

# How shall we escape

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] together in the epistle to the Hebrews and chapter 2 and we can read from the beginning of the chapter. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the words spoken by angels were steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness both with signs and wonders and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will.

This letter written in the first century of the Christian age is referred to as the epistle to the Hebrews. Now who were these Hebrews? Well they were Jews, God's ancient people who were the recipients of the truth of God. And it was necessary to write this letter to them because they had declined in their religion. Many of those who were converted and embraced the Christian faith had to suffer much persecution from other Jews so that Christian Jews and those who were tempted to turn back to their former religion of Judaism. Now the writer of this letter doesn't give his name but it is generally accepted that it was written by the apostle Paul. And he begins his letter by telling us who

Jesus is. And as the letter unfolds the writer shows that Jesus is greater than the angels, that he is greater than Moses, he is greater than Moses, he is greater than Aaron, and greater than the Old Testament priesthood.

And the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross was greater than all the sacrifices and all the blood that was shed in the Old Testament. The sacrifices and blood of bulls and goats were only shadows of the one great sacrifice of Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God. The sacrifices of the Old Testament had no efficacy in them to deal with man's greatest problem, that of sin and our broken relationship with God. However, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ has dealt with our sin and has reconciled us to God. And he brings before us that Jesus is the eternal Son of God and the only Saviour of sinners. In chapter 1 the writer is showing how Jesus Christ is superior to the angels. And then as we come to chapter 2 and the verses that we have taken as our text today, verse 1 to 4, he digresses. And there is an interruption to the writer's discussion of Christ's relation to angels, which he again resumes in verse 5 of chapter 2. And it begins this digression by an exhortation to give good heed to what we hear.

In other words, to give good heed to the gospel. Then he writes of the danger, lest at any time we should let them slip. And then he writes of the vengeance which is certain to follow, the neglect of the gospel which is centered in the question, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

[ 4 : 1 9 ] He begins then this chapter by emphasizing the great duty that is laid upon us as those who hear the gospel.

therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard. The word therefore could be translated for this cause or it could be translated since.

Pointing us back to what we are told in chapter 1. And what are we told in chapter 1? Well, he begins that chapter by saying, God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.

Without ourselves digressing too much from our text, let us note that the coming of Jesus Christ into this world is the final revelation of God to man. He spoke and made his revelation in times past through the prophets. But now the final prophet has come. The person to whom the prophets pointed has arrived and with him God's last revelation to man.

Paul writing up at preachers and the preaching of the gospel says, Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's dead, be ye reconciled to God. The gospel is God's final voice to mankind. God was in Christ speaking to mankind in the gospel. This gospel is not the word of a man. It is not the word of an angel.

[ 6 : 38 ] But it is the word of God. So how solemn it is for us to give heed to this gospel.

Paul writes to the Galatians and he says, But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

As we said before, so say I now again. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

And that brings before us the preciousness of the gospel. And I have to ask yourself today, Do you see the preciousness of what God has given you in the gospel?

Paul is here in Hebrews 2 addressing himself to the responsibility that is upon all those who hear the gospel.

[ 7 : 49 ] The fact that you have this privilege of the gospel and of hearing the gospel exacts a responsibility upon you. Here is a specific duty impressed upon all those who hear the gospel.

Notice that he includes himself with the Hebrews to whom he was writing.

He says, He says, We ought to give the moronous seed to the things which we have heard. This exhortation, To give moronous seed to the things that are spoken, to the things that we hear, includes everyone, the saved and the unsaved, the Christian and the non-Christian.

The word ought, has this thought of it included in it, we must, so that it could be translated, We must give the moronous seed to the things which we have heard.

We must give the moronous seed to the things we have heard, lest we should let them slip. Well, where has your own mind been since we began our service of worship today?

[ 9 : 38 ] Where has your mind been as we sang the praises of God? Where has your mind been as we read the word of God? And may I be more exact, where is your mind now?

