

Hebrews Chapter 6

Theme: Maturity, Apostasy, and the Certainty of God's Promise

Section 1: Pressing On to Maturity (Hebrews 6:1–3):

1 Therefore, let us leave the elementary teaching about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, faith in God,
2 teaching about ritual washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
3 And we will do this if God permits.

Greek Word Study:

- **ἀρχῆς (archēs)** – “beginning” or “elementary,” indicating foundational teachings.
- **τελειότητα (teleiōtēta)** – “maturity” or “perfection,” the goal of Christian growth.
- **νεκρῶν ἔργων (nekrōn ergōn)** – “dead works,” likely referring to legalistic or unspiritual actions not rooted in genuine faith.
- **βαπτισμῶν (baptismōn)** – “washings,” possibly ritual cleansings under Jewish law, not New Testament baptism.

Exegesis:

The author urges believers to move beyond foundational teachings toward maturity in Christ. The six foundational doctrines mentioned reflect early Christian catechism heavily influenced by Jewish context. The call is not to discard these, but to build upon them.

Historical/Theological Context:

The Jewish background of the audience made these topics (ritual washings, resurrection, etc.) familiar. However, the writer calls them to deeper Christ-centered understanding and maturity, moving beyond basic teachings into fully-formed discipleship.

Application:

Today’s Christians must not remain in a state of spiritual infancy but grow through study, discipleship, and obedience. Maturity is not optional—it’s essential for endurance.

Section 2: The Danger of Falling Away (Hebrews 6:4–8):

4 For it is impossible to renew to repentance those who were once enlightened, who tasted the heavenly gift, who shared in the Holy Spirit,
5 who tasted God’s good word and the powers of the coming age,
6 and who have fallen away. This is because, to their own harm, they are recrucifying the Son of God and holding him up to contempt.
7 For the ground that drinks the rain that often falls on it and produces vegetation useful to those for whom it is cultivated receives a blessing from God.
8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is worthless and about to be cursed, and at the end will be burned.

Greek Word Study:

- **φωτισθέντας (phōtisthentas)** – “enlightened,” likely referring to understanding the truth of the Gospel.
- **παραπεσόντας (parapesontas)** – “fallen away,” from παραπίπτω meaning “to fall beside” or “to apostatize.”
- **ἀνακαινίζειν (anakainizein)** – “to renew,” used here with ἀδύνατον (adynaton, “impossible”) indicating spiritual impossibility.
- **ἐμπαίζοντας (empaizontas)** – “mocking” or “subjecting to public shame.”

Exegesis:

This is one of the strongest warnings in the New Testament. The audience is warned that willful apostasy after experiencing the blessings of salvation is grave and irrevocable. The metaphor of cultivated land symbolizes lives either fruitful or cursed.

Theological Insights:

This passage does not describe temporary doubt but a decisive and permanent rejection of Christ after fully knowing Him. It reflects Numbers 14, where Israel refused to enter the Promised Land and faced judgment.

OT Connection:

Numbers 14:22-23

“None of the men who have seen my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness and have tested me these ten times and did not obey me will ever see the land I swore to give their ancestors.”

Application:

Believers must not toy with grace. The seriousness of rejecting Christ should move us to deep commitment and self-examination. Fruitfulness is the evidence of genuine salvation.

Section 3: Encouragement and God’s Faithfulness (Hebrews 6:9–12):

9 Even though we are speaking this way, dearly loved friends, in your case we are confident of things that are better and that pertain to salvation.

10 For God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you demonstrated for his name by serving the saints—and by continuing to serve them.

11 Now we desire each of you to demonstrate the same diligence for the full assurance of your hope until the end,

12 so that you won’t become lazy but will be imitators of those who inherit the promises through faith and perseverance.

Greek Word Study:

- **ἐνδείκνυσθαι (endeiknysthai)** – “to demonstrate” or “show,” implying an ongoing, visible faith.
- **σπουδῆν (spoudēn)** – “diligence” or “earnestness.”
- **μωροὶ (mōroi)** – “lazy” or “dull,” used also in Hebrews 5:11.

Exegesis:

The author expresses pastoral confidence in their readers, acknowledging their love and service. He encourages them to remain diligent and to imitate faithful believers who inherited God's promises through perseverance.

Application:

God values and remembers acts of faith and love. Christians are encouraged not to coast but to pursue Christ diligently, knowing their faith and service are not in vain.

Section 4: God's Oath and the Anchor of Hope (Hebrews 6:13–20)

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater to swear by, he swore by himself:
14 I will indeed bless you, and I will greatly multiply you.
15 And so, after waiting patiently, Abraham obtained the promise.
16 For people swear by something greater than themselves, and for them a confirming oath ends every dispute.
17 Because God wanted to show his unchangeable purpose even more clearly to the heirs of the promise, he guaranteed it with an oath,
18 so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us.
19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.
20 Jesus has entered there on our behalf as a forerunner, because he has become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Greek Word Study:

- **μεσίτης (mesitēs)** – “mediator,” describing Christ's role (cf. Heb. 8:6).
- **ἄγκυρα (ankyra)** – “anchor,” a powerful metaphor for stability and security.
- **πρόδρομος (prodromos)** – “forerunner,” indicating Christ went ahead of us into the Holy of Holies.

OT Connection:

Genesis 22:16–17

“By myself I have sworn,” this is the Lord's declaration: “Because you have done this thing and have not withheld your only son, I will indeed bless you and make your offspring as numerous as the stars of the sky and the sand on the seashore.”

Exegesis:

God swore by Himself to show the unchangeable nature of His promise to Abraham. Christians are heirs of that same promise. The imagery of Christ as our forerunner entering the inner sanctuary (the Holy of Holies) assures believers that our hope is anchored in heaven.

Application:

In a world of uncertainty, God's promises are unchangeable. Jesus has secured our access to God. Our hope is not wishful thinking—it is an unshakeable anchor for our soul.

Summary and Group Discussion Questions:

Main Themes:

- The call to spiritual maturity.
- The severe warning against apostasy.
- The faithfulness and certainty of God's promise.
- Christ as the forerunner and High Priest.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways Christians today can pursue deeper spiritual maturity?
2. How should the warning against apostasy affect how we minister to others and examine our own faith?
3. What does the metaphor of an "anchor for the soul" mean for you personally?
4. How can you rest more fully in the unchangeable promise of God this week?