

An Exposition of Hebrews

Lesson 7 – Chapter 6:1-12 ³⁴⁰⁷

Hebrews Passage(s) NASU	Commentary & Analysis	Bible Interprets the Bible References
<p>Contextual Transition: The word “<i>Therefore</i>” implies that the conversation proceeds directly from the prior arguments.</p>		
<p>The Peril of Not Progressing: To not grow in the knowledge of God and His mighty works of mercy and wrath, is to be in serious error, is to remain as a child in the faith, to be one who sinfully presumes on a relationship with God with no content, no contact, no knowledge, no relationship.</p>		
<p>6:1-2 <i>Therefore leaving <u>the elementary teaching</u> about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ²of <u>instruction</u> about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.</i> A list of 6 elementary OT topics relevant to these Hebrews from their Jewish faith:</p>	<p>Here the author is confronting these Hebrew readers about the elementary nature of their knowledge about God and His redemptive plan are entirely not that which matures a person in the faith. They may be essential and foundational, but there is more!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foundation of Repentance from dead works: Man has no good works that can add merit to God’s mercy. Man in his depravity is without any hope in himself. 2. Faith toward God: Any merit that man can attain is entirely through God’s provision of a holy and righteous sacrifice in the Man Jesus, the Christ. 3. About washings: <i>baptismos</i> (Str. 909) 4x; meaning 2x in NT refers to ceremonial washings (see Mk 7:4 & Heb 9:10, unlike <i>baptizo</i> (Str. 907) 77x which literally meaning to put or to go under water. <i>Baptizo</i> is the Greek word used throughout the NT referring to Christian Baptism. 4. Laying on of hands: Under the Old Covenant a person bringing a sacrifice to the Levitical priests was required to lay his own hands on the animal to be sacrificed as a way of self-identifying with the sacrificial animal. <u>Lev 1:1-9</u> Further study: Lev 3:1-5; Lev 3:6-11; Lev 3:12-17 5. Resurrection of the dead: “The Old Testament doctrine of resurrection is not clear or complete. We learn of life after death and of rewards for the good and punishment for the wicked – and not much more about the resurrection than this. John MacArthur’s Commentary on Hebrews; p. 140. 6. Eternal judgment: The OT is also very limited in what it reveals about eternal judgment. No much more is given than is found in Eccl 12:14 <i>For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil.</i> The NT goes much further in its descriptions of God’s eternal judgment. <p>Here the implication is that previous to this point the author has been presenting <i>elementary teachings</i> about the man Jesus, as the Christ. It is now time to <i>press on</i>. There is more, much more! The author is now going on to solid food, to meat!</p>	
<p>6:3 <i>And this we will do, if God permits.</i></p>	<p>Here we see the author’s declaration that in this book of Hebrews, we will leave the elementary teachings, and move on to the truth of doctrines that bring about spiritual maturity.</p>	<p>2 Cor 3:4-5 <i>Such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.</i></p>
<p>6:4-5 <i>For in the case of those who have once been <u>enlightened</u> and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made <u>partakers</u> of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the</i></p>	<p>The Hebrews as a people/nation of God had insight opportunities that Gentiles did not have. They were at that time and are now:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Had been <u>enlightened</u>. They were given Biblical truth in the OT. The LXX uses the Greek word <i>photizo</i> meaning to give light by knowledge or teaching. 2. Had tasted the heavenly gift. They were given God’s direct revelation in the incarnation of their own Messiah. He came to redeem the Israelites. 3. Have been made <u>partakers</u> of the Holy Spirit. μετοχους (Str. 3353) 6x to do with association, not possession. They had witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit as clear historical record within their own patriarchs, judges, kings, prophets and even lay people. 	

<p><u>good word of God and the powers of the age to come,</u></p>	<p>4. Had tasted the <u>Word of God.</u> <u>ῥημα</u> rhema (4487) 68x versus λογος 330x logos. “Whereas <u>logos</u> often designates the Christian proclamation as a whole, <u>rhema</u> usually relates to individual words and utterances.” From MCED; p. 803. The Hebrews had tasted/sampled God’s words, but had not yet consumed them. Jer 15:16 <i>Your words were found and I ate them, and Your words became for me a joy and the delight of my heart; for I have been called by Your name, O LORD God of hosts.</i></p> <p>5. Had tasted the powers of the age to come. Either by first hand knowledge or by reliable testimony, these Hebrews knew of the miracles by Jesus and His apostles. They had been curious and even astounded, but they tasted only, they did not change their inner man in response to God’s incredible displays of power!</p>	
<p>6:6 <i>and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.</i></p>	<p>4th Warning: Those Hebrews who had the advantage of knowledge and insight from God and yet have rejected God’s own Son, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. This is a severe warning, but we will come to the open invitation in verse 9-12.</p>	<p>Heb 10:26-31 - - ²⁹<i>How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? - - -</i></p>
<p>6:7-8 <i>For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.</i></p>	<p>Here we have a metaphorical comparison of the spiritual truth as compared to a commonly experienced unjust situation experienced by men. This metaphorical comparison helps them to understand the disappointment and wrath of God in the Hebrews who have been showered by spiritual privileges, yet largely remain unthankful and unproductive in service to God’s sovereign plan of redemption.</p>	
<p>A Better Estimate: Here we see the author of Hebrews now offering his <u>beloved</u> brethren the gospel presentation of salvation in the name of Jesus the Christ. Clearly, this passage above does not allow the interpretation that it claims that Christians can lose their salvation. It was written to the unsaved Hebrews to whom the author now offers this salvation that they never conceived of before.</p>		
<p>6:9 <i>But, <u>beloved</u>, we are convinced of <u>better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.</u></i></p>	<p>Here we see a distinct transition of intended audience. Previously the author was talking to the skeptics and seekers amongst these Hebrew people. Here the use of “<u>beloved</u>” is based on the root of <u>agape</u> a love of committed decision. “In secular Greek especially before the time of Christ, it was a colorless word without any great depth of meaning, - - - If it had any nuance, it was the idea of love for the sake of its object. Perhaps because of its neutrality of meaning and perhaps because of this slight nuance of meaning, the biblical writers picked <u>agapao</u> to describe many forms of human love and, most importantly, God’s undeserved love for the unlovely. In other words, its meaning comes not from the Greek but from the biblical understanding of God’s love.” Mounce’s Complete Expository Dictionary; p. 427</p>	
<p>Here the author is primarily speaking to the Hebrew saints, but in fact he is also reaching out to the Hebrew seekers and skeptics, offering them a genuine “General Call” unto salvation from the Church.</p> <p>This author of Hebrews does not pick and choose to whom the “General Call” of the gospel goes out to, nor should we!</p>		
<p>6:10 <i>For God is not unjust so as to forget your <u>work</u> and the <u>love</u> which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints.</i></p>	<p>The act of serving (<u>work</u>) in the church by these Hebrew saints is here commended.</p> <p>The <u>love</u> (<u>αγαπης</u> (Str. 26)) that these saints have shown toward Christ’s name through their work of ministry to these saints. See note on 6:9 above to see the type of love here being spoken of. (A love of decision to love that which is without merit, but of a committed decision to serve and care for.)</p>	<p>Heb 10:23-24 <i>Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, - - -</i></p>

<p>6:11 <i>And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence <u>so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end.</u></i></p>	<p>The author here is calling some of these Hebrews out to seek the Lord with diligence (seriousness and continuation) in order <u>to achieve the full assurance of hope</u> that the Hebrew saints already have in Christ and that this hope will continue through all things unto the end of this age.</p>	<p>Heb 3:5-6 <i>Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over his house – whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.</i> Consider: <u>1 Jn 3:1-3</u> <u>Rom 5:1-5</u></p>
<p>6:12 <i>so that you will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.</i></p>	<p>Consider that sluggish here is the opposite of animated, excited action. When conviction about the need for redemption comes to an individual, his or her best bet is to immediately seek God's redemption.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God! • Do not presume on the Father's mercy! • Do not dis-respect the sacrificial work of Christ on the cross! 	<p>Heb 3:12-15 <i>Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ¹³But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. ¹⁴For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, ¹⁵while it is said, "TODAY IF YOU HEAR HIS VOICE, DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS, AS WHEN THEY PROVOKED ME."</i></p>

Summary/Conclusions/Comments: The circuitous path of the logic ends on the issue of Hope which is found in Christ alone!

1 Pet 1:3-9 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶In this you greatly rejoice, even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been distressed by various trials, ⁷so that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ⁸and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, ⁹obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls.*

Important Quote(s)

Over and over, we have witnessed the spectacle of people coming forward in a service to recommit their lives. They rededicate, rededicate, and rededicate their lives, and nothing ever changes. In essence, they are coming down to say, "God, I'm really serious this time. This time I'll do it if it kills me!" To them I say, "Don't worry. It will!" I know, because it killed me. We have simply not come to grips with the fact that it isn't hard to live the Christian life. It's impossible! Only Christ can live it. And that's why our only hope is to learn that Jesus Christ did not come just to get men out of hell and into heaven; He came to get Himself out of heaven and into men!

Bob George; from *Classic Christianity*; p. 52

To see, and know, and love, and be loved by, the Father and the Son, in company with the rest of God's vast family, is the whole essence of the Christian hope. As Richard Baxter put it in his poetical version of the covenant with God to which his wife-to-be "subscribed with a cheerful will" on April 10, 1660: "*My knowledge of that life is small; The eye of faith is dim; But it's enough that Christ knows all; And I shall be with Him.*" If you are a believer, and so an adopted child, this prospect satisfies you completely; if it does not strike you as satisfying, it would seem that as yet you are neither.

J. I. Packer; *Knowing God*; p. 218