful that because Christ is our Elder Brother, we share in His clothing. “God made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21).

## II. We share in Jesus’ **DNA** (vs. 11). “all of one source”

### Holy Scripture

**Hebrews 2:11**, “For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified **all have one source.** That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers.”

### Spiritual DNA

I love this next truth. As our Elder Brother, we might say we have the same DNA as Jesus. Hang with me here. The idea is that we have the same “family” (NIV). Another translates it that we have the “same father.” The idea is we have the same spiritual DNA.

### A New Nature

What does this mean theologically? It means the Holy Spirit dwells in us. It means we are united to Christ. It means we have a NEW NATURE. We have a new spiritual make up. We were once “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1) but now we’ve been made alive. We are now “partakers of the divine nature” (1 Peter 1:4) “unto our Living Hope.” Jesus is our Living Hope! He has given us a new nature like His divine nature. We no longer want to sin.

## **Progressive Sanctification**

**Hebrews 2:11**, "For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers."

Here is another glorious truth. Since Jesus is our older Brother, He is sanctifying us. Theologically, you are positionally perfectly sanctified and holy in God's presence. And practically you are being progressively sanctified from now till you die. You are being conformed into the image of Jesus.

## **Jesus is Not Ashamed of You**

I want you to know something. Jesus is not ashamed of you. Sometimes you are not happy with yourself. Have you ever been disappointed in yourself? You need to know this. You are perfectly holy in God's sight. You might say, you don't know what thought went through my mind. The fact that it bothered you shows you are being sanctified by Jesus! But God is not disappointed in you. He is NOT ASHAMED to call you His brother or sister. He's making you holy. He bought your perfection. He was made perfect ON YOUR BEHALF to make you perfect. "That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers," (Heb. 2:11).

## **Bringing Many Sons to Glory**

How could Jesus be ashamed of you even when you sin? You see He is (as verse 10 says) "bringing many sons to glory." The picture is of a great family procession as it winds its way through this life and moves ever upward to "glory." Leading the procession is our Pioneer, our Captain, our Champion who wins our salvation. He has gone before us as perfect man—living a perfect, sinless life—overcoming every temptation and hardship—dying as a perfect atonement for all our sins—resurrected to glory—WHY? To lead many of God's children to His "same glory."<sup>4</sup>

We are truly part of God's forever family!

## **III. We share in Jesus' celebration (vs. 12-13).** "I will sing hymns in the church"

### **Citation from Psalm 22**

As was his custom, the writer of Hebrews proves this point with Old Testament citations. The first is from Psalm 22, which so accurately anticipates Jesus' death on the cross. These words come after the suffering, when the psalmist was sure of deliverance, just as Jesus praised God after his resurrection from the dead:

**Hebrews 2:12**, "saying,

"I will tell of your name to my brothers;

in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." **Psalm 22:22**<sup>5</sup>

### **I Will Sing Hymns in the Church**

This reminds us that Jesus is the true singer of the Psalms; they were written first and foremost for him, and it is always with him in mind that we sing them most truly. But this psalm also makes an important theological point: Christ died and rose again not merely to save us but

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<sup>4</sup> Hughes, R. K. (1993). *Hebrews: an anchor for the soul* (Vol. 1, p. 67). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

<sup>5</sup> Phillips, R. D. (2006). *Hebrews*. (R. D. Phillips, P. G. Ryken, & D. M. Doriani, Eds.) (pp. 73–74). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

also to make us worshipers of his Father. This is fulfilled in our churches today; literally, Hebrews 2:12 concludes, “I will sing hymns in the church.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Something to Sing About**

We truly have something to sing about! Christ is with His congregation singing. Make no mistake – He is your Elder Brother and He sings with you today. He sings the hymns of His death and resurrection with you!

### **John Calvin Quote: Christ leads our Worship**

John Calvin remarks here: “This teaching is the very strongest encouragement to us to bring yet more fervent zeal to the [worship and] praise of God, when we hear that Christ leads our songs of worship and is the Chief Conductor of our hymns.”<sup>7</sup>

### **The Prince and the Pauper**

Mark Twain, in his imaginative novel, "The Prince and the Pauper," tells the story of two boys of the same age and identical in appearance — one is Prince Edward Tudor and heir to the royal throne of England, the other, Tom Canty, an unfortunate and abused pauper whose father is a thief. In the book they are born on the same day.

By a coincidence, they are brought together and decide to **change places with each other**, the prince putting on the rags of the pauper and the pauper donning the royal garb of the prince.

So it is that Christ takes our place. As God and King, He puts on our rags of ruin and takes the full penalty for our rebellion. He exchanges his life for ours.

And after His true identity is revealed at the resurrection, as Psalm 22 says, he takes his place again with the paupers, but now stands and sings with them.

In the Bible’s story the paupers are brought into the palace and given the inheritance of the prince to share it with Him! And He stands and sings with us the songs of His victory!

### **Isaiah’s Sons: Symbols of the Church to Come**

**Hebrews 2:13**, "And again,

“I will put my trust in him.”

And again,

“Behold, I and the children God has given me.” **Isaiah 8:17-18**

These verses come from Isaiah 8:17-18 and present Isaiah’s two sons as symbols of the future church of Jesus Christ.

Isaiah had two sons who in English were called “Defeated Prey” and the other was “Salvaged Remnant”. Can you imagine him talking to his sons? Hey Prey stop hitting your brother Remnant!

But his sons were living signs and symbols of what God wanted to do in bringing Jesus Christ into the world. Israel would be taken into captivity as “Defeated Prey” but would come out of captivity as a “Salvaged Remnant” awaiting the incarnation of Christ into the world. All of this is from Isaiah 8:17-18. Remember what Isaiah says in the next chapter, **Isaiah 9:6**,

“For to us a child is born,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 74.

<sup>7</sup> Hugh Montefiore, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1964), 63, 64.

to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

In Christ the **defeated prey of Satan** is **God’s salvaged remnant!** Isaiah’s sons were signs and symbols of God’s promise to bring salvation through Christ.

### **Barak Obama**

I think of our president. He has a **half-brother** in Kenya way, Italian Vanity Fair magazine tracked George Hussein Onyango Obama to a 6ft by 9ft wooden shed in Kenya.

Imagine if he invited him into the White House. That's in essence what Christ has done for us on an infinitely greater level. He laid aside his glory. He loves you. He is not ashamed to call you His brother.

### **Conclusion**

Christ is not ashamed to call us his brothers. He is not ashamed because our salvation brings glory to God his Father.

What an overwhelming truth! How humbling to have the Son of God call us brothers and not to be ashamed of it. Conquering sin through His death, He broke sin’s mastery over us and placed His eternal righteousness on us. We are “fellow heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17) because His holiness is now our holiness. His righteousness not only makes us holy but makes us His brothers. This is the only way a person can become a brother of Christ, and therefore a child of God. We are not born into the divine family, only reborn into it.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1983). *Hebrews* (pp. 67–68). Chicago: Moody Press.