

Hebrews 2**Lesson 2
Giving Heed And The Humanity Of Christ****Outline****I. Give Heed to the Things Heard** (vv. 1-4)

- A. *Lest we drift away* (v. 1)
- B. *Cannot escape if we neglect* (vv. 2-4)
 1. Since disobedience to the Old Covenant was punished (v. 2)
 2. Cannot escape if we disobey the new (vv. 3-4)
 - a. First spoken by the Lord (v. 3a)
 - b. Was confirmed by signs of the apostles (vv. 3b-4)

II. Christ's Superiority to Angels is Seen Even in His Humanity (vv. 5-18)

- A. *Man's dominion over the world was lost* (vv. 5-8)
 1. Dominion not given to angels (v. 5)
 2. Dominion was given to man (vv. 6-8a)
 3. Dominion was lost (v. 8b)
- B. *Christ became flesh to restore man* (vv. 9-18)
 1. To die to save man (vv. 9-10)
 2. To be one with those sanctified (vv. 11-13)
 3. To destroy the devil and his work (vv. 14-16)
 4. To be a merciful High Priest (vv. 17-18)

Key Verses that Summarize the Chapter**Hebrews 2:1**

Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.

Hebrews 2:9

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.

This chapter begins with the first of the five warning or admonition sections (vv. 1-4).¹ It is followed by a continuation of the discussion of Christ being superior to angels (vv. 5-18).

Give Heed to the Things Heard (vv. 1-4)

The point here is that since God speaks to us by His Son (1:2), who is superior to prophets and angels, we must give earnest heed² to the things we have heard—the gospel (v. 1). To give heed would involve listening and obeying.

Lest we drift away (v. 1). “Our author represents us all as on a stream, the natural tendency of which is to carry us downward to ruin.”³ If we don’t give heed, we drift. The KJV uses the word “slip” with a footnote rendering, “run out as leaking vessels.”⁴ Each of these translations suggest a slow or gradual process to apostasy.

Cannot escape if we neglect (vv. 2-4). A second reason we must give heed is that we cannot escape punishment if we don’t.

1. Since disobedience to the Old Covenant was punished (v. 2). The word spoken by angels is a reference to the Old Testament. Angels played some part in the giving of Law of Moses (Deut. 33:2; Psa. 68:17; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19). What that role was, we do not know.

That law was “steadfast”⁵ or firm. It demanded obedience. Every transgression (going beyond) and disobedience (failure to comply) received just punishment.

2. Cannot escape if we disobey the new (vv. 2-4). The writer reasons from the lesser to the greater. If the principle seen above is true of the Old Covenant, how much more is it true of the new? “Neglect” is put in contrast to giving heed (v. 1). To stand in danger of condemnation we do not have to set ourselves in opposition to the will of God. Such a danger comes from mere neglect.

The salvation is called “great” in that it offers full and complete pardon that was not possible through the Old Testament (Heb. 8:12). The message of this great salvation was first spoken by the Lord (v. 3a) during his personal ministry.⁶ Then it was preached by the apostles and was confirmed (proven to be true) by the miracles they performed (cf. Mark 16:17-20). These are called “signs” because they give proof, and “wonders” because they are supernatural.⁷

1 See the Introduction for a list of all five sections.

2 The ESV and NASV translate this “pay much closer attention”.

3 Robert Milligan, *Vol. IX – Epistle to the Hebrews*, New Testament Commentary, 76.

4 A slow drip can lose more liquid (over time) than a major leak (which would receive prompt attention).

5 “Valid” (RSV).

6 Note the contrast between the law “spoken through angels” and the great salvation “spoken by the Lord.”

7 From this text we learn that the word *has been* confirmed by miracles. No further confirmation or proof is needed today.

Christ's Superiority to Angels is Seen Even in His Humanity (vv. 5-18)

This section (particularly verses 5-8) is difficult. This is seen when seeking to understand what the "world to come" is (v. 5), whether Psalm 8 is talking about man or Christ, and what is not yet under him (v. 8a). This is thorny in that each of the possible positions has some difficulty, including the one presented here. However, let us not lose sight of the overall picture in these verses, which all agree to be that the Son became flesh (to die for man) and in doing so he proved that he was superior to angels.

Man's dominion over the world was lost (vv. 5-8). The point here is that God intended for man to have the honor and glory of dominion over His creation (cf. Gen. 1:28). However that was never fully realized after the fall of man. However, the glory and honor that God intended for man is accomplished through Christ.

