

Our First Warning

The Book of Hebrews

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Well, this evening we're in Hebrews 2 and the first four verses. To go with our considerations tonight is this title "Our First Warning." Our first warning. The writer has established in chapter 1 the deity and glory of Christ particularly in those first four verses. He's shown how all that's to follow based upon his offices and his work is established upon who he is. None of it would work, none of his acts of sacrifice, none of him occupying the position of high priest would have any effect whatsoever unless he is the Son of God, unless he is divine. And so that's been the proven case, that's what the writer has been at pains to teach and so we find it extraordinary, don't we, that so many flatly deny that there are any claims in the Bible that the Lord Jesus Christ is God when Hebrews, the whole of the book would make no sense at all unless this is precisely who he is. That's why the writer at the beginning makes that very very clear in the first chapter so what will follow here from chapter 2 onwards as he develops his argument, this will only make sense if we constantly refer back to what's already established in chapter 1 and in those first four verses.

And in that, similarly but remote to us but which was a live issue then, that angels, angels were much thought of and the whole kind of basis and classification and different angels and what they did and you had different sort of strata between sort of earth and heaven occupied by different angelic beings, and unless if you've had a teacher who had some real insight into these and could tell you which ones now and you kind of graduated onto the next stage, it was almost like one of these sort of video-games or something there and you move onto the next stage and there's a treat that gets you through up to the next part of it, and so you gradually graduate up the scale, so it's this great elaborate system. But of course, missing from it all is the centrality of Christ. These angels have now suddenly been brought in and are interfering with the whole understanding indeed to any safe passage to salvation. And so the writer has established Christ's superiority to the angels.

That lives with us still because you can see there and we're looking at it this evening in chapter 2 in verse 5, "For He has not put the world to come, of which we speak, in subjection to angels." Still thinking back to the contrast that he's making in chapter 1 that it's not angels that are given the titles that the Son is given, including the title of being the Son. It's not the angels of whom is spoken, and we thought of our Lord in his office as

mediator, being given a throne and having there the right and entitlement to rule. No, the angels are not given that, worthy and mighty beings though they are.

And we saw how the Old Testament was applied in order to prove the case. So just as these people in these churches were looking back at the law and beginning to sort of resurrect some of the parts of Leviticus and elsewhere and thinking that these were still needed today, that we still needed to have those sacrifices, so the writer quotes copiously from the Old Testament to prove that actually they're wrong and that they don't need all those sacrifices, even though they are actually in the Old Testament, that the Old Testament itself envisages a day when those things will be done away with, as we'll see when we come to the main body of what he has to say.

Well, there are some serious implications from what chapter 1 establishes, some very serious implications based upon the person who is at the center of everything here, our Lord Jesus Christ, and that's where we come to in chapter 2, verses 1 to 4. Our first warning or my first heading, the first of many warnings because this book breaks away at various places to insert a warning and they're sometimes very very strong warnings that the argument proceeds on a way and then it's sort of interrupted with a warning and also with encouragement. But here we have a warning, a clear warning and it comes right after the establishing of the divinity of Christ and his centrality to everything and then follows a warning. It's as if you proceed a little way with the teaching and then there's a warning and we'll find quite a few of them, and some are reckoned to be some of the most troubling passages in the whole of the New Testament and set people running here and there wondering whether you can lose your salvation. Well, you're sure you know a true believer can lose their salvation but false believers most certainly can lose their kind of convictions or their place in what they thought was a secure place, and others thought they were in a secure place and it turns out they weren't.

So chapter 5, reading from verse 12 there and then on into chapter 6, "For though by this time," the writer says, "you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food, everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Therefore," he goes on, "leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame." There are more stern words that follow on after that. A warning, a very very strong warning and I'm not going to expound that at length here this evening. We'll come it when we come to it.

