



A Great Salvation

GOLDEN TEXT

“How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him”. (Hebrews 2:3)

USEFUL PRACTICE

Salvation is not something given to the believer compulsorily. The Christian is exhorted to be watchful and not negligent in regard to this gift received.

SCRIPTURE READING

Hebrews 2:1-18

- 1 - We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away.
- 2 - For since the message spoken through angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment,
- 3 - how shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.
- 4 - God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.
- 5 - It is not to angels that he has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking.
- 6 - But there is a place where someone has testified: “What is mankind that you are mindful of them, a son of man that you care for him?
- 7 - You made them a little lower than the angels; you crowned them with glory and honor
- 8 - and put everything under their feet.” In putting everything under them, God left nothing that is not subject to them. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them.



9 - But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

10 - In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.

11 - Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.

12 - He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises.”

13 - And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me.”

14 - Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil

15 - and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

16 - For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham’s descendants.

17 - For this reason he had to be made like them, fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

18 - Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

To explain that salvation is not something given to the believer compulsorily, so he must be vigilant and not neglect of the grace received.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- I. To show** the greatness of divine salvation;
- II. To discuss** the need for salvation
- III. To know** that salvation by faith in Christ is effective.



INTRODUCTION

The author begins the section of Hebrews 2:1-18 with a strong exhortation. It was necessary on the part of believers to be more steadfast in regard to spiritual things. What the author observed among them was a certain lethargy and negligence in the face of a fact of such great importance as salvation. In this respect the answer had to be given by returning to the truths previously heard that had been forgotten. This was of paramount importance because it prevented any of them from going astray. In fact, the Greek word used by the author—*pararreō*—, translated as "to divert", originally means "to lose one's way." The term was also used in relation to a boat that accidentally broke anchor and was put to drift away at sea. In the author's thinking there was only one way to stay on course: by anchoring the boat in the safe harbor, Jesus.

I - A GREAT SALVATION

1. Witnessed by the Lord.

The author draws a contrast between the covenants of Sinai and Calvary. While the Old Covenant was intermediated by angels (verse 2), the New Covenant had Jesus, the Son of God, as its mediator. The author, then, makes an analogy between the two covenants so that the contrast between the two is well defined. It was Jesus, the Son of God, not the angels, who announced this great salvation. Because they were mediators of the Law, the angels were highly esteemed and respected by the Jews. If a covenant based on the law, mediated by angels, which was imperfect and transitory, required obedience on the part of believers, much more would the New Covenant, which is perfect and eternal. If those who did not observe the principles of the Old Covenant, breaking its precepts, used to be punished harshly, what punishment did they deserve who insulted the New Covenant, which in all things was superior?

2. Proclaimed by those who heard it.

This great salvation was first announced by the Lord and later by "those who heard it" (Hebrews 2:3). It is pretty clear in this text that the author was not an eyewitness to the deeds of Jesus, but he had received the Word by those who "heard." Even though he did not receive the Word of God directly from the Lord, the author has no doubt that the apostolic message was essentially the very Word of God. This fact should make believers more diligent in observing the New Testament precepts. In fact, the word *bebaiōō*, translated here as "to confirm", has the sense of something that transmits security and confidence. In other words, what the Lord announced and that was subsequently proclaimed by



eyewitnesses should serve as the foundation of our faith.

3. Confirmed by the Holy Spirit.

The message, which was first announced by the Lord and witnessed by those who heard it, was used as an instrument by the Holy Spirit. In this respect, the translations - "distribution of gifts from the Holy Spirit" or "distributions of gifts of the Holy Spirit" (Hebrews 2:4) – very well express what the author meant. The Holy Spirit is the agent behind every miracle and sign performed in the history of God's people, both of the past and present. The writer wants to draw the attention of his readership once again to the importance of the message received, that is, it had also been witnessed in a concrete and palpable way by the Holy Spirit through the distribution of his many gifts.

II - A NECESSARY SALVATION

1. Through the humanization of the Redeemer.

In the section of verses 5-9, the author takes Psalm 8 as the background for his argument (Psalm 8:4-6). In this respect, he follows the Septuagint which uses the term "angel" instead of the Masoretic text, which bears the word "God." In the Jewish mentality, of which the writer is part, man was made as the crown of creation and to him was entrusted the whole domain. However, due to the fall, that domain was lost. Therefore, in the view of the author of this writings, Psalm 8 cannot be applied to Adam, nor to the post-Fall human race, but to Jesus, the Messiah, who through the cross came to restore the fallen mankind.

2. Through the suffering of the Redeemer.

For a first-century Jew the idea of a suffering Messiah was scandalous. How then to ensure that Jesus was superior to the angels if He had died on a cross? The author of Hebrews uses verse five of Psalm 8 to explain this apparent paradox. Yes, he argues, Jesus was actually made a "little" lower than the angels because of his humanization. The interpreters understand that the words "little" and "a little while" (Hebrews 2:7, 9) can denote position or time. In other words, Jesus became "lower" than the angels as he lived the limits of the human condition and experienced suffering from this state of humiliation. However, it was through this very suffering of Christ that mankind became free.

3. Through the glorification of the Redeemer.

In the author's mind, Christ did not suffer to be glorified, but He was glorified because he suffered. It was through suffering that He was "crowned with glory and honor ... so that by the grace of God he might



taste death for everyone" (Hebrews 2:9). For those believers who saw in suffering something incompatible with Christian living, and who, because of that, were discouraged, these words served as encouragement and consolation.

III - AN EFFECTIVE SALVATION

1. Victory over the Devil.

At the conclusion of his argumentation the author shows the methods and results of this great salvation. For salvation to be effected the Savior needed to suffer and die for men. Only through death on the cross, the Devil, archenemy of men, would be defeated (Hebrews 2:14). The writer uses the Greek verb *catargeo* to refer to the defeat of Satan. This verb has the meaning of "to dethrone" or "to make inoperative." Through the cross, Christ dethroned and disarmed Satan from the weapons that he possessed. It was on the cross that He stripped the principalities and powers and assured us of victory (Colossians 2:15).

2. Victory over death.

As sin came into the world death became a feared enemy. This powerful weapon was used by Satan to keep men under the yoke of fear (Hebrews 2:15). However, by dying on the cross for all men, Jesus defeated death. Men continue to die, but those who receive Him as Savior have eternal life, because death has no more dominion over them.

3. Victory over temptation.

For the first time in the epistle the author uses the term "high priest" in relation to Jesus (Hebrews 2:17). The theme of the priesthood of Christ will be explored by the writer in greater detail in subsequent passages (Hebrews 3:1, 4: 1-10, 6: 1-10, 6: 20, 11:4-19, 26-28, 8:1-6, 9:11-28, 10:1-39). Yet, its use here is justified in the context of the identification of Jesus with his "brothers", the saved. This high priest is merciful and faithful. Because he took on human nature, and identified himself with men within their limits, He knows what it means to be tempted, and for this reason He is ready to help them.

CONCLUSION

Through his humanization and humiliation Jesus became the legitimate High Priest, representative of mankind. Angels are indeed special beings in the service of God. However, Jesus came not to help them, but to seek the descendants of Abraham, the believers. Through his suffering and death, He can give life to those who are dead.