

Sunday April 28<sup>th</sup> 2019  
The Word of God  
A Survey of the Bible – Lesson 16E  
'Let Us Go On'

1). 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 salvation.....*

The Book of Hebrews contains 5 major warnings that are given exclusively to Christians. And the first of these warnings is seen in the verses we just read. And these are all warnings concerning one particular thing, that which our verses call 'so great salvation' – the salvation, shown in Hebrews, to be the salvation of the soul, the means by which many sons will be brought to glory; and this salvation and the rights of the firstborn that come with it, is presented in relation to one particular time – the age to come which will not be subjected to angels.

a). And this salvation, which is to be revealed in the last time, is so great because it involves faithful eternally saved Christians being removed from the earth to be placed alongside the Heir of all things upon His throne in the heavens as crowned rulers, in the place of Satan and his angels. With these Christians having been given the rights of the firstborn through adoption – Rom 8:7 *and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.*

Rev 2:26 *And he who overcomes, and keeps My works until the end, to him I will give power over the nations—27 'He shall rule them with a rod of iron; They shall be dashed to pieces like the potter's vessels'—as I also have received from My Father;*

And according to the scripture, there is nothing greater than this. And nor could there be, as in this salvation and all that is encompassed by it, comes the ultimate fulfillment of God's plan and purpose for Man as set out in the opening 34 verses of Genesis. A plan and a purpose that had been determined

by the Triune God before the world was ever created. A plan and a purpose that saw - 'the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world'.

b). And as we have seen from our previous studies there is a direct correlation between 'giving the more earnest heed to the things we have heard' and neglecting 'so great salvation'.

c). And the things we have heard, contextually, within the Book itself, have to do with 7 OT quotations from Chapter 1 that establish the certainty of both Christ's Deity and the coming of His Kingdom. And then beyond the context of Hebrews Chapter 1, this has been the same message we have heard and received from the beginning, from our early studies in the Book of Ruth onwards - Christ's Kingdom and the many sons to be brought to glory with Him.

d). We are then to 'give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard' concerning the Christ and His Kingdom that have been revealed to us in our previous studies. And we must do this because we are told that not to do so can cause us to drift away - not drift away from what many may describe as being 'a good Christian', but drifting away from the most important truth we could ever receive, that concerning the salvation of our soul in relation to Christ's coming Kingdom.

e). And to drift from this truth will cause us to become casual and careless with it, thereby neglecting so great salvation, leading us to shipwreck as we stand before the Lord in judgment.

2). This first warning, which draws from the experiences of Israel in the wilderness, establishes the framework within which the remaining 4 warnings are placed.

a). The 'so great salvation' remains central to all that comes next, and the second warning is given to us again through the type of the first generation of Israel to come out of Egypt with respect to faithfulness on their journey from Egypt to Canaan.

b). This is a journey made by Israel that presents a picture of our own journey. A journey, following our deliverance from the world, pictured through Egypt, that takes us to the heavenly land to which we are called, pictured through Canaan. And faithfulness remains key for us as it did for them - Heb 3:5 *And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, 6 but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. 7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:*

*“Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.’ 11 So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest.’ ”*

Hearing the Lord’s voice ‘Today’, we can equate with giving ‘the more earnest heed to the things we have heard’. And Israel going ‘astray in their hearts’ we can equate with us drifting away.

c). For Israel the end result was that God swore in His wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest’. An end result that takes us to the same conclusion, ‘how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?’.

d). The answer to the question is self-evident, we won’t escape the same end experienced by Israel – we will not enter God’s rest, the Sabbath Rest, the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, either. The rights of the firstborn will be, denied us - Heb 3:16 *For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. 4:1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. 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. 3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: “So I swore in My wrath, ‘They shall not enter My rest,’ ” although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.*

And we can see through this how the second warning fits into the framework of the first.

