

# An Unanswerable Question

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**Bible Text:** Hebrews 2:3  
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Again on a short word of prayer and ask for God's help as we come to his word.

*Father, we thank you today for the ministry in song, we thank you for the hope of the gospel, we thank you for our Lord Jesus Christ, the only Savior of sinful men, and we pray, O God, that as he is presented in the gospel today, that those who are gathered with us still not saved that, Father, you would be pleased to speak to them and draw them to the Lord Jesus for salvation. We need thy help as we come to thy word just now and we look to thee, Lord, in the Savior's precious and worthy name. Amen.*

I want to draw your attention to a question in Hebrews 2:3. The question is this: how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? In our New Testament that we hold in our hands today, there are at least three unanswered questions. The Lord Jesus on one occasion asked the question: what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? The Apostle Peter asked the question: what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And here the writer to the Hebrews asked this telling question: how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?

A Welsh minister, a man of God, many years ago beginning his message said this, "Friends, I have a question to ask. You cannot answer this question. I cannot answer this question. If a demon were to come from hell, the demon could not answer this question. If an angel were to come from heaven, the angel could not answer this question." Death-like silence reigned over the congregation. Every eye was fixed upon the preacher. He said, "The question is this: how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" My dear friends, it is to this question this evening, this afternoon, that I want to direct your attention. I want you to notice here there are three things that flow out of this searching question. First of all, I want you to notice a provision that is unspeakable: salvation. Secondly, I want you to see here a possibility that is unthinkable: neglect. Thirdly, I want you to see here a problem that is unanswerable: how are you going to escape?

What is the great provision that God has made for our souls, that God has made for you and I, sinners lost and ruined by the fall? It's summarized in one word: salvation. You

know, when we think about salvation, dear friends, we're not thinking about religion. You could have a cold, dead, lifeless, bloodless, Christ-less, cross-less religion and still not be saved. When we think about salvation, we're not thinking about reformation. You could tidy up your life but the Bible says God requires that which is past. When we think about salvation, we're not thinking about respectability. You could be respectable, moral, upright, God-fearing, and yet know nothing of this salvation. This word "salvation" is one of the key words of the Bible. It means deliverance, deliverance from life's infection, deliverance from sin, deliverance from wrath, deliverance from judgment, deliverance from the very pit of hell itself.

You know the deliverance that Noah experienced when he was in the ark was wonderful when God flooded the world, but the deliverance of our souls from the deluge of God's wrath through saving faith in Jesus Christ is even greater. The deliverance that Lot experienced when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone was tremendous and yet the deliverance that you and I experience through faith in Jesus Christ is even greater. And so when we think about salvation, we are thinking about the deliverance of our souls from the vengeance of an eternal hell through saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Can I ask you today: are you saved? I'm not asking you are you religious. I'm not asking you are you confirmed. I'm not asking you are you baptized. I'm not asking you are you church-going. I'm asking you are you saved? Has there been a moment in your life when you have repented of your sin and placed your trust and confidence in Jesus Christ? You know, my friends, this salvation is so great because it reveals a great person. The writer to the Hebrews says, "God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners, in times past spake unto the fathers by the prophets hath in these last days spoken unto us through his Son." My friends, today there is no one like Jesus Christ. He is in a class by all of himself. When we speak about Christianity today, we're not thinking of a creed, we're not thinking of a cause, we're not thinking of a church, we're not thinking, my dear friends, of a code, we're thinking of Jesus Christ. The gospel of the Lord Jesus introduces us to a real living person, a person who can be to you a Savior, a sustainer, a comforter, a friend.

You say to me today, "Denis, who is this person?" Jesus Christ. I wonder have you ever thought about who Jesus Christ was or is? That's his worth. The Lord Jesus is superior to all others. That's why we want you to trust him and embrace him as your personal Savior. The writer to the Hebrews seems to have one tremendous objective in this epistle and it's to show us the greatness of Jesus Christ. My friends, Jesus Christ is greater than the prophets. Jesus Christ is greater than the angels. Jesus Christ is greater than Moses. Jesus Christ is greater than Joshua. Jesus Christ is greater than Aaron. Jesus Christ is greater than all the sacrifices of the Old Testament. I'm here to tell you today that Jesus Christ is greater than Buddha. He's greater than Confucius. He's greater than Mohammad. He's greater than the blessed virgin Mary. He's greater than Prince William of Orange. There is none like Jesus Christ. He is in a class all by himself.

