

3. Thirdly, SPIRITUALLY the same thing is true.

Jesus says in Luke 9:23:

If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

The process of an ever-deepening relationship with our Lord Jesus involves:

A FEEDING DAILY UPON HIS WORD,

COMMUNION WITH HIM IN PRAYER,

SEEKING HIS FACE.

Philippians 3:12-14

Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies in front, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Lightfoot points out:

The theme of chapter 1 is that Christ is superior to the angels. His power is great. His name is unrivaled. His office and function are eternal. Therefore, the author says, we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard. Here is what is usually termed the author's first digression from the main argument. Yet, strictly speaking, this is not a digression but the climax and necessary conclusion to the foregoing. Since God has spoken through the Son, men must pay attention to that message.

M. R. DeHaan says:

The Book of Hebrews was written to born-again believers who are admonished not to stop short of God's best in a life of holiness, service and fruit bearing. He has provided everything for our growth in grace and expects us to develop into spiritual maturity. He Himself has made adequate provision whereby this may be attained, for Christ is at the right hand of God as our pleading High Priest, ever living to intercede for us. There is no excuse for any Christian remaining a spiritual babe, or living a defeated life, or being unfruitful because of His provision.

p. 23

Wiersbe points out:

This is the first of the five admonitions found in Hebrews. Their purpose is to encourage all readers to pay attention to God's Word and obey it.

p. 25

Black says:

The logical corollary of the Son's superiority over the angels is that the Son's message has greater authority.

p. 51

Westcott sets the stage for these verses by saying:

After establishing the superior dignity of the Son in comparison with that of angels, the writer of the Epistle pauses for a moment to enforce the practical consequences which follow from the truth before he sets forth the work of the Son for humanity. It is obvious that a revelation given through such a Mediator carries with it more solemn obligations on those who receive it and heavier penalties for neglect than a revelation made through angelic ministry.

p. 36

Lane says:

The temptation was to disregard the seriousness of Christian commitment, with the result that some were in danger of "drifting off course." Their interest in the Christian message had significantly slackened. Although the source of distraction is not specified at this point, the positive role assigned to angels and the appeal to the normative character of the Mosaic law in v 2 tend to suggest that the Christians addressed continued to maintain emotional and intellectual ties with the Jewish community. They needed to appreciate the solemn import of the message of salvation that they had received and to firm up their response to it.
p. 36

J. Vernon McGee says:

After seeing the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ in chapter 1, we come to the humiliation of Christ in chapter 2.
p. 513

v. 1 For this reason we must be paying much closer attention to things which we have heard, lest we should drift away from them.

Because of the message given in verses 4-14 of chapter 1 of the superiority of Christ to angels, it is necessary to give more earnest heed.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The trust he had just enunciated has important implications. The "therefore" shows that this admonition arose directly from the preceding material. Since the Son is so supremely great and is destined for final triumph over His enemies, the readers would do well to pay more careful attention to these realities.

2 Timothy 1:13

Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

Wiersbe says:

This is the first of five solemn admonitions to believers to pay attention to what God says in His word. During Old Testament times, God dealt with those who disobeyed His Word. In these last days, we have a greater obligation to obey because we have the complete Scriptures and the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ. Are you serious about what God says to you?

p. 813

John MacArthur says:

One writer, building on Shakespeare, put it this way, "There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at its ebb, leads to victory; neglected, the shores of time are strewn with the wreckage."

p. 44

Richards says:

This chapter begins with a warning. It's a warning about neglecting and losing sight of what the writer is going to tell us about salvation. The first verse is important, and the key expressions pay careful attention and drift away are both nautical terms. We could accurately translate it, "We must eagerly anchor ourselves to the truths we've been taught, or we're likely to drift away from our moorings."

p. 19

Barclay says:

"Therefore, we must the more eagerly anchor our lives to the things that we have been taught, lest the ship of life drift past the harbour and be wrecked."

There is a vivid picture there--the picture of a ship drifting to destruction because the pilot sleeps while the insidious current sweeps the ship past the harbour until it is wrecked. For most of us the threat of life is not so much that we should plunge into disaster, but that we should drift into sin.

p. 13

Pink says:

In one sense the first four verses of chapter 2 form a parenthesis, inasmuch as they interrupt the apostle's discussion of Christ's relation to angels, which is resumed in v. 5 and amplified in v. 9.
p. 82

". . . 'Since Jesus Christ is as much better than the angels, as He hath received by inheritance a more excellent name than they--since He is both essentially and officially inconceivably superior to these heavenly messengers, His message has paramount claims on our attention, belief, and obedience'," (Dr. J. Brown).
p. 83

Draper says:

The first four verses of Hebrews 2 are inserted as a parenthesis in the writer's presentation. They are an interjection, an exhortation of warning against a wasted life of neglect and indifference.
p. 38

"FOR THIS REASON WE MUST BE PAYING MUCH CLOSER ATTENTION TO THINGS WHICH WE HAVE HEARD."

Draper says:

The word "ought" is in the imperative mood. As such, it is translated "must" thirteen times in narrative about the life of Christ. It was the first thing Jesus said when he began his public statements. As a young lad, he was questioned about being in the temple reasoning with the scholars. He replied, "I must be about my Father's business" (Luke 2:49). It is a word that was used throughout his ministry. "I must work the works of him that sent me" (John 9:4). "I must preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 4:43). He "must needs go through Samaria" (John 4:4). It is a word that is used in connection with his suffering and death. He told the disciples how the Son of man must suffer (Luke 9:22). The New Testament also relates this word to his resurrection: "He must rise again from the dead" (John 20:9).

This term is a strong term that removes any options about duties to be performed. It is an ethical thing that rises from within and compels action rather than a yielding to some external force or pressure. I have no other choice. I must do it. This strong word leaves no alternative, there are no other options, there is a duty that must be performed.
p. 39

Ephesians 4:14

As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming;

James 1:5-8

But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Revelation 2:4

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

"FOR THIS REASON WE MUST BE PAYING MUCH CLOSER ATTENTION TO THINGS WHICH WE HAVE HEARD, LEST WE SHOULD DRIFT AWAY FROM THEM."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The word for "drift away" is a word that occurs only here in the New Testament. The audience to whom the author is writing is marked by immaturity and sluggishness.

The revelation is anchored. It is we who are drifting.

1 Timothy 1:19

Keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

Hughes points out:

Some in the church were also in danger of being blown away from their moorings and drifting away from the truth of Christ and back into "the Dead Sea of Judaism."

p. 47

The vivid warning here uses nautical, sailing language, suggesting the image of a ship whose anchor has broken loose from the ocean floor and is dangerously drifting away.

I have experienced this firsthand while fishing the tidal inlets of the California coast, when winds or surging tides have imperceptibly slipped the anchor from the seabed so that it hung suspended, and I, intent on my fishing, unknowingly moved several hundred yards and almost foundered on the rocks!