- 1. Dominion not given to angels (v. 5).** The subjection of the world was not given to angels, but was given to man as seen in verses 6-8. The glory and honor of dominion was not given to angels, but to man. Since that glory is realized through Christ, the "world to come" may refer to the time of the Messiah⁸ of which the writer was speaking (1:1-14; 2:1-4).
- 2. Dominion was given to man (vv. 6-8a).** The writer quotes from Psalm 8:4-6 wherein the Psalmist shows how God was mindful of man and crowned him with glory by setting him over the works of God's hands. He thus put all things under man (vv. 7-8a).
- 3. Dominion was lost (v. 8b).** "But now we do not yet see all things put under him" tells us that because of sin, that intended glory, honor and dominion of man (God's original intent) was never fully realized. "Indeed man is not in complete control of his environment; because of sin, we are subject to disease and death from many forces that can overcome us. We have lost the glory and honor that God originally planned for us."⁹

Christ became flesh to restore man (vv. 9-18). The honor that was held by man (before the fall) will be regained in Christ. This further shows that Christ is superior to angels *even* in his humanity. Perhaps some would question how he could be superior to angels while being made lower than angels (a reference to humanity). If in his death he brings sons to glory (v.10), then he is superior to angels.

- 1. To die to save man (vv. 9-10).** "But we see Jesus" shows a contrast. Man does not fully enjoy the dominion of which the Psalmist speaks, but we see the fulfillment of it in Jesus. He was made lower than angels¹⁰ (became flesh) that he should die and save man. In doing so the author is saying "he was crowned with glory and honor, and that he thus fulfilled all that David (Ps 8) had said of the dignity and honor of man."¹¹ His suffering made him "perfect" (completely fitted) to be our savior. Only through his suffering is salvation possible.

8 It is "to come" from the vantage point of the Old Testament and its prophecies.

9 Johnny Stringer, *Hebrews*, Bible Text Books, 5.

10 The NASV: "made for a little while lower than angels" (also RSV, ESV).

11 Albert Barnes, *Barnes' Notes*, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft.

2. To be one with those sanctified (vv. 11-13). By becoming flesh he becomes one with those who are sanctified. That is, being of one Father, he shares brotherhood with them. The Old Testament quotation in verse 12 is from Psalm 22:22. This messianic Psalm has the savior calling the saved his brethren. Two additional quotations are given in verse 13. The first of those is from 2 Samuel 22:3 (and Psalm 18:2).¹² Here the picture is of Jesus in his flesh putting his trust in the Father (as the children of God do), thus making him one with them. The last quotation is from Isaiah 8:18.¹³ As in the previous reference, the Christ is identified with the children of God (making them brethren), thus they are one.

3. To destroy the devil and his work (vv. 14-16). Jesus became flesh that he might destroy the devil (render him powerless by making it possible for man to escape his snares). By destroying the devil he delivers those who were held captive by him. While they were in bondage and without hope, they had every reason to fear death (v. 15). The aid his death provides was not for angels, but for man (v. 16).

4. To be a merciful High Priest (vv. 17-18). By becoming flesh, Christ becomes a merciful High Priest for he knows the suffering and temptation that man faces. Chapter one shows he is deity. Chapter two shows he was human. Thus, he is the perfect High Priest.

Even in his humanity and suffering he is superior to angels.

Use of the Old Testament in this Chapter	
Verse in Chapter 2	Old Testament Reference
vv. 6-8	Psalm 8:4-6
v. 12	Psalm 22:22
v. 13	2 Samuel 22:3 / Psalm 18:2
v. 13	Isaiah 8:18

¹² The Psalm is found in both passages.

¹³ Portions of this chapter are quoted in the NT and applied to Christ (Matt. 21:44; Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:7-8).

Questions

1. What is the warning or admonition given in 2:1-4?
2. What does this warning say about how apostasy comes? Why is this so dangerous?
3. What two reasons are given for giving heed to the things heard?
4. What does the use of the word "neglect" in this text suggest to us?
5. How do verse 3-4 show that miracles are not needed today?
6. Give a short summary of the point of verses 5-18.
7. How does the humanity of Jesus show he is superior to angels?
8. What dominion did God intend for man to have according to Psalm 8?
9. In what way is Christ and those who are sanctified one (vv. 11-13)?
10. How does becoming flesh make Jesus the perfect High Priest?