

## The Inscrutable Question: Impact of the Perfect Tense of “Lower” & “Crowned” in Heb 2:9; The Peter Principle & Satan’s Fifth Assertion

**Hebrews 2:9** - But we keep on seeing something of value, namely Jesus, and only Jesus ...

Next comes the phrase “who was made,” the perfect passive participle of:

ἐλαττώ / **elattoo** / - “having been made inferior”

perfect: This emphasizes the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, and the Crucifixion as a completed action. According to:

**Dana, H. E. and Julius R. Mantey. *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. (Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1955), 200:**

The perfect is the tense of complete action. Its basic significance is the progress of an act or state to a point of culmination and the existence of its finished results. The point of completion is always antecedent to the time implied or stated in connection with the use of the perfect. It might be graphically represented thus: —

●—.

The opening dash represents time prior to the Virgin Birth. The dot represents the Incarnation from the Virgin Birth through physical death on the cross. The closing dash represents time following the cross. From this past completed action there are permanent results about which the demons are ignorant but will be informed.

passive: The subject, Jesus Christ, receives the action of being made lower than the angels. God restored the world to a state of pristine perfection for habitation by the First Adam and gave it to him to rule. When Adam failed God decreed to give the world to Jesus Christ but only after He wins the victory of the cross and is elevated in His true humanity to a position greater than the angels'. At the appointed time the Lord will restore the world to its previous status-quo perfection in the Millennium.

participle: Indicates in the perfect tense that the completed action is antecedent to the action of the main verb which is our seeing Jesus crowned.

NOTE: An example that will illustrate the impact of the perfect tense is our Lord's proclamation of victory on the cross found in:

**John 19:30** - “It is finished!”

This is one word in the Greek, the intensive perfect passive indicative of **Τετέλεσται** / **Tetelestai** / . This statement points backward to an accomplished task, completed in full prior to the time of speaking. It indicates a present state as a result of a past completed action. Jesus, still physically alive, spoke of His work on the cross as an accomplished fact. Thus, the debt paid in judgment for our sins was not physical death but spiritual death.

Those to whom Jesus was made inferior in His true humanity were the angels, including the *Bene ha Elohim*:

παρά + ἄγγελος / **para + angelos** / - “to angels”

The fact that this is a past completed action is emphasized by the adverb of time:



βραχύς / *brachus* / - “for a brief period,” i.e., the Incarnation.

**Hebrews 2:9 - “But having been made inferior to the angels for a brief period ...**

- 1) This opening remark was an attention getter in Tartarus. The demons learn that for a brief period, Messiah was made lower in rank than theirs. They may have even assumed the possibility that the Lord’s mission to resolve humanity’s sin problem could have failed.

- 2) But such a delusion is shattered immediately by the revelation of the reason why Messiah was made lower or inferior to them. We find the preposition:

διὰ plus the accusative which indicates the reason why something happens, translated “because of.” Next comes the accusative of:

πάθημα / *pathema* / - “the suffering”

What kind of suffering is described by the direct object:

θάνατος / *thanatos* / - “death”

This refers to spiritual death suffered on the cross when our Lord was being judged as a substitute for our sins.

- 3) During the period in which our Lord was inferior to the angels He, in His true humanity, became an impeccable substitute for the sins of the world.
- 4) The judgment of those sins resulted in the suffering of the cross.
- 5) The word order of the Greek is quite different from what we see in English translations. It is at this point in our exegesis that we can straighten out the syntax:

**Hebrews 2:9 - But having been made inferior to angels for a brief period [ true humanity during the Incarnation ] because of the suffering of spiritual death, we keep on seeing something of value, Jesus and only Jesus ...**

- 6) The curse that has befallen this world following Adam’s fall is an intractable disorder which developed because of Lucifer’s mismanagement of his domain, a circumstance commented upon adroitly by:

**Chafer, Lewis Sperry. *Systematic Theology*. Vol. 2 (Dallas: Dallas Theological Seminary, 1947), 100:**

Satan’s dominant purpose is not, as the popular impression supposes, one of attempting to be *unlike* God. Satan has explicitly asserted concerning himself, as recorded in Isaiah 14:14, that his transcendent objective is to be *like* the Most High.

The system which Satan has constructed includes all the good which he can incorporate into it and be consistent in the thing he aims to accomplish. A serious question arises whether the presence of gross evil in the world is due to Satan’s intention to have it so, or whether it indicates Satan’s inability to execute all he has designed. The probability is great that Satan’s ambition has led him to undertake more than any creature could ever administer.

- 7) Our attention is drawn away from this hostile environment of the devil’s world where all is not yet subordinate to the Lord’s leadership and we focus our attention on something that catches our eye and gives us confidence and comfort in the midst of the battle.



- 8) What catches our attention is knowledge of the fact that Jesus Christ has won the strategic victory on the cross and at His session in heaven He was recognized to be higher than the angels. This is brought out by the perfect passive participle of the verb:

στεφανόω / *stephanoo* / - “crowned”

perfect: Emphasizes the session of our Lord at the right hand of the throne of God as a completed action.

Remember Dana and Mantey’s definition of the perfect tense (*Manual Grammar*, 200):

The perfect is the tense of complete action. Its basic significance is the progress of an act or state to a point of culmination and the existence of its finished results. The point of completion is always antecedent to the time implied or stated in connection with the use of the perfect. It might be graphically represented thus: —

●—.

The opening dash represents time prior to the Session. The dot represents the Session. The closing dash represents time following the Session to the present hour. From this past completed action there are permanent results about which the demons are ignorant but will be informed. For example, as King of kings and Lord of lords, Jesus Christ will return to the earth at the Second Advent and reclaim dominion over global government following his incarceration of Lucifer and his demons in the Abyss.

passive: The Lord receives the action of being crowned King of kings, a title that will become a literal development for the kingdoms of this world at the Second Advent. Satan will be dethroned as the “ruler of this world” as our Lord assumes the title for His millennial reign.

participle: Indicates with the perfect tense that the completed action is antecedent to the action of the main verb which is our seeing Jesus crowned, translated: “having been crowned.” Those things with which He is crowned are mentioned next:

δόξα καὶ τιμὴ / *doxa kai time* / - “glory and honor”