

Hebrews 2

Verses 1-4: *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His will?*

--(1) **Therefore.** . . Because the God of all creation, who spoke through the prophets in the past, and has now spoken in His Son, **therefore we** have a responsibility to respond properly to the Son of God.

--The writer continues his discussion about angels in 5, but pauses briefly for a moment of warning and admonition. (See also: **3:7-19; 6:1-8; 10:26-31**).

--**We** is an important word, as it is used throughout this warning and letter. Many commentators debate whether the writer is addressing those he sees as believers or unbelievers. I tend to think that it is both. There will always be a mixed multitude.

--What is the warning? The warning relates to *drifting* and *neglecting*.

--It is easy to hear truth without giving **the more earnest heed** to the truth. We *hear* truth but we do not *heed* truth.

--There is always going to be something in our lives pulling against the priority of the Word of God. As the old nautical saying goes: *Every wind that blows is blowing against the anchor.*

*Anchor watch & Josiah with the law lost in the temple (**2 Chron. 34:14-15**)!*

--(2) We need to give greater heed to the Son because His message is clearer, fuller, and more glorious than anything that came through the prophets or angels.

--The writer makes the point that angels were involved in the transmission of the law (**Deut. 33:2; Ps. 68:17; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19**).

--He then makes the point that under the law, all sin was judged—variously but definitely. No sins were allowable or excusable. In fact, a man was put to death for picking up sticks on the Sabbath (**Num. 15:32-36**). The drastic nature of that sin was not the punishment, but the fact that a man easily allowed the voice of God, verbally spoken at Sinai, to drift away and neglected the law of Jehovah come through angelic assistance.

--(3a) If that man picking up sticks on the Sabbath did not escape his neglect of the Mosaic law, how could anyone present expect to escape judgment for neglecting the very Son of God? The Messenger and message are so stupendous that they demand corresponding responsibility from hearers and judgment for neglecters.

--Notice, the danger is for **neglect**, not just reject, renounce, slander, or persecute. Jesus uses the same Greek word in a parable to describe the wicked servants who **made light of (Mt. 22:5)** a king's invitation to his son's marriage ceremony.

--It is dangerous to make light of **so great a salvation!** A message of good news has been spoken by God the Father, through God the Son, in the power of God the Holy Spirit. Our salvation is so great it cannot be explained in one image or by one theological term. God must give us its various shades: justification, sanctification, glorification, new birth, regeneration, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, etc.

*Stott (The Cross of Christ, pg. 165-166): "This new day is "the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2), and the blessings of "such a great salvation" (Hebrews 2:3) are so richly diverse that they cannot be neatly defined. Several pictures are needed to portray them. Just as the church of Christ is presented in Scripture as his bride and his body, the sheep of God's flock and the branches of his vine, his new humanity, his household or family, the temple of the Holy Spirit and the pillar and buttress of truth, so the salvation of Christ is illustrated by the vivid imagery of terms like *propitiation, redemption, justification* and *reconciliation*, which are to form the theme of this chapter. Moreover, as the images of the church are visually incompatible (one cannot envisage the body and the bride of Christ simultaneously), yet underlying them all is the truth that God is calling out a people for himself, so the images of salvation are incompatible (justification and redemption conjure up respectively the divergent worlds of law and commerce), yet underlying them all is the truth that God in Christ has borne our sin and died our death to set us free from sin and death. Such images are indispensable aids to human understanding of doctrine. And what they convey, being God-given, is true. Yet we must not deduce from this that to have understood the images is to have exhausted the meaning of the doctrine. For beyond the images of the atonement lies the mystery of the atonement, the deep wonders of which, I guess, we shall be exploring throughout eternity."*

--**(3b-4)** The message we can drift from and neglect, was:

- 1) **Spoken by the Lord**—the Messiah, the Son of God, God's final Word.
- 2) **Confirmed to us by those who heard Him**—attested to by the apostles as living eyewitnesses.
- 3) **God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will**—God made clear through supernatural witness that His message and Messenger were from Him (**Acts 2:22**). Especially through the coming of the Holy Spirit!

--Whatever the Hebrews leaned on in terms of their cultural OT history, they had a greater witness now in the Son of God, faithful witnesses, and supernatural works. To drift from or neglect Jesus Christ would bring greater judgment than drifting from or neglecting the Mosaic law.

