

Lesson Ten — The Third Warning

Day One — A Brief Review

Day Two — Milk vs. Meat

Day Three — Leaving Elementary Things

Day Four — It is Impossible

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You might want to begin by praying today that the Lord will allow you to move onto maturity, and that He would grant you the grace not to fall back. This is a serious request. Let the Lord know that you mean it.

Day One — A Brief Review

We are ready to consider the third of five warnings found in the Book of Hebrews. But before we jump right into this portion of the epistle, I think it would be wise for us to take a deep breath and glance back to see where we have been. We will spend the day doing just that. I will summarize for you, then I would like you to read the first five chapters of Hebrews. Deal? OK.

Hebrews chapter one lays the solid foundation upon which this book rests. If you miss the point in chapter one, you will miss the point of the whole book. Chapter one lays out seven Old Testament passages for the readers to consider. Six are from the Psalms, written by David, and one is from a prophecy which the LORD God gave to David through the Prophet Nathan. Remember David's house, kingdom, and throne are deemed eternal by God Himself (2 Sam. 7:10ff). It is no small matter that all of the quotes in chapter one which are drawn from the Old Testament and forms the foundation of this epistle have something to do with David.

Each Old Testament passage quoted in chapter one, and each portion of Scripture it comes from, reveals a particular facet of the coming kingdom, the very kingdom toward which David's kingdom pointed. The whole of chapter one has to do with the kingdom of Christ and His preeminence over all things, including angels. Chapter one also mentions Christ's companions, those who will be anointed with Christ when He comes into His glory (1:9), and speaks of the inheritance these companions will receive. This inheritance is referred to as a *future salvation* (1:14).

Chapter two picks up on the idea of this inheritance, giving us the first of the five warnings. The author tells us that due to the fact that this inheritance is our *so great salvation* that we *must pay much closer attention to what*

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we have heard (things spoken by the Father through the prophets, reflected within the seven quotes, and in His Son [1:1,2]), *lest we drift away from it* (2:1), and in so drifting, we incur *a just recompense* (2:2,3). Chapter two also tells us specifically what the subject matter of this epistle is. This epistle is dealing with the inhabited earth in the coming age, which will no longer be subjected to angels (fallen angels [2:5]), but will instead be subjected to Christ and His companions (2:6-10). Chapter two closes with a mention of the high priestly ministry of Christ, referring to the ministry according to the order of Aaron, as it mentions the propitiation Christ has made for the sins of God's people (2:17,18).

(One thing which may make understanding this section of Hebrews a little easier is to see that the present ministry of Christ *according to the order of Aaron*, has to do with this present dispensation and our continual cleansing and communion with the Father. This ministry of Christ is that which is being dealt with throughout these first two warnings.

Christ's future ministry, however, is *according to the order of Melchizedek*, and has to do with the coming dispensation [when He appears as King/Priest of the Most High God, with His companions] — a future salvation (cf. Heb. 9:28). This future ministry is not specifically mentioned until Hebrews 5:6, but thereafter it is mentioned nine times throughout chapters five, six, and seven. The priesthood of Melchizedek has nothing to do with a ministry of blood sacrifices. It has nothing to do with blood.)

The section covering this first warning ends with the fact that because Jesus was made like us, He has become our merciful and faithful High Priest, and did Himself make propitiation for our sin (2:17-18) — a *ministry according to the order of Aaron*.

It appears that while God is calling our attention to the fact that though Christ is now ministering in the Heavenly Sanctuary *according to the order of Aaron*, it is God's desire for us to look ahead to the time when Christ will appear as King/Priest *according to the order of Melchizedek*. God is obviously intent on keeping that progression before us, as we move forward into the Book of Hebrews

While the first warning deals with our paying more close attention to what we have heard from God concerning the inheritance and the fact that all things will be subjected to Christ and His companions in the coming age, the second warning has to do with our becoming a partaker with Christ in the Sabbath Rest, in the land, in that coming day. Chapters three and four deal with the *Sabbatical rest* aspect of the Kingdom. The author offers the Children of Israel as an example that we might learn from their falling short of the rest. We are told to fear our own falling short of this wonderful Sabbath rest. With this *rest* in view, we are warned *to hold fast our confidence and hope firm until the end* (3:6); *warned not to fall away from the living God*, thereby forfeiting this rest; warned not to allow *our hearts to become hardened by the deceitfulness of sin* (3:12, 13); warned to *believe* what we hear in Scripture concerning even the timing of the rest — *the seventh day* (4:4-9). The author places so much emphasis upon our being diligent toward this rest, that he states the warning *explicitly* four times in the text (3:11-12; 3:18-4:1; 4:6; 4:9-11), and *implicitly* (i.e., the idea is implied) three times (3:6, 14; 4:14).

