

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Hebrews 2:1–3

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. ² For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; 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 unto us by them that heard *him*;

Years ago a movie was released called “**THE GREAT ESCAPE.**” The movie was about British prisoners of war who managed to escape from Nazi Germany in 1942. Now, even if you’ve never heard of this movie, you probably envisioned *something* like this when you heard the words “The Great Escape.” Meaning, you probably envisioned someone *breaking out of jail* or *escaping from someone’s custody*.

However, this is NOT what the the word *escape* means here in Hebrews. It does not mean to *break free from something*. Instead, it means *to avoid something, particularly something dangerous or undesirable*.

What are we being admonished to avoid or escape?

ESCAPE FROM WHAT?

According to this passage, we’re being encouraged to avoid (escape) a “*just recompense of reward.*”

Hebrews 2:2–3

² For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received **A JUST RECOMPENSE OF REWARD**; ³ How shall we **ESCAPE...**

In this case, a “just recompense of reward” refers to a *just punishment for sin*. God has determined that there be a *just payment* (or judgment) for every sin. This includes sins of transgression AND disobedience!

Hebrews 2:2

² For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every **TRANSGRESSION** and **DISOBEDIENCE** received a just recompense of reward;

Transgressions are sins committed by *action*, while disobedience is a sin committed through *inaction*. According to this passage, both will receive their proper judgment. In fact, whenever we experience anything undesirable, it's most likely just payment for one of these two sins!

“But, what if I do something (or fail to do something) by mistake? Will I be judged for that too?” The curse (God’s judgment) doesn’t discriminate between unintentional and intentional sins.

Deuteronomy 28:15

¹⁵ But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to **DO ALL HIS COMMANDMENTS** and his statutes which I command thee this day; that **ALL THESE CURSES** shall come upon thee, and overtake thee:

Is there any way to be *saved* from this impending judgment? YES. There are actually TWO ways to be delivered from God’s righteous judgment. The first involves *mercy*.

Lamentations 3:22

²² *It is of the Lord’s* **MERCIES** that **WE ARE NOT CONSUMED**, because his compassions fail not.

While receiving mercy is good, it’s not a good plan long term. If we truly want to be saved from judgment (the curse), then we must *escape* or avoid it!

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

We’re coming to a time when the curse will be so prevalent in the earth that unless we escape it, we will not be delivered from it. Moreover, to escape the curse we must...

GIVE MORE HEED TO WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Hebrews 2:1

¹ Therefore we ought to **GIVE THE MORE EARNEST HEED** to the things which we have heard,

The phrase, “*give the more earnest heed*” means *to exceed or go beyond*. In this case, it means to give more heed to (or let one’s *adherence* to) the testimony of Jesus exceed and *go beyond* your adherence to the words of Moses (the law).

Today we might add, “Let your adherence to God’s word exceed and go beyond your adherence to the words on social media, or the evening news, or any other person you hold in esteem!”

Understand this, if we fail to *give the more earnest heed* to God’s word, we’ll be in danger of letting God’s word (His promises) “slip.”

Hebrews 2:1

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**.

The word “slip” means to “drift away.” (Many are allowing the word and promises of God to slowly drift away from their heart. When this happens, we will go from *neglecting* the truth, to out right *rejecting* it!)

Hebrews 12:25

²⁵ See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if **THEY ESCAPED NOT WHO REFUSED HIM THAT SPAKE** on earth, much more *shall not we escape*,

The Israelites did not escape God’s judgment in Moses’ day because they “*refused* to hear” the voice of God.

Exodus 20:18, 19

¹⁸ And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off. ¹⁹ And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but **LET NOT GOD SPEAK WITH US, LEST WE DIE**.

Notice the reason why they refused to hear God’s voice—because it threatened their *life*! We will typically reject (or stop giving heed to) God’s word the moment it threatens our way of life.

***BELIEVE STEADFASTLY* WHAT WE’VE HEARD**

Hebrews 10:35

³⁵ Cast not away therefore your **CONFIDENCE**, which hath great **RECOMPENCE OF REWARD**.

Notice how there is a “recompence of reward” for believing! Therefore, believing demonstrates that you are not deserving of punishment (the curse). Instead, you’re deserving of favor or blessing!

Hebrews 10:36

³⁶ For ye have need of **PATIENCE**, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

Notice that the “reward (or recompence)” of faith is not always given the *moment* we believe. Instead, we must exercise patience (or endurance) to receive the promise.

1 Peter 5:8–9

⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, **SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR**: ⁹ Whom resist **STEDFAST IN THE FAITH**, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

Again, it’s not just faith that delivers from the curse (or the devil who administers the curse). In order to escape or be delivered from the curse we must exercise steadfast faith!

PRAY CONTINUALLY FOR WHAT WE’VE HEARD

Luke 21:34–36

³⁴ And **TAKE HEED** to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. ³⁵ For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. ³⁶ Watch ye therefore, and **PRAY ALWAYS**, that ye may be accounted worthy to **ESCAPE** all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

The fact that ‘prayer’ is involved in deliverance reminds us that we cannot escape the curse in our OWN STRENGTH. Instead, we must rely on the deliverance that comes only from *God!*

Hebrews 2:3

³ How shall we escape, **IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION**;

First of all, notice how God is not just offering a *general* salvation (or one that only delivers from sin). He’s offering a “so *great* salvation” (or one that delivers from all things)!

Second, notice that the writer of Hebrews asks, “How shall we escape **IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION?**” Meaning, **THERE’S NO WAY WE CAN ESCAPE** *if* we bypass the salvation offered by God!

Now, many may *think* they can bypass God's salvation and still escape, but they're only delaying the inevitable!

1 Kings 19:17

¹⁷ And it shall come to pass, *that* him that **ESCAPETH** the sword of Hazael shall Jehu **SLAY**: and him that **ESCAPETH** from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha **SLAY**.

In other words, those who managed to escape one judgment, would fall under the curse of another judgment! (Many today have managed to escape COVID by bypassing the salvation being offered by God. However, another curse is coming down the road!) Sooner or later we will have to get it into our minds that we can't run from the curse, nor can we hide from it. There's only ONE way to escape it, and that's to resist it by faith and pray always for grace!

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. When the Bible talks about 'escaping' the curse, what does it mean? Have you ever felt like you were being treated unjustly for being made to experience some undesirable situation? What have you learned that might change the way you handle this in the future?
2. Does a person have to *commit* sin to be in danger of judgment or the curse? Can we say with confidence that man never receives anything *from God* he doesn't deserve? What do we base this claim on?
3. Can you list TWO ways the Bible gives to be delivered from the curse? Why did not the Israelites in Moses' day *escape* the curse (or judgment of God)?
4. What does the fact that 'prayer' is involved in deliverance tell us about escaping the curse? What would you say to those who argue that 'salvation' is limited to deliverance from sin?