

Hebrews Chapter Two (vv.1-9)

Outline: the **Lord** is the *Speaker* (vv.1-4), the **Son of Man** is the *Sovereign* (vv.5-8), **Jesus** is the *Sufferer* (v.9), the **Captain** is the *Saviour* (vv.10-16) and the **High Priest** is the *Succourer* (vv.17-18).

Hebrews 2.1-4: Duty in Relation to the Son's Glory.

Hebrews 2.1-4 really belongs with Hebrews 1. These four verses are in parenthesis so that the argument concerning Christ's superiority over angels continues between Hebrews 1.14 and Hebrews 2.5. This section also forms the first warning passage in the Epistle. The writer has been emphasising the Son's superiority to angels (Hebrews 1.4-14). These verses indicate why, and illustrate a contrast between **law** (given by angels, vv.1-2) and **grace** (brought by the Lord Jesus, vv.3-4).

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' looks back to the declared glory of the Son of God, i.e. because of the greatness and majesty of the Son of God we ought to give earnest attention to the things which we have heard concerning Him, i.e. the gospel proclaimed, at the first, by Christ (v.3). The company the writer addresses is a group of professing Christians, but he also includes himself by using the term 'we'. This is the 'we' of profession. For all those who profess to be Christians, they must cling closely (with practical results) to the message and doctrine of the gospel, including the revelation concerning the Son of God. Failure to do this will result in 'slipping', a word which describes a boat drifting without an anchor or a vessel leaking a liquid. The strict interpretation of this passage concerns false profession and **apostasy**. This describes those who wilfully turn away from and reject the gospel. *'The truth of the gospel may have been poured into many an unbelieving mind, but they will not take heed. The call of Judaism and the old way of life is too strong. The hearers are slipping away from the message. They drift like a ship without an anchor. They slip past the safety of the harbour with no mooring. This is apostasy.'* By way of application, are we holding tightly to the doctrine of the Son's glory? Does it reflect practically in everyday life? Is the truth of God slipping into our minds and slipping out? Let it not be said of us we are leaking vessels or ships drifting in the storms of life without an anchor (Christ)! Proverbs 4.21: Let not my words flow past before thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart.

2 *For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we (having) neglected 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?* The 'word spoken by angels' was the law, the first testament. Angels were present at the giving of the law as it was 'commanded' or 'administered' by them (Galatians 3.19, cf. Acts 7.53, Deuteronomy 33.2, Psalm 68.17). The law was 'steadfast', i.e. unyielding with an inflexible standard (Deuteronomy 30.15-18, 33.2). Every violation of the law was punished (justly) whether it was 'transgression' (wilful sins of **commission**, deliberate breaking of a known law) or 'disobedience' (sins of **omission**, failing to do what ought to be done). Now the argument is beginning to build. Any infringement of the law (which came by **angels**) resulted in a just penalty which must be paid. How then is it possible to 'escape' or 'flee from' the greater judgment for those who neglect the gospel of 'so great salvation' which came by the **Son**? *'If the law with its angelic mediation had sanctions that were severe and inescapable, then how much more serious would be the neglect of the message of grace proclaimed by the Son of God who is greater than angels.'*

The individuals concerned had 'neglected' this salvation, i.e. they did 'not care', showing an indifferent attitude towards the gospel. In the context of Hebrews, this was a deliberate action by those who had professed to receive God's salvation; it was apostasy. Note. This salvation is 'so great' because of its **Provider** (Hebrews 2.3), **price** (Hebrews 2.9) and **power** to deliver (Hebrews 2.15). Are we indifferent to the word of God and its claims?

The greatness of the gospel of God's grace is proved in a three-fold way: **1.** It was originally proclaimed by the Lord, not only through words but also by the presence of His very Person (v.3, cf. Hebrews 1.2). **2.** It was confirmed by the disciples after His resurrection and ascension (v.3, cf. Acts 2.32, 3.15, 5.32, 10.39-42). **3.** It was accredited by signs, wonders, miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.22, 2.43, 3.1-11, 5.1-12, 9.32-34). Signs and wonders were a traditional way of speaking of the exodus miracles (Exodus 7.3, 11.9-10). These signs were therefore associated with God's gracious actions in **redemption**.

Hebrews 2.5-9: The Glory of the Son of Man

In Hebrews 2.5-9, the Son of Man is seen in relation to **creation**. In Hebrews 2.10-18, He is seen in relation to His **own**. As Hebrews 1 declared the glories of the *Son of God* in relation to His **past**, **present** and **future**, so Hebrews 2 does the

same in relation to the *Son of Man*. His incarnation is seen in the **past** (Hebrews 2.9, 14, 17), He is crowned with glory and honour at **present** (Hebrews 2.9) and in the **future**, His universal dominion is assured (Hebrews 2.5).

