

Hebrews: A Bridge from the Old to the New

Hebrews – Chapter 6

Jesus Christ: Superior to Aaron (cont)

Heed God's Principles, Fully Commit to Christ: Warning against Deteriorating (5:11-6:20)

1-2 “Therefore” indicates a transition from the prior verses of Christian maturity leading to obedience ^{Hebrews 5}.

The word “leave” does not mean forget, but to use the basics of Christianity as a foundation for moving on to a deeper faith ^{Philippians 3:12-14}. The “elementary teachings” refer to OT principles about salvation, with seven listed here:

1. growing to “maturity” (‘faith that leads to obedience’) ^{Hebrews 11},
2. “repentance from acts that lead to death” (evil deeds) ^{Ezekiel 18:4, Romans 6:23},
3. “faith in God” (the Father) ^{2 Chronicles 20:20b},
4. ceremonial washings (mistranslated “baptisms”) ^{Exodus 30:18-21, Leviticus 16:3-4, 23-28, Mark 7:1-4},
5. “laying on of hands” (person would touch their offering before it was sacrificed ^{Leviticus 1:4(1-9), 3:1-2, 6-8}),
6. “resurrection of the dead” (the Pharisees believed, but the Sadducees did not ^{Acts 23:6-8}) and
7. “eternal judgement” ^{Jeremiah 10:15, Amos 7:4}.

3 The author identified himself with the readers and recognized his helplessness without God ^{Acts 18:18-21}.

4-6 In addition to the seven elementary teachings from the OT ^{v.1-2}, the author listed five NT benefits his readers had gained; however, they were still insufficient for salvation ^{1 Peter 2:2-3(1-3)}:

1. being “enlightened” (hearing about the Gospel message) ^{John 1:9, 2 Corinthians 4:4(1-6)},
2. tasting “the heavenly gift” (experiencing the goodness of God) ^{Matthew 5:45b, John 4:7-10},
3. sharing “in the Holy Spirit” (seeing the Holy Spirit’s ministry in the early church) ^{John 16:5-11, Hebrews 2:4},
4. tasting “the goodness of the word of God” (‘hearing’ God’s Word) ^{Psalms 34:8, John 6:60-66} and
5. tasting “the powers of the coming age” (they saw God’s power, yet resisted it ^{Hebrews 3:15-19}) ^{Mark 14:60-62}.

This is the only place in the NT the Greek term for “fall away” was used, because it referred to the Jew’s knowledge of, yet rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. This apostasy by the Jews was done in spite of full awareness and conscious experience, which resulted in no hope of restoration or forgiveness ^{2 Peter 2:17-22}, because their actions stated that Jesus deserved to be crucified multiple times ^{Romans 6:10, Hebrews 7:27, 1 Peter 3:18}.

These three verses have been used to promote the belief that salvation can be lost, but the context supports the passage as speaking of Jews who had head knowledge of God and Jesus, but had not trusted in the finished work of Jesus on the cross ^{John 19:30}.

- 7-8** These verses are a short parable illustrating the warning the author just wrote about ^{v.4-6, John 15:5-8}. The message ^{Matthew 13:18-23} speaks of people either being blessed for hearing the gospel and responding in faith ^{2 Timothy 2:6} or being cursed and judged for rejecting the message ^{Genesis 3:17-18(17-19), Isaiah 5:3-6}.
- 9** The writer may have been changing audiences, turning from a perspective of warning people with a ‘said’ faith, to a message of encouragement to true believers (“dear friends” ^{1 Corinthians 10:14, 1 Peter 2:11, 1 John 2:7}). The “things that accompany salvation” are works testifying to their salvation ^{Ephesians 2:8-10, James 2:17(14-18)}.
- 10** God is a good, loving God, always remembering what is done in service for His “people” (better translated “saints”, referring to all true Christians ^{Acts 9:13, Romans 1:7, 15:25}) ^{Proverbs 19:17, Matthew 25:34-40, 1 Thessalonians 1:3}.
- 11-12** The readers were encouraged to imitate genuine saints ^{2 Thessalonians 1:3-4, Hebrews 13:7} in order to make their hope (inheritance ^{Ephesians 1:13-14, Hebrews 10:35-36}) “sure” by maintaining ^{Colossians 2:2-3, Hebrews 3:6, 2 Peter 1:10-11}.

The Certainty of God’s Promise (Verses 13-20)

- 13-15** The author wrote about Abraham, who was a model of faith ^{Romans 4} in response to God’s call ^{Genesis 12:1-4} and promises ^{Genesis 17:1-2, 18:10}. The text refers to (with a quote from ^{v.14, Genesis 22:17}) the Angel of the LORD (Jesus), who swore by himself a reaffirmation of His promises after Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son, Isaac ^{Genesis 22:15-19}. Abraham was rewarded with his son, because of his patient faith ^{Genesis 12:4, 21:5}.
- 16** There is no one greater than God, so His word needs no endorsement. Conversely, people confirm oaths by appealing to the LORD ^{Exodus 22:10-11}, but Jesus reminded Christians their word is their bond ^{Matthew 5:37(34-37)}.
- 17** God wants man to know His unchanging promise ^{Psalms 110:4} to Abraham (confirmed by an oath ^{Genesis 22:16}), which was also a promise to us (heirs of the promise ^{Galatians 3:29}) and ultimately fulfilled in Jesus Christ.
- 18** The “unchangeable things” mentioned by the author are God’s promises and oath ^{Numbers 23:19}. The phrase “fled to take hold of the hope” referred to a Jew who would take flight to a city of refuge after an accidental killing ^{Numbers 35:9-34}. “Hope” is an assurance from God of His salvation promises ^{Romans 15:4, Colossians 1:3-6}.
- 19-20** Our “hope” is “firm and secure” because it is embodied in Christ ^{Romans 5:1-5, 1 Timothy 1:1, 1 Peter 1:3-5}, who resides with the Father (for Jews, in the “inner sanctuary” ^{Leviticus 16:2}, for Christians, in heaven ^{Hebrews 8:1}). As the eternal high priest, Jesus is representing true believers in the presence of The Father ^{Hebrews 9:24}.

Genesis 3:17-18 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

Leviticus 1:4 He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him.

Leviticus 16:3-4 This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on.

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind.

2 Chronicles 20:20b Have faith in the LORD your God and you will be upheld...

Psalms 34:8 Taste and see that the LORD is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Proverbs 19:17 He who is kind to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will reward him for what was done.

Jeremiah 10:15 They are worthless, objects of mockery; when their judgment comes, they will perish.

Ezekiel 18:4b The soul who sins is the one who will die.

Matthew 5:37 ...let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Matthew 5:45b He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

John 19:30b Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Romans 15:4 For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

2 Corinthians 4:4 The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Galatians 3:29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Hebrews 2:4 God also testified to it by signs, wonders and various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.

Hebrews 3:6b And we are [Christ's] house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

Hebrews 7:27b [Jesus] sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

Hebrews 9:24 For Christ did not enter a man-made sanctuary that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence.

Hebrews 13:7 Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.

James 2:17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the LORD is good.

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price, ron@hopeinchristnm.com, 505-294-4743.