

“So Great a Salvation”

Lesson 3, for Sunday March 4, 2001

“For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?”

Hebrews 2:2-3a, NAS

“Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.” Hebrews 2:14-17, NAS

The Outline

A. The Finality of Christianity (1:1 - 2:18)

1. God’s final revelation in His Son (1:1-4).
2. Christ better than the angels (1:5-14).
3. First admonition: Gospel vs. Law (2:1-4).
4. Humiliation and glory of the Son of Man (2:5-9).
5. The Son of Man, the Savior and High Priest of His people (2:10-18).

The Key Words

ἀρχηγός -- Translated in Hebrews 2:10 as “author.” This can also be translated as “leader,” “prince,” or “pioneer,” or even as “one who goes first upon the path.”

χάρις -- Grace. The linguistic starting point is the sense of “making glad by gifts,” of showing free, unmerited favor. It is in direct opposition to the requirement of Law. Kittel (IX, p.388) quotes the rabbis as having said, “Grace is what thou hast done to us because there is no good works in our hands.” This will be developed further in Hebrews chapter 10.

ἀδελφός -- Brother, literally a male relative with the same parents, and is figuratively used of all members of the Christian community, whether male or female. The sense is that of one with equal rank and dignity, and a member of one’s in-group. See Matthew 5:22 for its use as *friend*.

παῖδιά -- Children, in this case speaking of us as God’s children. It is used here as an expression of affection, and can be seen used like this also in I John 2:14. This is used in the sense of “younger brothers” of Jesus.

υἱός -- Son, i.e. an immediate male offspring, if used in the normal sense. In Hebrews 2:10 this term is used of us, as a parallel to Hebrews 1:2 where it is used of Jesus.

ἀρχιερεύς -- High Priest, i.e. chief, principal, and most important intermediary between God and man. Jesus Christ is our High Priest.

ἱλάσκεσθαι -- Translated as “to make propitiation for sin,” or “to make atonement for sin,” or “to cleanse from sin.” Here Jesus Himself acts on man to effect true purity from sin. He here is the redeemer from the bond of sin. Kittel (III, p.315ff) paraphrases it as “...to expiate the sins of His people, to rob them (the sins) of their validity and significance before God.” He quotes Philo as saying, “For when He robs us of our sin ... this is to experience the grace of God.” In the New Testament, it is used only in Hebrews 2:17, and in Luke 18:13.

Bibliography

Additions

Kittel, Gerhard, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Eerdmans, 1974.