

# Jesus, Our Faithful Brother



Week Four

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage:  
Hebrews 2

### SON DIVINE AND SON HUMAN

Hebrews 1 talks of Jesus as the Son of God, the ruler over the angels, and “the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person” (Heb. 1:3, NKJV). In Hebrews 2, Jesus is the Son of Man, who was made lower than the angels and who adopted human nature with all its frailty, even to the point of death (Heb. 2:7).

In Hebrews 1, God says about Jesus: “You are My Son” (Heb. 1:5, NKJV). In Hebrews 2, Jesus refers to human children as His “brethren” (Heb. 2:12).

In Hebrews 1, the Father declares the Son’s divine sovereignty (Heb. 1:8–12). In Hebrews 2, the Son affirms His faithfulness to the Father (Heb. 2:13a).

In Hebrews 1, Jesus is the divine Lord, Creator, Sustainer, and Sovereign. In Hebrews 2, Jesus is the human high priest, merciful and faithful.

In summary, the description of Jesus as a faithful and merciful Brother is depicted in the description of the Son as the ultimate manifestation of the eternal creator God (Heb. 1:1–4).



## **inScribe**

Write out Hebrews 2 from the Bible translation of your choice. If you are pressed for time, write out Hebrews 2:14–18. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.

## inGest



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?

Memorize your favorite verse in Hebrews 2. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

How does this passage reveal the deeper and experiential reality of just how close Christ can be to you?

Why was what Jesus did so much more condescending to Himself than what Moses did?



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## THE BROTHER AS A REDEEMER

The law of Moses stipulated that when a person was so poor that he had to sell his property—or even himself—in order to survive, he would receive that property or his liberty back every fifty years, on the jubilee year (Lev. 25:25–27, 47–49). The jubilee year was a “grand” Sabbath year in which debts were forgiven, properties reclaimed, and liberty proclaimed to the captives.

Fifty years was a long time to wait, however. That’s why the Law of Moses also stipulated that the nearest relative could pay the part that was still owed and thus ransom his relative much sooner.

The nearest relative was also the one who guaranteed that justice was done in the case of a murder. He was the “avenger of the blood,” who would pursue the murderer of his close relative and punish him (Num. 35:9–21).

Hebrews 2:14–16 describes us as slaves of the devil, but Jesus as our Redeemer. When Adam sinned, human beings fell under the power of Satan. As a result, we did not have the power to resist sin (Rom. 7:14–24). Worse, our transgression required a death penalty, which we could not pay (Rom. 6:23). Thus, our situation was apparently hopeless.

Jesus, however, adopted our human nature and became flesh and blood like us. He became our nearest relative and redeemed us. He was not ashamed to call us “brothers” (Heb. 2:11, ESV).

Paradoxically, by taking our nature and redeeming us, Jesus revealed His divine nature as well. In the Old Testament, the true redeemer of Israel, their closest relative, is Yahweh (e.g., Ps. 19:14; Isa. 41:14; 43:14; 44:22; Jer. 31:11; Hos. 13:14).

Hebrews says that Jesus was not ashamed to call us His brethren (Heb. 2:11). Despite being one with God, Jesus embraced us as part of His family. This solidarity contrasts with the public shaming that the readers of Hebrews suffered in their communities (Heb. 10:33).

Have you imagined what it meant for Moses to be called “the son of Pharaoh’s daughter”? Hebrews 11:24–26 reveals that Moses was a powerful figure in the most powerful empire of the time. He received the highest civil and military training and became a remarkable character. Stephen says that Moses was “mighty in words and in deeds” (Acts 7:22). Ellen G. White also says that he was “a favorite with the armies of Egypt” and that Pharaoh “determined to make his adopted grandson his successor on the throne.” (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1890), 245.) Yet, Moses abandoned all of this privilege when he chose to identify himself with the Israelites, a slave nation without education and power.

After suffering persecution and rejection, many of the early Christians began to feel ashamed of Jesus. By their actions some were in danger of putting Jesus “to an open shame” instead of honoring Him (Heb. 6:6). Thus, Paul constantly calls the readers to “hold fast” the “confession” of their faith (Heb. 4:14; 10:23, NKJV).

God wants us to recognize Jesus as our God and our Brother. As our Redeemer, Jesus has paid our debt; as our Brother, Jesus has shown us the way that we should live in order that we will “be conformed to the image of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren” (Rom. 8:29).

## SAME AND DIFFERENT

Hebrews says that Jesus adopted our human nature so that He could represent us and could die for us (Heb. 2:9, 14–16; 10:5–10). Here is the foundation of the plan of salvation and our only hope for eternal life.

The expression “flesh and blood” emphasizes the frailty of the human condition, its weakness (Eph. 6:12), lack of understanding (Matt. 16:17; Gal. 1:16), and subjection to death (1 Cor. 15:50). Hebrews says that Jesus was made like His brothers “in all things” (Heb. 2:17). This expression means that Jesus became “fully human” (NIV). Jesus did not simply “look like” or “seem to be” human; He truly was human, truly one of us.

