

Hebrews

Chapter 2:1-4

¹ ***For this reason we must pay** much closer **attention** to what we have heard, so that we do not **drift away** from it.*

For this reason > (Constable) since Jesus Christ is greater than the angels, we should take the revelation that has come through Him seriously. If the Israelites received severe punishment, whenever they disobeyed the Mosaic Law that God gave them through the angels, the punishment for disregarding what God has given us through His Son will be even more severe.

We > Some individuals feel the recipients referred to are not saved. The author of this book is placing themselves into the group of recipients ... saved individuals

Must > (Uteley) This is the term "*dei*, which means moral necessity.

Pay ... attention > (Strong's) *prosecho* > to hold to, turn to, attend to

Drift away > (Strong's) *pararrwo* > to flow by, slip away

(Barclay) We have taken *prosecho* to mean to pay attention to, which is one of its most common meanings. *pararrwo* is a word of many meanings. It is used of something flowing or slipping past; it can be used of a ring that has slipped off the finger, of a particle of food that has slipped down the wrong way, etc. ... But both these words also have a nautical sense. *prosecho* can mean to moor a ship; and *pararrwo* can be used of a ship which has been carelessly allowed to slip past a harbour or a haven. So, this first verse could be very vividly translated: 'Therefore, we must the more eagerly anchor our lives to the things that we have been taught in case the ship of life should drift past the harbour and be wrecked.'

(C. S. Lewis) "... if you examined a hundred people who had lost their faith in Christianity, I wonder how many of them would turn out to have been reasoned out of it by honest argument? Do not most people simply drift away?"

(Wuest) The nature of the sin of Adam was a careless, indifferent attitude towards the commands of God. The particular word which is translated "disobedience" in **Romans 5:19** (*parakoe*) means literally "to hear alongside," thus, "a failing to hear, a hearing amiss." But this failure to hear is due to a carelessness in paying attention to what God had to say.

(Strong's) a hearing amiss, by implication disobedience. Usage > disobedience, imperfect hearing.

(HELPS) properly, contrary hearing, i.e. *disobedience* which springs from a *negative (opposing) attitude*, i.e. the *refusal to listen properly*.

(Wuest) *On this account it is a necessity in the nature of the case for us to give heed more abundantly to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should drift past them.*

(Wiersbe) (Very informative thoughts regard the five tough passages!) Let me list these passages for you and explain their sequence in the book of Hebrews. I think you will see how they all hang together and present one message:

- Drifting from the Word—2:1–4 (neglect ... we'll see this word in verse 3)
 - If we do not listen to God's Word and really hear it, we will start to drift. Neglect always leads to drifting, in things material and physical as well as spiritual.
- Doubting the Word—3:7—4:13 (hard heart)
 - As we drift from the Word, we start to doubt the Word, because faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17).
- Dullness toward the Word—5:11—6:20 (sluggishness)
 - We start to get hard hearts, and this leads to spiritual sluggishness, which produces dullness toward the Word. We become "dull of hearing"—lazy listeners!
- Despising the Word—10:26–39 (willfulness)
 - This leads to a spiteful attitude toward the Word to the extent that we willfully disobey God,
- Defying the Word—12:14–29 (refusing to hear)
 - Despising the Word gradually develops into a defiant attitude—we almost "dare" God to do anything!

²For *if the word spoken through angels proved **unalterable**, and every **violation** and act of **disobedience** received a just punishment,*

(Swindoll) the author employs a common Jewish form of argument known as *qal wahomer*, which means "light to heavy." That is, if a principle applies in a "light" (or less important) matter, it must apply even more so in a "heavy" (or more important) matter. (The author is comparing the punishment that happens if they disobeyed to message coming through angels. How much more if that message came from the Messiah?)

(Constable) The writer did not specify the punishment, but it cannot be loss of salvation, since Scripture specifically states that Christians will not lose their salvation (**John 10:28-29**; **Eph. 1:11-14**; **1 Pet. 1:3-5**; et al.).

John 10:28-29 > ²⁸ and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. ²⁹ My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

Eph. 1:11-14 > ¹¹ In Him we also have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things in accordance with the plan of His will, ¹² to the end that we who were the first to hope in the Christ would be to the praise of His glory. ¹³ In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of the promise, ¹⁴ who is a first installment of our inheritance, in regard to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

1 Pet. 1:3-5 > ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled, and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

If > (Robertson) Condition of first class, assumed as true.

Through > (Precept Austin) stresses the important truth that the law did not originate from the angels but from God ... both Stephen and Paul indicate that the Law was ordained by angels.

The word spoken through angels > (Vincent) The Mosaic legislation which was conveyed through the mediation of angels. Comp. Deuteronomy 33:2 (LXX); **Acts 7:38**, **Acts 7:53**; **Galatians 3:19**

Acts 7:38 > ³⁸ This is the one who was in the assembly in the wilderness together with the angel who spoke to him at length on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living words to pass on to you

Acts 7:53 > ³ you who received the Law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it."

Galatians 3:19 > ¹⁹ *Why the Law then? It was added on account of the violations, having been ordered through angels at the hand of a mediator, until the Seed would come to whom the promise had been made.*

Unalterable > (Strong's) firm, secure

Look at the source word!!! (HELPS) derived from *bainō*, "to walk where it is solid"

Violation > (Strong's) a going aside, a transgression (Remember verse 1? "Drifting"?)

Disobedience > (Strong's) a hearing amiss, by implication disobedience (Same pattern)

(Utley) These two terms are formed with the same preposition; *parabasis* and *parakoe*, which may have been an intentional word (sound) play.

³ ***how will we escape*** if we ***neglect*** so ***great*** a salvation? After it was at first spoken through the Lord, it was ***confirmed*** to us by those who heard,

We need to connect verses 2 and 3 to see the flow > ² *For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every violation and act of disobedience received a just punishment,*
³ *how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard,*

How will we escape > (Vincent) The rhetorical question expressing denial. *We* is emphatic. We, to whom God has spoken by his Son, and who, therefore, have so much the more reason for giving heed.

How > (Wuest) *How* is from *pos* which means "how is it possible?" The rhetorical question expresses a denial. There would be no escape

We > (McGee) He said, "How shall we escape?" not "How shall you escape?" (cf. v. 1). The most natural conclusion is that genuine Christians are in view in this warning, not simply unsaved professing Christians

Escape > (Precept Austin) *ekpheugo* from *ek* = out, from + *pheugo* = move quickly from a point; flee; run) means literally to flee out and so to flee out of a place and to escape.

Neglect > (Strong's) to be careless

(HELPS) from A "not" and *mélō*, "have concern, be affected") – properly, *without* concern, unaffected, viewing something as being *without significance*, i.e. without *perceived* value

Great > (Strong's) such as this, of persons so old, of things so great (Strong's indicates the Greek word is a combination of three words > *ho* > *the*; *helikos* > *how great, how small*; and *houtos* > *this*)

Confirmed > Interesting! This is the same Greek word that was translated as *unalterable* earlier > (Strong's) firm, secure

Look at the source word!!! (HELPS) derived from *bainō*, "to walk where it is solid"

(Barnes) How shall we escape - How shall we escape the just recompense due to transgressors? What way is there of being saved from punishment, if we suffer the great salvation to be neglected, and do not embrace its offers? The sense is, that there is no other way of salvation, and the neglect of this will be followed by certain destruction. why it will, the apostle proceeds to show, by stating that this plan of salvation was proclaimed first by the Lord himself, and had been confirmed by the most decided and amazing miracles.

(Precept Austin quoting the Amplified version) The Amplified version accurately phrases this rhetorical question (a question asked merely for effect with no answer expected) as: "How shall we escape [appropriate retribution] if we neglect and refuse to pay attention to such a great salvation [as is now offered to us, letting it drift past us forever]?"

Let's conclude verses 2 and 3 with the Wuest version > *For in view of the fact that the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every over-stepping of the line and neglecting to hear received a just recompense of reward, how is it possible for us to escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which salvation is of such a character as to have begun to be spoken at the first by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,*

⁴ God also ***testifying*** with them, both by ***signs and wonders***, and by various ***miracles*** and by ***gifts of the Holy Spirit*** according to His own will.

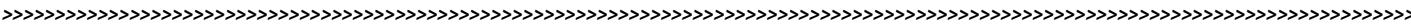
Testifying > (Strong's) to bear witness, testify

Signs ... wonders ... miracles ... gifts of the Spirit (Constable)

- "Signs" emphasizes that the miracles signify something.
- "Wonders" (*a wonder, marvel*) emphasizes the reaction of awe that the miracles produced in those who observed them.
- "Miracles" (*dunamis* > *power, might, strength*) emphasizes their supernatural origin, and
- "gifts" (*a dividing, distribution*) the graciousness of God in providing them.
- "Gifts of the Holy Spirit" refers to the gifts of prophecy, tongues, faith, etc.

The writer intended that his reference to these miracles would bolster the readers' confidence in the gospel that they had received.

Signs and wonders > Please take a look at the end of the notes for an interesting listing of those verses containing the phrase "signs and wonders". They truly are performed to prove the validity of the individual exhibiting them. Which is why Satan tries to duplicate them in the last days



"Signs and Wonders"

Matthew 24:24 > ²⁴ For false christs and false prophets will arise and will provide great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect.

Mark 13:22 > ²² for false christs and false prophets will arise, and will provide signs and wonders, in order to mislead, if possible, the elect.

John 4:48 > ⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to him, "Unless you people see signs and wonders, you simply will not believe."

Acts 2:22 > ²² "Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a Man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know

Acts 2:43 > ⁴³ Everyone kept feeling a sense of awe; and many wonders and signs were taking place through the apostles.

Acts 4:30 > ³⁰ while You extend Your hand to heal, and signs and wonders take place through the name of Your holy servant Jesus."

Acts 5:12 > ² At the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were taking place among the people; and they were all together in Solomon's portico

Acts 6:8 > ⁸ And Stephen, full of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

Acts 14:3 > ³ Therefore they spent a long time there speaking boldly with reliance upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be performed by their hands.

Acts 15:12 > ¹² *All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were relating all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles.*

Romans 15:19 > ¹⁹ *in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Spirit; so that from Jerusalem and all around as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.*

II Corinthians 12:12 > ¹² *The distinguishing marks of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs, wonders, and miracles.*

II Thessalonians 2:9 > ⁹ *that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and false signs and wonders,*