

The Point Church
9.20 | Jesus is Better Than...Angels | Hebrews 2

MAIN POINT

Knowing that Jesus has destroyed the power of the devil by His death, believers can be confident of the great salvation Christ has accomplished for them.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What is one personal goal you set for yourself this year? How have you done in meeting that goal? What have the greatest hindrances been in attaining this goal?

What are the greatest barriers or hindrances to our spiritual growth?

Of all the things that we often allow to negatively affect our spiritual growth, none is more influential than the devil. Fearing the influence of Satan, however, demonstrates a lack of faith. In reality, Satan is a defeated foe that Christians need not fear. Through His death, Jesus destroyed "the one holding the power of death--that is the Devil" (Hebrews 2:14). By dying on the cross for our sins, Jesus rendered the great Accuser powerless over us and freed "those who were held in slavery all their lives by fear of death" (Hebrews 2:15).

UNDERSTANDING

Ask a volunteer to read Hebrews 2:1-13.

¹Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. ²For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, ³how 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, ⁴while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will. ⁵For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. ⁶It has been testified somewhere, "What is man, that you are mindful of him, or the son of man, that you care for him? ⁷You made him for a little while lower than the angels; you have crowned him with glory and honor, ⁸putting 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. ⁹But 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. ¹⁰For 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. ¹¹For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹²saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise." ¹³And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children God has given me."

Hebrews 2:1-18 (ESV)

To what did the readers of Hebrews need to “pay even more attention”? How did the writer connect their present experience with the past?

What situations potentially cause a person to drift when it comes to obeying Christ and holding to the gospel truth?

The word “Therefore” at the beginning of chapter 2 refers to the discussion of the superiority of Christ over the Law in Chapter 1. The readers of Hebrews were predominantly Jewish believers who had become Christians. They may have been on the verge of deserting Christianity and returning to their former religion (the Law). The readers of Hebrews needed to focus more closely on what they had heard—the truth of the gospel.

What happens when believers fail to pay attention? How does this passage apply to Christians today?

How is a divine warning an act of grace? When has a warning in Scripture helped you resist the pull of doubt and unbelief?

“Drifting away” describes a boat that sails past caution signs to meet destruction. In this context, drifting refers to straying from the truth of the gospel. The readers of Hebrews were headed in a dangerous direction, so they needed to pay attention. Drifting isn’t something that happens intentionally; it’s something that happens when you stop paying attention to where you are.

Two types of neglect are described in verses 2-3. How are they similar? How do the consequences of disobeying the Law compare with neglecting Christ?

The first type of neglect he mentions is violating the Law. The second type of neglect is neglecting Christ: The “great salvation” came through Him and Him alone. Some people think they can please God by keeping rules or doing good. This passage reminds us that salvation through Christ is the only way to be in a right relationship with God.

Disobeying the Old Testament Law led to punishment. Specific penalties existed for violating each commandment. Neglecting or ignoring Christ has far greater consequences. We face God’s judgment after we die (Heb. 9:27). We face judgment with eternal consequences if we do not accept Christ.

How does God hold His people accountable today? How does this compare to the accountability faced by the Old Testament hearers?

Ask a volunteer to read Hebrews 2:14-18.

¹⁴Since 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, ¹⁵and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery. ¹⁶For surely it is not angels that he helps, but he helps the offspring of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore 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. ¹⁸For because he himself has suffered when tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Hebrews 2:1-18 (ESV)

Christ has freed you from death so that you will live for Him. What does this look like on a day-to-day basis?

What are one or two ways that you have been living as one who is still a slave to death, rather than as someone who has life and freedom in Christ?

The unfortunate reality is that for all of those people who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus, death is still something to be feared. How would you put the truth of Hebrews 2:14-15 into your own words in order to share Christ with someone else?

This passage of Hebrews speaks about two things Jesus did that, at first glance, seem unrelated. One of the greatest results of Jesus' death and resurrection is that by defeating death He defeated Satan, the author of death. That is something that only He, the Son of God, had the power to accomplish. However, the writer of Hebrews points out that Jesus' defeat of death had huge implications for our lives; it brought us freedom. Before you became a Christian, you were a slave to death. It was the inevitable outcome of your life, and it was a hopeless reality. But in Christ, death is no longer the end; it's the beginning of eternal life with God. This means that in both your life and your death, you are free to love God and live for Him.

Jesus did not stop helping us when He accomplished His work on the cross or when He ascended to heaven (vv. 16-18). How has Jesus helped you recently?

We all face temptations of many kinds; they are an inevitable consequence of the presence of sin and Satan's efforts to push us away from God. What tempts you? How will you resist?

At the end of Hebrews 2, the writer gives us one more reminder (vv. 16-18) of the ways Jesus made Himself like us in order to save us: Jesus faced temptation, which means He empathizes with you when you face temptation. One of the best pictures of Jesus' temptation in Scripture is found in Matthew 4, when Satan tried to put an end to Jesus' earthly ministry before it began. In the story of Jesus' temptation, we learn that a person's relationship with God is the most surefire way to avoid temptation. Through Scripture, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus' example, God has given us everything we need to withstand the temptations that come our way. When we stand for Christ in the midst of our temptations and sufferings, we show the world that serving God is so much better than anything else this world has to offer.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How can paying attention to God's Word and His great salvation help you avoid drifting away from Jesus?

Is there anything in your life right now that is causing you to drift? How are you going to take an active stance against that drift this week?

How have you used the experience of these temptations when telling someone else about Jesus? If you never have, brainstorm a list of ways you can turn your temptations into opportunities to share the gospel.

PRAYER

Pray and ask God to help you and your group pay attention. Confess your tendency to drift, and ask Him to remind you of the anchor you have in Christ.