

*So Great a Salvation*  
*Part One*

*Sunday January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007*

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 a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him, 4 God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?*

2). Our scripture here from Hebrews presents the first of five warnings contained within this Book for Christians in relation to losing their inheritance.

a). In this particular instance we are warned to ‘give more earnest heed to the things we have heard’ - Heb 1:1 ¶ *God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds;*

b). Things presented in encapsulated form in seven Messianic scriptures from the OT quoted subsequently in Hebrews Chapter 1, all of which speak of the coming Seventh Day and the establishment of Christ and His coheirs in regal positions within the coming Kingdom –

Heb 1:8 *But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. 9 You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions."*

c). If we do not ‘give more earnest heed’ to all God has said concerning the coming Seventh Day, we run the risk of ‘drifting away’, thereby neglecting ‘so great a salvation’ with somewhat dire consequences following.

3). Now clearly ‘the so great a salvation’ spoken of here, given its context within Hebrews, which is a Book specifically written to those who are – Hebrews 3:1...*holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,*

a). A Book that's stated subject is given in - Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels.*

b). Is not referring to the salvation we already possess – the free gift of eternal life, the salvation of our spirit, but rather that salvation reserved for those - 1Pe 1:5 *who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.....9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

c). The salvation of the soul.

4). Now if we do not 'give more earnest heed' and consequently 'drift away', then, according to our scripture in Hebrews 2 we would be guilty of 'neglecting' this 'so great a salvation'.

a). The word translated 'neglect' here is the Greek word – '*ameleo*' which means 'to be unconcerned about', 'to care nothing for', 'to disregard'.

b). And if we should 'neglect' this salvation, which is the very thing at first spoken of by Christ, then we, by disregarding the word of God would suffer the same consequence as Israel, when that nation disregarded the word of God given at Sinai concerning the Theocracy in the land of promise in respect of the earthly portion of the Kingdom.

c). In both instances, Israel and Christians, there is a 'just reward' for disregarding what God has said – Israel was overthrown in the wilderness, redeemed but falling short of their inheritance in the past and basically the same consequence will be for Christians at Christ's Judgment Seat, redeemed unto eternity, but overthrown in respect of their inheritance, this remaining yet future.

5). That the consequences for Christians who disregard what God has said about the coming Kingdom would be of a similar nature to that experienced by Israel really would be self evident as the salvation of the soul here in Hebrews, which is inextricably connected to regality within the Seventh Day, is described as 'so great a salvation'.

a). Unfortunately within the English translation we may miss much of the significance of this phrase.

b). 'So great' is a translation of the Greek adjective – *telikoutos* – a word only found in three other places in the NT. Its sparse usage denoting the intensity of its meaning.

c). The more usual Greek word translated 'great' is – *me-gas*- which we find used 185 times in the NT.

d) To get the flavor of *telikoutos* let's look at one of its three other uses

e). Re 16:18 *And there were noises and thunderings and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, **such a mighty and great** [telikoutos] earthquake as had not occurred since men were on the earth.*

f). We see it here used in connection with the termination of God's judgments at the end of the Tribulation. The earthquake that heralds this termination is of such a magnitude and intensity that nothing like it has ever been experienced in the whole of human history from Adam to that time.

g). And with this in mind, this is how we should view its use in relation to the salvation of the soul – this salvation is so incredible that nothing like it has ever been seen before. It is completely unparalleled in the whole of God's dealings with His created beings, either in the angelic or the human realm - 1Pe 1:10 ¶ *Of this salvation the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, 11 searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. 12 To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven--things which angels desire to look into.*

h). This is by far the most superlative privilege that the Creator could bestow in His creation.

i). And perhaps it would be helpful for us, so that we will not neglect it, to have a small glimpse at least into the enormity of what God has set in place with regards to the salvation of the soul.

6). Now we know all too well the purpose for God's creation of Man as recorded in Genesis 1:26-28 – 'Let them have dominion' – but for just a moment let us back up a little and realize something.

a). Ge 1:1 ¶ *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* When God created the heavens and the earth it was with a view to this province in His universe being administered or ruled over on His behalf, by a specifically created messianic angel, the one we now know as Satan, along with an unspecified number of subordinate angels who would rule with him.

b). Not only was Satan given charge over the earth, but it would seem that other specifically created messianic angels were created to administer other provinces within the universe on God's behalf - Job 1:6 ¶ *Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan also came among them. 7 And the LORD said to Satan, "From where do you come?" So Satan answered the LORD and said, "From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking back and forth on it."*

c). Now in our scripture from Job we see ‘the sons of God’, a title given to all created beings, including Satan, presenting themselves before the Lord, presumably, given the interchange between the Lord and Satan, to give a report on the provinces over which they have jurisdiction.

