

The Five Warnings of Hebrews

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CHAPTER 1

SO GREAT SALVATION

CHRIST alone qualifies:

I. In His Person to Attempt Salvation, 1:1-4:13.

The Son. (Eternal, 1:1-3) - CHRIST - Prophet

- A. Greater than the Prophets, 1:1-3.
- B. Greater than the Angels, 1:4-2:18.
- C. Greater than Moses, Ch. 3
- D. Greater than Joshua, 4:1-13.

II. In His Work to Provide Salvation, 4:14-10:18.

The Saviour. (Perfect, 7:24-28) - JESUS - Priest

- A. The High Priest, 4:14-7:28. -- THE SERVICE - "**After the order of Melchisedec**".
- B. The Tabernacle, 8:1-9:11 -- THE SANCTUARY - "**Not made with hands**".
- C. The Sacrifice, 9:12-10:18 -- THE SACRIFICE - "**Once for all**".

III. In His Position to Effect Salvation, 10:19-13:25.

The Shepherd (Great, 13:20) - The Lord - King

Here is the believer's walk, "**by a new and living way**" in relation to CHRIST's position:

- A. FAITH, 10:19-11:40.
- B. HOPE, Ch. 12.
- C. LOVE, Ch. 13.

Washington D. C. is one of the few cities in the world that was completely designed before any

street were made or buildings erected. What once was a marshy wilderness now stands one of the most beautiful capitols in the world.

Pierre Charles L'Enfant, an engineer in the Continental Army, being recommended by President George Washington for the task, designed the entire city. Capitol Hill was selected as the focal point, and broad avenues were laid out which radiate like spokes of a wheel from centers placed within the rectangular pattern of the streets.

For anyone visiting our nation's capital, the first point to visit should be the Washington Monument. From this vantage point of beautiful white marble, forty stories above the city in the tallest masonry structure in the world, may be seen a panoramic view of four of the most picturesque scenes upon which the human eye may gaze.

Looking east at the end of the Mall on Capitol Hill stands the Capitol Building with its magnificent dome glistening in the sun. At the right and left stand the House and Senate Buildings covering a square city block. Behind the Capitol to the right is the massive Library of Congress, and at the left is the white structure of the Supreme Court of the United States. In the foreground may be seen the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Institute.

A diagonal street may be seen running from the Capitol Building. As we move north we see that this street is the famous Pennsylvania Avenue which connects the Capitol with the White House. Here we view the President's home and the Treasury Building to the right.

The western view gives us a picture of the Reflecting Pool and the Lincoln Memorial. Beyond the Potomac River we view Arlington National Cemetery with its Tombs of the Unknown Soldiers and the Marine Memorial.

Looking south the Tidal Basin lined with cherry trees is seen with the Jefferson Memorial on the far side. And across the Potomac, the massive Pentagon Building is visible. If time permitted many other important landmarks could be pointed out by our guide.

Now we are ready to descend the Washington Monument on to busy Constitution Avenue and see each building individually. Why? Because we know the relation of one building to another; we have viewed the design of a planned city. We have seen what no amount of hours spent on the busy and crowded streets could have given us. We have seen the city -- our Nation's Capitol -- and we draw back in amazement at what we have just viewed.

GOD's Word is identical with this. Each book is a magnificent city designed by the greatest Architect. Avenues of truth run throughout in beautiful symmetry. Monuments are erected by the sterling character of its men. Beautiful scenes catch our vision every direction we look. We see on every hand the grandeur and glory of the Person of our GOD.

We may wander for days along its streets and through its buildings, and yet never see the relationship of one aspect of truth with another. Our need is first to rise far above the whole picturesque scene, as beautiful as any one spot may be, and receive a panoramic view of the entire landscape. We need to see the design that was in the mind of the Designer, the over-all plan and purpose of this city we are about to view and whose laws are to govern all our lives.

No book in Scripture was written without design: each was written with specific purpose and air in mind. This is especially true of the book of Hebrews which we are about to consider.