Verses 5-9: For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. But one testified in a certain place, saying:

***“What is man that You are mindful of him,
Of the son of man that You take care of him?
You have made him a little lower than the angels;
You have crowned him with glory and honor,
And set him over the works of Your hands.
You have put all things in subjection under his feet.”***

For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone.

--(5a) After warning these Hebrews not to drift from or neglect the message spoken by the Lord, he resumes his discussion about the supremacy of Jesus over angels.

--He will now make the point that ***the world to come*** will not be ruled by angels, but by the Son of Man. Angels never have ruled over God’s people. They are not kings. They are servants.

--(5b-8a) To prove his point he quotes from **Psalm 8:4-6**. This Psalm is quoted four times in the New Testament and always in reference to Jesus Christ (**Mt. 21:16; 1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:20-22**).

--David is contemplating how God has thought of, minded, and cared for man.

--He was created a little lower than the angels—being material, earthly, and mortal while they are spiritual and heavenly beings. Though this is only for a time. Commentators argue here whether the reference is in relation to ***a little lower*** as a created being, or in relation to just a little time. Clearly, this is a both and situation whichever position you take.

--Yet, while contemplating man as man in God’s created order, David proclaims man will be crowned with glory and honor and have all of God’s works in subjection to him.

--(8b-9) The writer doubles down on the truth, claiming ***all*** means ***all***. Everything must one day be put under man, but also acknowledges that is not what we currently see.

--***But we see Jesus!*** In Jesus we see a true Man. Also, made lower than angels. Why? ***For suffering of death***. Jesus needed to be a true, material male human so that He could suffer and die. How else could He purchase the church of God with His own blood?! (**Acts 20:28**).

--He was crowned with glory and honor, before and after His death, that He ***might taste death for everyone***. In a sense, Christ come in human flesh made the scope of His work on the cross universal to all of humanity—everyone He was united to.

--His death accomplished something for everyone. How? ***By the grace of God!*** God the Father was delighted to give heaven’s best, God the Son, for us. What a message!

Verses 10-13: For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying:

"I will declare Your name to My brethren:

In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You."

And again:

"I will put My trust in Him."

And again:

"Here am I and the children whom God has given Me."

--(10) ***For it was fitting for Him.*** . . As Creator, who made all things and would bring all things to their appointed ends, He has rightly chosen the means to get to His own ends. It was a bold claim by the writer because the Son of God come in our flesh to suffer was *not* something Jews or Greeks would have understood as ***fitting***.

--How else could God have fittingly made Jesus Christ the Captain of our salvation? The Greek word for ***captain*** (*archegos*) does mean *prince* (**Acts 3:15; 5:31**), *author* (**Heb. 12:2**), or *chief*, but it also has the idea of *one that takes the lead in anything as an example*—the line leader.

--Jesus Christ is God's Captain who fittingly led mankind, humanity, to their ultimate end.

--Jesus Christ fittingly satisfied God's justice and mercy on the cross (**Rom. 3:21-26**).

--Jesus Christ fittingly fulfilled the Word of God through His sufferings (**Lk. 24:26+46**).

--Jesus Christ fittingly became the firstborn out from among the dead. The beginning of God's new creation.

--Jesus Christ fittingly fulfilled God's plan as a perfect and holy servant to the glory of God.

--(11) The work of Christ has made an unbreakable bond between Him and those who are sanctified in Him by faith (**Acts 26:17-18**). We are now ***all of one***. We now stand in the same set apart position to God and His purposes as does Jesus Christ.

--Jesus Christ is not ashamed of us! Even though we are still ***being sanctified*** by Him. We are truly His brothers and sisters because of His work as the Son of Man. He is not ashamed of us because He is not ashamed of His own work.

--(12-13) That oneness, that brotherhood and union was always God's intention.

--The writer makes that clear by quoting **Psalm 22:22** as an expression of the Messiah's joy in being the Captain of His brethren's salvation (**Mt. 29:9-10**).

--Also, by quoting **Isaiah 8:17-18**. First, as an expression of the Messiah's trust in the Father as the Son of Man, and then the corporate outcome of that trust for mankind—***the children whom God has given Me***. Jesus' act of taking on our flesh and blood was fitting in relation to God's desire to bring many sons and daughters to glory! Are you a child of God?