Has it wandered away? Are you thinking of what you're going to do tomorrow? Or what are you going to do the rest of the week? Or have you been thinking of what you have done the past few days?

Where has your mind been? Have you let the hearing of the gospel slip away? When the apostle writes here to give it, he is saying to us that we should apply our minds to it and consider it well.

How often we sit under the gospel and allow it to pass over us without giving it any due attention. How easy it is for us to let our minds drift away under the gospel, under the word of God.

Here we are told to give our attention to what we have heard and what is being said. which one of us is not guilty of allowing our minds to drift away under the gospel, under the word of God.

- [ 11 : 04 ] But here the apostle exhorts us. We ought to give the more earnestly. We must give the more earnestly to the things which we have heard less at any time.

We should let them slip. We ought to give the more earnestly to the gospel because this gospel has come to us absolutely and exclusively by the grace of God.

Paul writes in another place, Paul writes in another place, for after in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Paul, in writing to Timothy, calls it the glorious gospel of the blessed God. So the apostle says then, we ought to give the more earnestly to the things which we have heard, to give the more earnest heed.

To hear is not enough. There must be a personal embracing of the things that we hear. It is not enough to hear the gospel, but there must be a personal embracing of the gospel, a personal application of the gospel to oneself.

- [ 12 : 33 ] The danger is that unless we give heed to what we have heard, that we will let it slip. To allow the things of the gospel to slip out of the mind.

And which one of us has not been guilty of that? So we should give the more earnest heed to the gospel because of the glory and majesty that belongs to Jesus Christ, the person by whom God has communicated to us his mind and his will.

The gospel is a final message of God to sinners. And here is brought before us the awful destruction and destination awaiting those who reject or slip the testimony of God's wonderful grace to sinners to allow it to slip away.

Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

In verse 2, the apostle advances another reason why we ought to give the more earnest heed to the gospel.

- [ 14 : 02 ] For he says, For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received are just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect neglect so great salvation?

It is generally accepted that the word spoken by angels is a reference to the giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai. The origin of the law and of the gospel is of God.

He is the author of both the law and the gospel. But here the apostle is contrasting not the origin but the medium of the two revelations.

In giving the law to Moses, he made known his will by the ministry of angels. They were engaged in some manner at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai.

But in his son, Jesus Christ, God has made known his will in the revelation of mercy.

- [ 15 : 09 ] And so he says, If every transgression and disobedience under the law received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

I think what the apostle is drawing your attention to here is that there will be degrees of punishment on the basis that every transgression and disobedience shall receive a just recompense of reward.

In other words, we can say that punishment will be graded according to the light and the opportunity that was given to us.

We see that in the gospel of Luke, for example, chapter 12. And there we read, And that servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will shall be beaten with many stripes.

But he that knew not and did not commit things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given of him shall be much required and to whom men have committed much of him they will ask the more.

[ 16 : 32 ] In chapter 10 of this letter itself, we read, Of how much sorrowed punishment suppose ye shall he be so worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing and hath turned his spite into the Spirit of grace.

In other words, if they receive just punishment in the Old Testament for despising or snubbing the law of God, then we shall receive just punishment in the New Testament for neglecting or drifting away from the only salvation that is offered to us in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because to us in the Gospel has been given, we are given much more light and more opportunity.

And the more light and opportunity that we receive if we slip away or if we neglect it, then the greater the punishment.

That brings us to the great question. How shall we escape if we neglect this great salvation? What is this salvation?

[ 18 : 02 ] salvation? Well, it is the deliverance from sin and the punishment that is due to us for our sin. And it is to have eternal life through Jesus Christ.

To be reconciled to God. To have peace with God. That is this salvation.

salvation. This salvation which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him. God also bearing them witness both the signs and wonders and with divish miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will.

The Gospel first spoken by the Lord then reported to us by the apostles. And God confirming the message of the apostles by signs and wonders and miracles and gifts.

Surely all this brings before us the preciousness of the Gospel that we have today. The Gospel message that is proclaimed to us in the preaching of the Word.