There is a plan and purpose which can never be seen by traveling on its broad avenues or passing through its magnificent structures. It was written that one fact and one fact alone would be in the mind of the Hebrews as they finished reading this letter. This one fact is: CHRIST alone can qualify to provide perfect salvation. This message is a timeless message. It is just as pertinent today as it was the day this letter was inscribed on parchment and sent by a messenger to its destination.

There are three areas in which CHRIST alone qualifies to provide a perfect salvation.

1. He alone qualifies in His PERSON to attempt salvation, 1:1-4:13
2. He alone qualifies in His WORK to provide salvation, 4:14-10:18
3. He alone qualifies in His POSITION to effect salvation, 10:19-13:25

I. CHRIST ALONE QUALIFIES IN HIS PERSON TO ATTEMPT SALVATION, 1:1 - 4:13.

Fundamental in the mind of the writer of Hebrews is that the person must qualify or else nothing that person does can possibly qualify.

For example, it is the Indianapolis Speedway Classic, and we are seated there on Memorial Day, moments before the five hundred mile race is to begin. As we anxiously wait for the final flag to be waved to begin the race we undoubtedly realize the hours upon hours of preparation which have gone into making this moment possible. Long before any cars were built regulations were issued giving the specification to which the cars would have to conform. Then came the qualifying run to eliminate those cars not able to maintain a specific speed. Many have labored to be sure that both car and driver would qualify. Yet as we watch the cars going by this day at speeds of 170 mph we fail to see many cars, upon which thousands of dollars were spent, simply because they did not meet the qualifying standard set by the officials. These can never win because they cannot participate.

GOD says, "I am the qualifying official and whoever runs as the Saviour of men must pass the qualifying standards which I have set up."

The writer of Hebrews spans the whole realm of creation, and the entire span of time to see if there could be found someone who might qualify as the Saviour of men. His verdict is that none but Deity Himself can possibly qualify for the standard set by Deity for the salvation of lost mankind. He identifies the only One who can qualify as the Son.

A. Son -- Far Greater Than the Prophets, 1:1-3

The prophets represented GOD to man, and spoke His message as it was revealed to them. But this One who was the Son, being from a far greater realm, had by this same degree a much greater message. The prophets spoke the message of GOD; the Son was the message of GOD.

B. Son -- Far Greater Than the Angels, 1:4-2:18

The Son is "**so much better than the angels**" (1:4). This is proved by quoting seven different Old Testament passages in Chapter 1, and three more in Chapter 2.

In summary, the Son is greater in two ways:

1. He is the CREATOR, they are creatures, Chapter 1.
2. He identified Himself completely with humanity, Chapter 2.

Angels are always angels so they cannot do what CHRIST did for man. Angels serve man; but the Son became man in order to serve in a far greater capacity.

C. Son -- Far Greater Than General Joshua, Ch. 4.

In Hebrews 4:8 the word "*Jesus*" is the Greek word for "**Joshua**" and so should be understood. Joshua led the nation into the land, but he could not give them rest. Since a rest was promised, there remained One who is greater than Joshua to come and bring them into a place of rest because He had "**ceased from His own works.**"

The exhortation is given to the Hebrews to "**enter into that rest**" (4:11). The throne of grace is the place of rest (4:16). The rest is provided because a greater than Joshua ceased from His own work as GOD did from His.

The illustration is that of GOD's rest of creation. When He finished creation He pronounced everything "**very good**" and then He experienced a Sabbath rest. Then something happened. Sin came in, and there was no more rest for GOD. Only after the Lord had a redeemed people, redeemed through blood, did He institute the Sabbath rest for them. Yet saying: "**My Father worketh hitherto and I work.**" There had been no rest in the Godhead and could not be until there was a completed work. Only after CHRIST exclaimed: "**It is finished!**" was there rest. Today CHRIST sits on high because the work is over. We can enter into His rest of a completed work. Have you done this?

II. CHRIST ALONE QUALIFIES IN HIS WORK TO PROVIDE SALVATION, 4:14-10:18

We have seen that the Son alone qualifies to attempt salvation:

- Because He is greater than the prophets: They spoke the word - **HE WAS THE WORD!**
- Because He is greater than the angels: They were creatures - **HE WAS THE CREATOR!** - They were servants - **HE IS THE SERVANT OF MAN!**
- Because He is greater than Moses: Moses led the nation - **CHRIST MADE THE NATION!**
- Because He is greater than Joshua: Joshua took them in, but he never gave them rest - **CHRIST COULD GIVE THEM REST!**

Previously, the writer's entire argument had been on the PERSON of the Son; now he turns to His WORK. He realizes that the worth of the WORK is dependent upon the WORTH of the PERSON. Consequently, he now turns from the Son aspects of the PERSON OF CHRIST, to the

Saviour aspects of the WORK OF CHRIST.

In the Jewish economy three basic areas of work are involved in providing salvation for sinful man: the high priest, the tabernacle and the sacrifice. If you like them to begin in the same letter, they would be the service, the sanctuary and the sacrifice. These three areas are now taken up in this order.

A. CHRIST, THE GREAT HIGH PRIEST, 4:14-7:28.

Here CHRIST is contrasted to the best in the Jewish economy: Aaron, and the Aaronic priesthood. But three times it is said of the Son: "**Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec**".

CHRIST is not only a greater PERSON than Aaron, but He had a superior priesthood. Because the Son's priesthood was of a different order, He could be both King and Priest which was never possible for Aaron. Moreover, He could abide a Priest continually because He would not be hindered from continuing by death which affected the Aaronic priesthood. Because of this fact, the Son has an unchangeable priesthood.

The summary conclusion is given in Hebrews 7:25-28: **THE WORK OF CHRIST IS SUPERIOR TO THAT IN JUDAISM.**

B. CHRIST, THE TRUE TABERNACLE, 8:1-9:11

Four words show that the earthly tabernacle in Israel was only an object lesson of the real tabernacle.

"Example and shadow of heavenly things," 8:5

"Pattern" of the true tabernacle," 8:5

"A figure for the time then present," 9:9

The contrast is between the shadow and the real image that cast the shadow. The earthly tabernacle was then GOD's illustration of the work of salvation which was to be accomplished through the body or tabernacle of the Lord JESUS CHRIST -- the true tabernacle "not made with hands."

This is the reason for GOD's specific instruction to Moses in Hebrews 8:5.

This true tabernacle is as superior to the earthly copy as:

The image of the shadow,

The Creator is to the creature, and

The Infinite is to the finite.

CHRIST, as the true tabernacle, is infinitely superior to that in Judaism.

The transition to the third aspect of the Lord's work is given in Hebrews 9:11-12 where CHRIST is specifically stated as the High Priest, the tabernacle and the sacrifice.

C. CHRIST, THE ONE SACRIFICE, 9:12-10:18.

Here three words contrast the old sacrifices with the once for all sacrifice of the body of the Lord JESUS.

"Patterns," 9:23 - "Figures," 9:24 - "A shadow of good things to come," 10:1.

The outstanding point of contrast is given in Hebrews 10:11, 12 and 14 (Compare 10:4 with 10:10).

As the true tabernacle was infinitely better than the earthly pattern, so the sacrifice which is to be offered for its purification must be to the same proportion greater (Hebrews 9:23, 25, 26b).

This is why John the Baptist cried out: "**Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.**" This was new, this had never been done in the Old Testament. It was infinitely superior to that in Judaism.

Now only does CHRIST alone qualify in His PERSON to attempt salvation, He alone qualifies in His work to provide salvation.

- Because He is the High Priest "**after the order of Melchisedec**," and not after the order of Aaron;
- Because He is the true Tabernacle "**not made with hands**" instead of only a pattern made by men; and
- Because He is the Sacrifice "**once for all**" offered for sin.

Have you ever accepted Him as your sin-bearer and substitute? He died that you might not have to die. He tasted death for every man.

CHRIST died for your sins, but you must personally receive Him as your GOD-appointed Saviour before His sacrifice can be credited to your account. He "willed" to be your Sacrifice; you must now "will" Him to be your Saviour!

III. CHRIST ALONE QUALIFIES IN HIS POSITION TO EFFECT SALVATION, 10:19-13:25

Up to this point we have been dealing with doctrinal matters in which all you and I can do is sit on the sideline and watch how GOD provides perfect salvation through His Beloved Son. There was nothing we could do to enter in. Anything we would attempt to do would be only to mar the perfection which characterized all that GOD does.

GOD's law is fixed -- each shall produce after its kind. He has produced a salvation which is entirely His product, and takes after His own nature. It is infinitely perfect. The only way He will allow any of us to enter in is to believe in what He has done. His entire plan for salvation is that "**no flesh should glory in His presence.**" Anything that we do to help provide this perfect salvation would be only to ruin it.

With a perfect salvation provided we now enter into the practical division of the book.

First is His person -- Then we see what He did -- Now the emphasis is on what He can do for you.

First it is CHRIST's life -- Then it is His death -- Now it is His new life and position at the Father's right hand.

The writer is pressing home one truth: **GOD IS TAKING AWAY THE OLD AND ESTABLISHING THE NEW!**

There is a new object for men's faith -- CHRIST.

There is a new will or covenant of which CHRIST is the Mediator.

There is also a new walk for the believer because of the Person, Work and Position of CHRIST.

Now the believer-priest is to enter into the Holy of Holies, i.e., into the very presence of GOD, by a new and living way through the blood of JESUS (Hebrews 10:19). Our new life and walk is to be governed by three new avenues of Christian experience: Faith, Hope, and Love.

A. FAITH, 10:19-Ch. 11

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). Here is a great list of those in GOD's hall of fame.

GOD's testimony of them - Hebrews 11:13, 15, 39, 40.

Now this better thing is given unto us and is ours for the appropriation: an entrance by faith into the very presence of GOD. There is nothing greater.

Only one Israelite -- the high priest -- once a year on the Day of Atonement could enter in, yet we have the Privilege of coming and abiding there as often as we wish and staying as long as we desire.

The only way we can grasp the value of this provision is to measure the price that was paid to obtain it. It was the greatest redemptive price ever made: The death of the Son. The rending of the Saviour's side made possible that **"whosoever will"** may enter in by faith into the very presence of GOD. The weakest Christian stands here as boldly as the strongest saint, simply because all stand clothed in the righteousness of the Son. Here is the Shekinah Glory by which we are changed into the same image from one glory visit to another. It is the **PLACE OF VICTORY!**

B. HOPE, Chapter 12:

We are to run anticipating the approval of the Judge. We are to know that GOD, even through chastisement, is dealing with us as sons, and our lives are to bear fruit unto righteousness because of this experience.

C. LOVE, Chapter 13:

"**Let brotherly love continue**" (Hebrews 13:1). This is what is to cause all men to know that we are the Lord's disciples. Love is to permeate and govern every area of our life and our walk with the Lord and with others.

THE CLOSING BENEDICTION: Hebrews 13:20-21.

No one else but the Son can possibly qualify to effect salvation. It takes a living Saviour. "**Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them**" (Hebrews 7:25). He is all that we need.

He is the Eternal Son.

He is the Perfect Saviour.

He is the Great Shepherd of the sheep.

There is no need we have but what JESUS CHRIST is the answer.

My friend, GOD today has provided perfect salvation. This salvation is in His Son Who alone can qualify. He has accomplished our redemption and now sits at the right hand of the Majesty on High ever living to save all who will come unto GOD by Him.

Yet though there be a thousand who could qualify to pay the debt for sin, and though they die a thousand deaths to provide salvation, still you would not be saved apart from accepting that salvation provided.

GOD didn't need quantities of saviors, nor quantities of sacrifices. He needed one perfect Person to offer one perfect Sacrifice that would make perfect forever those who "will" to accept GOD's Provision for sin. "**This man... offered one sacrifice for sins for ever . . . for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.**"

Where once was a marshy wilderness stands one of the most beautiful capitols in the world. Where once there stood a creation ruined by the fall, blighted by sin and under the verdict of death, now has been raised a new creation created in the beauty of holiness and clothed with the perfect righteousness of the Son.

All who "will" may enter in, but there is only one way of approach. This is through the Son.

What are you going to do with GOD's Perfect Provision for sin? If you reject GOD's way, there is no other way.

If you accept GOD's Provision, you have Perfect salvation for He is the Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him. And this is GOD's will, that we "**believe on the name of His Son, Jesus Christ . . .**"

~ end of chapter 1 ~