

Part II, Week One: Warning Against Apostasy

Digging Deeper

Hebrews 6:1-12

The opening verses of Hebrews 6 have been known to frighten believers if they are misunderstood, but it need not be so. The author's purpose, in what will be an encouragement and a challenge, is clear: I want you to be mature!

With that in mind, we'll notice a few concerns the author has for his readers. The first is that he doesn't want them to stay stuck in their faith, but continue learning and growing in their understanding of Christ and his teachings. The basic things he describes as foundational (repentance and faith, baptism, resurrection and judgment) are indeed vital. But we don't stop with these key doctrines; we should have a desire to know all that God has for us in his Word.

The next few verses have caused disagreement for many years, even among those who love the Bible and teach it as true. Despite the difficulty of the passage, God wants us to learn from the Scriptures. We should note that the hearing of the Gospel, salvation itself, is a privilege, not a right, and we should be eternally grateful for the mercy we have received. Those who claim to have received the truth of the Gospel, yet act as if it means nothing, have probably not understood it to begin with.

We also should note from this warning that we never know when the end will come, so no one should take for granted that there will be another chance to believe in Christ for salvation.

Does this passage teach that unless we always obey perfectly, that we will lose our salvation? I don't think so. I believe the author has in mind those people who have heard the truth, and by their proximity to the Gospel and to believers have seen how wonderful God's salvation is. The people in view in these verses may have even claimed to be believers, but have now shown, by their words and actions, that they are not truly in Christ.

But that is not where the readers find themselves, according to v. 9, and I pray it is not where this verse finds you. If you find yourself in fear after reading these words, I encourage you to read some other passages like Romans 5, Romans 8:29-30, and John 6:39-40, 44. These reassuring words should comfort those who are truly in Christ.

But if you examine your heart and find that you do not really believe the Gospel, that you have been "playing church" but unwilling to commit your life to Christ, then I encourage you to take the author's words seriously. It is never too late to repent, and God loves to save sinners.

Written by Pastor Jason Hall

Bible Study Questions

Read Hebrews 6:1-6

1. Read v. 1-3: The author is issuing a warning and a call to maturity. What do you think the author means by, "...if God permits."?

Answer: This is a statement of faith that means there is no going forward in our faith unless God permits. It is a statement of complete trust in God for our spiritual maturity.

2. Respond to the following:

"This is a warning and a call for all of us to make progress in our faith. If we are not more knowledgeable in the faith now than a year ago, if we are not growing in holiness and commitment, we had better check what is going on inside. Even more, if we are sliding, losing our grasp on things that were once clear, caring less about god and holiness and the world, we had better drop everything and tend to our souls." - R. Kent Hughes

3. How can we make progress in our faith? What are steps we can take? Read 6:4-6

A key principle in biblical interpretation is that since God is the ultimate author of all the Bible there can be no inconsistency in scripture. This means when faced with a difficult passage we must interpret it in light of clearer ones.

4. Read John 10:28,29; John 6:36-40; Romans 8:38,39; Philippians 1:6

In light of these passages we hold to the perseverance of the saints and therefore need to interpret our passage accordingly. Andrew Murray has said, "...My assurance of salvation is alone to be found in the living fellowship with the living Jesus in love and obedience."

Group Application Question

1. In what ways does this week's passage change the way you live your life? Ask yourself the following questions:

"Am I becoming more mature in my faith and knowledge of God?"

"Am I growing in my faith and relationship to Jesus?"

Prayer

Read Psalm 119:49-56. Pray:

- That God would help us to remember his Word and to have hope in God.
- That we would be faithful to remind one another of God's Word in times of affliction.
- Thanks to God for giving us his words in the Bible.

*Overview was adapted from Richland Hills Community Church

*Questions were adapted from "Hebrews, An Anchor for the Soul" by Kent Hughes and "The NIV Application Commentary" by George H Guthrie.

