

Hebrews 2:1-4

The first 4 verses of chapter 2 brings the first warning passage in this book. Remember, the focus of the book is "to the Hebrews," Jewish people who are truly saved, "possessing believers," and those who have only a head knowledge but are not saved, "professing believers." The warning passage(s) addresses those who only "profess" the Lord and are considering going back to the Judaism that leaves out Jesus.

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.*

- **Therefore** requires us to consider what has been established before (chapter 1)

1) The Son is the anointed One (the Messiah) promised by God

He is God's Prophet - 1:2

He is God's King - 1:2

He is God's Priest - 1:3

2) The Son is so much better than the angels because He is God

- **ought**

δια dia (dee-ah)

Meaning: 1) it is necessary, there is need of, it behooves, is right and proper

1a) necessity lying in the nature of the case

- **give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard**

more attention in a greater degree to what we have heard than anything else we might hear

- **lest at any time we should let them slip**

μηποτε mepote (may pot'-eh)

Meaning: 1) that ... not, lest, whether perhaps, whether or not, in no way, perhaps

παρρηεω pararrhewo (par-ar-hroo-eh'-o)

Meaning: 1) to glide by: lest we be carried by, pass by 1a) lest the salvation which these things heard show us how to obtain, slip away from us

The thought is of a drifting boat that is without oars, motor, sails, rudder, or anchor. The boat is at the mercy of the elements.

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

- **For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast**

In this phrase is a reminder of the deliverance of the Mosaic Law through angels (Psalm 68:17; Galatians 3:19 and Acts 7:53) and the trustworthiness of that Law. This thought can also include other times angels spoke to man. Their word came to pass (Genesis 18-19; Daniel 9:21-27).

- **and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;**

God is not mocked and lawbreakers will be punished. They will get what they deserve.

Romans 6:23 *"For the wages of sin is death..."*

Galatians 6:7 *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."*

God **WILL** judge all who reject His Son. In the 2nd to last warning passage the awful ramifications of rejecting the Son is stated: *"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"*, Heb. 10:31.

BELIEVERS NEED TO BE REMINDED OF THE PRINCIPAL THAT GOD WILL EXECUTE JUSTICE/JUDGMENT AGAINST EVILDOERS. IF WE DON'T LEAVE "VENGEANCE TO THE LORD" (ROMANS 12:19) AT THE VERY LEAST WE CAN DEVELOP A BITTER SPIRIT.

Psalm 37:1-10 Human nature (sinful nature) is to want to strike back, get even, against evildoers.

Only when one walks in the spirit, Galatians 5:16-19, he doesn't let his flesh (sin) rule. The contrast in Galatians 5 is the sinful works of the flesh and the righteous works of the Holy Spirit. The law is not the Mosaic Law, although most commentators believe this, but the law of sin.

16 *This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.*
17 *For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*
18 *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*
19 *Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,*

Romans 7

17 *Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*
18 *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.*
19 *For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.*
20 *Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.*
21 *I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.*
22 *For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:*
23 *But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.*

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;

- **How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation**

"so great" speaks of an unfathomable depth - nothing can compare

Salvation is:

- 1) Simple (Ephesians 2:8-9)
"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
- 2) Free (Romans 6:23)
"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
- 3) Universal (Romans 10:13)
"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
- 4) Sufficient (Acts 13:39)
"And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
- 5) Priceless (Matthew 16:26)
"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
- 6) Eternal (John 10:28-29)
"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

In light of the greatness of salvation it is no wonder it is asked "How shall we escape?"

- **which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord**

Through His words Jesus communicated our need for salvation through Him (John 3:16-18; 11:25-26; 14:6)

- **and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;**

The followers of Jesus who personally heard Jesus confirmed our need of salvation through Jesus (Acts 2:36-38; 4:8-12). God confirmed the message of those "that heard him."
"Those" were the apostles.

4 **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?**

- **God also bearing them witness**

"Them" is the same group as the previous verse and is speaking of the apostles.

- **both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles,**

God authenticated their message with signs, wonders, and miracles.
Jesus' ministry approved by miracles - John 10:38; Acts 2:22
Apostles ministry approved by miracles - Mark 16:19-20; Acts 14:3

- **and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will**

Gifts are sovereignly bestowed by God, not dependent on what we want or pray for (1 Corinthians 12:11,18,28)

The gifts of the Holy Spirit here are unique, miraculous sign gifts given to the apostles to authenticate their ministry. There are 4 identifiable "sign" gifts - gift of healing, miracles, tongues, and interpretation of tongues - and they were relegated to the apostolic age.

- 1) They were unique to the apostles (2 Corinthians 12:12; Acts 2:7,14; Ephesians 2:19-22)
- 2) The "sign" gift of tongues confirmed the ministry of the apostles among unbelievers as a sign of coming judgement (1 Corinthians 14:22).

1 Corinthians 14:21-22

- 21 In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.**
- 22 Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.**

This is the only passage that tells the purpose for the gift of tongues.

Tongues is a "sign" to the nation of Israel. These verses are quoted from Isaiah 28:5-13 where God is going to use Assyria to judge Israel.

There are some basic stipulations for the use of this gift:

- 1) Jewish people have to be present - "will I speak unto this people"
Acts 2:1-11 (see Acts 2:13-14)
Acts 10:44-46
Acts 19:1-6
- 2) Tongues are for a sign to unbelievers - "tongues are for a sign...to them that believe not"

3) Tongues is a sign of impending judgment for Israel

Isaiah 28:11-12

Jeremiah 5:11-17

Deuteronomy 28:45-50

Jesus prophesied that the Temple would be destroyed as a judgment upon Israel for rejecting Him (Luke 19:41-44).

Tongues were a sign of this coming judgment and thus ceased after the judgment (70 A.D.) happened because there was no longer any need for this sign.

Daniel Wallace has an article worth reading on the purpose of sign gifts
<https://bible.org/article/two-views-sign-gifts-continuity-vs-discontinuity>

Wallace develops 2 theses:

Thesis One: To the extent that we see discontinuity between the first century and the twentieth in terms of the sign gifts, to that extent we are cessationists.

Thesis Two: The more we see discontinuity, the more we affirm that the purpose of the sign gifts was authentication rather than a display of normative Christianity.

Wallace's conclusion:

"Continuity or discontinuity? In several major ways, there is discontinuity between the first century and the twentieth century as far as the sign gifts are concerned. This certainly raises questions about the legitimacy of such gifts today. We have not even addressed the historical evidence that after the first century those who have practiced the sign gifts have almost always been on the fringes of orthodoxy. From the second century until the beginning of the twentieth, such manifestations were almost unheard of in orthodox circles - yet God somehow was able to bring about great revivals (not to mention the Reformation) without such gifts taking center stage. How is that possible if they are normative expressions of the Christian faith?"