

Hebrews Chapter 2

Verses 1-4

The Book of Hebrews contains five warning passages (2:1-4; 3:7 - 4:13; 5:11 - 6:20; 10:19-39; and 12:18-29).

These passages contain much exhortation but also some explicit warnings, a danger sign.

This first passage warns: Do not neglect Christ's message.

Since God has no greater messenger than His Son, He has no more important message than the gospel which the Son has given.

And if the law given through angels was steadfast, producing sure judgment, how shall we escape, if we ignore the sure message of the Son?

This message was proclaimed by Christ to His apostles and then by the apostles to the author of Hebrews (verse 3).

In order to drive home the importance of the superiority of the Son of God over the angels, the writer urges the readers to respond.

"We":

This includes all those who are Hebrews.

Some had given intellectual assent to the doctrine of Messiah's superiority to the angels, but had not yet committed themselves to His as God and Lord.

He deserves their worship as much as He deserves the worship of the angels.

Hebrews 2:1 "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let [them] slip."

"Earnest heed ... let them slip":

Both phrases have nautical connotations.

The first refers to mooring a ship, tying it up at the dock.

The second was often used of a ship that had been allowed to drift past the harbor.

The warning is to secure oneself to the truth of the gospel, being careful not to pass by the only harbor of salvation.

The closest attention must be paid to these very serious matters of the Christian faith.

The readers in their tendency to apathy are in danger of making a shipwreck of their lives (6:19).

It appears to me, from the Scripture above, that Paul is trying to tell us the importance of learning God's ways and then living the life God would have for us.

We must not only be saved, but walk in that salvation.

These Scriptures from Proverbs tell us the best.

Proverbs 2:1-6 "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee;" "So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, [and] apply thine heart to understanding;" "Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, [and] liftest up thy voice for understanding;" "If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as [for] hid treasures;" "Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God." "For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth [cometh] knowledge and understanding."

In our society today, it seems as if the standards that God has given us in the Bible are being totally ignored.

Men are doing whatever is right in their own sight.

This society is interested in fulfilling the lust of the flesh.

The only solution to the problems we face is a return to God and His ways.

Hebrews 2:2 "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;"

“If”:

“The Greek term assumes a fulfilled condition and here carries the idea.

“In view of the fact that ...”.

Transgression and disobedience”:

The former means to step across the line, in an overt sin of commission.

The latter carries the idea of shutting one’s ears to that of God’s commands, thereby committing a sin of omission.

Both are willful, serious and require just judgment.

Hebrews 2:3 "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard [him];"

“How shall we escape”:

If disobedience to the older covenant of law brought swift judgment, how much more severe will be the judgment of disobedience to the New Covenant gospel of salvation, which was mediated by the Son who is superior to the angels (Matthew 10:14-15; 11:20-24)?

The messenger and message of the New Covenant are greater than the messengers and message of the older covenant.

The greater the privilege; the greater the punishment for disobedience or neglect (see 10:29; and Luke 12:47).

“By them that heard”:

This phrase reveals the succession of evangelism.

That generation of Hebrews would not have heard if the previous generations of witnesses had not passed the message along (1 Tim 2:5-7).

The angels who followed Lucifer sinned in full knowledge.

They were in the very presence of God and still decided to go against God and follow Lucifer.

Isaiah 14:12 "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! [how] art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"

Revelation 12:4 "And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born."

It is much worse to sin in full knowledge than it is to sin unknowingly.

These fallen angels (devil spirits), recognized Jesus, because they had been in heaven with Him.

When they came into contact with Jesus, they would ask Him if He had come to torment them before time.

Matthew 8:29 " And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

They know that their fate is to burn in the lake of fire.

Revelation 20:10 "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [are], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

1 Corinthians 10:12 "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Mark 16:15-16 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

There are only 2 ways to go.

One way belief in Jesus leads to heaven.

To reject Jesus as your Savior brings damnation.

"Believeth" means to continually believe.

You must not put off salvation.

To put off salvation is to reject it for right now.

There may not be tomorrow.

1 Thessalonians 5:3 "For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape."

There is a great falling away of even the Christians, what in the world will happen to them who do not believe?

1 Peter 4:17-18 "For the time [is come] that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if [it] first [begin] at us, what shall the end [be] of them that obey not the gospel of God?" "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

Hebrews 2:4 "God also bearing [them] witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"

"Signs ... wonders ... miracles ... gifts":

The supernatural powers demonstrated by Jesus and by His apostles were the Father's divine confirmation of the gospel of Jesus Christ, His Son (John 10:38; Acts 2:22; Romans 15:19; and 1 Corinthians 14:22).

This authentication of the message was the purpose of such miraculous deeds.

