

Hebrews

Chapter 2:2-12

June 25, 1995

- **Hebrews Outline:**

Chapter 1 Jesus is greater than the prophets and the angels.

Chapter 2 Jesus' message is greater than the angel's.

- **Introduction**

The Author of this letter shows us his point of demonstrating that Christ is greater than angels; the superiority of His message. He warns them that if they paid so close attention to the message delivered by servants, how much more should they listen to a message delivered by the Master Himself? Then the author moves on to describe the glory which Christ has brought to the elect.

- **Exposition**

Hebrews 2:2-12

2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,

3 how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

- The author provides a "how-much-more" argument that is intended to warn them against drifting into heresy. The point of his instruction is, "If you thought you could get into trouble for ignoring a message from angels, how much worse off will you be when you ignore a message from the Lord Himself?" The tone of these verses is what leads us to believe that the recipients of the letter were struggling with the superiority of the things of the new covenant. The reference to the old covenant being delivered by angels is probably alluded to in Deut 33:2 where the term "saints" is literally "holy ones" and most naturally refers to the angelic host surrounding God's throne.
- The answer to his rhetorical question is that we shall *not* escape. We know that in the end all knees will bow and the Lordship of Christ will be proclaimed by every tongue. Though we look with our eyes and we see the wicked prospering, we must know that no one will escape their just reward for neglecting this salvation.
- This salvation is referred to a great salvation. This is descriptive not only of the quality of the salvation but also of the quantity. There will be an innumerable number of Abraham's descendants in heaven. This is no small thing that God has done; He has done a great thing.
- The end of this verse is one of the strongest internal evidences against the Pauline authorship of this letter. Whoever it was that composed the epistle, declares that the message of the great salvation was confirmed by *those who heard* Christ. Paul goes to great lengths in Galatians to explain that he did not receive his instruction from the other Apostles but rather was qualified to be an Apostle because he received his instruction directly from the Lord Himself.

4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

- In addition to the eyewitness testimony, God testified (martyred) to the validity of the message by signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit. God has always used these miraculous signs and gifts for the purpose of testifying to something; not for the sake of the sign itself. The purpose of these signs was to confirm the truth and divine nature of the message of Christ and of the Apostles (2 Cor. 12:12). The authority of Christ has been established. The authority of the Apostles has been established. The authority of Scripture has been established. All of these signs were used to establish all of these things. Today, unless we are claiming new revelation or Apostleship, we need not have our authority testified to. We stand on the foundation of the Apostles, Prophets and Christ.
- As confirmed in 1 Corinthians, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are distributed according to the will of the Spirit-not ours. We cannot allow these gifts, which served a purpose, to become badges that we wear for show and expect others to be similarly equipped.

The equipping with gifts is the business of the Holy Spirit.

5 For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. 6 But one testified in a certain place, saying:

"What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him?"

7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands.

8 You have 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 do not yet see all things put under him.

- When attempting to understand ". . .the world to come" there are at least two ways to understand these verses. It is either the final kingdom of heaven where we will be with the Lord forever or (more likely) it is the new age to come after Jerusalem is destroyed and the gospel goes forth to the ends of the earth. Notice that regardless of our understanding of the world, the point of the instruction is that that world will not be in subjection to angles. Again the author is showing the greatness of Christ.
- At first glance, it is an easy mistake to interpret this quotation in 6-8 as pertaining to Christ. Although Christ is involved in these verses, these verses are actually referring to mankind. We know this because in verse 9 he contrasts what we do not see in man with what we do see in Jesus. In addition, the context of the Psalm is the glory of God's creation.
- When God made man, He made him slightly lower than the Angels but gave him dominion of everything. In the fall, mankind gave up that ability to rule as God intended. Even still, the Angels do not rule in dominion over us but as already said they are servants of God meant to minister to the elect.
- The awesomeness of God's wisdom is hidden in these verses. He begins by pondering the insignificance of man and the glory to which God had created him. When the first Adam sinned our glory departed. But God, in His grand wisdom provided a way to restore the glory. The quotation from Psalm 8 declares that man was intended to rule all things but we cannot see with our eyes such glory.

9 But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. 10 For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11 For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12 saying:

"I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." (NKJV)

- Although we do not see all things under the feet of man, we do see Jesus who also was made a little lower than the angels (like us) for the purpose of suffering to the point of death, and crowned with glory and honor for the benefit of the elect. Notice that Christ is making us perfect (sanctification) through our persecutions and is bringing us to glory. Because He is the one sanctifying us, He is not ashamed to call us brothers. We must repent of refusing to call those whom Christ has called brother, brother ourselves. If God is willing to fellowship with them and give them His name, who are we not to fellowship with them? The result of this is that we (those being sanctified) are all one in Christ (the Sanctifier).
- Because of the obedience and resulting exaltation of Christ, we have not only been saved from the consuming wrath and condemnation of God, we have been glorified and raised up to the heavenly places in Christ. Notice the awesome progress of Romans 8:29-30.
- The author quotes and applies Psalm 22:22 which is a prophetic Psalm of the sufferings of the Messiah.