

A STUDY OF HEBREWS

Pay Careful Attention to the Lord - Chapter 2:1-18

I. Review: Christ is Superior to the Angels (Heb 1:4-14)

A. Christ is Superior to the Angels Because:

1. He is the divine Son of God, resurrected and ascended and glorified as Lord. (Ps 2:7)
2. He is the true and final Son of David, ruling as King over all God's people. (2 Sam 7:14)
3. He is the exalted and incarnate Lord, worshipped by the angels. (Deut 32:43)
4. He rules from a position of glory and supremacy, while angels are God's servants. (Ps 104:4)
5. He is the eternal Ruler of David's throne, exalted as Messiah in His ascension. (Ps 45:6-7)
6. He is the eternal Creator who governs the affairs of people and angels. (Ps 102:25-27)
7. He is the enthroned Son of God, while angels are servants of God's elect. (Ps 110:1)

B. THEREFORE...

"The truth and teaching of the gospel must not be held lightly; they are supreme moment, they are matters of life and death, and must be cherished and obeyed at all costs." - F.F. Bruce, Hebrews, 66.

"The true and only way of honoring the Lord Christ as the Son of God, is by diligent attendance and obedience unto his word." - John Owen, Hebrews, vol. 2, 464.

II. Text: Hebrews 2:1-18 – Pay Careful Attention to the Lord!

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ² For since the message declared through angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³ how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first through the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, ⁴ while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

⁵ Now it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶ It has been testified somewhere,

"What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him?"

⁷ You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor,

⁸ putting everything in subjection under his feet." [Ps 8:4-6]

Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. At present, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. ⁹ But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

¹⁰ For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the founder of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹² saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." [Ps 22:22] ¹³ And again, "I will put my trust in him." [And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me." [Is 8:18]

¹⁴ Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵ and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶ For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷ Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted. (Heb 2:1-18)

1. Why, according to the author, must we “pay much closer attention” to the Word of God about Christ now in the New Testament era?
2. How does our Christian culture reflect a bias against the ordinary when it comes to the things of God? How can we?
3. How should an awareness of the “ordinary” ways God cares for you affect how you worship? Your Bible reading? Your thoughts of Him during the day?

“Many are led either by pride, dislike, or rivalry to the conviction that they can profit enough from private reading and meditation; hence they despise public assemblies and deem preaching superfluous...This is like blotting out the face of God which shines upon us in teaching.” - John Calvin, Institutes, 4.1.5

“I remember the events of that time more clearly than those of recent years. For what boys learn, growing with their mind, becomes joined with it, so that I am able to describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp sat as he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and the manner of his life, and his physical appearance, and his discourses to the people, and the accounts which he gave of his intercourse with John and with the others who had seen the Lord. And as he remembered their words and what he heard from them concerning the Lord, and concerning his miracles and his teaching, having received them from eyewitnesses of the word of life, Polycarp related all things in harmony with the scriptures. These things being told me by the mercy of God, I listened to them attentively, noting them down, not on paper, but in my heart. And continually, through God’s grace, I recall them faithfully.” - Irenaeus (bishop in 177 AD), disciple of Polycarp (d. 156 AD), friend of John

1. How does the incarnation and death (and resurrection!) of the Supreme Man (vv. 5-8) benefit believers according to vv. 17-18? How is this compassion similar to God’s care for you through His “ordinary” Word, sacraments, and church fellowship?

*“The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the word, an effectual means of convincing and converting sinners, and of building them up in holiness and comfort, through faith, unto salvation.”
- Westminster Shorter Catechism, Answer 89.*

2. How do you listen to a (bad) sermon in order to benefit from the Word of God? (From L. Duncan)
 - (a) Listen as though your life depended on it.
 - (b) Recognize the seriousness of your life situation. - *“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.” (Eph 6:12)*
 - (c) Understand that it is God’s help that you need. - *“As for me, I am poor and needy, but the Lord takes thought for me. You are my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God!” (Ps 40:17)*
 - (d) Make communion with God your ultimate goal.

*We have been brought to the point where we both can and must get our life’s priorities straight. From current Christian publications you might think that the most vital issue for any real or would-be Christian in the world today is church union, or social witness, or dialogue with other Christians and other faiths, or refuting this or that -ism, or developing a Christian philosophy and culture, or what have you. But our line of study makes the present day concentration on these things look like a gigantic conspiracy of misdirection. Of course, it is not that; the issues themselves are real and must be dealt with in their place. But it is tragic that, in paying attention to them, so many in our day seem to have been distracted from what was, and is, and always will be, the true priority for every human being. That is, learning to know God in Christ. - J.I. Packer, last page of *Knowing God*, 1973.*