

# ARE YOU DRIFTING?

Hebrews 2:1-4

In Hebrews 2:1-4 the Preacher delivers the first of five warnings: *pay attention – stop drifting!*

## To Whom Is The Preacher Preaching? (Hebrews 2:1)

Hebrews 2:1 (ESV)

*Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*

It is a critical question because of the issue of eternal security. Certain warnings seem to indicate believers can lose their salvation. In order to avoid this interpretation, some teach that “we” refers to unbelievers. But a plain reading of the text (without a theological agenda) doesn’t support this interpretation.

Most certainly the Preacher is addressing born-again believers here and throughout the book (cf. 3:1, 6, 12-14; 5:11-14; 6:9-12)

## What Does It Mean To “Drift Away”? (Hebrews 2:1)

Hebrews 2:1 (ESV)

*Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.*

To what do they need to “pay much closer attention”? The message declared by the Son! To “drift away” is to fail to give proper attention to the message. This is also what it means to “neglect such a great salvation” in verse 3.

There were drifters in the church. Some had grown cold in their love for Jesus. He wasn’t central to their lives. They weren’t rejecting Jesus; He just wasn’t that important to them anymore.

In verses 2-3, the preacher warned them that their drifting put them in grave danger.

## What Is The Danger in Drifting? (Hebrews 2:2-3a)

Hebrews 2:2-3a (ESV)

*For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?*

The “message declared by angels” was the Law given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Both Stephen (Acts 7:38, 53) and the Apostle Paul (Galatians 3:19) affirm angels played a role in mediating the Law from God to Moses.

Since punishment was certain for disobeying the message declared by angels, how much more certain is punishment for those disobeying the message declared by God’s Son?

The warning is of punishment, not loss of salvation. To drift is to risk punishment.

God is a good Father; He means what He says. The life, teachings, sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus saves us not only from the **penalty** of sin, but the **practice** of sin. The salvation in view is wholistic including both justification and sanctification (cf. 2:10-11).

To drift away, to neglect such a great salvation, is to drift away from Jesus back into the world, back into the flesh, back into sin. To drift brings down the discipline of God upon the child of God.

Of course, this is only true if the message is reliable.

## How Can We Be Certain Of The Message? (Hebrews 2:3-4)

Hebrews 2:3-4 (ESV)

*...how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.*

The message came first through the life and teachings of Jesus to those who were eyewitnesses such as Peter, James, John etc. These eyewitnesses in turn declared the life and teachings of Jesus; their testimony to Jesus being validated by God through signs and wonders and miracles that accompanied their testimony (Acts 2:43, 4:33, 5:12). The Preacher and his brethren were “2nd” generation believers having been led to faith by those who were eyewitnesses to Jesus.

## Bottom Line

Drifting is as much a danger today as it was in 65AD. Every Christian faces the danger of drifting.

Drifting puts us in danger of God’s punishment. It is therefore important for us to be able to recognize when we are drifting. Bob Deffinbaugh lists possible symptoms of drifting:

1. My sense of wonder begins to wane
2. My awareness of the nearness of God has become ancient history.
3. My love and desire for God’s Word falls short of what I find in Psalm 119.
4. The realities of heaven and hell seem distant and unreal.
5. I fall apart at the first sign of suffering or persecution.
6. I am unaware of the constant, downward pull of the world, the flesh, and the devil.
7. Prayer, Bible study, witnessing, and going to church are a duty, rather than a delight.
8. The Lord’s Table is dull, and preaching is boring.
9. Remembering the work of Jesus Christ on the cross does not emotionally move me.
10. I become autonomous, rather than deeply dependent upon other believers.
11. Theology ceases to be important to me, or (worse yet) when it is just an intellectual exercise.
12. My theology is derived more from the fiction section of the library than from the Bible, good commentaries, or books on theology.
13. I lack joy and gratitude for all God has done for me.
14. I have ceased growing in faith, hope, and love.
15. I’m looking for something “more” outside Scripture, and outside of Christ.<sup>1</sup>

The Preacher urges us to “pay much closer attention to the message”. We stop drifting when we anchor ourselves again in the Word. Many ways are available to us beginning with a daily quiet time. Review the sermon throughout the week. Use your commute to listen to Christian radio or to the Bible on CD. Listen to Christian music that turns your thoughts toward Christ. Spend time with fellow believers talking about God’s Word and praying together. Plug into ministry to rekindle the joy of accomplishing for Jesus.

May the Holy Spirit alert us if we’re drifting. Let us pay much closer attention to what God has revealed to us through His exalted Son.

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<sup>1</sup> bible.org, *A Word of Warning and Exhortation* (Hebrews 2:1-4)