

“Our Elder Brother”
Hebrews 2:9-13
(Preached at Trinity, October 15, 2023)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. The author has been stressing the infinite superiority of Jesus. **Chapter 2** opens with the phrase, “because of this.” The writer is making some important application to what he wrote in **Chapter 1**. Namely, if Jesus Christ is infinitely superior to the angels and is seated at the right hand of Majesty on high, how should we respond? What expectation is placed upon us? There is great importance to the question. He is admonishing his readers: “Pay close attention!” “Give earnest heed!”
Bow before Him as Lord and King.
 2. But His reign hasn’t reached its fullness. Jesus is eternally glorious. He was the eternal Son before He became man. He has always been infinitely superior to the angels. But as Redeemer, He briefly, for a little while, became a little lower than the angels. He had to first become mortal. He had to suffer. This was in order to save His people from their sins. **Hebrews 2:9 NAU** - "But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone."
 3. **Verse 10** says this was fitting or proper for Christ. It was fitting for the one who was eternally glorious, eternally superior - "for whom are all things, and through whom are all things" It was fitting for Him to become like us, so that He might bring many sons to glory.
- I. First, we must understand the substitutionary work of Christ. This is greatly misunderstood by many. This is why so many believe in a universal atonement.
- A. He suffered in our place.
 1. For whom did He suffer? **Verse 9** – “for everyone”
 2. To whom does this apply? Does it mean everyone without exception?
 - a. This would result in universalism.
 - b. This is the logical fallacy of Arminianism. If Jesus died for “everyone” and if His death was an atoning sacrifice, then everyone would be saved. The sins of all would be atoned for. Why would God send people to hell if Jesus satisfied the demands of God’s justice in their place?
 3. **Verse 10** gives clarification to the word “everyone.”
 - a. “Everyone” refers to all of the sons – the “many sons.”
 - b. The “sons” are the objects of God’s eternal love. This love led God to send forth His Son to redeem them. These are the ones who have been given to Christ.
Verse 13 quotes from **Isaiah 8**
"Behold, I and the children whom God has given Me."

- c. Jesus suffered the pains of death so that the sons would not have to experience it.
1 John 4:9-10 NAU - "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins."
- d. How did they become sons? Through the grace of adoption. Adoption that was accomplished through the atonement of Christ.
Galatians 4:4-7 NAU - "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, ⁵ so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. ⁶ Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" ⁷ Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God."
- B. The gift of adoption was forged in eternity.
1. God chose to love us and adopt us as His children—His chosen sons.
Galatians 3:26 NAU - "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."
 John Owen said this electing love is the "fountain and spring of all other immediate causes of our salvation."¹
 2. We were chosen to become His sons for praise of the glory of His grace.
Ephesians 1:5-6 NAU - "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved."
Hebrews 2:10 NAU - "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings."
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.
 3. How could Jesus be made perfect, the one who is the epitome of perfection, infinitely perfect in every way. Simply, that through His death on the cross He fully and perfectly accomplished the salvation of the elect and returned to His place of glory and exaltation.
Hebrews 1:3 NAU - "When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"
 4. **Verse 10** declares that Jesus is the Author of our salvation.
Hebrews 2:10 NAU - "For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings."

¹ John Owen, *An Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, ed. W. H. Goold, vol. 20, Works of John Owen (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1854), 379.

Hebrews 12:2 NAU - "fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

5. Jesus is the founder of our salvation. It is all about Him.

Romans 11:36 KJV - "For of him, and through him, and to him, *are* all things: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen."

II. The blessedness of sonship

A. We are in an intimate union with Christ. We have a family relationship.

1. Through His redemption we have been brought into union with Christ. The sanctified and the Sanctifier are made one.
2. Through adoption Jesus embraces us as His brethren.
Hebrews 2:11-12 NAU - "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, ¹² saying, "I will proclaim Thy name to My brethren, In the midst of the congregation I will sing Thy praise."
3. We call upon the same God and Father
This is a gift that most take for granted. This is because most presume everyone has the right to approach God. Only as the sons of God, God's precious children, do we have access before the throne of God at all times.
4. Even more glorious, **Verse 12** tells us that Jesus Christ leads His brethren in the praise of God. John Calvin remarks here:
"This teaching is the very strongest encouragement to us to bring yet more fervent zeal to the praise of God, when we hear that Christ leads our praise and is the Chief Conductor of our hymns."²

B. We share kinship with Christ.

Hebrews 2:11 NAU - "are all from one *Father*, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren,"

1. Prior to our salvation we were under God's wrath and condemnation. In Ephesians 2 Paul referred to us as "Children of wrath." Jesus called the Pharisees children of the devil.
John 8:44 NAU - "You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *nature*, for he is a liar and the father of lies."
2. In Christ we are now the children of the most high. John declared this sharp distinction.
1 John 3:10 NAU - "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother."
3. We now enjoy a sweet union with Christ and with one another. Jesus calls us His brothers.

² R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 74.

4. If we are God's children then we are brothers and sisters. We have been joined to a unique family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ.
5. We are fellow heirs with Christ. We have inherited all that pertains to Christ.
Revelation 21:7 NAU - "He who overcomes will inherit these things, and I will be his God and he will be My son."
Romans 8:17 NAU - "and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* so that we may also be glorified with *Him*."
6. The sons of God also have God's unconditional love.
1 John 3:1 NAU - "See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God; and *such* we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know *Him*."

C. What is the chief characteristic of God's family?

Romans 8:29 NAU - "For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;"

1. Paul writes we have been predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ. What is that image?
2. In **Romans 8:14** Paul equated the sons of God as being those filled with the Spirit.
Romans 8:14 NAU - "For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."
 But what does this look like?
3. The sons of God bear the family image. Peter declared that believers are partakers of the Divine nature.
2 Peter 1:4 NAU - "For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of *the* divine nature"
4. What does that family relationship look like? It is a family of holiness.
Hebrews 2:11 NAU - "For both He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one *Father*"
 - a. The word for "sanctified" refers to holiness. We are saved unto holiness.
 - b. The chief characteristic of the believer is holiness. God saved us that we might be holy.
Ephesians 1:4 NAU - "just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him."

D. Holiness is our chief pursuit in this life.

1. The Christian spends his whole life seeking holiness.
1 John 3:2-3 – "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

2 Peter 3:10-11 NAU - "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up. ¹¹ Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,"

2. Our pursuit is to reflect our elder brother. He came that we might be holy. It's been said, He became like us that we might become like Him.

Conclusion:

1. The Amazing love of God is displayed upon His chosen children.
God gave up His beloved Son Jesus that we might be made sons.
God loved us enough to give His Son.
John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."
2. Have you embraced the Son? Do you know the good news?
There is no other way to the Father. No other way to sonship. But it is available to all who will receive Him. It cannot be purchased. It can only be received.
John 1:12 NAU - "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name"
3. Those who receive Him become children of God.
Those who refuse remain the children of wrath.
Ephesians 2:3 NAU - "Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest."