

GOSPEL / HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE

A Gospel Message by George Bates. The Meeting House. Randalstown. Co., Antrim. Northern Ireland. UK.

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READING:- HEBREWS 2 : 1-4

*The entire platform for what is being said here, is the very first word "**Therefore**".*

*Whenever we see the word "**Therefore**" in the Bible, we should always stop and ask ourselves the question "What is it there for".*

*Well, the writer to the Hebrews is saying that because of the great Galaxy of Christ's Glories, that he has already set forth in **Ch.1** ...*

*and because of our Lord Jesus Christ's superiority over all the angels that worship Him, (including Gabriel and Michael the Archangel),
and because He is greater than all that have gone before Him, whether they be Prophets, Priests or Kings,
and because He owns everything, and He made everything,
and He controls everything,
and He sustains everything,
by the word of His power,
and because **He is "God** manifest in flesh", the Redeemer of our souls, and the Sovereign Lord and everlasting King on the Eternal Throne of all existence ...
Then we should never forget who He really is, and we should never neglect to hear and obey His voice!*

*You know that if someone deliberately breaks the Ten Commandments and kills or steals or commits adultery, then it is only but right that they should suffer the consequences.
(The Law condemns us to **Death**).*

*But how much more do we deserve to suffer the consequences, if we neglect to hear and believe the Gospel that gives us life, preached by the one who gave the Commandments!
That's why Paul asks "**How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord?**".*

There are only two alternatives here, you are either hearing His voice, or you are hardening your heart.

*Friend, you are not taking this thing seriously enough, believe me!
It is going to cost you everything!*

For by your own neglect you are consigning yourself to the torments and punishment of hell forever!

We are talking here of nothing less than the eternal loss of your own soul.

Some of us have lost a lot in life because of our sins, but up until this present moment we still have our own souls.

The Saviour Himself said "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul".

The quickest way to hell is to just sit there and do nothing about it!

You can know all that there is to know about the Saviour, and yet through neglectfulness, die and still perish in the lake of fire, because you have drifted on past your last chance of salvation.

*You can allow yourself to "**Slip away**" from the lifebelt of God's Gospel and be lost.*

I am told that if a frog jumps into a pot of water that has been placed on a slow burning stove, it will enjoy the heat and it will continually acclimatise itself to its environment, without jumping out of the pot, until it's too late and it's cooked.

I will never forget the story that I heard from a man with the worst scarred hands that I have ever seen.

He was a man in his 60's.

As he wept, he told me of how dearly his wife and he had loved one another.

Then she developed MS and her health deteriorated very quickly, until he had to lift and lay her.

He invented wee things to make her life easier, for this old thing had drained the strength out of her body.

Then one day he hopped her up in a chair, and went down to the bottom of the garden to work for a while.

He became engrossed in the work that he was doing, and although he did smell smoke at one point, yet he never suspected where it was coming from.

Then suddenly he heard a scream, and he turned around to see a sight that he would never forget.

His house was going up in flames, and it was burning like an inferno!

*He ran to the top of the garden and heard his wee wife calling for him "**Bob! Bob!**".*

Without even thinking he ran right into the flames to look for her!

He couldn't find her as he stood there with nothing but fire all around him.

He looked down at his hands which were hanging in shreds and burning in flames and he told me "George, I couldn't feel the pain in my hands, because the pain in my heart was so much greater!".

Friend, what is hell going to be like?

There is a pain beyond any physical pain.

One thing is sure, Our Lord Jesus Christ knows, for He suffered hell on the Old Bloodstained Rugged Cross, so that we will never go there if we trust Him as our Saviour.

*We read in **Hebrews 2:3** of
AN UNPRECEDENTED PREACHER*

"How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;"

It is very true that in Old Testament times, God's people were aware of the Gospel, in types and shadows and promises and prophecies, but Our Lord Jesus Christ was the first to publicly proclaim and fully expound the Gospel.

We must never forget this blessed fact that the very first Gospel preacher was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself!

*And the Apostles confirmed it, ...
and the Holy Ghost in turn confirmed their witness by a mighty display of His power.*

He is AN UNPRECEDENTED PREACHER of the Gospel of the Grace of God.

*But there is also a universal problem in the text, **"How shall we escape?"**.*

Paul is reasoning with his fellow Hebrews, and in particular with those who were not yet saved, but the question is the same for all of us!

It is the heart cry of fallen humanity all over the world!

Jews and Gentiles, small and great, rich and poor, educated and illiterate.

"For there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God".

