

# Hebrews

## Chapter 2

### *Warning Against Neglecting Salvation*

**Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. 2 For since the message declared by 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 by 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.**

**2:1–4** The first of five warnings strategically positioned throughout the letter (see 3:7–4:13; 5:11–6:12; 10:19–39; 12:14–29). (CSB)

**2:1 therefore** – The basis of this encouragement is what has just been asserted and proven in chapter 1. Since the Son is above the angels, the word He spoke should be listened to even more keenly than the revelation given through the angels (i.e. the Law at Mt. Sinai). This does not mean that the OT is to be rejected. The OT is God’s Word and is to be heeded. But its meaning and purpose is to be seen in the light of the revelation in Jesus, not the other way around. The Gospel, testified to in the OT but revealed in all its clarity in Jesus, is God’s final word and is to be heeded most carefully. (LL)

*closer attention.* If God’s people were to listen to the law delivered by angels (cf v 2), then Christians are bound to give their whole attention to the Word delivered by Jesus, God’s eternal Son. (TLSB)

*what we have heard.* The message of the gospel, including that of Christ’s person as the God-man and his redemptive work on the cross. (CSB)

The message of Jesus, the Son of God, whose sacrifice cleanses us from sin. (TLSB)

*drift away.* From the greater revelation given through the Son. (CSB)

*pararuōmen.* The text begins by warning us not to “drift away” from the Gospel, just as a boat may drift before a contrary wind. In Eph 4:14, Paul employs essentially the same image and identifies contrary winds as being false doctrine. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

This reminds us of a ship that is drifting past, instead of into the safety of the harbor. Some wayward wind is carrying it slowly, almost unnoticed, past its destination. This was no idle concern on the part of the author. The drifting past the harbor had already begun for those Jewish Christians. The winds of persecution and oppression were carrying them further out to sea. (PBC)

**2:2 the message declared by angels.** The law given to Moses at Sinai. That angels were active in giving the law is indicated by Dt 33:2 (“myriads of holy ones”); Ps 68:17; Ac 7:38, 53; Gal 3:19. (CSB)

Angels were responsible for handing on God's Law to Moses (cf Ac 7:38, 53). (TLSB)

*received a just retribution* – Everyone who violated the law by stepping over it in thought, word and deed and everyone who disobeyed it by being unwilling to hear it would be justly punished. No sin of commission or omission would go unpunished by a fair and impartial God; so the OT history of God's people plainly showed. (PBC)

God's Law is authoritative. Any breaking of the Law leads to the appropriate punishment. (TLSB)

**2:3 neglect-** The writer warns that simply *amelēsantes*, neglecting salvation, becoming indifferent, is to reject it. The phrase "attested to us" suggests that Hebrews was not written by Paul or another of the apostles, yet is apostolic in content and authority. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

*such a great salvation.* The argument here is from the lesser to the greater, and assumes that the gospel is greater than the law. Thus, if disregard for the law brought certain punishment, disregard for the gospel will bring even greater punishment. (CSB)

Jesus' sacrifice frees people from the curse of the Law (cf Gal 3:13). If they neglect this gift God has given, they will not escape the just punishment for sin. (TLSB)

*confirmed to us by those who heard him.* The eyewitnesses, chiefly the apostles (see 2Pe 1:16; 1Jn 1:1), had vouched for the message first announced by Christ. The author himself apparently was neither an apostle nor an eyewitness (see Introduction: Author). (CSB)

Suggests that the writer of Hebrews was not St Paul or one of the Twelve, because they were directly called by Jesus and received the Word from Him. (TLSB)

Confirm is a legal term designating something properly documented. What court in the land will throw out evidence brought by actual eyewitnesses? The gospel was not human speculation, but divine revelation. It was not man's thoughts, but God truth. (PBC)

2 Peter 1:20-21, "<sup>20</sup> Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. <sup>21</sup> For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit."

**2:4 God also bore witness.** The Father and the Holy Spirit attested to the message of salvation, first spoken in its fullness by Jesus (v 3). (TLSB)

*signs, wonders and various miracles.* God added his confirmation to the gospel message through supernatural acts such as healing the sick (see Ac 3:7-9, 11-12, 16). (CSB)

Signs put stress on the meaning of the miracles. The miracles were not to be pointless displays, but pointers to Christ. (PBC)

Wonders refer to the effect of the miracle on the observers. (PBC)

Miracles refer to the superhuman power involved pointing to the Omnipotent as the source. (PBC)

*gifts of the Holy Spirit.* Such as the gift of tongues (see Ac 2:4–12). (CSB)

Cf Rm 12:6–8; 1Co 12–14; Gal 5:22–23; Eph 4:11–12. God chooses to bless His people with what they need to live by faith. (TLSB)

