

**Question:** In Hebrews 2:5–8, I don't understand what clues there are that imply these verses are referring to man and not Jesus? How do I know that 2:5 is referring to man because the whole world is "subject" under Jesus but evidently this is referring to man when it says the Lord has "made him for a little while lower than the angels" (2:7)? Yet, in 2:9, the writer again refers to Jesus. I'm confused.

**Answer:** The answer is found in how one interprets the author of Hebrews use of Psalm 8:4–6 the Old Testament passage that is quoted in Hebrews 2:6–8a. Due to some technical grammatical issues, scholars disagree over whether these verses are specifically referring to Jesus or humankind.

Beginning in Heb 2:5, the word "for" alludes to the content of Heb 1:5–14. In this previous section, the subject matter is how the Son (Jesus) is superior to the angels. The Greek word *oikoumene* that renders the phrase "the world to come" is used to describe the world of people and their civilizations. It means the coming inhabited earth. Thus, the author of Hebrews is speaking of the future rule of the Son and His companions (Heb 1:9) on the earth (i.e., the millennial kingdom). The point of this verse is that angels will not rule in the age to come. Rather, believers will judge angels (1 Cor 6:3).

Hebrews 2:6–8 is a quotation of Psalm 8:4–6: "What is man, that you remember him, or the son of man, that you are concerned about him? You have made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, and have appointed him over the works of your hands. You have put all things in subjection under his feet." This is where the real difficulty lies. The phrase "son of man" can be understood as a reference to Jesus (Dan 7:13–14; Matt 16:13) or humankind in general (Num 23:19). It seems best in this context to understand it as referring to mankind in general. Another debatable issue is the word translated the "angels." In the Greek Old Testament (LXX), the word *aggelous* is usually understood to refer to a supernatural messenger, although it can refer to a human messenger. However, in the Hebrew Old Testament, the word used in Psalm 8:6 is *elohim*, a word that means "God" or "gods." While *elohim* often refers to the one true God, it can also refer to the members of the heavenly assembly (Ps 82:1, 6). While some understand this as a reference to God alone, the allusion to Gen 1:26–27 suggests a broader referent, including God and angels (cf. Gen 3:5, 22). It is also worth noting that the LXX is the source of the quotation in Heb 2:7 and it reads "angels."

The author of Hebrews is saying the God who created the stars and calls them all by name (Isa 40:26) is unimaginably awesome; His wisdom, beauty, power, and dominion are beyond human comprehension. Yet, He desires to seek intimacy with the people on this puny planet and has given them great dignity and destiny. We were made to rule over the works of God's hands (Ps 8:6–8), but we forfeited this dominion in the devastation of the fall (but now we do not yet see all things subjected to him; Heb 2:8b). But by Christ's humiliation and exaltation, all things will be subjected under His feet when He returns (1 Cor 15:24–28; Phil 2:6–11), and we will live and reign with Him (Rom 5:17; 2 Tim 2:12; Rev 5:10; 20:6). This is the point of Heb 2:9: The only way that we will be able to reign is through Jesus' work and our faithfulness to persevere.

It is important to understand that bringing many sons to glory (Heb 2:10) is not a reference to taking believers to heaven. It is bringing fellow sufferers to future glory (2 Cor 4:17). When believers suffer, they become sons in the sense that they are like their Father (cf. Matt 5:44–45). The salvation (Heb 2:10) refers to our future salvation, our glorification in Christ's coming kingdom (Heb 1:14). Again, the whole thrust of this passage is dealing with a future salvation that will be realized during Christ's kingdom.