

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN LIGHT OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

II. God's Warning Not To Drift Into Catholic Error

(Hebrews 2:1-4)

I. Introduction

- A. A number of the members of our Church have come from Roman Catholic backgrounds, and they often seek support in Biblical truth to counter the strong, errant indoctrination they experienced in their past.
- B. The epistle to the Hebrews was written to counter the errant traditionalism of first century Judaism that was similar in theological thrust to much of Catholicism, so we study Hebrews for edification in this matter.
- C. We thus view Hebrews 2:1-4 on God's warning not to drift into Catholic error for our insight and edification:

II. God's Warning Not To Drift Into Catholic Error, Hebrews 2:1-4.

- A. The Roman Catholic Church did not exist when the epistle to the Hebrews was written in the Early Church, so the epistle's instruction applies directly to the trial early Hebrew Christians faced from unbelieving Hebrews "to give up their Christian profession and to return to their ancestral faith" (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 779).
- B. However, as Loraine Boettner in his book, Roman Catholicism, 1978, p. 44 noted, much of Old Testament Hebrew religion that unsaved Hebrews tried to push on Early Church Christian Hebrews has remarkably similar application to believers today who have come from Roman Catholic backgrounds.
- C. Accordingly, the author of Hebrews 2:1-4 provided a warning against drifting back into false Judaistic error, and by way of *application*, it has application for believers with regard to the Roman Catholic Church today:
 1. In our previous lesson on Hebrews 1:1-14, the Roman Catholic Church teaches doctrines that greatly counter the teachings of this passage (as follows):
 - a. Catholicism calls Jesus' earthly mother Mary the "Mother of God" (Ibid., p. 133), but Hebrews 1:1-2 teaches that Christ created the world, what would include Mary herself.
 - b. Catholicism teaches that all power in heaven and on earth has been given to Mary so that all obey, even God (Ibid., p. 139, citing Bishop Alphonse de Liguori, The Glories of Mary, 1931, p. 189), but Hebrews 1:3 ESV teaches that Christ is the exact imprint of the nature of God the Father and upholds creation by the word of His power by which He called the universe into existence at creation.
 - c. Catholicism teaches that the Triune Godhead gave Mary a name above every other name, that at her name, every knee in heaven, on earth and under the earth should bow (Ibid., p. 140, citing Liguori, Ibid., p. 260), but Hebrews 1:4 shows Jesus has a more excellent name than the angels, and God the Father called Jesus God in Hebrews 1:8. Mary is not God, so she cannot be sovereign over God and Christ in heaven!
 - d. Catholicism calls Mary "Queen of Heaven" and "Queen of the angels" (Ibid., p. 134), but Hebrews 1:5-14 reveals that Jesus Christ is the One Who is Superior to heaven's angels – not Mary!
 2. In addition, the Catholic Church intends to bring back all Christian denominations to its fold, not to change its beliefs, for even at Vatican II where there was a strong thrust by the Catholic Church for ecumenism, at "Lumen Gentium 14," it asserted: "Whosoever . . . knowing that the Catholic Church was made necessary by Christ, would refuse to enter or to remain in it, could not be saved." (cited by Rory Fox, "Did Vatican II Change the Doctrine 'No Salvation Outside the Church'?", March 9, 2023; catholicstand.com)
 3. Therefore, the call of Hebrews 2:1-4 is **strongly** applicable to **us believers** in Christ **today** (as follows):
 - a. In view of the unbiblical exaltation of Mary even to the demeaning of the position of Christ as God, and in view of the Catholic Church's drive to bring all professing Christians back to its fold without changing its view that salvation is solely through the Catholic Church, we "would do well to pay more careful attention" to the Biblical truths we have received from Christ's Apostles that we might not "drift away (*pararyomen*, a word that occurs only here in the NT)." (Hebrews 4:1; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 783)
 - b. If the words spoken by the angels in the giving of the Mosaic Law at Sinai (Psalm 68:17; Acts 7:53) was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, we Christian believers will not escape accountability to the Lord if we neglect the true salvation truth that was given to us by the Lord Jesus and was confirmed by His disciples through validating miracles in the Early Church, Hebrews 2:2-4.

Lesson: *God holds us highly accountable to hold to the truths handed down to us from Jesus and His apostles, so we must give care to withstand great Catholic error and its promotion of its error lest we slip from the truth.*

Application: *May we sense our great accountability to God to be vigilant in withstanding grave Catholic error that is being promoted onto us in our era.*