*distributed according to his will.* See 1Co 12:4–11. (CSB)

**2:1–4** Christians need God’s Word, spoken by Jesus and attested by those who heard Him. The Father and the Holy Spirit also bear witness. Ignoring God’s revelation of how to be saved is frightening. Jesus gives the Church pastors, teachers, and other leaders to spread the Word. He likewise gives us brothers and sisters to encourage us in our life of faith. He will always provide all that is needed to receive the gift of life. • Lord Jesus, thank You for speaking the Word of the Father to me. By Your Holy Spirit, keep me anchored to the hope of salvation that You freely give. Amen. (TLSB)

*The Founder of Salvation*

**5** For 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.” 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.[b] 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.” **13** And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again, “Behold, I and the children God has given me.” **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.

**2:5–18** An exposition of Ps 8:4–6, which continues to show Christ’s superiority over the angels—in fulfilling man’s role as sovereign over the earth and in redeeming fallen man, not fallen angels. To accomplish all this, Christ assumed human nature (see vv. 11, 14). (CSB)

**2:5** *It was not to angels that God has subjected the world to come.* Some think the readers were being enticed to believe that the future kingdom would be under the rule of angelic beings (see note on 1:4). Others see the author trying to dissuade his readers from turning back to Judaism. He shows that Christ, as bearer of the new revelation, is superior to angels who had participated in bringing the revelation at Sinai. (CSB)

Angels oversee the nations of this world (cf Dn 10:13). But the Son has authority over the whole of creation and time, including the angels. (TLSB)

**2:6a** *it has been testified somewhere.* Such a well-known passage as Ps 8:4–6 did not need precise identification. (CSB)

Ps 8 reflects on the apparent insignificance of human beings in contrast to their great significance to God. (TLSB)

Psalm 8, quoted here, is speaking of God’s original intention for his creation of human beings. But the double entendre is not lost on the inspired writer. In v 9, he makes clear that these words also point to Jesus, who by becoming man, and thus “for a little while . . . lower than the angels,” has restored our human nature and again exalted man to the honored position God intended. Paul makes the same point explicit when he applies Ps 8:6 specifically to Jesus (1 Cor 15:27). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

**2:6b–8** Awed by the marvelous order and immensity of God’s handiwork in the celestial universe, the psalmist marveled at the high dignity God had bestowed on puny man by entrusting him with dominion over the other creatures (see Ge 1:26–28 and notes). (CSB)

*testified somewhere.* Writer perhaps cites from memory or from notes (finding lines in a scroll was considerable trouble). Though he often quotes Scripture, he does not provide specific references. His free style is an example of the human side of Scripture. (TLSB)

**2:8** *subjection under him.* Ps 8:6 speaks of human beings, who have dominion over the earth and its creatures (Gn 1:28). As man, Jesus also has this dominion over creation. As God, He has still greater dominion. (TLSB)

*everything.* God’s purpose from the beginning was that man should be sovereign in the creaturely realm, subject only to God. Due to sin, that purpose of God has not yet been fully realized. Indeed, men are themselves “in slavery” (v. 15). (CSB)

By faith alone (cf Heb 11:1), we confess Jesus’ authority over our own lives and His authority over all things, even though life may seem out of control. (TLSB)

**2:9** *made lower than the angels.* Before His resurrection and ascension, Jesus did not always choose to demonstrate His divine power and so appeared lower than the angels. By taking the form of a servant, He appeared to be less authoritative than those glorious beings who are upheld by His Word (1:3). (TLSB)

*Jesus crowned with glory and honor.* Ps 8 is here applied to Jesus in particular. As forerunner of man’s restored dominion over the earth, he was made lower than the angels for a while but is now crowned with glory and honor at God’s right hand. By his perfect life, his death on the cross and his exaltation, he has made possible for redeemed man the ultimate fulfillment of Ps 8 in the future kingdom, when man will regain sovereignty over creation. (CSB)

Through Jesus’ death and resurrection, His true status as God’s Son was revealed to the sinful world, and God the Father exalted Him (cf Php 2:9–11). (TLSB)

Our Lord did not sit in some remote throne room in heaven, watching and sadly shaking his head at our feeble, futile efforts. Instead, himself came down to earth and took on our human nature.