But it's ever peace, this is of peace what we have in chapter 2 in verses 1 to 4. Then in chapter 10, more briefly, and there at verse 26 and following on to verse 31, very strong warning. "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. And again, 'The LORD will judge His people.' It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Well, we see in that passage there this talk about rejecting Moses' law and dying without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses that in chapter 2, verse 2, "For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward," that is contrast between what happened under the old covenant and what happens in the new covenant that actually what happens in the new covenant is severe for those who disobey.

So this theme comes through that there is punishment on both orders, under the old covenant and under the new covenant, and that warning is very clearly shown there, especially when there is sin against light, when there is sin against clear understanding, clear teaching that has been issued about the person of the Son of God, the preciousness of his blood, his resurrection, and such things as this. How shall we escape? And that is the question, isn't it, there and this is where the writer here in chapter 2 brings the first of his many warnings. How shall they escape? Well, the answer is that they won't. We won't escape if we neglect so great a salvation. People think that they can, they think they can somehow turn away with impunity and that there's no kind of eternal retribution. Well, chapter 10 told us, God says, "Vengeance is Mine. I will repay." And there is that warning, that theme of warning interspersed throughout this book so as a body of teaching and then a warning, joining on, as it were, what's just gone before in order to impress upon the readers they're not to abandon this. Having established something that should have them looking at so great a salvation, then there's a warning. If you neglect this or abandon this, then there is great great peril ahead.

Now what is the process that is happening here, this idea in verse 1 of drifting away, "lest we drift away"? And the idea is of water just sort of pouring away as though you had a leaky container and it just gradually gradually empties and there's nothing left, it's all gone. You look in a half hour, an hour's time and it's empty. It's all just dribbled away. And so that idea is there with this idea of drifting. Gradual, it's not sudden but a gradual emptying until suddenly that's the result, it is empty entirely.

Now it's not talking here about backsliding, that there's a temporary spiritual decline, and all of us have done that, I'm sure. We've had periods of fallowness, periods in which we were lackluster, we weren't there, not found serving the Lord as we might have been, we might have been entertaining some sin or other, some folly, some foolishness. True children of God do this and then they're recovered. We think of Peter, don't we, when he denied the Lord three times which was a pretty devastating collapse there and yet could

be recovered, and the Lord had promised him that Satan had already asked that he might sift him like wheat but that the Lord had prayed for him that he would stand, and afterwards that he should go and strengthen his brethren. And indeed he does and weeps bitterly, doesn't he, then as the cock crows and he has made his three denials that the Lord predicted he would before that incident and the cock crowing in the morning. But he's recovered. It's backsliding but he's recovered and, well, we know because he's there preaching on the day of Pentecost and he's there right at the forefront of all the developments and action at the beginning of the book of Acts.

Now this is something more serious. This is what we call apostasy. This is the danger that the writer here and in chapter 5, 6 and in chapter 10 is speaking about. This is apostasy and this is something more serious than backsliding though, of course, backsliding if unchecked could lead to full-scale apostasy. This is where one ends up actually denying the faith, the faith that one accepted even preached, even went evangelizing whatever else on the basis of, but then you end up denying it, you end up preaching something completely different. You end up taking away central planks of what that truth actually requires and contains. This is now when you're found actively opposing the truth, actively standing against the truth and that is where you have apostasy and it's dangerous because what we read here is that if this is indulged or the early stages of it are indulged, it can become irrecoverable and that one has then sealed one's own doom and God will bring his vengeance down that the insult that it is to his Son, the way in which such provision has been made in the Holy Spirit and in the blood of Christ, that so much is spoken against that, they go on then declares that person beyond recovery.

And so that is a dreadful, dreadful state to get into. That is something that is then a totally abandoned and the danger of that is very very clear, isn't it, for us to see, and we are all to be watchful. We're all to see within ourselves to make sure that those seeds of that kind of ultimate overthrow of our faith are kept firmly inbound. For sure, sinful nature rebels against the truths of God, clamors to have itself satisfied, our lusts, our covetousness, our greed, all the ways in which we break the commandments, various of them in various ways. Yes, those things live on in the human soul and we are to be dealing with it, mortifying sin and ever watchful, ever entertaining a healthy suspicion about ourselves.

