

I. Introduction and review.

- A. How do you explain when people fall away?
- B. The church today is drifting away from Christ.
 - 1. The flood of ecumenism has swept away many evangelicals. Gal. 1:6-10 Jo. 14:6
 - 2. Rudderless churches tickle people's ears and entertain, failing to provide a doctrinal anchor for those who attend. Eph. 4:14 I Co. 3:10-15
 - 3. The storms of doctrinal novelty have caused many reformed men to go off course. I Ti. 1:3-6 Acts 17:21

II. Don't drift away from what you have heard about Christ. v. 1

- A. This is the first of five major (and difficult) warning passages in Hebrews. 2:1-3 4:12-4:16 5:11-6:12 10:19-39 12:14-29
 - 1. What is being warned against? *Apostasy* (falling away). 3:12 6:4f 10:26f
 - 2. Who is being warned? v. 3 3:12 *Professing believers*.
 - 3. What is the consequence of ignoring the warning? v. 3a 12:25 I Th. 5:3
 - 4. Can you lose your salvation?
 - a. You are kept by God's power. John 10:27-29 Rom. 8:28f I Pet. 1:5
 - b. Those who fall away were never truly converted. I John 2:19
 - 5. What is the purpose of the warning?
 - a. Those who are not yet truly converted need to turn to Christ.
 - b. True believers need to be awakened out of their complacency.
 - 6. Only those who remain faithful to Christ (persevere) will be saved. Mark 4:3f 13:13 Mt. 7:24-27,13-14,21-23 I Co. 15:2 9:27 Gal. 4:11 5:2 I Tim. 1:19-20
 - 7. A true child of God may drift, but not for long.
- B. Be extra careful not to drift away from Christ. v. 1b
How can this happen and who is at risk?
- C. Pay closer attention to God's Word in Christ. v. 1a
Doing nothing will result in the loss of everything.

III. Don't neglect God's word of salvation spoken through Christ. v. 2-3

- A. God's word spoken through the mediation of angels was to be taken seriously. v. 2
 - 1. The Old Covenant was given to Moses through the mediation of angels. v. 2a Dt. 33:2 Ps. 68:17 Gal. 3:19 Acts 7:28,53
 - 2. God's people were told to listen to His law. Deut. 6:4f
 - 3. Those who failed to heed the Old Covenant were severely punished. v. 2b 10:26f Ge. 9:5-6 Lev. 20:10 Dt. 22:24 Nu. 15:32f Lev. 18:5,22 20:13 10:1f Ex. 32:27-28
- B. How much more attention should we give to the words of our Lord? v. 3 10:28-31
 - 1. The New Covenant is better attested, being revealed through the Lord Himself.
 - 2. The New Covenant is a better word from God. 8:6 12:24 Mt. 5:17
 - 3. The punishment for neglecting this message will be even more severe. 10:28-31 Mt. 5:22 10:12 11:20f 16:27 23:14 25:41f Rev. 14:10-11 II Pe. 2:20-22
- C. Such a great salvation is worthy of your full attention. 1:14 2:10
 - 1. Why would anyone neglect God's message of salvation?
 - 2. The amount of time and effort you spend considering Christ reflects the value you place upon Him.

3. How great is this salvation? 1:1-14 2:9-10 9:14-15 10:10,14 Rom. 1:16-17
4. Such a salvation demands a response proportionate to its greatness!

IV. God has plainly and powerfully spoken. v. 3b-4

- A. The Lord Jesus proclaimed this message during His time on earth. v. 3b 1:2 Is. 61:1f Mark 1:14f Luke 4:16-21 John 1:1,14 Acts 10:36
- B. God continued to bear witness to His Son through the apostolic eyewitnesses. v. 3c-4
 1. Who are *those who heard*? v. 3c Jo. 15:27 Acts 1:21-22 I Co. 15:5-8 II Pe.1:16-18 I Jo. 1:1f
 2. After Jesus ascended to heaven, the apostles carried on His work. Acts 1:1f
 3. The apostles were sent forth preaching the gospel of Christ.
 4. God confirmed the apostolic testimony through signs, wonders and miracles. Acts 2:19,22,43 4:30 5:12 6:8 7:36 14:3 15:12 II Co. 12:12 Ro. 15:19
 5. God's final and decisive revelation was recorded by the apostolic generation for the sake of the generations to come.
 6. Our hope is built upon confirmed historical events. Luke 1:2f 24:28 I Cor. 15:3-8 Acts 2:32 3:15 10:41 13
 7. What can we surmise about the author and the original recipients? v. v. 3c-4
- C. Should we expect signs, wonders, and miracles today?
 1. Miraculous signs were given infrequently under the Old Covenant to confirm God's revelation through His prophets. Ex. 4:1f Dt. 4:34
 2. The signs and wonders of the New Testament were given to confirm the ministry of Christ and the apostolic testimony. II Co. 12:12 Ro. 15:19
 3. The era of revelation has ceased: prophecy, apostles, and signs. Eph. 2:20
 4. While we believe that revelatory signs and wonders have ceased, we still believe God supernaturally answers prayer according to His sovereign will.
- D. How is the Lord's message proclaimed today? II Ti. 2:2 Rom. 10:14-15 Eph. 2:17
 1. There is a continuing succession of truth. II Tim. 2:2
 2. Wouldn't more people believe if we could work miracles? Luke 16:30-31 God has given us full and sufficient testimony to His Son in the Bible.

V. Concluding applications.

- A. Are you drifting? Rev. 3:15-17 2:4
- B. Stop neglecting the greatness of God's salvation. Acts 16:30-31 24:25 Luke 14:16f
- C. Pay much closer attention to Christ. 10:25 12:1-2 Isa. 55:1-4 Ps. 1:1f II Tim. 4:1ff Js. 1:22 Mt. 7:24-27 Phil. 4:8-9 II Co. 3:18

Discussion questions

1. What was the problem faced by the recipients of the epistle to the Hebrews?
2. How does this author exemplify balance in preaching?
3. What does it mean to *drift away*?
4. What are the consequences of drifting away?
5. Who is at risk of drifting away?
6. How do we reconcile this warning with the teaching that true believers can't be lost?
7. Why is the Word of Christ worthy of closer attention than the Law of Moses?
8. How has God borne witness to His revelation in Christ in the past?
9. How can 1:1-2 and 2:4 be used to argue for the cessation of certain spiritual gifts?
10. How is God presently bearing witness to His revelation in Christ?
11. What would you say to someone who demands a miraculous sign before he would believe?