What a sight that must have been for the angels as their Lord stepped down from his eternal glory to be wrapped in human flesh and made a little lower than they. (PBC)

Psalms 8: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. <sup>2</sup>From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise <sup>b</sup> because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. <sup>3</sup>When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup>what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? <sup>5</sup>You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings <sup>c</sup> and crowned him with glory and honor. <sup>6</sup>You made him ruler over the works of your hands; you put everything under his feet: <sup>7</sup>all flocks and herds, and the beasts of the field, <sup>8</sup>the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. <sup>9</sup>O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Philippians 2:5-11 <sup>5</sup>Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup>Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup>And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! <sup>9</sup>Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*by the grace of God.* God has freely provided His Son as the sacrifice for the sin of the world (Jn 19). (TLSB)

*might taste death for everyone* – Jesus became man to die for man. To do so is more than merely to sip at the dread cup. It is to drain it completely, to experience it fully. And this he did for everyone. (PBC)

Jesus' death has drained the cup of sin and death that poisoned every person (cf Rm 5:12–17). (TLSB)

“taste death for everyone.” Jesus restores our human nature by his substitutionary death for all. By becoming man, Jesus is able to identify with us in all of our various needs (such as in our struggles against temptation, v 18). However, this substitution—his death for our life—is the ultimate purpose of Jesus so intimately and fully identifying himself with mankind (v 17). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

**2:10** *He ... by whom all things exist.* God the Father, who created all. (TLSB)

*for whom.* Aug: “You have formed us for Yourself, and our hearts are restless until they find rest in You” (NPNF 1 1:45). (TLSB)

*many sons to glory.* Those who believe in Christ are made God's children through his only Son (cf. Jn 1:12–13). (CSB)

Jesus' glory will be shared with all whom God leads in faith. (TLSB)

Many people are saved through what Jesus did.

This plan of salvation was no haphazard happening. (PBC)

John 1:12-13 “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup> children born not of natural descent, <sup>c</sup> nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

*founder*. The Greek word occurs only four times in the NT: here; 12:2; Ac 3:15; 5:31 (“Prince”). (CSB)

Jesus (cf 12:2). (TLSB)

The “founder” of our salvation, Jesus—and thus also our salvation itself—is made *teleiōsai*, complete, through his suffering. This is from the same root as Jesus’ *tetelestai*, “It is finished,” from the cross. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

arkhaygos - The chief leader or captain. It is someone who begins and finishes something. There is little value in starting things and not finishing them. They payoff is in what we finish and not in what we start. This is called to mind in Revelation where it calls Jesus “the Alpha and Omega” the beginning and the end. It can also mean “source.”

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

In one way or another it always means “to bring to the goal.” (Beck)

This can also be translated as “source.” Jesus didn’t merely lead to salvation. He did more than blaze a trail to heaven; he became the Way without which no one comes to the Father. (PBC)

*perfect through suffering*. Christ had not been morally or spiritually imperfect, but his incarnation was completed (perfected) when he experienced suffering. He identified with us on the deepest level of anguish, and so became qualified to pay the price for our sinful imperfection and to become our sympathetic high priest. (CSB)

As God’s eternal Son, Jesus demonstrated complete obedience to the Father through His suffering. Just as a test may show that a student has perfect or complete knowledge of a topic, the cross showed that Jesus completely obeyed the Father’s will. Jesus’ Passion led to His exaltation and glory following the resurrection. (TLSB)

This was not a hit or miss plan. It was perfectly planned and executed. People are brought to glory not by God just winking at sin but because Jesus took the complete punishment for each and every sin.

Perfect is teleioo and means to complete something, to accomplish a goal without any shortcomings.

**2:11** *who sanctifies and those who are sanctified*. Christ became man to identify himself with man and, by his substitutionary sacrifice on the cross, to restore the holiness man had lost. (CSB)

Because the Father adopts us through Jesus, Jesus and Christians have God as their Father (Rm 8:15). Also Jesus, as a true human being, shares descent with us from the one human father, Adam. (TLSB)

*to call them brothers.* Our brotherhood with Jesus is the brotherhood of the Redeemer with the redeemed, who are truly one with him. (CSB)

Jesus is ready to confess before the Father and all creation that believers in Him are truly His family (Mt 12:48–50). (TLSB)

This is spoken about in the OT and shows how perfect and well thought-out a plan this is.

Psalm 22:22 “I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation I will praise you.”

He took on our flesh and according to our flesh has truly become our brother. (Beck)

They are truly brothers and Jesus did not shrink from declaring the fact. (PBC)

Hebrews 2:14-18, “<sup>14</sup> Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—<sup>15</sup> and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. <sup>16</sup> For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. <sup>17</sup> For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for<sup>f</sup> the sins of the people. <sup>18</sup> Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

Matthew 25:36 sick or in prison n prison and you came to visit me.’

