

Hebrews 2:1-4

We live in a day and age when truth does not seem to matter very much. The culture is constantly telling us that “we should not get hung up on matters of doctrine or truth. Feeling good is what really matters.” That may sound wonderfully tolerant and attractive, but the Bible solemnly warns us that such an attitude is a recipe for disaster.

Summary

In Hebrews 2:1-4, the author warns his readers about drifting away from Christ and His great salvation, exhorting them to pay much closer attention to the message of God’s salvation in His Son that they have heard.

1. Grave Danger vs. 1

Here we find the first of five major warnings in the book of Hebrews, all of which deal with the danger of falling away from faith in Christ and therefore from salvation. These Hebrew Christians were being persecuted by the community around them, and the writer urgently warns them not to renounce Jesus Christ under pressure. The author focuses on the danger of “drifting away” from the message they had heard. He uses a nautical term, describing a ship at sail that has drifted off course, or a ship in harbor that has slipped its moorings. One of the key ideas here is that this drifting away is something that happens largely unnoticed. Whilst it is happening the changes are imperceptible; only later do its consequences become clear.

2. Accompanying Command vs. 1

Aware of the danger of apostasy, the writer gives an accompanying command (**Heb. 2:1**). “What we have heard” is the message of salvation in God’s Son. “Pay attention” denotes holding to a course or securing an anchor. Drifting away happens on its own without much effort on our part, but staying on course is quite the opposite. It requires constant diligence.

3. Particular Means vs. 1

The particular means of security and sanctification is the Message of the Gospel; God’s saving revelation culminating in Christ. People are looking for power from God to change their lives and assure them of salvation. Yet many Christians seem intent on using every method except the one highlighted for us all through the Bible: diligent hearing, understanding and obeying of the Word of God. We must remember and organize our thoughts around the Bible’s message every day of our lives (**John 8:31–32, 17:17; Rom. 12:2**).

4. Specific Reasons vv. 2-4

Vv. 2-4 make clear why the warning and exhortation of vs.1 is to be taken so seriously.

First, there is an argument from the lesser to the greater (**Heb. 2:2–3a**).

The old covenant had to be taken seriously, even though it was mediated by angels and is subordinate to the new covenant. If that is true of the old covenant, which is the lesser revelation and lesser salvation, the writer then asks, How shall we escape if we neglect the greater salvation of the new covenant?

These words should dispel the common idea that the new covenant is an easier law than the old covenant. Jesus' presentation of the law of Moses serves to bring its every nuance and spiritual demand into view (**Matt. 5:21–22; 17**).

It is easy to wash your hands but washing your heart of anger, malice, and self-interest is another matter altogether. Therefore, the law's condemnation—always intended to drive sinners to God's grace in the gospel—is more intense in the light of Christ's coming. Therefore it is most urgent for us to attend to and receive and hold fast the revelation that has come to us in Jesus Christ.

Secondly, the revelation in Christ is positively commended (Heb 2:3b-4).

The gospel has come to us from the Lord himself. It was also attested to in the ministry of the apostles (**Heb. 2:4b**). Because of what God did in the apostolic age, we do not need signs and wonders today to prove the gospel.

5. Miracles Today

“We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard,” the writer of Hebrews exhorts, “lest we drift away from it.” These words are as relevant today as when first written. We should fear to be separated from the anchor of God's Word, or to have any other hand on the wheel of our lives than the Captain of our salvation, who speaks in the Bible. To drift away is ultimately to invite the judgment God will inflict on those who neglect his saving message in Jesus Christ.

The writer of Hebrews says God attested to the gospel in the apostolic age by signs and wonders and miracles. We are not to go seeking after signs and wonders, but there is a miracle that happens today in the lives of those who hold fast to the message of God's Word. It is the miracle of a changed life; a changed mind and a changed heart, changed attitudes and changed behaviors; changed into the likeness of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

This is the wonder by which God commends his Word to the world today; Christian people enlightened in truth, purified in holiness, settled in peace, and energized in love. This is the life eternal that begins today in the lives of those who believe.

As God does this in you, through his Word, he will use the miracle of your life to commend his message in Christ to others.