Hebrews also says, however, that Jesus was different from us regarding sin. Jesus did not commit any sin (Heb. 4:15). And now, as High Priest, while our Brother, Jesus was “holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners” (Heb. 7:26, ESV). We have evil tendencies. Our bondage to sin begins deep inside our very nature. We are “carnal, sold under sin” (Rom. 7:14; see also 7:15–20). Pride and other sinful motivations pollute even our good actions. Jesus, however, was not marred by sin. It had to be this way. If Jesus had been “carnal, sold under sin” like us, He would have also needed a Savior. Instead, Jesus came as a Savior and offered Himself as a sacrifice “without blemish” to God for us (Heb. 9:14, ESV; 7:26–28).

Then Jesus destroyed the power of the devil by dying as the sinless offering for our sins, thus making possible our forgiveness and reconciliation with God (Heb. 2:14–17). Jesus also broke the power of sin by giving us the power to live a righteous life through His fulfillment of the new covenant promise to write the law in our hearts (Heb. 8:10). Thus, Jesus has defeated the enemy and effectively liberated us so that we can now “serve the living God” (Heb. 9:14). Satan’s final destruction, meanwhile, will come at the final judgment (Rev. 20:1–3, 10).

The apostle also says that God made Jesus “perfect through sufferings” (Heb. 2:10; see also 2:17, 18; 5:8, 9). This expression is surprising. The author has said that Jesus is “the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature” (Heb. 1:3, ESV) and that He is sinless, spotless, undefiled, and holy (Heb. 4:15; 7:26–28; 9:14; 10:5–10).

Hebrews does say, however, that Jesus underwent a process of “perfecting” that provided Him the means to save us. Jesus was perfected in the sense that He was equipped to be our Savior.

1. Jesus was “perfected” through sufferings in order to become the Captain of our salvation (Heb. 2:10). Jesus had to die on the cross as a sacrifice so that the Father could have the legal means to save us. Jesus was the perfect sacrificial offering, the only one. As God, Jesus could judge us; but, because of His sacrifice, Jesus can also save us.

2. Jesus learned obedience through sufferings (Heb. 5:8). Obedience was necessary for two things. First, obedience made His sacrifice acceptable (Heb. 9:14; 10:5–10). Second, His sufferings enabled Him to become our example (Heb. 5:9). Jesus “learned” obedience because He had never experienced it before. As God, whom would He have to obey? As the eternal Son, and one with God, He was obeyed as the ruler of the universe. Therefore, Jesus did not progress from disobedience to obedience, but from sovereignty and dominion to submission and obedience. The exalted Son of God became the obedient Son of Man.

3. Sufferings revealed Jesus as a merciful and faithful High Priest (Heb. 2:17, 18). Sufferings did not make Jesus more merciful. To the contrary, it was because of Jesus’ mercy that He volunteered to die on the cross to save us to begin with (Heb. 10:5–10; compare with Rom. 5:7, 8). Yet, it was through sufferings that the reality of Jesus’ brotherly love was truly expressed and revealed.



## inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks overall seem to point to?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

Since we have the promise of victory through Jesus, what can we do to start living up to the high calling we have in Christ?



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[www.inverseible.org/heb04-4](http://www.inverseible.org/heb04-4)



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Hebrews 11:24–26

1 Corinthians 15:50

Hebrews 5:8, 9

Hebrews 12:1–4

Matthew 10:32, 33

2 Timothy 1:8, 12

Hebrews 13:12–15



What other verses come to mind in connection with Hebrews 2?

Review your memorized verse from Hebrews 2.

## THE BROTHER AS A MODEL

Another reason why Jesus adopted our human nature and lived among us was that He could be our example, the only one who could model for us what is the right way to live before God.

In Hebrews 12:1–4, Jesus is the culmination of a long list of characters whom the apostle provides as exemplars of faith. This passage calls Jesus “the founder and perfecter of our faith” (ESV). The Greek word *archegos* (“founder”) can also be translated “pioneer.” Jesus is the pioneer of the race in the sense that He runs ahead of the believers. In fact, Hebrews 6:20 calls Jesus our “forerunner.” The word *perfecter* gives the idea that Jesus had displayed faith in God in the purest form possible. This passage teaches both that Jesus is the first one to have run our race with success and that He is the one who perfected the art of what living by faith is all about.

Hebrews 2:13 reads: “And again: ‘I will put My trust in Him.’ And again: ‘Here am I and the children whom God has given Me.’” (NKJV). What’s happening here is that Jesus said He would put His trust in God. This reference is an allusion to Isaiah 8:17, 18.

Isaiah spoke these words in the face of a terrible threat of invasion from Northern Israel and Syria (Isa. 7:1, 2). His faith contrasted the lack of faith of Ahaz, the king (2 Kings 16:5–18). God had exhorted Ahaz to trust in Him and to ask for a sign that He would deliver him (Isa. 7:1–11). God had already promised him, as a son of David, that He would protect Ahaz as His own son. Now, God graciously offered to confirm that promise with a sign. Ahaz, however, refused to ask for a sign and, instead, sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, saying, “I am your servant and your son” (2 Kings 16:7, NKJV). How sad! Ahaz preferred being “son” of Tiglath-pileser than the son of God.