*How shall we escape **WHAT?***

*How shall we escape the due reward for our sins, both in time (as we reap whatsoever we have sown ...), and in Eternity, for **"The wicked shall be turned into hell"**.*

There is a well known principle in God's truth, that the greater you are privileged to know God's truth, the bigger is your responsibility to obey it, and the more effectively your sins will be dealt with.

*The city of Capernaum was **"Exalted unto Heaven"**, as they witnessed more of Christ's mighty works and words, than any other place on God's earth, in the days of His public ministry.*

They went to all the meetings and heard all the messages, and saw all the miracles, but they neglected to repent

Matthew 11:23

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained

until this day".

*Have you been privileged by God to know the Gospel from an early age?
or have you witnessed its mighty works in the life of a friend, or a loved one?
But blind unbelief has closed your eyes to it, and your haven't repented?*

"Be sure your sin will find you out".

*Be warned friend, you need desperately to escape the awful condition of dying in your sins, for the GREAT Gospel preacher Himself said, That if you die in your sins **"Whether I go ye cannot come"** John 8:21.*

*Be completely assured of
THE SURENESS OF THE SAVIOUR'S SAYINGS
and that there is no purgatory!*

*The dying thief was not told "Today shalt thou be with me in purgatory", but **"Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise"**.*

Surely you can trust the Saviour's sayings, can you not?

*He is not a mad man!
He is not mistaken!
He is not misguided"
Or melodramatic!
He is not making it all up to scare people!
He is God revealed in human form!*

The eternal son of God Himself, who cannot be wrong or lie.

He is the sinless, pre-existent, virgin born Son of the Living God!

And He gives you His personal guarantee, that you will never Him in Heaven, if you die in your sins.

*I know full well that this is no **"New thing"** to you.*

*You **have** heard, haven't you?*

*You **have** thought deeply about eternal issues?*

*You **are** aware of your Spiritual need of this Great Salvation?
(The Hebrews that received this letter were exactly the same).
BUT you are asleep to
ITS URGENCY!*

*To **"Drift Away"** from something, presupposes the fact that there was a time when you once were very near!*

*It could have been said of you at that time, as the Lord Jesus said to a young man one day,
"Thou art not far from the Kingdom" Mark 12:34.*

*You were **so close** to coming to the Saviour, that it seemed to be a certainty.*

*But then you **drew back**,
because of the consequences of such an action,
and because of the change that it would make in your circumstances, and because of the critical
crowd around you.*

*You drew back!
You procrastinated!
You put it off, and **you began to drift away!***

*It wasn't the Lord who was drifting away!
It was you who was drifting away from the Lord, and His word!
You are without excuse!
The sense of **urgency** was gone!*

*And you were lulled by the devil into a satanically inspired sleep, with regard to your awful
danger!*

*Listen friend, you need to give "**The more earnest heed to the things which (you) we have heard;
lest at any time (you) we should let them slip**".
(Margin - "**Run out as leaking vessels**").*

*Some of you older ones can possibly still remember going down to the pump for a bucket of water,
and if there was a hole in the bucket then the water was gone before you got home.*

*God gave you light ...
or Heavenly illumination upon the Scriptures and especially upon the Gospel, so that you can
understand it.*

*You ought to have praised God for it, and obeyed it, but you let it run out again like a leaking
vessel.*

*"Oh" you say "I have no time for that at the present time",
but the verse says "**Lest at any time you should let them slip**".*

*Don't underestimate
GOD'S DANGER SIGNALS!
NEGLECT is easy, but ESCAPE will be impossible.
I know that many of you have heard of the sinking of that great ship, called the Titanic.*

*They said that this amazing ship, that was built in Belfast, was **unsinkable**, and **virtually**
indestructible.*

The Titanic was the best equipped ship of its day.

It was a state of the art, and up to the minute vessel in everything, and no expense spared!

Yet it never even completed its maiden voyage!

But sink on Sunday night, the 14th April 1912, with 1,517 passengers and crew that perished.

There were 2,223 on board altogether.

*There were 3,560 life belts in the cabins and births, but it took so long for so many of the people to realise **THE SERIOUSNESS OF THE SITUATION**, that they didn't avail themselves of the resources that had been provided.*

They didn't think that they would need them.

Listen friend, without Christ in this meeting, God has provided a Great Salvation for you ..., even though it cost Him the heinous death of His only begotten Son, but it won't count for tuppence on your behalf, if you don't avail yourself of the salvation that He offers.

The Captain and Crew of the Titanic had been fully conscious of the danger ahead!

They had been warned by wireless from 5 o'clock that day, and ice had been seen also from the crow's nest on board ship.

