

Anchor Yourselves to the Truth Not to Drift Away

Hebrews 2:1-8 (v. 1)

Bible Teacher: Rev. Tesfaye Tamrie

I. Historical and Biblical Context

A. Historical Background

Historically, the Israelites were *prone to drifting away from the Truth* proclaimed to them by Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David and the Prophets. Every time they drifted away from the Truth (The Word of God), they found themselves mired in their own sins from which they couldn't get out on their own! Every time they *drifted away* from the Word of God, they *slid back* into slavery, lost their God given lands, properties, and status in society! Because they *turned away from God* only to latch onto idols, the Israelites lost most of the territories gained by Joshua. Their lives were filled with wars, conflicts, destitution, misery and humiliation as recorded in the Book of Judges. Because of their chronic habit of drifting away from God, the Israelites either lived as exiles or as second-class citizens under different nations who ruled over them.

In the New Testament era, *Christians also exhibited this tendency of drifting away from the Truth of the Gospel*. As we read the Book of Acts and the Epistles Apostle Paul wrote to the various churches, we find Christians *vacillating* between the Truth and the lies propagated by False Preachers and Teachers who insisted obedience to the Law, Circumcision and adherence to Jewish rituals are necessary for Salvation! **Apostle Paul had to counter such false teaching through out his life because Christians were also prone to drifting away from the Truth!** The history of Christianity is filled with periods of *apostacy, spiritual stagnation* and veering off from the Truth in different directions as can be attested by the various denominations, traditions and rituals which *elevate* Angels, Mary and *venerate* people (Popes, etc.) in place of Jesus Christ! **When Christians drift away from the Truth, they latch onto anything that appeals to their flesh!**

B. Biblical Context

To fully understand and interpret the various books, any chapter or particular verses in the Bible correctly, we must always:

- a) Study, examine them in context (in relations to all the other books in terms of foundational Doctrines);
- b) The Old Testament and the New Testament are in perfect harmony and unity (they don't contradict each other in any way);
- c) Passages in the New Testament must be understood in the context of the Old Testament;
- d) Jesus Christ is the Focus – The Preeminent Focus of God's Word. God, His Father, made Him so!

The Book of Hebrews is an excellent example in its demonstration of how the Old Testament and the New Testament are in harmony and unity. In the first 4 verses of chapter 1, The Book of Hebrews opens by declaring that (a) Jesus is the Son of God, (b) He is the Final Word in terms of validating what was spoken by the prophets of the Old, (c) the universe was made through Him, (d) as God's only Son, He is "the radiance of God's Glory and the exact representation of His Being," (e) the universe is sustained by His Power, and (d) He sits at the Right Hand of God. Fittingly, we began our Sunday Morning Bible Study in 2023 by declaring that "No One Should be Compared with Jesus Christ!" And Rev. Rhyne did an excellent job in highlighting the Supremacy of Jesus Christ in who He is and in what He does to secure Salvation for us! The following week, Rev. Alice did an outstanding job by letting us know that "Angels, Prophets & priests are just Messengers!" And today, with the help of the Holy Spirit, I shall attempt to highlight what we must "Anchor Ourselves in the Truth not to drift away" for God.

II. The Lesson: Anchor Yourselves in the Truth Not to Drift Away

1. Verse 1. Pay Careful Attention to What You Hear.

God *preserved* His Word in a way that anyone "**who pays careful attention to it**" can *understand* and *benefit* from it. The Scripture is written in *very clear* language. There is no *ambiguity* in God's Word. Its words are *absolutely certain* and *imbued with divine power* which

can radically transform lives for the better! So, **what is it** that prevents Christians/Believers from paying “care attention” to the Truth as it is proclaimed to them by *faithful servants* of the Lord? From verse 1, we know that *the issue* is “lack of attention.” Therefore, we need to examine the *causes* for “lack of attention” among the Believers (Christians). Let us look at possible scenarios:

- a) **Unrepentant Heart.** Unrepented Sins and persisting in them can *block the believer from listening and accepting God’s Word.* Eventually, that can even lead to backsliding/regression.
- b) **Undeveloped Faith.** The *quality of one’s faith* in Christ *depends on* the degree to which the believer reads, learns, and studies the Word of God. The more the believer knows who Christ is, what He did for our Redemption and the Plan He has for us to inherit Eternal Life, the more he or she carefully listens to the Word of God. The *interest and desire* to know more *increases over time*, not decrease! Therefore, one cultivates “**more careful attention**” to the preached/taught Word of God.
- c) **Being Distracted Easily.** Losing Focus. Lacking Discipline. *Allowing* things to come between the Word and you. Half listening. Present in the body but absent in the mind. Develop perseverance in the faith!
- d) **Interference by Satan.** But the Bible says, Resist the devil and he will flee from you! In other words, don’t entertain him! Pray and fight him off in the Spirit using God’s Word!

So, the **remedy** is to “pay more careful attention … to what we have heard so that we do not drift away.” The operative words are “**more**,” “**careful**,” and “**attention**.” When it comes to the Word of God, we need to pay “**more**” “**careful attention**” to *how* we “**listen**” and *process* what we have **heard**.

- **Let us remember** the price Jesus paid for our **Salvation!**
- **Let us keep in mind** who Jesus Christ is!
- **Let us not forget** all the blessings we have received which we didn’t deserve!

2. vv. 2 and 3. Pretending Ignorance Won't Save You from Punishment.

Let us break down verses 2 and 3 to closely examine the implications relevant to us at this time.

- a) “For if the *message spoken by the angels* was **binding**, and **every violation** and **disobedience** received its **just punishment**, ...” (v. 2).

In this section, there are *two major aspects* Scripture wants us to pay “**more careful attention**” to. The first aspect in verse 2: the “message spoken by the **angels**,” a reference to Moses, Samuel, the OT prophets was both **true** and **binding** (**Note:** in this verse, angel doesn’t refer to angels in heaven). For example, Moses not only *warned* the Israelites not to “**ignore**,” “**violate**,” or “**disobey**” God’s Word, but he also *prophesized* in great detail *what would happen to them* (Deuteronomy 28 and 29, etc.).

- b) “... how shall we escape **if we ignore such a great salvation?** This **Salvation** which was *first announced by the Lord*, was confirmed to us by those who **heard** Him” (v. 3b).

The *second aspect* is that “ignoring” what *we have heard* from Jesus Christ himself is inexcusable! Jesus came to affirm, confirm and fulfill all the Law, Psalms and Prophecies of the Old Testament. In Hebrews chapter 1, it was established that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is superior to “**angels**” who are only *His messengers*. Recall also that it is God who gave Moses, Samuel, Isaiah, etc. His Divine Law, Truth, divine principles, etc. So, “if the message spoken by the angels was **binding**, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment, *how shall we escape if we “ignore”* the message of salvation proclaimed by Jesus Christ Himself?! **The implication concerning us is very clear!** If the Israelites who “ignored” the message of salvation proclaimed by the prophets of old didn’t escape God’s punishment, what can happen to us who “ignore” **the message of redemption secured by the Blood of His Son?**

- **Ignoring God’s Word is a serious sin!**
- **Remember Jesus Christ is The Word!**

- **Ignoring God's Word is the worst form of ignorance!**
- **Remember God created the Universe by His Word!**
 - **You came into being by God's Word!**
 - **You breath God's air every day!**
 - **You eat and drink what God provided every day!**
- **Don't ignore God's Commandments!**
- **Pretending Ignorance won't save you from punishment!**

3. vv. 4. The Signs, Wonders and Miracles Confirm God's Word.

Verse 4 specifically refers to **Signs, Wonders** and **Miracles** (a) manifested in the Son who became Incarnate to fulfilled all the Prophecies of the OT, (b) *manifested* during the 3 years of Christ's earthly ministry, (c) *manifested* in His Crucifixion, Burial, Resurrection and Ascension, and (d) *manifested* in the Birth of the New Testament Church by the Power of the Holy Spirit (as recorded in the Book of Acts). **The whole purpose of these manifestations is to continue unfolding God's Plan of Salvation which was secured by the Blood of His Son!**

Every disciple of Jesus who truly believes and lives by the Word of God has been affirmed and confirmed by **Signs, Wonders** and **Miracles** which **testify** about the Amazing and Mighty Power of the Most High! In other words, the Signs, Wonders and Miracles each of us experienced **testify** about the existence, faithfulness and awesome Power of God! As disciples of Christ, each of us have **testimonies** which affirm and confirm *the realizations* of the Truth and Promises of God's Word in our lives. In other words, each of us can **testify** in various ways that God's Word became real, that is, became a reality in our lives! *First and foremost, we received our salvation when we believed in Jesus Christ!* Our Redemption became possible only because God was so gracious towards us when we didn't deserve His Love and Mercy! We received our Salvation in Jesus Christ only because He was obedient to His Father's Will! **Therefore, we must anchor ourselves to this Truth so that we may not drift away carried by false preaching and teaching!** Jesus Christ is the Rock of our Salvation!

The Gift of the Holy Spirit. Before Jesus was crucified, He told His disciples that He will send the Holy Spirit, the Gift that the Father promised. On the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the 120 believers and anointed them with His Power. Many Signs, Wonders and Miracles occurred during and after the initiating of the New Testament Church as recorded in the Book of Acts. **Accordingly, God's Plan of Salvation was extended to the Gentiles and the Church grew and expanded rapidly through out the world through the Power of the Holy Spirit!** Various Gifts of the Holy Spirit were also distributed among the believers “according to His Will” as also mentioned in 1 Corinthians chapters 12.

4. vv. 5 to 8. Envision Yourself as God Sees You!

As we read Genesis chapter 1, we can clearly see the Vision and Plan of God for humanity. Not only God created “man in His own image,” but He also made man *ruler over* everything on earth. After The Fall, God initiated His Plan of Salvation so that Man could be *reconciled with Him* by faith and obedience to His Word under the Covenant. God’s Vision is for man to inherit Eternal Life to be with Jesus Christ who reigns from above! If we could envision our destiny the way God sees it, we would never be short sighted! “We must pay more careful attention” to God’s Word so that we can see what God sees in us! When God looks down and sees us, He doesn’t see how sinful we are because we are covered by the Blood of the Lamb! When God looks at us, He sees what we can accomplish in the Power of the Holy Spirit!

III. Conclusion

- **We Must See Ourselves as God sees Us!**
- **We Must Regard Ourselves the Way God Values Us!**
- **We Must Envision our Future from God’s Perspective!**
- **Envision Yourself as God Sees You!**