

The Salvation We Dare Not Neglect

Hebrews 2:1-4

Introduction:

- The glory and deity of Christ are on display in chapter 1, but chapter 2 emphasizes his humanity and humiliation
- But first... Chapter 2 begins by applying the doctrine laid out in chapter 1
- The word "therefore" (2:1) indicates that this is a continuation from chapter 1.
- The Scriptural fact of Jesus' superiority over the angels has life-changing applications – listen and don't drift away!
- "The writer is arguing from the less to the greater. He has in his mind two revelations. One was the revelation of the law which came by the medium of the angels, that is to say, the Ten Commandments. Now any breach of that law was followed by strict and just punishment. The other was the revelation which came through the medium of Jesus Christ, the Son. Because it came in and through the Son it was infinitely greater than the revelation of God's truth brought by the angels; and therefore any transgression of it must be followed by a far more terrible punishment. If men cannot neglect the revelation which came through the angels, how much less can they neglect the revelation which came through the Son?" - William Barclay
- There are several warnings given in the epistle to the Hebrews and this is the first
 - It is impossible to "slip away" (2:1) from eternal life, but it is quite easy to slip away from godly living and from sound doctrine.
 - This is one of the saddest things to behold - believers drifting away from the things of God.
- The danger specifically to professing Jewish believers
 - Lapsing back into Judaism
 - Stopping short of true faith in Jesus
- We must give the more earnest heed
- If we do not give the more earnest heed, we will slip away. In the Greek it has a nautical sense- drifting. Drifting naturally happens without an anchor to something solid. If we are not securely set in the superiority of Jesus, we will drift with the currents of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

- "Therefore, we must the more eagerly anchor our lives to the things that we have been taught lest the ship of life drift past the harbour and be wrecked."
- There are few people who deliberately turn their backs on God; there are many who day by day drift farther and farther away from him. There are not many who in one moment of time commit some disastrous sin; there are many who almost unknowingly involve themselves in some situation and suddenly awake to find themselves in a mess. All because they did not take heed!

I. THE WORD SPOKEN BY ANGELS

- a. The word spoken through angels: This is a way to describe the Mosaic Law, which was received... by the direction of angels (Acts 7:53). The idea is that the law was "delivered" to Moses by the hands of angels. See also Gal 3:19
- b. The Mosaic Law was steadfast and strict (every transgression and disobedience received a just reward). It demanded to be taken seriously.
- c. There were numerous capital crimes under the Mosaic Law
 - i. Murder
 - ii. Breaking the Sabbath
 - iii. Rebellion and dishonoring parents
 - iv. Committing acts of adultery/committing acts of homosexuality
- d. Seem harsh/mean? Remember- this is the word of God, so we cannot just pretend these passages don't exist. We also cannot let our modern sentiments determine how we evaluate these texts (too harsh, bigoted, etc.)
- e. The death penalty was and is an essential, foundational principle of biblical theology. Adam was told in the Garden he would die from his disobedience (Gen 2:17).
- f. God's holiness and righteousness is revealed in his judgment against sin- so God is perfectly right and just in all that He does because He is God!
- g. Remember, the ultimate capital punishment was laid on God's own Son when he took the wrath that we deserved!

- h. If when Israel was under the law, when the Bible was not yet complete; if when all they had were the types and shadows to illustrate God's great salvation - they were still held accountable - how then shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?
- i. John 1:17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."
- j. We have a higher obligation under this age of grace! (i.e. Jesus' explanation of adultery and murder)
- k. The word ancient Greek word translated neglect is also used in Matthew 22:5 (they made light of it). This refers to those who disregarded the invitation to the marriage supper. It means to have the opportunity but to ignore or disregard that opportunity.
- l. This is primarily a warning to believers, not to the unsaved. The danger described isn't **rejecting** salvation (though the principle certainly applies there also), but the danger is **neglecting** salvation- not walking with Jesus. Not abiding in Jesus.
- m. Convenience or commitment? When we consider something great, we will naturally pay attention to it and not neglect it- even when inconvenient to us
- n. Why is our salvation so great?
 - i. We were saved from a great penalty- eternity in Hell, separation from God
 - ii. We are saved by a great Savior! It is great because our Saviour is great. Titus 2:13 says He is "the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - iii. We were saved at a great cost- His own precious blood
 - iv. We are saved for a great purpose: Fellowship with God and to be lights in a dark world
 - v. We are saved for a great future- eternity with the Lord!

II. THE WORD SPOKEN BY OUR LORD

- a. John 1:17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

- b. Jesus fulfilled the Law. He clarified and revitalized the Law of God.
- c. Now, God has spoken unto us "by His Son" (1:2) - in the four Gospels, in the Book of Acts, in the Book of Revelation, etc.- The NT is the revealing of Jesus
- d. The nature of revelation- what is opaque/cloudy in the OT and is made clear in the NT- I Cor. 13:8-12
- e. If we must take the word which came by angels seriously, then we must take the word that came by the Son of God even more seriously

III. THE WORD SPOKEN BY THE APOSTLES

- a. "Them that heard him" (Heb. 2:3b) refers to the apostles.
- b. God authenticated the apostolic preaching of the Gospel "with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost" (Heb. 2:4).
- c. See Mark 16:17-18
- d. Many are recorded in the Book of Acts and taper off in the later Christian church epistles (stopping down through history until the Charismatic movement picked up)
- e. This indicates that the "sign gifts" were of a temporary nature.
- f. The Holy Spirit distributed spiritual gifts "according to his own will." So God's work doesn't come forth by our enthusiasm or flesh, but according to His will!

Conclusion:

- Our faith is unique:
 - In its origin- From Christ Himself
 - In its transmission: God used faithful men to pass it on
 - In its effectiveness- these miracles showed God at work. The best miracle is that the Gospel turns a sinner into a saint, and turns bad men good- and that can still be seen today!
- It's a great salvation- that should not be neglected! According to an old story, an ungodly farmer died and it was discovered in his will that he left his farm to the Devil. In the court, they didn't quite know what to do with his request – how do you give a farm to the Devil? Finally, the judge decided: "The best way to carry out the wishes of the

deceased is to allow the farm to grow weeds, the soil to erode, and the house and barn to rot. In our opinion, the best way to leave something to the Devil is to do nothing.” We can leave our lives to the Devil the same way – by doing nothing, by drifting wherever the current drive us.

- I Corinthians 10:12- Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall