

**HEBREWS**  
**(Lesson 7)**  
**Our Duty in Light of The Excellence of Jesus**

**INTRODUCTION**

You will notice that Chapter 2 begins with the word, “Therefore.” And when you see the word “therefore” you should always ask yourself, “What is the “therefore” there for?” The word “therefore” refers us back to what was said before.

The first chapter of Hebrews has set forth the superiority of Christ. He is superior to the prophets of the Old Testament. He is superior to the prophets because they prophesied at “sundry times.” This means they brought God’s word only in bits and pieces – a bit of knowledge here, a bit of knowledge there. Prophets are also inferior because they prophesied “in times past.” They didn’t prophesy in the final days of God’s revelation, but rather, in former days when it was not time for full knowledge. It was a time for types and figures then. It was a time for learning the abc’s of religion. (i.e. “Our God is one God”; “Thou shalt not steal”; “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”)

But Jesus came in the “last days” with a much fuller revelation. He came explaining the law and fulfilling the law. In many ways, his sermon on the mount in Matthew 5-7, is an amplification of the basics of the law.

In Matthew 5:21-22 Jesus expands the meaning of “Thou shalt not kill.”

In Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus expands the meaning of “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

In Matthew 5:43-44 Jesus expands the meaning of “Thou shalt love they neighbor.

And so, Jesus and the revelation which came with Jesus is better than the prophets and the bits and pieces of information brought by them.

And, Jesus is also superior to angels. (Heb.1:4) And, how so?

1. Jesus has obtained a better name than the angels. (v.4, 5 - Son)
2. Jesus is to be worshipped by angels. (v.6)
3. Jesus made angels. (v.7)
4. Jesus is God who sits on a throne. (vs.8, 9)
5. Jesus is especially anointed by God above all other creatures. (v.9)
6. Jesus is the creator of the universe. (vs.11, 12)
7. Jesus is eternal and immutable. (vs.11, 12)
8. Jesus has the highest place of honor. (vs.13, 14)

And now Paul says, "Therefore." Because Jesus is better than the prophets and because he is better than the angels and because of his superiority to every living creature and because he has been raised up to a place of highest honor and because he is God himself who rules upon a heavenly throne, "Therefore . . ."

You see, there is a natural duty that falls on us by virtue of the excellence of Jesus. If he is who he says he is and if he is who the writer of Hebrews says he is and if he is who God the Father says he is, then, we are under the most compelling obligation to honor him, to obey him and to love him. And this is the subject of the next few verses.

Now we are about to change gears here in Hebrews. Chapter one sets forth essentially the Deity of Jesus. He is better because He is God. And by the authority of a declaration by the Father himself, Jesus is God. (1:8).

But now, beginning in chapter 2:5, the writer will establish the humanity of Jesus. Look at Hebrews 2:9.

*But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death.*

And in verse 10, Jesus was made perfect through sufferings.

You see, suffering is the nature of fallen man, not of the eternal God. And when Jesus suffers, then it demonstrates him in his humanity.

In verse 14 Jesus is a partaker of flesh and blood and this shows his

humanity.

In verse 16, we see that Jesus was not made an angel, but he was made a human being.

In verse 17, we see that,

*It behooved him to be made like unto his brethren.*

So, the writer of Hebrews first demonstrated the divinity of Jesus in chapter one and now he demonstrates the humanity of Jesus in chapter two.

But there is a little parenthesis here in the first four verses of chapter two. Before the writer moves on to look at Jesus' humanity, he pauses to exhort us based on his deity.

This little parenthesis shows the heart of a pastor. He is not just concerned with the cold, hard facts of theology. But when he has laid out the elements of theology, he then asks the people to order their lives thereby.

What good is it if we instruct the people in the doctrine of the theanthropic man Jesus if we don't then encourage the people to behave according to the truth of that doctrine.

And this is what the writer does starting in chapter two, verse one. After instruction on the excellencies of Jesus and on the deity of Jesus in chapter one, and before he moves on to instruction regarding his humanity in chapter two, he says, "Therefore, we ought . . ."

You see, here is what we ought to do since Jesus is the Almighty God.

