

## Daily Bible Study

### *“The Danger of Drifting”*

#### *Hebrews 2:1-4*

*February 26– March 3, 2012*

**THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY** –This week we prepare to come to The Lord’s Table we take a break from **Mark** and use for our text, **Hebrews 2:1-4**. It’s time for an examination. I have chosen this particular text for us to study together because as a shepherd in the church of Jesus Christ, there are few things that horrify me, concern me, and anger (I pray righteously) me as much as seeing people drift away from Jesus and therefore drift away from salvation in and through Him. As recent years have gone by and in fact, recent days I have encountered more and more people, who once professed faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who now are disillusioned and doubting at best and damned at worst because they have in fact not heeded the warnings of Sacred Scripture such as our text. Beloved, these warnings are there for our benefit, yes even as true believers; because make no mistake about it, not everyone who professes Jesus as Savior and enter the doors of the church for worship are in fact true believers. This type of warning, here expressed as “drifting away” from salvation, is what we find in several places in the book of Hebrews. These types of passages have caused great consternation through the years. The reason for that is mainly because the texts seem to suggest at surface reading that it is genuine Christians who are “losing” their salvation. We will look into that issue and shed some light on it by God’s grace. The severity and seriousness of these warnings is in fact horrifying. They are meant by GOD to horrify and make you examine the genuine nature of your faith and yearn for Jesus, and cling to Him in faith MORE not less. Beloved, it is so very sad and heartbreaking to realize some (many according to Jesus—**Matthew 7:21-23**) who we have called brothers and sisters will not enjoy eternity in the New Heaven and Earth with us but instead suffer the horrors of hell and those in a most severe manner and form because they have lived so close to the truth without embracing it (Him) through repentance and faith. May God use His Word this week to help you resolve and desire more to anchor your soul to the harbor of safety; The Rock, The Lord Jesus Christ. Read our text for the week, **Hebrews 2:1-4** *“Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?”*

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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Suggestion for Prayer: Father, teach me Your Word; help me examine to see if I’m drifting.

**TUESDAY** – **Hebrews 2:1** “*Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*” We see here in our text the first in a series of five serious and urgent warnings from Hebrews. (The others are: **Hebrews 3-4**, **5:11-6:20**, **10:19-39**, **12**.) Our text is the first warning of the Epistle and the briefest. This is not to say that it should be taken lighter than any of the others. As we understand in studying Scripture, when we see the word *Therefore* we must look to the previous verses to see what the writer is referring to. Here he is referring back to the truths of **Hebrews 1**. They include the facts that the highest revelation of God to man is given through The Son of God, He is far superior to angels, He came to earth and completed the mission of procuring eternal redemption for His people and now He sits enthroned in the place of power, rule, honor, and reign; at the right hand of The Father. These truths have important implications and this is what the “*Therefore*” is therefore. Since Jesus Christ the Son has triumphed and is supreme over all things we would be wise to *give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard* about Him. The military private always would do well to listen to his commanding officer and here it is as if he is listening to the highest General in the Army. The necessity and importance of listening is expressed well with; *we must*. Refusal to listen, to *hear* and pay attention to the spoken Word of God has consequences that can lead to eternal ruin. The author leaves no one out as he says, *we must...* We are called to *give the* literally, “more earnest, more exceeding, especially, excessive” *heed* to the Divine message. This call reminds us of what we have studied in **Mark 12** and **Deuteronomy 6** where we are taught to “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one...*” and we are told to “*Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength...*” The importance of this hearing and heeding is emphasized in Deuteronomy where we are told to teach the Word to our children, talk about it constantly, put them on our hearts and heads, and write them on our houses and gates. Read **Deuteronomy 6:1-8**.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to really listen to Your voice to me through Holy Scripture. Jesus, may I meditate on Your perfect life and understand as The Father said, I need to hear You.

**WEDNESDAY** – **Hebrews 2:1** “*Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.*” The reason we must give careful attention to *the things we have heard...* is because there is a serious consequence and danger for not doing so. This is the heart of the warning in a nutshell. The danger is that, if we do not *pay much closer attention to what we have heard* (ESV) we might *drift away*. The Greek word here translated *drift away*, is used only here in the New Testament and means among other things, “glide by, pass by, slip away, slip one’s mind, a thing escapes me”. The warning is to all but we see the writer of Hebrews has identified his readers as those who are lazy and sluggish in the things of God who are marked by spiritual immaturity (**Hebrews 5:11-12**). If this trait is not dealt with, worked through, and