Such dangerous drifting is not intentional, but comes rather from inattention and carelessness--which was precisely the problem with the pressured little church. They had become careless about their moorings in Christ. At first, in calm waters, that was not noticeable. But as the storms of opposition rose, some of them were drifting farther and farther away from Christ toward the shoals of shipwreck in their old world of Judaism.

p. 48

Wiersbe says:

"Lest . . . we should let them slip" (2:1) might better be translated "lest we drift away from them." Later (6:19), the writer uses the illustration of an anchor to show how confident we can be in the promises of God. More spiritual problems are caused by neglect than perhaps by any other failure on our part. We neglect God's Word, prayer, worship with God's people (see 10:25), and other opportunities for spiritual growth, and as a result, we start to drift. The anchor does not move; we do.

p. 25

Page, in his book Bringing Many Sons into Glory, says:

The danger of drifting is everpresent and the spiritual loss involved is very great. Men do not usually jump off a precipice. They go down a toboggan slide. Suicide may be a slow process as well as a sudden act. The fall of a tree in time of storm is usually preceded by a process of decay covering many years. In spiritual matters indifference, inattention and neglect of scriptures and prayer create a perilous condition. A sudden crisis finds us unprepared and down we go. There is such a thing in legal parlance as criminal negligence. And it entails loss. Loss of liberty, of privilege and of respect. This is also true in the things of the spirit. How shall we escape loss? The loss of spiritual privilege and power, of present blessings and future reward if we neglect so great salvation.

How easy it is in life to get off schedule, to have botched-up priorities, to become tired and bored of the mundane sameness of everything.

The picture here is a picture of Christians being carried downstream past a landing place, thus missing the goal or destination.

It is used in secular literature to mean "slipping away," like a ring slipping off the finger or food going down the wrong pipe.

Since the author was obviously familiar with the Old Testament, it is possible that the idea reflected in Proverbs 3:21 might be the concept presented here:

My son, don't slip away but keep my counsel and intent.

Lane says:

If it is proper to recognize a nautical overtone in prosechein, "to hold a ship toward port, or to fasten the anchors to the sea bed," the image of a drifting ship, carried by the current beyond a fixed point, furnished a vivid metaphor for the failure to keep a firm grip on the truth through carelessness and lack of concern.

p. 37

Griffith Thomas says:

The readers are urged to give heed to things which they have heard, and to hold them fast with firmness. One of the greatest dangers of the Christian life is losing interest in what is familiar (8:9; Matt. 22:5). The entire Epistle lays stress on steadfastness at almost every stage, and this is one of the essential marks of the true, growing, deepening Christian life.

p. 29

Lenski says:

With prosechein we supply noun: "to keep holding the mind to something," "to give heed," here: "to continue to heed the things that we were made to hear" . . .

p. 63

Draper says:

We will drift away from where we ought to be unless we give diligence to the matter at hand.

p. 40

Not many people openly and flagrantly stand up and shake their fists in the face of God in defiance and rebellion. Most people slowly drift, little by little, bit by bit into the place where suddenly they are awakened to understand that they have broken someone's heart. They have gone too far, they have let things go too long, they have failed to stand for what they ought, and they have gotten away from God. That is what the writer is addressing.

pp. 40-41

The picture is a picture of drifting down the NIAGARA RIVER past a point of no return and plunging over the falls to one's demise.

Notice the text says that "WE MUST BE PAYING MUCH CLOSER ATTENTION TO THINGS WHICH WE HAVE HEARD."

James 1:22

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

James 4:17

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.

"THY SERVANT HEARETH"

Waiting to be interviewed for a job as a wireless operator, a group of applicants paid little attention to the sound of the dots and dashes which began coming over a loudspeaker. Suddenly one of them rushed into the employer's office. Soon he returned smiling. "I got it!" he exclaimed. "How did you get ahead of us?" they asked. "You might have been considered if you hadn't been so busy talking that you didn't hear the manager's coded message," he replied. "It said, 'The man I need must always be on the alert. The first one who interprets this and comes directly into my private office will be hired.'" The lesson is clear: Too many Christians are not really tuned in, so they do not hear God's directives.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

(The Essential Abraham Lincoln by John Gabriel Hunt)

The battle of freedom is to be fought out on principle. Slavery is a violation of the eternal right. We have temporized with it from the necessities of our condition; but as sure as God reigns and schoolchildren read, that black, foul lie can never be consecrated into God's hallowed truth!

(Abraham Lincoln in his Speech before the First Republican State Convention of Illinois, Bloomington, May 29, 1856)
p. 109

Now, I confess myself as belonging to that class in the country who contemplate slavery as a moral, social, and political evil, having due regard for its actual existence amongst us and the difficulties of getting rid of it in any satisfactory way, and to all the constitutional obligations which have been thrown about it--but, nevertheless, desire a policy that looks to the prevention of it as a wrong, and looks hopefully to the time when as a wrong it may come to an end.

(Abraham Lincoln in his Speech at the Fifth Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Galesburg, Illinois, October 7, 1858)
p. 160

That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles--right and wrong--throughout the world. They are the two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time, and will ever continue to struggle.

(Abraham Lincoln in his Speech at the Seventh Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Alton, Illinois, October 15, 1858)
p. 172

(The Tribute by Dennis Rainey with David Boehl)

I can guarantee that if you don't confront these attitudes, you are going to face many regrets. I am reminded of a country ballad that captures the urgency to honor our parents now:

Roses for Mama

I had two weeks of vacation coming.
I thought I'd spend it in Florida
with some old friends--party and date a few girls.

I called Mom in Chapel Hill, Tennessee.
She asked, "Are you coming by?"
"No, too busy a schedule--wouldn't have time.
I'll be by in a week or two."

Going through Georgia, I remember it was Mom's
birthday. I stopped in a flower shop to wire my mom some flowers.

A little boy was leaving, he was very sad.
"What's wrong, son?"
"I wanted to buy my mother some flowers--haven't
seen her in a year. I live with my grandma now.
Today is my mother's birthday and I promised her
some roses.
All I have is a dime. I wanted to buy five roses
because
that's how old I am and roses are her favorite
flower."
My heart was touched. "Charge them to me," I told
the lady.

I wired a dozen roses to my mother in Chapel Hill, Tennessee. I turned around and the boy was gone. The boy rushed back in and said, "Thank

you, Mister."

I got in my car and was driving on to Florida.
I saw the little boy again.
He was by a grave in a cemetery.

I stopped. The little boy said, "This is where my
mom stays.
She's been here a year. I talk to her all the time.
She thanks you for the flowers."

I had to leave.
I went back to the flower shop and asked,
"Have you sent that dozen roses yet?"
"Not yet," was the reply.
"Never mind. I'll take them back with me."

pp. 106-7

(Standing Tall by Steve Farrar)

In Colson's words, moral relativism means that:

In every decision a person stands alone. Because there are no moral absolutes, there are no value-associated reasons to make one decision over another. We may as readily choose to ignore a neighbor rather than help him, to cheat rather than be honest, to kill rather than let live . . . the outcome of our choices carries no moral weight.

No longer are we guided by virtue or tradition. Selfish passions breed freely. . . . Gone are any notions of duty to our fellow man and to the Creator. As a result, there is no straight edge of truth by which to measure one's life. Truth is pliable and relative; it can take whatever shape we want.

p. 39

SOUL WINNING--A MODERN PARABLE

On a dangerous seacoast where shipwrecks often occur there was once a crude little lifesaving station. The building was just a hut, and there was only one boat, but the few devoted members kept a constant watch over the sea, and with no thought for themselves went out day and night tirelessly searching for the lost.

Many lives were saved by this wonderful little station, so it became famous. Some of those who were saved, and various others in the

surrounding area, wanted to become associated with the station and give of their time and money and effort for the support of its work. New boats were bought and crews trained. The little lifesaving station grew.

Some of the members of the lifesaving station were unhappy that the building was so crude and poorly equipped. They felt a more comfortable place should be provided . . . So they replaced the emergency cots and beds and put better furniture in the enlarged building. Now the lifesaving station became a popular gathering place . . . it was used as sort of a club.