Then as in the first warning, the second warning ends with the mention of Christ's present ministry as our High Priest. Having pointed out previously that Jesus was made like us in that He was tempted in all ways, yet without sin, He is therefore able to come to our aid (2:17,18), now the author mentions the same idea again, only from a little bit different perspective. He mentions that the high priestly ministry of Christ allows *us to come to Him, to draw near to the throne of God in order for us to find mercy and grace in time of need* (times of weakness in our journey toward the Land). Both, His coming to our aid, and our coming to His throne (4:16), is only possible because of Christ's role as our *High Priest according to order of Aaron*.

Chapter five continues with the same thought with which chapter four ends — the thought of our High Priest being able to deal gently with us, because He had become like us being beset with weakness (not in His nature as God, but in His nature as man [4:14-16]). Now the author moves us on to the greater purpose of God and of

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His Christ. He moves us on to see that all of this is toward the purpose of His Son coming as *a King/Priest according to the order of Melchizedek* (5:15ff). And this brings us to the opening of the third warning, which we will deal with tomorrow.

As we close for today, I would like for you to read through these first five chapters of Hebrews once again. It is so important for you hear it spoken in God's words and not mine. Please take the time to do this reading. God will bless you for doing it. And you will come away with a sense of how much you have learned since we began.

Have a good day.

Day Two — Milk vs. Meat

Begin today in prayer. Ask the Father to give you understanding concerning the third warning. Ask Him to help you to take the warning to heart, and to prompt you to make any necessary adjustments in your life He would like you to make. Be willing to be obedient. So many blessings hinge upon obedience!

The main crux of this third warning is found in Hebrews 6:4-8. However, in order to understand what the warning is dealing with you need to grasp the information leading up to it. We have come to the place where Melchizedek is mentioned explicitly for the first time in the epistle. We worked on it a little bit last week, but we will now delve into this passage in earnest. Would you turn to your observation sheets in the Appendix and read Hebrews 5:5-6:8? Then we will take the sections apart one by one. Read the section now.

Write out what you think the essence of the third warning is:

In the past week we have seen emphasis around the ministry of Christ *according the order of Aaron*. Now, the author introduces another ministry, a future ministry of Christ. He mentions a man from Abraham's day. A man who is only mentioned two previous times in Scripture up to this point, but in mentioning this man to his readers, the author of Hebrews tells them that there is so much he could tell them about Melchizedek, but they are simply not ready for it. These things are difficult to explain to them because their ears have become dull (*lit.*, sluggish).

What could it be? What could it be about a man who is only mentioned two previous times in all of Scripture, yet the author, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, felt that it was so important to tell them? Hence, his harsh rebuke for his readers — *you have become dull of hearing!* Let's work our way up to the warning. The author mentions Melchizedek for the first time in the passage below.

Hebrews 5

**5 So also Christ did not glorify Himself so as to become a high priest, but He who said to Him,
"THOU ART MY SON, TODAY I HAVE BEGOTTEN THEE";**

**6 just as He says also in another passage,
"THOU ART A PRIEST FOREVER [lit., with respect to the age (singular)]
ACCORDING TO THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK."**

Think about what we have previously learned about the Old Testament passage quoted in v. 5. This passage was first quoted in Hebrews chapter one. We covered the context of the quote (Ps. 2) in Day Three of Lesson One,

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beginning on page 8. It would be very helpful if you could refresh your memory as to what this passage involves, through a brief review of that day.

Notice here in Hebrews chapter five, the passage quoted out of Psalm Two is followed by a passage quoted from Psalm 110. We also covered Psalm 110 in the homework on Day Four of Lesson Three, page 40. Would you like to skim that Psalm now, as well?

Then referring to Jesus, the author says that He has been designated by God as *a High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek*. He goes on to say...

11 Concerning him [Melchizedek] we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

Things concerning Melchizedek offers the author of Hebrews *much to say*. But, at this point, he can't tell them the things he would like to tell them. Verses 11 and 12 tell us why he cannot tell them. Why not?

Is he speaking to a group that never has been able to hear it, or a group that at some point could have, but has gotten to point where they cannot hear it now? What do you think? Why?

