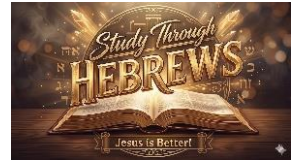




**For A Little While,  
Made A Little Lower Than The Angels  
(Heb 2:1-9)  
(Part 1 of 2)**



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***2:1 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3a how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?***

Here in 2:1-4 we come to the first of five warnings contained within the book of Hebrews. This is a warning about neglect, it is a warning about drifting.

The therefore is placed here as a reference to all that the writer of Hebrews has stated thus far, as well as the quotations we reviewed last week from the Old Testament Canon about the Son of God. We should be reminded of the sevens points about Jesus that we saw two weeks ago, as well as the seven quotes we saw last week.

The writer is building on all the things that he has said about Jesus up to this point, **Therefore**.

- Because **Jesus is the only begotten** of the Father, uniquely God's Son.
- Because **Jesus is the King** whose throne will never end, who rules with a scepter of righteousness, who loves righteousness and hates iniquity.
- Because **Jesus is the eternal Creator**, who laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of His hands.
- Because **this same Jesus** (the exalted God-man) is now **seated** at the right hand of the Father.
- Because this **Jesus is the One** who **gave his life**, who **shed His blood unto death at Calvary**, so that you and I might be saved.

**Therefore**, because these things are all true, ***therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.***

The first thing that should capture our attention is the author's use of **"we"**.

Notice what he is saying for he includes himself in the declaration, it is not a "you guys" need to pay attention, rather this is a **we must pay closer attention**, to the things that we have heard.

The Greek word translated **closer** being **περισσότερος (perissoterōs)**, it means **greater**, more **abundantly**, more **supremely**. The Greek word translated **attention** is **προσέχω (prosechō)**, meaning **devotion, watching, or serving**.

Because of what Jesus has done, because of his supremacy, because all the things that the writer has explained in Hebrews chapter 1 are true.

**"We"**, his readers, himself, and you and I, must, it is **absolutely necessary** that you and I give this our **greatest attention**, in fact we must give these truths our **highest devotion**.

The truth of who Jesus really is (God incarnate) and what He has done for us, offered Himself for us, so that we might be purified from our sins. These great truths **demand our highest devotion and our greatest commitment**.

**APPLICATION:** Have these truth claims about Jesus changed our lives. Does Jesus and the truth claims of the gospel have our full attention and our highest devotion?

If not, if we have simply put Jesus on the “shelf” of our lives, with all our other stuff, if He has never secured, I mean really secured our attention, it is possible and even I dare say likely, that we will drift away from Him.

This is a nautical metaphor. It is not one of active rejection, but of passive drifting. We have all been there, we have all had seasons of drift, but the writer of Hebrews is warning of drifting that carries you away from Christ, away from fellowship of the church, away from Bible study, away from prayer, tragically away from Jesus. .

Johnson D.E. “The term translated “pay attention” frequently had this general sense of giving heed to something of import (e.g., 7:13; Luke 21:34; 1 Tim. 4:13). Here it is contrasted with a verb meaning to “drift away,” describing a ship loosened from its mooring and at the mercy of strong currents.”

Let me give you an observation of over 30 years as a believer. If we are not anchored in Christ, if He is not everything to us, it is only a matter of time, before we will find ourselves drifting, drifting away from Him.

The **Greek word** here is a **Hapax Legomenon**, but its meaning seems clear enough.

**AS YOU CONSIDER THIS:** A departure from the faith, by those who profess faith, normally happens as a slow, step-by-step, slipping or drifting away.

**Here the writer is warning his readers (you and I) of the danger of drifting away. The danger of hearing the truth, but seemingly never fully embracing the truth.** The danger of hearing for a time and simply sliding, drifting, or slipping away.

**This warning** is contained in other verses in the Bible, it is not unique to the book of Hebrews. Let me show you a few.

