**Chapter Three**

**God Has Spoken**

*Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard*, *lest we drift away*.

*For if the Word spoken through angels proved steadfast*, *and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward*,

*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation*, *which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord*, *and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him*,

*God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders*, *with various miracles*, *and gifts of the Holy Spirit*, *according to His own will*? (**Hebrews 2:1-4**)

The opening four verses in **Hebrews** chapter **two** record the first of the five major warnings in the book. This warning is introduced and based upon that which is seen in chapter **one**, and neither this warning nor any one of the other four warnings can be properly understood apart from this introductory material.

Any incorrect understanding of the central message in **Hebrews** — usually seen as having to do with eternal salvation, causing the warning passages to be incorrectly applied to the unsaved rather than correctly applied to the saved (a common misinterpretation of these passages and the book as a whole) — can invariably be traced back to a misunderstanding of chapter **one** and the connection that this chapter has with the remainder of the book.

The Spirit of God led individuals to begin that which they wrote after certain fashions for particular reasons; and, aside from the manner in which the book of **Genesis** and the gospel of **John** open, **Hebrews** provides about as good of an example of this as can be found in Scripture. **Hebrews** is a book built around five major warnings, and the first fourteen verses of the book, comprising the first chapter, set the tone for not only the first warning but for the remaining four as well.

The entire first chapter, made up mainly of quotations from the Old Testament, centers on the thought of *heirship*. Christ has been appointed “*Heir of all things*” (v. **2**); and when He comes into His inheritance, He will have many “companions [KJV: ‘fellows’]” with Him (v. **9**), who are spoken of as those “*who will inherit salvation* [lit., ‘who are about to inherit salvation’]” (v. **14**).

These seven Old Testament quotations in chapter **one** (vv. **5-13**), from which most of the teaching is drawn in this introductory chapter, are all *Messianic* in their scope of fulfillment. And these quotations present *a complete*, *composite Messianic portrait of Christ*, drawing from different things that the Spirit of God had previously revealed concerning Christ in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The first chapter has one central focus: *a forward look to that day when Christ and His companions* (*Christians*) *will ascend the throne together and rule the earth with a rod of iron for one thousand years*.This chapter then leads immediately into the first warning, recorded in chapter **two**, which sets the tone for the other four warnings in the book.

In this respect, contextually, all five warning passages can be understood *only one way*. They can only be understood *as warnings directed to Christians relative to the inheritance that lies out ahead*.

Then, the very nature of the way that the first warning begins in chapter **two** should eliminate all controversy. This warning begins with the word “*Therefore*,” or more literally, “Because of this.” Because of what? Only one thing can possibly be in view — *because of that which has preceded in chapter* ***one***.

Introductory material has been given, and now the Spirit of God can move beyond this material and sound the first warning to Christians without the possibility of being misunderstood, provided one heeds the introductory material. But, if one ignores this introductory material . . .

Therefore

**Hebrews 2:1** could be better translated:

*Because of this it is necessary*, *so much the more*, *to keep our attention fixed upon the things which we have heard*, *lest*, *at any time*, *we might drift away*.

Because of that which precedes, especially the immediately preceding verse dealing with Christians as “*those* *who will inherit salvation*” (v. **14**), Christians are *compelled* on the one hand and *warned* on the other. They are *compelled* concerning the necessity of keeping their attention fixed on the inheritance that lies out ahead, and they are *warned* concerning the consequences of not so doing.

Christians, by the birth from above, have become members of the family of God. They have become “*children of God*”; and because they are *new creations* “*in Christ*,” (**2 Corinthians 5:17**), they, as well, are seen as “*sons of God*” (**Galatians 3:26**; **4:6**). In fact, Christians are referred to as “Children” and “sons” about an equal number of times in the New Testament.

Because Christians are *new creations* “*in Christ*” and can presently be viewed as “sons” *because of creation*, they can one day be adopted into a firstborn standing. And, in this respect, they are in line to inherit the rights of the firstborn, the rights of primogeniture.

With these things in view, the first chapter in the book of **Hebrews** is about *Christ*, *as God*’*s firstborn Son*, *one day coming into possession of His inheritance*; and the chapter, as well, is about *Christ’s* “*companions*,” *— Christians*, *following the adoption into a firstborn standing — coming into possession of this same inheritance as co-heirs with Him*.

(For additional information on Christians presently seen as both “*children of God*” and “*sons of God*,” with the adoption into a firstborn standing occurring yet future, refer to the author’s book, God’s Firstborn Sons, Chapter 3, along with the appendix.)

And at the heart of all five of the warning passages, reflecting back on material in chapter **one**, each passage clearly reveals that it is possible for a Christian to forfeit his birthright and fail to realize this inheritance. The entire matter is looked upon from different angles in the first four warnings, viewing the inheritance from different perspectives and showing different facets of the present pilgrim walk, warning and exhorting Christians.

Then the fifth and final warning deals with the matter in a more direct manner, summing up the previous four warnings by drawing from the account of Esau forfeiting his birthright (**Hebrews 12:14-17**; cf. **Genesis 25:27-34**; **27:1-38**).

The thought in **Hebrews 2:1** is very similar to the thought set forth in **Hebrews 12:2** where Christians, running the race of the faith, are exhorted to center their attention upon Jesus. Drawing from the way that the Greek text is worded, Christians are to *look away from* anything that could distract and *look to* Jesus alone in the course of the race.

In **Hebrews 12:2**, the person upon whom we are to keep our attention fixed is described as:

1. The One who, at Calvary, kept His attention fixed on “*the joy that was set before Him* [the day when He and His co-heirs would rule and reign over the earth (**Matthew 25:20-23**)].”
2. The One who is presently seated at God’s right hand, anticipating that future day when “*the joy that was set before Him*” will be realized (cf. **Hebrews 1:13**).

And in **Hebrews 2:1**, it is the overall scope of this future inheritance upon which we are to keep our attention fixed — *Christ* as the appointed “*Heir of all things*” and *Christians* as those who are about to come into the position of “*companions*” with Him.

The danger of Christians not keeping their eyes fixed on the goal in either passage (**Hebrews 2:1**; **12:2**) is the same. It would have to be, for the race of the faith in chapter **twelve** is simply another picture of the same thing seen in chapter **two**, with the goal at any point throughout the book where a goal is in view having previously been established and made known in the opening chapter.

In **Hebrews 2:1**, the thought is that of drifting away from these things (as a ship, because of improper navigation by the crew, might drift past its mooring). Then, because of this improper direction in the course of one’s life — an improper navigation in one’s life — because of this drifting along in life, in a direction not moving toward the revealed destination, a Christian can fail to realize the goal of his calling.

In **Hebrews 2:1**, attention is to be fixed upon “*the things we have heard*,” which center on the coming inheritance of Christ and His co-heirs. And in **Hebrews 12:2**, attention is to be fixed upon Jesus, who, as seen in the very opening statement concerning Him in Hebrews, is the “*Heir of all things*” (**1:2**). And by fixing our attention *upon Him*, *as Heir*, our attention will also be fixed upon the coming inheritance of the saints as well. From a proper Scriptural perspective, our attention really cannot be fixed upon one apart from the other, for they are inseparably related, one to the other.

The same inseparable relationship can be seen between Christ’s finished work at Calvary and His coming reign with His co-heirs. Jesus paid the price for His co-heirs’ redemption at Calvary, and, at the same time, had His eyes fixed upon “*the joy that was set before Him*” (referring to that day when He and those for whom He was paying redemption’s price [His shed blood] would occupy the throne together [ref. the author’s book, Run to Win, Chapter 3]). Thus, within the scope of the inheritance given to Him by the Father, Christ cannot be separated from His co-heirs, for *both* are to exercise the rights of primogeniture *together*.

There is no such thing as viewing the events surrounding Calvary in their proper perspective apart from viewing Christ’s future inheritance in connection with these events. And, as well, there is no such thing as viewing Christ in a proper perspective as “*Heir of all things*” apart from also viewing the “*companions*” which He will have with Him in that day, made possible because of His finished work at Calvary.

The *glory* must follow the *sufferings*, and Christ and His co-heirs, within the scope of this future glory, *must realize the inheritance together*. *Sufferings*, *glory*, *Heir*, *co-heirs* are all inseparably related, one to the other.

We *must* fix our attention upon *the Christ of the Scriptures*, the “*Heir of all things*”; we *must* look at redemption’s price, paid at Calvary, the same way Christ looked at it — “*for the joy that was set before Him* . . . .” If we don’t, “*at any time*, *we might drift away*” from these things. And such a drifting away — an erroneous direction in the course of one’s life — will, unless corrective action is taken, ultimately result in tragic consequences.

A Just Recompense of Reward

Two things are brought to light in **Hebrews 2:2**:

1. “. . . *the Word spoken through angels proved steadfast*.”
2. “. . . every transgression and disobedience received a just [KJV: ‘recompense of’] reward.”

God gave His Word to Moses at Sinai through the instrumentality of angels (cf. **Deuteronomy 33:2**; **Psalm 68:17**; **Acts 7:53**; **Galatians 3:19**), and that which they spoke was “steadfast [i.e., ‘settled,’ ‘established’].” This word was given “perfect” in the beginning (**Psalm 12:6**); that given through Moses, and later through other Jewish prophets, was “firm,” “established” at the time it was given. And the Israelites’ adherence to or departure from this Word *always* resulted in that which Scripture calls, “*a just reward*,” referring to *payment exactly commensurate with services rendered*.

God told Moses at this time,

*Now therefore*, *if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant*, *then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people*; *for all the earth is Mine*.

*And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation* . . . .

(**Exodus 19:5**, **6a**).

The matter was then later reiterated at length, along with the negative side, as recorded in both **Leviticus 26:3ff** and **Deuteronomy 28:1ff**.

God always acts in perfect accord with that which He has revealed, that which is “steadfast”:

*If you walk in My statutes and keep My commandments*, *and perform them*,

*then I will* . . . . (**Leviticus 26:3**, **4a**).

Or, on the other hand,

*But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments*,

*and if you despise My statutes*, *or if your soul abhors My judgments*, *so that you do not perform all My commandments*, *but break My covenant*,

*I also will* . . . . (**Leviticus 26:14-16a**;cf. **Deuteronomy 28:1ff**, **15ff**).

The latter is what **Hebrews 2:2** deals with — acting contrary to God’s revealed Word and ultimately receiving “*a just reward*.” Receiving such a reward has to do with receiving exactly what a person deserves and such a reward must *always* be based on the person’s actions in the light of revealed Truth.

*God will not act apart from His revealed Word*, *and He will always act in perfect accord with this Word*. This is the reason that there must always be “*a just reward*.”

A present household servant will, in that day, receive *payment exactly commensurate with services rendered in the house*, *whether good or bad*, *whether comparable to* “*gold, silver*, *precious stones*” *or to* “*wood, hay, straw*” (**1 Corinthians 3:12ff**). To view matters after any other fashion would reflect negatively on God’s perfect justice and righteousness.

God had revealed certain things to the Israelites, and, numerous times, they acted contrary to revealed Truth. Ultimately, *they always reaped exactly what they had sown* (cf.**Galatians 6:7**, **8**). There was always a just reward, for if such a reward had not been forthcoming, God would not have acted in complete accord with His Word. Apart from such a reward, God would not have been perfectly just and righteous in His dealings with His people.

This is the reason for God’s wrath falling upon the Israelites at Sinai, the subsequent overthrow of an entire generation in the wilderness, the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities centuries later, and the worldwide dispersion of the Jewish people today. God has rendered a just reward, *based on the actions of His people with respect to His Word*. God has done *exactly* what He said that He would do. His actions in relation to that which He revealed in His Word have been *exactly commensurate* with Israel’s actions in relation to that which He revealed in this same Word. There has been “*a just reward*.”

How Shall We Escape

The heart of the warning now comes into view, and the thought turns from that which happened to the Israelites (who acted contrary to God’s Word) to that which will also happen to Christians (who act contrary to God’s Word). God dealt with the Israelites after a just fashion, based upon that which He had revealed in His Word; and God will, in like manner, also deal with Christians after the same just fashion, based upon the same thing — that which He has revealed in His Word.

The question is asked, “*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation*?” How shall we escape what? The answer is obvious. How shall we escape “*a just* [KJV: recompense of] *reward*”? God’s people did not escape in the past, and they, in like fashion, cannot escape today. That is, the Israelites did not escape in past time (v. **2**), and neither can Christians escape during the present time (v. **3**;cf. **Jude 5**).

God spoke to the Israelites “*at various times and in various ways* . . . *in time past* . . . *by* [‘in the person of’] *the prophets*,” and He has spoken to Christians “*in these last days* . . . *by* [‘in the person of’] *His Son*” (**Hebrews 1:1**, **2**). The Word that was spoken, in either instance, is the same. It was the written Word, which was God, which became flesh in the person of God’s Son. And the Three are inseparable, for any One of the Three (the Word, God, His Son) is simply a different manifestation of the other Two.

*In the beginning was the Word*, *and the Word was with God*, *and the Word was God*.

*He was in the beginning with God*. . . .

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us* . . . . (**John 1:1**, **2**, **14a**)

That which was given to man by means of the Son (the Word made flesh) “*in these last days*” is no different than that which had previously been given to man through Jewish prophets. No matter the form, it is still the unchangeable Word — whether the unchangeable God, the unchangeable written Word, or the unchangeable Word that was made flesh.

The unchangeable written Word “*was* [always has been, always will be] *God*.” This unchangeable Word is that which has forever been settled in heaven (**Psalm 119:89**) — as settled as the Father and His Son, for this Word is seen as both, and they are both seen as this Word.

(The word “*was*” appearing four times in **John 1:1**, **2** is a translation of a form of *eimi* in the Greek text, which is a verb of being, without reference to a beginning or an ending. Thus, the Word always has been and always will be God, who became flesh in the person of His Son.

The same verb [*eimi*] is used in **John 18:5-8** where Jesus identified Himself to “*a detachment of troops*, *and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees*,” led by Judas, when He simply said “*I Am*,” causing them to fall backward upon the ground.

[The translation “*I am He*” in the KJV, NKJV, NASB, NIV is incorrect. The translation should be, “*I Am*.” This is the manner in which the same identifying expression is set forth in the Old Testament, and, of necessity, it must be the same in the New Testament.

*Eimi,* as in **John 18:5-8**, is the verb used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the Septuagint) in **Exodus 3:14**, where God identified Himself in Moses’ presence as “*I AM THAT I AM*,” translating (as in the English text) a double use of a verb of being from the Hebrew text].

Also note that the Spirit, part of the Triune Godhead, can be seen in this same light with respect to the Word in another manner. The Spirit, who gave this Word through Jewish prophets, as well, cannot be separated from this Word. The Spirit possesses exactly the same relationship to the Word as does the Father and the Son. The Spirit would have to possess this same relationship relative to the Word, for He is part of an inseparable Trinity.

Comparing **Ephesians 6:18**, **19** with the counterpart to this passage in **Colossians 3:16**, the command to “*be filled with the Spirit*” in **Ephesians** is revealed in **Colossians** to be carried out by allowing “*the Word of Christ*” *to dwell in a person* “*richly in all wisdom*.” *The Spirit* and *the Word* — as *God* and *the Word*, or as *Jesus* and *the Word* — are *the same*, *manifested in two different forms*.

And the preceding is why a Christian can *eat Christ*’*s flesh and drink His blood* [**John 6:48-58**] *only one way* — by allowing “*the Word of Christ*” *to dwell in him* “*richly in all wisdom*.” And by so doing, the Christian will progressively become filled with the Spirit at the same time.

Thus, a progressive infilling with the Word is part and parcel with a progressive infilling with the Spirit. And this is the only manner in which a filling with the Spirit can occur in a Christian’s life.  *God simply does not act apart from His Word*. To do so, in a respect, God would be acting apart from Himself, His Son, and His Spirit — an impossibility.)

The actions of the Israelites in the past, in relation to that which God had said, pertained to *an earthly calling*; and the actions of Christians today, in relation to that which God has said, pertains to *a heavenly calling*.

The Israelites, following the appropriation of the blood of the paschal lambs (the point of beginning), were called to depart Egypt and go to another land, the land of Canaan.

And Christians, in like manner, following the appropriation of the blood of the Passover Lamb (the point of beginning), have been called to separate themselves from this world (“Egypt” is always a type of the *world* in Scripture) in view of one day inhabiting another land, a heavenly land.

The accountable generation of Israelites that left Egypt (twenty years old and above [**Numbers 14:29**]), because of “*transgression and disobedience*” (save Caleb and Joshua), failed to realize that to which they had been called. They failed to realize their earthly inheritance. They were overthrown in the wilderness, on the right side of the blood (eternally saved) but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling (entering into the land of Canaan and exercising the rights of the firstborn by God placing them “*above all people*” as a “*kingdom of priests*, *and an holy nation*” [**Exodus 19:5**, **6**]).

An entire accountable generation, forming part of a nation recognized as God’s firstborn son (**Exodus 4:22**, **23**), forfeited the rights of the firstborn. And this entire accountable generation was, accordingly (having received a just reward), denied these rights.

The Spirit of God in **1 Corinthians 10:1-11** makes it very clear that the experiences of the Israelites “*happened to them as examples* [Greek: *tupoi*, ‘types], *and they were written for our admonition*, *upon whom the ends of the ages are come*” (v. **11**; cf. v.**6** where the Greek word translated “examples” is also *tupoi*). That which happened to Israel happened as types for us.

God, within His sovereign control of all matters, allowed these things to occur; and these things have been recorded so that God can draw from the type and teach His people numerous deep spiritual truths in the antitype. That is, God has these events surrounding Israel’s earthly calling to draw from in order to teach Christians deep spiritual truths surrounding their heavenly calling.

And many of “*the deep things of God*” (**1 Corinthians 2:10**) surrounding the Christians’ heavenly calling can be found *only* in the types surrounding Israel’s earthly calling. The Spirit of God didn’t move different men to record the actions of the Israelites through hundreds of pages in the Old Testament just to provide man with a history of this nation.

God’s purpose goes far beyond that. All historical incidents in the Old Testament form types. This is the manner in which God has seen fit to give His revelation to man. And anyone who would properly study and teach that which God has revealed in the Old Testament *must* study and teach it after the fashion in which it was written.

The Christians’ present experiences form the antitype of Israel’s past experiences, which is exactly what is referred to in **Hebrews 2:2**, **3**:

*For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast* [and it was], *and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward* [and they did],

*how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation* . . . . [we won’t, we can’t]?”

God has established the experiences of the Israelites as types for us. That which occurred in the type will also occur in the antitype. One is an exact replica of the other.

God has established this in His Word, and it is a settled matter. God acting in accord with His Word must act in accord with the type that He has established. There can be no deviation from this established pattern. This is the reason why we can’t escape if we, relative to our heavenly calling, follow a parallel course of action to that which the entire accountable generation of Israelites, save Caleb and Joshua, followed relative to their earthly calling.

*They didn*’*t escape in the type*, *and we can*’*t escape in the antitype*; there was “*a just reward*” in the type, and there will be “*a just reward*” in the antitype.

As the entire accountable generation of Israelites that left Egypt, because of “*transgression and disobedience*” (save Caleb and Joshua), failed to realize that to which they had been called (an earthly inheritance), so will it be for Christians who follow a parallel course of action relative to their heavenly calling (which involves a heavenly inheritance). And as the Israelites were overthrown on the right side of the blood (eternally saved) but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling (failing to realize the inheritance that they had been called to possess), so will like-minded Christians be overthrown on the right side of the blood (eternally saved) but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling (fail to realize the inheritance that they have been called to possess). The Israelites forfeited and were denied the rights of the firstborn during Moses’ day; and numerous Christians are presently forfeiting and will, during the days of the One greater than Moses, be denied these same rights.

1) If We Neglect

The word “*neglect*” is a translation of the Greek word *ameleo*, which means, “to be unconcerned about,” “to care little to nothing for,” “to disregard.” This word is used four other places in the New Testament: **Matthew 22:5**; **1 Timothy 4:14**; **Hebrews 8:9**; and **2 Peter 1:12**.

1. In **Matthew 22:5**, certain individuals “*made light of*,” they “disregarded” an invitation to the festivities surrounding a royal wedding.
2. In **1 Timothy 4:14**, Timothy is warned to not “*neglect*,” “disregard” the gift given to him.
3. In **Hebrews 8:9**, the Israelites had failed to keep the Lord’s covenant — they had “disregarded” that which the Lord had said — and He, exactly as He had said that He would do, had, correspondingly, “*disregarded*” them. They reaped exactly what they had sown.
4. In **2 Peter 1:12**, the writer explained that he would “*not be negligent*” to keep the attention of those to whom he was writing channeled in the proper direction, “*to remind you always of these things* [things having to do with Christian maturity in relation to the Lord’s return and an *abundant entrance* ‘*into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*’ (vv. **2-11**; cf. vv. **15-19**)].”

Understanding how the Greek word *ameleo* is used in the preceding passages will suffice to show exactly how this word is also use in **Hebrews 2:3** (note that which is in view in three of the four references where this word is found [**Matthew 22:5**; **Hebrews 8:9**; **2 Peter 1:12**]. It is man’s attitude [and resulting action on his part] toward that which the Lord has revealed in His Word).

The parable of the wedding festival in **Matthew 22:2-14** provides three different invitations to two groups of individuals, requesting their attendance at a royal wedding festival. The first group was invited on two different occasions. The first time that the invitation was extended, Scripture states that they simply “*would not come*” (v. **3**); and the second time that the invitation was extended, these individuals not only “*made light of*” the invitation, but some of them went so far as to extend ill treatment to the King’s servants who, on behalf of the King, had extended the invitation (vv. **4-6**). Then the King sent His servants out with the message a third time, to other individuals. Some of these individuals showed a proper attitude toward the invitation (vv. **10**, **14**), but others didn’t (vv. **11-14**).

The wedding festivities in view are those surrounding the marriage of God’s Son. The first two times the invitation was extended had to do with God’s servants sent to the Israelites, along with the Israelites’ response. It is the same as in the immediately preceding parable of the Householder and His vineyard (**21:33-44**).

Then, following judgment falling upon the Israelites for their attitude toward this invitation (**21:41**; **22:7**), the King’s servants were sent to a different group of individuals — the group called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel rejected, the Church (**21:43**; **22:8-10**). Some from this last group accepted the invitation (vv. **10**, **14**), but others didn’t (vv. **11-14**). And the emphasis in this part of the parable, as in the first part, is upon those who rejected the invitation.

The man appearing at the wedding festivities improperly clothed in verses **eleven** through **thirteen** would, in the light of verse **fourteen**, be representative of many like-minded individuals. He appeared without a wedding garment, and the way that the Greek text is worded (vv. **11**, **12**) shows that the man knew he was supposed to have a wedding garment but *deliberately*, *willingly* refused to provide himself with one. Consequently, when the King came in and asked the man what he was doing at the festivities, with the man knowing that he was present at these festivities improperly clothed, *the man* “*was speechless*.” There was nothing he could say, for his innermost thoughts had been revealed — laid bare before the all-searching eyes of the King (cf. **Revelation 1:14**) — through the question that had been asked.

The attitude of numerous Christians during the present dispensation toward the invitation to attend the festivities surrounding the marriage of God’s Son is little to no different than that exhibited by the Israelites in the past dispensation. Christians are making light of this invitation; there is *an utter disregard* for that which God has revealed about the matter, recorded in His Word. And the end result will be, it can only be, the same as that which Israel experienced for doing exactly the same thing.

The Israelites, acting contrary to God’s Word in the past, did not escape a just reward; and neither can Christians acting contrary to this Word today escape a just reward. The Israelites disregarded that which the Lord had said, and He correspondingly disregarded them (**Hebrews 8:9**). And Christians are warned in **Hebrews 2:2**, **3** that if they “*neglect* [‘disregard’] *so great a salvation*,” the Lord will extend like treatment to them, in perfect keeping with His Word.

We, as expressed in **2 Peter 1:12**, must not disregard that which the Lord has revealed about His return and coming kingdom. Rather, we must keep these things “*always in remembrance*.” Even though we “know” these things and are “established in the present truth,” we still *must* keep these things uppermost in our thinking. We *must* keep our eyes fixed on the goal out ahead (cf. **Hebrews 12:2**).

If we don’t, according to **Hebrews 2:1**, there is an ever-present danger of *drifting away* from these things. And continuing on to **Hebrews 2:3**, there would, correspondingly, be an ever-present danger of *neglecting*, *disregarding* “*so great a salvation*.”

