

“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,” Heb. 2:1-3.*

The preceding verses begin with “*therefore*,” which means that a conclusion is being drawn from that which had just been stated. What had just been stated, and then proven in succeeding arguments is that Jesus is “*much better than the angels*,” and that He “*has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*,” Heb. 1:4. In Heb. 2:2, the writer referred to “*the word spoken through angels*,” and how that “*word*” had “*proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward*.” Contextually, he is referring to the Law of Moses, which was given to Moses by the ministration and medium of angels. Proof of this statement is found in Gal. 3:19 wherein, referring to Moses’ “*law*,” the inspired writer said “*it was appointed through angels by the hands of a mediator*.” Note also Acts 7:53.

The affirmation made at the beginning of Hebrews chapter two is that since Jesus is “*so much better than the angels*,” then that which was “*spoken by the Lord*” is vastly greater than that which was “*spoken through angels*.” Inasmuch as the Hebrew saints had “*heard*” that which was “*spoken by the Lord*” (namely the gospel), then they were admonished to “*give the more earnest heed*” to the things they had heard lest they “*drift away*,” v. 1. Drifting, as used in this verse, is a nautical term, which suggests the analogy between a ship (through the neglect of its captain) drifting from its moors to that of a child of God, through sheer “*neglect*,” drifting away from the Lord and His gospel message. To show the grave spiritual danger one places his soul in when he drifts “*away*,” the writer referred to “*the word spoken through angels*” (namely, the law of Moses), and how that it “*proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward*,” Heb. 2:2. There are many Old Testament examples which illustrate that point. For example, in Exodus 20:8 the Israelites were commanded to “*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*,” and involved in keeping that day “*holy*” was the command to “*do no work*” on that day. However, in Numbers chapter 15 we read of a man who was found “*gathering sticks on the Sabbath day*,” and of Moses and “*all the congregation*” stoning him to death (Num. 15:32-36), and so doing because “*the Lord commanded*” that it be done! Many other examples could be cited to illustrate the fact that the “*law spoken through angels*” proved “*steadfast*,” and that “*every transgression and disobedience received a just reward*.” However, **if** Jesus is greater than the angels, **then** that which was “*spoken by the Lord*” is greater than that which was “*spoken through angels*.” In other words, the law of Christ is much better than the law of Moses! Cf. Heb. 8:6. But **if** people under Moses’ law suffered the consequences for violating that law, **then** “*we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard lest we drift away*,” Heb. 2:1. Now, having made the preceding affirmation, the writer posed the question, “*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*,” Heb. 2:3. Much more could be said about the importance of our giving “*the more earnest heed to the things we have heard*,” and of the seriousness of our neglecting “*so great a salvation*,” v. 3. But from this point forward, our emphasis shall be placed upon the phrase “*so great a salvation*.” Why is salvation “*so great*?”

Salvation is “Great” Because:

1. Jesus Christ is its “*Author*,” Heb. 5:9. Jesus is “*so much better than the angels*,”

Heb. 1:4. Jesus is “worthy of more honor than Moses,” Heb. 3:1-6. Jesus is our “High Priest,” and He is “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens,” Heb. 7:26. And He, as our High Priest, “is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,” Heb. 8:1. In fact, Jesus is “the Son of the living God,” Matt. 16:16. He is the One through Whom “all things were made,” and “without Him nothing was made that was made,” John 1:3. Hence, we simply cannot afford to neglect the gospel message “which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord,” Heb. 2:3!

2. It is “eternal,” Heb. 5:9! Or everlasting in duration. Cf. Matt. 25:46. In addition to the expression “eternal salvation,” we also note in the Scriptures that “eternal” is connected with “hope,” Tit. 1:2, with “redemption,” Heb. 9:12, with “inheritance,” Heb. 9:15, and “glory,” I Peter 5:10. In brief, we state that the “great salvation” which is “at first began to be spoken by the Lord,” Heb. 2:3, enables one to possess eternal hope, eternal redemption, an “eternal inheritance,” and will ultimately receive “eternal glory!” It is no wonder then that the inspired writer warned the Hebrew saints against neglecting “so great a salvation!”

3. It is “common.” Note Jude 3: “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” In this verse, Jude mentioned “our common salvation.” “Common,” as used here, does not refer to that which is of little value, but to that which is available for everyone, both Jews and Gentiles, and upon the same terms. Jesus, “by the grace of God,” tasted “death for everyone,” Heb. 2:9. God is not a respecter of persons! Acts 10:34-35.

4. It provides spiritual freedom, John 8:32. “All have sinned and fall short of the grace of God,” Rom. 3:23. “The wages of sin is death...,” Rom. 6:23. Jesus said that “whoever commits sin is a slave of sin,” John 8:34. Prior to their obedience to the gospel, all are “slaves of sin,” Rom. 6:16. Throughout the world, people oppose forced slavery (and rightly so); however, there is no slavery worse than being slaves of sin, and this slavery **is voluntary**, having been brought about when people are drawn by their “own desires and enticed,” Jas. 1:14. But the “great salvation” offered by Jesus can free a person from the slavery of sin!

5. Because of the great love which made it possible. “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life,” John 3:16. “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us,” Rom. 5:8. “In this is love, not that we loved God, that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins,” I John 4:10.

6. Because of the great sacrifice it required. Please read, and meditate upon, I Peter 1:18-19: “you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious **blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” Your sins, and my sins, are so sinful that nothing short of the blood of the Son of the living God is sufficient to enable God to be both a “just” God and a justifying God! Rom. 3:23-25.

6. Because of the great tragedy from which it delivers a person. Putting it plainly, every person who rejects the “great salvation” which only Jesus provides will “spend eternity” in that “everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels,” Matt. 25:41, elsewhere called “the furnace of fire,” where there “will be wailing and gnashing of teeth,” Matt. 13:42.

7. Because of the great blessings it offers. When people obey the gospel which enables them to partake of that “great salvation,” they immediately receive “the remission of sins,” Acts 2:38; they are “added” to the church, the body of the “saved,” Acts 2:47, wherein they are

reconciled unto God, Eph. 2:16. They then enjoy “*all spiritual blessings*” in Christ, Eph. 1:3; they live “*in hope of eternal life*,” Tit.1:2, and one day if they remains faithful to the Lord, they will enter that heavenly home where “*God Himself will be their God, and they shall be His people*,” Rev. 21:3, a place void of anything unpleasant, Rev. 21:4, where they shall eat of the tree of life, drink of the water of life, Rev. 22:1-4, and bask eternally in the sunlight of God’s abounding love.

Conclusion: More could be said about the “*great salvation*,” but enough has been said so that you surely would not dare allow yourself to “*drift away*,” or to “*neglect so great a salvation!*” Consider ye well!

—Bobby Witherington
