

Lesson Four — The First Warning

Day One — Day of Review

Day Two — Second Day of Review

Day Three — The First Warning

Day Four — The First Warning, con't.

Day Five — So Great Salvation

For the past three weeks we have been pouring over Hebrews chapter one, looking back to what the prophets of old told our fathers. We must continue to ask the LORD God to reveal to us His intent as we move forward. We must not separate chapter one from the rest of the book. In fact, chapter one should be the foundation upon which we build. Please go to the Lord in prayer now, and seek His Face. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal truth to you. Ask Him to do the same for the other members in your class.

Day One — Day of Review

For the next two days you are going to look over the past three weeks of homework. Please don't be tempted to shirk this exercise. You have covered much material in these weeks, and the importance of building upon the proper foundation cannot be overemphasized. So give yourself ample study time these three days, and pray, pray, pray yourself through the material. On Day Three we will look at the first warning given in Hebrews.

The first thing I would like you to do is to go to the sheet in the Appendix titled "A Clean Look." This is an unmarked copy of Hebrews chapters one and two. If your original copy is like mine, you have so many marks on your sheets that you can hardly read it! I want you to look at these chapters from a fresh sheet, relating chapter one to chapter two.

Read through both chapters without a break. While reading think: "REGALITY — as it pertains to the earth!" This first chapter, from start to finish, deals with the regality of Christ — in relation to the earth. Then see how it flows right into chapter two. Read both chapters now.

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Did you learn anything new? Have new thoughts? Any comments or questions? Write it below.

Now spend the rest of the day perusing your first week's homework. Don't just skim it. Think through it! Write any new insights. Ask the Lord to impress these things upon your heart.

Any new insights?

Day Two — Second Day of Review

If you would like to begin again today by reading the first two chapters of Hebrews from your "clean" sheets, please feel free to do so.

Now peruse your second and third week's homework. Ask the Lord to fill up your heart with the passion of His heart. Write out any new or fresh insights:

One last thing today...take the first four Old Testament prophecy sheets (the ones you have been working on in the past three weeks) and fill in the chart below with the information you wrote at the bottom of each sheet. In other words, write out your brief summary of each Old Testament prophecy.

What is the main theme of this Passage?

Psalm 2 —

II Samuel 7 —

Psalm 97 —

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Psalm 104 —

Psalm 45 —

Psalm 102 —

Psalm 110 —

Now look over your summaries. Do you see a similar thread running through these Old Testament passages? What do the passages have to do with? What is the *general* theme of all of these chapters?

Do you see how the different facets of the coming age are given in these seven Old Testament passages?

Now read Hebrews 2:1. How important do you think it is that you understand Hebrews chapter one before you move into Hebrews chapter two?

Have a good day. ☺

Day Three — The First Warning

Begin today in prayer.

Now as you begin your study for today, skim the chart you filled in at the end of yesterday's homework. Having a better understanding of the foundation laid out in chapter one, let us move on to a closer look at chapter two. Read the passage below and look up the definitions of the words below.

Hebrews 2:1 For this reason we must pay much closer <4056> attention <4337> to what we have heard, lest we drift away <3901> *from it*. **2** For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience <3876> received a just recompense <3405>, **3** how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, **4** God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

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much closer <4056>

attention <4337>

drift away <3901>

disobedience¹ <3876>

just recompense <3405>

After looking up all the definitions, write the passage in your own words.

OK. We need tie some things together in the context of Hebrews chapter one with this first warning given to us in chapter two. One of the things chapter one deals with is Christ and His inheritance. Do you remember what His inheritance will be? Write it down.

Hebrews 1:8-9 deals with the Throne of the Lord and His Righteous Scepter. It also mentions an anointing. The Son will be anointed with oil *above His companions*. What does this comparison seem to imply?

Now notice Hebrews 1:14. Angels are sent out as ministering *spirits to render service for the sake of the those who will inherit salvation*. This is a salvation yet future, and it is a salvation related to our inheritance.

Let's look up a few verses related to our inheritance.

¹ It is interesting how this word is used in v. 2. It seems to have to do with disobedience **due to mishearing**. In other words, people disobeyed *because they didn't hear the commands correctly*. Something needs to be said here concerning the excuse of mishearing — God has not stuttered in what He has said. Mishearing will not be an acceptable excuse! We need to open up our ears and hear what the Spirit says to the church.

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Romans 4:13 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

According to this verse, what will Abraham and his descendants inherit?

Compare our inheritance to the inheritance of the Son in Psalm 2:8. What do you see?

Galatians 3:29 And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Who are Abraham's descendants and heirs according to the promise?

When dealing with verses that speak of *our inheritance*, many Christians believe that the free gift of salvation and our inheritance are one and the same. Scripture never presents our inheritance as the same as the free gift, rather Scripture presents our inheritance as something *in addition* to the free gift. Something to be earned. Something that may be forfeited. This will become clearer as you move through Hebrews, but for now, understand that the free gift of eternal life is gained through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ, which places one in the family of God and in the position as an heir. This person, having become a child through faith, is an heir of God, and is in position to become *a co-heir with Christ if he suffers with Christ*. Read the following passage, checking the condition of becoming a co-heir with Christ:

Romans 8:16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with *Him* in order that we may also be glorified with *Him*. 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

What is this passage saying concerning being an heir of God and a co-heir with Christ?

As we go along you will see the connection between suffering and glory. The two are *inseparable*.

According to Psalm 2, Christ's inheritance is the earth, and all the nations. Our inheritance is exactly the same thing according to Romans 4:13 (see above). Therefore, Romans 8:17 *gives us the condition* of realizing our inheritance as a co-heir with Christ. The condition is that we must be willing to suffer with Him. Just as Christ suffered in order to obtain His inheritance, so we must suffer in order to realize our inheritance. Again, I am only quoting what these verses say. Go back and check them. See if they say these things. Suffering must precede glory! Keep this in mind as you read various passages in Scripture that deal with inheritance of the believer.

So, let's talk about suffering for a moment. What does it mean that we are to suffer with or for Christ? Sometimes we have the wrong idea of what suffering means when it is used in this type of context. It means to suffer in the same way Christ suffered while He was on the earth. He stood for righteousness and was ridiculed for it. He brought the message of the kingdom of the heavens to very people for whom the message was given, and they persecuted Him for it. He got up early in the morning to spend time with His Father, and did His Father's work until He was exhausted at times. He exemplified the fruit of the Spirit at all times, even when He was tempted not to. He sought and did the will of the Father, even unto the point of death. So how do you think you can suffer with Christ in your day-to-day life, right where you are? (This will be a good discussion question in class.)

Ask the Lord to give you clearer understanding what it means to suffer for Him. See you tomorrow.

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Last week, we read sections of Peter's epistles, but I want to recall them to you again today. (Repetition is one of the most effective ways to learn!) Peter clearly differentiates our free gift from the inheritance. As you work through this passage, you'll see that it contains more information than what we need today, but we need to see it in context. We will be drawing from this passage more as we work our way through Hebrews chapter two. (It is printed in double space so that you can observe it thoroughly.) Spend some time in this passage.

1 Peter 1

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

6 In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, 7 that the proof of your faith, *being* more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; 8 and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but

believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9
obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.

10 As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful search and inquiry, 11 seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow. 12 It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven-- things into which angels long to look.

Write out below all that you learn from this passage on the inheritance:

According to this passage, how is this inheritance related to a salvation that is *yet to be revealed*?

Notice the importance of this salvation. What did the prophets do concerning this salvation?

What do the angels do?

Isn't that interesting?

Now we will jump ahead briefly to a verse in Hebrews chapter nine. It shows whom it will involve, and what event will bring this salvation to pass.

Hebrews 9:28 so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time for (*lit.*, with respect to) salvation without *reference to sin*, to those who eagerly await Him.

According to this passage, what did Jesus do the first time He came?

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What event is this passage dealing with?

Jesus Christ came once to bear the sins of *many*. The next time He comes it will be for a salvation to those who *eagerly await Him*. (I am only saying what the text says.)

Let's talk for a moment on the whole picture of salvation. Many times when we see the word salvation in a passage of Scripture, we automatically tend to think that the word or passage is referring to the past justification we have received through faith in Christ. But Scripture deals with salvation in three different aspects — our *past salvation* (which is based upon faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ), our *present salvation* (which we are to be working out), and our *future salvation* (which is yet to be revealed). The latter two are only possible because of the former.

On the basis of Christ's shed blood at Calvary (His past work), we are, through faith, placed into the family of God and we presently possess eternal life. There is not anything a person can do to gain this salvation, except believe in the finished work of Christ. Neither is there anything a person can do to add to this salvation or take away from this salvation, because it has been completely finished in Jesus Christ. This is the past aspect of salvation, and God eternally preserves it.

