

# Finishing Well

Lesson #6

Hebrews: Jesus Is Greater: Hold Fast To Him

Feb. 24, 2021

## Warning #1 Danger Of Drifting

Hebrews was probably written around 64-69 AD. The temple which was not destroyed until 70 AD was still standing and daily sacrifices were offered.

Hebrews was written to "second generation believers" who were won to Christ by those who had known Jesus during His earthly ministry.

Problem: The Christians, facing increasing persecution under Nero, were tempted to turn or depart from their faith and move back toward the Mosaic Law.

Many of the early Jewish believers were slipping back into the rites and rituals of Judaism to escape the mounting persecution under Nero. This letter is an exhortation for those persecuted believers to continue in the grace of Jesus Christ.

The writer to the Hebrews showed these Jewish Christian believers that, though they were faced with suffering, they were indeed following a better way . . . and they should persevere.

Hebrews encompasses a great wealth of doctrine, a refreshing spring of encouragement, and a source of sound, practical warnings against slothfulness in our Christian walk.

We also find a magnificently rendered portrait of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Author and Finisher of our great salvation [Hebrews 12:2].

The word Better is used 13 times to show the superiority of Jesus Christ and His salvation over the Hebrew system of religion

Heb. 1:4, 6,8 Jesus is greater than the angels

Heb. 3:3-4 Jesus, the Son of God, is greater than Moses, the servant of God.

Heb. 4:8-9 Jesus is greater than Joshua because Jesus brings a greater rest.

Heb. 7:19 Jesus brought in "a better hope" as the Mediator of a "better covenant."

Heb. 7:26-28 Jesus is a greater priest than Aaron because Jesus is sinless and immortal.

Heb. 8:6 Jesus' better covenant was established on better promises.

The word Perfect is used 14 times and means a perfect standing before God.

Perfect standing could never be accomplished by the:

Heb. 7:11 Levitical priesthood

Heb. 7:19 The Law

Heb. 10:1 The blood of animal sacrifices

Heb. 10:14 Jesus Christ gave Himself as ONE offering for sin.

By this He has "perfected forever those who are sanctified.

Conclusion: The Jewish religious system was temporary and could NOT bring in the eternal "better things" that are found in Jesus Christ.

Eternal is a third word important to the message of Hebrews.

- Heb. 5:9 Christ is the "author of eternal salvation"
- Heb. 9:12 Through His death, He "obtained eternal redemption"
- Heb. 9:15 Christ shares with believers "the promise of eternal inheritance."
- Heb. 1:8 His throne is forever.
- Heb. 5:6 He is a priest forever. [also 6:20; 7:17, 21]
- Heb. 13:8 "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever"

Established, used 8 times in Hebrews, means to be solidly grounded, to stand firm on your feet. It carries the idea of strength, reliability, confirmation, permanence.

You can be secure while everything around you is falling apart.

I Cor. 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

- Heb. 13:9 God wants our hearts to be "established with grace"
- Heb. 12:28 We have a "kingdom which cannot be moved"
- Heb. 2:2 God's Word is steadfast.
- Heb. 6:19 The hope we have in Him is steadfast.

Focus of Hebrews is on the Future!

- Heb. 2:5 The "world to come" when believers will reign with Christ.
- Heb. 1:2 Jesus Christ is "heir of all things."
- Heb. 9:15 We share the "promise of eternal inheritance."
- Heb. 11:10-16, 26 Like the patriarchs, we are looking for that future city of God.
- Heb. 11:13 Like them, we should be "strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

Consider: God is shaking everything around us so we will turn loose from the things of this world, center our attention on the world to come and live for the eternal values.

As with Abraham and Moses, the decisions we make today will determine the rewards tomorrow.

- Heb. 11:10 Abraham obeyed God because "he looked for a city."
- Heb. 11:26 Moses forsook the treasures and the pleasures of Egypt because he "had respect unto the recompense of the reward."
- Heb. 11:31, 35 These great examples of faith "lived in the future tense" and were able to overcome the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil.

Consider: This same "attitude of faith" carried our Lord Jesus Christ through the agony of the cross.

- Heb. 12:2 Jesus...for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Theme Verse: Heb. 10:23-24 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) <sup>24</sup> And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

George Whitefield Give diligent heed to the things that are spoken from the Word of God. Hebrews gives ample encouragement to believers, but there are 5 solemn warnings we must heed or suffer the sad spiritual consequences.

Heb. 2:1-4	Danger Of Drifting From The Word Leads to	Neglect
Heb. 3:7-4:13	Danger of Doubting The Word Leads to	Dullness
Heb. 5:11-6:20	Danger of Dullness Toward The Word Leads to	Sluggishness
Heb. 10:26-39	Danger of Despising The Word Leads to	Willfulness
Heb. 12:25-29	Danger of Defying The Word Leads to	Refusing To Hear

Hebrews addresses these 5 exhortations to people:

a. Who are truly born again, not mere professors.

Heb. 3:1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,

Heb. 4:14 Seeing then that WE have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let US hold fast our profession.

Heb. 6:4 have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

Heb. 6:5 Have "tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world [age] to come"

b. Who have been persecuted because of their faith [Heb. 10:32-34; 13:13-14]

c. Who have faithfully ministered to the needs of others who had suffered [Heb. 6:10]

d. Who were being seduced by teachers of false doctrine [Heb. 13:9]

e. Who were in danger of forgetting the true Word their first leaders, now dead, had taught them [Heb. 13:7]

Temptation: Their difficulties are tempting them to return to the Jewish law and religion to escape persecution. The Christian life was proving to be very difficult.

Red Alert: These believers were at a standstill spiritually and in danger of going backward [Heb. 5:12ff].

➤ Some had forsaken the regular worship services. [Heb. 10:25]

➤ They were not making spiritual progress. [Heb. 6:1]

Heb. 6:12 We desire that you do not become sluggish but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

The author includes 14 "Let Us" statements of exhortation interspersed among the warnings.

Why the Warnings to BELIEVERS?

Why does the author of Hebrews take the time to structure the book around five warnings?

1. God in His love and mercy saw fit to move the author of Hebrews to warn his readers.

2. Along with the original recipients, God wanted future readers to understand the GRAVE DANGER that accompanies apostasy.

➤ Two dozen times the author includes himself in the warnings and admonitions.

What Is at Stake? What are the BELIEVERS going to lose, forfeit or suffer?

Dr. Dehaan: "The lesson and burden of Hebrews is not salvation for sinners, but it has to do with rewards or loss of rewards for believers at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

We cannot escape it by applying it to others."

R.T. Kendall: "In many ways, the key to Hebrews is the Judgment Seat of Christ. I think that if there is anything the devil wants, it is to get Christians to think that all that matters is being saved or lost. There is a reward or loss to be meted out at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Understanding this truth should be revolutionary for the believer."  
Dr. Dehaan: "The burden of Hebrews is not the rescuing of sinners from hell, but it is the Bringing Of Sons To Glory. Israel did not reach the enjoyment of being God's son, His firstborn son and heir."

I Pet. 1:3-9 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. In THIS you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials: <sup>7</sup> That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:  
<sup>8</sup> Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:  
<sup>9</sup>Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

I Thess. 5:23-24 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.

<i>Justification - Spirit</i>	<i>Sanctification - Soul</i>	<i>Glorification - Body</i>
Past	Present	Future
Have been saved from the Penalty of Sin	Are Being Saved from the Power of Sin	Will be saved from the Presence of Sin
One time experience	Life-long Experience Ongoing	Eternal experience
Positional	Continual	Final
God's Work FOR Us	God's Work IN Us	God's Work TO Us
Perfect In This Life	Not Perfect In This Life	Perfect In Next Life

James 1:21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

Our Future Salvation - The underlying theme in Peter's epistles involves:

- Our present hope which is centered in
- The salvation to be revealed,
- Wherein Christians will realize the inheritance "reserved in heaven" for firstborn sons.

During our present pilgrim walk, anticipating "that blessed hope" set before us, we are being "kept [guarded] by the power of God through faith" for the purpose of realizing the salvation of our souls and occupying positions as joint-heirs with God's Son during Christ's Millennial Kingdom. The entire program of God for Christians moves toward this end.

God is calling you, equipping you and preparing you according to His purpose.

Rom. 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Heb. 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? This speaks of a future salvation that is so intimately associated with the inheritance of the saints that "salvation" itself is said to be inherited.

