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A. Introduction

1. "We All Promise"

- a. the story begins in Harwich, 80 km north of the Thames Estuary
- b. the four Walker children are convincing their mother to let them go sailing on the Goblin with its owner and skipper, Jim Brading
 - (A) "Now, Susan," says mother, "and you too, John. No night sailing. ... No going outside the harbour. ... And back the day after tomorrow. ... You don't want to risk not being here to meet Daddy. ..."
 - (B) "We promise ..."
 - (C) "I promise too, said Jim ..."
 - (D) "We've all promised," said Susan
- c. well, as the book's title indicates – We Didn't Mean to Go to Sea —{2}– they did wind up going outside the harbour, they did wind up sailing at night, and, they didn't get back the day after tomorrow!
 - (A) as the proverb says, 'there's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip'
 - (B) Skipper Jim went to shore for a few moments, was hit on the head and wound up in the hospital – the children waited for him in vain
 - (C) during the night, not only did a thick fog come up, but as the tide came in, the anchor first dragged and then hung uselessly – so that unaware of what was happening they drifted – down the river and then out of the harbour – into peril
 - (D) as they chatted in the cabin, not knowing it, the boat flowed out of the harbour, across the forbidden boundary, they were lost
- d. there is a peril of being lost and not knowing it

2. Scripture Reading Hebrews 2:1-4

3. Being Lost Is Perilous

- a. in commencing our study of this book we noted that it is not simply a letter, but more: it is a sermon, an exhortation, a treatise

- b. already, in this book, we have discovered that its writer is a well-versed Bible scholar – he knows the Scriptures, thoughtfully uses them
- c. but from time to time in this book, the message comes not from the head of a scholar and from the heart of a shepherd
- d. this is such a place
 - (A) he has been writing about the greatness of the Saviour, Jesus Christ
 - (B) and turns here to the greatness of the salvation
 - (C) the majority of his readers would have been Jewish in culture
 - (D) some were first-generation Christians; others were their children
 - (E) in Judaism, you were a Jew because your parents were Jews
 - (F) and the writer is aware, that many of these children of Christian converts may have thought the same way, considering themselves Christians, but never having claimed Jesus' salvation as their own
 - (G) they thought themselves safe, but were lost without knowing it
- e. so this shepherd – pastor – pauses to pronounce a warning

B. Danger, Look Out! 2:1
 a. [For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it.](#)

2. Pay Attention

- a. [for this reason](#); for what [reason](#)?
 - (A) well, it could be a reference to the immediately preceding verse, that the angels are ministers to those who are inheriting salvation – that certainly shows the importance of salvation because these exalted but created beings should be servants to believers
 - (B) but it is better to consider the entire first chapter as providing the reason – the reason is the superiority of the Son
 - (1) in the message he brought, chapter 1:1-3
 - (2) and in His person He is far better than the angels

- (3) on this account attention must be paid to His message
- (4) a reason that agrees with what will follow
- b. **we must** – this is a strong statement
 - (A) the word expresses
 - (1) not simply an obligation – we ought
 - (2) nor even an inner inclination – we should
 - (3) but a strong necessity, a matter of first importance;
 - (4) it is the exclamation mark in the sign, “Danger! Thin Ice!”
 - (5) ignore this at your own risk!
 - (B) the writer includes himself in this necessity
- c. we must **pay much closer attention**
 - (A) we have here the first of two nautical terms in this verse
 - (B) “pay attention” is literally “hold towards,” and describes what the steersman does in bringing a sailing ship into harbour
 - (C) normally a sailboat is propelled by wind that is coming from the side, and, as a result the ship is travelling in two directions at once – I believe the same is true for an aeroplane, depending on the wind – it is going forward and it is going side ways
 - (D) so the steersman has to hold the ship against the wind – steering into the wind as necessary – so that the actual path of the ship is toward the harbour and the dock, rather than downwind of it
 - (E) this takes such a concentration of mind and hand that the term came very early to be used to mean ‘pay attention!’ – hold your mind towards this subject and act upon it
 - (F) one scholar has said that these words are nor mere comparison
 - (1) not to play closer attention than to our jobs
 - (2) not to play closer attention than to our house
 - (3) nor to play closer attention than to any other such thing
 - (4) but that they have to be considered in absolute terms
 - (5) we are to pay most particular attention, unlike any other ...

3. The Message

- a. to what we have heard
- b. this returns our thoughts to what God has in these last days spoken to us by His son
- c. to the same message the writer himself had heard
- d. a message made clearer in the verses and chapters to come
- e. but enough has already been said in chapter one to make it clear what he means –
 - (A) if the message in the prophets – from Moses to Zachariah – was important, being inspired and directed
 - (B) then that which was brought personally to earth in God the Son is a message to which we must pay attention; because of

4. The Peril

- a. lest at any time we should drift past
- b. this can be translated 'so we do not slip,' i.e., off as a ring
- c. however, the root meaning of the word – 'to flow beside or past' – as well as the preceding use of a nautical term, the expression 'to drift past' better pictures what is meant here
- d. if you do not hold fast the course of your life towards the message that we have heard, then you are going to miss the harbour entrance
- e. missing that entrance can take you into perilous waters or crashing upon the rocks and shoals outside of the way into the harbour
- f. I believe that on the Niagara river south of the falls, there are warning markers of the peril past that point – if you are in a boat and go beyond those markers it is unlikely that you can turn around and make it safely back – so it is for those who drift past Christ's truth

C. Peril of Punishment 2:2

- a. For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just penalty,

2. The Word through Angels

- a. in Deuteronomy 33:2, speaking of the Lord coming from Sinai, where our translations have "ten

thousand holy ones” or “saints’, the Greek translation reads “ten thousands (holy ones – the Hebrew word) on His right hand, his accompanying angels”

- b. thus Stephen speaking in the Holy Spirit at his defence, said, “This is the one (i.e., Moses) who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with the angel who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.” (Acts 7:38) and again, “you who received the law as ordained by angels, and yet did not keep it.” (Acts 7:53)
- c. and Paul says, “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, ...” (Galatians 3:19)
- d. so the Law was in some measure given through the agency of angels – by the very angels that chapter 1 shows are far less important than Jesus, being but servants while He is the Son; but that Law has ...

3. Its Sure Penalties

- a. first that law was ‘unalterable’
 - (A) we live in a day when the laws of the land are bent left and right
 - (B) our parliament can decree one thing, our judiciary change it
 - (C) we are left not knowing what rule will next be cast aside, nor what anti-law (from God’s perspective) will take its place
- b. God’s law dealt with specific offences in specific ways
 - (A) **transgressions** were those acts that stepped over the boundaries that God had drawn for His people to live within; boundaries that would reveal His people to have a wise, holy and just God
 - (B) **disobedience** – literally is ‘to miss hearing’, ‘to neglect listening’
 - (1) it is simply to fail to heed what God has said
 - (2) it includes both those sins of commission (doing what we ought not to do) and of omission (failing to do what we should)
 - (C) for such offences there will be a just – not arbitrary nor capricious – recompense or reward
 - (1) think of a workman paid by the hour: if he works an hour, he is paid for it; if he slacks off for an hour he is not
 - (2) as he works, so he is paid – that’s the meaning of recompense
 - (3) here, is its other side: as a man sins, so he is punished

(4) the phrase "eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise." (Exodus 21:24-25) did not describe a spirit of vengeance but of moderation, a limit imposed in a world which then would take 'a life for an eye, a life for a tooth, a life for a hand, &c'

(D) so that law, given through the lesser beings of angels, dealt to wrong-doers fair punishment – in some cases exacted by God Himself in direct and miraculous fashion

(E) in the face of these facts, what about the greater message given by one infinitely greater than the angels – how should we treat it?

D. Peril of Inattention. 2:3a
a. how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? ...

2. A Question Without Answer

a. it is that word 'how?' that presents the difficulty

b. it means looking at every alternative of which we can possibly think

c. mankind has come up with a multitude of them, but none work

d. no one has ever figured out, ever will figure out, find an alternative

(A) "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

(B) to choose any way other than the way that God in His grace has provided, is to place yourself immediately contrary to His will – and that is sin

(C) and sin brings punishment by a righteous and holy God

e. what about God's solution respecting our sin? It is ...

3. So Great Salvation

a. it is great because its Spokesman and Author is great

b. far greater than the angels who ordained the law

c. it is great in its scope: it is sufficient for all mankind – "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the

whole world.” (1 John 2:1-2)

- d. it is great because it covers all our sin: past, present and future
- e. it is great because it is an eternal salvation by an eternal Saviour
- f. it is great because the Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God is the greatest

4. Put in Peril by Mere Neglect

- a. the peril is silent and deadly
 - (A) it is so easy to slip off, to drift away
 - (B) it is not that we even object to Christianity
 - (C) we think it to be a nice religion: ‘it was good for our mothers...’
- b. but so easy to neglect it: it may not be deliberate opposition
- c. it is being heedless, careless, thoughtless
- d. Jesus gave a parable that illustrates this in Luke 14:16–24: ‘16 But He said to him, “A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many; 17 and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’ 18 But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’ 19 Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’ 20 Another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’ 21 And the slave came back and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, ‘Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.’ 22 And the slave said, ‘Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.’ 23 And the master said to the slave, ‘Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel them to come in, so that my house may be filled. 24 For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.’”’
- e. carelessly we drift past and fail to enter the safe harbour of Christ

E. A Triune Testimony 2.3b-4

- a. ... After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit

according to His own will.

2. Of Trinitarian Importance

- a. it was spoken by the Lord Jesus: God the Son
- b. it was borne witness by God the Father
- c. it was validated by God the Holy Spirit

3. Confirmed to Mankind

- a. the 12 disciples – later sent by Christ as apostles
 - (A) heard the message
 - (B) saw the signs and wonders of Christ proving its power
 - (C) heard the Father speak to the Son
 - (D) and, given the Holy Spirit, relayed that message to mankind
- b. and following them came others
 - (A) who heard the apostle's message
 - (B) saw the signs and wonders that they in turn performed
 - (C) received that same wondrous gift of Holy Spirit
 - (D) the readers of this book – Christians of the first century – had heard and seen these things
- c. there was no way in which they – or, for that matter, we – could dispute and discredit that message – better pay attention!

F. Conclusion

1. A Great Question

- a. is to be found in these verses; an important question; of eternal import
- b. 'How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?

2. Some Related Questions

- a. do you find yourself listening to speakers or religious programs that talk all around salvation but never mention sin and that Jesus Christ is the one and only remedy for it? Then watch out!

- b. are you drifting away away spiritual things due to the allure of things, due to this world's deceitful riches? Then watch out!
- c. do you take for granted that you are going to heaven because you were baptised or your name is on a church roll but you are unsure what having a personal relationship with Jesus means? Then watch out!
- d. if your answer to any of these is 'yes' or even a hesitant 'no', then now is the time to pay attention and get right with God in these things

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AV Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NIV New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
WEY The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh
BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, Michigan
Hebrews, by Leon Morris
EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton
Hebrews, by Marcus Dods
Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.
Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.
NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
The Epistle to the Hebrew, by F. F. Bruce
RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
TYN – *The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*
Hebrews, by Donald Guthrie

2. ‘*We Didn’t Mean to Go to Sea,*’ by Arthur Ransome © his estate, Jonathan Cape, 1937