

Hebrews 2:1-13

V 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."**

A Bible expositor once said whenever you find a **"therefore"** in scripture, you should look and see what it is there for.

The **"Therefore"** in V 1 refers us back to the previous chapter.

In that chapter, Christ was shown to be superior to the angels, the ones who had attended the giving of the Law. And because the Messenger of the Dispensation of Grace is superior to

the angels, so by inference, the Dispensation of Grace is also superior to the Dispensation of Law.

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V 1-4 **"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.**

2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, (that was the Law) and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; (that is under the Law)

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;

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?"**

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It seems that this epistle was chiefly written to Hebrews that had allied themselves with the Christian community, but had not really received the Lord as their Saviour.

These individuals were now in danger of slipping back into Judaism.

So, the writer, having shown the superiority of Christ and God's message of grace in Chapter 1, now issues a warning in Chapter 2 to those who have merely professed Christianity.

Faith in Christ can only be faith in Christ alone.

Having heard the Gospel message, they could not remain with one foot in Old Testament Law and the other in New Testament Grace.

So they must **"give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard,"** and commit their lives to Christ only.

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Even today there are some who attend Bible believing churches and make a pretense of Christianity, but have never really given their hearts to the Lord.

They, too, are in danger of being almost persuaded . . . but lost.

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And even those who are believers, who have given their hearts to the Lord, should still **"give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard."**

Yes, we should read God's Word frequently,
meditate upon it carefully, and mix the
message with faith.

We should embrace it in our hearts, retain
it in our memories, and allow it to
regulate our words and actions.

We should **"give the more earnest heed to the
things which we have heard"** because
there is a danger that we might **"let
them slip."**

Just like precious oil in a leaky vessel,
God's Word can run out of our heads,
and lips, and lives, and we will be the
greater losers for our neglect.

Yes, our memories do not readily keep that
which is poured into them without much
care.

That's why Peter says in 2 Peter 1: 12-13,
"Wherefore I will not be negligent to

put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

¹³ Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance."

And again in 2 Peter 3: 1-2 "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

² That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour."

And not only are we prone to forget, but our great enemy Satan delights to steal away the Word that was sown in our hearts.

In Jesus' parable, the cares of this world,
like thorns, choked the seed, and the
hope of a good harvest was lost.

And we suffer inconceivable loss when we let
Gospel truths, which we have once
received, slip out of our minds.

We have lost a treasure far above silver and
gold.

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And then there are some, like these early
Hebrew adherents, that neglect the real
Gospel message and remain unsaved.

I have a first cousin who was raised in a
godly Brethren home, but as a young man
went his own way.

As time went on, he grew up, and was living
in a far off city, but the Lord was
still dealing with him.

As he drove to work each morning, he went past a little Brethren hall.

This assembly was having Gospel meetings, and had hung a banner on the front of their building which said, "**How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?**" Hebrews 2:3.

These words hit home, and he knew that the Lord was speaking to him, perhaps for the last time.

He went to those Gospel meetings, and one night came to the Lord, the One he had long avoided.

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However, not everyone accepts the Gospel as my cousin did, but continues to reject God's offer of mercy.

For those, there is an awful judgment ahead.

V 2-3 " For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;

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."

God's Law, as we see it in the Old Testament, is a just Law.

However, because it is just, there are no amendments, and its condemnation is final.

It was "**spoken by angels**" and "**was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward.**"

It was the Word spoken by angels, not because they were actually the authors of the Law, but because they were ministering angels at the time of the giving of the Law.

No doubt they were the ones who sounded the trumpet when the Law was given.

And they will sound the trumpet a second time when mankind, who have rejected God's grace, will stand to be judged by God's righteous Law.

If men will trifle with the Law of God, the Law will not trifle with them.

And the severest punishment that God ever inflicted upon sinners is no more than what their sin deserves.

As V 2 says, it is "**a just recompense of reward.**"

In one sense, God's righteous Laws are like His natural Laws in that they cannot be broken.

For instance, if a man jumps off a cliff, he does not break the Law of gravity. He only breaks his neck.

In like manner, when man sins, it is not God's Law that is broken. It is the transgressor that is broken.

But the real purpose of these verses in Hebrews is not to describe the punishment of the Law itself, but to point out that the punishment for rejecting God's offer of salvation is even more severe than the punishment meted out to the transgressors of the Law.

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Here, sinning against the Gospel is described as a neglect of **"so great salvation."**

It is nothing less than contempt for God's saving grace in Christ.

It is an utter disregard for their sinful state, and their need of a Saviour.

Their punishment for such rejection is not only severe, but unavoidable.

V 3 asks the question, **"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"**

Well, we can't escape.

In fact, John 3:18 describes the despisers of God's salvation as condemned already.

"He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed

**in the name of the only begotten Son of
God."**

Not only does he have the weight of his own sins to condemn him, but he carries the sin nature that he inherited from Adam, which is "**already**" present to condemn him.

