

Hebrews 2:1-4 (December 17, 2021)

Reflection: *What does it mean when someone says that a Christian is drifting in his/her faith? What are some things that cause us to drift?*

Goal: To understand that Christians can drift and get a sense of what that is like. Also to know it's causes, and that they are very real to us.

Cause us to drift: Lack of accountability (Heb 9), passing of time/familiarity with material makes us dull of hearing, busyness of life

Review of Hebrews 1:1-14

1. What is the message of Jesus the Son, and how is Jesus the Son superior to angels?

a. What is the message of Jesus the Son

Given in v.3: *He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

Jesus is not just a prophet, is the image of God's divine glory and possessing the exact divine nature as God. Furthermore, to Jesus' message, he has come to fulfill God's promises by dying and rising from the dead and providing a purification of sin. Now Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father.

b. how is Jesus the Son superior to angels?

i. A better name - Son

He has always been the Son of God, just like he has always been heir of all things (v. 2). But when he had made purification for sins and triumphed over death and Satan, Christ was declared Son of God and heir of all things on a new basis and in a new way. Now he reigns as the God-man Jesus Christ—the Son of God not only by his eternal right, but now by the right of his victory over sin and death. He is Son of God in manifest power by the resurrection. (Desiringgod)

This is seen from the verse quoted in Psalm 2:7.

When a king was enthroned in the Old Testament, there was an acclamation that now he was formally taking up his title and inheritance which had been his by birth. And one of the ways this acclamation was given was with the words spoken by God, "You are my Son. Today I have begotten you." (Compare Psalm 2:7 and Psalm 89:27=LXX 88:28.) (Desiringgod)

ii. Angels Worship Jesus (stated in text)

iii. Jesus is Creator, King, and God, while the angels are servants (stated in text)

Read Hebrews 2:1-4 – Pay Attention or Drift (v.1)

2. Hebrews says we should “pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it”. “What we have heard” is the message of Jesus the Son (Heb 1:1-4, 3:6, 10, 10:23). Why is the message so important? What does it mean to pay closer attention to the message? In your own words describe someone who pays careful attention to the message of Jesus Christ.

Note for leader: Now the author tells us why Jesus being greater than angels is important

a. Why is the message so important?

The message of Jesus is one from a king and comes with kingly authority. The things in which he speaks on are eternal things, things that deal with life and death, and not to be heard lightly but rather cherished and obeyed.

b. What does it mean to pay closer attention to the message, and is this the same thing as having faith in the message?

Meaning: The idea is to "take hold" of something and pay attention to it, "putting your mind on it", especially in the sense of being on guard. It means to turn the mind to something and includes the idea of to act upon what one perceives (Austinprecept)

Greek sense: Prosecho means to be in a continuous state of readiness to learn of any future danger, need, or error, and to respond appropriately - keep on the lookout for, be alert for, be on one's guard against. Prosecho almost always warns of danger. Prosecho is not a call simply to notice or sense something, but to be on guard against it because it is harmful. (Austinprecept)

Bible speaking on this topic: Reaffirmed (2 Pet 1:19), Preserving in teachings and life (1 Tim 4:16), Hold fast to the truth (Heb 10:23), Meditate on it day and night (Psa 1:2), Test yourself to see if you are on in the Truth (2 Cor 3:15)

c. In your own words describe someone who pays careful attention to the message of Jesus Christ.

To be like Jesus, or someone like Paul. Whose entire life who pays careful attention to the fact that their entire life is in line with the Scripture in the way they think, their attitudes, affections, and actions.

Purpose of this question: To think about what this should look like, and as they approach Q4 if they are striving to be the person they described here.

3. Answer to "what is drifting". Practically, what does drifting look like and how does it affect a Christian? If unchecked, what is the worst result of drifting?

a. Answer to "what is drifting"

It is a process that is real but can be imperceptible, whereby we are propelled or urged away from Christ (both in our beliefs or actions). In the Greek, it is a term that has nautical roots that paints the image of a drifting ship, floating away from its starting point.

b. What does drifting look like and how does it affect a Christian? If unchecked, what is the worst result of drifting?

Look like: Where our actions, attitudes, affections, and beliefs do not find their joy and rest in Christ and where we do not look to please him. This could be expressed as a numbed or dull of feeling towards these things, but ultimately it is when people do not either find joy in these things or worse, find their pleasure of worldly things

Some examples from a sermon (“The Peril of Ignoring the Gospel”):

- Speaking to the Lord about him is not vital part of life
- Being like him doesn’t dominate your thinking
- Gathering for worship has lost its delight
- Pointed scripture and sermons are embarrassing to you
- When acquisition of wealth becomes a dominant purpose
- You can sing worship songs and you do not engage them with your heart
- Pursuit of leisure or recreation dominates your life
- Sin in your life doesn’t cause an uproar in your being
- You practice bad business habits or cheating customers
- Indifferent or lack of delight for seeing the gospel preached and sinners saved
- When we understand or more interested the worldly things, more than we understand Biblical things

Worst result: Shipwreck your faith and wander away entirely (2 Thess 1:7-8, 1 Tim 1:18-20, 1 Tim 6:10)

Note to leaders: don’t we believe in the Perseverance of the Saints?

“Once saved, always saved.” The Bible teaches that those who are born again will continue trusting in Christ forever. God, by His own power through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, keeps or preserves the believer forever. (Gotquestions)

Answer: We do believe in once saved always saved, but this is just one half of what we believe. We also believe that those that God truly saves he will cause to persevere to the end (does not mean that true Christians can’t experience challenges in their faith). We see this in passages like Philippians 1:6 and John 10:27-30)

4. Key idea from v.1: We either are paying careful attention, or we are drifting. During this time of pandemic, how have you been doing, do you find that you have been drifting or growing in your faith? How would you advise someone (encouraging, admonishing, repairing) the drifting in their faith?

a. During this time of pandemic, how have you been doing, do you find that you have been drifting or growing in your faith?

Goal: that they can outwardly express how they have been doing in their faith. Keep this chat open and light and allow people to express themselves.

b. How would you advise someone (encouraging, admonishing, repairing) the drifting in their faith?

Encourage – There is always forgiveness for sin, even if we drift

Admonish – Talk about later about judgment, but we must act on our drifting by the power of God

Repairing – Pay attention to our faith, no longer neglect our salvation

What we can do or counsel someone to do about it:

Reminder: drifting requires more than a 1-day spa treatment but it is an injury we treat over time and it can last a while before we see a change.

- Repentance and fasting – lamentation and fasting
- Realignment and Reflection – paying careful attention in all ways as you live, trust in God, why you find rest and peace and joy in other things, die to worldliness, Read God’s word, meditate on it, pay special attention to salvation, promises, wrestle with your heart (1 Pet 5:8, Mk 14:38)
- Action – deal with your sin, action attitude and affections, put into community, put on the Armour of God from Eph 6.
- Rejoice in the Lord

Do Not Neglect this Great Salvation (v.2-4)

5. This message declared by angels was The Law. The New Testament speaks of The Old Testament law being from God but given by angels (also Acts 7:53, Gal 3:19). How does the earlier discussion about Jesus being greater than the angels make us think about the relationship between the message of the Law and the message given by the Son? What is the admonishment given in v.2-3a about neglecting this great salvation? (cf. Rom 2:8-9, Gal 3:10)

Further comments on Angels giving the Law if it comes up: The Law being given by angels is not spoken of directly in Exodus or Deuteronomy. What the angels seem to have communicated was the whole body of the Law. Though numerous OT passages speak of angels being present when the Law is given (Deu 33:2, Psa 68:17). This is an oral tradition held by Christians in Jews in the first century (book of Jubilee and Josephus are early Jewish sources where we can see this attested) and confirmed to be true by the Words of Scripture as part of God’s progressive revelation unfolded.

This is not a contradiction that the Law was given to Israel by God because the Law is from God, only that the angels are the ones who have given this oracle, but the attribution of where it comes from is God himself.

a. How does the earlier discussion about Jesus being greater than the angels make us think about the relationship between the message of the Law and the message given by the Son?

His message is greater and must be attended to. Jesus is the source of salvation while the angels are just a proxy to the message of the Law. We may have heard this message many times, but never should our ears be dull to the message.

b. What is the admonishment given in v.2-3a about neglecting this great salvation? (cf. Rom 2:8-9, Gal 3:10)

The law demonstrated that disobedience has a just punishment involved. How much more is the punishment of those who don’t respond to a greater message, what would the punishment be.

6. How can this section’s reminder of Jesus’ message being greater than the angels’ message help us to pay more careful attention to the message of the Son in our everyday life? Are there people’s opinion and worldly beliefs today that influence you, how does understanding the above concept help us in filtering and prioritizing the different messages we hear?

Goal: To realize what God teaches is primary and is the sole filter of all we believe and hold to, and that we should be especially careful with worldly wisdom as it is based in worldly things and are also ideas that will fade when this age has ended. This is not to say there that there is nothing we can learn from non-Christians, rather we should make clear and know deeply the message of the Son and that should be above all beliefs and philosophies.

This passage encourages us to really think about the state of our faith and how seriously we hold onto the message of salvation given to us by Jesus Christ. We live in a time where it is easy to drift away, adopt worldly beliefs and philosophies, and this should encourage us to be attentive to our faith and lifestyle. We need to ask ourselves, "are we drifting?" and if we are, we need to seek out help first from the Lord and then the local body to restore us.