Fewer members were now interested in going to sea on lifesaving missions so they hired lifeboat crews to do this work. The lifesaving motifs still prevailed in the club's decorations, and there was a liturgical lifeboat in the room where initiations were held.

About this time a large ship was wrecked off the coast, and the hired crews brought in loads of cold, wet, half-drowned people. They were dirty and sick and some of them had black skin and some had yellow skin.

The beautiful new club was considerably messed up. So the property committee immediately had a shower house built outside the club where the victims of shipwrecks could be cleaned up before coming inside.

At the next meeting there was a split in the club membership. Most of the members wanted to stop the club's lifesaving activities as being unpleasant and a hindrance to the normal social life of the club.

Some members insisted upon lifesaving as their primary purpose and pointed out they were still called a lifesaving station. But they were finally voted down and told if they wanted to save the lives of various kinds of people who were shipwrecked in those waters, they could begin their own lifesaving station down the coast. They did.

As the years went by, the new station experienced the same changes that had occurred in the old. It evolved into a club, and yet another lifesaving station was founded. History continued to repeat itself, and if you visit that coast today, you will find a number of exclusive clubs along the shore.

Shipwrecks are frequent in those waters, but most of the people drown.

--Author unknown.

The Presbyterian Journal

By popular demand by men in the Dallas area this is enclosed. It will take the place of four ills. I trust it will be a rich blessing to your ministry.

5/15/66 -5-8

Scott's Sermon Materials

A number of summers ago while we were still in the Northwest Pearl and I along with the children spent some time on the Oregon Coast relaxing. The ocean is one of my favorite places for feeling the presence of the Lord.

After a good night's sleep early that morning I went down on the beach to have a little time with the Lord. I found a nice rock and with the roar of the breakers in the background, I had a blessed time of communion.

When I finished, I made my way down on some of the rocks that were uncovered due to the tide being out quite far. It was really interesting to study some of the fish as they swam around in the little pools made by the rock formations.

Then my eyes fell on quite a scene. One big wave came breaking in and as it began to subside, I noticed floating in the water on its back a crab. Back and forth went this dead crab, just moving with the tide, laying there limp and legs flapping in the tide as the water gave them movement.

I thought to myself, am I like that crab? Just being tossed to and fro in life not amounting to much, just drifting along with the crowd because I'm afraid of what it might cost to take a stand? Or am I different, does my life have a purpose, do I stand for something, or am I just so much dead weight as far as God is concerned?

The BIG QUESTION that is asked at this point is:

ARE YOU DRIFTING?

Maybe you are sitting in this study and you have drifted from His word. You have lost your fellowship with Him and you no longer have power in prayer.

It is possible too that you are not a Christian, and you have never really had any purpose in life. You have just drifted from pleasure to pleasure, from experience, to experience looking for some purpose to life to which you could anchor yourself.

Drifting is dangerous to the SHIP.
It is dangerous to the BUSINESSMAN.
It is dangerous to the STUDENT.

DRIFTING IS DANGEROUS,

DOOM IS PENDING,

AND DISASTER IS CERTAIN.

Proverbs 24:33, 34

A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep--so shall thy poverty come.

PRECAUTION AND PREVENTION

A sign on the highway had been placed there by the American Dental Society and it said, "Ignore your teeth and they will go away." For some people that's a helpful reminder, but for others it's like hitting an exposed nerve with the drill! Much expense and trouble can be avoided by developing good eating habits and practicing dental hygiene. Apparently the American Dental Society thinks we need a strong reminder of the importance of preventive dental care.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

John Denver sings a song called "SOME DAYS ARE DIAMONDS AND SOME DAYS ARE STONE." One of the verses goes like this:

Now the face that I see in my mirror more and more is a stranger to me.
 More and more I can see there's a danger in becoming what I never
 thought I'd be.
 Some days are diamonds, some days are stone.
 Sometimes the hard times won't leave me alone.
 Sometimes the cold wind blows a chill in my bones.
 Some days are diamonds, some days are stone.

Stedman says:

His conclusion is: We need to pay attention!

This convinces me that the writer of this letter, whoever he was, was a preacher. There is nothing more heartbreaking than preaching to people week after week and to see certain ones constantly exposed to truth that you know could change their lives, set them free, transform their very existence and bring them out into a realm of experience they hardly believe existed; you know this, and yet you see them, week after week, lose the whole effect of the message simply because they do not pay attention. This is why Jesus said again and again to the people of His day, He who has ears to hear, let him hear (Matt. 11:15).

p. 13

(The Tribute by Dennis Rainey with David Boehl)

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

It was Robert Whitaker who said:

Live for something; have a purpose,
 And that purpose keep in view;
 Drifting like a helmless vessel,
 Thou can'st ne'er to life be true.
 Half the wrecks that strew life's ocean,
 If some star had been their guide,
 Might have now been riding safely,
 But they drifted with the tide.

THE SEAMAN'S PSALM

The Lord is my Pilot; I shall not drift. He lighteth me across the dark waters; He steereth me in the deep channels; He keepeth my log.

He guideth me by the star of holiness for His name's sake. Yea, though I sail 'mid the thunders and the tempests of life, I shall dread no danger; for Thou art near me; Thy love and Thy care, they shelter me.

Thou preparest a harbor before me in the homeland of eternity; Thou anointest the waters with oil; my ship rideth calmly;

Surely sunlight and starlight shall favor me on the voyage I take, and I will rest in the port of my God forever.

--Capt. J. Rogers, taken from
 NOW magazine, 8/1/53

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)

REASON #2

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

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

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

To quote TED COPPELL:

"They were the Ten Commandments not the Ten Suggestions."

Because it was valid and in force "EVERY TRANSGRESSION AND DISOBEDIENCE RECEIVED A JUST PENALTY."

(Active Spiritually by Charles R. Swindoll)

But in the long run, every time we fight against wisdom, we lose. A bit of "folk wisdom" comes to mind: "Never git in a spittin' match with a skunk. Even if ya out-spit him, ya come out stinkin'."

Enough said.

pp. 14-15

(Victory through Surrender by E. Stanley Jones)

Those psychiatrists, who are not superficial, have come to the conclusion that the vast neurotic misery of the world could be termed a neurosis of emptiness. Men cut themselves off from the root of their being, from God, and then life turns meaningless, goalless, empty--and sick. Then we get them as psychiatrists."
pp. 22-23

Galatians 6:7, 8

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

Hosea 8:7

They sow the wind and reap the whirlwind.

Hosea 10:12

Sow for yourselves righteousness, reap the fruit of unfailing love, and break up your unplowed ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, until he comes and showers righteousness on you.

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,

Hebrews 12:25

See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

If the readers lost sight of the ultimate victory and deliverance that was promised to them in connection with the Son's own final victory, they could expect retribution.

The "we" helps us see he is not talking about hell here.

2 Corinthians 5:10

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Romans 14:12

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

1 Corinthians 3:13-15

Each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

Hebrews 10:31

It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

1 John 2:28

And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.