Heb. 2:3 call this future salvation - "So Great Salvation."

It is the greatest thing God could ever design for redeemed man, for it consists of the recipients exercising power and authority from the heavens over the earth with God's Son when He rules as "King of kings, and Lord of lords." Through coming into possession of this future salvation, Christians will realize the very purpose for their present salvation -

- the goal of their calling, the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls.

The Book of Hebrews, written to believers, is replete with admonishing and warnings to not lose your inheritance and rewards. These warnings are drawn from OT history. DM Patton:

- To deny the parallel is to overthrow inspiration
- To ignore the parallel is to silence Scripture
- To admit the parallel is to disclose a momentous peril to the believer in Christ.
- These are like stop signs on the boulevard of backsliding.
- They are warning posters placed on the freeway of disobedience. It clearly teaches that one can forfeit his inheritance. There are dangers for not persevering.

God has promised blessing and glory so incredible the human mind cannot conceive! [I Cor. 2:9] He so wants to reward the believer that He moved the author of Hebrews to include 5 major warnings concerning the potential loss of regal status in the coming millennial kingdom of Christ.

Hebrews opens with the writer's main thesis: The Superiority Of Christ & His Coming Rule.

Heb. 1:1-2 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed Heir Of All Things, by whom also he made the worlds;

- God's revelation to man is complete.
- Christ's message is the definitive revelation.
- His declarations are superior to those of the prophets.

The fulfillment of His message will not be complete until He restores all things.

Christ's message is to be the direct focus because we are living in the time immediately preceding His return, and we must be prepared for it.

Hebrews 1: Emphasis on Christ's heirship and inheritance. [mentioned 3x in 14 verses]

- 1:2 The Son has been appointed Heir Of All Things
- 1:3 Jesus is the image of God; our Savior; seated in heaven
- 1:4 He has obtained a superior name to the angels by way of inheritance.
- 1:5 Jesus is the Only Begotten Son Quotes Psalm 2:7 & II Samuel 7:14
- 1:6 He is the Firstborn who receives worship. Quotes Ps. 97:7
- 1:7 He is served by the angels. Quotes Ps. 104:4
- 1:8-9 He is enthroned and the Anointed One Quotes Ps. 45:6-7
- 1:10-12 He is the Eternal Creator Quotes Ps. 102:25-27
- 1:13-14 He is the Sovereign. Angels are the servants. Quotes Ps. 110:1
- 1:14 Angels are seen as ministering to individuals who shall be heirs of salvation. [lit., 'about to inherit']
- 1:9 As 'companions' the readers will have a role in this deliverance over the Lord's enemies and will participate in His millennial kingdom.

The 7 quotations in Heb. 1: 5-14 from the OT with regard to Jesus Christ and His coming glory in the Millennial Kingdom.

Jesus is the One who fulfills the OT prophecies. Jesus Christ Is Your Messiah, Your King!

- The importance Scripture places upon the coming millennial kingdom of Christ is immense.
- Paul comments on the importance of Christ's millennial kingdom in I Cor. 15:20-28.
  - Christ "must reign" to defeat all enemies. Death is last enemy.

The final part of Christ's redemptive work will occur during His coming millennial kingdom.

All of prophecy points to this coming kingdom of the Messiah which is paramount in Scripture.

For it is in this Kingdom that the Father's eternal purpose in His incarnate Son shall be certainly and completely fulfilled.

The Danger of Drifting Heb. 2:1-3 Neglecting So Great Salvation

Therefore [because of these things] we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, [the message from the Son] lest we drift away [let them slip].

Drift: Strong's 3901 = pararrhyéō = drift away from

- only time it occurs in Bible where it refers to going spiritually adrift
- sinning by slipping away from God's anchor.
- gradually drift away means to "lapse" into spiritual defeat, describing how we slowly move away from our moorings in Christ.

In Heb. 6:19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast,

- an anchor to show how confident we can be in the promises of God.

Wiersbe: "More spiritual problems are caused by neglect than perhaps by any other failure on our part. We neglect God's Word, prayer, worship with God's people and other opportunities for spiritual growth. As a result, we start to drift. The anchor does not move; we do.

It is easy to drift with the current, but it is difficult to return against the stream.

