

Hebrews Part One

Lesson #24, Chapter 6:7-12

1. This lesson continues where we left off last week. Verses 7 and 8 illustrate the spiritual truths the author of Hebrews had explained about those who go apostate. We didn't use the term *apostate* last week, but it is the right word to use to describe the people who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ after enjoying the benefits of the preaching, teaching, and fellowship of the church. According to vss. 4-6, describe what these people experienced prior to their falling away.

2. Now explain the consequences that await those who knowingly turn their back on the free gift of God (vs. 6).

3. What is the illustration that the author of Hebrews uses to further explain this truth? See vss. 7 and 8.
 - a. How is the ground in the illustration like those who fall away?

 - b. What does rain do according to the example (vs. 7)? How is the rain like the blessings of preaching and Christian fellowship?

 - c. What is the intended purpose of rain in vs. 7?

 - d. What happens if that ground which has received the blessing of rain does not produce "good fruit" (vs. 8)?

- e. How is that a picture of those who reject the gospel of Christ? See James 5:19-20; 1 Pet. 2:7-8; 2 Pet. 3:16.

I am committed to the biblical truth that salvation is forever. Contemporary Christians have come to refer to this as the doctrine of eternal security. Perhaps the Reformers' terminology is more appropriate; they spoke of the perseverance of the saints. The point is not that God guarantees heaven to everyone who professes faith in Christ, but rather that those whose faith is genuine will never totally or finally fall away from Christ. They will persevere in grace unto the very end. Even if they fall into grievous sins or continue in sin for a time, they will never abandon the faith completely. ...True believers will persevere. Professing Christians who turn against the Lord only prove that they were never truly saved. As the apostle John wrote, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, in order that it might be shown that they all are not of us" (1 John 2:19). No matter how convincing a person's testimony might seem, once that person becomes apostate, he or she demonstrates irrefutably that the testimony was hypocritical and the professed salvation was spurious. God will keep His own. He "is able to keep [them] from stumbling, and to make [them] stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy" (Jude 24).¹

4. In vs. 9 the author shifts his focus from those who have fallen away, back to what group?
5. What is he convinced of according to vs. 9?
6. What are the "better things" that he refers to? "Better things" than what?

¹ John MacArthur, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, electronic ed., (Grand Rapids, MI: Academic and Professional Books, Zondervan Publishing House, 1997, c1988).

7. Why would the statement, *Beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation*, be an encouragement for the persevering saints who heard this letter read to them?

8. What do we know about the brethren the author of Hebrews now directs his comments to? See vs. 10. He addresses this same group in 5:12-14 and 6:1-2. What do you learn about them from those verses?

9. Why would it be unjust of God to forget their faithfulness in ministering to others? See Ps. 37:28; 111:7; Prov. 2:7-8.

10. How can verse 10 be an encouragement for you when you are apt to be discouraged because no one seems to notice your service?

11. What key words from vs. 10 describe what we do for each other?

12. Define *minister* [Strong's #1247 (ESV *serve*; NIV *help*)].

13. What are some ways to minister to the saints?

14. What are each one of us supposed to do according to vs. 11?

15. What is the result of doing this thing from verse 11? How would being faithful accomplish this? See vss. 10, 12; 2 Pet. 1:10-11.

16. When are we supposed to have hope according to vs. 11? What is our hope to be in? See Gal. 5:5; Col. 1:5, 23; Heb. 6:18-19; 1 Pet. 1:3-5, 21; 1 Jn. 3:1-3.

17. Two other desires for our faithfulness in ministry are stated in vs. 12. What are they?

18. Define *sluggish* [Strong's #3576 (NIV *lazy*)].

19. According to vss. 10-12 what are the life qualities of the kind of person we are to imitate?

20. Peter says in 2 Peter 1:8, "If these qualities are yours and are increasing" as a way to get us to consider our lives. What does that phrase say about you? See Heb. 6:11-12 and 2 Pet. 1:8-11.

What a love the author of Hebrews had for his readers! In order to protect and bolster their faith so the false teachers wouldn't sway them, he painstakingly presented Jesus Christ to them. He was concerned about their spiritual immaturity since they had been given ample time and opportunity for them to grow strong in the Lord. Challenging them with greater spiritual truths seemed to be the answer, which he immediately began to do. He tackled the problem of those who had gone apostate in the faith and clearly explained the consequences of such unbelief. But, fearing that his readers may identify themselves with the apostates, he encouraged them in the faith and urged them to persevere and excel in their service to the saints. May we heed the counsel and commands of this chapter, so that "we may realize the full assurance of hope until the end."