

BAND of BROTHERS

SPRING SERIES 2024 – WEEK 1

Hebrews 1:1-2:4: God Has Spoken

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

– Hebrews 2:1 ESV

- **Why would 21st Century Gentile Christians study this book?**

All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right. – 2 Timothy 3:16-17 NLT

- Because this book is divinely inspired
 - ...it's message is timeless
 - ...it's truths are still relevant
 - ...it's teachings about Christ still apply
 - ...and it's content applies to our context

These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. –

1 Corinthians 10:11-12 NLT

- **The theme of the book:**

*So what makes us think we can escape if we ignore **this great salvation** that was first announced by the Lord Jesus himself and then delivered to us by those who heard him speak?"*

– Hebrews 2:3 NLT

- How would you rate your salvation?
 - Are you happy with the results?
 - Would you say you're a satisfied customer?
 - Has Jesus delivered on all His promises?

*“I have come that they may have life, and have it **in all its fullness.**” – John 10:10 BSB*

- How spiritually fulfilling is your life?

*“I am leaving you with a gift — **peace of mind and heart.** And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.” – John 14:27 NLT*

- How was your peace of mind this past year?

*“These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that **your joy may be full.**” – John 15:11 ESV*

- Is your life marked by joy?

*“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another **Helper**, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.” – JOHN 14:16-17 ESV*

- Has your salvation been helpful in this life?

*“...**you will receive power** when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” – Acts 1:8 NLT*

- Do you sense the power of God in your life?

*“When the Spirit of truth comes, **he will guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.” – John 16:13 ESV*

- Would you say the Spirit guides your life?

- Despite all these promises, many of our lives exhibit...
 - ...excessive worry and anxiety
 - ...discontentment and even depression
 - ...a sense of helplessness and hopelessness
 - ...feelings of weakness and inadequacy
 - ...a lack of direction and purpose
 - ...and decreasing confidence in the future

So is our great salvation not so great after all?

- Is something missing?
- Did your salvation not “take?”
- Were you never saved to begin with?
- Are you doing something wrong?

- Does the gospel over-promise?
- The answers are found in this letter
 - This is a letter written to believers
 - ~ Who are struggling with their faith
 - ~ Who are doubting their salvation
 - ~ Who are questioning Jesus' sacrifice
 - ~ And who are looking for more
- These were Christ-following Hellenistic Jews
 - They were Jews by birth
 - But they lived outside of Israel
 - They spoke Greek and not Hebrew
 - Yet, because of their salvation they were persecuted by Jews and Gentiles alike
- The good news wasn't so good after all
 - Things had not turned out well
 - They were having second thoughts
 - And even doubting the sufficiency of Jesus

"The audience appears to be primarily Jewish Christians who grew up in Judaism but have believed in Jesus. They have embraced him as Messiah. Yet they have hit a snag. For whatever reason – perhaps the pressure of persecution and opposition – they are thinking about going back to Judaism. They are considering leaving this new-found faith and going back to the old ways: animal sacrifices, worship at the temple – the old paths, if you will, that Jews had trusted in for generations. In other words, these people are starting to doubt whether this Jesus thing is all it first promised to be." – Michael J. Kruger, *Hebrews for You*

- Exchanging the **good news** for the **old ways**
 - The **new covenant** for the **old one**
 - The **gospel** for the **law**
 - **Faith** for **works**
 - **Grace** for **merit**
- **The danger of doctrinal drift**
Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. – Hebrews 2:1 ESV

παραρρέω (*pararreō*) - to drift away, to glide by, carried away

"The vivid warning here uses nautical language, sailing language, suggesting the image of a ship whose anchor has broken loose from the ocean floor and is dangerously drifting away." – R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul*

- This will be a recurring theme
 - The author will repeatedly call for...
 - ...endurance
 - ...perseverance
 - ...steadfastness
 - ...consistency of belief
 - ...faithfulness

*Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, **turning you away** from the living God. You must warn each other every day, while it is still “today,” so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For **if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed**, we will share in all that belongs to Christ. – Hebrews 3:12-14
ESV*

- These people risked losing their **foundation**
- They were losing **faith** in the gospel
- But they weren't losing their salvation
- If they drifted, they had never been anchored

*Therefore, we who have fled to him for refuge can have great confidence as we hold to the hope that lies before us. **This hope is a strong and trustworthy anchor for our souls.** – Hebrews 6:18-19 NLT*

*All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now **we live with great expectation**, and we have a priceless inheritance — an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, **God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation**, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. – 1 Peter 1:3-6
NLT*

- Their faith in Christ was under siege
 - Their concept of Jesus was faulty
 - He was just a man
 - So, He was a created being
 - He wasn't even a prophet
 - And He was inferior to angels

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having

become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. – Hebrews 1:1-4 ESV

- Jesus trumps all
 - He is superior to the prophets
 - He is superior to the angels
 - Because He is the Son of God
 - He speaks as God's Son – vs 2
 - He is the heir of all things – vs 2
 - He created the world – vs 2
 - He makes God's glory visible – vs 3
 - He is the exact imprint of God's nature – vs 3
 - He sustains the entire universe – vs 3
 - He sits at God's right hand – vs 3
 - He is the Father's only Son – vs 5
 - He is worshiped by angels – vs 6
 - His reign is eternal – vs 8
 - He has been anointed by God – vs 9
 - The heavens are His handiwork – vs 10
 - He is eternal – vs 11-12
 - He is victorious over all – vs 13

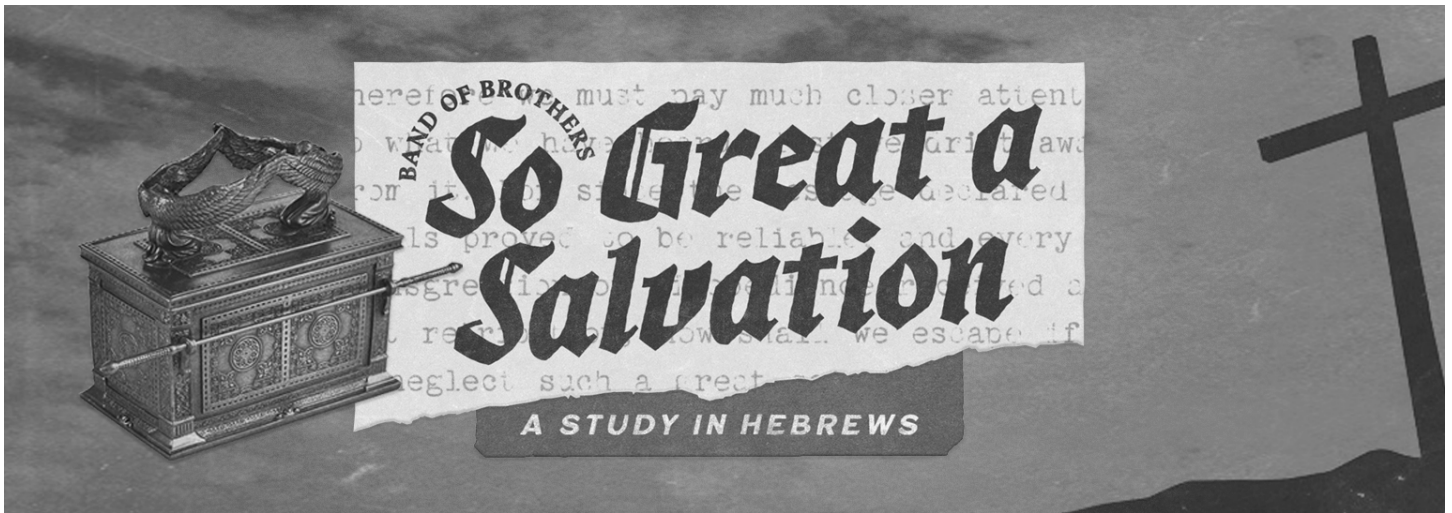
***Therefore** we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.* – Hebrews 2:1 ESV

- **Discussion questions**

What are some ways in which we can under-value our "great salvation?"

Why should the list of Christ's superior attributes keep us from drifting away and losing faith?

Has your salvation resulted in peace, comfort, direction, and power? If so, how? If not, why?



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SPRING SERIES 2024 – WEEK 2 HOMEWORK

WEEK 2 – Hebrews 2:5-3:6: A Better Adam

In this lesson we will examine the dramatic turn in circumstances concerning the descendants of Jacob. They were blessed by God but also suffered persecution at the hands of the Egyptians. This lesson will establish the less-than-ideal conditions facing the Israelites and how God intervened on their behalf. A major focus of this lesson will be the sovereignty of God. This was all part of His plan, and the birth of Moses was another divine intervention that revealed how God was going to miraculously deliver His people from their oppressive and seemingly hopeless situation.

- Read Hebrews 2:5-3:6. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.

- Now read pages 15-20 of Ken's Devotional™ on Hebrews.

- In the week one lesson, we discussed how the recipients of this letter were facing persecution and under pressure to compromise their faith. Things had not turned out as they had expected. Take a few minutes to write down some ways in which your salvation has proved disappointing or failed to meet your expectations. Be honest; God can handle it.

- Read verses 5-9 of chapter 2. What is the primary point the author is trying to make?

In verses 6-8, the author quotes from Psalm 8:4-6. He takes the words written by King David and attributes them to Jesus. Rather than using these verses to refer to mankind, the author applies them to Jesus. Now, look at verse 9 of Hebrews 2. Why is it so important that Jesus be seen as having been subjected but now glorified? What is the author trying to tell His audience about Jesus?

- In verses 10-18, the author expands on this image of Jesus as the Son of God who willingly subjected Himself by taking on human flesh. Why was it so important and necessary that Jesus become a man and suffer on our behalf?

Why did Jesus have to “be made like his brothers in every respect” (Hebrews 2:17 ESV)?

According to verses 14-15, what did Jesus’ incarnation and crucifixion accomplish?

Read the following passages and write down what you learn from them:

John 1:14 –

Romans 7:19 –

Romans 8:3 –

Philippians 2:5-11

- Read Hebrews 3:1-6. This verse opens with the word, “therefore.” You might translate it this way: “With all that in mind...” What does the author tell his readers to focus their attention on considering everything he has just written? (see verse 1).

Why do you think the author compares Jesus to Moses? Keep in mind that he is writing to an audience made of Jewish Christians who are flirting with a return to law-keeping.

According to the author, in what ways is Jesus superior to Moses?