Hebrews 2:1-4

**Digging Deeper in the Word**

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July 2018

***Hebrews 2:1–4*** (ESV)  
**1** Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. **2** For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, **3** how 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, **4** while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

1. Briefly summarize Chapter 1.
2. In Heb 2:1 starts out with “therefore”, literally “because of this”. Because of what?

***Hebrews 1:1–2*** (ESV)  
**1** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, **God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,** whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

The beginning of Chapter 1 starts with “God spoke to our fathers by the prophets; in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son.” Because of what? **Because of what we have heard** from the prophets and no from the Son directly!

The author spent all of the first chapter proving how much more important the word of Yeshua is, compared even to angels. Even more so, the word of angels comes *from* God himself. Everything he says has the weight of YHWH himself.

1. In Heb. 2:1, what is it that the people have heard that they must pay closer attention to, both from the prophets of old as well as from Yeshua himself? See for example Zech 1:3, Mal 3:7, and Jer 15:19, as well as Mat 3:1-2, Mat 4:17, and Mark 1:14-15.

***Zechariah 1:3*** (ESV)  
**3** Therefore say to them, Thus declares YHWH Tseva’ot: Return to me, says YHWH Tseva’ot, and I will return to you, says YHWH Tseva’ot.

***Malachi 3:7*** (ESV)  
**7** From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my statutes and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you, says YHWH Tseva’ot. But you say, ‘How shall we return?’

***Jeremiah 15:19*** (ESV)  
**19** Therefore thus says YHWH: “If you return, I will restore you, and you shall stand before me. If you utter what is precious, and not what is worthless, you shall be as my mouth. They shall turn to you, but you shall not turn to them.

***Matthew 3:1–2*** (ESV)  
**1** In those days John the Baptist came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, **2** “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

***Matthew 4:17*** (ESV)  
**17** From that time Yeshua began to preach, saying, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

***Mark 1:14–15*** (ESV)  
**14** Now after John was arrested, Yeshua came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, **15** and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

People have been called to "return to God" (**shuv** or **tishuvah** = repent), so that "God will return to them". Each of these disobedient transgressions led to God repaying their actions with just retribution. If God punished the nation of Israel because of its disobedience before, how much greater will it be if we neglect having faith in God's living Word, Yeshua.

The prophets of old, John the Baptist, and Yeshua all preached “repent, the kingdom of God is at here.” It’s happening. Now is the time. Repent if you want to be a part of what God is doing on earth.

1. How did people drift away from YHWH before Yeshua? See Ezek 16:17, Exodus 32:1-4, Judges 10:6, and Isa 1. From this passage, how does it appear people were drifting away from YHWH? How do people drift away from YHWH in our day? How do all of these compare to each other?

***Ezekiel 16:17*** (ESV)  
17 You also took your beautiful jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and with them played the whore.

***Exodus 32:1–4*** (ESV)  
**1** When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, “Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” **2** So Aaron said to them, “Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” **3** So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. **4** And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”

***Judges 10:6*** (ESV)  
**6** The people of Israel again did what was evil in the sight of YHWH and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth, the gods of Syria, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines. And they forsook YHWH and did not serve him.

***Isaiah 1:10–17*** (ESV)  
**10** Hear the word of YHWH, you rulers of Sodom! Give ear to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah! **11** “What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says YHWH; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. **12** “When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? **13** Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. **14** Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. **15** When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. **16** Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, **17** learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow’s cause.

People naturally tend to worship things created. God is always calling his people back to himself and away from false gods. It can be easy to look back to the old testament and think that we would never worship things created and only give our love to God, but our struggles are really the same and we need to recognize that faith and repentance to YHWH is what saves us. During the writer’s time, it appears that angel worship is something that is as prevalent in that time as it is today. We need to shift our focus on turning to our creator instead of the things he has created.

1. What is the “message declared by angels” in Heb 2:2? Note Deut 33:2-4 (compare MS with LXX), Acts 7:53, and Gal 3:19.

***Deuteronomy 33:2–4*** (ESV)  
**2** He said, “YHWH came from Sinai and dawned from Seir upon us; he shone forth from Mount Paran; he came **from the ten thousands of holy ones**, with flaming fire at his right hand. **3** Yes, he loved his people, all his holy ones were in his hand; so they followed in your steps, receiving direction from you, **4** **when Moses commanded us a law**, as a possession for the assembly of Jacob.

***Deuteronomy 33:2–4*** (LXX)  
**2** And he said: “YHWH came from Sinai and displayed *himself* to us from Seir and made haste from Mount Paran together with myriads of Kadesh, from his right, **angels with him. 3** And he spared his people, and all those who have been sanctified beneath your hands, even these *who* are beneath you, and it **received of his words 4 a law**, which Moses commanded you, an inheritance of the congregations of Jacob.

***Acts 7:52–53*** (ESV)  
**52** Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, whom you have now betrayed and murdered, **53** **you who received the law as delivered by angels** and did not keep it.”

