

# Session 4 Do Not Neglect the World to Come

*Before the Silence: A Study of Hebrews*

Session 4 | Hebrews 2:1-5

## The Warning and the World to Come (Hebrews 2:1-5)

Session 3 showed that the Son is above the angels. Angels are servants, but the Son has the name, throne, permanence, and right-hand expectation. Hebrews 2 now turns that doctrine into warning: if the Son is greater than angels, then His word carries greater accountability.

The movement of Hebrews 2:1-5 is simple:

- **Hebrews 2:1-4** - The Hebrews must give earnest heed to the word spoken by the Son and confirmed by apostolic signs.
- **Hebrews 2:5** - The warning is tied to the “**world to come**,” not a vague heavenly spirituality. The coming kingdom order belongs under the Son, not angels.

## Hebrews 2:1 - Give the More Earnest Heed

*Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

### Exegesis

- “**Therefore**” reaches back to Hebrews 1. Since God has spoken in His Son, and since that Son is above angels, the Hebrew audience has greater responsibility.
- “**We ought**” keeps the writer identified with the Hebrew audience under the same warning.
- “**Give the more earnest heed**” is not casual interest. It is deliberate attention to what God has spoken.
- “**The things which we have heard**” refers to the revelation already described: God spoke to the fathers by the prophets and now has spoken by His Son.
- “**Let them slip**” pictures drifting away from what has been heard. The danger is not that the word is weak, but that the hearers fail to hold course.

### Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Hebrews 1:1-4** - The warning rests on God’s speech in the

Son.

- **Hebrews 1:13-14** - The Son sits at God’s right hand while angels minister; that contrast gives Hebrews 2:1 its force.
- **Acts 3:22-26** - Peter warns Israel that the prophet like Moses must be heard. Hebrews gives the same kind of accountability to Messiah’s word.

### Text And Translation Notes

- “**Give...heed**” carries the idea of turning the mind toward something.
- “**Let them slip**” carries the idea of drifting or flowing past. The old 2016 notes compared this to nautical language: set your sail toward what has been heard, or you will drift off course.

### What The Passage Does Not Say

- It does **not** begin a new subject unrelated to Chapter 1.
- It does **not** primarily describe a believer having an ordinary bad week.
- It does **not** detach the warning from Israel’s late Temple setting and kingdom accountability.

## Hebrews 2:2 - The Stedfast Word

*For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward;*

### Exegesis

- “**For if**” begins a lesser-to-greater argument. The earlier word was binding; the Son’s word is greater.
- “**The word spoken by angels**” likely points to the mediated revelation connected with Sinai. The same word can also mean messengers, so the prophetic messengers are not far from the thought.
- “**Was stedfast**” means the earlier word was firm, valid, and unalterable.
- “**Transgression**” is stepping across a known boundary.

- “**Disobedience**” is tied to hearing. In Hebrews, failure to hear rightly becomes disobedience.
- “**A just recompence of reward**” means covenant violation received righteous repayment.

### Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Acts 7:53** - Stephen says Israel received the law by the disposition of angels and did not keep it.
- **Galatians 3:19** - Paul says the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.
- **Hebrews 10:28-29** - Hebrews later uses the same logic: despising Moses’ law was serious, and rejecting the Son brings a sorer punishment.

## Text And Translation Notes

- “**Stedfast**” is related to firmness or sure footing.
- “**Transgression**” has the idea of going out of bounds.
- “**Disobedience**” is connected to hearing. The issue is not lack of information, but failure to heed.
- The NASB’s “**penalty**” in this verse is an interpretation of the context. The KJV leaves the broader recompense/reward

idea visible.

## What The Passage Does Not Say

- It does **not** say the law was weak, false, or unreliable.
- It does **not** make Christ’s superiority depend on despising the earlier word.
- It does **not** turn consequences into vague feelings. The verse speaks of real accountability.

## Hebrews 2:3 - So Great Salvation

*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;*

- **Ephesians 3:1-9** - Paul says the mystery was hidden in God; therefore Hebrews 2:3 should not be confused with the later mystery gospel.

## Exegesis

- “**How shall we escape**” completes the warning. If the earlier word brought just recompense, neglecting the Son’s word cannot be treated as safe.
- “**Neglect**” is not open hostility. It is careless disregard.
- “**So great salvation**” must be defined by the verse itself. It was first spoken by the Lord and confirmed by those who heard Him.
- In this context, the salvation is the kingdom salvation proclaimed to Israel, not the later mystery gospel revealed through Paul for the present dispensation.
- “**Confirmed unto us by them that heard him**” distinguishes the Lord’s original hearers from those who received their testimony.

