

# Jesus, the Anchor of the Soul



Week Seven

## inTro



Read This Week's Passage:  
Hebrews 5:11–6:20

### WARNING!

Hebrews 5:11–6:20 interrupts the theological exposition about Jesus' priesthood in our behalf. Paul inserts there a severe warning about the danger of falling away from Christ.

Apparently, the people were in real danger of going down the slippery slope of self-pity and faithlessness. The apostle Paul is concerned that his readers and hearers may have had their spiritual senses dulled because of the difficult situations they were facing, and thus they had stopped growing in their understanding and experience of the gospel.

Isn't this a potential danger for us all, getting discouraged because of trials and thus falling away?

The severe warning culminates, however, in an affectionate encouragement. Paul expresses faith in his readers and exalts Jesus as the embodiment of God's unbreakable promise of salvation to them (Heb. 6:9–20). This cycle of warning and encouragement is repeated in Hebrews 10:26–39. We will study this cycle and focus on the strong words of encouragement that Jesus provides for us.



## **inScribe**

Write out Hebrews 5:11–6:20 from the Bible translation of your choice. If you're pressed for time, write out Hebrews 6:9–12, 19, 20. You may also rewrite the passage in your own words, or outline or mind-map the chapter.

## inGest



Go back to your scribed text and study the passage.

**Circle** repeated words/phrases/ideas

**Underline** words/phrases that are important and have meaning to you



Draw **Arrows** to connect words/phrases to other associated or related words/phrases

What special insights do your marks seem overall to point to?



Memorize your favorite verse in Hebrews 5:11–6:20. Write it out multiple times to help with memorization.

What does it mean to die to “self,” to take up the “cross”?



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## DANGER OF FALLING AWAY

In Hebrews 6:4–5, to have been “enlightened” means to have experienced conversion (Heb. 10:32). It refers to those who have turned from the “darkness” of the power of Satan to the “light” of God (Acts 26:17, 18). It implies deliverance from sin (Eph. 5:11) and ignorance (1 Thess. 5:4, 5). The verbal form here suggests that this enlightening is an act of God achieved through Jesus, “the brightness of His glory” (Heb. 1:3, NKJV).

To “have tasted the heavenly gift” and to “have become partakers of the Holy Spirit” (NKJV) are synonymous expressions. The “gift” of God may refer to His grace (Rom. 5:15) or to the Holy Spirit, through which God imparts that grace (Acts 2:38). Those who have “tasted” the Holy Spirit have experienced the “grace” of God, which includes the power to fulfill His will.

To taste “the goodness of the word of God” (Heb. 6:5, ESV) is to experience personally the truth of the gospel (1 Pet. 2:2, 3). “The powers of the age to come” refers to the miracles God will perform for believers in the future: resurrection (John 5:28, 29), transformation of our bodies, and eternal life. Believers, however, are beginning to “taste” these miracles in the present. They have experienced a spiritual resurrection (Col. 2:12, 13), a renewed mind (Rom. 12:2), and eternal life in Christ (John 5:24).

Paul probably has in mind the wilderness generation, who experienced the grace of God and His salvation. The wilderness generation was “enlightened” by the pillar of fire (Neh. 9:12, 19; Ps. 105:39), enjoyed the heavenly gift of manna (Exod. 16:15), experienced the Holy Spirit (Neh. 9:20), tasted the good word of God (Josh. 21:45), and saw “the powers of the age to come” in the “wonders and signs” performed in their deliverance from Egypt (Acts 7:36). Paul suggests, however, that just as the wilderness generation apostatized from God despite those evidences (Num. 14:1–35), the audience of Hebrews was in danger of doing the same despite all the evidences of God’s favor that they had enjoyed.

In Hebrews 6:7, the original text in Greek emphasizes the word “impossible.” It is impossible for God to restore those who have “fallen away” because “they are crucifying once again the Son of God” (Heb. 6:6, ESV). Paul wants to stress that *there is no other way of salvation except through Christ* (Acts 4:12). Salvation by any other means is as impossible as it is “for God to lie” (Heb. 6:18) or to please God “without faith” (Heb. 11:6).

To crucify again the Son of God is a figurative expression that seeks to describe something that happens in the personal relationship between Jesus and the believer.

When the religious leaders crucified Jesus, they did it because Jesus posed a threat to their supremacy and autonomy. Thus, they hoped to eliminate Jesus as a person and destroy a powerful and dangerous enemy. Similarly, the gospel challenges the sovereignty and self-determination of the individual at the most fundamental level. The essence of Christian life is to take up the cross and deny oneself (Matt. 16:24). This means to crucify “the world” (Gal. 6:14), the “old man” (Rom. 6:6), and “the flesh with its passions and desires” (Gal. 5:24, ESV). The purpose of the Christian life is that we undergo a kind of death. Unless we experience this death to self, we cannot receive the new life God wants to give us.

The struggle between Jesus and self is a struggle to the death (Rom. 8:7, 8; Gal. 5:17). It is a difficult battle that is not won at once. This passage does not refer to the person who sometimes fails in the battle against the “old man” and the “flesh.” Rather, it refers to the person who, after having experienced genuine salvation and what it implies (Heb. 6:4, 5), decides that Jesus is a threat to the kind of life he or she wants to have and moves to kill their relationship with Him. That is, as long as the person does not fully choose to turn away from Christ, there is still the hope of salvation.

## FORGIVENESS, FRUIT, AND FAITH

The warning of Hebrews 6:4–6 is very similar to the warning found in Hebrews 10:26–29. Paul explains that the rejection of Jesus' sacrifice will leave the readers without any means for the forgiveness of sin because there is no other means for that forgiveness besides Jesus (Heb. 10:1–14).

The author does not say that there is no atonement for any sin committed after receiving the knowledge of truth. God has appointed Jesus as our Advocate (1 John 2:1). Through Him we have forgiveness of sins (1 John 1:9). The sin for which there is no sacrifice or atonement is described as trampling underfoot the Son of God, profaning the blood of the Covenant, and outraging the Holy Spirit (Heb. 10:29). Let's review the meaning of these expressions.

The expression "trampled the Son of God underfoot" (Heb. 10:29, NKJV) describes the rejection of Jesus' rule. The title "Son of God" reminds the audience that God has installed Jesus at His right hand and promised Him to make His enemies a "footstool" for His feet (Heb. 1:13; see also 1:5–12, 14, ESV). The trampling of Jesus underfoot implies that the apostate has treated Jesus as an enemy. In the context of the argument of the epistle (Heb. 1:13), it could be implied that, as far as the life of the apostate is concerned, Jesus has been taken off the throne (which is occupied now by the apostate himself) and set as the footstool instead. This is what Lucifer wanted to do in heaven (Isa. 14:12–14) and what the "lawless one" would attempt to do in the future (2 Thess. 2:3, 4, NRSV).

The expression "has profaned the blood of the covenant" (ESV) refers to the rejection of Jesus' sacrifice (Heb. 9:15–22). It implies that the blood of Jesus is devoid of cleansing power.

The expression "insulted the Spirit of grace" is very powerful. The Greek term *enybrisas* ("insult, outrage") involves the manifestation of hubris, which refers to "insolence" or "arrogance." This term stands in stark contrast to the description of the Holy Spirit as "the Spirit of grace." It implies that the apostate has responded to God's offer of grace with an insult. The apostate is in an untenable position. He rejects Jesus, His sacrifice, and the Holy Spirit.

After the strong and sincere warning of Hebrews 6:4–8, Paul expresses confidence that the readers have neither fallen away from the Son, nor will they in the future. He believes that his audience will receive the warning and produce the appropriate fruits. They are like the "earth," which is cultivated by God and produces the fruits He expects. These people will receive the blessing from God (Heb. 6:7), which is "salvation" (Heb. 6:9).

In Hebrews 6:10, believers show their love toward God's "name," that is, toward God Himself, by their service to the saints. These were not isolated actions in the past, but sustained actions that have extended into the present. Exceptional acts do not reveal the true character of a person. The weightiest evidence of love toward God is not "religious" acts per se, but acts of love toward fellow human beings, especially those who are disadvantaged (Matt. 10:42; 25:31–46). Thus, Paul exhorts believers not to "forget" to do good (Heb. 13:2, 16).

Hebrews 6:12 warns against their becoming "dull" (NLT) or "sluggish" (NKJV), which characterizes those who fail to mature and are in danger of falling away (Heb. 5:11; 6:12). Hope is not kept alive by intellectual exercises of faith, but by faith expressed in acts of love (Rom. 13:8–10).

Paul wants the readers to "imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises" (Heb. 6:12). He has already presented the wilderness generation as a negative example of those who, through lack of faith and perseverance, failed to inherit what was promised. He then presents Abraham (Heb. 6:13–15) as an example of one who through "faith and patience" inherited the promises. The list of positive exemplars is lengthened with the people of faith in Hebrews 11, and it climaxes with Jesus in Hebrews 12 as the greatest example of faith and patience (Heb. 12:1–4). In Revelation 14:12, faith, patience, and commandment-keeping are characteristics of the saints in the last days.



## inTerpret

After looking at your scribed and annotated text, what special insights do your marks seem to point to overall?



What questions emerge after studying this passage? What parts are difficult?

What other principles and conclusions do you find?

What can we learn from the apostle regarding warning and encouraging others whom we love?



Read more at  
[www.inverseible.org/heb07-4](http://www.inverseible.org/heb07-4)



What relationship do the following verses have with the primary passage?

Hebrews 10:26–29

Matthew 16:24

Romans 6:1–11

Galatians 2:20

Galatians 5:22–24

John 7:37–39

1 Corinthians 12:13



What other verses/promises come to mind in connection with Hebrews 5:11–6:20?

Review your memorized verse from Hebrews 5:11–6:20.

## JESUS, THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

Paul culminates his warning against apostasy and encouragement toward love and faith with a beautiful, soaring exposition of assurance in Christ.