Heb. 2:2 For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we NEGLECT so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

Neglect: Strong's 272 Ameleo = to become apathetic, to have an attitude of indifference to have no care or concern for it.

"Therefore" points the reader back to the facts in chapter one concerning the coming millennial glory of Christ and the believer's impending inheritance and glory in Christ's millennial kingdom.

- Exhortation: Do not let the truths of chapter one fade away from his or her mind.
- Revelation, through the mediation of the Son, carries far more solemn obligations for the recipients than revelation which was mediated through angels or men.
- God used men and angels to give revelation.
- In light of the fact that Jesus is superior to angels, they must give more earnest heed to what He has revealed.
- He powerfully exhorts them, without saying so directly, to re-evaluate the worth of what they have [inheritance], and what lies ahead.
- He draws their attention to Christ as our pattern and example.

### Jesus Christ is Not Inferior Because Of His Humanity - Heb. 2:5-18

*Heb. 2:5-9 His humanity enabled Him to regain man's lost dominion.*

Heb. 2:5 It is not to angels that He has subjected the world to come, about which we are speaking

"What is man that You are mindful of him,  
Or the son of man that You take care of him?  
You have made him a little lower than the angels;  
You have crowned him with glory and honor,  
And set him over the works of Your hands.  
You have put all things in subjection under his feet."

Man was created "a little lower than the angels" [therefore inferior to them], but man was given privileges far higher than the angels.

God never promised the angels that they would reign in "the world to come" [Heb. 2:5].

Heb. 2:8 "But now we see not yet all things put under him."

Heb. 2:9 But We See Jesus,... Jesus Christ became man that He might suffer and die for man's sin and restore the dominion that was lost because of sin

One day, when He establishes His kingdom, we shall reign with Him in glory and honor.

Jesus Christ did all of this for us—for lost sinners—because of "the grace of God."

*Heb. 2:10-13 His humanity enabled Him to bring many sons to glory.*

Heb. 2:13 "Behold I and the children which God hath given me." If Jesus Christ had not come to earth and become man, He could not take us from earth to share in His glory.

The incarnation, crucifixion, and resurrection must go together. They all lead to glory.

Heb. 2:10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. The word translated "perfect" means "complete, effective, adequate." Jesus could not have become an adequate Savior and High Priest had He not become Man and suffered and died.

Heb. 2:14-16 His humanity enabled Him to disarm Satan and deliver us from death.

Heb. 2:17-18 His humanity enabled Him to be our sympathetic High Priest.

From a human point of view, it would seem foolish for God to become Man, yet it was this very act of grace that made possible our salvation and all that goes with it. When Jesus Christ became Man, He did not become inferior to the angels, for in His human body He accomplished something that angels could never accomplish. At the same time, He made it possible for us to share in His glory! He is not ashamed to call us His brothers and sisters.

The author defines the time of which he speaks— the World To Come, where angels who presently rule [cf. Dan 7:9; Eph 6:12; Rev 4:4; 12:7-9] will no longer rule but will be replaced by Christ and his companions, the faithful who are about to inherit salvation.

He says, "What is man, that you are mindful of him?"

- He is drawing their attention to their calling, and the value of that calling,
- That we are co-heirs with Christ of ALL things.
- Of what value is it to inherit everything that God has created?

The "so great salvation" refers to its future aspect, not past justification [Heb. 1:14].

It is the glorious privilege of ruling and reigning with Christ in His coming millennial kingdom— inheriting the kingdom! Those who are deemed worthy at the judgment seat of Christ will be allowed this privilege

Rev 3:21 To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

Rev. 21:7 He that overcomes shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

The law was given by angels [Deut. 3:32; Ps. 68:17; Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19].

➤ It proved steadfast - and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward. The children of Israel who were redeemed by blood and by power, drifted from the truth at Mount Sinai, and made a golden calf. It cost the physical life of 3,000 saved Israelites.

- The result of neglecting this salvation is serious.

The author, including himself in the warning, says "we" shall not escape—escape what?

- The just recompense of reward spoken of in verse 2.

When the Lord Jesus assumes the role of Judge, He begins His judgment with believers [I Peter 4:17] at the Judgment Seat of Christ rewarding all according to their works.

