



“The Subtle Sin of Neglect”

Hebrews 2:1-8

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“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, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts[a] of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will.”

The timeless truth of this passage is to exhort believers to pay careful attention to the teachings of Christ lest they drift away from the true faith, for to neglect the gospel is to neglect Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord, which is the unpardonable sin.

- God’s gift of salvation is not connected to, much less, in any way, dependent upon, the rules, regulations, and man-made traditions of any religious organization.

- The gospel is from God the Father, authenticated by God the Son through His life, death, burial, and resurrection, and then further validated by the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Therefore, to neglect the gospel is to deny one's need for a Savior, which, if not confessed and repented of before one's physical death, will lead that unbeliever to an eternity in hell.

Hell is full of people who were not actively opposed to the God, or to His Son as the God-sent Savior. However, they drifted into eternal damnation by their neglect of the gospel.

- The writer of Hebrews identified these types of people as:
 - Those who know the gospel truth, because they have heard it all of their lives.
 - Those who believe the gospel truth, for they have seen the powerful effects of the gospel upon those who have fully embraced it.
 - Those who are well aware of their need for the gospel, for the evidence of their sin nature is ever before them.
 - Those who have not fully surrendered their lives unto the Lordship of Christ.
- Therefore, they are running the risk of drifting past the call of God upon their lives. They are drifting down the road to ruin and will enter into that Godless eternity called hell.

While we do not know the author of the Book of Hebrews, we do know that it was written to three different Jewish groups.

- Those Jews who had not heard the gospel, or who had heard it but didn't believe it. These were not Christians – they were Jews who practiced Judaism.
- Those Jews who had heard the gospel, believed the gospel, and received Jesus Christ as their Messiah, but who were still participating in the rituals of the religion of Judaism.
- Those Jews who had heard the gospel and believed it, at least intellectually, but who had not fully committed their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord.

According to the Cultural Research Center of Arizona University, 40% of those who claim to be evangelical believers are not born again; 45% of them hold core beliefs that differ from established biblical doctrines.

- They have embraced a form of religion designed by their church and/or denomination, but they do not have a personal relationship with God through unconditional surrender to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Therefore, while they may be religious, without God's gift of salvation, through their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord, they are also eternally lost.

The goal of the writer of this letter to the Hebrews was to convince his readers that Jesus Christ was a better mediator than any character in the Old Testament, and therefore, His covenant with God, on man's behalf, was better than theirs.

- God's gift of salvation was not about any form of religion.
- Salvation is about Christ and Christ alone, for He alone has the power to forgive us of our sins, and, therefore, the only One who is worthy of our worship and praise.
- His assignment was to awaken these reluctant Jews to realize, by their continual neglect of the gospel, that they were, in fact, neglecting the deity of Jesus Christ.

The writer gave three reasons why no one should neglect God's great offer for such a great salvation.

1. The Character of Christ – Hebrews 2:1 – *“Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest we drift away.”*

- The word “**therefore**,” means that his letter was based upon what he had already written about Jesus in the 1st chapter.
- The man who died on Calvary's Hill to pay the debt of our sin was the very Son of God, the One who is now seated at the right hand of God the Father, having finished the redemptive work the Father had sent Him to do.
- To “**give the more earnest heed**” means to pay attention to what we are taught about the Lord Jesus; to let the truth about Him sink deep into our souls and change the way we think, feel, and live. The most dangerous thing a person can do is to hear the Word of God but not take it in as the bread of life.

2. The Certainty of Judgment – Hebrews 2:2-3 – *“For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 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?”*

- The Old Covenant was the revelation of the law of God, which was communicated to Moses by angels, and any breach of that Old Testament law, or any level of disobedience to it, was followed by a strict, severe, and just punishment.
- Under the Old Covenant, the Jews had to not only keep the Ten Commandments, but the Jewish Religious Leaders had added 613 additional laws, with the punishment for violating those laws already written in the books.
- Under the New Covenant, there is only one: **To believe in Jesus Christ and to receive Him as your Savior and Lord.**
- In Romans 8:1, the Apostle Paul said, *“If any man be in Christ, there is no... what? Condemnation! No judgment, for on that cross where Jesus died, the wrath of God was satisfied.*

3. The Confirmation of God – Hebrews 2:3-4 – “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, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”

- In John 5:39-40, Jesus said this, *“Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me, and you will not come to me, that you might have life.”*
- Jesus had a passionate concern that his hearers respond to the gospel, for He knew the danger of the sin of neglect.
- In the Parable of the Sower (or Soils) found in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8, Jesus (The Sower) explained how different people received the (Seed), the “Word of God.”
- The four types of soil represent the spiritual condition of the hearers, i.e., their receptiveness to the seed of the gospel.
 - **The Path (Hard Heart):** Someone who hears the word but does not understand it, allowing the evil one to take it away.
 - **Rocky Ground (Shallow Heart):** Someone who receives the word with joy but has no root; they fall away when trouble or persecution arises.
 - **Thorns (Crowded Heart):** Someone who hears the word, but the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.
 - **Good Soil (Receptive Heart):** Someone who hears, understands, and retains the word, producing a lasting crop (a transformed life).