The present and future aspects of salvation are inseparably linked together and can only begin to be realized based upon the past aspect. Presently, Jesus Christ sits at the right hand of the Father as our High Priest mediating for us (His present work). This present aspect of our salvation is the *ongoing process of sanctification*, which will one day be realized in the *salvation of the soul* — the future aspect of salvation — and has to do with our position as co-heir with Christ in His kingdom. This is why Paul tells us to work out *our own salvation in fear and trembling* (Phil. 2:12). In one way or another, Paul stresses in all of his letters that we are to strive to realize the upward call. The present and future aspects of salvation are what we are to focus upon once we have been saved (past). The present aspect being the ongoing work — our walking in the spirit and not in the flesh — with the future aspect being the realization of the salvation of our souls for an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1 Pe. 1:9 [cf. 2 Pe. 1:10]).

Hebrews is a book dealing with the present and future aspects of salvation. That is why the author, after only mentioning the past purification for sins (1:3) immediately focuses the attention of his reader on the Messianic Era through quoting the Old Testament prophets. The author is simply laying the foundation upon which his warnings would rest. It all has to do with our present and future salvation, based upon the past.

This *inherited salvation* in Hebrews 1:14 has to do with the present and future aspect. And it is the same salvation as mentioned in 2:3. The warning spoken of in Hebrews 2:1-4 is that we must pay very close attention to what we have heard about this salvation (future), lest we *presently* drift away from it, or let it *presently* slip.

In the text, the question is asked, *how will we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* The answer is assumed — we won't escape! And within the very immediate context concerning the salvation mentioned in Hebrews 1:14 and the warning mentioned in 2:1-3, verse 2:5 tells us what this salvation has to do with —

Hebrews 2:5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

More on *the world to come* later.

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Write out what you learned today. How does Hebrews 2:1-5 relate to Hebrews chapter one?

As we close today, meditate for a moment on the following passage. I hope you find encouragement in these words.

2 Thessalonians 2

13 But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. 14 And it was for this He called you through our gospel, that you may gain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word *of mouth* or by letter from us.

16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God our Father, who has loved us and given us eternal comfort and good hope by grace, 17 comfort and strengthen your hearts in every good work and word.

Have a good day.

Day Five — So Great Salvation

Today we want to look at the phrase *so great salvation*. This is one exciting thought, so hang on! Open your time today in prayer.

Now go back to the beginning of the homework for Day Three and read the portion of Hebrews chapter two printed on page 45.

What would be the implication of this salvation being called *so great* by the author of Hebrews? Arlen Chitwood has a good statement about it, and quotes G. H. Lang in what he says. Here is what Mr. Chitwood says:

On “great” in Heb. 2:3, the regular Greek word for “great” is “megas.” The word here is “telikoutos” (pronounce the “e” like a long “a,” and the remainder is pronounced as it looks). The word moves beyond the thought of “great” to more the thought of a superlative — “greatest” (though “telikoutos” is not a superlative). The thought is that this salvation moves into the realm of the greatest thing God could ever design for redeemed man, as it would pertain to the Messianic Era. I see nothing in the word which would indicate a connection with time, an age, etc., though it is describing a salvation within an age.

G.H.Lang is quite good commenting on this word. Here’s what he says:

“It is not here that salvation is great: salvation in its lesser range than this is indeed great (megas); but the adjective used here is rare in the New Testament, and very emphatic. Telikoutos means “so great.” Its only other places are: Jas. 3:4 — the ship that is so great as compared with its small rudder; II Cor. 1:10 — ‘so great a death’ as threatened Paul in Asia, something more terrible than men ordinarily face, and Rev. 16:18 — where the full force of

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the word is seen by its describing ‘so great an earthquake, so violent (megas), such as was not seen since there were men upon the earth.’”

Chitwood goes on to say:

Thus the point in our passage is that the future salvation in view is something wholly unexampled, as was that earthquake. It is not the “common salvation” in which all the saved must share, or they would not be saved in any sense, but it is the highest height and splendor of glory to which the God of all grace in this age is calling us in Christ, even “unto His eternal glory” (I Pet. 5:10); yea, “unto His own kingdom and glory” (I Thess. 2:12); so that such shall obtain nothing less than “the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thess. 2:14).