*12 Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. (Heb 3:12, ESV).*

*1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, (I Tim 4:1, ESV).*

*3 For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, 4 and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. (II Tim 4:3-4, ESV).*

*13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. (Luk 8:13, ESV).*

*20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: “The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire.” (II Pet 2:20-22, ESV).*

This last reference should our attention. Peter, seems to be saying that we would be much better off to have never come to church, to have never joined the Truth Seekers class, never dabbled for a bit in religion, than to have joined, heard, confessed, and then simply lost interest and returned to our previous life as if nothing had happened.

Let me set this up for us a different way. The Philippian Jailer asked Paul an amazing question, do you remember:

*29 And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:29-31, ESV).*

Let's turn that question around. **What must a person do to be lost?**

The answer is quite simple. A person needs to do nothing to be lost. Apart from truly placing faith in Jesus, we are lost. **We are adrift!** We must stop the drifting and close with Christ, else we will certainly be lost!

**Before we even read the next words** of the writer of Hebrews, I want all of us to sense the full weight of **sliding back, the danger of drifting away.**

Let's hear with great clarity, the writer of Hebrews: Warning us beware, lest we simply drift away!

***Vs 2 For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, 3a how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?***

The message declared by angels, what is the writer talking about?

Although angels are not mentioned in the account of Moses receiving the law at Mt Sinai (Exodus 19-40), they are mentioned in other places including in Deuteronomy where Moses recalls the inauguration of the Sinaitic covenant.

In a few different places (Hebrews 2:2 being one of them) the Bible declares that angles (those powerful beings we discussed last week) were **present** and in **some way active** in the **giving of the law at Mt Sinai**. Let me show you:

*2 He said, "The LORD came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came from the ten thousands of holy ones, with flaming fire at his right hand. (Deut 33:2, ESV).*

*17 The chariots of God are twice ten thousand, thousands upon thousands; the Lord is among them; Sinai is now in the sanctuary. (Ps 68:17, ESV).*

**Stephen is his sermon:** *52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, 53 you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it." (Acts 7:52-53, ESV).*

*19 Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. (Gal 3:19, ESV).*

So clearly, the angels were **involved** in the giving of the law at Mt Sinai and the writer of Hebrews is making an argument from the lesser to the greater. Since the message declared by angles proved to be reliable, it proved to be **firm**, it proved to be **steadfast**, it proved to be **trustworthy**.

Since that is true and indeed even more: *Vs 2b and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution.*

And those who disobeyed the law, those who transgressed the law, those who were disobedient to that law, received a righteous and just repayment or reward for their sins.

Of course his point is correct, under the Old Covenant, those who broke the law paid whatever the cost of their transgression, as outlined by the law.

Whether repaying back an item that had been stolen, or forfeiting one's life for a capital offense "**every transgression**" received a fair and righteous retribution.

If these things are true of the Sinaitic covenant:

- 1) It proved to be reliable
- 2) Those who broke its codes were punished.

**If those things are true and without a doubt they are**, then we come to the writer's point:

*Vs 3 - how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?*

If we **neglect**, if we **reject**, if we **turn away** from, if we **slide back** from, this "**great salvation**" (we will talk about that in a second), how shall we escape?

This is a rhetorical question; it is an overhead question. This is where the answer is self-evident in the original audience and in you and I right now.

Here is the writer's point. If the message at Mt Sinai, which was in some way delivered by angels, came at a cost to those who rejected it. How much more so is that true of those who would reject God's final message spoken by His Son?

The superiority of God's final message is shown not only in its messenger (the Lord) but also in its contents of the message (**great salvation**).

The message the Lord brought was a message about a great salvation. Theologically, salvation gathers into a single concept redemption, reconciliation, atonement, grace, repentance, forgiveness, justification, adoption, faith, conversion, regeneration, sanctification, and perseverance. The message of the Son is message about a **great salvation**.

Whatever name we might give to the message delivered at Mt Sinai, (the ten words, the ten commandments, the decalogue), the message that the angles had some part in delivering, we would likely not call it a "**great salvation**." But, that is the message brought to us by the Son.