Psalm 51:5 **"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."**

So the situation, apart from the mercy of God, is hopeless.

The sinner cannot hide on the great Day of Judgment, nor deny the fact of his sin, nor bribe the Judge, or break the prison bars.

There is no more offer of mercy left open to him.

There is no more sacrifice for sin if he has rejected **"the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."**

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?"

The fact is, we cannot escape.

And God's judgment will be even greater on those who rejected Christ than on those who fell under the Law.

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And why should man so stubbornly reject God's mercy?

What is the nature of this Gospel that they have spurned?

Well, V 3 says it is **"so great salvation,"** a salvation so great that no other can compare to it.

A salvation so great it is impossible to express or comprehend how great it really is.

It is this *great salvation* that shows us a great Saviour that has reconciled sinful man to a righteous God.

The Gospel unfolds to us a great and excellent Dispensation of Grace, a new covenant, settled and secured to all who take shelter under the blood of Christ.

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And who was it that first revealed this good news of salvation?

It was none other than Christ Himself.

V 3 **"which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord."**

The Lord of all, Who possesses unfailing wisdom, infinite power and absolute

authority, was the first to speak the Gospel clearly, without types or shadows.

You would have thought that all would have honoured the Son who spoke as **"never man spake."**

But, sadly, this was not the case.

"For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."

Not only was the Gospel spoken by Christ Himself, but it **"was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness."**

Here we see Christ's testimony confirmed by two witnesses: the disciples, and God Himself.

The disciples were eye witnesses of what Jesus began both to do and to teach.

Their testimony was not induced by ulterior motives such as worldly gain or prestige, but rather the proclamation of the Gospel exposed them to the loss of all things, even, in some cases, life itself.

And God the Father bore witness to those who were Christ witnesses by **"signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will"** - V 4.

He supported them by signs of His presence with them, and by His power working through them.

Yes, God supplied signs and wonders to convince the hearers of the doctrine His servants preached.

Acts 4: 13-14: **"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and**

perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

¹⁴ And beholding the man which was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it."

And, finally, the early Christians were supported by the gifts of the Holy Ghost empowering and enabling them to do the work to which they were called.

Acts 6: 8-10: "And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

⁹ Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing

with Stephen.

¹⁰ And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."

So, to turn away from Christianity and go back into Judaism would be to blaspheme against the Holy Ghost, Who had given testimony to the truth of the Gospel.

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When the Law was given on Mount Sinai, there were signs and wonders whereby God testified to the authority and excellency of it.

But, He has given witness to the Gospel by more and greater miracles than those given at the time of the Law, and thereby testified to the more excellent and abiding Dispensation of Grace.

So God has given to us a sure footing for
our faith, and a strong foundation for
our hope.

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V 5-9 "For unto the angels hath he not put
in subjection the world to come,
whereof we speak.

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?

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

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.

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a
little lower than the angels for the
suffering of death, crowned with glory
and honour; that he by the grace of God
should taste death for every man."

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

While angels are greater in power and might
than man in his present condition, they
are still *servants*.

For instance, God has sent His angels from
time to time as messengers to mankind.
It was an angel that announced Christ's
birth to Mary.

Also, after Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, angels ministered unto Him. But it was never God's purpose that the angels should be rulers over humanity. Neither the church, which is Christ's body, nor the world to come will be ruled over by the angels.

This is the exclusive right of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Colossians 1: 16-18: **"For by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him.**

¹⁷ And He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.

¹⁸ And He is the head of the body,

the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence."

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In V 6-8, the writer quotes Psalm 8:4-6 which says, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

⁵ For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

⁶ Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet."

Here the writer is referring to mankind in general, but to Christ in particular. First of all, concerning mankind, God had given him dominion over the rest of creation.

As such, he was the top-stone of that creation, and only a little lower than the angels.

And the redeemed in Christ in the resurrection will gain even greater heights than this, being made equal to the angels themselves.

In Luke 20:36, Jesus said, **"Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."**

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But to a much greater extent, this passage in Psalm 8 (quoted here in Hebrews 2), refers to Jesus the second Adam.

We know Jesus is being spoken of here because V 6 refers to the **"Son of man,"**

a term that was never attributed to the first Adam or any other man.

V 7-8" **Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:**

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."**

Yes, because Jesus became a real man, He was as other men are, a little lower than the angels . . . for a time.

But today, as He sits at God's right hand, He is Lord of all--"**thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands."**

The first Adam lost much of his dominion over God's creation after the fall, but the second Adam will reign over all creation some day.

V 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."**

As we look around our world today, we can see clearly the truth of this statement in Hebrews: **"But now we see not yet all things put under him."**

Rebellion against God still characterizes our earth.

God's divine Law is ignored, and His grace despised.

But with the eye of faith, we can see Him sitting at God's right hand, crowned with glory and honour.

And we look forward to the day when He will indeed be ruler over all of God's creation.

V 9 **"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."**

Concerning V 9, I would like to make a direct quote from Harry Ironside's commentary on Hebrews.

