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## WHY OUR STATUS IS BETTER THAN ANGELS

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS  
NUMBER 5  
HEBREWS 2:1-3

Dr. W. O. Vaught  
Immanuel Baptist Church  
Little Rock, Arkansas

There is singing up in heaven such as we have never known,  
Where the angels sing the praises of the Lamb upon the throne;  
Their sweet harps are ever tuneful and their voices always clear,  
Oh, that we might be more like them while we serve the Master here

But I hear another anthem, blending voices clear and strong,  
"Unto Him who hath redeemed us and hath bought us," is the song;  
We have come thro' tribulations to this land so fair and bright,  
In the fountain freely flowing He hath made our garments white.

Then the angels stand and listen, for they cannot join that song,  
Like the sound of many waters, by that happy, blood-washed throng;  
For they sing about great trials, battles fought and vict'ries won,  
And they praise their great Redeemer who hath said to them, "Well done  
So, although I'm not an angel, yet I know that over there  
I will join a blessed chorus that the angels cannot share;  
I will sing about my Savior who upon dark Calvary  
Freely pardoned my transgressions, died to set a sinner free.

### Chorus

Holy, holy, is what the angels sing, And I expect to help them  
make the courts of heaven ring;  
But when I sing redemption's story, they will fold their wings,  
For angels never felt the joys that our salvation brings.

Angels have a relationship to Jesus Christ and therefore function in that relationship. Members of the human race who are born again also have a relationship to Jesus Christ and function in that relationship. However, all unbelieving angels and unbelieving humans are to be put in the lake of fire forever. We can't see angels now but we will be able to see them in eternity.

### Outline of Hebrews 2

1. The prologue. The Angelic Conflict is a warning to the human race. Verses 1-5.
2. The two Adams and the Angelic Conflict. Verses 6-9
3. The Bride and the Angelic Conflict. Verses 10-13
4. An epilogue Since mankind was created to resolve the Angelic Conflict, Christ had to become a man. Why didn't he become a God-angel? Why did he become the God-man?

Christ has always been God, but there came a time when he became the God-man. Why? The answer to that question is angels. This chapter brings together the eternal members of the Godhead and our relationship with them and this gives purpose and meaning to life. Without operation grace, life has no meaning.

Angels were a higher creation than man, and to understand this, we need some explanation of angelic life. So there are many wonderful things here for us in this prologue. The Angelic Conflict, a warning to the human race.

HEBREWS 2:1. "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."

The words are "dia toute" and should be translated "Because of this." Then we say, because of what?

1. Because Jesus Christ is the victor in the Angelic Conflict. Humans are not victors. Angels are not victors. The only one who is a victor is the Lord Jesus Christ. Hebrews 1:1-4
2. Because of fundamental doctrine and Old Testament documentation of the superiority of Christ to angels as shown in Hebrews 1:5-13. We had seven of these documentations in those verses 5-13.
3. Because of the fact that angels have been subordinated to humans as brought out in Hebrews 1:14. "Are they not all subordinate servants, spirits being sent into action to serve those who are about to inherit deliverance?"
4. Therefore, because of the Angelic Conflict, humans are warned "Do not reject Jesus Christ."
5. Jesus Christ, as a member of the human race, is the victor in the Angelic Conflict. Furthermore, any member of the human race who rejects Jesus Christ will share the destiny of all fallen angels and will spend eternity in the lake of fire.

This is the reason why this second chapter is related in these ways to the first chapter. That's why it begins "Because of this." Then we have the word "we" which is a personal pronoun and in this way the writer of the Hebrews is identifying himself with these Jews in Jerusalem who are standing very near their destruction and almost complete annihilation. Just a few months after these words were written, Titus will roll into Judaea with his Roman legions and conquer and destroy them. One million will be killed and Jerusalem will be destroyed, including the holy temple, and 97,000 Jews will be taken captive. It will happen just like Jesus had described it in Luke 21:20-24 So here the writer of Hebrews interrupts himself, after describing the great victory of Jesus Christ, and reminds the Jews to hear this warning. "We" is used in a very interesting way. It is the accusative plural of "ego." The writer is identifying himself with them and he says, "I warn you to hear this message." Beware of missing the port of eternal life. Don't drift by it. Believing in Christ not only means salvation but it also meant deliverance from the Romans. "We" shows the writer is a Jew and is identified with them. He, a believer, identified himself with these unbelievers.

