

# keep your *focus* on **Jesus**

## Hebrews 2

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Long ago, at many times and in various ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son. The letter of Hebrews was written to followers of Jesus, then and now, who are turning away, or being tempted to turn away from Jesus to other things. In chapter one, the author says what? You know God's SON - the Creator of all, the Sustainer of all, the Heir of all, the radiance of God's glory, very God of very God, your Redeemer, seated at the right hand of God, in eternal glory, Ruler of all ... and you're turning away from *HIM*, to *angels*; focusing on them instead! That's crazy!

Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta, Georgia. Rams vs. Patriots. The Lombardi Trophy. Super Bowl LIII! The media. The hype. The fanfare. The distractions - one of a coach's greatest fears. Focus. It's one of the keys to success - in sports, in school, in business, in marriage, in life, in eternal life.

The letter of Hebrews was written to followers of Jesus in times of trial - when we're distracted - when we're tempted to lose our focus and drift away from Jesus. To help prevent this tragedy from occurring, the author focuses our attention on the absolute supremacy of Jesus above all! It was written to bring us back to the truth of the Gospel, in order that Jesus *alone* would be supreme in our hearts, in our minds, in our lives.

*Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.* That's what was happening to some of these believers. They were paying more attention to angels and less attention to Jesus. Something else had caught their attention other than Jesus. You think they were the only ones to struggle with such distraction and loss of focus?

*For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable ["was binding"] ...* What was the message declared by angels? We hear about this in the following scriptures: Deuteronomy 33 *This is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the people of Israel before his death. He said, "The Lord came from Sinai ... he came with myriads of holy ones ...* Acts 7:38 *This is the one [Moses] who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him at Mount Sinai ...* Acts 7:53 *"You stiff-necked people ... who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it."* Galatians 3:19 *It [the Law] ...was put in place through angels ...* What was the message declared by angels? God's Law. Specifically, the Ten Commandments.

If turning from God and neglecting His word, His commandments, neglecting Him, not trusting Him, brings judgment, how shall we escape His judgment and punishment if we neglect such a great Salvation? If we lose our focus on Jesus, the Divine Heir, the radiance of God's glory, our Creator, our Sustainer, the ruler of the universe, our Redeemer and Savior - if we lose focus of Jesus in our hearts and in our minds and in our daily lives, if we neglect Jesus and turn away to something *else*, how shall we escape God's eternal judgment? We won't. We'll be eternally condemned, just like any other unbeliever!

Do you see what's at stake here? Do you see why the author of Hebrews is making such a big deal about Jesus and keeping our attention on Him; not losing our focus and drifting away from Him? This great salvation of God in His Son, is it *really* that important? Where did it come from in the first place? Is there a danger in drifting away from Him? Apparently they needed to be reminded? Do you ever need to be reminded of the Good News?

*It was declared at first **by the Lord** ...* by Jesus Himself. Jesus proclaimed it loud and clear, right from the very start. Mark 1:14-15 *Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."* John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* John 4:13-14 *Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks*

*of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."*

*It was declared at first by the Lord ... and it was attested to us **by those who heard**, by the twelve apostles (and other eye witnesses) ... The apostles go out and do what? They start preaching to the world. They preach in Jerusalem at first. Then they preach among the Samaritans. They preach among the Gentiles. They go out to Antioch, someone from Ethiopia. Paul makes his three great missionary journeys to what we now call Cyprus and Turkey and Greece. He eventually makes it to Rome.*

While the apostles are doing this preaching, **God testifies** to their preaching at the same time with what? With **miracles**. The first one was the mysterious tongues of fire that came down on the apostles' heads on the Day of Pentecost. There was the sound of a rushing wind. The apostles were granted the power to speak in other languages. The apostles healed the sick. They made a lame man walk again. They cast out demons. They gained such a reputation for healing, that people did what? They were bringing sick people to the streets where they knew where Peter would be walking just to have his shadow cross over them. Apparently, Peter's shadow healed people.

What was happening? These miracles among the apostles were God's testimony. God was giving testimony that their message was true. ... *while God also bore witness ... How? ... by signs and wonders and various miracles ...*

*[This great salvation in Jesus] was declared at first by the Lord ... and it was attested to us by those who heard ... while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by **gifts of the Holy Spirit** distributed according to his will. 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.*

Therefore what? *Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, [by Jesus Himself, by eye witnesses, by God through miracles, and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit] lest we drift away from it. How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? We won't!*

Are you ever distracted from Jesus? Would you ever do that; reject this great salvation? How might such a thing happen? In a million ways. As the early Christians did, drifting away from an emphasis on Jesus and focusing elsewhere - angels, Moses, laws, feasts, traditions, some particular teaching. Or you might be distracted by everyday life - daily tasks, worries, concerns, entertainments; the things of this world. Beside all of this, your own sinful, self-centered heart is always drifting away. Drifting away from God's great salvation in Jesus. You and I are distracted by a million things. How shall you escape God's judgment if you neglect such a great salvation? You won't! Without Jesus, what awaits you, but the wrath of God!

*For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. Some of the readers of Hebrews may have been enticed to believe that the future kingdom would be under the rule of angelic beings. But Jesus didn't humble Himself, come into our world as a human baby, humble Himself to the point of death on a cross, and rise from the dead - for angels - but for you and me. He came to restore what you and I were meant to be!*

*It has been testified somewhere [in Psalm 8], "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? Out of all God's creation, of what value is puny man? Of what value are human beings to God? Are we really that important? "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? You made him a little lower [or for a little while lower] than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet."*

Everything under our feet; in charge of all God's creatures; entrusted with a shepherding dominion over the earth. *And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."* (Genesis 1:28)

*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. God's purpose from the beginning was that humans should be what? Sovereign in the creaturely realm, subject only to God. But due to sin, that purpose of God has not yet been fully realized, has it? Indeed, we are "in slavery" instead. (Concordia Self-Study Bible)*

*But what do we see now? 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 [and God's judgment] for everyone.*

Right now, we don't have the high dignity God created for us - as ruling in dominion over the world He created. But what do we see? We see our *Substitute*. As forerunner of our restored dominion over the earth, Jesus was made lower than the angels for a while - when He was made in our image. But now, having suffered in our place, suffered on our behalf, given His life for us, now - He is crowned with glory and honor at God's right hand. By his perfect life, his death on the cross and his exultation, Jesus has made possible for us the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 8 in the future kingdom, when we will be restored and regain sovereignty over creation. (Conc. Self-Study Bible)

What a great salvation! What else could possibly be worth your focus - the focus of your heart, the focus of your mind, the focus of your life!

*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 [complete His incarnation, complete our salvation] through suffering. For he who sanctifies [makes holy] and those who are sanctified [made holy] all have one source [are all of the same family].*

*That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, "I [Jesus] will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." (Ps 22:22) And again, "I [Jesus] will put my trust in Him." (Isaiah 8:17) And again, "Behold, I [Jesus] and the children God has given me." (Is 8:18)*

*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, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery.*

*For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brothers [not angels] in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation [atonement, payment] for the sins of the people. For because He himself has suffered when tempted, He is able to help those [not angels] who are being tempted.*

What a great salvation! Declared at first by Jesus Himself. Attested to us by the apostles and other eye witnesses. God also bearing witness by signs and wonders and various miracles. The Holy Spirit testifying to it by the gifts He gives out.

Focus. It's one of the keys to success - in sports, in school, in life, in eternal life. It's easy to get distracted, isn't it? It happened to some of these first believers. It happens to us today. It's easy to lose your focus on this great salvation in Jesus. But what a tragedy that would be! *Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*