Verses 14-18: *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.*

--(14-15) Jesus Christ became like those He would make His brethren. He took on flesh and blood. We are flesh and blood by creation—involuntarily. He became so voluntarily. *Which is why He is the One Mediator between God and man. Only in Jesus can the love and holiness of God come together with the life and obligation of man.*

--Why? That through death He could undo all that death had done.

--How does the devil have **the power of death**? I don't rightly know. My guess is because Satan was the means of death's entrance into the world.

--Only in Jesus Christ will Satan's head be crushed, his being imprisoned for a thousand years, and ultimately his person judged in Gehenna for all eternity.

--In defeating death and Satan, Jesus Christ sets mankind free from the fear of death which the devil leverages against us for his own purposes.

--(16) Jesus Christ did not become an angel, but He did become a man (**Gal. 3:16**)! Jesus' *giving aid* or *taking on* here is in the present tense. It means it is still something He is presently doing. The Man Christ Jesus stands in heaven on our behalf.

--(17) **Therefore.** . . because Jesus Christ has fittingly become our Captain through suffering and death, and is crowned with glory and honor, He also properly becomes our active High Priest in the things of God.

--The revelation of Jesus' role as our High Priest seems very abrupt, but it fits in relation to His continued role regarding His brethren, and was also something they may have already been familiar with. (Though one cannot be dogmatic about how much they were familiar with. It could have also been a unique and timely revelation for these Hebrews believers.)

--Interestingly, Jesus' position and ministry as our High Priest is only named in the book of Hebrews (**2:17; 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:5+10; 6:20; 7:26; 8:1; 9:11; 10:21**). Not even in Revelation where Jesus is seen as active and working in relation to the heavenly throne, altar, and temple.

--God always intended to maintain a unique relationship with mankind. He didn't plan on sending His Son to die, return to heaven, and live as a distant God. **Made like His brethren**, He retains unique relationships to His brethren—High Priest, Bridegroom, King of kings, Lord or lords, Savior, Brother, Friend, Lamb, Lion, etc.

--His High Priestly ministry is a fitting revelation in this context because of relation how ***He had to be made like His brethren***. Taking on flesh and blood, He becomes a ***merciful and faithful*** High Priest of those who will follow as sanctified priests and kings in His kingdom.

--Merciful and faithful means He gets the job done (faithful) but does so in the kindest way possible (merciful).

--***To make propitiation for the sins of the people***. . . Of course, making atonement for the sins of the people would be the pinnacle of the work of every human high priest from Aaron on. Thinking of a high priest would take every Hebrews mind to the day of atonement.

--The difference is the Jesus didn't enact a ceremony in obedience. He lived the fulfillment of the ceremony as High Priest and Lamb of God. He gave Himself as the sacrifice.

--Propitiation is the heavenly—Godward payment righteously required for sin. We are pardoned by God because our sin was punished by God. Forgiveness is available because sin has been paid for. God does not forgive sin in the sense of ignoring punishment or condemnation. God is Just and the Justifier.

****Romans 8:3: For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh,****

--The Hebrews wanted their Messiah, but struggled with Him as the Lamb of God! They didn't know that the role of the Lamb of God is what fittingly leads Him to fulfilling the role of the Lion of Judah. This was their stumbling block (**Mt. 16:21-22; 17:22-23; Lk. 24:25-26**).

--**(18)** Having suffered for all our sin, and having been tempted to the farthest points, He knows how to minister divine help to the needs of His brethren.

--How was Jesus tempted? He was tempted *in the flesh* but not *from the flesh*. He did not have wicked lustful desires like us, but He did hunger. He was tired. He felt sorrow, weakness, anger, and pressure enough to sweat great drops of blood!

--The world and the devil also pressed against Him with all their sinful might. Having never relented, He felt the pressure of temptation to its fullest extent—something you and I will never know.

****Saphir (The Epistle to the Hebrews, pg.160): "We are comforted and upheld when we remember the humanity of Jesus now enthroned in glory, even as He in His dealings with us remembers what He endured upon earth."****

--Jesus' suffering, temptation, and death were very practical truths for these Hebrews who were presently in a time of great trial and suffering themselves. That Jesus would be faithful and merciful as an understanding High Priest would mean much to them, and should continue to mean much to us.

****4:6: Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.****