But the author *can hardly not* tell them, so first he lays out the third warning (ch. 6), then he begins to tell them a little about this man Melchizedek (7:1ff). This information is so important that, while he knows many of his readers may remain dull of hearing, after he gives them the warning, he goes on to tell about Melchizedek. This is exactly the format we will follow. Things concerning Melchizedek *are* hard to explain. (I'm glad someone else thinks so!) But they must be explained! Therefore, we will follow suit.

Hebrews 5:11 is the beginning of this warning. Write out how the author begins this warning:

We find some interesting words being used here. The word *hard* means just that — the author finds it difficult to explain these things to people who have dulled their spiritual senses. The author has come to a topic in Scripture which is difficult to explain *to them* — not because it is difficult to explain in and of itself, but because it is difficult to explain *to them*. They had *become dull of hearing*, and they should not be in that state! The word *dull* means sluggish, slow to allow their senses to accept. In fact, the definition I have found says this — *sluggish, descriptive of constitutional qualities and suggestive of censure*. This would indicate that they were censuring their information, choosing what they wanted to hear. In glimpsing ahead in the text, compare 5:11 with 6:12. What admonishment to you see the author giving to his readers?

Dull of hearing! This word *hearing* is the same word Paul used in Romans 10:17, "Faith comes from *hearing*, *hearing* by the Word of God." So the readers of this epistle were not growing in their faith with respect to what the author would like to be telling them about Melchizedek, because they were not allowing themselves to hear it. They were censuring it. Therefore, they were not coming to the place of faith concerning the meat of the Word, without which no one will go on to maturity.

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What about you? Are you fully willing to hear what you are about to study concerning Melchizedek? Each of us should stop and pray right now that the Lord would give us willing hearts to hear even the difficult things in Scripture, and the He would allow the Holy Spirit to teach us truth and bring us to maturity.

The admonishment goes on.

Hebrews 5

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

Ouch! That would smart! There are two comparisons in this passage. Can you identify both?

Notice that the author equates milk with the elementary principles of God's Word, and from the context, he equates the solid food (meat) of the Word with things surrounding Melchizedek. He goes on to explain a little more about the differences between milk and solid food (meat).

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

From vv. 12 and 13, write down everything you learn about *milk*:

Now write down all that you learn about *solid food*:

If the milk of the word has to do with the *elementary principles of the oracles of God*, and the solid food has to do with the *word of righteousness*, and this *word of righteousness* has to do with discerning good and evil, then who are the only ones who can have this discernment?

As stated in the text, only those who have moved from milk to solid food will find it easy to discern good from evil. This should cause us to ponder the thought — *In order for a Christian to have the ability to easily discern good from evil, he must have moved from milk to meat, from being a babe to being mature, and all of this has to do with understanding the things concerning Melchizedek.* Quite right!

One last thing before we end for the day — an interesting thought to run through the text. In 5:14, the author says that solid food is the for the *mature*. The word *mature* (Appendix <5046> *telios*) is from the root of the Greek word transliterated *telos* (Appendix <5056>). The main thought behind this word is that of coming to a desired end, a goal, if you will. The root of this word is also used in speaking of Christ in 5:8-10, where the word is translated *perfect* (Appendix <5048> *teleioo*).

Notice that in v. 14 it says that those who are *mature* have practiced the word of righteousness to the point that their senses have been trained to discern good from evil. This is with a goal in mind, our coming to our goal (*cf.* I Pe. 2:21), even as Jesus came to His goal, and through such, He has become the source for us to come to our goal. But we can only accomplish our goal by practicing the word of righteousness — which can best be accomplished through understanding the things concerning Melchizedek, allowing us to better understand and be able to discern good from evil. We'll see a little more of this tomorrow.

As we close for today, would you please write out a brief summary of what the text says about immature and mature Christians? Who is immature? Who is mature? What does it take to become mature? What if one does not become mature? Etc., etc.

For now, that's enough to chew on!

Day Three — Leaving the Elementary Things

After you begin with prayer today, go back and read the summary you wrote at the end of yesterday's study. It is very much connected with today's study.

Are you ready? Let's go!

Begin today by reading Hebrews chapter six.

Many people would like to believe that in the midst of chapter six the author suddenly begins to deal with non-saved individuals. This is not the case at all. In keeping within the context of the whole of Hebrews, the author is dealing with issues that begin at a point beyond the free gift of eternal life — issues dealing with the millennial reign of Christ and a believer's participation therein. This remains true for Hebrews chapter six. The way to come to correct interpretation in Scripture is to remain within the context. We will do so here.