Colossians 3:23-25 "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance:"



for ye serve the Lord Christ. For the one who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Notice two things in this passage: (1) The reward is an inheritance and

(2) Those who do wrong receive for the wrong they have done, which can only be a loss of inheritance (i.e. reward).

This loss of inheritance is what Hebrews is warning the readers to avoid at all costs!

The "just recompense of reward" is receiving exactly what an individual deserves.

I Cor. 10:1-5 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

<sup>2</sup> And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; <sup>3</sup> And did all eat the same spiritual meat; <sup>4</sup> And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

<sup>5</sup> But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness.

Note: They NEVER even tasted their inheritance.

Question: Did they have everything they needed to run their race successfully?

Should they have possessed a strong, living and unwavering faith and confidence in God?

- Were they in danger of being returned to Egypt?
- Were they in danger of being removed from the safety of the blood?

Impossible: The firstborn had died [substitutionary lamb]

- God was satisfied.

Rather, the danger the Israelites faced lay in the fact that they could be overthrown in the wilderness and not realize the purpose for their deliverance from Egypt.

Through obedience they would realize this purpose, but through disobedience they would fail to realize this purpose. In either instance, they would receive a "just recompense of reward" — receiving exactly what they deserved, based upon faithfulness or unfaithfulness to their calling, whether positive or negative.

All born-again believers have availed themselves of the substitutionary death of the Passover Lamb, Jesus Christ.

- Are we in danger of losing our justification?
- Are we in danger of being removed from the safety of the blood?

Impossible: God's only begotten Son, the Passover Lamb has already died in our stead.

- God, as in the type, is satisfied.

The danger that Christians face is the same as that which the Israelites under Moses faced: We can be overthrown in our present position and fail to realize the purpose for our salvation.

- Be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ
- Goal of my faith > Salvation of My Soul

Will I take heed and OBEY the warning to not drift?

To know the warning and not heed it and obey it is SIN. [James 4:17]

Adrian Rogers: Everything we truly believe, we obey. Everything else is religious talk.

May God grant that we beware of drifting away from Christ, and that we pay much closer attention to that which God has revealed to us through His Son, who is vastly higher than the angels.

Heb. 10:23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

### Jesus Is Greater: Hold Fast To Him

If drifting away is a grave danger for every believer, it is important for us to recognize when we are drifting. What are some possible symptoms of drifting? I am drifting when . . .

1. My sense of wonder begins to wane. Illustration: You visit an area and are in awe of the magnificent scenery. However, people who have lived in that area for years seem to have forgotten its beauty and majesty. Likewise, when we read the first verses of Hebrews 1, we are informed of the majesty and splendor of the Son of God, our Savior. Has the wonder that He came down to earth to save us been lost on us? Is this not awesome? If we have lost the wonder of our Savior and His salvation, we are drifting.
2. My awareness of the nearness of God has become ancient history. If the intimacy I once knew and enjoyed is now a faint memory, I am drifting.
3. My love and desire for God's Word falls short of what I find in Psalms 119.
4. The realities of heaven and hell seem distant and unreal.
5. I fall apart at the first sign of suffering or persecution.
6. I am unaware of the constant, downward pull of the world, the flesh, and the devil.
7. Prayer, Bible study, witnessing, and going to church are a duty, rather than a delight.
8. The Lord's Table is dull, and preaching is boring.
9. Remembering the work of Jesus Christ on the cross does not emotionally move me.
10. I become autonomous, rather than deeply dependent upon other believers.
11. Theology ceases to be important to me, or (worse yet) when it is just an intellectual exercise.
12. My theology is derived more from the fiction section of the library than from the Bible, good commentaries, or books on theology. The popularity of the book, *The Shack*, among Christians is distressing and disturbing. When professing saints say they have learned more about God from this book than from their Bible or from preaching, something is seriously wrong. I think that too many Christians have found it easier and more enjoyable to read Christian fiction to learn about spiritual warfare or prophecy than to learn from God's Word.
13. I lack joy and gratitude for all God has done for me.
14. I have ceased growing in faith, hope, and love.
15. I'm looking for something "more" outside Scripture, and outside of Christ. This is evident in carnal Corinthians.

In Colossians 1, Paul declares the supremacy of Christ.

In chapter 2, Paul writes that in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." He then goes on to warn us about seeking wisdom that is not according to Christ.