It's interesting when the Lord tells his disciples that one of them will betray him as they met having the Lord's Supper on the eve that he was betrayed and was crucified. And Judas sitting at table with him but all the other disciples wonder, "Could it be me?" And they're aware that, "It could be me because I know my weakness. I feel that I'm frail and I could well imagine that I could be the one that betrays Him." And they have to inquire of the Lord, "Is it I?" And you can feel their anxiety, you can feel their consternation, the worry that's on their faces. And the Lord, of course, speaking there to John who Peter has asked him to ask who it is and it's the one that he dips the bread in the dish and then gives it to him, that is the one who is going to betray him. It turns out, of course, to be Judas Iscariot. He is apostate. He is one who seemingly belonged among them, seemed to have a part in that ministry, but turned out not to. As Peter when he preaches in Acts 1 reminds, he has no part in this ministry. He's gone to his place, his appointed place, and that was apostasy.

But the disciples, all of them, had that healthy self-suspicion, looking at themselves and feeling their own weakness and that is no bad thing to feel that. Why, even the Apostle Paul quite extraordinary in 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 saying this, "Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." That Paul could look at himself and say, "Well, I'm keeping myself under very very close observation that I don't become a person who in the end is disqualified." For all that he's seen as an apostle, for everything that he's learned and all the ways in which God has spoken to him, well, that he could himself at the end be a castaway, be disqualified.

You get the idea from what he's speaking about here, the discipline, how he's going to discipline his body. Well, some take that to wide extremes, don't they? Self-flagellation and all these kinds of weird things that people through the ages have thought brought them nearer to God. It's a much more subtle thing than that. He's watching over his mind. He's watching over his behavior, what he's doing, what's happening within his body with all the little ways in which to make a compromise here or look to just gain some advantage there or make out something here, deceive a little there. And he's watchful over his soul. He's disciplining his body, bringing into subjection, not running with uncertainty as though he's got no purpose, no aim. No, his aim is to please God. He's not beating the air in that way as though it is just sort of futile exercise, just a kind of blur of activity but without any real purpose. No, he keeps his aim clear in view that he's going to heaven. He has an answer to give at the judgment throne for his stewardship, the things he's done, the things he's permitted, the things that he has been involved in.

So he is watchful that he himself should not become apostate, should not so how by his behavior so deny the truth that really he is now in direct conflict with it. Of course, people can wave the Bible around and can quote texts and make out all kinds of things, liberal people do that all the time and excuse their own behavior and their own attitudes and reckon that they're covered by what Scripture teaches when Scripture teaches the complete opposite of what they're actually doing, in some glaring way in which they're denying the resurrection or giving themselves leave to countenance homosexuality or something, that they are giving themselves there a Bible text, an excuse somehow to undermine some central part of Christian teaching and doctrine. That's apostasy and that can be a situation that as the writer here warns us, is irrecoverable.

Presumption, over-confidence, these are dangerous dangerous things. Not to self-question. Not to have any doubts and so worrying when one hears the kinds of teachings and victorious living and the way in which just enjoy God's grace and set aside the law and not worry about commandments and stressed over those, you just sort of go in a flow of obedience that will be distinctive, and then stop and look and wonder at themselves, how come therefore that they're behaving in ways that is totally unchristian and totally

against the tenure and the spirit of the Gospel, the Bible, its teaching, and this is apostasy. This is an actual fighting against the word of God.