**2:12-13** OT quotes emphasize Jesus’ solidarity with mankind. (TLSB)

**2:12** *I will tell of your name to my brothers.* A quotation from Ps 22:22, a psalm describing the sufferings and triumph of God’s righteous servant. The key phrase is “my brothers,” seen here as coming from the lips of the triumphant Messiah. (CSB)

In Ps 22, David prays to God because he is suffering from persecution and distress. He ends with a confident confession of the Lord’s righteousness (Ps 22:22). Jesus, David’s descendant and heir, prayed a portion of this psalm on the cross (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34). (TLSB)

**2:13** Speaks of the trust that the prophet Isaiah and his family had in the face of coming judgment. Also describes Jesus, who while suffering judgment for sin, placed His trust in His Father. Jesus is bound to those who place their trust in Him. (TLSB)

*I will put my trust in him.* An expression of true dependence on God perfectly exemplified in Christ. In him humanity is seen as it was intended to be. (CSB)

*Here am I, and the children God has given me.* Also seen ultimately as an utterance of the incarnate Son. The Father’s children are given to the Son to be his brothers (see v. 11). (CSB)

Verse 10 spoke of us as “sons,” emphasizing inheritance. Here we are called “children,” referring to our dependence on Christ. (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

**2:14-15** A quite complete summary of the incarnation: its nature (“partook” of “flesh and blood”), its destination (“death”), its accomplishment (“destroy” the devil and “deliver” the enslaved “children”). (Concordia Pulpit Resources - Volume 22, Part 4)

**2:14** *children share in flesh and blood.* Children and their parents share genetic unity. (TLSB)

*partook of the same.* Jesus became, and still is, a real human being and truly our Brother. Through the incarnation, Jesus shares our human nature (yet without sin). Christians and their Lord also share the unique fellowship of the Lord’s flesh and blood through the Lord’s Supper (1Co 10:16–17). “He did not receive a foreign nature, but our own flesh in the unity of His person. In this way He has become our true Brother.... Christ redeemed human nature as His work, sanctifies it, raises it from the dead, and gloriously adorns it as His work” (FC Ep I 5–6). (TLSB)

*through death ... destroy.* Jesus’ death absorbed God’s judgment against sin. On the cross, Jesus bore all sin and the condemnation of death. (TLSB)

*the one who holds the power of death.* Satan wields the power of death only insofar as he induces people to sin and to come under sin’s penalty, which is death (see Eze 18:4; Ro 5:12; 6:23). (CSB)

Death has a claim on those who sin (Rm 6:23). (TLSB)

*the devil.* He uses God’s Law to bring accusations against those who have sinned. Luther: “The devil’s work is to crush us under his feet and, because of our sin, to dispatch us from life into death.... [Christ’s] works are truly divine works such as: to justify, to restore to life, to save” (AE 13:135). (TLSB)

*katargeo* – To render entirely useless. The devil continues to remind us of our many sins and tries to enslave us. But, Jesus reminds us that his death takes care of all of our sins and we are not guilty and don’t have be burdened with that guilt.

**2:15** *lifelong slavery.* All who sin fear death as a consequence of sin and are bound in this fear unless God speaks His word of mercy in Christ (cf Rm 7:14–25). (TLSB)

**2:16** *offspring of Abraham.* Christ assumed not angelic nature but human nature, characterized by the descendants of Abraham. (CSB)

Those who also have faith in the Savior. Cf Gal 3:6–9, 26–29. (TLSB)

**2:17** *in every respect.* Jesus was, and is, a real human being who has shared in every aspect of human life, including the temptation to sin. (TLSB)

*a merciful and faithful high priest.* Christ could represent mankind before God only if he became one with them. (CSB)

Jesus brings our needs to the Father because He knows the reality of human weakness. (TLSB)



*the service of God.* Jesus' sacrifice is given to God the Father and is not compelled by Satan or any other power. Jesus went to the cross willingly, thwarting Satan's purposes (1Co 2:8; 1Jn 3:8). (TLSB)

*make propitiation.* In order for Christ to turn aside the wrath of God against guilty sinners, he had to become one with them and die as a substitute for them. (CSB)

*propitiation.* Jesus removes the stain of sin, bringing human beings into a right relationship with the Father (TLSB)

hilastayreeon – This means to have an atoning victim (Jesus) and also mercy seat like in the lid of the Ark or propitiation. The OT priests sprinkled blood of animals on the altar as a symbol of a sacrifice for sin. Jesus used his own blood and did it only once and for all.

**2:18** *he himself has suffering when tempted.* Jesus' prayers are those of one who has suffered and been tempted as a real human being. We are assured that His prayers are effective and heartfelt (cf 5:7; Rm 8:34). (TLSB)

**2:5–18** Jesus, as true man, willingly humbled Himself to taste death. As resurrected Lord, and as our firstborn Brother (v 11), He serves as our High Priest to intercede for us before the Father. Without a Savior, we would live in slavery to the fear of death. But Jesus has taken the consequence of our sin and removes our fear. Knowing our weaknesses, He will always help us when we are tempted. • Lord Jesus, You know my weakness. Help me always to turn away from sin and to put all my trust in You. Amen. (TLSB)