In Hebrews 6:17–20, God has guaranteed His promises for us in several ways. First, God has guaranteed His promise with an oath (Heb. 6:17). According to Scripture, God’s oaths to Abraham and David became the ultimate basis of confidence in God’s permanent favor for Israel. When Moses sought to secure God’s forgiveness for Israel after the apostasy with the golden calf, he referred to God’s oath to Abraham (see Exod. 32:11–14; Gen. 22:16–18). The implied strength of his plea was that God’s oath was irrevocable (Rom. 9:4; 11:28, 29).

Second, God has guaranteed His promises to us by the act of seating Jesus at His right hand. Jesus’ ascension has the purpose of corroborating the promise made to the believers because Jesus ascended as a “forerunner on our behalf” (Heb. 6:20, ESV). Thus, the ascension reveals to us the certainty of God’s salvation for us. God led Jesus to glory through the “suffering of death . . . for everyone,” so that He might bring “many children to glory” (Heb. 2:9, 10, NRSV). Jesus’ presence before the Father is the “anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:19) that has been fastened to the throne of God. The honor of God’s rule has been waged on the fulfillment of His promise to us through Jesus.



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Meditate on Hebrews 5:11–6:20 again and look for where Jesus is.



How much assurance do you need and how much assurance does Jesus give us?

How do you see Jesus differently or see Him again?

What is He saying to you through these texts?

Prayer: How do you respond to seeing Jesus in this way?



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Review the memory verse.  
How does it apply to your  
life this week?

→  
After this week's study of the  
passage, how does Hebrews beg  
to be applied in your personal life?

How can the warning of Hebrews  
be applied in your place of study,  
work, or worship?



Read more inSight from the  
Spirit of Prophecy at  
[www.inverseible.org/heb07-7](http://www.inverseible.org/heb07-7)

## ONE ENLIGHTENED AND ONE FALLEN AWAY

“The warfare against self is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a struggle; but the soul must submit to God before it can be renewed in holiness.” (White, *Steps to Christ*, 43.)

“In all that Christ said to His disciples, there was something with which, in heart, Judas disagreed. Under his influence the leaven of disaffection was fast doing its work. The disciples did not see the real agency in all this; but Jesus saw that Satan was communicating his attributes to Judas, and thus opening up a channel through which to influence the other disciples. This, a year before the betrayal, Christ declared. ‘Have not I chosen you twelve,’ He said, ‘and one of you is a devil?’ John 6:70.

“Yet Judas made no open opposition, nor seemed to question the Saviour’s lessons. He made no outward murmur until the time of the feast in Simon’s house. When Mary anointed the Saviour’s feet, Judas manifested his covetous disposition. At the reproof from Jesus his very spirit seemed turned to gall. Wounded pride and desire for revenge broke down the barriers, and the greed so long indulged held him in control. This will be the experience of everyone who persists in tampering with sin. The elements of depravity that are not resisted and overcome, respond to Satan’s temptation, and the soul is led captive at his will.” (White, *The Desire of Ages*, 720.)

“The lessons of Christ, setting forth meekness and humility and love as essential to growth in grace and a fitness for His work, were of the highest value to John. He treasured every lesson and constantly sought to bring his life into harmony with the divine pattern. John had begun to discern the glory of Christ—not the worldly pomp and power for which he had been taught to hope, but ‘the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.’ John 1:14.

“The depth and fervor of John’s affection for his Master was not the cause of Christ’s love for him, but the effect of that love. John desired to become like Jesus, and under the transforming influence of the love of Christ he did become meek and lowly. Self was hid in Jesus. Above all his companions, John yielded himself to the power of that wondrous life. He says, ‘The life was manifested, and we have seen it.’ ‘And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.’ 1 John 1:2; John 1:16. John knew the Saviour by an experimental knowledge. His Master’s lessons were graven on his soul. When he testified of the Saviour’s grace, his simple language was eloquent with the love that pervaded his whole being.

“It was John’s deep love for Christ which led him always to desire to be close by His side. The Saviour loved all the Twelve, but John’s was the most receptive spirit. He was younger than the others, and with more of the child’s confiding trust he opened his heart to Jesus. Thus he came more into sympathy with Christ, and through him the Saviour’s deepest spiritual teaching was communicated to the people.

“Jesus loves those who represent the Father, and John could talk of the Father’s love as no other of the disciples could. He revealed to his fellow men that which he felt in his own soul, representing in his character the attributes of God. The glory of the Lord was expressed in his face. The beauty of holiness which had transformed him shone with a Christlike radiance from his countenance. In adoration and love he beheld the Saviour until likeness to Christ and fellowship with Him became his one desire, and in his character was reflected the character of his Master.” (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1911), 544, 545.)



Share insights from this week's memory verse and Bible study as well as any discoveries, observations, and questions with your Sabbath School class (or Bible study group). Consider these discussion questions with the rest of the group.



Why did John come to be transformed into the image of Jesus while Judas committed the sin against the Holy Spirit?

What is the difference between taking up the cross and submitting to abuse from others?

Why does God require a total surrender (not 99.9 percent) of our lives to Him?

What is the relationship between free will and salvation?

What is the thing that you find most difficult to hand over to the dominion of Christ?

What do you feel when you think that God has made an oath to you?

How has the assurance of Christ's salvation changed your life practically?