The book of Hebrews is meant to challenge and encourage Christian believers. It says that Jesus is superior to all prophets, angels, people and all other claims to truth.

Scripture clearly tells us that Jesus is God, so we should listen to what He says in our earthly life. The consequences of ignoring God are serious and Hebrews notes many OT Scriptures in showing that Jesus is God's plan for mankind.

In chapter 1 of Hebrews there are no commands for the church - we are not told to do anything. The whole chapter is a declaration and celebration of God’s final word to the world – Jesus Christ the Son of God.

But in chapter 2 the first thing is a command or a duty - something we must do and the connection with chapter 1 is important. Chapter 2 begins with a sentence that includes the word, ‘therefore’.

Chapter 2 starts by telling us that chapter 1 is the reason for this duty - as God has spoken by his Son in these last days and because he is the Creator, Sustainer and Sovereign of the world - above all angels – the writer tells us **We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away**.

**READ Hebrew 1:10 – 2:18**

The warning that this chapter begins with, relates to the hierarchy between Jesus and the angels and because Jesus is superior it is to Him that we should listen **so that we do not drift away**.

Scripture tells us that when God delivers a message and it is ignored, there are consequences. This applies to more than just a take-it-or-leave-it approach to God's message; ‘drifting’ from His truth also results in problems and this is bourne out in **v2** which includes mistakes as well as deliberate sin - the text says **violation and disobedience**. Regardless of how or why it happens, moving from truth to error never ends well and in **v3-4**, we are told that God has gone to great lengths to provide proof, so there are no good excuses for ‘drifting.’   
  
The Greek phrase for **drift away** contains the idea ‘to float away’, or ‘to slip’. It is something that can happen easily, not necessarily as a deliberate act – it is often sufficient just to follow the flow of wherever life takes you, rather than focussing on God’s will for your life.

But to listen to God, in order to know what you should be doing, often takes preparation – in the same way that if you want to listen to the news, you will turn on the TV or radio, or if you want to read a book you will go and get that book, it takes planning. Sometimes the planning is minimal, sometimes planning involves a great deal of effort, but either way God will supply the resources you need.

In Hebrews, the writer is telling us that God’s message is waiting for us to hear it – all we need to do is get in a position that we can hear it and the most basic way to do that is by reading your Bible or by praying.

The writer says that the message spoken through the angels was binding, possibly a reference to the laws and instructions given to Moses by God.

But the writer goes on to say **how shall we escape**, if we ignore the Word that came from God’s Son, bringing us salvation. The writer keeps returning throughout this letter to how serious it is to listen to Jesus, the Word of God and focus completely on Him. By not doing so, **we neglect a great salvation**.

This is a warning to believers – this is not rejecting salvation, but neglecting it. The Greek means ‘to make light of’ and in our context it means that our efforts and emphasis on life are elsewhere, rather than Jesus. If something is great, we generally pay it attention, but here the believer is treating their salvation as unimportant. Maybe they see it as a gift that they have received to do with as they will, rather than something that is an essential God-given rescue package.

**v3-4** tell us that the message of salvation was spoken by Jesus, it had had eye-witness testimony to back it up and physical miracle testimony from God. All of these things should make us want to hold on to our salvation firmly, not to let it slip in any way.

The next few verses **5-8a** talk of the humanity of Jesus. Hebrews tells us clearly that Jesus is not, nor ever has been an angel, though He is worshiped by angels. Jesus is fully God and fully man, which has important implications for us.

### v5 is taken from Psalm 8:1-5 1Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory in the heavens. 2Through the praise of children and infants you have established a stronghold against your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. 3When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, 4what is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?

**5You have made them a little lower than the angelsand crowned themwith glory and honour. 6You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet: 7all flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild, 8the birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim the paths of the seas. 9Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!**

That text is about human beings. We have been given dominion over the earth – it is a promise that all believers will be crowned with Jesus’ glory and honour and all the universe will be put under our feet.

The text says **it is not to angels that He has subjected the world to come**. God never gave angels the kind of dominion that man was given over creation in **Genesis 1:26-30**.

The second half of **v8** is God’s perspective in terms of man’s dominion over creation – **at present we do not see everything subject to them**. At present the world seems to be ruling us – especially today as we are fighting disease, death and sinful lives.

However **v9** is our encouragement - **But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.** As a sinless human Jesus is able to take, on our behalf, that dominion of creation that God promised.

That should be an encouragement and the push you need to stop drifting, if you are doing so. God gave man dominion over the earth, but man forfeited his power to rule because of sin, however, Jesus came and through His humility and suffering He defeated the power of death and made possible the fulfilment of God’s promise that humans will once again have dominion over the earth.

The writer tells us in **v10** that **In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.** It means that God thought the only way to bring mankind to salvation was through the sufferings of Jesus.

As Creator of everything, God could conceivably, made a way to save us that did not require the suffering of the Son of God. But the writer says, **it was fitting** for Jesus to save us at the cost of His own suffering.

In Jesus’ suffering we have the ultimate illustration that real love and real giving, involves sacrifice and has always done so. To paraphrase David’s statement in **2 Samuel 24:24**, **I will not make offerings to the Lord my God which cost me nothing**. God’s love for us had to show itself in sacrifice and the only way God could do that was to send Jesus as a human to suffer on our behalf and become **perfect through what He suffered.**

To be absolutely clear, there was nothing lacking in the deity of Jesus. But He chose to become a man and suffer, all because man had sinned. The text tells us that He is willing to make that choice, as the result of that sacrifice was **bringing many sons to glory**.

In doing so, we became one family with Jesus and therefore, God the Father. **v11** says **the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.**

God tells us that in becoming part of His family, we are made Holy, other translations may use the word sanctified or set apart. Either way, we become God’s possessions and in doing so, **Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters**. He is wanting to associate with us and to prove it, we are told **I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises**.