English raises the question:

Why is this salvation, of which the epistle speaks, so great? In what respect could it be described thus? Its magnitude is due to two things: one, the dignity of the One who proclaimed it; and two, the immensity of the fact that God, in the Person of His Son, suffered for our sins. Nothing of old could parallel this. In former days man's sin was covered through the animal sacrifices until the righteous penalty for sin should be paid by the righteous Lamb of God. Salvation of old was on credit, as it were. Now the bill is paid. Sin's punishment has been meted out. But look who wrought it--the only One who could, the sinless, divine Son who died, the Just for the unjust!
p. 65

Bruce says:

Here we have the first of many warnings which recur throughout the epistle, which makes it plain that our author was afraid that his readers, succumbing to more or less subtle pressures, might become liable to those sanctions--if not by an overt renunciation of the gospel, then possibly by detaching themselves increasingly from its public profession until it ceased to have any influence upon their lives.
p. 68

DeHaan says:

This text is almost universally applied to the sinner and used for an evangelistic sermon. As an application this may be justified, but the interpretation applies to the saint--not the sinner. Two words hold the key, the words "we" and "neglect." The "we" implies that he is addressing believers. The word "neglect" assumes that we already possess something which may be neglected. The text does not say, "How shall we escape if we reject so great salvation?" These Hebrew Christians had not rejected the Gospel, but had received this great salvation.
p. 27

ONE WAY?

According to a recent 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 earnestness 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.

Gutzke makes an interesting observation:

Do you realize that I can neglect only what I already own? For years I thought this question was a warning to unbelievers, indicating that any person who had not accepted Christ should face the fact that he would not escape if he neglected this great salvation. All of that is true but close attention to the context and careful reflection upon the meaning of the words leads me to say this is a message to believers.

F. B. Meyer points out:

The tendency of our age is to minimize God's righteous judgment on sin. It seems to be prevalently thought that because our dispensation is one of love and mercy, therefore there is the less need to dread the results of sin. But the inspired writer here argues in a precisely contrary sense. Just because this age is one of such tender mercy, therefore, sins against its King are more deadly and the penalties heavier. In the old days no transgression positive and no disobedience negative escaped its just recompense of reward. And in these days there is even less likelihood of their doing so.

Lane says:

... "a salvation as great as this," simply means that they are faced with greater responsibility and greater peril.
p. 38

Draper says:

The message here, however, is to the Christian. Very simply, it means there is no way to escape the consequences of a wasted life, a dissipated life. In such a wasted life, we will ruin our health. We will dissipate our witness and influence. We will do no good for God or his kingdom at all. We will waste our energies and efforts if we drift by and ignore or disobey the things God has spoken to us. There is no way to escape. This rhetorical question has to be answered in the negative. We cannot escape a wasted life if we neglect this kind of salvation.
p. 44

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

Revelation 3:11

'I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown.'

(A Dance With Deception: Revealing the Truth Behind the Headlines by Charles Colson with Nancy R. Pearcey)

In our most common afflictions, we are not so much victims of disease as victims of our own behavior.

So if we're looking for a solution to our health-care problems, here's a major part of it. As the old saying goes, what we need is "clean living"--don't smoke, don't drink, don't sleep around, don't eat junk food.

As Secretary Sullivan put it, health depends on personal character, on "personal values . . . such as self-discipline, integrity, honor, taking responsibility."

p. 115

(Knowing the Heart of God by George MacDonald)

The more you talk about what is right, or even talk about doing it, the more danger you are in of turning it into unpracticed theory. Talk without action saps the very will. Something you have to do is waiting undone all the time you are talking, and getting more and more undone. The only refuge is to do.
p. 214

One writer points up the fact:

How shall we escape after neglecting? In other words, the neglect is assumed.

It's awfully easy to neglect something that is difficult. We want to major in our lives on the things which are easy.

For instance, a CHOICE between:

EAT or EXERCISE

PLAY or PRAY

RELAX or READ

WATCH T.V. or WORSHIP.

J. Vernon McGee points out:

For example, when the two angels came to Sodom with the announcement that Sodom was to be destroyed, Sodom was destroyed exactly as they said. In fact, whenever an angel brought a message, you could depend on its being carried out just as it was stated.
p. 514

Billy Graham said:

If God doesn't judge America, He owes an apology to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Thomas Jefferson said:

I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just.

Somebody said, "If He trembled then, He would have a violent seizure now."

Matthew 25:14ff

"For it is just like a man about to go on a journey, who called his own slaves, and entrusted his possessions to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another, two, and to another, one, each according to his own ability; and he went on his journey. Immediately the one who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and gained five more talents. In the same manner the one who had received the two talents gained two more. But he who received the one talent went away and dug in the ground, and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. And the one who had received the five talents came up and brought five more talents, saying, 'Master, you entrusted five talents to me; see, I have gained five more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, enter into the joy of your master.' The one also who had received the two talents came up and said, 'Master, you entrusted to me two talents; see, I have gained two more talents.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' And the one also who had received the one talent came up and said, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed. And I was afraid, and went away and hid your talent in the ground; see, you have what is yours.' But his master answered and said to him, 'You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents.'

There are altogether too many neglecting Christians paying the price of their neglect in loss of joy and peace and power, and are experiencing the life of pitiable defeat; and whose works shall be burned up as wood, hay and stubble in the great day of reckoning.

Pink points out:

The Christian life is likened unto a "race" set before us. A "race" calls for self-discipline, personal exertion, perseverance. The inheritance is set before us in promise but it is written, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36). The "promise" is secured by faith and patience, by actually "running" the race set before us. In the light of this, "neglect" would signify failure to "give diligence" to make our calling and election sure, failure to "press forward" and "run the race." If then we "neglect", how shall we "escape?" Escape what? . . . the chastening rod of the holy Father? Thus, the question asked in our verse addresses itself to all who read the Epistle.
p. 90

Matthew 22:1-5

And Jesus answered and spoke to them again in parables, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king, who gave a wedding feast for his son. And he sent out his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding feast, and they were unwilling to come. Again he sent out other slaves saying, "Tell those who have been invited, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fattened livestock are all butchered and everything is ready; come to the wedding feast." But they paid no attention and went their way, one to his own farm, another to his business.

Philippians 2:12

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;

(God Works the Night Shift by Ron Mehl)

An elderly saint named Frank Lamback used to actually keep track of the percentage of his waking hours that he was conscious of the Lord's watchful eye. Before he retired at night, the godly old patriarch sat down and carefully calculated the amount of time he had been aware of his Lord's presence with him. At the bottom of a page in his little journal, he recorded a number: 68% or 79% or 31%. If the percentage was low, he vowed to do better the next day. Frank Lamback understood that being sensitive to God's watchful eye changes your life. Making it a discipline to remind yourself of the Lord's presence keeps you from sin.

p. 111

(Flying Closer to the Flame by Charles R. Swindoll)

Few people could express my closing thoughts on the Holy Spirit better than the late, great Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

Common, too common is the sin of forgetting the Holy Spirit. This is folly and ingratitude. . . . As God, He is good essentially. . . . He is good benevolently, tenderly bearing with our waywardness, striving with our rebellious wills; quickening us from our death in sin, and then training us for the skies as a loving nurse fosters her child. . . . He is good operatively. All His works are good in the most eminent degree: He suggests good thoughts, prompts good actions, reveals good truths, applies good promises, assists in good attainments, and leads to good results. There is no spiritual good in all the world of which He is not the author and sustainer. . . . They who yield to His influence become good; they who obey His impulses do good, they who live under His power receive good. . . . Let us revere His person, and adore Him as God over all, blessed for ever; let us own His power, and our need of Him by waiting upon Him in all our holy enterprises; let us hourly seek His aid, and never grieve Him; and let us speak to His praise whenever occasions occur. The church will never prosper until more reverently it believes in the Holy Ghost.

p. 263

(The Victorious Christian Life by Dr. Tony Evans)

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.
p. 68

(Carpe Diem by Tony Campolo)

In one school I visited, a student had scribbled on a hallway wall, "Tomorrow will be canceled because of lack of interest."
p. 55

(Signs of Warning, Signs of Hope by J. Kerby Anderson)

In their earlier years, they went "out on the town." Now they prefer to lounge at home as "couch potatoes." As one boomer crassly put it, "I used to be a stud, now I'm a spud."
p. 201

(Over the Top by Zig Ziglar)

Is it really true that failure is an event and not a person?
p. 4

Bobby Knight, head basketball coach and winner of three national championships at Indiana University, accurately states that "the will to win is nothing without the will to prepare to win." He is right.
p. 30

"These ten little two-letter words--If it is to be it is up to me--are absolutely valid. The solution is to do it now."