Please listen closely to this very marvellous type.

I quote: *"Notice the special reason given for His humiliation."*

He became a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death: that is, with this very object in view.

It was impossible that Deity as such should die.

If He would taste death for every man, He must become man, for only as a man could He die."

This is the mystery set forth in that ancient type in Leviticus 14:5 were, in connection with the cleansing of the leper, the priest was instructed to take two birds alive and clean.

One of the birds was to be killed in an earthen vessel over running water.

The other was to be dipped in the blood of the dead bird, and let loose in the open field.

The two birds typified one Christ.

*The first speaks of Him as the Heavenly One
Who entered into the earthen vessel of
humanity in order that He might die.*

*The second speaks of Him as the Risen One
Who has returned to the heavens in all
the value of His own most precious
blood.*

*Then it is well to notice that after all, it
is not merely for every man that He
tasted death.*

*The context makes it plain that the "all"
for which He died is in the neuter in
the original.*

*It might rightly be rendered, "**that He by
the grace of God should taste death for
everything.**"*

*For through His death not only will sinners
be saved and the world of redeemed men
brought into eternal blessing, but the*

creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and everything in heaven and earth at last brought into harmony with God.

None shall fail of this reconciliation excepting those who deliberately prefer their sins to the salvation so freely offered." End of quote.

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V 10-13 " **For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.**

¹¹ For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

¹² Saying, I will declare thy name

unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

¹³ And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me."

--- "to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings."

We must be careful not to misunderstand this word perfect.

Yes, Jesus is and always was the perfect Son of God.

He is without sin, without deficiencies, and perfect in wisdom.

Then why does it say that God would **"make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings?"**

This verse is not referring to His character, which was always perfect, but points out that if He were to be

"bringing many sons unto glory," He must be perfect in His Saviourhood by suffering.

He was always the Perfect One, but we must not forget that the perfect life of Jesus could never save one poor sinner. To be the Captain of our salvation and lead many sons to glory, He must go by the way of Gethsemane and Golgotha, where He was perfected by sufferings.

Apart from that supreme sacrifice, there could be no redemption for lost men and women.

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In verse 11, we have the glorious result of His suffering--"**both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one.**"

To sanctify means to separate or set apart.

Jesus set Himself apart in order that He might become our Saviour.

John 17:19: **"And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."**

As Christ sits in glory at God's right hand, He is the sanctifier of the brethren. Yes, every believer has been set apart by Him, and, in Him, each believer has been set aside for God the Father.

1 Corinthians 1:30: **"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."**

V 11 also says, **"For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one."**

In several ways, our Lord Jesus is one with us.

When He became man, He entered the human race and became one with us, in the same family, so to speak.

And He has brought us into his heavenly family also.

We can now call God our Father, as He calls God His Father.

And, because we are in the same family, Christ calls us Brethren.

Yes, **"he is not ashamed to call them brethren"** even though there is much in us that would make Him ashamed to do so, if He were not who He is.

No, He is not ashamed to call us His Brethren, although nowhere in Scripture is He spoken of as our brother.

He says, **"ye call Me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am."**

But He Whom we gladly own as Lord in
wondrous grace still calls us *His*
brothers.

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To give you the background of V 12 "-- **I**
will declare thy name unto my brethren,
in the midst of the church will I sing
praise unto thee,"--let me first of all
give you a brief overview of Psalm 22.

In this Psalm, we see Jesus as He hung on
the cross.

It begins with the words, "**My God, my God,**
why hast thou forsaken me?"

Up to verse 21, we see Christ suffering
alone under the judgment of God for our
sins.

Then from verse 22 to the end of the Psalm,
He is no longer alone, but is pictured

as the risen Christ surrounded by a multitude of the redeemed.

It is in this resurrection scene that He exclaims--"**I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.**"

It is this verse, that is V 22 of Psalm 22, that the writer of Hebrews is referring to when he penned Hebrews 2:22, "**Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.**"

The only change being that the word

"congregation" is changed to **"church."**

This congregation is the assembly of the redeemed, and in their midst, we see the risen Christ as the chief singer, leading the praises of His people to Almighty God.

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V 13 **"And again, I will put my trust in him.
And again, Behold I and the children
which God hath given me."**

We see two more references to Old Testament scriptures here.

The first, **"I will put my trust in him,"** is from Isaiah 8:17.

Although, if you look it up, as I did, you will find it does not translate that way in our English text.

However, these words, **"I will put my trust in him"** remind us that Jesus, as a man, walked through the wilderness of this world with perfect confidence in His Heavenly Father.

The second reference in Verse 13, **" Behold I and the children which God hath given me,"** is from the very next verse, that

is, Isaiah 8:18, and looks forward to the time when Jesus will be surrounded by those whom He has redeemed by His precious blood.

Yes, we are the children that God has given Him, and some day He will bring us to His Heavenly Father.

Praise His blessed name!

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There is still more ahead in this chapter that shows the superiority of the Son, but we will have to leave that for the next lesson.