

In the previous chapter the writer of Hebrews has shown us that God is currently speaking through His Son and begins this chapter stressing the importance that we pay attention to what God has said in the past and is now saying about and through His Son, lest we miss out on the salvation He provides. The writer then shows us that it was necessary for God's Son to take on the nature of a human being in order to save human beings.

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.

“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest [abundantly; to a greater degree] heed to the things which we have heard” – The writer has spent much of the first chapter declaring how that God is now speaking through His Son, and that His Son is superior to the angels. For that reason (“therefore”) we should give abundant attention “to the things which we have heard” (the OT references to Christ the Messiah as well as the contemporary preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ).

“lest at any time we should let *them* slip [to flow past]” – Many times we're guilty of letting the truth go in one ear and out the other without giving it the attention that it deserves. The writer is speaking to Jews who may not be believers in Christ and therefore he is warning them not to ignore the truths about Christ in the OT, letting them pass without understanding their implications for salvation.

2 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*;

“For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast” – The Bible tells us that angels were used in the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai, but it does not explain what part they played. **Acts. 7:38, 53** “*This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us...Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.*” **Gal. 3:19** “*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.*”

“and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward” – If the law spoken by angels was binding so that disobedience was rewarded by the appropriate punishment, how much more important is it that we pay attention to what Christ has to say?

“How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation” – The law was mediated by angels and disobedience of that law carried a penalty. Since Christ is superior to the angels, we ought to “give the more earnest heed” to the magnificent salvation spoken of and provided by Jesus Christ. If we ignore the only means of salvation provided by God, what hope do we have of escaping judgment?

“which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*” – This salvation was spoken of by the Lord Jesus Himself and later confirmed by the apostles (“them that heard him”). The apostles heard what Christ said and passed it on to us so that we could hear and be saved. They also testified to His resurrection.

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?

Not only did the apostles confirm the words of Christ and His resurrection, but God Himself also bore witness to the legitimacy of the testimony of Christ and the apostles by performing miraculous acts through Christ and the apostles. These done through the apostles were done by God, Who performed them “according to His own will.” If the apostles were engaging in deceit then God would not have given them credibility by performing these miraculous signs and wonders.

Verses 5-8: To further prove that Christ is superior to the angels and to start building the case that Christ came to save mankind, he first points out that God has not put the earth in subjection to angels (v. 5). However, this is something that God has given to mankind, who were created lower than the angels (v. 6-8) but have been given the honor of being over God's creation. The writer quotes Psa. 8:4-6 to show this truth.

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.

“But we see Jesus” – The writer now turns the focus back to Jesus, the Son of God. The human race has witnessed what the writer now describes about Jesus.

“who was made [to lessen in rank] a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death” – Jesus temporarily was demoted from His place of honor in heaven to becoming a human being (“a little lower than the angels”) for the express purpose of dying on the cross for our sins.

“crowned with glory and honour” – After the cross, Jesus was resurrected and exalted to sit at the right hand of the Father. He has been given all power and authority. **Matt. 28:18** (after the resurrection) “*And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*” Jesus was temporarily made lower than the angels and then was exalted with the highest glory and honor (**Phil. 2:10** “*Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth*”).

“that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man” – The purpose of Jesus being made “a little lower than the angels” was so that He could die for “every man” in order to redeem them from their sins. Obviously “every man” only refers to those who would believe on Him for salvation, otherwise every person would automatically be saved. Also notice that all this was done “by the grace of God.” God had no obligation to send His Son to die on the cross for the salvation of men.

10 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.

“For it became [was fitting or proper] him” – God the Father was not being unfair nor did He do something that was unnecessary when He sent His own Son to die on the cross. He did what was appropriate for the circumstances to accomplish the desired purpose of the salvation of men.

“for whom *are* all things, and by whom *are* all things” – All of creation is His and He is free to utilize it in any way He wants because He created it. He could bring salvation to men in any way He chose.

“in bringing many sons unto glory” – This is the goal that God wanted to accomplish through sending His Son to the cross: the salvation of men/women.

“to make the captain [chief leader; prince] of their salvation perfect [complete] through sufferings” – Christ had not completed His role as Savior until He went to the cross and suffered the wrath of God for our sins. Our sin deserves that we suffer God’s wrath and thereby die (**Rom. 6:23a** “*For the wages of sin is death*”). However, Christ suffered the wrath of God in our place so that we as God’s sons could be brought into glory. Until Christ suffered on the cross, we could not have been saved and He would not have been a complete Savior.

Verses 11-15: The writer declares Christ’s (the one who sanctifies) willing unity with His people (the ones who are sanctified). The writer then quotes a few OT passages to illustrate that Christ willingly calls us His brethren and children of God. He then shows that because we are flesh and blood (and therefore subject to death), Christ also chose to become flesh and blood and subject Himself to death in order to defeat Satan and rescue us from the bondage of sin and death.

16 For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham.

“For verily he took not on *him* the nature of angels” – It was not angels that God chose to redeem, but human beings. We have no record that God has taken steps to redeem the fallen angels and yet we have abundant record in scripture of His desire to redeem mankind. Thus Jesus did not come to earth as an angel but as a man to redeem men from their sins.

“but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham” – Jesus came in flesh as a descendant of Abraham since Abraham and his descendants are God’s chosen people. He came as a man to meet sin on the same ground as we do, and yet without sin. **Heb. 4:15** “*For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*”

17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

“Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren” – To be an appropriate substitute on the cross, Christ had to become a man who would be faced with the same temptations to sin as we do and yet resist and remain sinless (Heb. 4:15).

“that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God” – An angel does not face the same temptations as we do and thus could not die in our place. But Christ, as a man, understands the temptations we face and our needs before God. Therefore, he can be merciful to us and a faithful mediator between God and us.

“to make reconciliation for the sins of the people” – Jesus knows what it’s like to be God and what it’s like to be a man, and therefore He intercedes for us based on His blood to reconcile us to God.

18 For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

“For in that he himself hath suffered [to be affected by an experience] being tempted” – Being a man, Jesus knows what it is like to be tempted by sin. He had to resist the temptation and choose to follow His Father’s will. Because of that experience, He knows what we are going through when we experience temptation.

“he is able to succour [help] them that are tempted” – Because Jesus knows what it’s like to be tempted, He is able to help us resist sin when we are tempted. We do not rely on our own will power but on Jesus Christ for the strength to resist temptation.