

LESSON 3A – WARNINGS

Various Texts On Warnings

1. 2:1 – 4 Pay careful attention.... so that we do not drift away
2. 3:1 – 4:16 Do not harden....no unbelieving heart among you... enter the Sabbath rest.
3. 5:11 – 6:6 Leave elementary teaching...Go on to maturity...
4. 10:19 – 39 Let us draw near...hold...consider...remember...don't throw away confidence...
5. 12:1 – 29 Let us run...don't grow weary or lose heart when disciplined...make level paths...etc.

- The Exhortations are not limited to these sections but they are heavily emphasized.
- We don't have time to study each one.
- We will consider big picture concluded from warnings and focus on one in particular.

Big Picture Observations

- **Appear to be a spectrum of possible issues within the congregation.**
 - Drifters...
 - Neglectors...
 - Diseased babies...
 - Fakers or Unbelievers in Sheep's clothing...
 - Loafers or walkers versus runners...
 - Unable to find repentance (so hard in unbelief they are doomed)...
- **Not clear the author really knows who has what issue so he seeks to address the whole range of issues.**
 - In a general sense, the antidote appears to be the same for all conditions.
 - Solution appears to at some level include exhortations and lifting up Christ.
 - To see the specific antidotes, we will have to study the whole book.
- **Appears there is a large number who are considering a return to Judaism.**
 - This is concluded by the intensely Jewish nature of the author's approach to the Sermon.
 - However, some have argued this is not necessarily needed...i.e. Gentiles can be tempted with Judaism as well especially when ROME is persecuting Christians and not Jews.

Read The Text

Hebrews 5:11-6:6

11 Concerning him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. 6 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings and

laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do, if God permits. 4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 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. NASB

Did He Just Say That?

- WOW ...
 - We need to avoid the giant canyon many have fallen into..."can you lose your salvation?"
 - We need to climb the steep wall of what he is really saying.

LESSON #3a

Hebrews 6:4-6 Avoiding the Canyon!



LESSON #3b

Hebrews 5:11-6:6 Climbing the Wall



When the text leads into a dense forest...

- Slow down
- Pray and seek counsel
- B&W Scripture should interpret Grey Scripture
- Consider all options.
- Seek counsel from theologians tested by time
- Pay extra close attention to context.
- Try to see where the interpretation leads in the big picture to determine if it leads astray.
- Don't be afraid of hard doctrinal work...it is your sinful flesh which wants you to take the easy path!
- Be wary of your attitude...are you repentant or holding on to sin?



Historical and Current Theologians Thoughts

- There has been much debate over the section in 6:4-6 dating back even to the early church.

- This heated debate has split denominations and theologians apart.
- Both sides make reasonably good arguments about whether the following terms are indicative of their salvation or not.
 - IS vs 4-5 a Description of Christian Experience?
 - Once been enlightened (**Heard and believed the Gospel** or **Heard and understood the Gospel**)
 - Tasted of the heavenly gift (**Fully received Justification** or **Temporarily exposed to conviction of the Holy Spirit**)
 - Partakers of the Holy Spirit (**Saving participation in the Holy Spirit** or **They were partakers of some of the benefits the Holy Spirit gives**)
 - Tasted the good word of God and powers of the age to come (**Experienced salvation** or **See the word of God is true and the healing power of the Holy Spirit...i.e. freed from demonic possession for example**)
- **If they are indicative of salvation**, then it is implying they can lose their salvation.
- **If they are not indicative of salvation**, then it is not saying you can lose your salvation...but is saying something altogether different.
- It would appear the scripture is grey with two different heavily supported interpretations.
- When confronted with grey scripture, we need to...
 - Let black and white (clear) scripture instruct our interpretation...from Hebrews and the rest of the Bible.
 - Pay extra close attention to the context in the chapter and the rest of the book.
 - Determine the end result of the interpretation...i.e. where does one interpretation lead vs another.

Arguments from the Bible

- Here are some passages which show that we MUST persevere to the end: Colossians 1:21-23; Matthew 24:13;

Colossians 1:21-23

21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, 22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach— 23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Matthew 24:13

13 "But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.