The word "ought" is "dei" and comes from "deo" and indicated logical necessity. These religious Jews were the most difficult people to reach in all the world. Religious people always seem to have a thousand things going for them. They wear a big badge of religion and ritual. They had the Levitical priesthood, the Tabernacle and Temple, animal sacrifices, and the priesthood of ceremony and ritual. They clung to all these things and all through this book they are pictured holding to these things of religion and ritual. But now that Christ had come all these things had been replaced. Christ brought a new day, a new way, a way of simplicity and directness. There was a new center and a new power. Ritual to the Jews is the same as ceremony is to the military. The Jews were clinging to the shadows of their ritual. And as they clung to their ritual, the reality of Jesus Christ passed them by and they were not even aware that it had happened to them. (The Sanhedrin was so steeped in religion and ritual that they were absolutely blind to the Saviour, even though he stood right there before

them and taught them.) The Jews had great music. For a thousand years the sons of Levi had been great musicians and their choirs were wonderful. That wonderful music started at the Red Sea and had been with them since. But Christ had replaced that ritual with reality and they just drifted by it. The man who wrote this book was a Jew and his heart was broken because the Jews were left standing there with an empty shell, a meaningless ritual. The compassion for the Jews became so great that this "koine" greek almost turns into classical greek as he pleads with the soon-to-be-destroyed Jews.

There are a lot of people in the human race who are religious and ritualistic but they miss the reality of knowing Jesus Christ. So the word "ought" means "it is necessary." They were fooling around with an obsolete priesthood when they could have been walking with Jesus Christ.

(For 40 years God gave them Manna every morning--the best food anyone would ever eat. It was all they needed. There was never a day when it wasn't there, even when they were complaining. And God still provides manna but it is in written form.)

Just think of the reality of Jesus Christ in your own life--the living manna. This chapter is dedicated to who and what Jesus Christ is--not to what ritual is.

"To give" is a present, active, infinitive of "pros echo" and it means to have and to hold something face to face. Now that's reality, as real as anything can be. This means to have something in your soul so it is real to you. The "more earnest" is from "perissoteros." It means to put down all that meaningless ritual and listen to what is real. Put away all that music and robes and sacrifices and ritual and look for a change at reality. "To the things which we have heard" is an aorist, passive, participle of "Akouo." They had heard it all their lives. And before you can take it and hold it face to face, you have to hear it. You can't hear it when you are running around in circles in rituals. So this phrase has said thus far--"It is necessary for us to pay more attention to the things having been heard."

This writer knows what the Jews have heard. They heard it, but ritual and religious trash had blinded their eyes and their ears. This writer of Hebrews was a great patriot and he identified himself with these Jews and is laying his heart on the line to try to get them to take warning before it is too late.

Then he says "Lest" and this is from the negative "me." This negative introduces a temporal clause "pote" and says, "Lest, at any time."

"We should let them slip" is an aorist, active, subjunctive of "pararreoo." And it means to flow past, to drift past. It is a picture of a ship about ready to come into port, but a storm sweeps it past the harbor of safety. The Jews were facing the greatest test of their lives and they needed to pay more attention to the great doctrine of salvation lest they drift by it and be destroyed.

HEBREWS 2:2 "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; Doom was hanging over the Jews. Destruction of their nation and their city was right before them. The destruction of the Jews in 70 A.D. is one of the best documented events in all human history. They went down in August of 70 A.D. The one thing that would have saved the Jew was salvation in Christ.



This second verse is the protasis of this conditional sentence. "For" is from "gar" and is used here as to show the reason for something. The reason why unsaved Jews should pay more attention to the gospel now than ever before.

The word "if" is from "ei" and is a first class condition, to show the statement is true. What's true? Then we have "Ho logos," meaning the Word and it refers to the angelic teaching of the Word of God in the law of Moses. God taught those people in Old Testament times and he taught them by angels. (Deut. 33:2, Psalm 68:7, Acts 7:38 and 53, Galatians 3:19) All these passages say that angels taught. Angels were great teachers. Moses was the greatest teacher of all and Aaron used Moses as his model. Angels taught Moses and the prophets and they also taught people. They taught the great spiritual principles. They taught the people the meaning of the Levitical offerings, and the meaning of the furniture in the Tabernacle and Temple. In those days men learned these great truths from this shadow teaching. But the time had come when the reality replaced the shadow. The shadow looked forward to the cross and the time had come to place the shadow aside and look at the reality. Christ taught this in the Upper room discourse and in the Temple discourse. The shadows were over and the time for the great reality had arrived.

It was NO LONGER NECESSARY, OR PROPER OR RIGHT TO HAVE ANGEL TEACHERS FOR MAN HAD REPLACED THE ANGELS AS THE TEACHERS OF REALITY. The Jews were hung up on their ritual and ceremony and couldn't move on to the reality. But you can't go back to the shadows once you have the reality. So we have moved from shadow ritual to reality. Human beings are provided a spiritual gift and they can now communicate things that not even the angels were permitted to teach. And angels didn't even know these things, much less could they teach them. (Angels tune in on the things I am teaching here so they can know these things.) Satan thought he had a chance when angels preached, but now that man has taken over, he now points his big guns of opposition on man and tries his best to stop him. So in Old Testament times they learned because angels taught them. But now we have the indwelling Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit uses human pastor-teachers to teach the people. Times have really changed. Demos had a lot to do with hindering the gospel. The word for "spoken" is an aorist, active, participle of "laleo" and it means to communicate in a conversation. It means "The doctrine having been communicated through angels, through the channel of angels (dia plus the genitive). The word "was" is an aorist, active, indicative of "ginomai" and it means to become something that it was not before. It became "steadfast" and the word is "Debios" and means reliable, dependable, permanent. So thus far this verse has said, "For if the doctrine having been communicated through the channel of angels, became permanent, and it did."