Some of the saddest words you'll ever hear are "what might have been." Speaker Vicki Hitzges puts it in a unique and different way when she asks, "Will you look back on life and say, 'I wish I had' or 'I'm glad I did'?" Over the Top is going to make it possible for you to look back one day and say, "I'm glad I did." You do have a choice.
p. 39

(Perilous Pursuits by Joseph M. Stowell)

My CD player has a feature called random. After loading the compact discs into the player and pressing the random button, musical numbers are played from any track on any disc in no particular order, with no thoughtful progression or consistency. Often quiet, meditative songs are followed by fast, loud, and intense pieces. This produces an effect that can be jarring and contradictory to my sense of order and reliability.

Unfortunately, many of us experience random living. At one moment our actions are solemn, constructive, and good; the next they're contradictory, careless, and totally inconsistent. Clearly randomness in life spells trouble.

p. 51

Hughes points out:

There is a danger of busyness too. John Foster Dulles was a great statesman and a man of legendary busyness. He almost lived on a jet--so many were his globe-trotting responsibilities. In fact, it was once suggested that the President should tell him, "Don't just do something; stand there!" I have wondered if there were some unconscious Freudian irony in Washington D.C.'s naming its international airport after him.

p. 49

Dr. Campbell, reflecting back on his years of ministry, says:

Continued obedience to God's commands was essential to continued enjoyment of His blessing. A believer has only one must and that is to be faithful to the Lord.

It is because we lose sight of a God who can do the INCREDIBLE and the IMPOSSIBLE that we meet FRUSTRATION and FUTILITY.

Hughes quotes Lewis again by saying:

Lewis gave wise advice to a little girl: "If you continue to love Jesus, nothing much can go wrong with you, and I hope you always do so."
p. 53

(The Pleasures of God by John Piper)

This stress on satisfaction shows the secret of the psychological dynamics of why faith produces obedience. When we are satisfied with our counselor we will do what he counsels. But more than that. True faith delights in all that Jesus is--his character, his personality, his nature. This means that his counsel itself will be beautiful to us. We will love holiness because it is an expression of the personality of the One whose personality we cherish.
pp. 256-7

"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.

Obviously, the writer and the recipients are second generation Christians.

Westcott says:

The superior authority of the Gospel is shewn in three points, in its original announcement, in its convincing proclamation, and in the manifold divine attestation to its truth.

p. 39

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.

This great salvation was not only spoken by the Lord and by those who heard, but God the Father also bears witness with the Lord and with those who heard, with several MIRACULOUS MANIFESTATIONS.

It is interesting to note 2 THINGS in verse 4:

1. He was bearing witness with THEM and not necessarily with US
2. All of the signs, wonders, various works of power and gifts of the Holy Spirit are "ACCORDING TO HIS OWN WILL" and NOT ACCORDING TO OURS.

Wescott says:

The divine witness to the 'salvation' of the Gospel is both continuous and manifold. The writer appeals to a succession of forms in which it was manifested in his experience and in that of those whom he addressed.
pp. 39-40

J. Vernon McGee says:

I think the writer of Hebrews has definite reference here to the Day of Pentecost when the gifts of the Holy Spirit were exercised. The gifts, of course, confirmed the message. To whom? To the nation Israel.

What tremendous truths we have here in this first danger warning. It is a warning sign, not about speeding up but about drifting--just drifting by these great truths which we may have been taking for granted.
p. 515

(Exit Interviews by William D. Hendricks)

"I once asked a pastor this question," Anthony continued. I could tell by now that he loved to teach. "Suppose you paid fifty-eight bucks of your own money for a ticket to see the Chicago Bulls. And all the guys you went there to see were not there, but the guys from the Cubs baseball team decided to come in their place and put trunks on. They play the game and they get destroyed. They don't make one basket--a total bunch of buffoons! Would you think they were worth fifty-eight bucks? Of course not!

"The reason for this is because they were never asked by God to be basketball players. God gave them gifts and talents to be baseball players. But they decided they were going to play basketball. And it cost you money to watch them do something they couldn't do, and you did not enjoy any of it. You were insulted, as a matter of fact.

"The pastor said, 'That's right.' I said, 'Why are we doing that in church?'"
p. 164

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

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

We see ANGELS at numerous times in the scripture:

1. We see angels at Sodom and Gomorrah.
2. We see angels at the Giving of the Law.
3. We see an angel ministering to Elijah's physical needs.
4. We see angels surrounding Elisha and his servant.
5. We see angels in the life of Jesus:

There were angels at the birth of Jesus.

There were angels who came and ministered to Him following the temptation.

There were 72,000 angels on alert status if there had been a call from the Son at the time of the cross.

There were angels at the resurrection.

Larry Libby has written a delightful new book called Somewhere Angels that would be so good for you to use in teaching your children.

ANGELS WERE CREATED TO MINISTER.

MAN WAS CREATED TO RULE.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary titles the next section containing verses 5-18 "The King-Son as the perfected Captain."

The author here returned to his main train of thought, the destiny of Jesus in the world to come.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary calls this next section "The Destiny of the Captain (2:5-9)."

Delitzsch says:

Great is the salvation which has come to us under the New Testament; first, through the preaching of the incarnate Lord, and then through men commissioned by Him with miraculous corroborating testimonies from God Himself. This greatness the sacred writer proceeds to unfold thus: . . .
p. 101

A. T. Robertson says:

The author now proceeds to show (2:5-18) that the very humanity of Jesus, the Son of Man, likewise proves his superiority to angels.
p. 344

The author is discussing this new order introduced by Christ which makes obsolete the old dispensation of rites and symbols. God did not put this new order in charge of angels.
p. 344

Black comments:

After establishing the Son's intrinsic superiority over angels, our author now turns to prove a very different point, the real humanity of the incarnate Son.
p. 55

Lane says:

. . . "about which we are speaking," underscores the continuity in thought between 1:5-14 and the resumption of the exposition at this point.
p. 45

Stedman says:

This section declares that Jesus Christ became a man **in order to recapture our lost destiny**. No angel could take Christ's place, for God had never given the right to govern the universe to angels but to men.
p. 19

Larry Richards says:

In chapter one the writer began with Jesus. Salvation means we must grasp clearly who Jesus, the Son of God, is.

In this chapter the writer focuses on us. To understand salvation and to avoid slipping into a life of frustration and spiritual immaturity, we must grasp who we are.
p. 20

Griffith Thomas says:

The Epistle now reverts to the main line of teaching after the warning of vv. 1-4. Verse 5 is thus connected with 1:14, and the thought seems to be that it is not to angels but to men, in the representative man Christ Jesus, that God has subjected the coming habitable world. Thus the Son is better than the angels, not only as the revealer of God (chap. 1), but also, as will now be shown, as the representative of man.
p. 32

Westcott titles this section "The promise of man's sovereignty and its potential fulfillment (5-9)."