eliminated there is a real danger of slipping away from what a person has heard concerning Jesus Christ. The author may have had the Septuagint rendering of **Proverbs 3:21** in mind, where the Greek translators used the word for “drift away” that is found here: “*My son, do not slip away, but keep my counsel and intent.*” The warning here translated, “drift away” can give us several mental pictures. We saw earlier some of the lexical definitions of this verb which can also be defined “to flow”. We can use nautical language and picture a boat *drifting away*, out past the harbor of safety out to the perils of the open sea. In ancient writings we find this verb was also used of the snow slipping off from soldiers bodies and of a ring slipping from the finger. There is a rendering of **Proverbs 4:21** which says, “*Let not my words flow past before thine eyes.*” The bottom line in the warning is that this idea of *drift away* is in sharp contrast with *giving earnest heed*. Falling and slipping from truth is often the result of lazy inattention rather than deliberate design. Marvin Vincent comments, “Drifting is a mark of death: giving heed, of life. The log drifts with the tide: the ship breasts the adverse waves, because someone is giving earnest heed.”

*(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?*

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me know the great danger if I would drift away from Your salvation through not paying attention to Your gospel. May I be diligent to take heed, lest I fall.*

**THURSDAY – Hebrews 2:2-3a** “*For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation...*” The text speaks of *the word spoken through angels* and it is referring to the law of God given to His people from Mount Sinai. The Old Testament in general and Exodus in particular give no specific indication God used angels to convey His law to the people (**Exodus 20:1, Deuteronomy 5:22**). When we come to the New Testament we find that Stephen in his address before the Sanhedrin (**Acts 7:35–53**) and Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians (**Galatians 3:19**) both mention the activity of angels. It appears there is a reference to angels present at Mount Sinai in **Deuteronomy 33:2**, in the final blessing of Moses pronounced on the people before he died. Regardless we learn from the total of Scripture including our text that they were in fact involved in the giving of the Law. The text informs us the angels were the instruments (*through*) not the author of the Word. The writer is telling us here that the Word brought to God’s people *through angels* was reliable (*proved steadfast*). Tomorrow we will see in the text that if the word brought through messengers was reliable how much more the Word brought through the messenger, Jesus Christ. God is the actual speaker of His Law and Word and therefore it is ultimately both reliable and binding. This is the Word of the Covenant keeping YAHWEH and His Word stands because He is true to it. The Word of God remains the same and is one singular revelation given to God’s people at various times throughout history and culminating in the Word of the Son Jesus Christ (**Hebrews 1:1–2**). We understand Scripture tells us *every transgression and disobedience received a just reward*. Disobedience to God’s law brings a just punishment upon the sinner. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that transgressing the divine law results in

righteous and just retribution. Every violation of God's law is evil; every act of disobedience is an insult and affront to God and even "one" transgression of the law makes us guilty of it all (**James 2:10**). This is why we need Jesus; His life, death, resurrection, ascension; in a word, His "victory", "deliverance", "*Salvation*". We see in this verse the word *salvation*; the term has already been used in **1:14**, where we are told that angels are *ministering spirits* that serve believers who are *the heirs of salvation*. Our *salvation* was bought for us, earned if you will, by Jesus Christ's perfect life and suffering death where He was punished for our sin; not His own. He is called the *author and finisher of our faith* (**Hebrews 12:2**) and He is the *author* of our salvation who *brings many sons to glory* (**Hebrews 2:10**). Our salvation is immeasurably great and *how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?* "We" are being warned not to get lazy and to pay attention concerning this gospel message we have heard.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Father, Help me not neglect the study of Your Word, prayer, and the faithful gathering together of your people to hear the Word preached and to partake of the Sacraments. It is in these means of grace that I hear, see, and taste this glorious message of salvation.*

**FRIDAY & SATURDAY – Hebrews 2:3b-4** "*which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*" We saw yesterday our salvation came from and is authored by our gracious God. The Lord Jesus Himself, while on earth, spoke this message of salvation bringing to fulfillment all the previous pictures and words which pointed to Him and His ministry. In **Hebrews 2:3b** the emphasis is on Jesus, whose word is sure. As we saw, the angels brought "the message," but Jesus whose name is derived from the name *Joshua* (salvation), brought "*salvation.*" This message of both the Old and New Testaments are fulfilled in Jesus; He came not to annul the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfill them (**Matthew 5:17**). The Old and New Testaments are God's written revelation to man, although the fullness of redemption comes to expression in the New. From the moment of his public appearance to the day of his ascension, Jesus unfolded the full redemptive revelation of God to which the apostles bore *witness*. We have heard the message through them and the word of Jesus they proclaimed (**John 17:20**) which was validated and confirmed by *signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit...* We have been given so much, beware lest you drift away!

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today? (Apply)How can I put it into practice?

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*Suggestion for Prayer: Help me Father to look to Jesus; to hear, see, obey, and follow Him.*