

Sunday February 24th 2019
The Word of God
A Survey of the Bible – Lesson 16A
'Let Us Go On'

1). *Heb 1:1 God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

Throughout the course of our survey of the Bible we have continually returned to the first 34 verses of Genesis, because contained in those verses is the foundation upon which the rest of the Scripture is then built.

a). And as we have followed these verses through, we have come to the 7th Day, the Day of Rest, in which a Man and a Woman in a marriage relationship are to rule.

b). The whole focus of these verses in Genesis is God's great redemptive purpose through and for His Son, to be realized in the age to come by Christ, the second Man, the last Adam, and His joint heirs.

c). And as we looked to the Gospel of John we saw that John began in exactly the same place as Moses – *Jn 1:1 In [the] beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

And the Spirit working through John, as He had through Moses, brought us again, to the 7th Day where there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee.

d). The beginning of Moses and the beginning of John both take us to the end of the matter, to the 7th Day and a marriage relationship for the purpose of rulership.

e). And this same subject matter is dealt with time and again by the OT prophets who provided much more than just a history of the Jewish people. They provided us enormous spiritual truth through the typology contained in the events within that history – 1 Cor 10:11 *Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. 12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*

And it is the same subject matter with respect to Christians, faith, works and the salvation of the soul that the Spirit inspired the writers of the NT Epistles to record.

f). Not that any of this should be surprising to us as God's purpose for His Son and Man has never changed from that set out in Genesis. That is the one central theme that God has orchestrated throughout all of Scripture and there is nothing that is other than a variation on that theme to bring that which is central to harmonic crescendo.

g). And it is with this holistic revelation in view that the unknown writer of Hebrews, under inspiration of the Spirit, begins to write, taking us to the conclusion of that set out in Genesis and John – Heb 1:1 *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; [ages]*

Throughout the course of OT history, beginning with Moses, God raised up prophets through whom He spoke to the fathers, the Children of Israel, concerning inheritance and rulership in the earthly realm of God's Kingdom.

h). And as we have noted already, through that which God spoke to Israel by the prophets, He has also spoken to us – 1 Pet 1:9 *receiving the end of your faith—the salvation of your souls. 10 Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.*

And this has then been climaxed in these last days as God has spoken to us in the person of Son – the One who has been appointed ‘heir of all things’, the One through whom He has also set the ages in place. Who came as Prophet with the offer of the Kingdom of the Heavens to a people who were the only ones at that time able to receive it.

i). This is the very One who died on the cross in order to purge our sins so that we might receive that rejected by Israel. The One who has returned to the heavens to sit ‘at the right hand of the Majesty on high’ to wait until His enemies are made His footstool.

j). And having done so we are told this about Him – Heb 1:4 *having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.*

The present world system is ruled over by Satan and his fallen angels, but the One appointed ‘heir of all things’, has through inheritance ‘obtained a more excellent name than they’. This then is the One who will bring about the change in rulership with respect to the earth, that is the goal of God’s great redemptive purpose set in place from the beginning.

k). This one province in God’s universal Kingdom has been ruled over by angels from ages past, even though those angels have forfeited the right to rule because of rebellion. And because of that rebellion and a subsequent deception in the Garden the earth continues in a state of complete disorder, spiraling into a chaos that can only be resolved by the Son when He comes in His Kingdom.

2). Hebrews Chapter 1 then continues with 7 OT quotations, all of which have a Messianic context, that establish both the Deity and the legitimacy of the One through whom God has spoken to us – Heb 1:5 *For to which of the angels did He ever say: “You are My Son, Today I have begotten You”? And again: “I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son”? 6 But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” 7 And of the angels He says: “Who makes His angels spirits And His ministers a flame of fire.”*

All angels are sons of God through creation, but God has never spoken to any angel in the way that He has spoken to this Son. And if angels who have never been spoken to in this way presently rule of how much greater legitimacy is the One who is Son, to whom God the Father has said, ‘You are My Son’.

a). And we see from v6, that when God ‘again brings the firstborn into the world’, which takes us to the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom, the angels will then worship Him and minister on His behalf in the administration of His Kingdom.

b). Heb 1:8 *But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” 10 And: “You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 11 They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; 12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.”*

V8 establishes the Son’s Deity and His rule within the context of the endless ages, a rule characterized by righteousness. And in V9, it is the Son who has been anointed ‘with the oil of gladness’ more than those who will be His companions, those who will rule with Him in the age to come.

c). And this is because it is the Son – Heb 12:2.....*who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

His companions will be the recipients of the fullness of the salvation His death and shed blood has brought to pass, but greater is the anointing with the oil of gladness for the One whose sacrifice made their redemption possible, than for those who have been redeemed – Heb 3:3 *For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.*

d). Then v10-12 take us from the beginning of Genesis to the new heavens and new earth and the endless ages beyond, establishing once again the Son’s Deity, just as we had seen at the beginning of John’s Gospel, while drawing our attention to the timeless, endless, nature of God who is from everlasting to everlasting.

e). He is the One who never changes, who is the same yesterday, today and forever. Whose righteousness never fails, whose justice is the foundation of His throne, whose love is boundless, whose purpose is immovable – the

Word made flesh that never changes who is God, and has always been God, and always will be God.

f). Then the final OT quotation takes us back to angels again –
Heb 1:13 *But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool”?* 14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will [are about to] inherit salvation?*

Again, God has never spoken to the angels as He has to the Son. And angels even now, not the fallen angels, are seen to minister on behalf of those who are about to inherit salvation. Those seeking first the Kingdom and God’s righteousness. Which creates for us the most extraordinary and humbling reality that mighty angels, the crowned rulers who had not rebelled with Satan, are ministering on our behalf, probably within the realm of the spiritual warfare, that we might successfully replace them as rulers, receiving the crowns that they presently wear.

g). And then, when we have inherited the salvation of our soul and have become a companion with Christ, these same angels are seen to minister on our behalf as joint heirs, just as they will for the Lord, but apart from worship.

3). That which the Holy Spirit sets out in the first Chapter of Hebrews confirms the certainty of God’s great redemptive process taking us all the way from the beginning in Genesis to the Millennial Kingdom. And makes plain God’s intent with respect to His Son, just as we have seen before in –
Col 1:16 *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. 18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.*

And that which is laid out in this opening Chapter of Hebrews, which is the summation of all Scripture, leads into an encouragement and a warning for us and all those who have embraced the Word of the Kingdom. And this encouragement and warning we find at the beginning of Chapter 2 -
Heb 2:1 *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. 2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, 3 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, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?

There are 5 interrelated warnings in the Book of Hebrews, warnings that are given to the eternally saved and more specifically to those who are about to inherit salvation. And considering the enormity of what is at stake, which we have just seen laid out for us in Chapter 1, we would do well to pay serious attention to them. Because warnings are there to do just that, warn. And if we receive the warning then we are better placed not to fall into that which we are warned about.

a). And this first warning at the beginning of Chapter 2 begins with, *Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away*

‘Because of this it is necessary, so much more, to keep our attention fixed upon the things we have heard, lest, at any time, we might drift away’ [ALC]

Our attention needs to be fixed on that which lies ahead, that which the Holy Spirit has labored to set before us, without wavering. Not just that laid out in the first chapter of Hebrews of itself, but all that first chapter has drawn from, beginning with Moses, that has revealed to us the reality and the certainty of Christ’s Judgment Seat, His Kingdom in the age to come, and what is offered to us there.

b). This is our encouragement, because if we don’t keep our attention fixed on that which lies ahead, we might at any time drift away. Without that constant attention it can become all too easy to lose the plot and end up a million miles from where we should be. And it is because of this that Peter wrote – 2 Pe 1:12 *For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. 13 Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, 14 knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. 15 Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. 16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.*

c). And to make clear to us what the outcome of drifting away is, we are provided with an example in v2 - *2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward,*

The reference here is to the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt, to those whom the Word was spoken – Heb 4:2 *For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.*

The gospel spoken to them, the same gospel spoken to us, has been proven to be steadfast, unchangeable, sure and immovable – they were told of the blessings for obedience and of the consequences for disobedience just as we have and in exact accordance with that which God had told them, every transgression and disobedience received a just reward. God acted completely in accord with that which He had said.

