

Hebrews Chapter Two

In Hebrews chapter two we find that the message of Jesus is better than the one conveyed by angels. What the angels spoke and conveyed was true; their message was the message of God. Under the Old Testament law every transgression and disobedience received prompt and certain punishment (verse two). If this was the case under a system of religion proclaimed by inferior beings, there would be no escape from the consequences of disregarding a message proclaimed by the Lord.

Don't neglect the salvation in Jesus (verses 1-4)

The writer implores us to give more earnest heed to what we have heard. This is so we won't drift away. There are some people who believe that a Christian cannot drift away from God, but the writer of Hebrews informs us that we can if we don't give heed to what we have heard. One of the reasons Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper was that Christians would be reminded every week of His death. I believe that the ordinance of baptism also serves this purpose by reminding us of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus.

If what the angels delivered through the Old Testament law was true and Jesus is superior to them, His message is likewise superior and can be ignored by mankind only at great peril. The writer uses the word "neglect" to illustrate the point. Neglect is a habitual rejection of something, not simply a failure from time to time (Hebrews 12:25).

Neglect is easily discerned in the following passages: Ezekiel 34:4 and Matthew 25:43. In both instances warnings are given about caring for the helpless. If we can understand what it means to neglect those in need it will enable us to better understand a neglect of the great salvation found through Jesus (Acts 4:12).

This great salvation was spoken first by Jesus then confirmed through witnesses. Luke wrote his gospel so that we might know the certainty of the things in which we were instructed (Luke 1:1-4). John wrote that the miracles of Christ were performed so that we might believe and have life through His name (John 20:30-31). Jesus told His disciples that they would be witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth after they received the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

The miraculous power of the Holy Spirit was given so that miracles (signs and wonders) could be demonstrated. These miracles would then convince people that what the witnesses said was true. There was a specific purpose and a specific time period for these miraculous gifts (such as raising people from the dead, drinking poison with no effect, picking up snakes without danger, healing diseases instantaneously), and these miraculous gifts should not be confused with the gift of the Spirit which is granted to each baptized believer in Jesus today (Acts 2:38).

While we today cannot replicate the miraculous gifts of the 1st Century, each of us has a gift given by God through the Holy Spirit (Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 12:4). These gifts enable us to build up the Church as Christ desires. We should not diminish the great miracles that were performed in the 1st Century. These miracles serve to strengthen our faith.

The Son made lower than the angels (verses 5-9)

In Hebrews chapter one the writer demonstrated the superiority of Jesus over the angels, yet in Chapter 2 the writer tells us that Jesus was made a little lower than the angels. What this means is that Jesus (who was, is, and shall be) superior to the angels had to be made lower than the angels in order to come to earth and save us from our sins.

Since angels are eternal beings created by God, death has no effect upon them. And, Jesus, being superior to the angels likewise could not die. So, in order for Jesus to die, He had to be made a little lower than the angels, by becoming human. When Jesus (Son of God and Son of Man) was born of Mary He became subject to death.

In verse five we find that the world to come is not in subjection to angels, but in verses 6-8 we find that the world to come will be subject to Jesus. The quotation in verses 6-8 comes from Psalm 8:4-6 and refers to Jesus. At the present time not everything is subject to Jesus. Death still exists upon the earth and so we await the time when Jesus shall have all things subject to Him. This will be at the end of time (1 Corinthians 15:20-28).

Right now, we see Jesus! The writer informs us that we should see Jesus in a variety of ways: 1) made a little lower than the angels; 2) made for the suffering of death; 3) crowned with glory and honor; 4) made, so that by the grace of God, He might taste death for all of us. As John recorded in Revelation 5:8-14, the inhabitants of heaven sing praises to Jesus since He is the one who has redeemed us.

The Son's unique role in salvation (verses 10-18)

Jesus was made perfect through His suffering, which could only take place if He was made a little lower than the angels (Hebrews 5:8). Because Jesus came to earth and was known as the Son of Man, the sanctifier (Jesus) and those being sanctified (believers in Jesus) are said to be one in verse 11. In fact, Jesus refers to those who are sanctified as His brothers and sisters. What a wonderful and intimate description!

To prove this point, the writer quotes from Psalm 22:22 (in verse 12), 2 Samuel 22:3 (in verse 13), and also Isaiah 8:18 in verse 13. The writer then goes on in verse 14 to

show that Jesus took upon Himself flesh and blood (He was made a little lower than the angels).

John also testifies to the incarnation of Jesus in 1 John 4:2 and the well-known passage in John 1:14 where we find that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus shared with us the frailties and pains of humanity while at the same time being the Son of God. This is hard for us to understand. The writer tells us that Jesus died so that the power of Satan would be destroyed and that we might be released from the curse of death (1 John 3:8, 2 Thessalonians 2:8, Revelation 20:10).

The writer tells us in verse 16 that angels don't need aid, people do. Therefore Jesus gives aid to the descendants of Abraham (whether physical or spiritual descendants, see Galatians 3:29). Jesus accomplishes this task through His role as a faithful and merciful High Priest who makes propitiation for the sins of the people. His blood was shed so we might live. Jesus also can aid us because He experienced humanity (Hebrews 4:15, Matthew 4:1-11). His message is superior to the message conveyed by angels.