

AN EARNEST ADMONITION

TEXT: HEBREWS 2:1-4

Introduction:

1. The word “therefore” (2:1) indicates that this is a continuation from chapter 1.
2. Matthew Henry said that “in this chapter the apostle makes some application of the doctrine laid down in the chapter foregoing concerning the excellency of the person of Christ, both by way of exhortation and argument (2:1-4), and enlarges further upon the pre-eminence of Christ above the angels (2:5-9).”
3. I mentioned in an earlier message that there are several warnings given in the epistle to the Hebrews (cf. Heb. 3:7, 8; 6:4-6).
4. This is the first of the warnings (2:1).
5. 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.
6. This is one of the saddest things to behold – believers drifting away from the things of God.
7. We have noted that this is the theme of this epistle. Specifically, some of the Jewish believers were drifting back to the rituals of Judaism. This epistle emphasizes that the Gospel of Christ is better than Judaism.
8. The *Scofield Study Bible* says the theme is, “To confirm Jewish Christians by showing that Judaism had come to an end through the fulfillment by Christ of the whole purpose of the law; and the hortatory passages show that the writer had in view the danger ever present to Jewish professed believers of either lapsing back into Judaism, or of pausing short of true faith in Jesus Christ.”

I. THE WORD SPOKEN BY ANGELS (2:2)

II. THE WORD SPOKEN BY OUR LORD (2:3)

III. THE WORD SPOKEN BY THE APOSTLES (2:3, 4)

I. THE WORD SPOKEN BY ANGELS (2:2)

1. The “word spoken by angels” was the Law of God. Acts 7:53 says the Israelites “received the law by the disposition of angels,” but did not keep it.
2. Galatians 3:19 says the law was “ordained by angels.”
3. The law demanded complete obedience, “and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward” (Heb. 2:2).

4. The death penalty was attached to every transgression – stealing, profaning the Sabbath day (e.g., the man found gathering sticks in Numbers 15:32), disobeying parents, adultery, etc.
5. Ezekiel 18:4 and 18:20 says, “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”
6. Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death.”
7. “A just recompence of reward” (Heb. 2:2) means eternal punishment in hell.
8. Sometimes sinners seem to escape God’s retribution in this world, but they don’t. Psalm 9:17 says, “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”
9. Then, the author of this epistle (probably the apostle Paul), adds, “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” (2:3a).
10. If when Israel was under the law, when God’s revelation 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?
11. Why is salvation “so great”?
12. It is incomparable. There is nothing to compare it to.
13. All other religions teach vague notions about the afterlife and salvation, but the Bible is crystal clear (John 3:16).
14. It is great because of the enormity of man’s sin. Man is a wicked rebel – capable of committing the most horrible and disgusting sins.
15. Only the perfect, sinless Son of God could pay the penalty for our sin by dying on the cross Substitute.
16. It is great because our Saviour is great. Titus 2:13 says He is “the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

II. THE WORD SPOKEN BY OUR LORD (2:3; cf. 1:2)

1. John 1:17 says, “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”
2. Our Lord clarified and revitalized the Law of God. He said, “Ye have heard that it was said of them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Matt. 5:21, 22).
3. Our Lord said, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:27, 28).

4. The chief priests and Pharisees sent the temple officers out to arrest Jesus. John 7:44 says, “And some of them would have taken him; but no man laid hands on him.”
5. The chief priests and Pharisees then asked the officers, “Why have ye not brought him?” and the officers answered, “Never man spake like this man” (John 7:45, 46).
6. 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.

III. THE WORD SPOKEN BY THE APOSTLES (2:3, 4)

1. “Them that heard him” (Heb. 2:3b) refers to the apostles.
2. In II Peter 1:16, Peter says, “we...were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (cf. I John 1:1-3).
3. 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).
4. This indicates that the “sign gifts” were of a temporary nature. That is why the apostle Paul says in I Corinthians 13:8, “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”
5. Furthermore, tongues as practiced in the apostolic church is vastly different than the gibberish spoken today in Pentecostal and charismatic churches (cf. I Cor. 14:27, 28, 33-35, 40).
6. The Holy Spirit distributed spiritual gifts “according to his own will” (Heb. 2:4; cf. I Cor. 12:11).
7. This reminds us that the Holy Spirit is a Person. He has a “will.”
8. Hebrews 2:4 was written over 30 years after our Lord gave the Great Commission (cf. Mark 16:15-18).
9. Our Lord said, “And these signs shall follow them that believe...” (Mark 16:17).

CONCLUSION:

1. In his commentary on the epistle to the Hebrews, William Newell gives an interesting illustration.
2. He was driving from Buffalo to Toronto, and while passing by Niagara Falls, he saw a beautiful large yacht lodged upon the brink of the falls.
3. He got out of his car and asked a guard, “How came that yacht there?”

4. The guard explained that a group of men were sailing down the Niagara River right below Buffalo, when they decided to go ashore for some refreshments.
5. However, when they came back they discovered the boat was gone. The worker responsible for tying it up had done so hastily and carelessly. He did not take into consideration the force of the current.
6. William Newell then asked the guard, "Can the yacht be recovered?"
7. The guard replied, "No machinery known to man could rescue that vessel."
8. It is easy to see his point. Many Christians are like that careless worker. They do not realize that the strong current of the world, the flesh, and the devil can easily dislodge them, and they are in grave danger of drifting far from God.