

The Importance of Being Earnest

Hebrews 2:1 (KJV)

¹Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

Earnest means serious ,grave, severe, zealous

The word "heed" means to give attention to; to listen very carefully. Note how intense the warning is: we must not only heed the gospel, we must earnestly heed it

Therefore we ought to give the more serious/attention, more zealous to listen very carefully to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let *them* slip.

Driving, pay serious attention to the things we heard, speed limits, texting, phones makeup reading. Doing these things that you know better to can and will cost you your life. There are things in the spirit if you don't do, the more earnest heed to the things which you have heard, while driving on your spiritual journey can and will cause you to lose your spiritual life with Jesus.

There are six danger signals in the Book of Hebrews. They are warnings to the people of Israel that they fail not to enter into the full blessings which God has provided through Christ. These six danger signals can be likened to highway markers to warn the reader. These danger signals are as follows:

The First Danger Signal: Peril Of Drifting (2:1-4)

Let's realize that this is a warning for every child of God in our day also, a warning that there is a danger of drifting.

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip [Heb. 2:1].

"Let them slip" indicates neglect, that is all. hearing the gospel message and doing nothing about it is tragic. What must I do to be lost? Nothing!

We are given the answer for "What must I do to be saved?" in Acts 2:38, Acts 16:30-33 "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...." But what is the answer for "What must I do to be lost?" Well, the answer is nothing.

You don't do anything to be lost, because that is your natural condition.

I would like to get all the folk that hear the gospel into the "now" generation. "Now" is the accepted time. "Now" is the day of salvation. There is a real danger of drifting, and Hebrews warns us about it.

For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward [Heb. 2:2].

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.

the question --

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him [Heb. 2:3].

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" Do you know a way of escape?

The only way is Christ. He said so in John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." In the Scriptures we also read, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 16:25). There are many ways that seem right to men.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? What do you do to be lost? Nothing. You can be lost by neglect.

"Which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord" is, of course, the Lord Jesus when He was here. He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden..." (Matt. 11:28) and "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

"And was confirmed unto us by them that heard him," refers to His disciples and others who heard Him and witnessed His death and resurrection -- then went everywhere preaching the gospel.

God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will? [Heb. 2:4].

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.

"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. There are few people who deliberately and in a moment turn their backs on God; there are many who day by day drift farther and farther away from Him. There are not many who in one moment of time commit some disastrous sin; there are many who, bit by bit and almost unknowingly, involve themselves in some situation, and suddenly awake to find that they have ruined life for themselves and broken someone else's heart. We would do well to be continually on the alert against the peril of the drifting life"

Peril of doubting, Heb. 3:7

Hebrews 3:7-11 The generation of Israel that came out of Egypt doubted God, and because of their doubt they never entered the land of Canaan. The place where God was taking them, the promise land, a place of rest

"They shall not enter into my rest."

You see, they didn't believe God enough to enter into the land. They believed Him enough to come out of Egypt, but not enough to enter Canaan.

Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways." Notice where they erred. In their minds? No, in their hearts. The generation of Israel who came out of Egypt were examples to the Hebrew believers in the apostolic days as a warning not to repeat their sin. Not to err in their hearts, doubt. We have the same danger, the danger of erring in our hearts, doubting

"They shall not enter into my rest." God said that, because of unbelief, the generation of Israelites would not enter into the Land of Promise. Until you not only accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, but walk with Him by faith, committing your life to Him, you are not going to know anything about the joys of Canaan. Unfortunately, we have a great many wilderness Christians in our churches. The wilderness is a place of death; it is a place of unrest; it is a place of aimlessness; and it is a place of dissatisfaction. To those Israelites out there in the wilderness God said, "You are not going to know what rest is." And there are many believers today who just don't know what rest really means. They have never entered into it because they must enter by faith.

Now, what does a *hardened heart* mean? Israel's wilderness experience shows us. After the Jews had been freed from Egyptian slavery, they wandered about in the wilderness of the Sinai desert for some forty years. During their wanderings, they committed sin, doubt that hardened their hearts.

The great failure of Israel was this: they just failed to believe God—to trust that He would do what he said: take care of them, provide for their needs, and give them the promised land and rest.