How much greater the cost to those who reject the superior message that was brought to us by the Son, especially when we considered what happened to those who rejected the message that was in some way brought by angels at Mt Sinai.

If God was serious about the message that was in some way brought by angels. How much more serious, do you suppose, God the Father is with the message (of **great salvation**) that His Son brought and that His Son laid down His life to secure.

**APPLICATION:** This message is a message of great salvation, bought and brought to us by the Son.

**Vs 3 - how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?**

**The answer. We (including the writer) WILL NOT ESCAPE, if we reject or even neglect this message!**

**This is as serious as a warning gets in reference to drifting away, sliding back, or returning to our prior life as if nothing happened.**

**May this ring in our ears, may we shout this from the housetops. To turn from the truth of the precious gospel as if it were nothing, after having heard the gospel is a very dangerous endeavor!**

C. H. Spurgeon: “Neglect is as ruinous as distinct and open opposition.”

Cockerill, G.L. “To neglect this salvation is to despise God’s revelation and treat it as inconsequential.”

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***Vs 3b-4 It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, 4 while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.***

For a moment, the subject shifts, to this “**great salvation.**” In considering this “**great salvation**” the writer first writes that it was declared by the Lord Himself!

Pause, I want you to see this: in verse 2 we were told that the Sinaitic (Old) covenant was **declared by angels**, here the writer of Hebrews is further juxtaposing the declaration of the Old Covenant with the declaration of the New Covenant. The writer is telling us that the New Covenant was at first declared by not by angles, but by the Son, the Lord, Himself.

The words translated declared is the exact same Greek word in both cases. The point is clear, the Old Covenant is some way was declared by angles. The New Covenant is declared by the One who created the angels, the New Covenant is declared by the One who is vastly superior to the angels.

Not by angles, but by the **One who created all things**, the One who **sustains all things**, the one who will one day **roll up this whole shooting match**. That is who *declared* the New Covenant.

The first thing you should see about the greatness of the New Covenant when compared to the Old is the initial herald:

- The Old Covenant: Angles
- The New Covenant: King Jesus

But it is not just the Son, notice what the writer says next. The New Covenant was also **attested to us**, by **those who heard**. This would seem to indicate the apostles, the inner circle. It was declared by the Lord and it was attended by the apostles (at a minimum those who heard if directly from Jesus):

- The writer is saying that it was confirmed and established to us, by those who immediately heard the Lord (directly)

- We are not talking about a message given to our Fathers, we are talking about a message given to “us” (Hebrews 1:2).
- Keep in mind, at this time many were still slave who had heard that message directly from King Jesus!

Now clearly the author seems to be saying that he heard the gospel from those who heard it directly from Jesus.

This is often used as a proof text that Paul did not write Hebrews.

For Paul describes how he learned the gospel:

*11 For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. 12 For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. (Ga 1:11–12, ESV).*

But we should not forget that in the letter to Galatians, Paul is definitely not saying he did not hear the gospel from others along the way, we know he did.

Remember who was guarding the garments when Stephen was stoned. Paul.

He was there when Stephen gave his massive defense and said things like this:

*51 “You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. 52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, 53 you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.” (Acts 7:51–53, ESV).*

Further still, God had Vs 4: ***also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.***

- God had also bore witness of the message of the gospel through signs, wonders, and various miracles.
- God had also bore witness of the gospel by gifts of the Holy Spirit that were distributed (to believers) according to His will.

Cockerill, G. L.: “It was God, however, who used this human witness to confirm his message. He is the one who spoke it “through the Lord” in the beginning. He is the one who bore supporting testimony to the message of his witnesses by granting “signs and wonders and various miracles and apportionments of the Holy Spirit.”

Throughout the New Testament we find that “signs,” “wonders,” and especially “miracles” are the work of the Holy Spirit who is poured out on God’s people because of the work of the exalted Christ.