The writer of the Epistle has already assumed the establishment of a new order corresponding with the fulfillment of the purpose of creation. The sovereignty of this order was not prepared for angels (v. 5). It was promised to man (6-8a); and the promise was fulfilled in 'Jesus' (8b-9).
p. 41

J. Vernon McGee says:

The humanity of Christ needs to be emphasized as well as His deity. You see, He brought deity down to this earth, and He took humanity back to

heaven.
p. 515

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?"

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

In verses 6-8a, a portion of Psalm 8 was now quoted, reading it primarily as messianic and eschatological.

Verses 6-8 are a quote from Psalm 8:4-6. Let us pause here for just a moment. Who is man anyway? Man is just a small creature on one of the minor planets.

Someone put it like this:

Man is a rash on the epidermis of a minor planet.

That really puts man in his place but I suppose it is more or less accurate. We are very small in God's universe.

F. B. Meyer, speaking on these verses says:

Yet it is an undeniable fact that God is mindful of man, and that He does visit him. "Mindful!" There is not a moment in God's existence in which He is not as mindful of this world of men as the mother of the babe whom she has left for a moment in the next room, but whose slightest cry or moan she is quick to catch. "I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinks upon me." "How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!" "Visiting!" No cot is so lowly, no heart so wayward, no life so solitary but God visits it. No one shall read these lines, the path around whose heart door is not trodden hard by the feet of Him who often comes, and stands, and knocks. We speak as if only our sorrows were Divine visitations. Alas for us, if it were only so! Every throb of holy desire, every gentle mercy, every gift of Providence, is a visitation of God.

p. 16

The psalmist is so overwhelmed by what the Lord, the Creator, has brought into existence. In Psalm 8:3, we read:

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained.

How can a God of this great creation--the heavens are the work of His fingers, the earth His handiwork--be mindful of man?

John Wesley puts it this way:

God created the heavens and the earth and didn't half try. Creation was His finger work, like the crocheting of a woman. How can this great God, through the manifestation of all of His glory and power in the creation of the universe be someone who is mindful of man, or the son of man that He would visit him.

Wuest observes:

The writer now quotes from Psalm 8. The words "one in a certain place" do not mean that the writer is ignorant of the identity of the writer of the psalm, but assume that the readers know who the author was. The word "testified" in the Greek text implies a solemn, earnest testimony. The question as to whether the Messiah or man is spoken of in verses 6-8, is settled easily and finally by the Greek word translated "visit." The Psalmist is exclaiming as to the insignificance of man in the question, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? That is clear. But to whom do the words "son of man" refer, to the Messiah who is called the Son of man, or to mankind? The Greek word "visit" is episkeptomai. The word means "to look upon in order to help or to benefit, to look after, to have a care for." This clearly indicates that the son of man spoken of here is the human race. God looks upon the human race in order to help or to benefit it. Thus, the picture in verses 6-8 is that of the human race in Adam.

p. 55

Barclay says:

Now if we are ever to understand this passage correctly we must understand one thing--the whole reference of Psalm 8 is to man. It is the Psalm which sings of the glory that God gave to man.

p. 15

Pink says:

What is man, fallen man, that the great God should be mindful of him? Still less that He should crown him with "glory and honour?" Ah, it is this which should move our hearts to deepest wonderment, as it will fill us with ever-increasing amazement and praise in the ages yet to come.

p. 98

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] (some ancient manuscripts omit);

Whereas in verse 6 we have the FRAILITY OF MAN,

in verse 7 we have the DIGNITY OF MAN.

Stedman says:

The writer further points out that man was made lower than the angels for a limited time to learn what the exercise of that dominion meant. He was given a limited domain: this earth, this tiny planet whirling its way through the great galaxy to which we belong, amid all the billions of galaxies of space! And he was also given a limited physical body so that within that limited area man should learn the principles by which his dominion could be exercised throughout the universe. This limitation is described as being lower than the angels.
pp. 20-21

John Owen says:

He was made a "little lower than the angels," that is, lower than the angels for a little time; it was but for a short time that the Person of Christ in the nature of man was brought into a condition more indigent than the state of angels is exposed unto; neither was He for that reason made a little, but very much lower than the angels.
p. 22

A celebrity is a person who works hard all his life to become well known, and then wears dark glasses to avoid being recognized.

--Fred Allen

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

Genesis 1:26-28

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

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.

The sovereignty that was promised to man in Genesis 1:26, 27 was lost by the fall, though the title is still man's. Christ, as the representative man, has won back for man this sovereignty. This sovereignty will be exercised in the millennial age. This never was promised to angels.

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.

Barclay speaking of man says:

He is a creature who is frustrated by his circumstances, defeated by his temptations, girt about with his own weakness. He who should be free is bound; he who should be a king is a slave. As G. K. Chesterton said, whatever else is or is not true, this one thing is certain--man is not what he was meant to be.

p. 17

F. B. Meyer says:

His crown is rolled in the dust, his honor tarnished and stained. His sovereignty is strongly disputed by the lower orders of creation. If trees nourish him, it is after strenuous care, and they often disappoint. If the earth supplies him with food, it is in tardy response to exhausting toil. If the beast serve him, it is because they have been laboriously tamed and trained; while vast numbers roam the forest glades, setting him at defiance. If he catch the fish of the sea, or the bird of the air, he must wait long in cunning concealment.

Some traces of the old lordship are still apparent in the terror which the sound of the human voice and the glance of the eye still inspire in the lower creatures, as in the feats of lion tamer or snake charmer. But for the most part anarchy and rebellion have laid waste man's fair realm.

pp. 17-18

Wuest observes:

But now comes a sad note. The words, "But now we see not yet all things put under him," point to the fact that Adam through his fall into sin, lost the dominion he had before enjoyed. He was no longer master of himself.

He had become a fallen creature, with a totally depraved nature. He was a slave to sin. The animal kingdom was subservient to him not now through affection but fear. The ground, instead of yielding only good things, now produced also thorns, weeds, and other harmful things. Extremes of heat and cold, poisonous reptiles, earthquakes, typhoons, hurricanes, all conspired to make his life a constant battle to survive. He had lost the dominion over all these things.

pp. 56-57

Griffith Thomas says:

Notwithstanding man's littleness, God intended his position to be one of remarkable greatness.

(2) But there has been delay in the realization of this purpose. Although everything has been subjected to man, "We see not yet all things subjected to him" (v. 8). Sin has entered, and robbed man of his dominion over everything else.

(3) And yet the divine purpose will be accomplished because, notwithstanding human sin, there is a divine plan for its complete realization (v. 9). We do not yet see man in authority, but we have the pledge and assurance of this glorious future for humanity in what Jesus Christ is and has done.

p. 33

Hewitt says much the same thing:

The divine purpose has not been fulfilled in man; the sceptre has slipped from his grasp; he has failed to realize his sovereignty. Moffatt remarks that the terror of death and the devil enslaves human nature.

pp. 67-68

Hughes says:

Chesterton was right: "Whatever is or is not true about men, this one thing is certain--man is not what he was meant to be."

p. 58

G. Campbell Morgan puts it this way:

As we survey human history, we see two things clearly marked. One is man's failure to realize and exercise completely this power of dominion; and the other is the constant movement towards victory in that direction. His dominion has been growingly extended over the earth, over the sea, over the air. As a writer some while ago put it, "Man is learning to master everything except himself."

p. 31

What is said of man here can also be said of Jesus Christ.

All hail the pow'r of Jesus' name!
 Let angels prostrate fall;
 Bring forth the royal diadem,
 And crown Him Lord of all.

