

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

PART I

STUDY NUMBER TWO - Hebrews 2:1-9

INTRODUCTION:

Stephen R. Covey in his book, First Things First wrote,

As one wise man observed, "The greatest battles we fight are in the silent chambers of our own souls."

We need to ask ourselves:

"Am I willing to be a person of total integrity?
Am I willing to apologize when I make mistakes,
to love unconditionally, to value someone else's
happiness, as much as I do my own?" p. 69

We choose--either to live our lives
or to let others live them for us.

By making and keeping promises to ourselves
and to others, little by little we increase our
strength, until our ability to act
is more powerful, than any of the forces
that act upon us.

p. 70 (First Things First by Stephen R. Covey,
A. Roger Merrill, & Rebecca R. Merrill)

One of the basic principles of life is that we live every day in a segmented package.

And if you live each day in that kind of a way, you're life will be greatly enriched!

There are three basic assignments to everybody who answers the alarm in the morning and wakes up.

These assignments can not be done on one day, neglected the next and then done the next, and then neglected the next for you to receive the maximum fulfillment out of life.

If you have done these three things today, you are sitting here today with a joy that is yours, because you were faithful.

God designed our bodies to have some kind of stress put upon them, in a physical way, that we might be a good steward of that body, and that it might operate as well, and function as long as it possibly can.

So there is a physical assignment,
that we do something physically,
whether it is walking, running, jogging,
playing tennis, doing something physically
for our bodies.

Secondly, you have an emotional assignment.
That emotional assignment means that you give
your love that day to someone else.

To your precious wife and children or it might be
a word of encouragement to somebody at the office.

It might be someone that is really
having a hard time and you cry with them,
you hurt with them, you express
some kind of feelings toward them,
but emotionally you are spending yourself.

Now if you keep that stuff bottled up inside,
it's going to dry up and it's never
going to bless anybody else.

So we are designed to give out physically,
we are designed to give out emotionally and
we are designed to take in spiritually.

You know that you are happy
and fulfilled today if you started the day
with some time with Him.

Now, what you did yesterday
does not count for today, and
what you did today,
does not count for tomorrow.

Someone has said,

"Life by the inch is a cinch.
Life by the yard is hard."

When you try to pack it all together
and make up for lost time, all that does is
increase stress and then you are really
not happy.

If you will live life a day at a time, and
you live it in these three segmented packages,
you are going to start to really
enjoy the fulfillment and the abundance
that the Lord meant for you to have.

Now having said that, we are dealing
in the book of Hebrews with some people,
who have faced some severe adversity.

**They have become Christians,
they are born again believers,
they have made a commitment to Christ,
and basically they are from a Jewish background.**

**That's why the book of Hebrews
talks about the Lamb of God,
talks about the priesthood,
talks about sacrifice,
talks about the Law,
talks about Moses,
talks about angels, and
talks about a lot of stuff in the Old Testament.**

**Now as we look at this, the writer of the book
of Hebrews says, hey look you can't go back,
there is no way for you to go back,
and besides if you went back,
you are going back to something that is inferior
to the superiority of Christ.**

**Last time in Chapter 1 verses 2-3
we saw, seven great statements of Christ.**

**The heir of all things
Creator
The radiance
The very nature of God
He handles the power of God
The priest who makes purification for sin**

He is seated at the right hand of God the Father
interceding for us, because the work
on the cross is finished.

In a verse and a half, we had all that.

And then we saw Him
not only as the final prophet who came to be
the last message, that God gives to man,
but he is also superior to angels.

A lot of times this writer,
will throw a red light
on the dashboard, just to get
your attention, and there are going to be
five red lights on the dashboard
before the book is done.

In these first four verses they are going to
show you a warning, a red light comes on
the dashboard, so we have to stop, and pull over
to the side of the freeway and pay attention.

v. 1 For this reason we must be paying much closer
attention to things which we have heard, so that we
do not drift away from them.