"The Holy Ghost":

The epistle's first reference to the Holy Ghost refers in passing to His ministry of confirming the message of salvation by means of miraculous gifts.

Mentioned elsewhere in the epistle are the Holy Ghost's involvement in the revelation of Scripture (3:7; 10:15), in teaching (9:8), in pre-salvation operations (6:4), perhaps His convicting work (10:29), common grace, and in ministry to Christ (9:14).

God verified the Son's message with miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.

The author states that these sign gifts were given to the first-generation witnesses.

He does not suggest that his readers possessed these same miraculous gifts.

The phrase "gifts" of the Holy Ghost Himself upon every believer (Rom. 8:9; Gal. 3:5; Eph. 1:13), or more likely it refers to the gifts given by the Spirit (Rom. 12; 1 Cor. 12).

The miraculous sign gifts of the Holy Ghost were present in the first century to confirm apostolic revelation (2 Cor. 12:12; Heb. 2:2-4), and are not expected today.

Just as it is necessary to erect a scaffolding to aid construction when a building is being erected, so sign gifts were the spiritual scaffolding used by God to give credibility to His revelation which became the foundation of the church.

When the written Word of God was complete, God removed the scaffolding.

These gifts were given primarily as signs for the Jews (1 Cor. 1:22).

Also, as the apostles were primarily communicating an oral tradition, they needed signs to authenticate their message (2 Thess. 2:15).

When considering a sign gift, one should remember that gifts, such as the gift of apostles, were foundational gifts needed in the first century.

And were characterized by certain qualifications that could not be met today (Acts 1:21-22).

Also, Paul specifically indicated that some gifts would cease (1 Cor. 13:8), and he referred to miracles seemingly in the past tense.

They were still prevalent at the time of writing (verse 3).

The sign gifts would include apostles (Eph. 4:11), healing (1 Cor. 12:9), tongues, miracles and interpretations of tongues (1 Cor. 12:10).

Some might add to that list the discernment of spirits (1 Cor. 12:10).

Just as God gave Moses the power to do miracles before the pharaoh, He gave the disciples power to perform miracles before the people.

We read that Jesus did so many miracles that if they were all written down there would not be enough books in the whole world to hold them all.

John 21:25 "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen."

No one but God could bring sight to a man who had been blind from birth.

Everyone should have believed who saw these fantastic miracles of God, but they did not. Jesus told them if they did not believe for any other reason to believe Him for the works.

John 10:37-38 "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." "But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father [is] in me, and I in him."

Notice (in verse 4 above), that all of the miracles are according to God's will.

Paul found this to be true when he prayed three times for God to remove the thorn in his flesh, and God said no.

Signs and wonders will still follow those who believe.

The difference in Jesus and us, is that we must do these miracles in Jesus' name.

Read the 14th chapter of John beginning with the 12th verse.

I will give just two verses here.

John 14:12-13 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater [works] than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Notice in verse 12 who can do this, "he that believeth".

Verses 5-9

If Christ became a Man and partook of death, how can He be superior to the angels?

This apparent contradiction is presently answered as reasonable and logical.

The writer states that the angels do not have authority in the world to come.

Throughout the past and present ages angels have administered judgment on man: at Sodom (Gen. 19:13), on Israel (2 Sam. 24:15-17), on kings (Acts 12:23), during the Great Tribulation (Rev. chapters 8, 9).

But in the age to come angels will have no authority over the saints.

In fact, the saints will judge angels (1 Cor. 6:3).

Quoting (Psalm 8), the author shows that man will rule in God's coming age.

Psalm 8 describes man as made by God a little lower than the angels.

"A Little" (Greek brachu ti) has two possible interpretations.

It can refer to time (for a little while), or degree (a little lower).

Both concepts are true, but the second fits the context better.

Although God has made man slightly lower than the angels for the present, He also has crowned him with glory and honor and set him over His creation.

Man, is the capstone and crown of God's creation.

Into man's hands God will ultimately place His creation.

As He proclaimed from the moment of creation (Gen. 1:26, 28), God will ultimately place His creation into man's hands through Christ.

By death Christ will regain for man what he lost by sin and death, and that was namely, the dominion of the world.

The author interprets all things to mean that God left nothing, including angels, independent of man's dominion.

So as Man, Jesus will rule the earth.

He to whom world dominion is divinely committed is greater than the angels, who do not have this privilege.

Hebrews 2:5 "For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak."

"World":

The term refers to the inhabited earth.

The reference is to the great millennial kingdom (Zech. 14:9; Rev. 20:1-5).

Angels will not reign over the messianic kingdom.

Revelation 11:15 "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become [the kingdoms] of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever."

Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy [is] he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

We can all clearly see that the angels will not rule.

Jesus will be the supreme ruler and His followers [Christians] will rule with Him as His subordinates.