"And every transgression" comes from "kai passe parabasis" and it near every violation of the law and disobedience, which is from "parakoe." It means a refusal to hear doctrine and go on negative volition at the point of gospel hearing. The word "revived" is an aorist, active, indicative of "lambano" and the word "Endikos" means just or fair. The word for punishment is "mesthopodasia." So this says, "And every violation of the law and negative volition received a just punishment, and it did."

Summary

1. The victory of Christ in the Angelic Conflict brought to focus the great importance of the Jews receiving Christ prior to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. This event drove home this great truth that the Jews should get away from shadows and get to reality.  
Christ was the victor, seated at the right hand side of God, and we are in union with him. He is there and we are in him and positionally as good as he is and as high as he is. Angels are impressed by this fact. That's why elect angels are our slaves, because of who and what Christ is. Angels can no longer teach us because positionally we are superior to them. We are superior to them because of God's grace.
2. In that time Jews were steeped in the Mosaic Law and that original teaching came through angels.
3. But something more important has now come. Salvation through Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the great high priest has arrived--and the Jews were about to drift past it.
4. The Jews were dabbling in shadows while the reality was being presented to them. (Like being in love with a girl and she is standing behind you and her shadow falls on the wall. You stand there and talk to the shadow instead of turning around and talking to her.)
5. The angels administered shadow doctrine while now Christ administered reality doctrine. (Paul said, "When that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away.")
6. If there was punishment for rejecting the Mosaic Law, and there was; how much more will there be punishment for rejecting the real thing, even Jesus Christ.

HEBREWS 2:3 "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;" This now is the apodosis of this conditional sentence.

"How" is an adverb from "pos" and means "By what means."

"Shall we escape." "We" is an editorial pronoun, and the writer, a believer, identified himself with these unbelieving Jews. The word for escape is a future, middle, indicative of "ekpheugo" and means to make a clean escape. It means to not only escape the destruction of Jerusalem that was soon coming, but also escape the destruction that was coming at the great white judgment throne. The construction of this greek is such to say, "There is no escape." "If we neglect" but there is no "If" here. This is an aorist, active, participle of "ameleo" and it means to disregard, be totally unconcerned. It means "Having disregarded." The words "so great" come from "telikoutos" and it is in the ablative case with the concept of source. It is an ablative of comparison. Salvation is so great there is nothing else in the whole world with which you can compare it. God gave you something so great that there is nothing with which to compare it. "Soteria" is the word for salvation and it too is in the ablative case. Salvation is beyond

anything else in all the world. Salvation is just so great that you can stack everything else in the earth up beside it and it is not even to be compared with salvation. So the angels had a chance and they taught, but now it is our turn and they had nothing to teach to compare with what we have to teach.

"Which" comes from "hostis" and it means "Which kind of salvation." Which kind of salvation was at the first spoken of by Jesus Christ. Speaking is a present, middle, infinitive of "laleo" and it means Christ was speaking something that no angel could ever speak.

This is a reference to the spoken ministry of Jesus Christ. It says, "Through the Lord" and is "dia plus the genitive." "And was confirmed" is an aorist, passive, indicative of "bebiaoo" and means to establish, to verify. To us is "eis plus ego" and it means he beamed the gospel toward us. So we have an unbroken chain of a message. He spoke it in 30 A.D., the disciples picked it up and spoke it and now we have it in our day. "Hupo plus akouo" and it is an aorist, active, participle. It should read, "Of those having heard."

#### Summary

1. "Those having heard" refers to the apostles.
2. This infers that there was a generation span between Christ and the writer of the Hebrews.
3. The unknown author of Hebrews could not have been Paul who received his revelation directly from the Lord. Galatians 1:11
4. This unknown writer of Hebrews received his message from the apostles who, in turn, received it from the Lord.
5. Therefore, this passage makes a good case for either Barnabas, or Clement of Rome, or Apollos as the author of Hebrews.

So this verse says, "For if (and it's true) the doctrine, having been communicated through angels became permanent (and it did) and every violation of the law plus negative volition received a just punishment (and it did); by what means shall we escape, having disregarded so great a salvation, which was at first communicated through the Lord, and was verified under the authoritative teaching of those having heard, the apostles."