So these warnings are given to us here, those in reality have been some very big stories in the wider Christian media over the last six months or so. A man called Joshua Harris, well, this man for a fair few years belongs to sort of the new Calvinist camp, a young restless Reformed, this effort to claim some affinity to Reformed teaching, the sovereignty of God, but then to do things which are completely alien to what that is actually teaching, this really which is a kind of a bit of a conjuring trick to present as being something but then actually what you are doing in your behavior and the kinds of conclusions you're reaching are totally alien to what Scripture is teaching. Well, this man sort of was nurtured within all of this and had all of the works there, the home school part of it and being mentored by a big figure within this whole movement, and then there were problems in the church. There was a, well, dear friends, don't like to mention these things but there was actually a child abuse scandal, the church had behaved badly and sort of covered up rather than actually sought to address the issue and help the victims and deal strongly with the perpetrators. And the church began to fall apart and this not so young man now, and he's a bestselling author of a book that was doing the rounds, and he went away to go through what he described sort of theological reflection and then he realized that what he'd been sort of birthed in, this kind of Evangelical culture with all of its Charismatic elements and other bits and pieces that went with it had not served him well enough and left him, I think, feeling a little bit at sea to deal with this. Well, the news came through three or four months ago it must have been now, now left his wife and he was last seen where he's actually identified as gay but he's on a sort of gay pride kind of march and happily there in a selfie, and he says he no longer identifies as a Christian. Well, I guess he doesn't from the way he's behaved. He no longer identifies as a Christian and so a lot of people are wondering, talking about that. Well, a fellow who was at Hillsong, soon after that he put up his particular kind of apologia and describing how he had left the faith and no longer identified as a Christian.

So it's a real thing. There are warnings and we could cite other people and, in fact, some have stood in this very pulpit who are now apostates. They have denied the faith. They're now working actively against true doctrine and it's quite quite sad to see but it's reality and so there's a warning because it could happen and we have to be on our guard. My second heading then: great salvation. It is a great salvation and this is where the writer there warning us about drifting away and speaking to us about the dangers of apostasy because what is being overlooked, what we are turning our backs upon is a great salvation. This is what chapter 1 is establishing for us. We have a great salvation because it's underwritten by a great Savior. It's actually God himself as veiled in our flesh but unmistakably it is God himself. This great salvation here which is spoken of is underwritten by the Son of God himself.

He's reminding them what it is that you are abandoning, what it is that you are leaving behind, and how should we escape if we neglect so great salvation? It's a great work that has been done. The cross of Jesus Christ, the blood that he shed, the body that was broken, this is a great salvation because of the person. He's a great Savior. He must be

because he's described in the terms that chapter 1 has established, that he's able to apply a warning using the argument to date that follows. This is a great Savior. Where do we go if we abandon him? What can we be finding that can offer us any comfort, any solution to our broken relationship with God to our state of alienation and enmity toward God if we walked away from this great great Savior?

So he is a supreme ruler who purged our sins, whose sacrifices alone and only can atone for our sin. What else is there? What other sacrifice can we look to? What other reason can we find in any other thing if we have turned our back upon him? And he therefore shows that this would be disastrous. This can only lead to absolute ruin. And he mentions about the old covenant, the word spoken through angels, and this is the 10 Commandments and the book of the covenant in Exodus 21 through to 24. Every transgression, disobedience received a just reward as that word was steadfast, it was the law, and God would back up his law. And when the disobedience was the Israelites in the wilderness and all the various disobediences there, the opposition against Moses, their unwillingness, the complaints, the moans, the ways in which they're looking back to Egypt and God judged them, snakes that were sent among them, or particular specific judgments upon Dathan, Abiram, Korah and their rebellion. It's what thought of here. There were severe judgments. Read the book of Numbers and you'll see just how severe they were, the ground opening up and swallowing them and various plagues that came upon those who disobeyed. Well, that was severe but he's actually telling us, well, actually it's going to be even more than that, "how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation." That was under the old covenant. If we had the glory of Christ revealed, now that he is revealed, what then? How will God deal with us then if in the old dispensation the disobedience then met with very swift retribution and very strong retribution, well, how do we think that somehow now that we have the full light and revelation of Jesus Christ that somehow it's all going to be fine for us?