[ 19 : 18 ] This salvation is the greatest work that God has ever done. He brought the universe into being by His Word.

God said let there be light and there was light. He uttered the Word and it was. But salvation was worked out by God becoming Emmanuel God with us.

Sharing our nature without sin and going to the cross to suffer and die for sin that was not His own. This is the greatest work of God greater than the work of creation.

Wonderful and precious as that work is the work of salvation is greater because it required God in the person of His Son to come into this world and to go to the cross of Golgotha and there suffer and die the consequences of sin that was not His own but sin that was reckoned or imputed to Him as the sin that belonged to all those who will trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The person of God the Son who'd been in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and been found in fashion as a man He humbled Himself and became obedient to death even the death of the cross.

[ 21 : 02 ] Oh how great is the salvation that is presented to us in the gospel. And its greatness exists in this also that God planned it before the world began.

This salvation is not an afterthought in the mind of God after man sinned. God purposed this salvation before man sinned. He planned it in the covenant of redemption.

And what is that the covenant of redemption? Well the covenant of redemption is an agreement that was made by the three persons of the Godhead the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit before the foundation of the world.

The three persons made an agreement among themselves. We can put it like this simply that the Father gave a people to the Son and the Son agreed to redeem them and the Spirit agreed to apply the benefits of redemption to them.

There was that eternal agreement among the persons of the Godhead the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit. Oh how great this salvation is.

[ 22 : 31 ] And this salvation is great because of the price that was paid. This salvation is free to me and you as sinners.

But this salvation came at a cost. The cost was not to sinners. For them it is free. But the cost was to God himself.

Jesus Christ the Son took our human nature into union with himself. Not for 33 years but he took that nature into union with himself forever.

Jesus will retain his human nature throughout the ages of eternity. He will never cast away his human nature. But he took that nature in order to redeem and work salvation for sinners.

Jesus in our nature had to undergo unspeakable agonies in mind and body and in soul. God the Father had to lay upon him the curse and the damnation of sinners.

[ 23 : 45 ] Our sins were imputed and reckoned to Christ. He made him of you know sin to be sin for us. Christ has paid the debt that we owe to the justice of God because of our sin.

What we couldn't do the Father sent his Son to do it. The fourth cry from the cross brings before us the apex of his suffering.

When he cried my God my God why hast thou forsaken me? What kind of cry was this that Jesus made? indeed indeed it is the most appalling sound that ever pierced the atmosphere of this earth.

In the entire Bible there is no other sentence that is so difficult for us to explain than this one the fourth cry of the cross my God my God why hast thou forsaken me?

Spurgeon stated that he did not think that the records of time or even of eternity contain a sentence fuller of anguish.

[ 25 : 00 ] Here you may look as into a vast abyss and though you strain your eyes and gaze till sight fails you yet you perceive no bottom it is measureless unfathomable inconceivable we will adore where we cannot comprehend a sentence that we often take up quoted by Spurgeon we will adore where we cannot comprehend how can we comprehend that cry my God my God why hast thou forsaken me?

How can we ever comprehend the unspeakable agonies that Christ suffered in his mind and his body and soul? We can never comprehend them but we will always always adore them and even in eternity in heaven we shall adore them all the greatness of salvation and the price that was paid Jesus has entered the presence of the judge of all who cannot look upon sin with pleasure even when carried by his own sinless son Jesus as a sin bearer made sin so that he enters the place of judgment and he discovers that it was a terrible occasion to be found in perhaps we should pause here for a moment and see how great the love of God for us was and how great was the price that Jesus was willing to pay to save us from our deserved damnation perhaps we should pause and consider well the greatness of salvation and the price that was paid pause for a moment and see the salvation that is brought to us in the gospel oh how we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip

Paul in another of his letters writing about those who trusted in Christ says in whom he also trusted after that he heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation and what is presented to you today in the preaching of the word is the gospel of your salvation the gospel of your salvation how we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them drift away we should let them slip away Paul puts it like this so great a salvation which indicates that there is nothing else like it you will never ever hear a more important message than that which you are hearing today and you have heard for so many years years have passed since you first heard this message and what have you done with the message is it not the truth that you have let it drift away let it slip away heard it on a Sunday and by the end of that

Sunday it had slipped away drifted away by Monday it was all forgotten what an attitude to the greatest message that you will ever hear how many of us tune in to hear the Queen's Christmas message we all sit around our screens to hear what she has to say but here is a more important message it's a message from God regarding salvation it is a message that is unique because there is only one gospel great salvation great here means the greatness of degree it is great because it centers around one person and that person is the Lord

Jesus Christ Christ is called the salvation of God as we recall the words of Simeon at the temple when Simeon said Lord now let us know thy servant depart in peace according to thy word for my eyes have seen thy salvation everything about salvation is wrapped up in Jesus Christ God is salvation is not only unique but it is exclusive because salvation from sin is not to be found anywhere else salvation from the consequences of what our sins deserve is only to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ there is salvation nowhere else it is only found in Jesus Christ so we ought to give the more honesty to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip when the gospel is proclaimed in the hearing of sinners it addresses itself to the moral responsibility to those to whom it comes and their moral responsibility is to accept the message that is proclaimed the gospel is not to be rejected because it has within it the inherent command to be believed or accepted or received it is a gospel of which

[ 31 : 19 ] God commands mankind to repent the gospel is for the sinner's acceptance Paul could say to young Timothy this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief this exhortation was given to the apostle as one who wrote as he was led by the Holy Spirit because we believe in the divine inspiration of the word of God so here as Paul writes these words he is directed and led by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit is given to reveal to us the things of Christ and what this exhortation reveals to us is the mind of Jesus it reveals to us how concerned Jesus is for me and you this is the mind of

Jesus given to the apostle to the Holy Spirit we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard lest at any time we should let them slip lest the things you and you I and you allow the gospel to slip out of minds and And so he directs the apostle through the spirit to write these words.

We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard. Lest at any time we should let them slip. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

Here is the mind of Jesus. And he is exhorting us. He is warning us against letting the gospel. Slip out of our minds.

By letting the gospel drift away from our minds. You see the gospel is more than an announcement. Verse 3 indicates to us that there are those who do neglect God's salvation.

[ 34 : 14 ] For Paul would not have said it unless it was a fact. And the question is are you one of them who neglect the gospel of salvation?

Are you one of them who allows it to drift away? The gospel is more than an announcement. It is an invitation. It is a command for the sinner to come in repentance and trust in the Lord Jesus alone.

And disobedience to this command or a rejection or a neglect of this gospel. My friend will be punished. He that believeth on him is not condemned.

But he that believeth not is condemned already. Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. Paul in another of his letters in regards to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

He says. When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God. And listen my friend.

[ 35 : 18 ] What it says. And that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.

And from the glory of his power. We may think that hell is for murderers, adulterers, those who commit great crimes. But my friend it is a place prepared for those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And therefore the more need there is that we give heed to the gospel. That we give heed to the things that we hear.

And not allow them to slip away. Eternal punishment is also prepared for those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Where do you stand today in your relationship to the gospel? In Matthew 22 we read about a certain king who made a marriage for his son and sent forth his servants to call them that were invited to the wedding.

[ 36 : 31 ] And they would not come. And we are told that those who had been invited to the wedding made light of it. And went their ways. One to his farm. Another to his merchandise.

Well these words made light of it is the same word that is translated in our text as neglect. The parable says forth the very sin against which the apostle is warning us.

And that is to make light of the gospel. And I challenge you today and I ask you. Are you among those who have made light of the gospel?

Those who have no care for the salvation that is found in Jesus Christ. Who make light of it. Oh that failure to give the most earnest heed to the things which you have heard.

Not only can we let them slip. But we can make light of them. And we can neglect them. How shall we escape if we neglect this great salvation?