There is a yet future time when He will come as King of kings and Lord of lords, and He will sit upon the throne of His father David. And the universal kingdom will have come.

O that with yonder sacred throng
 We at His feet may fall!
 We'll join the everlasting song,
 And crown Him Lord of All.

("All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name" by Edward Perronet. The New Church Hymnal, Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #268)

Philippians 2:9-11

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

In the Son of Man man's sovereignty shall be gained.

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."

John 12:20, 21

Now there were certain Greeks among those who were going up to worship at the feast; these therefore came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and began to ask him, saying, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus."

I am reminded of the hymn:

O soul, are you weary and troubled?
No light in the darkness you see?
There's light for a look at the Savior,
And life more abundant and free!

Turn your eyes upon Jesus,
Look full in His wonderful face;
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim
In the light of His glory and grace.

("The Heavenly Vision" by Helen H. Lemmel. The New Church Hymnal, Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #344)

Open our eyes Lord we want to see Jesus.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This last statement is best understood as the purpose of the Lord's being made lower than the angels in His Incarnation.

English asks the question:

What does it mean, "He tasted death"? The expression tells us that He partook of it. He tasted it to its fullest depth. We cannot comprehend all it meant to the eternal and sinless Son to be made sin for us, but we do know that the separation from the Father thus required magnified death for sin to the greatest possible degree.

p. 72

Wiersbe says:

He is God's answer to man's dilemma. Jesus Christ became man that He might suffer and die for man's sin and restore the dominion that was lost because of sin. When our Lord was here on earth, He exercised that lost dominion.

p. 28

Lenski says:

"To taste death"=to undergo all its dread bitterness; it is not a softening but rather a strengthening of the simple verb "to die." Jesus tasted death, not by merely sipping, but by fully draining the cup. The emphasis is on huperpantos, masculine: "for the benefit of everyone." The fact that this includes universality as well as substitution is rather plain although neither idea is in the foreground, this being the idea of benefiting everyone by opening up to him the avenue to eternal glory and honor.

p. 77

Wescott says:

But in spite of the obvious fact of man's failure the promise has not failed: . . .
p. 45

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

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

Draper says:

The phrase "taste death" is a picture of death being a cup of liquid. Some people look at that and conclude that he sipped it and tasted it only slightly. But if we will look carefully and study these Greek words, they say, "He drank the cup dry." He drank it all! He drained it to the very last! He drank death dry! He tasted it for every man! Now do you see the hope? I do not have to die as he did. I do not have to suffer the anguish of my sins in hell. He bore it for me. He tasted death. He drank it dry, and everything that is offensive, everything that is fearful, he took out of death. He drank it dry for every man.
pp. 54-55

Hughes points out:

Significantly, this is the first use of the name "Jesus" in the Book of Hebrews, and it is emphatic, stressing his humanity and his work of salvation. It is the name given to him by Gabriel at his birth (Matthew 1:21), and it means, "the Lord is salvation."
p. 59

He paid the debt He did not owe
For those who owed but could not pay.

Andrew Murray points out:

Tasting death for all, bringing to naught the devil, making reconciliation for the sins of the people, refer to the finished work which Christ wrought, the sheer and everlasting foundation on which our faith and hope can rest.

M. R. DeHaan points out:

How can any believer stand at the manger in Bethlehem and realize that there God emptied himself to save us, and not be deeply moved? How can we behold him, covered with blood and spittle in Pilate's hall and realize it was in our place, and not be willing to say, "Take my life and let it be consecrated, Lord, to Thee." How can a truly born-again believer stand at Calvary in the awful stifling darkness, and hear the cry of the Son of God that shook the foundations of heaven, "My God, My God, Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" and not fall down before him and cry:

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

p. 37

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

"THE GRACE OF GOD."

His reason for coming is:

that He should taste death for everyone.

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."

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

THE SELF-SACRIFICING BROTHER

The Moody Monthly carried a true story that beautifully illustrates how Christ took the punishment for our sin on Calvary. It told about a mother who was always very careful to keep her house spic-and-span. She gave strict orders to her children that everything should be kept neat and clean, and she was particularly insistent that they should not get their shoes on the bed linens. They were warned that if they disobeyed, they could expect a whipping.

One day while she was away, her little son James played in the mud. When he came into the house, he went upstairs to his room and carelessly lay on his bed, getting the snowy white spread covered with dirt. In no time he was sound asleep. When his mother arrived home and discovered him lying there, she awoke him and said she was going to give him a spanking. Just then his older brother came to his rescue. He knew that Jimmy's disobedience could not be overlooked, but because of his love for him he wanted to spare him a paddling. Asking his mother if he could take his brother's place, he bent his own body over the little fellow and received the painful punishment.

The writer of this anecdote added these apt words: "I have an Elder Brother who has done the same for me; for He lay over against my sin and interposed himself between me and the chastisement that I as a sinner deserved."

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

"HE DIED FOR ME!"

In sixteenth century England, Oliver Cromwell ordered that a soldier be shot for his crimes at the ringing of the evening bell. But that night at the fateful hour, no sound came from the belfry. The girl who was to be married to the condemned man had climbed up into the tower and had clung to the great clapper of the bell to prevent it from striking. Brought before Cromwell to give an account of her actions, she only wept and showed him her bruised and bleeding hands. Cromwell was greatly impressed, and he said, "Your lover is alive because of your sacrifice. He will not be shot!"

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

A HIDING PLACE

All of us need a "hiding place" to protect us from God's wrath against sin. But many people are offended by the Biblical teaching that Jesus died as our substitute to provide this. George Bernard Shaw, for example, bitterly attacked the Book of Common Prayer at this very point. He said, "It is saturated with the ancient--and to me quite infernal--superstition of atonement by blood sacrifice, which I believe Christianity must completely get rid of, if it is to survive among thoughtful people." He may not have realized it, but he felt this way because he wouldn't admit that he too needed a "hiding place" from the judgment of a holy God.

How different was the attitude of Major John Andre, who was sentenced to death as a spy during the Revolutionary War. He was innocent and could have become bitter, but his relationship to the Lord was an anchor for his soul. In fact, he wrote this poem in which he gloried in the sacrifice of Christ:

"On Him almighty vengeance fell!
Which must have sunk a world to Hell;
He bore it for a sinful race,
And thus became their hiding place."

Though Andre was only 30 years old and would be put to death within 3 days, he added this glowing assurance:

"A few more rolling suns at most
Shall land me on fair Canaan's coast,
When I shall sing the song of grace
And see my glorious Hiding Place."

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

"STANDING IN HIS SHOES"

Some years ago a poor, elderly woman was approached by a skeptic. The man said sarcastically, "Well, Betty, you claim you're one of the saints. Tell me what you mean by that. Are you trying to say you're well versed in religion?" "No, sir, I'm not a scholar nor a theologian," replied the Christian, "but I'm positive about one thing--I'm saved by grace. That's enough to make me happy in this life and bring me safely to Heaven." "Is that all you know about it? Can't you at least explain a little more what being saved by grace means?" the man insisted. Betty thought for a few moments and then answered, "Why, it means that because the Lord stood in my shoes at Calvary, I'm now standing in His!"

Though that happy believer had no special Bible training, she had expressed the great theological doctrine of substitutionary atonement in simple, accurate, everyday language. The conviction and clarity with which she spoke revealed a genuine faith and silenced her critic.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

His reason for coming is in the last phrase:

"HE MIGHT TASTE DEATH FOR EVERY ONE."