It's a warning he says of great salvation and we reject it at our peril and he speaks about how this salvation was announced and this is why we perhaps struggle to think that Paul is the kind of main author of this because he would have probably spoken about himself at this point because he talks, doesn't he, this salvation "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him. God also bearing witness both with signs and wonders, with various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to His own will?" This was a very clearly established salvation. This was not something that was not attended with quite considerable supernatural evidences, and the writer here is speaking about how that first began to be spoken by the Lord himself. Well, we can think of wonderful passages like Matthew 11:28-30. My Lord famously said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." That was a word indeed that he proclaimed there, and as we've noted before, it's all about himself. That's it. Salvation, this great salvation, well, it hinges upon the person, a great Savior, Jesus Christ.

Just as an instance of this, there are many we could have chosen, but John 6 and there in verse 47 following on from that, "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world." Well, indeed, you could pick any other passage out of that section of John 6, that's the salvation, it's himself. He's giving everlasting life.

So as the writer says here, this was "at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him." The apostles. It was they who affirmed these things and spoke and Gospel writers who followed from that, the various other epistles which came to be written by those who were eyewitnesses by which that recalls Paul himself. Had he have been the writer of this particular part here, well, he would have spoken of himself as an eyewitness but the person who is writing here is someone somewhat removed from that apostolic company but knows intimately what those apostles said. I suppose some wonder is this Luke writing this? Well, perhaps it is and able to comment upon what he has heard, what he has picked up by way of information.

And these then he goes on further to say, that the apostles, God will witness to the apostles. We understand in the minutia of the Greek is how best to understand verse 4. It's God bearing witness to his Son by signs and wonders, various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his will. Ah, but the apostles, that would make more sense of them. Gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will. Well, that would rather more speak there of what God according to his own will gave to his people, to the apostles and those they laid hands on such as the members of the Corinthian church and how God distributed gifts to them according to his own will. Thus we would see in the book of Acts the various miracles, signs and wonders, including judgments like the blindness coming upon by Jesus when on the island there and going to speak to Sergius Paulus and how this man kept interfering and so Paul judged him and spoke to him. He was a perverter of the truth and how he's going to go blind and he did and needs somebody to hold him by the hand. And so we can see there that this is actually what the apostles were doing. God was bearing witness to the truth of the apostles by the signs and wonders that he gave to them.

And it is a great salvation because it saves all kinds of people, every kind of person, all genders, all races, Jew or Gentile. It saves all kinds of sinners, religious sinners, people that were self-righteous and full of judgmentalism, it saves them. People that were just knee deep in lust and all the sins of the flesh, well, it saves them. Decent people who lived polite, quiet and respectable lives, well, it saves them also in the depths of their corruption. And it saves so comprehensively because it's a finished work and it accomplishes everything.

When Christ died upon the cross, he didn't just obtain for us a beginning but he obtained for us the middle part of our walk, and indeed the end as well, that we'll die in Christ and that we will go to heaven, that we will persevere. It's comprehensive. That's why it can

remove fear and doubt. That's why we live as people who indeed God has taken away through him the fear of death because we can see beyond, we can see to glory because of the sufficiency, the completeness, the absolute reliability of the death of the Son of God. Fear, doubt, questions removed.

It requires nothing else. That, of course, is what the writer is going to establish at some length. It requires nothing else, no other sacrifice needed because this is a great salvation that we have and we must appreciate it. We have to ask ourselves do we, do we as believers, do we value it because, in a sense, this sermon here may not be immediately appropriate to all of us here that apostasy may not be the thing that we're most floating with at the moment, but we always have to ask ourselves do we appreciate this much, that it is a great salvation, that we are introduced to something that is just so immense and so wonderful and because of the person who is the guarantor of it.

