

Hebrews 2:1-4

“Unescapable Reality”

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I. Introduction

Having made the argument that Jesus’ final revelation is superior to the prophets and angels progressive revelation; the author issues **the first of five warning against rejection such a revelation**. The cause of rejection according to chapter 10 verse 25 was sever persecution from their Jewish country men which had gotten so strong that they were forsaking the assembling together of followers of Christ. This exhortation to **NOT “drift away”** is a particular strong warning as this was Adam’s sin who was so careless and indifferent towards the command of God, that He rejected the divine revelation for a lie of satan which is what caused this mess to begin with. Christ not only OFFERS a stronger word than the prophets, and has a higher name than the angels, but, in these next four verses: **He is a surer word than the Law which means we must adhere to it’s truths above the First Testament.**

II. Vs. 1-2 Cause and effect

Vs. 1 Therefore, we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. The phrase “*drift away*” in the Greek means to “*flow alongside*” and was used of **a ring slipping off a finger**. The idea is best understood in Proverbs 4:20-21 where Solomon writes, “*My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; Keep them in the midst of your heart.*”

These Hebrew believers were to “*give the more earnest heed*” because the Son is better than the prophets and of angels. Their country men had given heed to the First Testament which had been brought forth by prophets and angels but now a better and final revelation had been brought forth and they were willing to abandon it for the first. The premise of the writer’s argument is: ***If rejection of the the First Testament truth was punished (which is the point of verse 2) how much more will there be judgment for rejecting the New Testament truth which was presented by Jesus?***

As a side note there are three clues and two small words here in this text that points to the identity of the original author.

1. The first is the use of the word “**WE**”; three times; twice in verse 1 and once in verse 3. Since this letter is written to Jews the “**we**” is an indication that the author was himself a Jew.
2. The second clue is in verse three and is the word “**US**” and is used specifically in reference too the apostles, which would tell us that the author was an apostle.
3. Finally, the authors heartache for those who will not heed the word of God identifies him as a teacher of God’s word. ***There is nothing more heartbreaking to a teacher of God’s Word than people who week after week are exposed to God’s truth that will change their lives, but it has no effect upon them simply because they do not pay attention.***

This convinces me that the writer of this letter, was **Jewish**, a **Teacher** and an **Apostle**.

All of this reminds me of what Jesus said again and again to the people of his day, “*He who has ears to hear, let him hear,*” (Matthew 11:15, 13:9, 13:43, etc.). The author tells us that: **There are two reasons why Jesus’ message valid:**

Vs. 2 The words “*for if*” in the Greek represent a “*fulfilled action*” **NOT** a “*hypothetical case*” and as such could be interpreted by the English word “**since**” as the idea is a fact that “*word spoken by angels, the First Testament **PROVED** steadfast..*” The word “*transgression*” in the Greek is a word that means to “*step over the line*” it speaks of a disobedience which has come about from a neglect of hearing the truth, letting truth “*drift by*”, and such neglect resulted in judgment!

A. First: The New Testament is a valid by comparison with the Law. If the word spoken by angels, the Law of Moses, had validity and those to whom it was given found that it was absolutely true in experience, then this message also is true. If angels could give a word like that, how much more the word that comes by the Son? **If the Law spoken by angels had that effect, how much more shall the words spoken by the Son have effect?** Israel's history is a testimony of “cause and effect” of this truth. **In Deut 11:27-28 they were told that if they would obey it they would be blessed; if they disregarded it, they would be cursed.** There is no people on the face of the earth who show a more consistent pattern of cause and effect than the Jewish people. Wherever they have gone, in obedience there has been blessing; in disobedience there has been cursing.

III. Vs. 3-4 The great New Testament

Vs. 3 The word “***HOW***” in the Greek is “**How is it possible?**” As such it is a “*rhetorical question that express a denial.*” **The writer is issuing a grave warning to those Jewish believers who were in danger of returning to the temple sacrifices for atonement which would reject the TRUE sacrifice of Jesus and were doing so knowingly and as such would leave them without recovery.** The author calls Jesus finished work of sacrifice “so great a salvation” and is **NOT** a reference to the teaching regarding it but the act its self. The truth of the First Testament, given by angels “*looked forward*” to the “**final finished**” work of Christ. **Jesus was not like the angels who were only “spokesmen”;** He was the very One who brought into being salvation for believing sinners as well as announced it. **It was a great mystery to this writer how these Hebrews could be so convinced of the trustworthiness of the First Testament brought forth by angels and be**

so doubtful of the New Testament brought forth by the very Savior who sacrificed Himself for their salvation! This leads to his second point:

B. Second: This message is valid because it is spoken to us by the Lord! The writer makes **three points as to the validity of the message through the Son.**

- a. **COMMUNICATED by Jesus:** Vs. 3a “Which at the **FIRST** began to be spoken by the Lord”. The word “**Lord**” in the Greek is the word used to translate the Hebrew word Jehovah and to the Jewish readers of this letter it meant that the First Testament letter was given by angels but the New Testament letter was given by Jehovah personally. By implication, the writer says, this message did not originate with the apostles, it did not come to us by means of prophets, it came through the Lord himself; he spoke it. **There was no second of third party communication as it came directly from the Son of God!** As such they should even be more obedient to it than they were to the First Testament not less!
- b. **CONFIRMED by those who heard Him:** Vs. 3b “And was confirmed to us by those who heard Him”. Second, it was confirmed by eye witnesses. The greater validity of the New Testament is who heard the truth of the Lord directly, the apostles. They were official “eye witnesses” and they confirmed the truth spoken by the Lord. This is always an unimpeachable argument as in any court in the land will accept evidence if it is confirmed by enough eye witnesses.
- c. **CERTIFIED by God through miraculous works:** Vs. 4 “God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy spirit, according to His own will?” Third, it was attested by signs sent from God himself, by wonders and miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, distributed according to his own will. **Not only did the apostles confirm the message they witnessed the miracles that accompanied the message.** Nicodemus in John 3:2 recognized this when he said to Jesus, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” **The primary purpose of miracles was to attest to the truth that Jesus taught NOT to alleviate distress and suffering.** In Matthew 11:2-5 when John the Baptist sent his disciples to question Jesus concerning being the Messiah Jesus spoke of His works. And in John 10:38 Jesus said, “though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him.” The author lists three such manifestations that God worked:
 1. **Signs and wonders:** A sign is a mark or token that is miraculous in nature. And a wonder is something so different or strange that it causes a person to watch because it is miraculous in nature.
 2. **Various miracles:** Is the word linked with the “power of God” and it describes a supernatural act which has the undeniable power of God working through it.
 3. **And gifts of the Holy Spirit:** The Greek word “gifts” means “distributions and impartations” from the Holy Spirit. The idea is that a person performs that which the Holy Spirit in powers.

It all focuses on one question in the first part of verse 3: **How shall we escape if we**

neglect such great salvation? This question addresses both the Hebrew believers, gentile believers as well as non-believers:

- a. **To the Hebrew believers the writer is saying:** It is not enough that you know Jesus as your Messiah: If you do not continue in Him and begin as the writer said in verse 1 “drift away” you will stop growing in your relationship with Him. The outcome of your “drifting away” will be far more than the lose of your peace, joy and freedom; you will also experience greater temptation, and confusion which will lead you into a greater change that you will be further deceived to the point where you will wonder if you ever really knew Jesus as your Messiah in the first place.
- b. **To the non-Christian it says:** It cause the person to ask, “Where are you going to go?” “How will you be able to escape or avoid God's universe?” Bob Dylan wrote a song about this where he stated, “You’re going to have to serve some body..” **It’s an unescapable reality! Most of the people in the world are trying to avoid the unavoidable but every person is going to have a come to Jesus meeting!** So why waste your life trying to attempt to escape? Especially when you consider that Jesus whole desire in this meeting is to bless you not to curse you.

The awful truth in eternity is that hell will be full of people who never actively opposed

Jesus Christ, they simply chose to neglect the truth of His gospel. All a person has to do

to go to hell is do nothing! That is the subject of the first four verse of chapter 2. These

Hebrew believers knew the truth that Jesus proclaimed and accomplished, they even believed that this truth was 100% reliable they were aware of it but weren’t willing to surrender too it, so they just drifted away into eternity apart from Him and into eternal damnation. The point is that **“Right teaching always demands a right response!”** Being **“intellectually convinced”** but not **“spiritually committed”** is the surest way to hell I know of! These Hebrews had all the facts to make a commitment but demonstrated that they just couldn’t get in the boat! A person should never be satisfied with a religious feeling, with going to church, being married to a believer or church activities. All those things as good as they are can still cause a person to “drift away” into hell unless they have made a personal commitment to JESUS as Savior and Lord of their lives.