



Hebrews 2:1-4

(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?

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These Hebrew Christians were neglecting what they were given. William Barclay's translation of the first clause of verse 1 reads, "We must, therefore, with very special *intensity* [the opposite of "apathy"] pay attention to what we have heard" (our emphasis). The wonderful message that these people had heard was drifting from their minds.

This word "drift" (or "slip" as translated in the King James Version) is used of a thing that is negligently, carelessly, or thoughtlessly lost: of a ring that slips from one's finger; a thought that is slipped into a conversation; or a boat that drifts away from the dock because the knot in the rope securing it slips. In Greek literature it is used of an idea that slips from one's mind. In this word picture is a major warning for us today—as we enter the most distracting, enervating, and fearful time in man's history.

There is another illustration here that is equally compelling. It is of a man on a long journey who is carrying over his shoulder a goatskin, which was used in ancient time to carry water. He intends to use the water in that bag to refresh and reenergize himself, whenever he needs it. However, the goatskin is cracked, and the water is slowly dripping out unobserved by the traveler. The water is "slipping away." When he becomes thirsty and reaches for the goatskin to take a drink to refresh himself, he finds that his bag is empty. Nothing remains.

It is reminiscent of the Ten Virgins and their oil ([Matthew 25:1-13](#)). Half have none when

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they need it, for it has run out. They have been negligent in buying it from the sources that they could have gotten it from, whenever they had the time. But now the Bridegroom approaches, and they have no oil, a kind of oil that cannot be transferred from one person to another. So, they must go out in desperation to find some on their own—but it is too late.

— John W. Ritenbaugh

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