So my final heading and briefly: pay attention. Pay attention. That's what he is saying here. We need to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard. What is it they've heard? Well, they've heard about what the Lord himself said and what the apostles taught as well. We have to pay attention earnestly and there has to be about us something very serious, something very intense in our interests because that's the antidote against drifting, that's the antidote against the truth just somehow dribbling away from us so we end up in the end opposing the truth, this intense and serious interest that is absolutely locked in to the person and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not religion. Not rules. Not things that are there that people observe and in some measure give them some comfort but don't in the end help. It is Christ and Christ alone.

So we are all of us to make sure that everything that we are, where our faith is, how we proceed with anything we do is absolutely locked into the person and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. And well, just a few thoughts as to how to ensure that that earnest heed is given. Well, we attend church, don't we? That's why we come to church, part of the reason for that is to keep us in that narrow way, it's to maintain us in the faith to prevent the drifting process. It's never good, is it, when people begin not to attend church or begin to show less interest in it, beginning to absent themselves, beginning to, well, drift away. What is it saying? And church and preaching the word, reading Scripture, Old Testament, New Testament, hymns that are worth calling hymns that we can sing to the glory of God, the Lord's Table, this speaks to us, doesn't it, of Christ. It doesn't have anybody, just Jesus Christ, it keeps our focus upon him. So we want to come. We want to be there. We want to hear these things. We're reminded of these things, be kept in check against drifting away from these things, be led to see that every other system, any addition that we might make, any other trust or hope or reliance that we have, rules and observances will not avail. We have to be in Christ Jesus and nothing else will do.

We are personally, aren't we, to read Scripture. We're to read Scripture at home. Read it, read it and read it and read it again. Read, well, read the Old Testament for sure but make sure we read the New Testament thoroughly, digest it, know it, know where to find things in it, find these truths that keep us anchored in the Lord Jesus Christ. So we read Scripture, that helps us to pay attention.

We pray. We pray. We keep in communion with the Lord. We were thinking, weren't we, after lunch about the eternal God being our refuge, a home to us, a place that we go back to and how we can pour out our hearts there, all of it, all the worries, all its concerns, all of its untidiness and unburden it to him, the secrecy of our own walk with him and so we are to pray. Praying brings us closer and closer to him. He interacts with us. It may seem, well, it is hard work, isn't it? Prayer is hard work but it is a worthwhile work indeed. We won't make any gains unless we pray. We won't make any gains unless we pray with heart engagement, with real outpouring of our soul. Such prayer God hears and he brings near to us, he comes and makes his home in us and with us, and we are able to behold the glory of his Son all the more.

And reflect. We're always to reflect upon who we are, what kind of people that we are, how we go about things. What does it say of us? What's important to us? Who are we as we move about the world? What are our priorities? What are we taken up with? What is filling our minds at any given moment? And are we satisfied with that? Is that what a Christian should be thinking about, should be doing, should be taken up with? Is that something that is honoring God or is it, in fact, honoring somebody else, our own selves, whatever else it must be?

So we're watchful, we are observant of the people that we are, what we're becoming, what habits we're allowing ourselves, what priorities and inclinations that we are satisfied, how we're coming across in that, and that is something, again, that helps us to pay earnest attention, earnest heed to these important things because what we find that it's something else, that our place in the world as Christians is not the thing that is coming to our mind and our attention, when there's something else, well, that something else could just be the bait that begins to draw us away, draw us away, and the process of drift takes place. People allow themselves, don't they, sins. They excuse themselves that they don't belong amongst the ordinary company of mortals and they're a law unto themselves. They believe themselves to be that, believe themselves immune and before they know it, they have become apostates.

Well, friends, we don't want that to be us so we will pay attention, we will give the more earnest heed to the things we've heard, what Scripture is telling us, and Scripture tells us again and again that the vital vital importance of our Lord Jesus Christ, no novelty in that is there, friends, and so we will make sure that he is at the very center of what we're about, who we are, what we're thinking. And to the extent that he is not, to that extent we'll inquire carefully about the state of our soul to make sure a process is not somewhere secretly working that will end up in disaster.