The great failure of people today is the very same thing—unbelief. People just do not believe God—that He will do what He says: take care of them, provide for their necessities, and give them the promised land of heaven and the eternal rest from the wilderness of this world.

God reminds us how *Israel had provoked God* in the wilderness. He says, "Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years" (3:8-9). The unbelief and complaints of Israel in the wilderness were truly astonishing. They had seen God pour out His plagues upon the land of Egypt, separating, as the judgments proceeded, between the land of Goshen, where the Hebrews dwelt, and the rest of Egypt. They had witnessed the crowning judgment: the slaying of the firstborn in every Egyptian home. The people had experienced a miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea and had seen the Egyptian army overthrown. But before long they began to criticize and complain,

Peril of dull hearing

Hebrews 5:11-14 (KJV)

¹¹ Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

¹² For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

¹³ For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

¹⁴ But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

the third danger signal; it is like a red light flashing. He is getting ready to bring us out on the highway, but before he does, we've got to look both ways. There is the danger of being dull of hearing.

a person becomes immature because of dull hearing. The word "dull" (*nōthroi*^{PWS: 1184}) means sluggish, slow, lazy, lethargic, forgetful

Of whom we have many things to say." paul, "I still have a lot of things to say."

"And hard to be uttered." Why is it hard to be uttered?

"Seeing ye are dull of hearing." Paul, could state it all right, but they couldn't grasp it.

"I don't think the pastor was quite up to it today. He usually does better. Did you ever stop to think that the problem that day may have been with you? Are you dull of hearing? The problem may not be in the speaking, but the problem may be in the hearing.

Some of his hearers were doubtless afraid to face the truth of Melchizedek . the Hebrew people believed in the priesthood of the levites. Now Paul is teaching them that Jesus is the priest of our profession after the order of Melchizedek. They would not hear, dull of hearing.

It's the same now we may hear something that is contrary to what we have been taught, we don't hear, we simply say I just don't believe that or it was good enough for mama it's good enough for me. The Lord may be trying to tell you something but you have dull of hearing

Because we are dull of hearing we develop another problem , *a moral problem* (5:12-14). The Hebrew believers are *behind in their duty*. They should be ready and able to teach others the principles of Christianity, but instead they need someone to teach them the first principles of the oracles of God. They were in need of milk, not solid food. "Ye ought to be teachers" (5:12), he says. The word *ought* implies moral obligation. We cannot escape personal responsibility and accountability for the truth we have.

Peril of departing, Heb. 6:1-20

Hebrews 6:1 (KJV)

¹Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

"Unto perfection" is maturity, full age. It's harder for someone of maturity to depart,

There are six foundational facts : (1) repentance from dead works; (2) faith toward God; (3) doctrine of baptisms; (4) laying on of hands; (5) resurrection of the dead; and (6) eternal judgment

a person has a great need to get past the ABC's of God's Word. Scripture is direct and forceful: "Leave the elementary teachings, the ABC teachings of Christ and go on to perfection [maturity]." This does not mean that we are to forget the basic teachings about Christ. We are never to ignore, neglect, or forget how we are saved by Christ nor how we grow in Christ. What this means is that we are to take the basic teachings about Christ and store and lay them up in our hearts. They are to be part of our lives, in fact, the very foundation of our lives. *But once the foundation is laid, we are to build upon it.* We are to move on and grow in all the teachings of God's Word.

go on to maturity by learning and doing all the commandments of God.

Peril of despising, Heb. 10:26-39

Hebrews 10:26 (KJV)

²⁶ For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! "For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2Pet. 2:21).

The warning is to the Hebrew believers because many of them were continuing to go to the temple and some were actually offering sacrifices there. They were keeping up a front, pretending that they were still under the Mosaic Law. In so doing they also were making it clear that the sacrifice of Christ was meaningless to them.

If a person rejects the truth of Christ's death for sin, there is no other sacrifice for sin available, and there is no other way to come to God. They are to look to Christ now rather than to the temple. If they refuse to do this, there is nothing left for them but judgment.

"If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth." This means to go on sinning willfully by offering the sacrifices. It is an attitude toward the Word of God which God calls willful rebellion.

