

## Devotional Questions – Hebrews 2:1-4, Study Leader’s Questions

N.B. No questions have been forwarded for Hebrews 1.

1. *What signs are there that we may be spiritually drifting? How can we avoid drifting away (Hebrews 2:1)?* Note that the NIV-based terminology in *Question 1* is incorrect and in turn misleading. Hebrews 2:1 actually states **“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”**
2. *What practical steps can we take to give more attention to what Jesus has said (Hebrews 2:1)?*
3. *What evidence is there that we cannot escape judgement if we neglect our great salvation (Hebrews 2:3)?* Note that the form of the question is misleading if applied directly to Christians in the Church Age. See **Introduction** with respect to the transitional nature of the Book of Hebrews.
4. *How was this great salvation revealed and confirmed to us (Hebrews 2:3-4)?*
5. *In what way does all of this help us to be better Christians today?*

### Hebrews 1-2:1-4

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Book of Hebrews* pp i-xiii, 1-38, 219-227, 229-230, 335, 366-367, his study *The Big Flap* and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 752, 1234, 1371, 1455, 1598-1599, 1601, 1610-1611 for detailed comments. The comments available for Hebrews 1 in this set of studies are mainly with respect to the word **"God"** that begins the Book, Hebrews 1:1, the expressions **"these last days"** Hebrews 1:2 and **"by himself"** Hebrews 1:3. See *Introduction*.

### Introduction

In sum, Paul wrote Hebrews 1-12 soon after his conversion, approximately 35 A.D. during his three-year sojourn in Arabia, Galatians 1:17, 18.

*In type*, by addressing *Hebrews*, Paul may have been writing as **"a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron...caught up unto God, and to his throne"** Revelation 12:5, Israel's hoped-for deliverer according Lamentations 4:20:

**"The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the LORD, was taken in their pits, of whom we said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen."**

Note now Hebrews 10:34 **"For ye had compassion of me in my bonds..."** where Paul may have been writing prophetically in the first person with respect to Israel's deliverer in bondage after his capture in Lamentations 4:20 and before his catching-up to God in Revelation 12:5, as David was writing prophetically in the first person of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, Psalm 22:12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18. Paul mentions **"bonds"** with respect to himself in captivity 9 times in his letters other than Hebrews; Ephesians 6:20, Philippians 1:7, 13, 14, 16, Colossians 4:3, 18, 2 Timothy 2:9, Philemon 10.

However, none of those references describes *Hebrews* as having compassion on Paul and none of them refer to a time early in Paul's conversion, which suggests that Paul was writing prophetically, possibly, as indicated, with respect to Israel's hoped-for deliverer described in Lamentations 4:20.

See Dr Ruckman's commentary *The Book of Revelation* pp 314-316 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 786, 1067, 1657 and for the approximate dates of Paul's prison epistles, 62-68 A.D.

**"As of one born out of due time"** 1 Corinthians 15:8, Paul added Hebrews 13 almost thirty years later, towards the end of his life and ministry, as the reference to **"our brother Timothy"** Hebrews 13:23 indicates. Timothy is the only individual mentioned by name in Hebrews 13 and who else but Paul would mention him explicitly without naming any other individual, given Paul's designation of **"Timothy, my own son in the faith"** 1 Timothy 1:2, **"son Timothy"** 1 Timothy 1:18 and **"Timothy, my dearly beloved son"** 2 Timothy 1:2, with two of Paul's 13 Epistles to Christians addressed explicitly to this one individual as 1 and 2 Timothy.

Paul's authorship of the thirteenth chapter of Hebrews is why the King's men entitled the Book *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Hebrews*.