So, let's look at this exhortation which is given us starting in chapter 2, verse one.

## The necessity of giving heed to Jesus

Paul says that we ought to give more earnest heed to the things which we have heard. Now the things which we have heard are the things of the gospel. Forgiveness of sins by Jesus Christ.

And it says, “We ought to give more earnest heed.”

This word ought almost sounds like we have an option. We ought to do it, but it is not absolutely necessary. But, this word really carries with it a very strong and emphatic tone. The word is translated “must” in other places. (1 Tim.3:2 – A bishop must be blameless)

Obedying the words and commands of Jesus are not optional. They are mandatory. It is not a matter of convenience it is a matter of necessity. His words are to be followed even under great inconvenience. His words are not to be merely considered as though we weigh them against our better judgment. But, the words of Jesus are the final authority. There is no better judgment than the judgment of Jesus. His words and his precepts are absolute truth and we are under an absolute responsibility to obey them. And so, it says, “We ought.”

## Our responsibility is to give heed to the gospel of Jesus

To give heed is to apply the mind to a particular subject, to give it great consideration. Now when it comes to the Scriptures, we are not considering it to evaluate whether it is true or false. That is the most wonderful thing about the Scriptures. The truth of the Scriptures is measured by the One who spoke it. And in these last days, God hath spoken through his Son. And this Son is God himself who has all knowledge and who cannot lie. And therefore, we have a sure word of prophecy. We have the words of God himself.

But it is our responsibility to consider these things. We are to think upon them. We are to keep God’s Word in our minds and in our hearts and on our lips. Paul says,

*Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard.*

Now our ultimate duty toward God’s Word is to believe it. There is great stress laid in the Scriptures on believing the Word. God has done all the work. He has created truth. He has recorded truth by inspiration of the Scriptures. And he has graciously and wonderfully preserved it through the

ages and given it to us. And it is our great duty to give heed to it and to believe it.

Now believing the gospel is how the gospel becomes efficacious to us. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

But before the gospel can be believed, there must be some understanding. To be saved you must believe something. You don't just believe the Bible in general, but you believe the truth contained in the Bible and sometimes it is hard to understand.

You will remember that Philip came across a man from Ethiopia who was sitting in his chariot reading from the book of Isaiah. And Philip came up to him and asked him if he understood what he was reading. And the man said,

*How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? For his life is taken from the earth.*

*And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? Of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus.*

Acts 8:31-35

Now this man believed the Scriptures. But he couldn't understand them. So, Philip preached to him in such a way that he could understand. And the man was saved and baptized.

Now the point I am making is that faith is the ultimate goal, but in order to get to saving faith, there must be understanding otherwise, your faith is in nothing.

And in order to get understanding, there must be attendance to the Word of God. You see, the Ethiopian was giving heed to the Word of God. He opened the Scriptures and he read it. Then, Philip came along and gave him understanding. Then, he believed and was saved.

Do you see how important it is to give heed to the Word of God? The Ethiopian could just have easily been reading the Jerusalem Times or some pagan magazine. Or he could have been asleep in his chariot. But, he was giving heed to the Scriptures. And it led to his salvation.

And Paul says,

*Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard.*

Our first duty is to give heed to the gospel of Christ. We must attend to it with great frequency and with great diligence. This is the duty of the entire congregation – to give heed to the Scriptures. We should be more interested in the Scriptures than the daily newspaper. We should be more gravely concerned with God's Word than the evening newscast. Paul says,

*Therefore, we ought to give more earnest heed.*

Now, your business as a congregation is to give more earnest heed to the gospel and to Word of God. And it is my principle duty as a pastor to give more earnest heed. I must attend to it on a regular and daily basis. And if we all give more earnest heed, then we are obeying the Scriptures and we are on our way to having a healthy church.

### The Seriousness of Giving Heed to Jesus and His Word

Now, please note the seriousness of this matter. Giving heed to the Word of God is the most serious of all matters. It is life or death. And because of the seriousness of the matter, note that Paul says give more earnest heed. The Word of God is not something to which we merely give a casual nod. We don't treat it lightly. We treat it with earnest seriousness. Therefore, Paul says, "We ought to give the more earnest heed."