Christ is the prophet
Christ is the priest
Christ is the king

“For this reason” since he is superior to the angels, and He is the last prophet and superior to the prophets, we need to be “paying very close attention” to these things – why? “so that we do not drift away from them.” That is the only place in the New Testament that word occurs, that word DRIFT.

**It is like here is the divine truth,
and here you come with the tide
in your boat with no motor,
and you are just being swept past
your opportunities of life.**

**It’s like if you are drifting today,
you could drift right past this bible study,
and God would want to stop you,
and make you make a decision,
and make some credible choices,
that could be life changing,
but if you don’t do
something about it,
you can just keep on drifting
and you’ll just go right on by.**

It’s a nautical term.

Remember when Jesus gives those letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2 and 3.

He starts with the church at Ephesus
and what does He say to them?

Revelation 2:4

But I have this against you, that you have left
your first love.

In other words,
you have gotten lukewarm,
you have gotten callused and you have
drifted away, from that first dynamic love
that you had for me,
and your love
has gone cold.

Now, what he wanted them to be
was anchored here, but they had drifted away
in a lethargic indifference.

It's like your boat is in the rough seas,
and the rough seas have pulled your anchor up
off the bottom, and now you are being
swept along, by the tide as you go.

Now that's easy to do, isn't it?

Have you had any time this week,
for physical fitness?

**Have you had any emotional energy
that you have given to yourself
or to anybody else?**

**And on top of that have you had some
spiritual time or are you just spent?**

**The picture is, the current is so strong
that it's pulling you along, and you are drifting
past opportunities, that's the image.**

The BIG QUESTION is:

ARE YOU DRIFTING?

**Drifting is dangerous to the SHIP.
It is dangerous to the BUSINESSPERSON.
It is dangerous to the STUDENT.**

DRIFTING IS DANGEROUS,

DOOM IS PENDING,

AND DISASTER IS CERTAIN.

Let me share an example.

Captain Joseph Hazelwood was not unlike most sea captains of old in his love of brew. It had cost him his driver's license when he was found guilty of driving while intoxicated. But he still retained his license to command a ship--a big ship.

On March 24, 1989, under Capt. Hazelwood's command, the Exxon oil tanker Valdez impaled itself on a reef in Prince William Sound, Alaska, ripping a hole in the ship fifteen feet wide. Ten million gallons of Alaskan crude oil gushed out and covered some 2,500 square miles of the ocean.

That infamous oil spill exhausted over a billion dollars and thousands of men and women--scrubbing and swabbing rocks and birds on oil-drenched beaches--in a massive cleanup effort. The environment and wildlife in the area are still recovering. It has been impossible to contain the deadly effects of that man-made disaster.

p. 140

Once again verse 1

v. 1 For this reason we must be paying much closer attention to things which we have heard, so that we do not drift away from them.

And we lose the opportunities that God meant for us.

I think one of the most revealing things
is going to be, when we get to heaven,
and see all the blessings we missed,

because we drifted and
because we violated principles of life,
where God meant blessing, and we lost it,
because we were not properly oriented
to the life, He had for us.

v. 2 For if the word spoken through angels was
valid, and every transgression and disobedience
received a just penalty,

Here the apostle gives us the REASON
why we must pay closer attention
to what we have heard.

There are 2 REASONS stated in the verse:

REASON #1

"IF THE WORD SPOKEN THROUGH ANGELS
WAS VALID"
(and it was)

Did you ever hear an angel speak anything,
that didn't happen?

When they came to Sodom and Gomorrah and said this is what is going to happen, it happened in Sodom and Gomorrah.

When they came down and announced that Jesus Christ the Savior was born, he did come.

The words spoken through angels was valid.

REASON #2

"IF EVERY TRANSGRESSION AND DISOBEDIENCE RECEIVED A JUST PENALTY" (and they did)

When somebody broke the law what happened? If it meant physical death, they were stoned to death.

It was like the law says this, and you do that, you pay the price.

Since these 2 STATEMENTS ARE TRUE, He can then raise the obvious question of verse 3, in applying the truth.