- And likewise here are passages which teach that true believers WILL persevere to the end: John 6:38-40; John 10:28-29; Romans 8:28-39; Philippians 1:4-6; Philippians 2:12-13; 1 John 2:19; Jude 1:24-25; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 2 Corinthians 1:22

John 10:28-29

and I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand. "My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand

John 6:39

"This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day

Romans 8:28-30

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. 29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren; 30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

- The Bible is clear that those saved by grace through faith will not lose their salvation. They will endure to the end.
- So if Hebrews teaches we can lose our salvation then it would directly contradict the rest of Scripture.
- We need to research the context further to see whether the author in Hebrews holds this view.

Arguments from the context

Hebrews 6:7-8 just following 4-6

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; 8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

- Analogy is incredibly clear
- Ground is the hearts of people
- Rain are the graces of the Holy Spirit ...healings, casting out demons, exposed to truth, etc.
- Good ground yields vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled
- Bad ground yields thorns and thistles and is worthless...close to being cursed...ends up being burned.
 - Note the ground is burned not just it's fruit.
- If the author thought you could be saved and lose your salvation then the analogy doesn't fit...i.e. the ground didn't bear fruit, then turn and lose fruit causing it to be burned.
 - The ground which is good (believing hearts) will yield vegetation.
 - The ground which is bad (unbelieving hearts) will yield thorns and thistles.
- ***Does this remind you of Matt 13:3-23?...parable of the sower***

Hebrews 6:9 just following 7-8

But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way.

- Only time the author calls them Beloved...he knows he has delivered harsh words...yet he loves them.
- Author is convinced of better things concerning the Hebrews...and things which accompany salvation.

- Clearly the author is saying salvation has things accompanying it which yields vegetation not thorns.
- He is really saying his concern is whether they are saved or not...but in the whole he believes they are saved...maybe not every single one of them but most of them.
- It would appear a warning about determining whether you are saved or not will tend to help the believer...it becomes a means by which the believer perseveres.

➤ Again, no indication the author believes you can be saved and lose your salvation...quite the contrary.

Hebrews 3:7-19

7 Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says, "Today if you hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as when they provoked Me, As in the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tried Me by testing Me, And saw My works for forty years. 10 "Therefore I was angry with this generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they did not know My ways'; 11 As I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" 12 Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. 13 But 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. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end, 15 while it is said, "Today if you hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked Me." 16 For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses? 17 And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

- Vs 12
 - Brethren...they are all professing so the author will treat them as such...knowing that they aren't all necessarily believers...but he doesn't know which ones are and which ones aren't.
 - Indicates evil unbelieving hearts fall away from the living God.
- Vs 14
 - For we have become (note verb tense) partakers (not professors) of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.
 - Here we see the author believes that if we continue to the end then we became (note tense) in the past believers.
- Vs 19
 - Indicates they were not able to enter the promised land due to unbelief.

Other Hebrews texts with similar conclusion

- 10:14 ...he is perfecting all those who are being sanctified.
- 10:39...not of those who shrink back... but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul
- 13:20-21 ...it does not depend on us but on God.
- See many more arguments in paper by Wayne Grudem, "Perseverance of the Saints: A case study from Hebrews 6:4-6"
- It is safe to say that this author does not believe nor is he teaching that you can lose your salvation...if you indeed are a believer!

Irony

- If we did say that we could lose our salvation, is this not the same thing as falling away from trusting in Christ's work alone?
- Is this not the same thing the author is telling us not to do?
 - He is saying to trust in Christ alone not the works of Judaism...do not fall away from the Grace of Christ to trust any other religious effort.
 - Unbelievers will fall away from trusting Christ but believers won't.
- We must be very careful what we teach ourselves in the inner most part of our hearts. Do we trust in Christ alone?

What should we conclude on 6:4-6?

- We cannot lose our salvation but what then is he saying?
- One of two conclusions
 1. The warning is just hypothetical
or
 2. The author believes they can have many things in common with believers and yet still be an unbeliever.
- Let's pick up here in Lesson 3B.
 - We will answer the above question and then look to see what this means to our interpretation of Hebrews 5:11-14

HEBREWS VIEW OF SALVATION / SANCTIFICATION / DISCIPLESHIP