[ 37 : 37 ] He doesn't say how shall we escape if we oppose this salvation? Or if we resist this great salvation? Or if we despise this salvation?

But if we neglect it. If we make light of it. How shall we escape? You see my friend. To go to hell can be so effortless.

All it requires is that you neglect. Make light of the salvation that is offered to you in the gospel.

To be lost can be so effortless. All you have to do is make light of the gospel of salvation. All you have to do is neglect the salvation that is offered to you.

All that is required is for you not to give the earnest heed to the gospel that you hear. And the great salvation that you are neglecting is something that you profoundly need.

[ 38 : 47 ] Many who are lost in a lost eternity will say, I didn't want to come here. I didn't hate God. I was in church every Sunday, both morning and evening.

How have I landed here? I had no intention to go to hell. And then they realize that they gave no heed to the gospel that they heard.

That they made light of the salvation that was offered to them. That they neglected the gospel. And in doing so, they neglected their own soul.

How shall we escape? There is no way of escape. There is nothing in the world so important as the salvation spoken of by God in his word.

And make sure, my friend, that you don't make light of it. But embrace the salvation in Jesus Christ that is offered to you today. Be drawn more and more to Christ.

[ 39 : 54 ] Or what else will happen is that you will drift away from him more and more. Well, what is it today? Are you drawn more and more to Christ? Or is it true of you that you are drifting more and more from him?

What is it? If you are drawing to him, or you are drifting from him. I cannot save you.

No one can. But I can point you to the one who can save. And the one who delights to save sinners like me and you. And that is Jesus Christ.

In the gospel we are offered what no other has ever offered to us. Deliverance from the burden of our guilt. Reconciliation with God.

Peace with God. We ought to give the more earnest heed to what we have heard. And not let it slip or neglect it. Because of the greatness of salvation it brings before us and offers to us today.

[ 40 : 59 ] That salvation meant for Jesus Christ to humble himself. It meant for him to become obedient to the curse of death of the cross.

So that the gospel of salvation could be communicated to sinners like me and you today. Surely it calls on me and you to give it the more earnest heed.

And not to let it pass over us. And not to let it slip away and drift away. When the Son speaks to us in such love. In such tenderness.

In such caring manner. And says to us. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden. And I will give you rest.

Think for a moment. Think for a moment what will you lose if you follow not this gospel. What destruction awaits you at the last.

[ 42 : 04 ] If you do not give heed to the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Think of the consequences that awaits those who let the gospel slip away.

The consequences that awaits those who let the gospel drift away. Those who neglect and make light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Dear friend there is not a more important message. That we can speak of or offer to you today. At the beginning of our new year.

Than the message of the gospel. Of Jesus Christ. There is nothing more solemn. That we can offer to you today.

Than the salvation that there is. In Jesus Christ. And it requires a response. It is your responsibility.

[ 43 : 11 ] To respond to what you have heard. And every one of us here gathered today. Will respond. To what we have heard. We have either let it slip away.

We have allowed it to drift away. As we have some of you for many years. Or we have made light of it. Our ears have become so accustomed.

To hearing the message. And familiarity breeds contempt. And maybe today. You are sitting here.

And what your attitude to us. Is that you have contempt for the gospel. Because you have become so familiar. Of hearing the message. That it doesn't even penetrate into your heart.



It doesn't even penetrate your ear. You allow it to slip away. You allow it to drift away. You set your minds and your affections. On other things.

[ 44 : 15 ] Rather than on the gospel of your salvation. Well what is it? Or are you among those. Who see the preciousness of this salvation.

Who sees the importance of this salvation. Who has their ears open. Who has their ears open. To the gospel.

And who wants to hear more. Of this salvation. Who wants to hear more. Of the gospel. And in hearing.

Who draws more and more. Towards Christ. What is your position today? What is your situation today?

Where do you stand today? In the light. Of the gospel. How shall we escape. If we neglect.

[ 45 : 15 ] So great. Salvation. May the Lord bless. All right. All right. All right.