God’s rest seen in Hebrews 3, is the 7<sup>th</sup> Day that He established and sanctified in Genesis Chapter 2 and it is the Day that is synonymous with the exercise of the rights of the firstborn regarding inheritance and rulership - Heb 4:4 *For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”; 5 and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.” 6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it*

*has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts."..... 11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.*

The second warning then, within the framework of the first, gives us direction and purpose through the type of Israel's journey from Egypt to Canaan.

e). We must know and understand that although we may never set foot outside the boundaries of the town in which we were born we are nonetheless traveling inexorably towards Christ's Kingdom, the 7<sup>th</sup> Day. And just as Israel inevitably came to the border of the land at Kadesh Barnea, so we will come to the Judgment Seat of Christ – nothing will prevent this from happening. But what we have done during the course of our journey will determine what will happen next.

f). And so, in anticipation of this we must 'be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience', disobedience demonstrated time and again by Israel during the course of their journey.

3). The third warning presents the antitype to that seen in the second by showing that our journey to the land of our heavenly calling is to be seen in terms of the spiritual growth we are to make from immaturity to maturity in the faith – Heb 5:9 *And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal [age lasting] salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek," 11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. 6:1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.*

Our journey then to maturity in the faith must take us beyond 'the first principles of the oracles of God', beyond the milk of the Word to the 'solid food' [strong meat]. And clearly, from the verses we have here in Hebrews, the

‘strong meat’ of the Word is specifically the teaching that surrounds the Melchizedek Priesthood of Christ.

a). Now, sometimes we may be confused by thinking that the meat and strong meat of the Word refer to things within the Word that are progressively harder to understand. But this would be to misunderstand what the milk, meat and strong meat are all about.

b). Rather than seeing the progression from milk to strong meat in terms of moving from that which is easy to understand to that which is difficult we should understand it instead as progressing from the letter of the Scripture to the Spirit, moving from a comprehension of the basic ‘storyline’ to understanding the spiritual truth contained within it – 2 Cor 3:5 *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, **not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.***

Rom 7:6 *But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in **the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.***

Heb 10:8 *Previously saying, “Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them” (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, “Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.” **He takes away the first that He may establish the second.***

The life and death seen at the end of the verses in 2 Corinthians can only be referencing having life or death with respect to the age to come – to receive the rights of the firstborn or to be rejected from those rights. And what we will realize through these verses, is that if we never move beyond the ‘storyline’, beyond the letter, to understand the spiritual truth revealed through the abundant typology given throughout the OT Scriptures, we cannot progress to maturity in the faith and we cannot be adopted as a firstborn son. Which is why the phrase ‘let us go on’ has such significance within the context of this 3<sup>rd</sup> warning. To go on to completion, to maturity in the faith, is absolutely possible and is available to every Christian who so desires.

c). But we had also seen this call to ‘go on’ is tempered by the phrase ‘if God permits’.

d). And we had seen in our study how God's permission to 'go on to perfection [completion]' in maturity in the faith was not down to random choices on God's part, but determined by where we have set our focus and the way we choose to live because of that focus.

e). And again, Israel is our example with only Caleb and Joshua from that first generation having their focus on the land that God had promised them and called them to. While the rest continually looked back to Egypt, finally resulting in the entire first generation, except Caleb and Joshua, committing apostasy at Kadesh Barnea.

f). And therein lies the 3<sup>rd</sup> warning for us. If our attention is fixed upon the world, upon this age, and this is where we look for our security and our future. If it is where we turn for praise, honor and glory from men, then God will not permit us to progress to maturity in the faith – Heb 6:4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

And God's lack of permission to go on does not make the Christian exempt from being rejected at the Judgment Seat, as that would be automatic given the absence of the faith in his life because of it. But rather, it would prevent him from bringing the shame and ignominy upon the One who died for him, as seen at His crucifixion, if he should do that which the first generation of Israel did at Kadesh.

g). Such is the importance that the Lord attaches to the salvation of the soul, the so great salvation that we are not to neglect, that we are to keep it and the land to which it relates always before us as we progress towards maturity in the faith, as we move beyond the letter to the Spirit – leaving behind death to embrace life in the age to come.