Believers in Jesus are precious to both Jesus and God the Father. Firstly because we are who we are and secondly because the writer says that we are the Father’s gift to Jesus.

The last part of this chapter tells us what Jesus was prepared to do for us, as a brother and Saviour.

Billy Graham took for the text at one of his crusades **John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever will believe in Him, will have eternal life.**

Throughout his talk he spoke bluntly about death. He said. ‘…in fifty or seventy years you will all be dead.’ Then he made it clear that he meant everyone would be in heaven or in hell. He said, ‘…when you were born, you were born to live forever and you will - either in heaven or in hell.’ Then he went on to tell everyone how to reach heaven and escape hell, through faith in Jesus Christ.

If there was no God, or eternal life, death would be a sad event for most people, but nothing to be terrified about - just falling asleep, going unconscious, never to wake again.

But Scripture teaches us that there is a God and we are created in the image of Him. Because of that, He is Holy and worthy of our love, devotion, worship and obedience. But He can be rightly angry whenever we are indifferent and put other things first - we will be judged accordingly when we have to give an account for our lives. That should make the prospect of death a terrifying thought, unless you have believed in Jesus.

The text of **v15** says that Jesus had to become human to remove us from the danger of eternal life in hell.

**By His death He might break the power of him who had the power of death - that is, the devil**. In this process, Jesus removed from the devil any authority that he had taken to rule over man, when Adam and Eve fell to temptation in the Garden of Eden.

That is not saying we are free from the devil’s power. We still need to individually make the decision to put our faith in Jesus - because He alone broke the power of the devil and we must rely on Jesus to do the same for us.

The result of Jesus’ work was to free us from what the writer calls **slavery by their fear of death**. Many people fear death, because beyond it is an unknown.

As believers we may have a fear of the physical act of dying, but we should not fear death itself, because death has been defeated for us, because we trust in Jesus and the writer reassures believers that Jesus’ work was for us as he says in v16, **For surely it is not angels He helps, but Abraham’s descendants**. As a believer, you are counted as one of Abraham’s descendants.

The chapter concludes by reminding us that the verses before lay out why Jesus had to become human and now they introduce us to Jesus as our High Priest, one who serves before God.

**v17** says …**He had to be made like** (us)**, fully human 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. 18Because He himself suffered when He was tempted, He is able to help those who are being tempted.**

If Jesus were not like us, He could not be our High Priest, representing us before the Father and making atonement for our sins. It is important to note and understand that neither the Deity nor the Humanity of Jesus is negotiable. If we reduce either, then He is unable to save us.

The High Priest wore a breastplate with stones engraved with the names of the tribes of Israel on both his chest and his shoulders as a constant reminder that he carried the Israelite people before God.

Whilst Scripture does not tell us that Jesus wears the High Priest’s breastplate, you can be sure that Jesus is constantly reminded of every believer and interceding on our behalf.

The last verse talks about Jesus’ temptation. Some people ask if Jesus really was tempted and the reasoning goes that as He was God, He could not sin, therefore, His temptation could not be real. But the writer is clear that not only was Jesus’ temptation real, it was so real that **He suffered** because of it.

The pressure of temptation builds and some people only find relief by giving into to it – but Jesus never did that. Scripture tells us about Jesus’ temptation by the devil at the start of His ministry and also when Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane - but there were no doubt other occasions during His life that circumstances were such that Jesus may have felt tempted take short cuts to progress God’s kingdom. But that is not what God requires, nor is that what Jesus did.

Fortunately for us, because Jesus was human, He is able to help us in temptation. He knows what we are going through. Because Jesus went through temptation, we inherit two advantages to deal with it ourselves.

Firstly, we know that He was able to resist. Secondly, we can receive His assistance from heaven to provide a way of escape. Paul writing to the Corinthians said, **No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it 1 Corinthians 10:13.**

By resisting, we come out of the situation better than if we had given in. Jesus did not lose anything by being tempted, but He gained everything by not giving in. In the same way, we do not have to lose anything when we are tempted, but we too can gain.

Through this chapter, God is telling us that we are free from being slaves to the fear of death.

We also are told that when trials come, when you are tempted to despair, self-pity, resentment, anger or to question your faith, Jesus is there to help – He knows from His own experience what you are going through and He will give you what you need to endure to the end.

Jesus is our merciful and faithful High Priest – we should rely on Him.

Pray

**2 We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away. 2For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, 3how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. 4God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.**

**5It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking. 6But there is a place where someone has testified: ‘What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him? 7You made them a littlelower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honour 8and put everything under their feet.’ In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them. 9But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. 10In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. 11Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. 12He says, ‘I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises.’ 13And again, ‘I will put my trust in him.’And again he says, ‘Here am I, and the children God has given me.’ 14Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death – that is, the devil – 15and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants. 17For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human 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. 18Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.**

1. [Hebrews 2:7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29985) Or *them for a little while*
2. [Hebrews 2:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29986) Psalm 8:4-6
3. [Hebrews 2:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29986) Or *7You made him a little lower than the angels;/ you crowned him with glory and honour/ 8and put everything under his feet.’*
4. [Hebrews 2:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29986) Or *him*
5. [Hebrews 2:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29986) Or *him*
6. [Hebrews 2:8](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29986) Or *him*
7. [Hebrews 2:11](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29989) The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God’s family; also in verse 12; and in 3:1, 12; 10:19; 13:22.
8. [Hebrews 2:12](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29990) Psalm 22:22
9. [Hebrews 2:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29991) Isaiah 8:17
10. [Hebrews 2:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29991) Isaiah 8:18
11. [Hebrews 2:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+2&version=NIVUK#en-NIVUK-29995) Or *like his brothers*