

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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August 31, 2025

Volume 45, # 35

Give Earnest Heed

Hebrews 1 sets forth the superior character of Jesus over angels. Angels are ministering spirits sent to do service for those who inherit salvation, while Jesus is God's Son who has been given authority over all things. The writer's last contrast was "to which of the angels has God ever said, sit thou at my right hand till I make thy enemies the footstool of thy feet" (Hebrews 1:13; cp. Psalms 110:1). Rather, it is said of angels, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for the sake of those who inherit salvation?" To which the writer might have added "as well as to comfort and strengthen the Son in His great hour of testing" (Luke 22:43-44).

Following the last contrast between Jesus and angels in Hebrews 1, the second chapter begins with these words:

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we drift away from them. For if the word spoken by angels proved steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which having first been spoken by the Lord was confirmed unto them that heard; God also bearing witness with them both by signs and wonders and by manifold powers and by gifts of the Holy Spirit, according after his own will" (Hebrews 2:1-4).

When the Holy Spirit urged that we "give ... earnest heed to the things which were heard," He referred to His earlier statement in chapter 1 that "God, having of old times spake unto the fathers in the prophets in divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son." Jesus, the Father's Son, has revealed to us God's last message and man must hear Him. When Jesus, along with three of His apostles, were on the "mount of transfiguration" there appeared two Old Testament worthies: Moses and Elijah. Peter said to Jesus, "Let us make here three tabernacles: one for thee and one for Moses and Elijah." At that moment a bright cloud overshadowed them and a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). God, in times past, had spoken in divers manners, one being through the agency of angels. Today He has spoken to us through His Son.

One of the things angels delivered to man was the law. When Stephen was about to be martyred, he said to those who were about to kill him,

"Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit, as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute and they killed them that showed before of the coming of the righteous one of whom ye have become betrayers and murderers, ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels and kept it not" (Acts 7:51-53).

Paul taught the same truth. He wrote in Galatians 3:19, "What then is the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise hath been made and was ordained through angels by the hand of a mediator." Both Stephen and Paul taught that angels were the means by which the law through the hands of Moses and the prophets was made known to man. Since none could reject that law with impunity, how does any suppose he can ignore the words today which came from Christ?

The contrast between Jesus and the angels, which showed the superior nature of Jesus, helps to prepare the way for the arguments the writer will make for the law of Christ being superior to the Law of Moses. It behooves all men to give heed to Jesus rather than to the words of the law.

The writer spoke of a new sacrifice and a new high priest, beside many other things related to them. He concluded in the 13th chapter showing that as the high priest under Moses' law carried the sacrifice for the sins of the people outside of the city of Jerusalem. Therefore, Christians then (and now) go outside the city to Christ who "suffered without the gate." He said, "We have not here an abiding city, but we seek for that which is to come" (Hebrews 13:14). Hebrews is an intensive study between the Law of Moses and the law of Christ, showing that in every way the law of Christ is superior to the law which Moses gave. Christians who were being tempted to return to Judaism were shown this would be a tragic mistake on their part. They were urged to hold fast to what they had embraced and not to return to the law and its shadow of the law of Christ.

- Jim McDonald

For The Love of Heaven!

A man once said of his tiny home town: "Where I live is not the armpit of the universe, we're located just south of there." That's rough! Surely, a man's home deserves more respect than that.

Or maybe not. The truth is, I long for heaven, and I think about it daily. I have read about heaven and heard about it for most of my life. It's as if heaven is indelibly imprinted inside me. I must go there! The apostle Peter said I am just a sojourner and a pilgrim here (1 Peter 2:11-12). I am a citizen of heaven, said Paul (Philippians 3:20), but as much as I yearn for home, I cannot go until I have finished my earthly pilgrimage. For the moment, I must continue here and look to that "city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Here I "have no continuing city" but I seek the "one to come" with eagerness (Hebrews 13:14).

Some people would tell me: "You are going to be here for a while, so you might as well get used to it." No sir, not me! I think that is bad advice. If I "get used to" this life, I might fall in love with it and forget heaven. John advised me against such a course (1 John 2:15). I don't want to grow accustomed to the place that is "under the sway of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). You can reason with me all you want about the beauty of earth, its delights, and the rich relationships with people that make this life so pleasant. I will agree with you, heartily, on every point, but then I will remind you that no matter how wonderful this world is, it isn't heaven.

Let me illustrate my point. I believe there is no place on this planet more beautiful than Jenny Lake which is located high in the Grand Teton mountains. I once sat by the shore of it's cold, crystal-clear waters. I breathed the invigorating crispness of its air, and heard the loveliest songs of birds as they flew by. I looked across the lake at the snowcapped, jagged, mountain peaks on the opposite shore, and heard myself say the following words out loud: "I could stay here forever. I wish we didn't have to go back home." Folks, West Columbia, Texas is no Jenny Lake, but Jenny Lake isn't home, either.

This world we live in is wonderful in so many ways, but it isn't heaven. Come quickly, Lord Jesus. I'm ready when You are, Lord (Revelation 22:20).

- David Weak

Clippings . . .

Psalms 115:11-18

- 11 You who fear the LORD, trust in the LORD; He is their help and their shield.
- 12 The LORD has been mindful of us; He will bless us; He will bless the house of Israel; He will bless the house of Aaron.
- 13 He will bless those who fear the LORD, The small together with the great.
- 14 May the LORD give you increase, You and your children.
- 15 May you be blessed of the LORD, Maker of heaven and earth.

16 The heavens are the heavens of the LORD, But the earth He has given to the sons of men.

17 The dead do not praise the LORD, Nor do any who go down into silence;

18 But as for us, we will bless the LORD From this time forth and forever. Praise the LORD!

He Grew Strong in Faith!

In Genesis 18:9-15, recall the promise made to Abraham and Sarah, that in spite of Sarah's being past childbearing age, they would have a son. Before this time, God's promises to Abraham about a son had been indefinite. The Lord's announcement at this time was specific: "this time next year." When "Sarah laughed to herself" in unbelief of such a statement, the thoughts of her heart were known by the Lord, who then asked Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh ...?" This question was followed by another: "Is anything too difficult for the Lord?" Then the Lord repeated the specific time of fulfillment of the promise He had made to them. The passage indicates that Sarah was "afraid" and probably embarrassed to have her private thoughts of unbelief exposed. Recall that Abraham also laughed (Genesis 17:17). These reactions are understandable to us because of the extreme difficulty for two people whose bodies were as good as dead to believe that it was still possible for them to have a child.

Let us take note that the Lord was providing for Abraham and Sarah to have faith that, with God, the impossible would be possible. Both of them struggled to progress from unbelief to faith, however, the Lord provided the reality of His sure word, by which they overcame their doubts. The Bible further informs us that their faith "grew strong" (Romans 4:18-21). Truly, they came to believe that nothing was "too difficult for the Lord" (18:14)!

Now, my friend, does this help your faith?

"In hope against hope he believed, so that he might become a father of many nations according to that which had been spoken, 'So shall your descendants be.' Without becoming weak in faith he contemplated his own body, now as good as dead since he was about a hundred years old, and the deadness of Sarah's womb; yet, with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform." (Romans 4:18-21).

- Gary Smalley

- * "Following the line of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked!"
 - * "Today is the harvest of yesterday's sowings. Tomorrow will be harvest of today's!"
 - * "The only difference between a grave and a rut is the dimensions!"
 - * "Clean living takes a lot more than soap and detergents!"
 - * "The heart of education is the education of the heart!"
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)