Hebrews 2:6 "But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

“Certain place”:

This is not an indication that the writer was ignorant of the source of the quotation that follows.

The location of the quotation is not as significant as its divine authorship.

Perhaps it is significant that the author of Hebrews is not identified either.

The writer may have desired that his readers understand that the Holy Spirit is the real author of all Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:21).

“Him ... Son of Man”:

Both refer to mankind, not to Christ.

The passage asks why God would ever bother with man.

As the following verses demonstrate (Verses 9-10), the incarnation of Christ is the greatest proof of God’s love and regard for mankind.

Christ was not sent in the form of an angel.

He was sent in the form of a man.

This son of man is not Jesus.

If this were speaking of Jesus, Son would be capitalized.

Another reason we know this is not speaking of Jesus is that Jesus here is the one visiting the son of man.

In our church services, I love to sing the song "WHO AM I".

In this song, it says who am I that a King would bleed and die for?

It also says who am I that He would pray "not my will thine for"?

The answer I may never know; why He ever loved me so.

If we stop and really think about this, it is almost unbelievable.

Why would God the Father be willing to sacrifice His only begotten Son so that someone as unworthy as I am might live?

It is a big question, isn't it?

1 John 4:10 "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins."

Propitiation means atonement.

Hebrews 2:7 "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:"

"Angels":

Angels were given supernatural powers by the Creator.

They have continual access to the throne of God (Job 1:6; 2:1; Rev. 5:11), and they are not subject to death.

When Jesus came to the earth, He took on the form of flesh that He might be tempted in all the ways we are.

He took on the flesh of man that He might relate to us better.

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Hebrews 4:15 "For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin."

Jesus was tempted in all things when Satan tempted Him 40 days and nights while Jesus was doing His fasting.

Jesus did not succumb to the temptation, but withstood the devil.

He also tells us, if we will withstand the devil, he will flee from us.

James 4:7 "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Hebrews 2:8 "Thou hast 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 see not yet all things put under him."

"Subjection":

In spite of the superiority of angels to mankind, God had originally placed the administration of the earth into the hands of mankind (Gen. 1:26-28).

Due to the Fall (Gen. 3), however, mankind has been incapable of fulfilling that divinely ordained position.

Matthew 28:18 "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

We know this was true even when Jesus walked the earth in His house of flesh.

When He told the sea to quiet down and it did, the disciples were amazed that even the sea had to obey Him.

He spoke to unclean spirits and they had to leave.

Even the 2000 devil spirits asked permission of Jesus to go into the hogs that ran violently into the sea.

He had to give permission for them to go, because they were subject to Him.

We could go on and on about how three times he told the spirit to go back into someone that was assumed dead.

Jesus is the God of the living and the dead.

Revelation 5:13 "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, [be] unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

To sum up this lesson, we would have to say that Jesus Christ our Lord is also King of kings and Lord of lords that the real power and authority is the Word of God; (spoken and written).

We must truly accept the spoken and written Word as absolute Truth and continue in the teaching of both to the end.

Hebrews Chapter 2 Questions

1. In verse 1, why are we told that we should take earnest heed to the things we have heard?
2. After we learn God's ways, what is the next step we must take?
3. In Proverbs 2-4, we are told that we should search for the truths of God as one would look for what?
4. Who giveth wisdom?
5. What is the mistake being made in our society today?
6. What is the only solution to our problems?
7. What is the most important question asked in Hebrews 2-3?
8. Why can the angels who followed Lucifer not be forgiven?
9. What portion of the angels in heaven followed Lucifer?
10. What are these fallen angels referred to on the earth?
11. Why did they recognize Jesus when He cast them out of people?
12. What is the terrible fate awaiting the devil, and the beast, and the false prophet?
13. What warning is given to those who think they are standing?
14. What does this tell us is possible?
15. Mark 16:16 tells us who will be saved, who are they?
16. What does believeth mean?
17. To reject Jesus as our Savior brings what?

18. Where does judgment begin?
19. How did God bear witness that what they were teaching was the Truth?
20. We could say that miracles are according to whose will?
21. Name 2 other people God gave miracle ability to, besides Jesus.
22. How many miracles did Jesus do?
23. Does God always do a miracle when we pray?
24. Give one example when God said no.
25. In whose name do we do miracles?
26. How long shall the saints reign with Christ on the earth?
27. How do we know that son of man is not Jesus in Hebrews 2-6?
28. What question do most Christians ask themselves about God giving His Son to save us?
29. Why can Jesus know the temptations and hurts that we feel, if He was God the Son?
30. Hebrews 2-8 says that all things are subject to Jesus, name 3 different things that happened when He was on earth that let us know this is true.
31. Who is Jesus God of?
32. How can we sum this lesson up?