Hebrews, as the name indicates, is written explicitly to *Hebrews*, *not* Christians, *not* Jewish Christians, *not* spiritual Jews and *not* Hebrew Christians. Like Matthew and Acts, Hebrews is a *transitional* Book. Matthew takes the reader from the Old to the New Testament, Acts from Israel to the Church and Hebrews from the Church Age to the time of **"great tribulation"** Matthew 24:21 of the End Times, when **"...he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved"** Matthew 24:13 i.e. salvation at that time is conditional on faith *and* works, as Hebrews also sets out. See for example Hebrews 2:3, 3:6, 14, 6:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. The designated intended recipients are *Jewish Tribulation* saints, Revelation 7:14, *not* Christians, see for example Hebrews 1:1 with respect to **"the fathers,"** 3:15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 4:1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

That said, as a transitional Book, Hebrews does contain Christian doctrine with respect to salvation, Hebrews 2:9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 10:12, 13, 14 with Romans 5:8, 9, 10. The Book of Hebrews, of

course, is also important for *Gentile Tribulations* saints with respect to faith and works salvation. See again Hebrews 2:3, 3:6, 14, 6:4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.

The Tribulation emphasis of the Book of Hebrews means that the expression *“these last days”* therefore refers prophetically to the *“perilous times”* of *“the last days”* 2 Timothy 3:1 that close out the Church Age and persist until the Second Advent. Paul is bracing for those *“perilous times”* his intended readers, who will be *Jewish* and have responsibility therefore for ministering *Tribulation* salvation to *all* saints at that time required to “keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ” Revelation 12:17 i.e. “the saints...they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” Revelation 14:12.

That is one reason why Hebrews has an emphasis on the term *“priest”* that occurs with its derivatives *“priesthood”* and *“priests”* 37 times in 34 verses; Hebrews 2:17, 3:1, 4:14, 15, 5:1, 5, 6, 10, 6:20, 7:1, 3, 5, 11 *“priesthood”* and *“priest,”* 12, 14, 15, 17, 20, 21 *“priests”* and *“priest,”* 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 8:1, 3, 4 *“priest”* and *“priests,”* 9:6, 7, 11, 25, 10:11, 21, 13:11 with a particular emphasis on “the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” Hebrews 3:1. See also Hebrews 2:17, 4:15, 5:1, 5, 6, 10, 6:20, 7:15, 17, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 28, 8:1, 3, 9:11, 25, 10:21, 21 references in all, over half of all the references in Hebrews to the term *“priest”* and its derivatives. Note the function of the priest *as this function would also apply to a Jewish ministry to Tribulation believers because the priesthood of all believers 1 Peter 2:5, 9 as in the Church Age and will not apply in the time of “great tribulation” Matthew 24:21, when Hebrew ministers will have to augment the promptings of Romans 2:14, 15 for Gentile Tribulation believers.*

“For the priest’s lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts” Malachi 2:7.

The Book of Hebrews is the vehicle for this ministry:

“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” Hebrews 5:12.

“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure” Isaiah 46:10, showing that the Lord prepared the Book of Hebrews for its particular End Times ministry two-thousand years in advance.

Noting Malachi 2:7, note that Hebrews is the only Book of scripture starting with the word *“God.”* That in itself is a pointer to Paul as the author of Hebrews. The word *“God”* appears 1367 times in the New Testament, 568 times in Paul’s Epistles Romans-Philemon, stated to be by him, beginning with the word *“Paul,”* 489 times in the Gospels and Acts, 238 times in James-Revelation, with 72 times in the Book of Hebrews – giving *“God”* 640 times in Paul’s letters i.e. almost half of the 1367 New Testament usages of the word *“God.”* It follows that, with Hebrews as Paul’s first Letter and the earliest Book of the New Testament, Paul would begin the Book of Hebrews with *“God”* i.e. “In the beginning God” Genesis 1:1 similar to how he starts the first of his letters chronologically.

“Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God” Romans 1:1.

It should be noted that Paul has the word *“God”* in the opening verse of each New Testament Epistle stated to have been written by him with the exception of Philipians and Philemon i.e. in 11 out of 13 Epistles. It then follows that Paul is in effect urging his readers in Hebrews 1:1 therefore to “seek unto their God” Isaiah 8:19 according to Isaiah 46:3-4.

“Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb: And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and will deliver you.”

God's concern for Israel shapes Paul's concern, another pointer to Paul as the writer of Hebrews i.e. **"to the Jew first"** Romans 1:16. **"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh...Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved"** Romans 9:1-3, 10:1.

Further, Paul is the best man for the task of writing the Book of Hebrews in that he **"...profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers"** Galatians 1:14. No-one could explain either the theme of **"better than"** Hebrews 1:4 in Hebrews with respect to the Lord Jesus Christ or the transition from the Church Age to **"great tribulation"** Matthew 24:21 of the End Times with respect to **"great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people"** Luke 21:23 *better than Paul.*

Finally, Paul **"in lowliness of mind...on the things of others"** not himself, Philippians 2:3-4, 3:7 is still **"an Hebrew of the Hebrews"** Philippians 3:5. Who else could write Hebrews better than Paul?

(Note in passing that 11 Books of the scripture i.e. one in six, begin with the word **"Now;"** Exodus 1:1, Joshua 1:1, Judges 1:1, Ruth 1:1, 1 Samuel 1:1, 2 Samuel 1:1, 1 Kings 1:1, Ezra 1:1, Esther 1:1, Ezekiel 1:1, Jonah 1:1. God's word is *now*: **"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word"** Acts 4:29.)

God's calling of Paul as the best man to write the Book of Hebrews has a lesson for the Christian and his calling, in that **"God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are"** 1 Corinthians 1:28 **"for with God all things are possible"** Mark 10:27. Whatever the Christian's calling, therefore, **"according to the power that worketh in us"** Ephesians 3:20 he is the best man for it that God can call and he should therefore rest in 2 Corinthians 9:8 and obey Colossians 4:17.

**"And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work:"**

**"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it."**

Note further that the expression **"by himself"** is found in the 1611 AV1611 in Hebrews 1:3, where it remains in the 2011+ AV1611 and with variation in the Bibles of the 16<sup>th</sup> century English Protestant Reformation; Tyndale, Coverdale, Great, Matthew, Bishops', Geneva.

The expression is also found in Ricker Berry's Edition of Stephanus' 1550 Edition of the Received Text and in the Farstad-Hodges 'Majority' Text and therefore in the NKJV, which disputes the expression in a footnote.

The expression does not occur in the 1385, 1395 Wycliffe's Bibles.

The expression is also omitted by the 1582 JR, Jesuit Rheims New Testament, the Douay-Rheims, DR 1749-1752 Challoner Revision, RV, Nestle's 21<sup>st</sup> Edition, 1978, 1984, 2011 NIVs, JB, NJB, NWT. J. A. Moorman notes in *Early Manuscripts and the Authorized Version* p 139 that **"by himself"** is found with some variation in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century Greek papyrus P46, 12 uncial Greek manuscripts and most of the Greek cursives, 3 Old Latin copies and in other versions including the very early Peshitta Syriac Text. Jerome's Vulgate and 8 Old Latin copies that contain Hebrews 1 omit the expression, along with a small number of the cursives but significantly, Aleph and B are among the 6 uncials that contain Hebrews 1 that omit the expression i.e. the usual suspects. J. A. Moorman states that early Christendom soon brought other means into the work of redemption that was wholly that of the Lord Jesus Christ e.g. Mary as Co-Redemptrix [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Co-Redemptrix](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Co-Redemptrix) and Purgatory [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purgatory](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Purgatory). Omission of **"by himself"** by the NIVs etc. helps sustain those Catholic heresies.

## Hebrews 2:1-4 – Answers to Questions

1. *What signs are there that we may be spiritually drifting? How can we avoid drifting away (Hebrews 2:1)?* Note that the NIV-based terminology in *Question 1* is incorrect and in turn misleading. Hebrews 2:1 actually states ***“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.”***

Paul’s exhortation in Hebrews 2:1 is ***“to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard”*** in order not to forget them i.e. ***“let them slip”*** as in Hebrews 12:5 or ‘it slipped my mind’ ☹, as a missionary once said ***“God is always giving and forgiving, we are always getting and forgetting.”***

***“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.”***

***“The exhortation”*** of Hebrews 12:5 is one of ***“the things which we have heard”*** because it is a quotation from Proverbs 3:11-12.

***“My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.”***

It should not be forgotten because as Paul states in Hebrews 12:11 ***“Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.”***

Paul has that in mind for the Hebrews’ good in Hebrews 2:1. To stay saved, they must stay righteous with the Lord Jesus Christ ***“whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end”*** Hebrews 3:6. Note by contrast that Christians irrevocably by definition ***“are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God”*** Ephesians 2:19.

Note also that ‘drifting’ away from the Lord does not match the scriptures that reveal *wickedness*, not negligence, which drifting implies, as the *prime* cause of anyone going away from God.

***“For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God”*** 1 Samuel 22:22.

***“For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God”*** Psalm 18:21.

***“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God”*** Hebrews 3:12.

Noting that ***“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*** Jeremiah 17:9, the counter to ***“a wicked heart”*** Proverbs 26:23 is a good grounding in ***“the word of God”*** e.g. 1 Samuel 9:29, Luke 8:11, 11:28, Acts 4:31, 12:24, 19:20, Romans 10:17, Ephesians 6:17, Colossians 1:25, 1 Thessalonians 2:13, 2 Timothy 2:9, 1 Peter 1:23, 2 Peter 3:5, Hebrews 4:12, Revelation 1:2, 9, 6:9, 20:4, 45 times in scripture in all:

***“But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience”*** Luke 8:15.

2 Peter 1:1-15, *binding also on a Christian*, then describe how ***“to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard,”*** in that ***“the things which we have heard”*** also include ***“exceeding great and precious promises”*** 2 Peter 1:4, such as Hebrews 12:26 with respect to ***“him that speaketh from heaven”*** Hebrews 12:25.

***“Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.”***

That is a quotation from Haggai 2:6, with respect to the Second Advent.

**“For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land;”**

Haggai 2:6 is a promise that should not be forgotten i.e. allowed to “let slip” because the sense of Hebrews 12:25-26 is that of a precursor to the receipt of a kingdom in Hebrews 12:28 that Hebrews in particular will receive if they are obedient to Hebrews 2:1.

**“Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:”**

The receipt of “a kingdom which cannot be moved” is a good incentive especially for the Hebrews for obeying Hebrews 2:1.

Acceptable, reverent service to God with “godly fear” is of course the sense of the steps of maturing in godliness as found in 2 Peter 1:1-15, with the promised reward for the Christian that **“an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ”** 2 Peter 1:11 i.e. a grand entrance with a grand reward, 1 Corinthians 3:14, including ruler-ship with the Lord Jesus Christ when He comes back, 2 Timothy 2:12 **“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him:”**

See Dr Ruckman’s commentary *The Books of the General Epistles, Volume 1* pp 406-421.

Taking in turn the steps that Peter lists in 2 Peter 1:5-7 for maturing in godliness as match-mates to Hebrews 2:1, it is found that they match Paul’s exhortation to Christians in Colossians 1:10-12:

**“Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge”** 2 Peter 1:5 is to be preoccupied with how to **“walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God”** Colossians 1:10 i.e. **“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth”** 2 Timothy 2:15, noting that *without right division, Hebrews cannot be understood in the light of Romans-Philemon that are intended for the Church Age.*

Adding **“to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness”** 2 Peter 1:6 is to be preoccupied with being **“Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness”** Colossians 1:11. The Hebrews **“have need of patience”** Hebrews 10:36 **“unto the coming of the Lord”** James 5:7.