Paul said this in his close of the book of Romans:

*17 In Christ Jesus, then, I have reason to be proud of my work for God. 18 For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me to bring the Gentiles to obedience—by word and deed, 19 by the power of signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God—so that from Jerusalem and all the way around to Illyricum I have fulfilled the ministry of the gospel of Christ; (Rom 15:17-19, ESV).*

**Do not miss the fourfold symphony of witnesses to the message of the gospel:**

- 1) It was declared by King Jesus.
- 2) It was declared by those who were present and heard King Jesus (the apostles).
- 3) God the Father bore witness of the message through signs, wonders, and various miracles.
- 4) God the Holy Spirit bore witness in his distribution of spiritual gifts empowering the church.

**The point, the New Covenant is superior to the old even in its method of distribution!**

*Vs 5-8a For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. 6 It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? 7 You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, 8a putting everything in subjection under his feet."*

What the author is going to do now is contrast angels with man (in particular) the "son of man."

Johnson, D. E. "Scholarly opinion is divided over whether our author treats Psalm 8 as a straightforward messianic prophecy of the Son's brief humiliation and subsequent exaltation or as a forecast of humanity's destiny, which finds its first fulfillment in Jesus."

Unlike the quotes from chapter 1 which were clearly and primarily Messianic, this quote, at least according to many scholars is different.

By quoting Psalm 8, and applying it to Jesus, I believe we should see two things:

- 1) The New Testament authors see Jesus throughout the Old Testament texts, it is almost like, knowing who He is now, they are looking for the indicator, in every text of the Old Testament, that lifts the text above the mundane and points to Jesus.
- 2) I believe the author chooses these verses intentionally to highlight the humanity of Jesus.

Consider, He has already proven that the universal heir of all things, is the exalted Son.

It seems, with this quotation, the writer initiates the claim that the One in charge of the future world, is also a man. The One with whom all things have been put into subjection is the exalted God-Man Jesus.

When the writer speaks of the "*world to come*", it is the world "*of which we are speaking.*"

The world to come, of which we are speaking, is the world where the Son stepped out of eternity and into time in the person of the Son of man. It is the world where the Son of Man lived a perfect life, it is the world where the Son of Man offered up Himself for the purification of sins, it is the world where the Son of Man is seated at the right hand of the Father. This is the world, which the writer is speaking to his audience about.

It is noteworthy that the world of which the writer is speaking, God the Father did not subject to the angels.

The angels are ministering spirits sent forth the minister, having the world subjected to them was never the plan!

It is this point, that the author refers to something that was testified "**somewhere.**"

Here the Human author of the quote is a someone, who spoke somewhere. The somewhere that the author quotes is (Psalm 8).

Now first to his point: What is man, that God would pay him any attention, or even the son of man that God would care for him? He was made a little lower than the angels although he was crowned with glory and honor and all things were put in subjection under his feet.

At its most basic level this is a Psalm about the dominion of man. When we read the Psalm you will really sense this.

But we must admit, at least in the quote here, what started out sounding like anthropology turned more into Christology.

Let's look at the Psalm, for it is different than the other Psalms the author has quoted:

*To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith. A Psalm of David. 1 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. 2 Out of the mouth of babies and infants, you have established strength because of your foes, to still the enemy and the avenger. 3 When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4 what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? 5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. 6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet, 7 all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, 8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes along the paths of the seas. 9 O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! (Ps 8:1-9, ESV).*

**Here, we have a Psalm that sounds like it could be about man, but, the writer of Hebrews, indicates this is actually about the Son of Man, who for a little while was made lower than the angels.**

As you consider applying this to Jesus, some may take offense at the word “made” in verse 5.

Remember what we read in Philippians 2:

*5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:5–11, ESV).*

Here is the point, and we will move on. For a little while, for a short while, in the incarnation, in his humiliation, Jesus was made lower than the angels.

But since then we have seen the resurrection, glorification, and the installment of the Lord Jesus to the right hand of the Father.

