

JESUS, SUCH A GREAT SALVATION

Hebrews 1:1 - 2:18

Key verse 2:1

"We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away."

Thanks be to the Lord that we may study the Word of God from Hebrews together. Through the Easter message, we have learned about the perfect redemption through the blood of Christ. Jesus' blood, shed for us on the cross, completely cleanses our evil conscience from all dead works, so that we may now serve the living God in holiness and righteousness in the new life. We were encouraged to wholeheartedly embrace this eternal redemption through the blood of Jesus and to lead young people to this redemption through one-to-one Bible study.

The Letter to the Hebrews is written to Jewish-minded 1st century Christians who were facing persecution and temptation to strengthen their faith in the superiority of Jesus Christ and encourage them to faithfully walk in faith. We, like the early Christians, may look up to Jesus, the beginner and perfecter of faith, and faithfully follow in his footsteps of faith.

Today we will look at chapters 1 and 2. The author begins the Letter to the Hebrews with a powerful statement about Jesus, who is the ultimate Word of God, the final and absolute revelation of God to us. Jesus is much higher than the prophets and higher than the angels. He is the Son of God who accomplished redemption for us and who is now seated at the right hand of God. We hear a serious exhortation today that we should not despise the Word of God and the salvation that is so great through Jesus. Jesus, the Son of God, humbled Himself completely to become our High Priest through suffering. Let us esteem,

accept and obey the Word of God that we hear, so that we do not miss our eternal goal, which is the Kingdom of God.

I. Jesus is higher than prophets and angels (1:1-14)

Let's read verse 1: "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,..." The author begins the letter to the Hebrews with the question of how God reveals himself to people or how he speaks to them. First he goes into the history and the spiritual heritage of Israel. The fathers here are the ancestors of faith from the Old Testament, starting with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but also Moses or David, with whom God communicated in various ways. God had revealed Himself again and again to the Israelites over many centuries through the prophets. They were the messengers of God through whom he repeatedly called the Israelites to repentance and led them back to the right path. However, we do not yet find the full revelation of God in the Old Testament. The Old Testament also testifies that something new was yet to come, namely through its more than 1000 promises about the Messiah.

Let's look at verse 2: "...but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe." God has spoken to us in these last days through the Son. The last days refer to the new age that began with the coming of Christ and extends to the second coming. During this time, God has spoken to us through His Son. Jesus Christ

is himself the Word of God, the Logos, through whom also the world was made.

Jesus is not a prophet like all the others. He is the Son of God. The world was made through him. His words are the words of the living God. God spoke to us very clearly this time by sending His only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world. In Jesus, God revealed Himself fully. In Jesus we can fully know and understand the Father heart of God, His absolute and unchanging love, His pain and devotion for our forgiveness, and also His holiness. Above all, God gave Himself to us in Jesus to reconcile us to Himself. Jesus is the final and ultimate word of God.

Some young people justify their unbelief by saying that God would not speak to them. They ignore that God has spoken to us through Jesus Christ and has revealed Himself very clearly. Jesus said to Philip, "He who sees me sees the Father!" In Jesus, we can see God fully as He is.

Verse 2 says that God appointed Jesus as the heir over everything. While the prophets passed on God's word, Jesus is the heir, that is, the owner of everything. The whole world belongs to him, just as it belongs to God. Even a little donkey, on which no man had ever sat, belonged to him and was ready to bear his master patiently and obediently. Jesus was also present at creation, for the world was made through him. All things were created by him and through him and to him. John 1:3 says, "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." In other words, God created all things through Jesus.

We often hear Muslims say that Jesus is a high prophet, right behind Mohammed. That sounds good. But they miss the most important thing. Jesus is the Son of God. He is worthy of all our honor and worship. It is very important that we answer the question, "Who is Jesus?" correctly. A prophet could never bring the great salvation. Therefore, it is critically important that we recognize and receive Jesus as the Son of God, the last and

ultimate Word of God, and take hold of eternal life through faith in Jesus. John 3:16 says, "'For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Let's look at verse 3: "The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven." All the glory of God is made visible in Jesus. Jesus is the perfect image of God, not a cheap copy, but like the original Himself. He also sustains all things with his powerful word. This means that he is the sustainer of all things.