Adding **“to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity”** 2 Peter 1:7 is to be preoccupied with **“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light”** Colossians 1:12 *as it applies to being thankful for one another, fellow “saints in light” with the aim of strengthening unity in the body of local believers* i.e. **“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace”** Ephesians 4:3 and in turn **“Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others”** Philippians 2:4, not as **“as a busybody in other men’s matters”** 1 Peter 4:15 but to **“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ”** Galatians 6:2, as James exhorts, as God leads.

**“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much”** James 5:16 e.g. like a brother in Christ who asked this writer to pray concerning a distressing situation. This brother’s attention was drawn to Isaiah 26:3, John 14:27, 1 Corinthians 10:13, which helped the skies to clear, as he said.

It is that kind of unity that prevents the memory slippage about which Paul warns in Hebrews 2:1 and about which Peter warns in 2 Peter 1:9, noting Peter’s emphasis on **“remembrance”** in 2 Peter 1:12, 13, 15.

**“But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”**

The basic *practical* step in achieving that unity is belief in *one* Book, “*the royal law*” James 2:8, the AV1611. Without that basic belief, a fellowship will fragment. It may do so even *with* that belief, see Acts 15:39 and the *Ruckman Reference Bible* p 1460 but at least some of the fragments will still be cut and polished “*as lively stones*” 1 Peter 2:5 “**And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him**” Malachi 3:17.

Note also that the above passages referred to with respect to Hebrews 2:1 all speak of “**better things...and things that accompany salvation**” Hebrews 6:9; “**the inheritance of the saints in light**” Colossians 1:12, “**a kingdom which cannot be moved**” Hebrews 12:28, “**an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**” 2 Peter 1:11.

It is these “*better things*” about which Paul exhorts in Hebrews 2:1 “**Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.**” “*Giving diligence*” to keep them in mind, e.g. by memorising Colossians 1:9-14 is the best prevention of memory slippage and an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure [www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/an+ounce+of+prevention+is+worth+a+pound+of+cure.html](http://www.usingenglish.com/reference/idioms/an+ounce+of+prevention+is+worth+a+pound+of+cure.html) as Peter well knew.

**“Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth”** 2 Peter 1:12. See *Appendix* for more remarks on the AV1611 reading “*let them slip*” versus the NIV reading “*drift away.*”

2. *What practical steps can we take to give more attention to what Jesus has said (Hebrews 2:1)?*

See *Question 1* above and note John 14:23, for anyone who professes to love the Lord Jesus Christ. Note that the AV1611 is far and away the easiest version to memorise. It has easier words than other versions, fewer syllables and consistent rhythm, which newer versions do not have. See *New Age Versions*, Chapter 7, *King James for Kids, Which Bible Is God’s Word?* pp 33-35 and *In Awe of Thy Word* Chapters 7-10.

Obedience to John 14:23 brings the promise of closeness to the Father and the Son, which should encourage greater attentiveness to the words of the Father and the Son.

**“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.”**

3. *What evidence is there that we cannot escape judgement if we neglect our great salvation (Hebrews 2:3)?* Note that the form of the question is misleading if applied directly to Christians in the Church Age. See *Introduction* with respect to the transitional nature of the Book of Hebrews.

Note first that a Christian *cannot*, strictly speaking, “*neglect so great salvation*” Hebrews 2:3. His salvation is inviolate:

**“Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him”** Romans 5:9.

**“In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory”** Ephesians 1:13-14.

**“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ*”** Colossians 2:10-11.

**“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory*”** Colossians 3:3-4.

**“For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, *Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him*”** 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10.

The Christian is safe from God’s wrath, sealed with God’s Spirit and set apart with God’s Son, having been spiritually circumcised by Him, unto supernatural glorification.