The great question that forces itself upon you today is this: what think ye of Christ? What think ye of Christ? Is the test to try both your state and your saved scheme? You cannot

think rightly of the rest unless you think rightly of him. I wonder have you come to see that in the person of Jesus Christ, he's the Creator of the world. He's the sustainer of the universe. He's the Savior of lost sinners. He's the final judge of all. I wonder have you ever thought about who Jesus Christ is. That's his worth. I wonder have you ever thought about what Jesus Christ did? That's his work, for we're told in this very passage that he purged our sins. You say, "What does that mean?" It means that when God wanted to save sinners, he came into the world by himself. The Lord Jesus speaking prophetically said, "A body hast thou prepared me." And on that sinless body, my awful sins were laid. All my sins were laid upon him. Jesus bore them on the tree. God, who knew them, laid them on him. And believing that we are free, I wonder today do you see that a price has been paid, a work has been completed, precious blood has been shed, atonement has been made for your sin, and all that you have to do today is come and rest upon the finished work of Jesus Christ?

Many years ago, there was a man called Alexander Wooten. He was an eccentric evangelist. One day someone came to him and said, "Mr. Wooten, what must I do to be saved?" And Alexander Wooten realized the man wasn't sincere and he said, "It's been done." He said, "Mr. Wooten, you don't understand me. What must I do to be saved?" And Wooten said, "Sir, it's already been done." My friend, you cannot add anything to it. You cannot take anything from it. You cannot substitute anything for it. The work today is finished and all that you have to do is come and trust the Savior.

You know, my friends, this salvation is so great because it reveals a great person, but this salvation is so great because it resolves a great problem. The problem is expressed in this very chapter. It's described in this passage as sins, as iniquity, as transgression. The Bible says for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The Bible says there is none righteous, no, not one. The Bible says there is not a just man that doeth good and sinneth not. You say, "Denis, what is sin?" The Bible says sin is the transgression of the law. You know, when I take my life and place it against the holy law of God, I discover that I'm a sinner. I've only got to take the first commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And my dear friends, when we realize God must come first and foremost and finally in our lives, we discover that we've broken the law of God. We discover that we're sinners.

I wonder, dear friend, have you ever come to see yourself as God sees you, a lost, guilty, hell-deserving sinner? I wonder have you ever cried for the mercy of God to save your precious soul? Sir James Simpson, the man that discovered chloroform, was asked at the end of a life in which he had made many scientific discoveries, "Sir, what's the greatest discovery that you've ever made?" He said, "The greatest discovery that I have ever made was this, that I was a lost guilty sinner and that Jesus Christ, the Savior of sinners, is my Savior." I wonder have you made that discovery?

I want you to see here a provision that is unspeakable: salvation. I want you to see here a possibility that is unthinkable: neglect. How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Yet how common neglect is. You know, the word that is used here is used in the parable of the marriage of the king's son in Matthew's gospel, 22. There we read of a

king who made a great feast for his son and he invited all and sundry to come, but they made light of the king's invitation, and one went his way to his farm and another one went to his merchandise business. I wonder, dear friend, is that what you've been doing with God's salvation? Have you been making light of the things of God? Maybe you're here today and like me in an earlier day, you're making light of the word of God, you're making light of the work of Christ, you're making light of the Holy Spirit of God working in your heart. Oh, be careful today.

R. A. Torrey was having a great mission in the Drill Hall in Plymouth many years ago, and a man came behind one night not to trust Christ but a man waiting behind and despised the messenger and the message and he said to Torrey, "Torrey, I'll be back tomorrow night to mock the message and to mock you." And Dr. Torrey said, "No, you won't." That man walked outside that Drill Hall and in five minutes he dropped dead at the side of the footpath and they carried his body into the Drill Hall to wait for the medical authorities.

I wonder today have you been making light of the things of God? Do you know how common neglect is? Dear friends, how simple neglect is. You know, in one sense, it is hard, it is very hard for sinners to perish. You know, God has put up barriers on the road to hell. Maybe you can look down the corridor of time today and you've an old mother and she's in the glory and she prayed for your soul. Maybe you've a father today in heaven and he instructed you in the word of God. Maybe you can look back to faithful Sunday school teachers and pastors and preachers who showed to you the way of life. And yet today you're still not saved, you're still on that broad road that leads to destruction. You know, my dear friends, God has set barriers on the road to hell. The greatest barrier is the cross of Jesus Christ.