Furthermore, Jesus accomplished the cleansing of sins. Through his death on the cross, he offered the atoning sacrifice and cleansed us, sinners, from sins once and for all. No one could cleanse from sins; even the animal sacrifices were ultimately only a reminder of sins, without being able to clear the conscience. But Jesus, who offered His own blood as a living and holy sacrifice, cleanses us completely from our sins so that we can now serve God in holiness and righteousness.

Jesus not only died, but also rose from the dead and ascended to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. Now He is seated in the highest position and possesses all power in heaven and on earth. He is our glorious King who will one day come again with the clouds of heaven to execute judgment and set up His eternal kingdom.

Let's look at verse 4: "So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs." Here the writer comes to a main statement that Jesus is higher than the angels. For the Jews, the angels were very important. Angels usually appear as bearers of the divine will, as in Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Daniel and in many places in the Bible. The Jews thought that it was a special revelation when an angel had talked to a human being. So there was a real angelology (angelology). In our time, the

interest in angels is apparently not so great. However, people are very interested in sorcerers and dragons and other evil spirits. Many people get excited by near-death experiences or esotericism, hoping it will give them access to the spiritual world. But verse 4 says that Christ is much higher than the angels. Jesus is the complete revelation of God. Therefore, no further revelations are needed.

In the following verses, the author reinforces this argument with various passages from the Old Testament. First, he quotes Psalm 2:7: "I will proclaim the decree of the Lord: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father." Jesus is the Son of God. Here the argument is that God never said to any of the angels that he was his son. Jesus is higher than the angels by position. Finally, all of God's angels are also said to worship him (6).

Psalm 45 testifies that Jesus sits on the throne from eternity to eternity. Psalm 102 says that heaven and earth pass away, but that Jesus abides forever. Finally, Psalm 110 says that God makes all enemies the footstool of Jesus. None of these testimonies of majesty were ever given to an angel. Finally, verse 14 says that the angels are ministering spirits sent out for those who are to inherit salvation.

Here we learn not to be blinded by special wisdom or revelation or miracles, even if they were delivered by angels. We may know that Jesus Himself is much higher than the angels and that no further revelation of God is needed after Jesus. Jesus is higher and more glorious than all the angels. He has accomplished purification and perfect redemption for us. He has become the beginner and perfecter of our salvation. All who receive and confess Jesus as their King receive forgiveness and eternal life. Praise Jesus.

II. Jesus, a merciful and faithful high priest (2:1-18)

Let's look at chapter 2 verse 1: "We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away." As a conclusion to the first chapter, we read here the first serious exhortation of the letter to the Hebrews: "We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away." Because Jesus is superior, because he is much higher than any angel or prophet, because he alone is the ultimate revelation of God, therefore we are to pay the more attention to the word we hear.

What word do you hear? Some only hear mainstream media or influencers or social media. Some are inattentive at meetings, but always listen carefully on YouTube. But all these words cannot give us salvation. Jesus alone is the ultimate word of God and that is what we are to listen to. Let us always listen carefully to Jesus' message and one-to-one Bible study. We have also each received different words of God. Let us keep at least one word of God in our hearts that we may pay attention to it and attain the goal of the kingdom of God.

Here, "pay attention" means not only to hear acoustically, but to obey Jesus' words concretely. The obedience of faith is the crucial step. We can pay attention to the Word by writing a profound testimony based on the Word of God, that is, by relating the Word to our own lives and obeying it in our practical lives. Opinion writing is not an option, but our spiritual struggle to pay attention to and obey God's Word. Jesus said that not all who call Him Lord enter the Kingdom of God, but those who do the will of the Father in heaven.

Because Jesus is the Son of God, the Beginner and Finisher of our salvation, we should pay all the more attention to the Word. In this context, the author urgently admonishes that it is possible to drift away from the goal. Behind this is the image of a ship that was on the right course, but then ignored the beacons on the shore and instead of entering the harbor, wrecked on the cliffs. This is a very serious warning to listen to the Word of God

through Jesus, otherwise we can still be shipwrecked in our faith.

As late as the 19th century, logs were often transported to Holland on the Rhine in large rafts. They were often over 300 meters long and were floated down the river and then slowed down in Bonn before the journey continued. On one occasion, the rafters missed stopping in Bonn and simply floated on. There was no turning back. Riding messengers had to be sent to Cologne to open the bridges there in time to prevent a major disaster. How tragic it is when we already have the goal of the kingdom of God before our eyes, but miss it because we drift away from it.