**Now, EVERYTHING has been put in subjection under his feet!**

*Vs 8b-9 Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. 9 But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*



First, as we read this, I want you to see how this is the equivalent of Psalm 110:1 (the author's most alluded to verse in the Old Testament):

*1 The Lord says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies your footstool." (Ps 110:1, ESV).*

When the Lord said **"sit at my right hand"** (Ps 110:1) it is the equivalent of **"you have crowned him with glory and honor"** (Heb 2:7). The statement that he is to sit there **"until the Father makes his enemies his footstool"** (Ps 110:1) is the equivalent of **"putting everything in subjection under his feet"** (Heb 2:8b). The **"until"** of (Ps 110:1) is the reality, that **"at present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him"** (Heb 2:8c).

But what is implied in both is a reality. That day is coming! When every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord! The day is coming when King Jesus will be seated on His throne, the day is coming when we will see with your eyes, everything subjected to the Son!

Finally, Psalm 8 highlights the start of this Messianic promise was the **incarnation**, when God the Son, for a time, was made a little lower than the angels!

**SO YOU KNOW:** Although a lot has been said about the Son, but this is the first time His name has been used. Here in verse 9: *We see him... namely Jesus.*

**APPLICATION:** Do you see Him? Do you see Him here in the pages of the Scripture, do you see Him, in the story of your life? Do you see His hand of guidance and His hand of providence? **Do you see Him? And, do you long to see Him more?**

In putting everything under the subjection of the Son, He (God the Father) left nothing outside of His (God the Son's control).

Now at this point some might push back and say, but at this present time we do not see everything in subjection to the Son. Have you seen the world we live in? There is a great deal that does not appear to be in subjection to the Son!

Then the writer plainly tells us what the Psalm is saying and what we see, right now, when he wrote this epistle in roughly 65AD!

- 1) Notice "we see" Jesus, who for a **little while was made lower than the angels**. This is his humiliation, this is the incarnation, this is when he took upon himself the form of a servant.
- 2) Notice, we also "now see" him, crowned with glory and honor. He is now the exalted God-man, seated at the right hand of the Father, clothed with glory and honor!
- 3) The reason he is now clothed with glory and honor is because by the grace of God, He offered His life (suffered unto death) that He might taste death for every man.

Everything has been moving us to this grand declaration, that Jesus **"tasted death for everyone."**

It was alluded, to although in a very muted form in Hebrews 1:3b:

*3b After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, Hebrews 1:3 (ESV)*

We must confess, that explanation is very sanitized. It is very sterile, it does not intrude into how the Son of Man could accomplish purification, only that He did.

But here in chapter two, the blindfold is removed, here the writer tells us plainly that the God-Man Jesus was crowned with glory and honor because of His suffering unto death.

For it was in His death (as the lamb of God) that He tasted death for all the sons of Adam.

This now begins to explain why the second person of the Godhead, the Son took on human form, for only a human, a perfect human, a sinless human, could redeem men and women.

Because men and women died when Adam sinned, because the curse passed upon all who would descend from Adam:

*22a For as in Adam all die, (1 Cor 15:22a ESV).*

*12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned— Romans 5:12 (ESV)*

So too, then men and women be redeemed by a last a final, a perfect sinless Adam ((ICor 15:45), the Lord Jesus.

This explains the necessity of the incarnation. This explains why God went to such extreme measures. It was the only thing that would work!

*21 For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead. 22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive. (1 Cor 15:21–22, ESV)*

*19 For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous. (Romans 5:19, ESV).*

This is what we now see. This is the last Adam; this is the man Jesus.

The man Jesus, was for a short time made lower than the angles, but the man, this God-Man, Jesus went to Calvary, this God-Man tasted death for every man (most importantly for you and I) because of His work at Calvary, this God-Man has been exalted above everyone and everything, and indeed everyone and everything has been subjected to Him, even if we do not see it that way (yet) with the natural eye.

*32 This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. Acts 2:32–33 (ESV)*

*20 that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. Ephesians 1:20–21 (ESV)*

**Everything has been subjected under His feet and I promise you dear brother and sister, the day is coming when that will be made manifest!**

**We will end here for today. Understanding that the entire creation has been placed under the subjection of the God-Man Jesus!**

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