And yet on the other hand, how simple it is for sinners to perish, just neglect. How common neglect is. How simple neglect is. How dangerous neglect is. In every realm of life neglect is dangerous. It's dangerous for the businessman to neglect his business. It's dangerous for the student to neglect his studies. It's dangerous for the farmer to neglect his crops. It's dangerous for the doctor to neglect his patients. But how more dangerous it is for you to neglect your immortal soul.

In the Ringtheater in Vienna some time ago, there was an awful fire. A great crowd were making their way down one of the aisles to escape the fire when they saw this sign, "Emergency in case of fire." And they turned aside from the main aisle and they went down this side aisle but when they got to the gate, the bolts couldn't be drawn. The locks were covered in rust. A heap of dead soon lay before that gate because it had been neglected. Dear friend, today don't neglect your soul lest you perish for all eternity.

How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, a provision that is unspeakable, a possibility that is unthinkable. Here's a problem that is unanswerable: how? The word how means how is it possible? Escape means to escape from. How is it possible to escape from the city of destruction if you neglect so great salvation? My friends, today here's a problem that cannot be solved. How will you escape? If under the Old Testament, those

who broke the law were punished, how will you escape? Did Moses and Aaron escape even though they were the leaders of the people? Did that Israelite escape if he failed to put blood on the lintel of the doorpost? Did that man escape who gathered sticks on the Sabbath day? All were punished. The Bible says every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward. How then will those of us today who are under the new covenant with all its greater privileges and blessings, how will we escape, escape his wrath? Escape his judgment? Escape the very punishment of hell?

I don't know where you were on the 11<sup>th</sup> of September in the year 2001, but I remember I was leading a group of Christians to Funchal, a city in Madeira, the capital city, when I received a text message from my daughter, Heather, to say, "Dad, put the television screen on. America is being attacked." Do you remember that awful scene? You know, I'm sure that morning was no different from any other morning for those people who were going to work on the Twin Towers. They would come into the city by underground, by car, by bus, by taxi, by train. No doubt thoughts of their family, perhaps the weekend that was past, maybe the weekend that lay before them filled their thoughts in their minds as they made their way up those lifts to those towering blocks, and then those planes loaded with fuel came, and will we ever forget those scenes as those people dropped from those heights to death and destruction? I tell you, when those planes hit the tower, they weren't thinking about their family, they weren't thinking about their friends, they weren't thinking about the weekend that had gone, they weren't thinking about the partying in the weekend that was to come, only one thought filled their hearts and minds, "How will we on the 91<sup>st</sup> floor get to the bottom floor?" And that would have been on my thought and your heart too.

My friend, let me ask you today how are you going to escape if you turn your back on God's Son? If God has provided salvation in the person of Christ and you turn your back on Christ, how will you escape? But there's no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved and you're depending on that name today, how will you escape? If there's only one sacrifice for sins forever and you're not depending on that sacrifice today, how will you escape? Here's a problem that cannot be solved. Here's a problem that must not be shunned. I wonder today are you shunning it? Maybe you're saying today, "Preacher, I'll escape by my wealth." It counts for naught at the judgment bar of God. Maybe you say, "Preacher, I'll escape by my good deeds." They have been weighed in God's balances and found wanting. Oh, today come to Christ. Come to the cross. Come to the fountain that was opened up for sin and for uncleanness. Bathe in that precious blood and be saved for time and for the great eternity.

Some time ago, an old farmer was out walking along the railway track between New York and Pennsylvania. Suddenly he noticed that part of the track had been damaged, a bit like the other day in Aberdeenshire. And as he stooped down to see what he could do to fix it, he could hear the train, the vibration of the train on the tracks in the distance. He wondered what he would do and he picked up his old oil lamp and he started running down the track, heading towards the oncoming train for he knew if they came to that part of the track and that train didn't stop, lives were going to be lost. As he was running down the track, he fell and the oil lamp broke. He didn't know what to do and so he picked it up

and he still kept running toward the oncoming train. And at the very last moment, he threw the broken lantern in the face of the engineer and jumped off the track. The engineer immediately sensing what was wrong halted the train. Many lives were saved that day because of the old farmer who cast that lantern in the face of the engineer.

Dear friend, this afternoon just now the Holy Spirit of God is throwing the blood-sprinkled cross in your face and he's crying to you today, "Stop! Think! Halt! How will you escape if you neglect so great salvation?" Will you come to Christ today? Will you take the sinner's place? Will you pray the sinner's prayer? Will you trust the sinner's Savior? Will you come? Will you come now? May God bless his word to all of our hearts this afternoon.