What is wilful sin? It is choosing to live a life of sin instead of living a life of godliness; it is deliberately choosing to live for this world and self instead of living for Christ.

Wilful sin is choosing to continue on and on in a life of sin and never turning to God. This person—the person who wilfully sins—shall never have any sacrifice for sin. The only conceivable way he can ever be acceptable to God is to repent and turn to Christ as the sacrifice for his sins. He must trust that Jesus Christ died for his sins—actually sacrificed His life for man's sins. Jesus Christ is the only sacrifice for sins that is acceptable to God.

this passage is not written to the unbeliever who wilfully sins. It is written to the person who has received the knowledge of the truth and wilfully sins. It is written...

Hebrews 10:28 (KJV)

²⁸ He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

The word *despise* means to insult and outrage. How does a person show despite to the Holy Spirit?

- ☒ By sensing the inner pull of the Spirit to repent and change and follow Christ, yet rejecting and ignoring the conviction of the Spirit. This insults Him and shows that the person despises Him.
- ☒ By professing that one is a follower of Christ, yet continuing to live in sin. This insults the Spirit and shows despise for Him.

Hebrews 10:38-39 (KJV)

³⁸ Now the just shall live by faith: but if *any man* draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

³⁹ But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

Drive down the road on faith toward heaven, don't despise, don't rebel

Peril of denying, Heb. 12:15-29

"Looking diligently" has in it the thought of direction. And what is that direction? "Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith..." (Heb. 12:2).

"Lest any man fail of the grace of God." The word here for "fail" is not apostasy -- this is not speaking of the danger of apostatizing. It means simply to fall back. In other words, a believer must keep his eyes on the Lord Jesus, not on men.

"Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." One critical, ugly saint in a church can stir up more trouble than you can possibly imagine, just like one rotten apple in a barrel spoils all the others. We need to ask God for grace to endure whatever we are going through, and not become bitter toward any one or toward any circumstances.

Remember Hebrews is written to the Jews for our learning

And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) (Heb. 12:18-21).

Paul is speaking here of the giving of the Law to Moses on top of Mount Sinai, and he is speaking of the old covenant. The people to whom he was writing were Hebrews who had turned to Christ. We need to keep that in mind all the time in this epistle. We must remember

that the early church -- the three thousand who were saved on the Day of Pentecost -- were not Gentiles but were Jews. Until Paul and Barnabas and the other missionaries began to move out, the early church for those first few years was 100 percent Jewish.

Now these Jews in Jerusalem who had turned to Christ find themselves at a great loss. They had been accustomed to going to the temple. They had been accustomed to hearing the Mosaic Law read. But now they are shut away from the Law, and now they are shut out from the temple. They are no longer a part of the system at all, and they feel very much on the outside. Therefore, I think the writer is saying to them. "You come now to a mount that is different from Mount Sinai, and you do not want to go back to that." Mount Sinai was the place where the Law was given and three thousand people were slain (see [Exod. 32](#)), but three thousand people were saved on the Day of Pentecost. There was death at the giving of the Law; there was new life when the gospel was preached on the Day of Pentecost. The giving of the Law was by no means a delightful experience. There were thunder and lightning, earthquake and storm, blazing fire and the blast of a trumpet that grew louder and louder and louder. It was a terrifying experience -- so much so that the people said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die" ([Exod. 20:19](#)). Now the writer to the Hebrews says, "You don't want to go back to that system. We have left all that behind us."

But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the loving God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels [[Heb. 12:22](#)].

Remember that he is speaking to Hebrews. Mount Zion was David's place in Jerusalem. His palace was located there, and he was buried up there. Zion was David's favorite spot. Many of the Jewish believers had still been going up to the feast in Jerusalem, but the persecution had broken out, and Christians had been driven out of Jerusalem. So he assures them they have a Jerusalem in heaven. Mount Zion is the heavenly city, the eternal city of the living God. The Book of Revelation calls it the New Jerusalem. I cannot give you the number or the street name, but my future address is in the New Jerusalem. This is what we have come to by God's grace. We have something far better in Christ than the Jews ever had under the Law.