Let's read verse 1 again, "We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away." Bible study is much more important than keeping ourselves entertained by news, social media, or little movies. Let's listen attentively to the Word of God and not miss the mark of faith! God bless each of us to hold on to the Word of God as the firm anchor of our soul and to attain the goal of our faith, which is the Kingdom of God.

Let us look at verses 2 and 3: "For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him." In the books of Moses we learn that the commandments were given through angels. Any transgression or disobedience was severely punished. This shows that God does not care how we live our lives. Disobedience is rebellion against God and entails a corresponding punishment. The Lord has given us such a great salvation, blotting out all our sins through the precious blood of Jesus and restoring us as His beloved children. We have received this grace totally free and undeserved. We have a new life in Jesus. But we must not lightly squander this grace, but take hold of it through the obedience of faith. Hebrews 12:25 says, "See to it that you do not

refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?" The consequence of faith and salvation is to live a new, changed life in obedience to the Word of God. Those who do not respect the great salvation and remain in disobedience will miss the mark in the end.

Verse 4 says that this salvation is witnessed among us by many signs, wonders and deeds and by the Holy Spirit. We have seen how powerfully God's word 1 Peter 4:13 worked in our Next Generation when they paid attention and chose to suffer with joy with Jesus. God worked in the life of a young man when he paid attention to Hebrews 5:8,9 so that he could overcome his self-will and learn the obedience of faith from Jesus. I know a man who paid attention to God's word from Matthew 6:33 in the time of crisis and decided to seek first the kingdom of God. God helped him to hold on to this word even in the challenge of habilitation, so that he could always fix his gaze on God's goal and gain the victory of faith in all areas.

Then how did Jesus accomplish the great salvation for us? Let's look at verses 6 to 8a: "But there is a place where someone has testified: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor and put everything under his feet." Jesus, the Son of God, was humbled for the sake of our salvation. He was crucified like a despised servant of men, eventually even like a felon on a cross. Thus Jesus became lower for a little while. But after His resurrection, God exalted Him and He is now seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Verse 10 says, "In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering." Jesus did not get his glory

for nothing, but after going through the suffering of death because of our sins. Jesus is the beginner of our salvation who led so many people to glory. His self-abasement became the beginning of salvation for us.

Let's read verses 14 and 15: "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 - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." By the grace of Jesus, we have become God's children. Jesus humbled Himself and became flesh and blood. Before, through fear of death, we had to be servants throughout our lives. But Jesus took away the power of death and redeemed us from the fear of death. This grace is not for the angels, but for us, the children of Abraham.

Let us read verses 17 and 18: "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 the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted." Because Jesus himself became a perfect man, he can understand our suffering. He can comfort and help us. He is our true High Priest, who is merciful to our weakness, and who intercedes for us faithfully. He is the good shepherd who knows us and guides us safely on the way to the heavenly pasture.

Jesus' humiliation, incarnation and suffering was not weakness. It was God's way of saving us from our sins. He took away the power of death and redeemed us from the power of the devil. Thus, he became the beginner of our salvation. Even today, the work of God is a manger work, which is done through humility and self-abasement. Because missionaries humbled themselves to serve German students through one-to-one Bible study and life fellowship, we have experienced the mighty work of God. God's work happened in a young man when Shepherd Jochen served him humbly and patiently for many years. Therefore, we may also accept the students

as our brothers and sisters, form one-to-one Bible study teams with them, and serve them with Jesus' mercy so that they too can enter the kingdom of God.

Through this lesson, we have learned who Jesus is. Jesus is the final revelation of God. He is the Son of God who is above all. He is much higher than all the prophets and angels. He has the power in the heavenly kingdom. This Jesus humbled Himself and took upon Himself the punishment of death in order to purchase eternal salvation for us. He accomplished the cleansing from sins. Now it is up to us to accept, hold fast and obey the Word of God so that we do not drift past the goal. Let us pray that we will hear God's admonition and pay attention to the word we hear, that we will take hold of so great salvation through Jesus. God use our one-to-one Bible study that the students would hear the Word of God, take hold of salvation in Jesus, and be spiritually awakened as an exceedingly great army of God. Let us pray that we will form 10,000 one-to-one Bible study teams and that 100,000 missionaries will be sent out for world missions through us.