It is a most serious matter to fail to give earnest heed to the Scriptures, because to neglect the Word of God is to risk a foothold at the gates of heaven.

You know, to be saved and to have a secure destiny in heaven, the Bible says that we must hold onto Christ 'til the end. It is not good enough to lay onto Him for a moment, or for a few days. But he that abideth to the end shall be saved.

Let me show you some verses that require continuance to the end.

**Hebrews 3:14**, "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end."

**Hebrews 3:6**, "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

Jesus Himself said in **John 15:6**, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

**John 8:31**, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

In the verses above, Jesus didn't tell them, "Now that you have come forward and professed belief in me, ye are my disciples." No. He said, "If ye CONTINUE in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed."

**2 John 1:9**, "Whosoever transgresseth, **and abideth not** in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

**Romans 11:22**, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."

And this is the instruction in Hebrews 2:1.

*Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.*

We cannot let them slip. We cannot slip away from the Word of God. To do so is to slip away from Christ.

You see, this doctrine is called, "The perseverance of the saints." All true Christians will persevere to the end. If we stop giving earnest heed to Christ and his Word, then Paul says we are slipping away from our only hope.

Note: There is a difference between the perseverance of the saints and God's preservation of the saints. We know that God preserves the faith of all true saints. He keeps them by his power. (Jude 24) And all those whom God keeps, persevere. Those who are mere professing Christians, will fall away because they are not God's elect, they are not kept by God and so they will not persevere.

Now, notice that Paul is not simply suggesting that slipping away is simply falling away from the truth as though the only problem is that we are failing to lay hold of understanding. But, we are slipping away from salvation itself. Look at verse three.

*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation.*

How important is it to give more earnest heed to the gospel of Christ? It is eternal life or death that is at stake. For if you fail to give earnest heed to the Scriptures then you will begin to slip. The things of God will slip out of your mind and the things more suitable to your old nature will replace them. And your hold on Christ will begin to weaken and your grip on Him will loosen and you will soon let go. And then,

*How shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation.*

There are reasons why we should give more earnest heed to the gospel of Christ.

1. Because of the glory and majesty of the author of the gospel (Jesus).

Were there no other reason, it would behoove us to give heed to the gospel of Christ. If an earthly king utters a decree, then we should give attention to it because he is the king.

And Jesus is the heavenly and eternal King. Therefore, give heed.

2. Because Christianity is final.

God hath spoken in these last days by His Son. There shall be no other words. There shall be no other way under heaven whereby men must be saved. It is Jesus for you or nothing. There are no other gods. There is no other religion. There is no other way but by Jesus. And therefore, we must give heed.

We should give heed to the gospel

3. Because the gospel is infinitely precious.

What other religion simply says, "Come unto me all ye who labor and who are heavy laden and I will give you rest?" (Matthew 11:28)

What other religion says, "Ho, every one who thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye?" (Isaiah 55:1)

What other religion tells the adulteress, "Neither do I condemn thee?"

What other religion saves by sheer grace, by faith alone?

The gospel of Jesus Christ is the most beautiful and precious message in all the world. And therefore, "we ought to give the more earnest heed."

We should give heed to the gospel

4. Because there is terrible torture awaiting those who let the gospel slip away.

If one fails to give heed to the gospel, then he falls under the condemnation of the law. There is only one escape from wrath of God under the law, and that is the free gospel of Christ. When a man slips away from the gospel, he lets loose of the only way out from under the condemnation of the law. This is the idea of Hebrews 2:2.

*For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast.*

This is the law. (Acts 7:53)

God spoke the law, but he spoke it in some way through the ministry of angels.

And this law of God was stedfast. That is, the law is immovable. It is the requirement of God that never goes away. It always hangs over the heads of fallen men like a guillotine over the head of a condemned man. And the blade is ready to fall at any time. And under the law, every

transgression is justly rewarded.

*And every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward.*

And therefore, we should give the more earnest heed to the gospel of Christ.

God says, "Here is my Word. In them is life. Give them heed. Give them earnest heed. Give them more earnest heed.