Here the WRITER is speaking of the GIVING OF THE LAW.

v. 3 how shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation, which was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was guaranteed to us by those who heard,

First, notice the word **WE**.
“How shall WE escape?”

The writer under divine inspiration chooses his words carefully.

“how shall we escape if we disregard (or neglect this) great salvation.”

You can't disregard and you can't neglect something, unless you own it.

This is a statement to Christians.

How do we neglect and how do we disregard this great salvation, and what are the consequences for doing it?

Let's talk about the consequences first.
Let's say that we are disregarding our salvation, we have a blasé attitude toward our salvation in Christ right now.

How am I going to pay, a price for that?

You are not going to hell, because God
is not an Indian giver, it doesn't depend
on your performance, it is a relationship
in the first place.

When you are born again you become
a son and daughter of God, and
you are never disowned,
you are His child.

So it has to mean something else.

It means that when,
“we disregard (or neglect this) great salvation.”
you are going to be terribly embarrassed,
when you get out there at the judgment seat
of Christ.

Romans 14:12

“So then each one of us shall give an account
of himself to God.”

There is accountability structured into our lives
as believers, that we are
held accountable for everything
that happens, from the day of our new birth
until the day of our death or
the rapture of the church.

Isaiah 1:18

Come now and let us reason together though your sins be a scarlet, they shall be as white as snow though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.

You get a brand new clean slate at the moment you receive Christ and that's the last clean slate you are going to get.

From that very day of your birth, until the day of your death, you will have a computer print out, that you will face at the judgment seat of Christ.

So what the writer is saying, is "how shall we escape if we disregard so great a salvation."

There are consequences for living a, a carnal drifting life.

Listen to this:

According to a Barna poll, 62% of the general U.S. population believes that it doesn't matter what specific beliefs a person subscribes to since "all faiths teach similar lessons about life." Smaller percentages of respondents who go to church (53%) and those who consider themselves "born again" (43%) agreed. The idea that all good people will go to heaven whether they believe in Jesus or not was

accepted by 44% of the respondents, including 32% of the born-again and 48% of the church attenders.

--National & International Religion Report,
Apr 5, 1993 (From InfoSearch 3.5)

How is it that we "neglect so great a salvation"?
There are several REASONS:

1. We cease to give attention and serious-mindedness to the things of God; that is:

our Bible reading,
prayer,
fellowship with the Lord.

2. We get absorbed with earthly and selfish interests.

3. An increased hardness of heart toward Christ and His sacrifice and of the love of God who gave Him.

4. An occupation with the affairs and news of this world, rather than of the world to come.

5. The loss of God-consciousness.

6. A putting away of the thought of a judgment to come, when we will be held accountable.

**7. Living only for the present
without contemplating eternity.**

Ray Stedman says:

. . . it is simply a question. It is addressed both to the Christian and to the non-Christian. To the non-Christian it says, Where are you going to go? How will you get out of God's universe? How can you escape the inevitable? Indeed, why seek to avoid that which is unavoidable: a confrontation with the One who is behind all things? How can you escape, and why attempt to do so? Especially when His purpose is not to curse but to bless? How can you find deliverance by any other route, by any other path, or by any other channel, if it does not involve the One who is behind all things?

To the Christian, the writer is saying it is not enough that we know Jesus Christ: We must use the resources we have in Him.

We can lose so much, even knowing Him, unless there is a day-by-day walk with Him. We lose peace and freedom and joy and achievement. We are subjected to temptation, frustration, bewilderment, bafflement and barrenness without Him. And if we do not go on as Christians, if we do not grow, a serious question is raised: Have we ever really begun the Christian life?

p. 15

It's awfully easy to neglect something that is important.

We want to major in our lives, on the things which are easy.

**For example, which would you choose?
Between:**

EAT or EXERCISE

PLAY or PRAY

RELAX or READ

WATCH T.V. or WORSHIP.

