

STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

A Study of Hebrews 6:1-14

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Introduction – Review

- The apostle Paul is believed to be the author of the epistle to the Hebrews (**GC 347, 411, 413, 420-421**).
- Timothy was a close ministry associate of Paul, and is mentioned by name in the epistle (**Heb. 13:23**), similar to other epistles written by Paul (**2 Cor. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2; 1:18; 6:20-21; 2 Tim. 2:1; Philemon 1:1**).
- Produced prior to Jerusalem’s destruction in AD 70, this epistle was written to Jewish Christians, and might have also been used as an evangelistic tool to reach the Jewish people with the Gospel message.
- One of the central themes in the book of Hebrews is the “**Jesus is better than . . .**” theme; **Heb. 1:1-14** describes how Jesus is better than angelic beings; **Heb. 2:1-18** describes how Jesus is better than any human being; **Heb. 3:1-19** describes how Christ is better than Moses; He has built a better spiritual house (the church), and offers a better rest than the earthly OT Canaan – an eternal spiritual rest in heaven; **Heb. 4:1-16** describes how Christ offers a better rest, the rest of salvation, the rest of the weekly Sabbath, and a perpetual rest in the eternal kingdom of heaven; **Heb. 5:1-14** describes how Christ has a better priesthood – the order of Melchisedec (He is our High Priest and Savior who offers us salvation).

Hebrews 6 – Reflections on Hebrews 6:1-3

- Chapter 5 concluded with that apostle Paul stating to his fellow Hebrew Christians that they needed to be reminded of the basic fundamental principles of the Gospel message with respect to Jesus Christ.
- Given their insights into the Old Testament Hebrew economy and Bible history, Paul encouraged these believers to build on the basic principles of Christ and grow into spiritually mature (“perfect”) Christians.
- These basic Gospel principles include repentance, faith, baptism, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment; with God’s help, these Hebrew Christians could grow in the faith.

Hebrews 6 – Reflections on Hebrews 6:4-8

- Speaking of the gift of repentance as a basic principle of the Gospel message, Paul next spoke some challenging words for professed Christians who have been shown great light and insights from God.
- He stated that it is impossible for professed Christians who leave the faith to experience a renewal of repentance once again after having experienced (1) spiritual enlightenment, (2) the heavenly gift of salvation, (3) the gift of the Holy Spirit, and (4) the power of the Word of God.
- The apostle Paul is describing the commission of the unpardonable sin; this involves people falling away from the faith to the point where their heart is hardened beyond the possibility or desire to repent.
- God cannot save someone who refuses to repent; those who fall away from the faith to the point of committing the unpardonable sin have crucified Christ afresh and have put Him to open shame.
- People who belong to this category have not brought forth good spiritual fruit; rather, the bad spiritual fruit they have brought forth in their lives is worthy of rejection and destruction by God.

Hebrews 6 – Reflections on Hebrews 6:9-12

- Hebrew Christians had great insights into the Gospel message because of their deep background and understanding of the OT Hebrew sanctuary and its services.
- Paul encouraged them that he was confident of better things from them in terms of their spiritual growth, namely that they would be faithful and successful in matters of salvation and avoid the unpardonable sin.
- He reminded them God is not unjust, but rather He has promised to remember how these believers have loved and ministered to fellow believers faithfully.
- Paul also desired that they would not become sluggish in a spiritual sense, but that they would continue to be diligent and patient in the practice of the Christian faith for their entire live; he encouraged them to imitate the example of other faithful believers so that they can inherit the promise of eternal life.

Hebrews 6 – Reflections on Hebrews 6:13-20

- Paul also reminded Hebrew believers that God’s promises are sure; these promises are built on God’s eternal infallibility regarding His own unailing ability to fulfill His promises to the faithful.
- Citing one example, God swore by Himself to Abraham that He would multiply Abraham’s seed, and then faithfully fulfilled that promise; after patiently enduring some trials because of poor choices and a lack of faith at times, Abraham eventually saw the fulfillment of God’s promise through the birth of Isaac.
- Human beings swear an oath in God’s name because God is the greatest source of making an oath, and thus ends all dispute in terms of a legal surety; however, God can only swear by Himself, because there is no one greater than God; yet, His promises and counsel are immutable, confirmed in an oath by Christ.
- The two immutable things – God’s promises and God’s oath in Christ – are sure and thus guarantee that it is impossible for God to lie; this reality gives complete assurance to every believer, and thus encourages the faithful to firmly grasp a hold on the hope of Jesus Christ for eternal life.
- Christ is the spiritual anchor of our souls – sure and steadfast – who stands for us as our Minister in God’s presence behind the inner veil in the heavenly sanctuary; He is our High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek, the One chosen by God to be our Lamb, High Priest, and soon-coming King.
- Just as God blessed Abraham’s seed, so has God blessed the spiritual seed of Christ, which consists of every true and faithful believer who will inherit the unailing promise of eternal life.

Quotations on the Order of Melchisedec (See also outline on Hebrews 5:1-14)

- “The religion of those that crucified Christ was a pretense. The supposed holy vestments of the priests covered hearts that were full of corruption, malignity, and crime. They interpreted gain to be godliness. The priests were appointed, not by God, but by an unbelieving government. The position of priest was bought and sold like goods of merchandise. Thus it was that Caiaphas obtained the office. He was not a priest after the order of Melchisedec, by God’s appointment. He was bought and sold to work wickedness. He never knew what it was to be obedient to God.” (E.G. White, *Bible Commentary*, 5:1105)
- “The high priest was designed in an especial manner to represent Christ, who was to become a high priest forever after the order of Melchisedec This order of priesthood was not to pass to another, or be superseded by another.” (E.G. White, *Review and Herald*, Dec. 17, 1872, par. 12).
- “In eloquent strains they [the people on Palm Sunday] repeat the prophecies concerning Christ: Adam will tell you, It is the seed of the woman that shall bruise the serpent’s head . . . Ask Abraham, he will tell you, It is ‘Melchizedek King of Salem,’ King of Peace. Genesis 14:18.” (E.G. White, *Desire of Ages*, page 578)

Summary of Hebrews 6:1-20

- Our Christian walk should involve the process of continual growth; we should continue to grow beyond the basics of the Christian faith into a deep and mature spiritual experience with Christ.
- We should avoid committing the unpardonable sin, which consists of settling ourselves in an unrepentant and disobedient attitude; those who fall away from the faith and reflect this unforgivable attitude actually crucify Jesus Christ afresh and openly shame Him; we should avoid this sin at all costs.
- We should trust that all of God’s promises in Scripture are sure; God cannot lie – His counsel and oath to fulfill His promises are immutable; because He will see His all of His promises through, we should rest our faith on them, and trust that He will fulfill them in the perfect way and at the perfect time.
- Jesus Christ is the eternal symbol that God’s promises are sure (2 Cor. 1:20); Christ is our spiritual anchor in the heavenly sanctuary, sure and steadfast, our High Priest, chosen after the order of Melchizedek.
- Christ is not our High Priest after the Melchisedec order because of His biological pedigree (as with the Levites), but because of His sincere desire to glorify God as His mouthpiece and instrument of salvation.
- Consistent with the “**Jesus is better than . . .**” theme of the book of Hebrews, Jesus’ promises are better than any human promises; they are sure and steadfast, and can be claimed by every faithful believer;
- God will fulfill His promises in His perfect timing and perfect manner, just when we need Him most!