d). This arrangement within God’s universe has existed from the beginning throughout a period of time the extent of which we have no knowledge.

e). Now the point is this – that from some distant moment in the ages of eternity past continuing even to the present day, God’s universe has been administered on His behalf by angels and there has never been a change in this.

f). But a continued rule by angels is not God’s long term plan – specifically with regards to the earth we know, to repeat - Heb 2:5 ¶ *For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels. And to continue in - Heb 2:6 But one testified in a certain place, saying: "What is man that You are mindful of him, Or the son of man that You take care of him? 7 You have made him a little lower than the angels; You have crowned him with glory and honor, And set him over the works of Your hands. 8 You have put all things in subjection under his feet." For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we do not yet see all things put under him.*

g). Man, God’s creation from the 6<sup>th</sup> day of the restoration in Genesis is to replace the fallen angels presently ruling with Satan, and with Christ they are to rule from the New Jerusalem in the heavens over the Gentile nations on the earth during the Messianic Era.

h). And when this change of rulership happens this will be the first time that created beings other than angels will rule within the universal Kingdom of God on His behalf.

i). And as we know, participation in this rulership is inextricably linked to the salvation of the soul.

7). Now here is something else for us to note – when God created Man for the specific task of rulership His perfect design was that of a body of flesh and bone animated by blood - Le 17:11 *'For the life of the flesh is in the blood,*

*in which is housed the spirit and the soul.*

a). Because of sin as a result of Satan’s deception of the Woman all three parts of Man’s being were adversely affected – the spirit ‘died’, the soul became corrupted and the body began to decay.

b). This made redemption for Man an absolute necessity if He were ever to fulfill the purpose for which he had been created.

c). And redemption for Man must take into account all three parts of his being – Spirit, soul and body.

8). And it is interesting to note that the One who would come to bring about that redemption would come in a body of flesh and bone, animated by the blood.

a). Ro 8:3 *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin:*

b). Our scripture here speaks of Christ coming in the likeness of sinful flesh, but we should note that there is nothing inherently sinful in flesh itself.

c). If we just to call to mind that Christ was without sin, and Himself had a body of flesh then this should be abundantly clear for us.

9). To understand why sin is synonymous with flesh we would need to return to the beginning – to Adam and the Woman.

a). Ps 104:1 ¶ *Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, You are very great: You are clothed with honor and majesty, 2 Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.*

b). In Psalm 104 here we see God enswathed in glory – glory that is described as light and intimately connected with honor and majesty.

c). Glory and regality go hand in hand.

d). Adam and the Woman were made in God's image and after His likeness – a triune – three part being, with a covering of glory. They were created to rule and rulership necessitates glory.

e). Because of sin however they lost their covering of glory and found themselves naked. Separated from the purpose for their creation.

f). In this sense, flesh apart from glory is equated with sin as flesh without this covering is a result of the sin seen in the Garden. Separating Man from regality.

10). Christ at His first coming was in the 'likeness of sinful flesh' because He came apart from glory. The matter does not stop here though.

a). Php 3:20 *For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, 21 who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.*

b). Our scripture specifically involves regality at the Lord's return in relation to Christians and we can see a transformation of our 'lowly' body, KJV uses the word 'vile' to a conforming with His glorious body, or glorified body.

c). This lowly, vile body of the Christian is seen specifically in connection with Christ's own body at His first coming.

d). Note the quotation from Isaiah 53 in Acts 8 - Ac 8:32... *"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. 33 In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth."*

e). We should note that the word translated 'humiliation' in verse 33 is the same word translated 'lowly' in Philippians 3:21.

f). And our scripture from Acts is referencing events surrounding Calvary. Christ was stripped of His garments and paraded as a mock King and then was stripped of His garments again and nailed to the cross presenting His lowly body, His body of humiliation for all to see in the exposing of His naked flesh.

g). He had come as the King of the Jews three decades earlier, apart from His covering of glory and without glory the regal robes of rulership could not at that point be worn and it is in this sense that we see His 'justice', His role as Judge in respect to regality taken from Him.

h). And at this time that He is subject to Gentile world power under Satan for the same reason – no glory – resulting in His life being taken from the earth.

i). We could perhaps envisage the delight of the powers of darkness in seeing God's Son naked, completely apart from glory and regality, lifeless on the cross.

