

Hebrews 2

What is the danger the author warns about (v 1)? Drifting away. Like a ship dragging its anchor, the tides of our culture can draw us away from our moorings. We need to keep standing firm in the faith (Colossians 1:23).¹ Might the Jewish readers be familiar with the concept of drifting from their religious heritage?

This is the first of five warnings listed in the book of Hebrews. There is a progression in these five warnings. Drifting all starts with being careless about salvation and indifferent to spiritual things until finally one comes to be *perfectly satisfied* with being indifferent.

Drifting away from what (v. 1)? From what we have heard. "*He has spoken to us by his Son*" (1:2). Drifting away from the Person of Christ and back into the old religion of legalism.

What have we heard (v. 1)? The superiority of Christ. The reality and truth of the Gospel. The redemptive message of the Cross.

How do we drift? By not doing/neglecting the things we have heard....the things we ought to do. By going along with the crowd and allowing the cares of life and pressures of this world's system to move us away from the truth. Distraction is one of Satan's primary tools. It is possible to come to Calvary and be redeemed by the precious blood of Christ and then drift away from this position because of indifference to the things of the Lord.

Is this a sudden or gradual process? It is a gradual progression (James 1:13-15).

What is the solution to this problem of drifting? Since "*He has spoken to us by his Son*" (1:2), we must listen/pay attention. **How do we listen?** We hear the voice of God primarily in the Word of God. Drifting is something that happens pretty much automatically if we are not intentionally engaged in the Bible. The supernatural written Word of God, in conjunction with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, will accomplish God's purposes in our hearts and lives (Isaiah 55:11). The combination of the two will be a great help to keep us from drifting.

What was the message spoken by angels (v. 2)? The Mosaic Law was "delivered" to Moses by the hands of angels. The concept that angels mediated the Law is found in Deuteronomy 33:2; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19.

How is the Law described (v. 2)? The Mosaic Law was binding and strict (*every violation and disobedience received its just punishment*). It demanded to be taken seriously.....no leniency.....no compassion.

What is the message of v. 3? If we must take the word which came by angels (the Law) seriously, how much more seriously must we take the word (the Gospel) which came by the Son of God - who has been proven to be greater than the angels?

The warning is against "*ignoring such a great salvation*" (vv. 3-4). We are also reminded that we have no excuse. Why not? We cannot say we have not heard about this salvation because it was announced by the Lord and confirmed by those who heard Him. It has even been witnessed to by God the Father through miracles.

How did God prove His salvation message (v. 4)? By signs, wonders, miracles and gifts which attested to the truth of the gospel especially to the Jewish people who traditionally asked for a sign before they would believe.

What do the words "*according to his own will*" indicate (v. 4)? That these miraculous powers are given out by the Holy Spirit as He chooses. They are sovereign gifts of God. They cannot be demanded by men or claimed in answer to prayer because God has never promised them to all.²

Chapter 1 talked about the deity of Christ. What is the general theme of vv. 5-18? The humanity of Jesus is stressed. He became one of us. He took on a human nature in addition to His divine nature.

What is man's position relative to angels (vv. 5-8)? A little lower. Note: v. 6 "*son of man*" refers to man generally; not primarily or distinctively to the Messiah.

What was God's plan from the beginning (vv. 8-9)? That man would be sovereign over the earth and all the creatures therein. **Yet we see that not all things are subject to man (v. 8). Why not?** Man forfeited his right to take that dominion through sin in the garden. **Who came to solve this problem?** The promise of dominion is fulfilled in Jesus. **What position did He have to take?** He had to be "*made a little lower than the angels*" (like us). **What price did He pay to accomplish this?** He gave his life for us. Man lost his right to rule by sin in the garden, and Jesus regained it by His death on Calvary's cross. Through Jesus, man can regain the fulfillment of God's promise that humans will one day have dominion over the earth – believers co-ruling with Jesus (Revelation 5:10).

How did God bring many sons to glory (v. 10)? God designed a way of saving us that was worthy of Himself. He sent His only begotten Son to suffer and die in our place. A paraphrase of verse 10 would read like this: "God the Father so valued men and women like us that he did not consider it unfitting for his Son to suffer horribly to win us back to himself. That is how deeply God loves us and how highly He values us."

What is the message (v. 11)? We are all of the same human family, we have the same father, so Jesus is not ashamed to call them (i.e. us) brothers. He could not be our brother unless He was also human like us. God the Son will be united to the human race for all eternity. There are no black sheep in the family of God.

Application: Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers. But are we ashamed to openly say that we belong to Jesus? Who should be more embarrassed?

What are the underlying themes (vv. 12-13)? Intimacy and tenderness as well as family oneness/unity.

Why did Jesus have to take on human nature (v. 14)? We children share the limitations of humanity. To free us from these limitations, the Son had to assume the same limitations, which He did at the Incarnation (John 1:14). Jesus Christ broke Satan's power over believers by His death. Obviously Satan still exercises great power, but Jesus Christ broke his power to enslave believers (Romans 6:1-14). Furthermore Jesus Christ defeated Satan in the area of his greatest strength: his power to inflict death.³

In what sense does Satan have the power of death? The reference is to spiritual death. Living under sin's penalty, separated from God.

What else did the Cross free us from (v. 15)? The fear and uncertainty of both physical and spiritual death.

Who are "Abraham's descendants" (v. 16)? He is probably referring to believers, the spiritual descendants of Abraham (Galatians 3:29), rather than to Jews, the physical descendants of Abraham (Isaiah 41:8-10). The original readers, saved Jews, were both the physical and spiritual descendants of Abraham. Jesus Christ does not give help to angels in the same way He gives help to Christians. He helps us uniquely as an elder brother and parent (vv. 11-15), a fellow human being.⁴

How is Jesus compared to men (v. 17)? He was made like us in every way. He assumed true and perfect humanity – with one exception: He was without sin.

Why did He have to become one of us (v. 17)? So He could become our High Priest and offer Himself as a sinless sacrifice. In order to turn aside the wrath of God against guilty sinners, Jesus had to become one with them and die as a substitute for them.

What is the message of v. 18? As our merciful and faithful high priest He understands us. He not only knows what it is like to be tempted but He, the Son of God, actually suffered when He was tempted! It was not an easy experience for Him. He knows first-hand the terrible pressure of temptation to sin. He is not disgusted with us. He is "*not ashamed to call us brothers*" (v. 11).

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Hebrews, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 9

² Believer's Bible Commentary, William MacDonald, 1995 Edition, (published by Thomas Nelson Publishers), p. 2161

³ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Hebrews, 2017 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), p. 37

⁴ Ibid. p. 38