2) So Great A Salvation

Understood contextually, “*so great a salvation*” would have to refer to the same salvation previously mentioned in **Hebrews 1:14** — Christians inheriting as co-heirs with the “*Heir of all things*,” realizing the rights of the firstborn. This is the “*salvation ready to be revealed in the last time* . . . *the salvation of your souls*” (**1 Peter 1:5**, **9**).

Further, the message surrounding this salvation “*began to be spoken by the Lord*,” it “*was confirmed to us by them those heard Him*,” and it was attended by “*signs and wonders*, *with various miracles*, *and gifts of the Holy Spirit*” (**Hebrews 2:3b**, **4**).

The Lord and His disciples offered to Israel the kingdom of the heavens (a rule from heavenly places as co-heirs with the Heir); and this message was attended by signs, wonders, and miracles, which were the credentials of the messengers, bearing witness concerning the validity of the message which they proclaimed. They were “*powers of the age to come*” (**Hebrews 6:5**; cf. **Isaiah 35:1**, **5**, **6**; **Matthew 4:17**, **23-25**; **10:7**, **8**), powers of that coming day, not the present day.

The salvation in view is that which was taken from Israel and is presently being offered to Christians (**Matthew 21:43**). And though the offer is no longer attended by signs, wonders, and miracles (it was the Jew who required a sign during the offer and the reoffer of the kingdom [**1 Corinthians 1:22**]), that which is stated in **Hebrews 2:3b**, **4**, as that which is stated in **Hebrews 1:14**, leaves no room to question what is meant by “*so great a salvation*.”

(*Signs*, *wonders*, *and miracles* in relation to “*so great a salvation*,” as seen in **Hebrews 2:3b**, **4**, is dealt with in the next chapter in this book.)

The Spirit of God in **Hebrews 2:3** chose to use a qualifying word, setting this salvation apart. The thought is not that of Christians (“we”) *disregarding* “salvation,” but that of Christians *disregarding* “*so great a salvation*.”

The adjective in the Greek text translated “*so great* [Greek: *telikoutos*]” is only found three other places in the New Testament (**2 Corinthians 1:10**; **James 3:4**; **Revelation 16:18**); and its full force can be seen in the latter reference, in **Revelation 16:18**:

*And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings*; *and there was a great earthquake*, *such a mighty* [*telikoutos*] *and great earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth*.

The earthquake in **Revelation 16:18** [Greek: *seismos,* ”a shaking,” has to do, contextually, with a complete collapse and disarray in the earth’s government under Antichrist, not with an earthquake] will occur in connection with the termination of God’s judgments during the Tribulation. The seventh bowl poured out in the preceding verse (v. **17**) will complete God’s judgments upon the earth-dwellers, preceding His Son’s return.

(For information on how the Greek word *seismos* is used in the New Testament [fourteen times — seven times in the gospel accounts and the book of **Acts**, and seven more times in the book of **Revelation**], refer to the author’s book, The Time of the End, Chapter 15, “The Great Seismos.”)

The words, “*It is done*,” at the end of **Revelation 16:17** are the translation of a perfect tense in the Greek text, indicating action completed in past time with the results of this action extending into the present and existing in a finished state. The succeeding four verses (vv. **18-21**) simply describe, in brief form, the completion of God’s judgments within the seventh vial in verse **seventeen**. Then chapters **seventeen** and **eighteen** elaborate more in detail concerning these judgments.

The evident thought incorporated into **Hebrews 2:3** and **Revelation 16:18** by the use of the word *telikoutos* is that, in each instance, something *unexampled* is being dealt with. In **Revelation** it is so “*mighty and great earthquake* [‘so mighty a shaking,’ one beyond anything having previously existed on the earth, dating all the way back to the days of Adam],” and in **Hebrews** it is “*so great a salvation* [the greatest thing God could ever design for redeemed man, for it has to do with removing man from the earth and positioning him in the heavens as co-heir with the ‘*Heir of all things*’].”

It is such a salvation as this — *so great a salvation* — that is in view. God is the designer, He has declared it to be something unexampled, and He has offered it to redeemed man. Resultantly, God is not going to countenance individuals whom He has redeemed through the finished work of His Son *making light of*, *disregarding* this salvation.

[Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's So Great Salvation, God Has Spoken, Ch. 3](http://bibleone.net/SGS_03.htm)