5 *For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.* 'For' continues from Hebrews 1.14. The 'world to come' is the millennial reign of the Lord Jesus (continuing from Hebrews 1.13). This future world has not been put in 'subjection' (a military term used to describe the arranging of soldiers in order under the commanding general) to angels. They are servants not kings (Hebrews 1.14). God's original purpose was that man would have ultimate dominion and reign over the earth, but Adam forfeited this through sin. Consequently Satan now reigns as the 'God of this world' and angels have certain administrative responsibilities in relation to this present world (cf. Deuteronomy 32.8, Daniel 10.13, 20, Colossians 1.16, Revelation 2.13). Have God's original purposes now been abandoned? **NO!** God's **first** thoughts are His **last** thoughts. God's **primary** thoughts are His **final** thoughts.

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.* Paul now quotes from Psalm 8 to demonstrate God's original purpose for mankind. Psalm 8 speaks primarily of Adam in innocence in the Garden of Eden. Reading the Psalm through David's eyes, only Adam can be seen. Reading the Psalm through the lens of Hebrews 2, it is clear that it looks beyond Adam to Christ. Psalm 8 has spoken of the immensity of the universe and night-time sky (Psalm 8.3). In this context, what is small, insignificant man that God should show interest in, and care of him in granting him dominion?

Mankind was created inferior to angels ('a little lower'). Man is material and mortal; angels are spiritual and cannot die (Luke 20.36). Even though Adam was inferior to angels, he was given dominion over God's creation. *Genesis 1.26: And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* This made man a king. He was given 'glory and honour' in view of his exalted position. The whole of creation was under the feet of Adam, even to the point of giving names to the animals (v.8, Genesis 2.19). BUT, Adam failed (Genesis 3). 'We see not yet all things put under him'. Creation now rebels against man. He has lost his crowning glory and honour and gained the sweat of the brow (Genesis 3.19). Now, subsequent to the flood, there is no thought of dominion. Rather, animals live in fear of man having become the food of man (Genesis 9.2-3). Surely God's purposes have therefore been frustrated? **NO!** God has another Man. He is the Second Man and Last Adam. He will restore all and more than Adam lost. God must and will show on this earth that He has lost nothing through the entry of sin. Man filled the earth with sin, but Christ will fill it with glory. This is the restitution of all things (Acts 3.21).

9 *But we behold Him, even Jesus (who hath been made a little lower than the angels in order that by the grace of God He should taste death for every man), because of the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour.* We see JESUS! This is the Name given to the Son's genuine and perfect manhood. Here is God's Man. Now the inspired writer carefully applies part of Psalm 8 to the Lord Jesus. He too was 'made a little lower than the angels', but not in terms of His **Person**. He was made lower (for a little while) as to the **position** He took up. This humiliation was only for a time. Now, in His exaltation, He has gone far higher than the angels (Isaiah 52.13, Hebrews 1.3). The purpose of His being made lower, or incarnation, was that He might be capable of dying; for the suffering of death.

The Lord Jesus is also 'crowned with glory and honour'. When did this crowning occur? Whilst it is true that the Lord Jesus was marked by glory and honour during His first advent (Matthew 3.17, 17.5, John 8.54, Acts 2.22, 1 Peter 1.21) the Greek of this verse suggest that the crowning in view has to do with His present position in glory (hinting at His present work as Great High Priest, cf. Exodus 28.2) and consequent upon His suffering of death (cf. Philippians 2.8-9). *'Therefore, the glory and honour that Adam lost by disobedience, Jesus, the second Man, has regained by tasting death at Calvary for everyone.'* 'Tasting death' indicates a bitter, slow and painful experience. The sufferings of the Lord Jesus are viewed in the Scriptures both **internally** and **externally**. For example, Noah's ark was pitched within and without with pitch. These are the sufferings of Calvary viewed externally (baptism, Mark 10.38) and internally (cup, John 18.11).

Notice the contrast of 'grace' to law. The law passed condemnation and death upon all. Grace makes justification and life available to all. Not only did the Lord Jesus tasted death for 'every man' but actually 'everything'. World dominion was lost in Adam but shall be regained in Christ. By His death He has purchased the whole field (Matthew 13.44). Although the whole creation now groans in travail (Romans 8.22) it shall be liberated in a coming day through the work of Christ. His death is so great in its scope that it even allows God to act where no exercise of faith is possible (cf. Isaiah 11.6-9)!