The Christian therefore *cannot* neglect his salvation because it is not his responsibility. It is the responsibility of **“the Godhead”** Acts 17:29, Romans 1:20, Colossians 2:9 (three mentions, one for each Person of the Godhead), **“the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost”** 1 John 5:7.

The Hebrew recipients of Hebrews 2:3, however, with whom Paul identifies himself as one sanctified by **“the blood of the covenant”** Hebrews 10:29, *could* neglect their salvation *and lose it because it is their responsibility to maintain it during the time of Tribulation or “Jacob’s trouble”* Jeremiah 30:7.

**“For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, *But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses’ law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?*”** Hebrews 10:26-29.

Hebrews 10:26-29 does not apply to the salvation of any Christian who ever lived, or will live.

Hebrews 10:26-29 applies to *Tribulation saints*, in particular Hebrew i.e. *Jewish Tribulation saints*, as a warning against neglecting salvation e.g. by worshipping an idol, Revelation 13:14-15, 14:9, 10, 11. Tribulation saints will have to desist from that form of worship as Daniel’s three friends did, Daniel 3:16, 17, 18, in order to retain their salvation.

The Christian can, however, neglect the *working out* of his salvation, though note that it is still *his own salvation* gifted to him by the Godhead, Who will not renege on **“the purchased possession”** Ephesians 1:14, see remarks above. God does not impose a *Returns and Refunds Policy* on **“the body of Christ, and members in particular”** 1 Corinthians 12:27.

**“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*”** Philippians 2:12.

The working out includes, for example, obeying Philippians 2:14 **“Do all things without murmurings and disputings”** in order **“That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ”** 2 Thessalonians 1:12 but the Christian’s salvation itself is not contingent on obedience to Philippians 2:14 or any **“commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus”** 1 Thessalonians 4:2.

The judgement on a Christian is that of believers’ works, 1 Corinthians 3:12, 13, 14, 15, for which the Christian will give account at **“the judgment seat of Christ.”** This judgement applies to *all* Christian believers.

**“...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ”** Romans 14:10.

**“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad”** 2 Corinthians 5:10.

That judgement will most likely require answers to the following six questions. See Dr Ruckman’s commentary *The Book of Job* pp 337-344. Marshall your answers carefully.

**“How hast thou helped him that is without power? how savest thou the arm that hath no strength?”** Job 26:2.

**“How hast thou counselled him that hath no wisdom? and how hast thou plentifully declared the thing as it is?”** Job 26:3.

**“To whom hast thou uttered words? and whose spirit came from thee?”** Job 26:4.

That last should be **“The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue”** 2 Samuel 23:2, overseeing **“the spirit of man”** Proverbs 20:27, Ecclesiastes 3:21, Zechariah 12:1, 1 Corinthians 2:11 and keeping at bay any **“spirit of an unclean devil”** Luke 4:33. See 1 Kings 22:22, 23, 2 Chronicles 18:21, 22 with respect to **“a lying spirit,”** fundamentalist by profession, 1 Kings 22:24, 2 Chronicles 18:23. No ‘liberal’ unclean spirit is found anywhere in scripture, Mark 1:23, 24, 25, 26, Acts 16:16, 17, 18, James 2:19, so watch out for ‘fundamentalist’ professions in these **“perilous times”** 2 Timothy 3:1.

4. *How was this great salvation revealed and confirmed to us (Hebrews 2:3-4)?*

It was revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

**“Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel”** Mark 1:14-15.

It was confirmed by **“us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour”** 2 Peter 3:2, who could perform confirmatory miraculous signs **“by the power of God”** 2 Corinthians 6:7.

**“And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen”** Mark 16:20.

It was attested to by **“diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit...that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will”** 1 Corinthians 12:4, 11 to show forth that salvation manifest tangibly and visibly as **“the body, the church”** Colossians 1:18 in its witness in that **“Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular”** 1 Corinthians 12:27 such that **“ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light”** 1 Peter 2:9. See *Question 1* with respect to unity of the body of Christ.

