

## A TRUSTWORTHY GOSPEL (v. 4)

*This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

1. In the Old Testament, truth is confirmed by two or three witnesses. In verse 4, the author of Hebrews offers three convincing witnesses to the gospel. What are they? What is the significance of each?
2. "Signs, wonders and miracles" in both the Old Testament demonstrate that God is at work among his people. They confirm both the message and messenger and illustrate the character of the coming kingdom. The apostles' miracles demonstrated that the same Spirit working through Jesus was at work in the Apostles. The Bible refers to them as signs because they point to something greater than themselves.

What do the signs, wonders, and miracles performed by the Apostles tell us about the nature of God's kingdom?

What do they demonstrate about the far greater miracle of salvation?

What happens when we are more fascinated with signs, wonders, and miracles than the gospel they point to?

3. Augustine captured the essence of Hebrews 2:1-4 when he wrote, "For now treat the Scripture of God as the face of God. Melt in its presence." What are some of the truths of this passage that have captured your heart?
4. What are some practical steps you can take to pay the most careful attention to the gospel in the days and weeks to come?

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# LOOK TO JESUS

PAY CAREFUL ATTENTION | HEBREWS 2:1-4

A newspaper article featured the story of a mom and her son who bought one of those giant inflatable swans and headed to the beach. They inflated the swan and hopped on to catch some rays. In a matter of moments, they were a lot further from shore than they wanted to be. In her words, "the shore kept getting further and further away." They paddled furiously but could not beat the current. Fortunately, an alert couple called 911. The fire department dispatched a rescue boat and escorted them safely back to shore. As soon as they were on shore, the mom ceremoniously punctured the inflatable with her son's shark tooth necklace. One of the firemen tossed it in a dumpster.

The writer of Hebrews is concerned that his audience may be drifting away from the gospel's foundational truths. Drifting happens slowly over time. At first, you barely notice. Before you know it, you are further from home than you ever dreamed. You may even be in grave danger of not making it back at all.

Hebrews 2 introduces us to the first of five warning passages. The writer of Hebrews wants us to know that losing sight of the gospel is far more serious than we might imagine. He cautions his readers, "How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation?"

## AN EXHORTATION (v. 1a)

*We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard...*

The writer of Hebrews opens his letter by reminding us, "In these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son (1;1)." In verse 4, he will remind us, "This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him. God also testified to it by signs, wonders, and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will (2:4)." His opening exhortation is, "We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we heard (2:1)." He doesn't say we need to pay attention. He tells us, "we **must pay most careful** attention." There is a sense of urgency in his appeal.

1. What do you think the writer of Hebrews has in mind when he tells us we must pay the most careful attention?
2. Why does the gospel deserve our **most careful attention**?
3. Why "must" we pay the most careful attention?
4. What happens when we do not pay careful attention to what we have heard?

## A WARNING (v. 1b)

*...so that we do not drift away*

1. How would you describe "drifting away?"
2. What are the dangers of drifting away?

In "For the Love of God," D. A. Carson writes, "People do not drift toward Holiness. Apart from grace-driven effort, people do not gravitate toward godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith, and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance; we drift toward disobedience and call it freedom; we drift toward superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation; we slouch toward prayerlessness and delude ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism; we slide toward godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated."

While it is easy to drift away, we never drift into greater godliness. What are some of the things we need to pursue to grow in godliness?

## A GREAT SALVATION FROM A REAL JUDGMENT (vv. 2-3)

*For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, how shall we escape if **we ignore** so great a salvation?*

1. According to the author of Hebrews, Old Testament judgments, as harsh as they seem, are simply a shadow of the greater judgment that is to come. What are the ultimate consequences of rejecting the salvation we have in Christ? Why are we hesitant to talk about judgment? Why is judgment an essential truth of the gospel?
2. What makes our salvation "great?"
3. To ignore our salvation is not the same as rejecting our salvation, but it can have a devastating effect. "If we ignore," in verse 3, is built around the same Greek construction as "they paid no attention" in Matthew 22:5.

*MATTHEW 22:1-5: Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: <sup>2</sup> "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for his son. <sup>3</sup> He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come. <sup>4</sup> "Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.' <sup>5</sup> "But **they paid no attention** and went off—one to his field, another to his business.*

What were some of the things that distracted the characters in Jesus' parable? What are some of the things that distract us? What is the danger of being distracted according to Jesus' parable? What is the risk of being distracted according to Hebrews 2:3?