Listen to what Dr. Tony Evans says,

**“Living a carnal life is like the law of gravity:
What goes up, must come down.**

**So when you persistently and knowingly live for
yourself rather than God, you can land hard on the
pavement of life.**

**In short, if you're a carnal Christian,
you risk severe judgment in time and eternity.
Carnality can result in divine discipline.”**

**(The Victorious Christian Life by Dr. Tony Evans)
p. 68**

v. 3 "HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE IF WE DISREGARD SO GREAT A SALVATION, WHICH WAS AT THE FIRST SPOKEN THROUGH THE LORD, IT WAS GUARANTEED TO US BY THOSE WHO HEARD."

This great salvation was at first spoken through the Lord.

And then it was guaranteed to us by those who heard.

v. 4 God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and various works of power and by distribution of the Holy Spirit according to His own will?

God is verifying their message in ministry by 4 THINGS:

1.BY SIGNS

2.BY WONDERS

3.BY VARIOUS WORKS OF POWER

4.BY DISTRIBUTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT according to His own will.

Now the writer returns to his argument, with regard to the ANGELS, that he was speaking about in chapter 1.

v. 5 For He did not subject to angels the inhabited earth which was coming, concerning which we are speaking.

Angels are meant to be servants, man is meant to rule and reign with Christ. So angels come back in it.
Read NIV, CEV, MSG!

***When you get to verse 6 down to verse 8, this is a quotation from Psalm 8 to show you again that man is far short of what God intended him, but man is superior to angels.

In relationship to angels, God's plan & program for man is far superior. Read complete quote! V.6-8

v. 6 But one testified somewhere, saying:
"What is man that you are remembering him? Or the son of man that you are concerned about Him?"

QUESTION #1 in the passage was:

**"How shall we escape if we disregard
so great a salvation?"**

QUESTION #2:

**"WHAT IS MAN THAT YOU ARE
REMEMBERING HIM?"**

QUESTION #3:

**"OR THE SON OF MAN THAT YOU ARE
CONCERNED ABOUT HIM?"**

Verses 6-8 are a quote from Psalm 8:4-6.

Who is man anyway?

**Man is just a small creature on one
of the minor planets.**

We are very small in God's universe.

**The psalmist is so overwhelmed
by what the Lord, the Creator,
has brought into existence.**

In Psalm 8:3, we read:

**When I consider Your heavens,
the work of Your fingers,
the moon and the stars
which You have ordained.**

**How can a God of this great creation—
be mindful of man?**

**The destiny of man will be realized only through
the Son's identification with men.**

**v. 7 You made Him for a short time lower than the
angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and
appointed him over the works of your hands**

**Whereas in verse 6 we have the FRAILITY OF MAN,
in verse 7 we have the DIGNITY OF MAN.**

**v. 8 all things you put in subjection under his feet."
For in that He put all things in subjection under
him, He left nothing that is not made subject to him.
But now we are not yet seeing all things subjected to
him.**

**At the time of creation God gave man
authority over the earth.**

**Man was given sovereign control over this sphere.
The right to exercise this dominion was lost**

in the fall, but the title to this dominion
was never surrendered.

Christ has identified Himself with man,
so as to assume not only the title,
but also the right, to rule and reign
over the earth.

Angels were never given the right
to have dominion over the earth.

Since Christ appropriated humanity,
He has title to the sovereignty.

This is something that puts Him
over the angels.

v. 9 But we are seeing Jesus who for a short time
has been made lower than the angels because of the
suffering of death, having been crowned with glory
and honor, in order that by the grace of God He
might taste death for every one.

In verse 8,

"we are not yet seeing all things subjected to him."

In verse 9,

"WE ARE SEEING JESUS."

Back in verse 7 the psalmist said,

"You made man for a short time
lower than the angels."

And now in verse 9 we see the writer
speaking of Jesus***,

**"FOR A SHORT TIME HAS BEEN MADE LOWER
THAN THE ANGELS."**

J. Vernon McGee says:

Now we have the very heart of this chapter-- . . .

"But we see Jesus." Because of what the Lord Jesus
has done, we behold Him.

We see Jesus.

This word see does not mean a casual look.

The word means that we look upon Him with
understanding.