4). And all of this we must now take with us into the 4<sup>th</sup> warning – Heb 10:19 *Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is*

*faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

The chapters that precede Chapter 10, in which our 4<sup>th</sup> warning is found, have to do with the Lord's present High Priestly ministry on our behalf in the Heavenly tabernacle which is compared with the ministry of the Levitical priests in the tabernacle of Moses under the Law.

a). The Lord's present High Priestly ministry is the very thing He taught the disciples about on the night of the last supper through washing their feet – and is the same thing that John, whose feet were washed by Jesus, teaches in – 1 Jn 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

That which Jesus taught through the washing of His disciples' feet and that taught by 1 John both draw their imagery from the same thing – The Levitical priests and their ministry in the Tabernacle.

b). Upon entry into the priesthood the Levitical priest would be ceremonially washed completely from head to toe. This was done once and never needed to be repeated – Jn 13:9 *Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!"* 10 *Jesus said to him, "He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet, but is completely clean;*

Beyond this experience though there was a requirement that the priest wash his hands and feet before entering into the holy place, the sanctuary, in the

tabernacle where the golden candlestick provided the light and where the table of showbread was to be found.

c). During the course of their daily activity in the outer court where the blood sacrifices were made the priests' hands and feet would literally be soiled through the dirt, blood and dust that would become attached to them causing them to be defiled. So, before they could enter the holy place, they stopped at the bronze laver with its upper and lower basins to wash off the defilement from the outer court. This washing was to be done on pain of death, but once washed they could then enter the holy place where the light was to be found.

d). It is that pictured through the washing at the bronze laver that Jesus is teaching on the night of the last supper – drawing from the type to teach the antitype. And it is the antitype that John takes us to.

e). As the Levitical priests became defiled through the blood and dirt of the outer court, so we become defiled through our contact with sin. As the priests would come to the bronze laver, so we are to continually confess our sin, and as the water washed away the defilement from the priests, so the blood of Christ continues to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The water in the laver is the type, the blood of Christ on the mercy seat is the antitype.

f). And if we continually avail ourselves of this cleansing for sin that our High Priest has provided through the sacrifice of Himself, then we can continually walk in the light as He is in the light and we will have fellowship with Him. And this is what we read in the verses from Hebrews Chapter 10 - *19 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.*

The word translated 'confess', simply means 'to speak the same as' – so, to confess our sin is for us to speak the same as the Lord has spoken about sin. We agree with Him. And I hope we may begin to realize that the confession of our sin is not done in a vacuum, but in 'full assurance of [the] faith' – we do it understanding how our confession and cleansing fit into God's purpose for us with respect to the salvation of our soul and the rights of the firstborn. - *23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

There is a connection between the confession of our sins and the confession of our hope. Every time we speak the same thing as the Lord with regards to our sin, so we speak the same as the Lord with respect to our hope. And we are to do this without wavering, because He who promised is faithful. 'He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and the cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'

g). But, the confession of our hope goes beyond the implied declaration we make by confessing our sins - *24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching. 26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,*

There is a singular purpose why Christians today are to assemble together. It is for the confession of our hope. To stir up love and good works in each other because of our hope and to exhort one another with respect to our hope.

h). Within our own context here this must be the focus for what we do on a Sunday, a Wednesday and a Thursday. Those who lead out must exhort us with respect to our hope, the songs that we sing must do likewise. The message spoken, irrespective of who speaks it must do the same. And the conversations we have with one another as we arrive and leave MUST be about the hope – to talk about the coming of Christ's Kingdom, our appearance at His Judgment Seat and the salvation of our souls, as this is the scriptural mandate, we have for assembling together.

i). And according to our verses from Hebrews we must do this 'so much the more' as we see the day approaching.

j). We will need to continue with this next time though – if the Lord is willing.