

“So Great A Salvation”

*“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. (2) For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward. (3) How shall we escape if we neglect **so great a salvation**, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him. (4) God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His Own will,”* Hebrews 2:1-4.

The preceding paragraph begins with the word “*therefore*,” which suggests a connecting link between what had just been stated, and the application the inspired writer was about to make. Chapter one of the book of Hebrews is all about Jesus Christ, His power, and greatness. Regarding this point, please note the following facts: (1) God has “*in these last days spoken to us*” by Jesus Christ, Heb. 1:2. (2) Jesus has been “*appointed heir of all things*,” Heb. 1:2. (3) “*Through*” Jesus Christ God “*made the worlds*,” Heb. 1:2. (4) Jesus is “*the brightness*” of the “*glory*” of God, Heb. 1:3. (5) Jesus is “*the express image*” of the “*person*” of God, Heb. 1:3. (6) Jesus upholds “*all things by the word of His power*,” Heb. 1:3. (7) Jesus has “*purged our sins*,” Heb. 1:3. (8) Jesus is seated “*at the right hand of the Majesty on High*,” Heb. 1:3. (9) And Jesus is “*so much better than the angels*,” Heb. 1:4.

In Heb. 1:5, after having affirmed in verse four that Jesus is “*so much better than the angels*,” the inspired writer, from verse five through the end of the chapter, cited a number of indisputable facts which clearly **prove** that Jesus is “*better than the angels*.” Now, in Heb. 2:1, the writer said “*therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard*,” and we ought to do so “*lest we drift away*.” The figure (“*lest we drift*”) is that of a boat drifting away from its moorings, simply due to “*neglect*” or carelessness. “*Neglect*” does not denote contempt, or a deliberate attempt to disregard the law of God; it simply indicates carelessness, or a lack of attention to what is important. The book of Hebrews was primarily addressed to Jewish Christians, who were in danger of becoming apostates from the faith. Contextually, it is evident that a number of factors were at work which could contribute to their falling away, but in our text, one very significant factor was that of “*neglect*.”

To show the danger of such neglect, the writer referred to “*the word spoken through angels*,” how that this word proved “*steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward*,” Heb. 1:2. In mentioning “*the word spoken through angels*” the writer was referring to the Law of Moses, which “*was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator*,” Gal. 3:19, the “*mediator*” being Moses. Cf. John 1:17. Under that law “*every transgression and disobedience*” received a just reward. “*Transgression*” involved going beyond what the law authorized. “*Disobedience*” simply denoted a failure to obey its commands. There were no exceptions — “*every transgression and disobedience received a just reward*.” If space permitted, countless Old Testament examples could be cited to prove that very point. However, contextually, as it relates to the message being

delivered, Jesus is “*so much better than the angels*,” Heb. 1:4, and Jesus is much greater than Moses, Heb. 3:1-4. “*Therefore*,” **if** under that law which involved both the agency of angels and the mediatorship of Moses (all inferior to Jesus!) “*every transgression and disobedience received a just reward*,” **then** the question is raised, “*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by those (the apostles, bw) who heard him*,” Heb. 2:3. You see, **if** Jesus is greater than Moses and the angels, **then** His Covenant is a “*better covenant*” than that which came through Moses, Heb. 8:6. Hence, in our text the writer asked, “*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation*.” At last, we are getting to our topic, “*so great a salvation*.” **Why**, we ask, is it “*so great*?”

“Salvation” is “So..Great” Because:

1. It was conceived in the mind of God the Father, Eph 3:8-11, and revealed “*by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets*,” Eph. 3:3-5.

2. It is “*so great*” that even before it was ultimately revealed the holy angels desired “*to look*” into it, I Peter 1:12.

3. It is “*so great*” because Jesus Christ is its “*Author*,” Heb. 5:9.

4. It is “*so great*” because of the greatness of the “*love*” which motivated it, John 3:16; Rom. 5:8-10.

5. It is “*so great*” because it is “*eternal*,” Heb 5:9.

6. It is “*so great*” because of the great sacrifice it required; namely, the shedding of the blood of Jesus upon that terrible cross, I Peter 1:18-21.

7. It is “*so great*” because of the tragedy from which it delivers the obedient — the tragedy of “*spending eternity*” in a devil’s hell! Matt. 25:41,46.

8. It is “*so great*” because of the great blessings it offers — the forgiveness of sins, the hope of eternal life, and being able to bask eternally in that city of the redeemed where God wipes away all tears, where there is no more death, sorrow, or pain, where the former things are passed away, a region blessed by the presence and glory of God, and where the inhabitants thereof shall eternally eat of the tree of life and drink of the water of life, Acts 2:38; Tit. 1:2, Rev. 21:4,23; 22:1-2.

Application:

In view of the greatness of the “*salvation*” herein described, it is the very epitome of foolishness to think we can “*escape*” the **wrath** of God if we “*neglect*” to heed the word of God. This becomes especially evident when we consider the very **nature** of God. Regarding God’s nature, we mention five important facts:

1. God is a just God, which means He cannot ignore sin and at the same time be true to His own nature. Rom. 3:26; Deut. 32:4; Rom. 12:19.

2. God is omnipresent, which means that we are unable to flee from His “*presence*,” Ps. 139:7-12,

3. God is omnipotent, which means He is “*Almighty*,” and He is able to carry out His threats, Gen. 17:1.

4. God is omniscient; His “*understanding is infinite*,” Ps. 147:5, which means He knows everything about us — including the very “*thoughts and intents*” of our hearts, Heb. 4:12; Matt. 12:34-35.

5. God “cannot lie,” Tit. 1:2; cf. Heb. 6:18, which means that **He will** carry out His threats to the disobedient, and He will honor His promises to the obedient, Matt. 25:41,46; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; Rev. 14:13, etc.

Conclusion: The question, “*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation*,” Heb. 2:3, is a rhetorical question — a question “posed without expecting an answer but merely as a way of making a point.” The “point” is obvious! We cannot “*escape*” if we “*neglect so great a salvation*!” Those who heed God’s will build their houses on the rock; those who reject His will build their houses on the sinking sand, Matt. 7:24-27. Dear reader, it is not only essential that you learn God’s will; it is equally as necessary that you **obey** God’s will. You **cannot** “*escape*” the judgment and wrath of God if you “*neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him*,” Heb. 2:3. Consider ye well!

**** —B. Witherington