***Galatians 3:19*** (ESV)  
**19** Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, **and it was put in place through angels** by an intermediary.

(Note the implied intermediary was Moses.)

So the message declared by angels refers to the Torah given at Sinai.

1. In Heb 2:2, the message declared by angels proved to be “**reliable**”. The Greek word is **βέβαιος “bebaios.”** What does this word really mean? Notice how the NASB translates this word. Look at the use of this word in other Scriptures, for example Rom 4:16, 2 Cor 1:7, Heb 3:14, Heb 6:19, Heb 9:17. The context of these verses should help you understand the meaning better than just looking up the word in a lexicon. What does this tell you about the nature of “the message declared by angels”?

BDAG lexicon: “**firm, permanent**”

***Hebrews 2:2*** (**NASB**)  
**2** For if the word spoken through angels proved **unalterable**, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

***Romans 4:16*** (ESV)  
**16** That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be **guaranteed** **[***lit.* **given permanently]** to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all,

***2 Corinthians 1:7*** (ESV)  
**7** Our hope for you is **unshaken** **[permanent, unchanged]**, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort.

***Hebrews 3:14*** (ESV)  
**14** For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence **firm** to the end.

***Hebrews 6:19*** (ESV)  
**19** We have this as a sure and **steadfast** **[firm, unchanging]** anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain,

***Hebrews 9:17*** (ESV)  
**17** For a will **takes effect** **[is binding]** only at death, since it is not in force as long as the one who made it is alive.

The Torah is being put forth as an example of something that is “**permanent / unchanging / unalterable / binding”.**

1. What is the author referring to what he says in Heb 2:2 “every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution”?

The Torah, which they understand to be permanent and unchangeable, clearly defines the consequences for each transgression.

1. In Heb 2:3, the message declared by angels is being compared to “a great salvation.” What does “a great salvation” refer to? And what is the point of this comparison? Also note Rom 3:23-24 and Rom 6:23.

The great salvation must refer to that salvation which will release them from the consequence of the breaking of Torah, that is, from the condemnation of the Torah.

***Romans 3:23–24*** (ESV)  
**23** for **all have sinned and fall short** of the glory of God, **24** and are **justified by his grace** as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Yeshua,

***Romans 6:23*** (ESV)  
**23** For the **wages of sin is death**, but the free **gift of God is eternal life** in Christ Yeshua our Lord.

The Torah, which is permanent and unchangeable, leaves one in a state of condemnation. Yeshua’s message, which is more important than this message given by angels, provides a path of lasting and complete righteousness. This is the great salvation proclaimed by Yeshua, the Son of God.

1. How do the arguments of the first chapter of Hebrews add weight to the message of Heb 2:2-3?

The Torah came via angels and was lasting and permanent, something they knew needed to be obeyed. Now, in these last days, the message from Yeshua proclaimed that no one comes to the Father but through me. He promises continual and complete salvation. If we held in high esteem the message delivered via angels, who much more should we hold in high esteem the message from God’s own son. Likewise, if we know there were dire consequences for neglecting the Torah, we should expect even greater consequences if we neglecting the message given by Yeshua the Son of God.

1. What does Heb 2:3 tell us about the author’s relationship to Yeshua?

He was not one of the apostles who originally heard the message from Yeshua, but apparently one who, like his audience, heard it from the apostles.

1. Heb 1:4 states that not only did the apostles attest to the message of Yeshua, but also God himself. How did God “bear witness” to the great salvation provide though the message of Yeshua? Can you find examples in Scripture demonstrating this?

God demonstrated the truth of Yeshua’s message though “signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit”.

***Acts 2:22*** (ESV)  
**22** “Men of Israel, hear these words: Yeshua of Nazareth, **a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst**, as you yourselves know—

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Miracles Done by Yeshua** | **Matthew** | **Mark** | **Luke** | **John** |
| 1 | Yeshua Turns Water into Wine |  |  |  | 2:1-11 |
| 2 | Yeshua Heals an Official’s Son |  |  |  | 4:43-54 |
| 3 | Yeshua Drives Out an Evil Spirit |  | 1:21-27 | 4:31-36 |  |
| 4 | Yeshua Heals Peter’s Mother-in-Law | 8:14-15 | 1:29-31 | 4:38-39 |  |
| 5 | Yeshua Heals Many Sick at Evening | 8:16-17 | 1:32-34 | 4:40-41 |  |
| 6 | First Miraculous Catch of Fish |  |  | 5:1-11 |  |
| 7 | Yeshua Cleanses a Man With Leprosy | 8:1-4 | 1:40-45 | 5:12-14 |  |
| 8 | Yeshua Heals a Centurion’s Servant | 8:5-13 |  | 7:1-10 |  |
| 9 | Yeshua Heals a Paralytic | 9:1-8 | 2:1-12 | 5:17-26 |  |
| 10 | Yeshua Heals a Man’s Withered Hand | 12:9-14 | 3:1-6 | 6:6-11 |  |
| 11 | Yeshua Raises a Widow’s Son in Nain |  |  | 7:11-17 |  |
| 12 | Yeshua Calms a Storm | 8:23-27 | 4:35-41 | 8:22-25 |  |
| 13 | Yeshua Casts Demons into a Herd of Pigs | 8:28-33 | 5:1-20 | 8:26-39 |  |
| 14 | Yeshua Heals a Woman in the Crowd | 9:20-22 | 5:25-34 | 8:42-48 |  |
| 15 | Yeshua Raises Jairus’ Daughter to Life | 9:18, 23-26 | 5:21-24, 35-43 | 8:40-42, 49-56 |  |
| 16 | Yeshua Heals Two Blind Men | 9:27-31 |  |  |  |
| 17 | Yeshua Heals a Man Unable to Speak | 9:32-34 |  |  |  |
| 18 | Yeshua Heals an Invalid at Bethesda |  |  |  | 5:1-15 |
| 19 | Yeshua Feeds 5,000 | 14:13-21 | 6:30-44 | 9:10-17 | 6:1-15 |
| 20 | Yeshua Walks on Water | 14:22-33 | 6:45-52 |  | 6:16-21 |
| 21 | Yeshua Heals Many Sick in Gennesaret | 14:34-36 | 6:53-56 |  |  |
| 22 | Yeshua Heals a Demon-Possessed Girl | 15:21-28 | 7:24-30 |  |  |
| 23 | Yeshua Heals a Deaf and Dumb Man |  | 7:31-37 |  |  |
| 24 | Yeshua Feeds 4,000 | 15:32-39 | 8:1-13 |  |  |
| 25 | Yeshua Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida |  | 8:22-26 |  |  |
| 26 | Yeshua Heals a Man Born Blind |  |  |  | 9:1-12 |
| 27 | Yeshua Heals a Boy with a Demon | 17:14-20 | 9:14-29 | 9:37-43 |  |
| 28 | Miraculous Temple Tax in a Fish’s Mouth | 17:24-27 |  |  |  |
| 29 | Yeshua Heals a Blind, Mute Demoniac | 12:22-23 |  | 11:14-23 |  |
| 30 | Yeshua Heals a Crippled Woman |  |  | 13:10-17 |  |
| 31 | Yeshua Heals a Man on the Sabbath |  |  | 14:1-6 |  |
| 32 | Yeshua Cleanses Ten Lepers |  |  | 17:11-19 |  |
| 33 | Yeshua Raises Lazarus from the Dead |  |  |  | 11:1-45 |
| 34 | Yeshua Restores Sight to Bartimaeus | 20:29-34 | 10:46-52 | 18:35-43 |  |
| 35 | Yeshua Withers the Fig Tree | 21:18:22 | 11:12-14 |  |  |
| 36 | Yeshua Heals a Servant’s Severed Ear |  |  | 22:50-51 |  |
| 37 | Second Miraculous Catch of Fish |  |  |  | 21:4-11 |

Acts 2 – Pentecost – the Holy Spirit fills 3000 Jewish believers.

Acts 10 – Caesarea – the Holy Spirit fills gentiles in Cornelius house

1. Why do you think the author in Heb 1:4 specifically mentions that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were “**distributed according to His will**”? Was the Holy Spirit only present in New Testament miracles? See Isa 63:10-14.

***Isaiah 63:10–14*** (ESV)  
**10** But they rebelled and grieved his Holy Spirit; therefore he turned to be their enemy, and himself fought against them. **11** Then he remembered the days of old, of Moses and his people. Where is he who brought them up out of the sea with the shepherds of his flock? Where is he who put in the midst of them his Holy Spirit, **12** who caused his glorious arm to go at the right hand of Moses, who divided the waters before them to make for himself an everlasting name, **13** who led them through the depths? Like a horse in the desert, they did not stumble. **14** Like livestock that go down into the valley, the Spirit of YHWH gave them rest. So you led your people, to make for yourself a glorious name.

Even though the Holy Spirit’s work is emphasized in the New Testament, God’s miracles have blessed his people in hopes to have Israel see His power and depend on him. Notice in Isaiah that the Holy Spirit was **in the midst of them** but could also be translated YHWH put his Holy Spirit **within him (them).** God not only gives his Spirit to Gentiles, but He also was present before Yeshua *actively desiring to save* the Jewish people. It’s important to remember that the Holy Spirit is called the seal of our salvation, and this salvation was present through faith even before Yeshua.

Ever since the Holy Spirit was poured out upon believing Gentiles in Cornelius’ house (about 25 years earlier in ~41 AD) there have been an increasing number of Gentiles added to The Way. The gifts of the spirit were clear indicators that God indeed sees these Gentile believers as righteous (“clean”). This was a MAJOR shift in Jewish thinking for the early believers. It was a clear sign of God working and giving his stamp of approval.