## Text And Translation Notes

- “**Escape**” is related to fleeing away. The question pictures someone trying to get out from under deserved judgment.
- “**Confirmed**” is related to the firmness idea in verse 2. The Lord’s kingdom message was not left as rumor.
- “**By them that heard him**” matters. It points to apostolic confirmation of the Lord’s earthly message.

## Theological Insights

- Hebrews can be written after Paul’s revelation of the mystery and still address Israel’s kingdom accountability.
- The warning is severe because Israel had received not only prophets and messengers, but the Son’s own message and apostolic confirmation.

## Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Matthew 4:17** - Jesus began preaching, “**Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.**”
- **Matthew 10:5-7** - The Twelve were sent to Israel with the message that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.
- **Acts 3:19-21** - Peter offers Israel repentance, refreshing, and the return of Christ.

## What The Passage Does Not Say

- It does **not** use “**so great salvation**” as a generic label for every salvation passage in the Bible.
- It does **not** teach that a member of the body of Christ can lose grace-age salvation by neglect.
- It does **not** erase the Jewish and kingdom setting of the Lord’s earthly ministry.

## Hebrews 2:4 - God Bearing Witness

*God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?*

ording to God’s will, not humanly controlled powers.

- The signs belong to the confirmation of the Lord’s kingdom message to Israel.

## Exegesis

- “**God also bearing them witness**” means God Himself confirmed the apostolic testimony.
- “**Signs**” point beyond themselves to the message they authenticate.
- “**Wonders**” emphasize the astonishment produced by God’s acts.
- “**Divers miracles**” means varied works of power, not one repeated phenomenon.
- “**Gifts of the Holy Ghost**” are distributions of the Spirit ac-

## Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Mark 16:20** - The Lord worked with the apostolic witnesses, confirming the word with signs following.
- **Acts 2:22** - Peter tells Israel that Jesus was approved of God by miracles, wonders, and signs.
- **Acts 5:12** - Signs and wonders continued among the people through the apostles.
- **2 Corinthians 12:12** - Paul speaks of the signs of an apostle in signs, wonders, and mighty deeds.

## Text And Translation Notes

- “**Divers**” means various or different kinds.
- “**Gifts**” can carry the idea of distributions. The emphasis is on the Holy Ghost’s apportioning.
- “**According to his own will**” controls the whole list. These were divine confirmations, not human techniques.

#### Theological Insights

- The miracles in Acts were not religious spectacle. They were divine witness to Israel concerning Messiah and the kingdom offer.

- The signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts were diverse. That variety warns against isolating one gift today and making it the single mark of God’s approval.

#### What The Passage Does Not Say

- It does **not** require every age or congregation to reproduce apostolic signs.
- It does **not** deny that God can do miracles.
- It does **not** make the Holy Ghost subject to human method.

## Hebrews 2:5 - The World to Come

*For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.*

#### Exegesis

- “**For**” connects the warning to the larger argument about angels and the Son.
- “**Unto the angels hath he not put in subjection**” denies angelic rule over the coming ordered realm.
- “**The world to come**” is the Messianic age, the coming kingdom order in which all things are subjected under the Son.
- “**Whereof we speak**” ties the salvation of verses 3-4 to the world to come.
- This verse turns the reader from warning to explanation: the Son’s temporary humiliation does not contradict His superiority.

#### Closely Relevant Cross-References

- **Psalm 8:4-6** - The passage quoted in Hebrews 2 gives the scriptural basis for dominion over God’s works.
- **Psalm 2:6-9** - The Son is set on Zion and receives the nations.
- **Daniel 7:13-14** - The Son of man receives dominion, glory, and a kingdom.

- **Revelation 11:15** - The kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

#### Text And Translation Notes

- “**World**” here is not kosmos but the inhabited or ordered world.
- “**To come**” keeps the focus future. Hebrews is not saying all kingdom promises are already invisibly fulfilled.
- “**Whereof we speak**” identifies the present subject as the world to come.

#### Theological Insights

- Kingdom salvation in Hebrews is future-facing. It concerns the coming order under Messiah.
- If Hebrews was written late, around A.D. 68-69, it is striking that the writer gives no indication that this world to come was “**already**” present in any meaningful sense.

#### What The Passage Does Not Say

- It does **not** make “**the world to come**” mean heaven in a vague sense.
- It does **not** put the kingdom under angelic administration.
- It does **not** separate the salvation of verse 3 from the kingdom world of verse 5.

## Teaching Summary

- Hebrews 2:1-4 gives the first warning of the book: the Hebrews must not neglect the Son’s word and the kingdom salvation confirmed by apostolic witness.
- Hebrews 2:5 identifies the subject as the world to come and shows that this coming order is not placed under angels.
- Hebrews 2:6-8 will continue the argument from Psalm 8, showing man’s intended dominion, Christ’s humiliation, and the present “**not yet**” before the reader is brought to “**But we see Jesus**” in verse 9.