The Captain had placed one man on look out duty, and she was doing "Full speed ahead", so as to make good time on her maiden journey to New York.

*The owners were hoping that **tomorrow's International Headlines in the newspapers** across the world, would be reporting that **all previous records had been broken** by the Titanic*

She could do 21 knots per hour, and she was doing 20 knots per hour at 11.40pm that night.

That's 300 feet every 10 seconds.

Think of the passengers on board for a few minutes.

They were not sad or anything like that, for they were on the crest of a wave of excitement and thrill!

This was Heaven on earth, as far as they were concerned.

It was the fulfilment of a dream, as they were being propelled forward, with a sense of adventure and achievement ...

*To have the privilege of being one of the very first to enjoy **THIS BRAND NEW LINER**, which so many men in our shipyard, had worked for so long to build.*

Forging ahead at full speed in luxury and beauty and plenty, on the journey of life ...

BUT

Death and disaster was only minutes away, as an iceberg gashed a 300 foot rip in her starboard side!

(Right hand side looking forward).

At 12 o'clock midnight the water was flooding into the Titanic, and at 2.20am she was gone to a

watery grave!

Friend!

The poor souls who had been PREOCCUPIED with the lavish things of earth that evening, heard the dance band playing "Nearer my God to thee" as the ship went down!

*The stark realities of eternity called "**Heaven and hell**" were now upon everyone's mind.*

A young Scotsman drifted alone on a piece of debris, when a wave brought John Harper, (a Christian from Glasgow) closer to him.

He also was holding on to a piece of wreckage.

"Man are you saved?" he shouted.

"No, I am not" came the reply.

John shouted "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved".

The waves bore him away, but strange to say he was washed back a little later on, and he asked him "Are you saved now?".

"No, I cannot honestly say that I am".

*"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shall be saved" called John Harper.
Then loosing his hold on the wreckage, because of the icy coldness of the water, he sank and drowned.*

That young scot stood up in a meeting in Hamilton in Canada and gave testimony to the fact that he became John Harper's last convert.

Were you once a lot nearer to God than you are now?

Have you been well warned about the awesome danger up ahead?

You believe in God.

You know the truth.

You understand the way of salvation perfectly.

But, you have drifted away and let it slip, and you never actually REPENTED of your sins, and trusted Christ as your own a personal Saviour.

You are forging ahead at full speed on the journey of life, with a false sense of superiority and security!

You are preoccupied with the things of time and sense, and you haven't a clue what the future holds in store for you.

"How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?".

How shall we escape the calling down of the Divine displeasure upon our ungodly heads.

How shall we escape the condition of dying in our sins.

How shall we escape the coming judgement at the Great White Throne.

*How shall we escape the consequences of eternally experiencing the horrific torments of hell.
It must be a horrible thing to actually see hell and realise that it does exist after all, with nothing under your feet but fire.*

*It must be a horrible thing to mentally accept the fact **that you are not only in it ...**,
but that you will never, ever, get out of it, as long as God exists.*

*But the most horrific horror of them all in hell is to realise that the gracious, merciful,
compassionate, loving God, who did everything that he could to save you, has washed His hands of
you forever.*

There will be no escape!

There will be no hope of it!

*There will be no way out of it, once you are in it!
For there is a great gulf fixed!*

*For Abraham told the rich man in hell, "**There is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass
from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence**".*

There are no dummy runs at this thing.

It is too late then.

*Your only hope is to escape right now, before you miss it.
(Illustration about Fred).*

*Our time is gone, but if I was to speak to you about
THE GREATNESS OF THE DANGER TO BE AVOIDED*

or

THE GREATNESS OF THE DAMNATION TO BE ENDURED

or

THE GREATNESS OF THE DELIGHTS TO BE ENJOYED

or

THE GREATNESS OF THE DESIRE OF GOD TO SAVE YOU,

We would be here all night.

***"For God so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on
Him should not perish but have everlasting life".***

But I finish by reminding you of

THE GREATNESS OF THE DEVOTION OF OUR SAVIOUR TO YOUR SOUL.

as He hanged and heaved on the Old Bloodstained Rugged Cross at Calvary.

He only had to speak and the whole of CREATION burst into being, like a garden at His feet.

*Just a few words from His lips was enough for CREATION,
but He had to die the death of the Cross for your SALVATION and for mine.*

Please don't neglect to heed the warning and take the proper action tonight!

*Please don't be taken up with the trifles of the present moment, and ignore the horrific
consequences up ahead!*

Don't be fooled by your unconsciousness of the danger!

Don't let it slip!