11). But this of course was not the end of the story - 1Co 2:8 *which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

12). There is so much in Christ's resurrection that would make us jump and shout, but particularly with regards to our subject today.

a). Christ at His resurrection was not raised in a glorified body. He still had a body of flesh and bone, but the animating force was no longer blood, as this had been poured out at Calvary, but was instead the Spirit - 1Co 15:44 *It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body.*

i/ Joh 20:27 *Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing."*

b). And in this spiritual body, still made of flesh and bone, animated by the spirit, He was able to appear in different locations instantly and to pass through solid objects - Joh 20:19 ¶ *Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you."*

c). We should perhaps note that Christ still has that same body of flesh and bone and will have that same body throughout eternity.

d). When Christ appeared to the disciples on the road to Emmaus He looked no different to anyone else.

e). After His ascension however matters are completely different

f). Ac 26:12 ¶ *"While thus occupied, as I journeyed to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, 13"at midday, O king, along the road I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, shining around me and those who journeyed with me.*

g). Re 1:16 *He had in His right hand seven stars, out of His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and His countenance was like the sun shining in its strength.*

13). In Acts and Revelation we see the glorified Christ. The same resurrected body but now with the covering of glory in preparation for the rulership that is to follow.

a). A rulership that does not happen apart from His companions

b). Heb 2:10 ¶ *For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.*

14). Christians at the rapture/resurrection will be raised in spiritual bodies to stand before the Judgment Seat. And just as Christ before His ascension these spiritual bodies will have no covering of glory.

a). Just as we saw with Adam and the woman, glory and rulership go hand in hand and only those found worthy to receive regal positions in the Kingdom will be covered with glory.

b). The redemption of our body is not the resurrection/rapture per se, but rather it is our adoption subsequent to this into the status of firstborn sons -

Ro 8:23 *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body.*

c). The redemption of our body must bring us back to that state in which Man was originally created – covered in glory as a prelude to regality

15). And we will realize of course that the redemption of the body is the final step in the redemption our complete being – spirit, soul and body.

16). The salvation of our spirit is the free gift that we currently possess and cannot lose.

a). The salvation of our soul on the other hand is brought about by an inward change a metamorphosis which may or may not be accomplished - Ro 12:2 *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

b). If this inward transformation is accomplished it will lead to an outward transformation -

Php 3:21 *who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body,*

c). The word translated ‘transform’ here is the Greek word – *metaschematizo* - an outward change – to transfigure.

d). So the possession of an outward covering is predicated by an inward change.

16). This so great a salvation, the salvation of our soul, will restore us to the unfallen condition in which Man was originally created, a spirit alive to God, an uncorrupted soul and a spiritual body covered in glory. Unlike the original creation of Man however, the regal robes of rulership will now be worn by those found worthy - fulfilling God’s plans and purposes.

a). In the same body of flesh and bone that we presently possess, but then covered in glory, so that we should shine like the noon day sun, we shall rule with Christ, also in a body of flesh and bone, from the heavens for 1000 years bringing order out of chaos.

b). It is only to Christians that the promise is made that we shall be like Him - 1Jo 3:2 *Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.*

17). And we should particularly note that only those found worthy to be a coheir with Christ will receive the covering of glory.

a). Israel of course is also one of God's firstborn sons, but Israel during the Millennium, on the earth at the head of nations with Christ in her midst on the throne of His father David in the earthly Jerusalem will have no covering of glory and will reside in bodies of flesh, bone and blood.

b). Peter, James and John are seen with Christ on the mountain when He is transfigured before them, prefiguring the coming Kingdom and although they are on the mountain with Him, above all those who are below they are there in bodies of flesh and blood.

c). Then Lazarus, who is a type of Israel in the place of death, is resurrected after 3 days and comes from the grave in a body of flesh and blood - Joh 11:43 *Now when He had said these things, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" 44 And he who had died came out bound hand and foot with graveclothes, and his face was wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Loose him, and let him go."*

i/ There is a stark contrast here to Christ's resurrection – Joh 20:6 *Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, 7 and the handkerchief that had been around His head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.*

d). Eze 37:12 *"Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel."*

e). Neither will Israel, on the earth, eat from the tree of life during this time. Again this is something reserved for those who will rule from the heavenly realm.

f). This is not a matter of being superior to, but just a matter of fact.

18). It is incredible to think that just as Satan and his subordinate angels rule from the heavens through Gentile world leaders on the earth today, so will Christ and His coheirs do likewise in the age to come – and this privilege is only for those who are found to be worthy and will never be extended to any other.

a). Not of course ruling in rebellion as now and not outside of God's Divinely perfect arrangement for government as now – but in complete harmony with God's plans and purposes for the ages.

b). Is it any wonder that scripture calls this 'so great a salvation'?