5. *In what way does all of this help us to be better Christians today?*

It helps to know that **“we have not followed cunningly devised fables”** 2 Peter 1:16 **“but speak forth the words of truth and soberness”** Acts 26:25 even **“before kings and rulers for my name’s sake”** Luke 21:12.

This writer sent a letter of support to HRH Prince Charles for the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge when the duchess was recently admitted to hospital [www.ctvnews.ca/world/duchess-of-cambridge-leaves-hospital-1.1068084](http://www.ctvnews.ca/world/duchess-of-cambridge-leaves-hospital-1.1068084).

The letter included 3 John 2.

**“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”**

The reply from the Prince’s office included reference to **“the thoughtful passage from the Bible”** i.e. 3 John 2 and it is hoped and prayed that in this way **“that the word of the Lord may have**

*free course, and be glorified*” 2 Thessalonians 3:1 even amongst the highest in the land in these “*perilous times*” 2 Timothy 3:1. Amen.

**Appendix** – Hebrews 2:1 “*let them slip*” AV1611 versus “*do not drift away*” NIV etc.

The 1611 AV1611 and 2011+ AV1611 read “*let them slip.*”

The 1385, 1395 Wycliffe Bibles read “*fleten away(i)*” i.e. float away.

The Tyndale, Coverdale, Matthew, Great Bibles read “*perish*” with variant spellings.

The Bishops’ Bible reads “*let them slippe.*”

The 1582 JR, Geneva Bibles read “*run out*” with variant spellings.

The DR Challoner Revision 1749-1752 reads “*let them slip.*”

The 1881 RV reads “*drift away from them.*”

The 1978, 1984, 2011 NIVs, NKJV, JB, NJB, NWT, Nestle’s 21<sup>st</sup> Edition, Ricker Berry’s Edition of Stephanus’ 1550 Received Text Edition, Hodges-Farstad ‘Majority’ Text Edition interlinears read “*do not drift away*” or similar – Ricker Berry has “*slip away.*” Those results show that the AV1611 is almost alone with respect to the reading “*let them slip*” in Hebrews 2:1. Nevertheless, as remarks under *Question 1* show, the AV1611, as always, has the correct reading, in the case of Hebrews 2:1 *wickedness*, not negligence, which drifting implies, as the *prime* cause of anyone going away from God, Hebrews 3:12. Note these additional references. God intended that His people “*forget not all his benefits*” Psalm 103:2.

“*Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons*” Deuteronomy 4:9. The things *seen* became the things *taught* and in turn the things *heard* in Hebrews 2:1 but the teaching *quickly not gradually* became the exception rather than the rule.

“*They soon forgat his works; they waited not for his counsel...They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea*” Psalm 106:13, 21-22.

Israel also forgot that the Egyptians “*made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour*” Exodus 1:14 and “*Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive*” Exodus 1:22.

Israel declared instead that “*We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick*” Numbers 11:5.

Concerning God’s “*Wondrous works in the land of Ham*” Israel had “*let them slip*” and quickly, not gradually. Gail Riplinger notes in *Which Bible is God’s Word?* p 123, that Israel was often only one generation away from total apostasy. Compare for example Joshua 24:31 “*And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua, and which had known all the works of the LORD, that he had done for Israel*” in 1444 BC, tenuous service admittedly but actual nevertheless, with “*In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes*” Judges 21:25 in 1406 BC., less than half a century later. See the *Ruckman Reference Bible* pp 375-376, 415.

This is *rapid decline through forgetfulness*, noting again Hebrews 2:1, 12:5, as in Proverbs 6:10-11, 24:33-34 “*Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man*” not gradual drift.

Note finally that *Christians* are vulnerable to rapid decline into unbelief as Paul warns in Galatians 1:6 “*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel.*” Therefore as Paul also warns about *rapid decline* “*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall*” 1 Corinthians 10:12 i.e. *fall*, not *drift*.