

THE STAND

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE HEBREWS CHAPTER 6



Chapter 6 Commentary

Chances are, you have completed Kindergarten, right? You know, the first stage of formal education. It's where you learned the alphabet, numbers and how to color in the lines. How exciting it was to move from Kindergarten to 1st Grade. What about the move from Jr. High to High School? The only thing that could top that would be High School graduation. But what if at High School graduation, instead of getting a diploma, everyone was told to go back to Kindergarten? It would seem ridiculous! Not only have these students completed Kindergarten, they've had 12 years to master the skills, why would they need to go back?

Salvation in Scripture



The full counsel of Scripture teaches that a true believer's salvation is secure and everlasting in Jesus Christ. Scripture points to this great unchangeable gift time and time again.

Paul says that God delivered Jesus up as a sacrifice for everyone (Romans 8:32) and whosoever believes in Him will not be condemned (John 5:24) or perish, but will have eternal life (John 3:16). John says that once we chose to follow Him and accept His salvation, nothing can snatch us away from the fold of Christ (John 10:28) and no sin we can commit that can separate us from Christ because He is able to save forever those who believe in Him (Hebrew 7:25). We see that Scripture strongly states that salvation is eternal, for all sin (even the sin of unbelief) and it is for everyone who believes.

Since all Scripture is inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16) and God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18) then we see a believers salvation is secure, complete and eternal.

As absurd as that scenario sounds, it is precisely what the writer of Hebrews claims this group of Jewish Christians were doing. These Jews had grown up hearing about the coming Messiah. They studied the Law and the Prophets and even chose to believe Jesus Christ had fulfilled history. Yet, they continued to teach and study the basics over and over again. They were stuck in a Kindergarten type faith, failing to move to what the writer calls "solid food" or "meat" (Hebrews 5:14).

Like many of us today, they thought they were on the right track. They believed that the message of repentance, baptism and resurrection were all advanced subjects, but the writer of Hebrews insists that these are the basics. He wanted this group of new believers to move forward, because he knew progressing in their faith would lead to more abundance. The message of Chapter 6 can be summarized like this: *Fully trust in your salvation and move on to maturity.* But taking these next steps towards maturity may have been scary for some of this first century audience. Just a few years before, everything in their relationship with God had to do with performance. Keeping the law and offering the right sacrifices had been imperative to hold a correct standing with God. But Christ fulfilled this old system and offered an ultimate sacrifice. In order to experience salvation, these Jews had to understand and believe that Christ was their ultimate sacrifice. They must believe that Jesus was better than their old way and the writer had a stern warning for the Jews who were attempting a hybrid type faith.

The warning of falling away in Chapter 6 has been a highly debated subject in Scripture throughout history. Let's take a look at this passage:

"It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace."

Hebrews 6:4-6 (NIV)

To interpret this warning correctly we must look closely at the writer's intended audience at this point in his message. At the beginning of the chapter, we clearly see the writer is addressing Holy Spirit indwelt believers. He is asking these people to stop reviewing the basics and "move on". The writer would never instruct a person that had not experienced the basics of salvation (repentance, baptism and hope of resurrection) to move on, so we can confirm the new Jewish believers were the intended audience. But there is a shift in the audience at verse 4. The author recognizes some people in the crowd do not possess the Holy Spirit, they have only professed some level of understanding of Jesus Christ. The writer is now addressing this second group of Jews, those that profess Christ, but do not possess the Holy Spirit. We can confirm the

writer is shifting his focus to this group because in verse 4 his language moves from “us” to “those”.

These professors had experienced the living testimony of the church, they had tasted and seen the results of living in community with Holy Spirit indwelt believers, but they still had not completely trusted in Christ. They had an intellectual knowledge of Christ, but were holding onto the Old Testament sacrificial system instead of trusting that Christ’s sacrifice was sufficient. They could not understand how one Man was better than their old sacrificial system.

The writer directs his warning towards these professors. If they continued to reject Christ’s sacrifice and fall back under the Jewish sacrificial system they would never experience salvation. This would be the most shameful thing these people could do to the name of Jesus. To have an intellectual belief in Christ and reject His sacrifice would be like re-crucifying Jesus all over again. The writer wanted to make it clear to these Jews that there is no salvation under the old sacrificial system.

They would never find salvation in a hybrid faith, but that’s exactly how some of these Jews were attempting to live. The writer makes it clear that you cannot believe in Christ and deny His sacrifice and still receive salvation. In order for the Holy Spirit to dwell in a person, he must have faith that Christ’s death is completely sufficient to restore his standing before the Father.

Many people believe verses 7-8 support the idea that a person can lose their salvation. However, on further study we see the writer is actually pointing out that a hybrid faith will never produce anything good. He uses the analogy of crops and thorns to show his point. Ground which receives the rain and produces good vegetation will yield a harvest that is useful to the community and is blessed by God. But ground which produces thorns and thistles is worthless and not blessed God; it will be destroyed. These professors of Christ may have been living in the community and attempting to contribute to the cause of Christ, but their works would never bless God or produce good fruit.

In verse 9, the writer turns his attention back to the true Christians in the audience. We can confirm this because his language changes again. He refers to them as beloved and includes himself by saying “we”. He takes time to encourage these true Christians. He wants to make sure they have not misunderstood his message of falling away. Their salvation is secure and the work they are doing for the Kingdom and in their community will never be forgotten by the Father. They are the ones producing good fruit and God is pleased with them. His desire is for them to continue their work with great diligence. Because of them, the message of Christ is being spread throughout their region.

The writer knows that it may be hard to move on to maturity, but it’s totally worth it. He reminds them of God’s faithfulness to Abraham. God made a promise long ago to Abraham that He would bless all the nations through Abraham and this audience is sharing in the fulfillment of God’s promise. We are reminded through the promise of Abraham that God is unchangeable. Just as Abraham had to wait years for God to fulfill His promise of a son, we will have to be patient and hold on to the assurance of Christ. Christ is our hope and salvation; nothing can ever change that. We must trust that God Himself is unchanging and our salvation is secure if we truly believe in Christ.



Personal Study Questions

The purpose of these study questions is to help you get into God's Word. We hope that through a personal encounter with God's Word, He will reveal His Truth and allow you to understand His story first hand.

1. In what ways are you still studying the ABC's of your faith?

2. What is the next step in your faith journey to move from "milk" to "meat"?

3. Why is the writer so upset that these "professors of Christ" would consider holding on to the Jewish sacrificial system?

4. What will happen if these professors continue to live a hybrid faith and do not put total trust in Jesus Christ as their sacrifice?

5. What are two attributes of God the writer mentions that allows us to take confidence in His promise?