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

(The Existence and Attributes of God by Stephen Charnock)

The more a man pays for a thing, the more usually we say he deserves to have it, he hath paid enough for it. It was indeed price enough, and too much for such vile creatures as we are.

p. 672

(New Testament Christianity by J. B. Phillips)

Once upon a time a very young angel was being shown around the splendours and glories of the universes by a senior and experienced angel. To tell the truth, the little angel was beginning to be tired and a little bored. He had been shown whirling galaxies and blazing suns, infinite distances in the deathly cold of inter-stellar space, and to his mind there seemed to be an awful lot of it all. Finally, he was shown the galaxy of which our planetary system is but a small part. As the two of them drew near to the star which we call our sun and to its circling planets, the senior angel pointed to a small and rather insignificant sphere turning very slowly on its axis. It looked as dull as a dirty tennis-ball to the little angel, whose mind was filled with the size and glory of what he had seen.

"I want you to watch that one particularly," said the senior angel, pointing with his finger.

"Well, it looks very small and rather dirty to me," said the little angel. "What's special about that one?"

"That," replied his senior solemnly, "is the Visited Planet."

"Visited?" said the little one. "You don't mean visited by----?"

"Indeed I do. That ball, which I have no doubt looks to you small and insignificant and not perhaps overclean, has been visited by our young Prince of Glory." And at these words he bowed his head reverently.

"But how?" queried the younger one. "Do you mean that our great and glorious Prince, with all these wonders and splendours of His Creation, and millions more that I'm sure I haven't seen yet, went down in Person to this fifth-rate little ball? Why should He do a think like that?"

"It isn't for us," said his senior a little stiffly, "to question His 'why's', except that I must point out to you that He is not impressed by size and numbers, as you seem to be. But that He really went I know, and all of us in Heaven who know anything know that. As to why He became one of them-- how else do you suppose could He visit them?"

The little angel's face wrinkled in disgust.

"Do you mean to tell me," he said, "that He stooped so low as to become one of those creeping, crawling creatures of that floating ball?"

"I do, and I don't think He would like you to call them 'creeping, crawling creatures' in that tone of voice. For, strange as it may seem to us, He loves them. He went down to visit them to lift them up to become like Him."

The little angel looked blank. Such a thought was almost beyond his comprehension.

"Close your eyes for a moment," said the senior angel, "and we will go back in what they call Time."

While the little angel's eyes were closed and the two of them moved nearer to the spinning ball, it stopped its spinning, spun backwards quite fast for a while, and then slowly resumed its usual rotation.

"Now look!" And as the little angel did as he was told, there appeared here and there on the dull surface of the globe little flashes of light, some merely momentary and some persisting for quite a time.

"Well, what am I seeing now?" queried the little angel.

"You are watching this little world as it was some thousands of years ago," returned his companion. "Every flash and glow of light that you see is something of the Father's knowledge and wisdom breaking into the minds and hearts of people who live upon the earth. Not many people you see, can hear His Voice or understand what He says, even though He is speaking gently and quietly to them all the time."

"Why are they so blind and deaf and stupid?" asked the junior angel rather crossly.

"It is not for us to judge them. We who live in the Splendour have no idea what it is like to live in the dark. We hear the music and the Voice like the sound of many waters every day of our lives, but to them--well, there is much darkness and much noise and much distraction upon the earth. Only a few who are quiet and humble and wise hear His Voice. But watch, for in a moment you will see something truly wonderful."

The Earth went on turning and circling round the sun, and then quite suddenly, in the upper half of the globe, there appeared a light, tiny but so bright in its intensity that both the angels hid their eyes.

"I think I can guess," said the little angel in a low voice. "That was the Visit, wasn't it?"

"Yes, that was the Visit. The Light Himself went down there and lived among them; but in a moment, and you will be able to tell that even with your eyes closed, the light will go out."

"But why? Could He not bear their darkness and stupidity? Did He have to return here?"

"No, it wasn't that," returned the senior angel. His voice was stern and sad. "They failed to recognise Him for Who He was--or at least only a handful knew Him. For the most part they preferred their darkness to His Light, and in the end they killed Him."

"The fools, the crazy fools! They don't deserve----"

"Neither you nor I, nor any other angel, knows why they were so foolish and so wicked. Nor can we say what they deserve or don't deserve. But the fact remains, they killed our Prince of Glory while He was Man amongst them."

"And that I suppose was the end? I see the whole Earth has gone black and dark. All right, I won't judge them, but surely that is all they could expect?"

"Wait, we are still far from the end of the story of the Visited Planet. Watch now, but be ready to cover your eyes again."

In utter blackness the earth turned round three times, and then there blazed with unbearable radiance a point of light.

"What now?" asked the little angel, shielding his eyes.

"They killed Him all right, but He conquered death. The thing most of them dread and fear all their lives He broke and conquered. He rose again, and a few of them saw Him and from then on became His utterly devoted slaves."

"Thank God for that," said the little angel.

"Amen. Open your eyes now, the dazzling light had gone. The Prince has returned to His Home of Light. But watch the Earth now."

As they looked, in place of the dazzling light there was a bright glow which throbbed and pulsated. And then as the Earth turned many times little points of light spread out. A few flickered and died; but for the most part the lights burned steadily and as they continued to watch, in many parts of the globe there was a glow over many areas.

"You see what is happening?" asked the senior angel. "The bright glow is the company of loyal men and women He left behind, and with His help they spread the glow and now lights begin to shine all over the Earth."

"Yes, yes," said the little angel impatiently, "but how does it end? Will the little lights join up with each other? Will it all be light, as it is in Heaven?"

His senior shook his head. "We simply do not know," he replied. "It is in the Father's hands. Sometimes it is agony to watch and sometimes it is joy unspeakable. The end is not yet. But now I am sure you can see why this little ball is so important. He has visited it; He is working out His Plan upon it."

"Yes, I see, though I don't understand. I shall never forget that this is the Visited Planet."

CONCLUSION:

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

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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Richards summarizes things by saying:

What the Book of Hebrews is telling us, then, is this: "Now that you are saved, you must never let slip the awareness that you are no longer a defeated and frustrated being. Because of Jesus you have been--and are being--restored to the experience of dominion and mastery for which God always intended man."

To see yourself accurately, you need to see not the slave made impotent by sin, but the renewed man who has a restored capacity for dominion and who, in Christ, is master of life.

You need to see yourself as undefeated.
pp. 22-23

(Over the Top by Zig Ziglar)

"One definition of insanity is to believe that you can keep on doing what you've been doing and get different results."

p. 45

Kenneth W. Osbeck in his book Amazing Grace tells the story of Edward Hopper who wrote the hymn, "Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me."

Edward Hopper died at the age of 70 as he was sitting peacefully in his study, pencil in hand, working on a new poem about heaven. At his funeral this tribute was given: "Suddenly the gentle, affectionate spirit of Edward Hopper entered the heavenly port, as he had requested--safely piloted by that never-failing friend, Jesus, whose divine voice was still tenderly whispering to him, 'Fear not, I will pilot thee.'"

Jesus, Savior, pilot me over life's tempestuous sea; unknown waves
before me roll, hiding rocks and treach'rous shoal; chart and compass
come from Thee--Jesus, Savior, pilot me!

As a mother stills her child, Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
boist'rous waves obey Thy will when Thou say'st to them, "Be still."
Wondrous Sov'reign of the sea, Jesus, Savior, pilot me!

When at last I near the shore, and the fearful breakers roar 'twixt
me and the peaceful rest--then, while leaning on Thy breast, may I hear
Thee say to me, "Fear not--I will pilot thee."

p. 21