

## A GREATER WORD

Hebrews 2:1–4 — *"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. For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 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; 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?"*

This is the conclusion to the first argument.

Because:

- The Father spoke by the prophets in time past and now is speaking by His Son
- The Son sat down at the right hand of God when He had by Himself purged our sins
- The Son is greater by inheritance than the prophets and even the angels
- The Son is God's ordained King
- The Son is creator
- The Son is in heaven waiting until His enemies are made His footstool

Therefore...

- "We" have heard the Word of God by the Son
- Neglecting the salvation sent by the Father through the Son is the gravest of offences and will lead to a terrible end.

## THE WORD SPOKEN BY ANGELS

The word spoken by angels has a general sense to any word that angels said to men in time past. There is a more particular sense.

- Acts 7:53 — *"Who have received the law by the disposition of angels and have not kept it"*
- Galatians 3:19 — *"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."*
- Psalm 68:17 — *"The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place."*

The particular sense here is the word of the Law. The law was given to Moses, the mediator, by angels. How exactly that happened is not really said, because it is said that God gave the law to Moses in Exodus without mention of the angels, except perhaps the thick dark cloud. However, both the Old Testament and the New are the revelation from God so we get a fuller revelation when we take both into account.

Under the law, transgressions and disobedience were dealt with swiftly. Recall a man that picked up sticks on the Sabbath. Recall Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Recall Miriam.

What is disobedience to the Son in this context?

How shall we (Hebrews, the Israelite nation) escape if we (same) neglect "so great salvation"?

Israel was not going to get the offer of another savior.

Acts 4:8–12 — *"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, If we this day be examined of the good deed done to the impotent man, by what means he is made whole; Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

This great salvation *began* to be spoken by the Lord. Recall that much of what He said was not understood even by His closest disciples, like Peter, for instance, in Matthew 16.

It was confirmed “unto us” by them that heard Him. Who is this “us”?

Who are “them that heard Him”?

Mark 16:14–20 — *"Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."*

The Lord ministered through His apostles particularly to Israel, in the first chapters of Acts. Even recall Paul in Acts 13 speaking to the men of Israel.

What Paul said to the men of Israel in Acts 13 is very similar to what we read in Hebrews 2:1-4. While not dwelling in this study of the question of authorship, these verses do not make impossible that the author of Hebrews is the Apostle Paul. It is well understood, or at least should be, that Paul did not receive his gospel from anyone, including the Twelve, other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, Galatians 1:11–12. But do understand that as an Israelite, even, as he said of himself, a “Hebrew of the Hebrews” (Philippians 3:5), he would be among the “us” of the Hebrew nation who heard the word of the Son by the Lord and by them that heard Him. This has nothing to do with the source of the particular gospel committed to Paul that he calls *“my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery which was kept secret since the world began but now is made manifest”* (Romans 16:25-26)

The summary of Hebrews 1 and these first few verses of chapter 2 speak of the greatness of the Son as God’s Word and that now that God has spoken by His Son, the hearers of that word stand at a fork in the road. Will they obey, i.e., believe that Word and heed its call to faith in the Son of God, or will they disobey, which is to reject the Word of God. The Word was not in secret. It was to all the nation (let all the house of Israel know, Acts 2:36, 13:38). The word of Christ is now made known to all the world as the nation of Israel rejected Christ, see Colossians 1:5 and 6, Titus 2:11. The question to the recipients of this letter, or rather the challenge, is that now that they have heard the greatness of the Son, and know

the truth of God given by Him, would they heed or neglect. To neglect is to disbelieve. It could be active defiance against God as we saw in Acts, or it could be simply ignoring the truth of God's revelation. What would be the direction that they will take. Both have the same consequence. We see this throughout this epistle, and it is the point.

As this was to the Hebrews, we too have an imperative. Will we believe the Word of God spoken to us, or will we neglect "so great salvation".

To us who are saved: will we walk according to the truth of God's Word, or will we follow that which satisfies the flesh and pleases that our likes and dislikes, rather than submitting to the truth of God's Word.