Do you get the picture? That should about knock your socks off! The question which the Spirit of Truth inspired the author of Hebrews to pose is: “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” Connect this question with the statement made in Hebrews 2:1. Put those two thoughts into your own words.

In the middle of v. 3 the sentence begins, “After *it* was at first spoken through the Lord...” What does the pronoun *it* refer to?

The Lord spoke of this future salvation. There are some verses printed out for you in your Week One homework on page 7. Turn back and read those passages that deal with Jesus’ message. What was the message?

The simplest way to describe what the phrase the *kingdom of heaven* means is to let it say what it says in the original language. In the Greek, the phrase literally reads, “the kingdom of the heavens.” The original language articulated both words, *the kingdom* and *the heaven*, with the word *heaven*, in this phrase, always being written in the plural form. Having seen that, let it mean exactly what it says. It speaks of *the rule of the heavenly realm* over the earth.

The present kingdom of the earth is set up in two realms. The *heavenly realm from which Satan and his fallen angels rule*, and the *earthly realm over which Satan and his fallen angels rule*. This heavenly realm is the very thing which Jesus offered to the nation of Israel — the rule from the heavenlies. And this is the very thing that Israel, as a nation, rejected. Now, this is the very thing which Jesus is offering to the church — the rule from the heavenlies. And it is the very thing that is being dealt with in the Book of Hebrews. Do you see the connection?

Hebrews 2:5 For He did not subject to angels the world to come, concerning which we are speaking.

What a great salvation we have to look forward to. We must not drift away from it!

Not only did Jesus speak about this salvation, *it was also confirmed by those who heard* (2:3b). The author states here that the very thing, which Jesus spoke about, was also confirmed to him and others by those who heard Christ speak. This would be referring to the message which Peter and the Apostles took forth on

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Pentecost, ten days after the ascension of Christ and throughout the early part of the Book of Acts. Once Paul was converted, he continued with the same message in the latter part of Acts, carrying the message of the kingdom to the Jew first then later, after the nation's continued rejection, to the Gentiles. Keeping this in context, the author of Hebrews speaks of God testifying to this *message by both signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gift of the Holy Spirit*.

Keeping all of this in context (otherwise you'll miss the author's intent), during the time of Christ's early ministry, He performed many miracles; and during the early portion of Acts, the Apostles were given the ability to perform many miracles. Through the use of these signs, wonders and miracles, God was testifying *to the Jews* concerning the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, validating the authenticity of the offer *and* the One Who was making the offer. And this offer of the kingdom of the heavens was being offered to Abraham's descendants, the only group of people on the face of the earth who could receive such an offer — first, to his physical descendants (Jews who had been saved through faith in the blood of a passover lamb), then, once the church was established, to his spiritual descendants (Gentiles who had been grafted in through faith in the blood of the Passover Lamb). These signs, wonders, and miracles were prophesied to be a sign *to the Jews* validating the King and His kingdom. But, as a nation, Israel rejected the offer of the kingdom of the heavens, and God has raised up a new entity to be the recipients of the offer of the kingdom. He raised up the Church, a new nation. And now through the pen of the author of Hebrews, the message is being sounded to the Church, with warnings being given to us concerning our future salvation that has to do with the kingdom of Christ.

The Book of Hebrews fits intricately together. In His *past* work, Jesus made purification for sins (our past salvation based upon His finished work [Heb. 1:3]); His *present* work as He sits at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us based on His shed blood on the Mercy Seat (our present salvation [9:10-14]), with a view to His *future* work, that of reigning as King in His kingdom (our future salvation yet to be revealed [2:3; 10:13, 37]). And this *so great salvation* has to do with this future kingdom. With this future salvation in mind (1:14), the Book of Hebrews tells us what *we* are to do and gives us five different warnings concerning this.

Before we close for the day, there is a sheet in your Appendix entitled ***The Five Warnings of Hebrews***. Please take that sheet and write out in your own words what this first warning is (Heb. 2:1-4), and to whom it is given. By the time you have finished this study, you should have all five warnings written in your own words. Hopefully, that will go a long way in reminding you of the way you are to be living now, with a view to that coming day.

If you are doing commentary work, read:

Arlen Chitwood's book So Great Salvation, read chapter three, *God Has Spoken*.

Philip Mauro's book God's Pilgrim, read chapter two, *The Things Which We Have Heard*.