

## JESUS IS BETTER

### Hebrews 2 || *Driftwood Faith*

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#### CONTEXT:

The author is writing to professing Christians who appear to be struggling in their faith.

- It was costing them to follow Christ.
- And it didn't feel like they were experiencing the glorious promises of the Christian faith.
  - **Confession of an unbeliever during evangelism this week:**  
"It's hard to think seriously about God or eternity when you can't see any of it."
- This same sentiment seems to have been true for some of the professing Christians in this early church.

Think about some of the **staggering promises** in the Bible...

- *We are seated with Christ in the heavenly places...*<sup>1</sup>
- *We are on mission with Jesus who has all authority in heaven and earth...*<sup>2</sup>
- *As we go into all the world with the Gospel, we go with supernatural power...*<sup>3</sup>
- *We are more than conquerors...*<sup>4</sup>

In **Psalm 8**, King David spoke about God putting all things in subjection under the feet of people.

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,  
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,  
**What is man**<sup>5</sup> that You are mindful of **him**,  
And the son of man that You visit (care for) **him**?  
For You have made **him** a little lower than the angels,  
And You have crowned **him** with glory and honor.  
You have made **him** to have *dominion* over the works of Your hands;  
You have put *all things* under **his** feet...

~ *Psalm 8:3-6*

- **But it doesn't always feel that way, does it...?**
  - When your 4-year-old refuses to sleep through the night...
    - *It doesn't feel like you are walking in victory* 😊
  - When you are waiting for the tow truck to come pick up your car...
  - When you're drinking Dayquil like water just to make it through the day...
  - When our state is passing the most horrific abortion laws in history...
  - When the world is so utterly confused over God's design of sexuality...
  - When your marriage feels like it's hanging on by a thread...
  - When you share the Gospel, and they just laugh at you...

It doesn't *feel* like we are more than conquerors.

It doesn't *feel* like we are seated with Christ.

It doesn't *feel* like all things are in subjection to us.

And the author of Hebrews acknowledges this feeling...

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<sup>1</sup> Eph 2:4-6.

<sup>2</sup> Matt 28:18-20.

<sup>3</sup> Mark 16:15-18.

<sup>4</sup> Rom 8:37-38.

<sup>5</sup> Man = *mankind*: men & women, man & woman, male & female, he & she,

But one testified in a certain place, saying:  
“*What is **man** that You are mindful of **him**,  
Or the son of man that You take care of **him**?  
You have made **him** a little lower than the angels;  
You have crowned **him** with glory and honor,  
And set **him** over the works of Your hands.  
You have put **all things in subjection under his feet**.”<sup>6</sup>*

For in that He put **all** in **subjection under him**,  
He left **nothing** that is not put **under him**.

**But now** we do not **yet** see all things put under him.  
~ *Hebrews 2:6–8*

There is a reality in Christ **now** – that “we do not yet see” **now**.

Which is why **Hebrews 11** says, “*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*” (**Heb 11:1**). This is why, in one of his letters, the apostle Paul said that *we walk by faith and not by sight* (**2 Cor. 5:7**).

- We don’t yet see the unfiltered glory of God.<sup>7</sup>
- We don’t yet see the reality of Jesus’ presence where there is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.<sup>8</sup>
- It’s **hard** to see the head of Satan and the gates of hell crushed beneath the feet of Christ.<sup>9</sup>
- It’s **hard** to see that Jesus is better than all the fleeting pleasures of this world.<sup>10</sup>

**But** just because it’s hard to see these things...doesn’t mean they aren’t true.

When the Syrian army had surrounded the prophet Elisha, the only thing his servant could see (at first) was the threat (**2 Kings 6:15**). But Elisha said to him,

“Do not fear, for those who are with us are **more** than those who are with them.” 😊

And Elisha prayed, and said,

“*Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see.*”

Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw.

And behold, the mountain was **full** of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

~ *2 Kings 6:16–17*

There was perception, and then there was reality. Elisha’s man could only **perceive** the threat, but the **reality** was that they were surrounded by the power of Almighty God.

Though you maybe can’t see (right now) how God is at work in your life,<sup>11</sup> His promises are true – no matter what.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The author is clearly quoting from Psalm 8:4–6.

<sup>7</sup> Exodus 33:18.

<sup>8</sup> Psalm 16:11.

<sup>9</sup> Genesis 3:15; Matthew 16:18.

<sup>10</sup> Hebrews 11:24–25.

<sup>11</sup> Romans 8:28.

<sup>12</sup> 2 Corinthians 1:20; Psalm 138:8; Numbers 23:19.

However, if we learn anything from the stories of people in the Bible (or from our own experience), it's that it's not easy to put your faith in something you can't see. It can be really hard to believe in the *goodness* of God & in the *promises* of God & in the *power* of God when we can't see what He is doing.

As a result, many **unbelievers** just keep on ignoring God's Word, and many **professing believers** eventually let go of whatever faith they did have.<sup>13</sup>

Judging by what they can see with their physical eyes, they conclude that (1) either God's Word isn't true, or (2) that it isn't great. And so, they let go of their faith (*in God, in His Word, in His commands, in His promises, in the gospel of their salvation*), and they drift away.

So, this is the message and the warning in **Hebrews 2**.

1. We must give earnest heed (*pay super close attention*) to the gospel of our salvation in Christ.
2. Or we will drift away to our own destruction.

Therefore,<sup>14</sup> we must<sup>15</sup> give the more earnest heed<sup>16</sup> to the things we have heard,<sup>17</sup>  
lest we drift away.<sup>18</sup>

For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast,  
and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,  
how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation,  
which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord,  
and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,  
God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders,  
with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

~ Hebrews 2:1-4

The first sentence in this passage is the main point of the whole chapter.

The rest of the chapter is supporting this sentence. It's telling us **why** this first sentence is true. So, let's take the few minutes that we have left by looking at the message & the warning of this first sentence.

**Question #1** | *What is this passage calling us to do?*

**Answer:** **Pay attention** (**give heed**) to the good news that God has communicated to us through Jesus. In particular, pay attention to what God has communicated about our great salvation (v 3).

You all know what "**selective hearing**" is. It's when you only listen to the things that you want to hear.

- If you have children, you know what *selective hearing* is...
  - I can be standing right next to my son when I give him a chore to do, and I'll find out later (when the job isn't done) that he didn't hear me.
  - But then they can be downstairs, on the other side of the house, behind a closed door, with headphones on, and if I whisper "*supper*" – somehow, they all hear me! 😊

People tend to **give attention** to things that are **important** to them: things that we believe are *true* and things that we believe are *valuable*.

- **E.g.**, World news. Local news. Social media. Stock market. ESPN.

<sup>13</sup> They quit **contending** for the faith (Jude 3). They quit **holding fast** to the pattern of sound words (2 Tim 1:13).

<sup>14</sup> Διὰ τοῦτο

<sup>15</sup> δεῖ

<sup>16</sup> περισσοτέρως προσέχειν ἡμᾶς

<sup>17</sup> τοῖς ἀκουσθεῖσιν

<sup>18</sup> μήποτε παραρῶμεν

Here in **Hebrews 2**, the author is calling for God's people to pay attention to what God has spoken through His Son – as if their life depends on it. Because it does. *How shall you escape (2:2–3)?*

- The way you listen to the news...*that's the way you should be listening to this Word*.
- The way you have your ear pricked to the newest gossip...
- The way you absorb yourself in what's happening in cyber world (social media)...
- The way you pay attention to what's happening in the sports world or the stock market...

... the Gospel of Jesus is worthy of that kind of attention in your life. Why?

1. Because it's true (**2:3–4**).
2. Because it's great (**2:5–18**).

**TRUE** | *How do we know that this Gospel is true?*

1. God spoke through Jesus, and **Jesus is greater** than the greatest messengers in the universe.<sup>19</sup>
2. The message was **confirmed** by those who heard Him.
3. God the Father Himself **testified** to the validity of the message. How? ~ **Heb 2:4**
  - a. **Signs and wonders**: *like all the prophecies that were fulfilled through the life of Jesus.*
  - b. **Various miracles**: *like raising dead people back to life.*
  - c. **Gifts of the Holy Spirit**: *like the disciples speaking in their language, and thousands of people each hearing the words in their own language.*<sup>20</sup>

**GREAT** | *What makes this Gospel so great?*

1. The Creator of the universe became human (**2:9, 14, 17**).
2. He identified *with us* – as one *of us* (**2:11–13**)
3. Then Jesus (the Author of Life) died for you (**2:9, 14**)
  - As we look at God's Word, we may not see the glorious realities of my salvation on display in the world around us (yet), but what do we see? Answer: **we see Jesus (9)**.
  - We see that He was **made a little lower than the angels**. *What does that mean?* It means that He became as you and I are. We were made a little lower than the angels (7). So, when it says that Jesus was brought a little lower than the angels, it means that He was made like us. *Why?* **For the suffering of death**. He was made like me so that He could suffer my death for me.
  - I see that He is **crowned with glory and honor (9)**. *What does that mean?* It means that He became just like us, because we too are crowned with glory and honor (7). *Why?* So that **He could taste death for everyone**.

Jesus is the Captain of our salvation (**2:10**), and our Captain doesn't stand over us barking orders for how we are to work for him. Rather, He condescends to become one with us. He isn't a god who stands over us telling us how we should live. Rather, He's the God who steps into our grave and takes our death so that we can have His life. He's the God whose bloody body was nailed to a cross while the only thing holding Him there was love for you and me.

**How great is our salvation?** Our salvation is one in which...

- the power of the devil has been destroyed (**14**).
- the fear of death is gone (**15**).
- Our sins have been dealt with (**17**).
- Our Savior is bringing us to glory (**10**).
- We are family with the God who knows what it's like to be human and who stands with us to help us in our sufferings and in all our temptations (**16–18**).

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<sup>19</sup> Hebrews 1:1–4; 2:1–3.

<sup>20</sup> Acts 2:1–12.

**Question #2** | *What is the warning in this passage?*

**Answer:** becoming a person whose faith drifts away.

Whenever I read about “drifting”, I tend to think about a type of wood known as **driftwood**. Driftwood is wood that has been blown into the ocean (or some other body of water) often due to some type of storm (*flooding, high winds, etc.*) and is then decomposed and eroded by the sun and waves. And (*because there is nothing anchoring it to the ground*) it drifts along with the current until it eventually washes ashore somewhere. There on the shore, this piece of driftwood looks very different from what it once was – so much so that it can sometimes be impossible to determine its origin.

The author of Hebrews says this is what happens to our faith when we are not anchored to the gospel of our salvation. When your faith is not anchored here in the Word of God – and therefore not growing in your relationship with Him (like branches that are connected to their tree), there’s only one alternative – and that is “drifting”.

**The greatest threat to your faith** is not spiritual warfare. It’s not a frontal attack against your beliefs. It’s not being immersed in a godless culture. The greatest threat against your faith is drifting.

Why? Because it’s slow. It’s subtle. And it’s easy. In fact, you might say that it’s relaxing. You’re not fighting against the current. You’re not bracing against the windstorms. It’s just you, the sunshine, and wherever the waves want to take you...**until** your faith eventually washes ashore on some abandoned beach as a decomposed, unrecognizable, dead fragment of what it once was – a million miles from its source of life. Our culture refers to this as **deconstruction**. Hebrews calls it **drifting**.

*“How will you escape if you neglect so great a salvation” (3).*

There is no such thing as neutral in the Christian life. There is no such thing as coasting. Your faith is always in motion – one way or another. Either you are pressing toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus,<sup>21</sup> or you are drifting backward.

- Nobody drifts closer to Jesus.
  - You **press on** toward Jesus, or you **drift away** from Jesus.

Again, the real threat isn’t spiritual warfare or Satanic attacks or cultural debauchery or government policies; the real threat is **neglect**.

Let me **CLOSE** with an **illustration**: the houseplant that died slowly from neglect.<sup>22</sup>

- Minimal light. Minimal water.
- And we watched as its leaves slowly went from green – to yellow – to brown – to dead.

The same is true of so very many professing Christians that I once knew. At one time, they seemed to have a sweet relationship with Jesus. But then...they quit spending time in their Bible. And then they quit setting aside time for prayer. And then they listening to music that lifts up Jesus. And then they quit gathering with their church family. And then they quit surrounding themselves with Christian friends. And then, one day, they find themselves looking very successful and attractive on the outside, but their faith has washed ashore on a faraway beach as a decomposed, unrecognizable, dead fragment of what it once was. They neglect their faith, and they drifted away.

But the good news... is that the story doesn’t have to end that way! We finally moved the plant to a place with light, started giving it water on a regular basis, and it’s growing again.

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<sup>21</sup> Philippians 3:14.

<sup>22</sup> The only plant that the Knoop’s didn’t kill (by neglect) is the one that was never alive in the first place! 😊