We recognize that in Him is something that our little
minds do not grasp.

pp. 516-17

Ray Stedman says:

“But, the writer of Hebrews says, we see Jesus!

This is man's one hope.

With the eye of faith we see Jesus already crowned

and reigning over the universe, the man Jesus fulfilling man's lost destiny.

In the last book of the Bible there is a scene where John beholds the One seated upon the throne of the universe while ten thousand times ten thousands and thousands of angels are crying out in unending, undying worship before the throne.

The call goes out to find one who is able to open the little book with seven seals which is the title deed to earth, the right to run the earth.”

A search is made through the length and breadth of human history for someone wise enough, strong enough, and compassionate enough to open the seals, but no one can be found.

John says, I wept much that no one was found worthy to open the scroll (Rev. 5:4).

But the elder said, Weep not; lo, the Lion of the tribe of Judah . . . has conquered, so that he can open the scroll (Rev. 5:5).

And when John turned to see the Lion, to his amazement he saw a Lamb, a Lamb with blood staining its neck, a Lamb that had been slain. As he watched, the Lamb stepped up to the throne and took the little book and all heaven broke into acclaim.

Here at last was found One wise enough, strong enough and compassionate enough to solve the problems of man and to own the title deed of earth.

pp. 22-23

Who is he?

He is God come in the human flesh.

We learned that in chapter 1

He paid the debt He did not owe

For those who owed but could not pay.

**The motivation of this act of incarnation
is seen in the phrase:**

"THE GRACE OF GOD."

His reason for coming is in the last phrase:

"HE MIGHT TASTE DEATH FOR EVERY ONE."

REMEMBRANCE DAY

On one occasion, President Harry Truman was asked to speak at a fund-raising project to help the children of a White House guard who was slain in the line of duty. With great feeling he said, "You can't image how a man feels when someone else dies for him."

His reason for coming is in the last phrase:

"HE MIGHT TASTE DEATH FOR EVERY ONE."

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

Lessons

LESSON #1: The passage opens with an exhortation, "We must be paying much closer attention to the things which we have heard" (Heb. 2:1).

LESSON #2: We have a tendency to drift when we are not focused on the divine purpose.

LESSON #3: "A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man" (Prov. 6:10, 11).

LESSON #4: There is no way to escape the consequences of disregard for so great a salvation.

LESSON #5: We disregard our great salvation when we live in the flesh rather than in the Spirit, when we live for self rather than being a servant.

LESSON #6: God bore witness to this great salvation by signs, wonders, various works of power and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

LESSON #7: Angels were created to minister, and man was created to rule.

LESSON #8: The destiny of man will be realized only through the Son's identification with men.

LESSON #9: Man lost his right to rule by sin in the garden, and Jesus regained it by His death on Calvary's cross.

LESSON #10: It was the grace of God that allowed Jesus Christ to taste death for everyone.

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v. 6 But one testified somewhere, saying: "What is man that you are remembering him? Or the son of man that you are concerned about Him?"

v. 7 You made Him for a short time lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honor, and appointed him over the works of your hands

v. 8 all things you put in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all things in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not made subject to him. But now we are not yet seeing all things subjected to him.

v. 9 But we are seeing Jesus who for a short time has been made lower than the angels because of the suffering of death, having been crowned with glory and honor, in order that by the grace of God He might taste death for every one.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. Read Hebrews 2:1-9 and summarize in your own words what Paul is saying in this section.**
- 2. State in your own words the warning that is sounded in verse 1.**
- 3. Do you think we will escape divine judgment if we disregard salvation in Christ?**
- 4. How did God bear witness, according to verse 4?**
- 5. What is said about angels in verse 5?**
- 6. To whom is Paul referring in verse 7?**
- 7. How much was put in subjection to Christ, according to verse 8?**
- 8. Describe the mission of Jesus, according to verse 9.**
- 9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?**
- 10. What lesson have you learned from this study?**

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

LESSON #1: The passage opens with an exhortation, "We must be paying much closer attention to the things which we have heard."

LESSON #2: We have a tendency to drift when we are not focused on the divine purpose.

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