d). With the ultimate outcome for them being that the entire first generation save Joshua and Caleb perished in the wilderness, falling short of the inheritance that could have been theirs.

e). And then with the example having been given the question is asked – Heb 2:3 *how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*

Given the content of v2, the answer to the question is clearly apparent, ‘We won’t escape the same punishment if we neglect so great salvation’.

f). There can be nothing that the all-powerful God could devise for His redeemed creation that could be greater than the salvation of the soul. This is the salvation that angels desire to look into. A salvation that takes a fallen creature and restores him to a place where he will fulfill the purpose for his creation, being in the image and likeness of God, so as to sit on Christ’s throne with Him as His Bride, as a joint heir to all that the Father has placed in His son’s hand.

g). Perhaps another example of the use of the word translated ‘great’ here in Hebrews will help to convey the enormity of that which God would have us know about it – Rev 16:17 *Then the seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and a loud voice came out of the temple of heaven, from the throne,*

*saying, "It is done!" 18 And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a **great** earthquake, such a mighty and **great** earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.*

The word 'great' is seen here in connection with the events that accompany the pouring out of the 7th bowl, when 'It is done!' And is used to describe the shaking of earthly powers that will result in the complete overthrow of Gentile world power and the angelic power that has worked through it, for all time. And according to these verses this is something the magnitude of which will have never been seen on the earth before, not at any point in prior human history will anything like this have been witnessed. And it is this same adjective that is used to describe the salvation of the soul.

h). Not only this, but we are also told that the salvation of the soul at first began to be spoken of by the Lord – we will remember that God in these last days has spoken to us in the person of Son – this salvation was confirmed by those who heard Him, and God witnessed to the veracity of the message and the legitimacy of the messenger with, 'signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will.'

And this is exactly what we have seen in the Gospel accounts and the Book of Acts as the offer and reoffer of the Kingdom of the Heavens was made to Israel. And these same miraculous signs were seen and experienced by the church throughout the Acts period, attesting to the unchangeable certainty of the truth being proclaimed.

i). Perhaps as we put this together, we can begin to grasp the enormity of the salvation of the soul, which in turn will help us to understand why God is so forthright about the consequences for neglecting this salvation.

j). And the word translated 'neglect', 'if we neglect so great salvation', has to do with being casual, careless and unconcerned.

k). And this warning is so significant, because drifting away, causing us to become careless about the salvation of our soul, is the start of a meandering, which if not corrected, can only end in shipwreck, which is where we end up in the 5th warning through the example of Esau despising his birthright. Being so unconcerned about what he was given that he sold it for a bowl of stew.

l). And in this first warning there are also echoes of the dispensational history of the church found in Revelation Chapters 2-3. A history which begins with the church in Ephesus, where we see a drifting away –

Rev 2:4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love.

A history which ends with the 7th church, that of the Laodiceans, a church that has complete disregard for its birthright, having sold it for worldly gain – *Rev 3:17 Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked—*

4). This extraordinary section of Scripture in Hebrews Chapter 2 then continues with – *Heb 2:5 For He has not put the world [age] to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels*

And here in this verse we find the focus of the complete Book of Hebrews – the age to come that will not be in subjection to angels.

a). The age to come when angels will no longer rule, but when Christ and a new order of rulers taken from the redeemed of mankind will rule in their place.

b). A time when the curse will be lifted, the very thing the creation longs for – *Rom 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. 20 For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; 21 because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.*

A time when righteousness and justice will prevail, and Divine order will be brought out of chaos.

c). A time when everything will be in its proper place – the creation delivered from the curse, Israel at the head of the nations, ruling with Christ from Jerusalem, the nations within their allotted boundaries, Christ and His joint heirs in the heavenly Jerusalem ruling over the Gentile nations – *Mic 4:1 Now it shall come to pass in the latter days That the mountain of the Lord's house Shall be established on the top of the mountains, And shall be exalted above the hills; And peoples shall flow to it. 2 Many nations shall come and say, "Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, To the house of the God of Jacob; He will teach us His ways, And we shall walk in His paths." For out of Zion the law shall go forth, And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.*

We will continue next week – if the Lord is willing.

