

1. The Danger of Neglecting Salvation (Heb 2:1-4)

After his lofty opening which exalted Jesus to the highest position, the author now issues the first of many exhortations: *“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed ... lest we drift away”* (Heb 2:1). The book of Hebrews stands as a clear rebuttal to the Calvinistic heresy of “once saved, always saved.” The entire epistle is an effort to drag weak brethren back from the brink of apostasy. Not once does the writer suggest that their salvation was a sham or pretense. In fact, he will expressly affirm their fellowship with God (i.e., Heb 6:4-6). If people were not predisposed to believe in eternal security, it would never occur to them when reading passages such as Heb 2:1-4. The author uses a “lesser to greater” argument: if the Law of Moses (“the word spoken through angels”) carried with it grievous punishments for violation, **how much more** the Law of Christ (“so great a salvation”) if neglected? The readers are offhandedly reminded of the abundant confirmation which had accompanied the gospel. If they drifted away, they could not blame it on a vague or garbled message from God.

1. List the three-fold process by which the gospel was delivered and established.
2. What was the express purpose of miracles in the first century?

2. Jesus: The Ideal Man (Heb 2:5-9)

The author next turns to the subject of Jesus’ incarnation. This was hinted at by the phrase *“when He had by Himself purged our sins”* (Heb 1:3), for such purging could only be accomplished by vicarious sacrifice. This involved the Creator assuming the likeness of men and temporarily being *“made a little lower than the angels”* (Heb 2:9). What a demotion! But it was one He was willing to endure for the sake of His creatures who had failed so miserably to rise to the level of rule as He had wished (2:7-8). If man is ever to reach the full potential for which he has been created, it will only be through Jesus Christ who was *“crowned with glory and honor”* (2:9).

3. What did Jesus taste for everyone?
4. What was originally put in subjection to man? What is not yet under man’s control?

3. Bringing Many Sons to Glory (Heb 2:10-13)

Not only was it difficult for the Jewish mind to accept the Creator appearing in fleshly form, it was especially repugnant to think of their Jehovah God *suffering*. Yet the author of Hebrews boldly affirms that such was a necessary part of God’s plan. *“It was fitting for Him ... to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings”* (Heb 2:10). If it is man’s lot to suffer, then the Messiah would likewise suffer in order to completely bridge the gap between heaven and earth: *“For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one ...”* (2:11). *“In bringing many sons to glory”* God created one family of sanctified people in which

the Creator-Son identified Himself with them as brother (2:11b-12). The overall picture is that of the Creator descending from His glorious, exalted position to temporarily take on flesh, suffer with man, offer Himself as a sacrifice, return to His throne in heaven and, in the process, redeem unto God a people who desire fellowship with Him. This is the same old gospel told from a different point of view.

5. Who is the “author of salvation”?

6. What OT text is quoted in Hebrews 2:12? What is the main subject of this OT text?

7. Who is Jesus not ashamed to call His brethren?

4. Free At Last (Heb 2:14-16)

As man is a creature of flesh and blood, Jesus willingly took on the same nature. He did not exempt Himself from any aspect of distress which afflicts fleshly creatures, including death. It was God’s plan that death, the dreaded foe of all mankind, would be vanquished by death. That is, Jesus ultimately identified Himself with His sanctified brethren by descending into the valley of the shadow of death. In that moment when the biological life of Jesus ended, atonement was provided and the devil’s stranglehold over mankind was broken.

8. How did the devil have the power of death? Why then do men still die today?

9. Why should man not now fear death?

10. Who does/does not benefit from the works accomplished by Jesus in the flesh?

5. A Merciful and Faithful High Priest (Heb 2:17-18)

The author now introduces a subject unique to the NT and to which he will later return: the high priesthood of Jesus. To serve as an intermediary between man and God, Jesus “*in all things had to be made like His brethren*” (Heb 2:17). Jesus was not only subjected to suffering but temptation as well (2:18). Again, Jesus did not exempt Himself from sinful impulses. Had He done so, men would have had little confidence in approaching Him with their own weaknesses and failures. God demonstrates both wisdom and love in providing a Savior who draws men to Him by shared nature and experience.

11. Describe God’s attitude toward sinners on the basis of what is revealed in chapter 2.

12. If Jesus aids those who are tempted, and He does not give aid to angels, what might we conclude about angels?