Jesus, however, put His trust in God and in His promise that He will put His enemies under His feet (Heb. 1:13; 10:12, 13). God has made the same promise to us, and we need to believe Him, just as Jesus did (Rom. 16:20).

Hebrews 2:13 contains the words of Jesus to His Father talking about His brethren: “Here am I and the children whom God has given Me” (Heb. 2:13, NKJV). Patrick Gray suggests that Jesus is described here as the guardian of His brothers. The Roman system of tutela *impuberum* determined that at their father’s death, “a tutor, often an older brother, became responsible for the care of minor children and their inheritance until they reached the age of majority, thus heightening the older brother’s natural duty to take care of his younger siblings.” (*The Epistle to the Hebrews and Greco-Roman Critiques of Superstition* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 126.) This explains why Hebrews refers to us both as the siblings of Jesus as well as His children. As our older brother, Jesus is our tutor, guardian, and protector.



inVite

Where do you see Jesus in Hebrews 2?



What is Jesus saying to you through these texts?

How can we learn to put our trust in Jesus by daily making choices that reflect this trust?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



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Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?



After this week's study of the passage, what is the next important choice you need to make that reveals the condescension of Christ?

What is an important choice you need to make that reveals this condescension in public?



Read more inSight from the Spirit of Prophecy at [www.inverseible.org/heb04-7](http://www.inverseible.org/heb04-7)

**CONDESCENSION**

“At the court of Pharaoh, Moses received the highest civil and military training. The monarch had determined to make his adopted grandson his successor on the throne, and the youth was educated for his high station. ‘And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.’ Acts 7:22. His ability as a military leader made him a favorite with the armies of Egypt, and he was generally regarded as a remarkable character. Satan had been defeated in his purpose. The very decree condemning the Hebrew children to death had been overruled by God for the training and education of the future leader of His people.”

“By the laws of Egypt all who occupied the throne of the Pharaohs must become members of the priestly caste; and Moses, as the heir apparent, was to be initiated into the mysteries of the national religion. This duty was committed to the priests. But while he was an ardent and untiring student, he could not be induced to participate in the worship of the gods. He was threatened with the loss of the crown, and warned that he would be disowned by the princess should he persist in his adherence to the Hebrew faith. But he was unshaken in his determination to render homage to none save the one God, the Maker of heaven and earth. He reasoned with priests and worshipers, showing the folly of their superstitious veneration of senseless objects. None could refute his arguments or change his purpose, yet for the time his firmness was tolerated on account of his high position and the favor with which he was regarded by both the king and the people.”

“Moses was fitted to take pre-eminence among the great of the earth, to shine in the courts of its most glorious kingdom, and to sway the scepter of its power. His intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages. As historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, he stands without a peer. Yet with the world before him, he had the moral strength to refuse the flattering prospects of wealth and greatness and fame, ‘choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.’

“Moses had been instructed in regard to the final reward to be given to the humble and obedient servants of God, and worldly gain sank to its proper insignificance in comparison. The magnificent palace of Pharaoh and the monarch's throne were held out as an inducement to Moses; but he knew that the sinful pleasures that make men forget God were in its lordly courts. He looked beyond the gorgeous palace, beyond a monarch's crown, to the high honors that will be bestowed on the saints of the Most High in a kingdom untainted by sin. He saw by faith an imperishable crown that the King of heaven would place on the brow of the overcomer. This faith led him to turn away from the lordly ones of earth and join the humble, poor, despised nation that had chosen to obey God rather than to serve sin.” (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Washington, DC: Review and Herald, 1890), 245, 246.)

“After the fall of man, Satan declared that human beings were proved to be incapable of keeping the law of God, and he sought to carry the universe with him in this belief. Satan's words appeared to be true, and Christ came to unmask the deceiver. The Majesty of heaven undertook the cause of man, and with the same facilities that man may obtain, withstood the temptations of Satan as man must withstand them. This was the only way in which fallen man could become a partaker of the divine nature. In taking human nature, Christ was fitted to understand man's trials and sorrows and all the temptations wherewith he is beset. Angels who were unacquainted with sin could not sympathize with man in his peculiar trials. Christ condescended to take man's nature, and was tempted in all points like as we, that He might know how to succor all who should be tempted.



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



How have you ever been ashamed of Jesus Christ? How have you been unashamed of Him?

Why is it important for us that Jesus was not "sold under sin" as we are (Rom. 7:14)?

In what way do Moses' decisions exemplify what Jesus did for us?

Why must we never think that suffering, in and of itself, is good, even if sometimes some good can come out of it?

What was the function of suffering in Jesus' life?

How is Jesus your real-life, real-time example?

How can we learn to endure the tragedies of life while at the same time drawing hope and assurance from the Lord?

Describe in more detail how we are Jesus' siblings as well as His children.