In the previous chapters of Hebrews, we have seen that the author mentions the priestly ministry of Jesus Christ in two respects. We have seen him deal with Christ's present ministry *according to the order of Aaron*, and we have seen him dealing with Christ's future ministry *according to the order of Melchizedek*. In this setting, the author mentions six facets of the elementary things of Christ. He lists them in text below. Can you identify the six things?

Hebrews 6

1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, **2** of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. **3** And this we shall do, if God permits.

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What are the six things listed which have to do, at least in part, with the elementary things concerning Christ?

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1) | 4) |
| 2) | 5) |
| 3) | 6) |

Now let's stop for a moment to pull a couple of things together. Look at v. 3 in the passage above. What does it say? What might God permit? What might God not permit?

Were you able to answer those two questions? The things surrounding these questions may have been a little difficult to see because of the list of the six things placed right in the middle of the thought. Look at the passage this way —

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity... And this we shall do, if God permits.

Now do you see what's involved? What does it say? What might God permit? What might God *not* permit?

The author encourages us to press on to maturity. Remember the thought we ran through the text yesterday? We saw in Hebrews 5:9, Jesus was made *perfect* (Gk., *teleioo* — came to His goal) by His obedience through suffering. He then became to all those who *obey Him* the source for our reaching our goal — salvation for the age (v. 9). And this salvation has to do with Christ's future ministry, His coming after the order of Melchizedek. But some cannot understand these things, and will not be able to reach maturity (Gk., *telios*) because they cannot handle the solid food of the Word of God; they are not accustomed to the Word of Righteousness, and therefore cannot discern between good and evil (teaching and/or living). But the author admonishes us to press on toward maturity (Gk. *teleiotes* <5047> [from the root <5046> *telos*]), which we will do *if God permits it*.

Here is the question we will need to answer by week's end — Why would God *not permit* someone to press on to maturity? Before we see what the author says about it, why don't you try to answer that question yourself. Why do you think God might not permit someone to go on to maturity?

Now let's look at the reason which the author gives through inspiration. When you read this, keep in mind what we have learned so far. What is the epistle about? What do the first and the second warnings have to do with? Who has the author been talking about? Whom has he given to us as our example? All of this fits into the flow of this passage. And remember, the real question here is, *why would God not permit someone to press on to maturity?* The first word in this passage connects the previous passage to it.

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Hebrews 6 (The text is formatted to make it easier to read.)

4 For in the case of those who

**have once been enlightened and
have tasted of the heavenly gift and
have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and
have tasted the good word of God
and the powers of the age to come,**

6 and then have fallen away

**it is impossible to renew them again to repentance,
since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God,
and put Him to open shame.**

This is where many people think that the text must be speaking of unbelievers. But is that possible? Are we speaking about *coming to faith*, or about someone *in the faith pressing on to maturity*? Which?

If the author had up to some point been speaking to believers, but now isn't, where did the switch occur?

Consider these questions:

- Can someone not yet in the faith *press on to maturity* in the faith?
- Can someone *who has once been enlightened*, not have really ever been enlightened?
- Can someone who is not really saved, *taste of the heavenly gift*?
- Can someone who has *been made partaker of the Holy Spirit*, not really have been made partaker of the Holy Spirit?
- Can a non-believer *taste of the good word of God*? How about *the powers of the age to come*?
- Can someone *fall away* from a place where they have never stood?

Can they?

OK. So, let's say that the text *is* speaking of believers, what would it mean that if a *believer falls away, it would impossible to renew him/her to repentance again*? What does it all mean?

The author has already given us definite clues. He has already warned the brethren *to take care, so as not to fall away from the living God* (3:12). And in warning them (us) about this, he has already used the Children of Israel as our example of what not to fall away from — the rest (chs. 3 and 4)! We have already seen that the timing of the rest is future, having to do with the Messianic Era, not eternity. And that the priestly ministry of Aaron is for the present time — the time leading up to the Messianic Era when Jesus will come as King/Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

The Children of Israel are our example. During their stay in the wilderness, they had been enlightened; they tasted the good word of God; and once they arrived at Kadesh Barnea, they tasted the fruit of the land, and then they fell away.

What happened next? Let's look at the Old Testament passage where it tells what happened next. Read Numbers 13:25-14:39, then answer the following questions.

Who led the nation aside from God's plan for them (13:2, 31-33)?

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Who wanted them to follow God's plan (13:30; 14:6-9)?

What happened to those who led them astray (14:36-37)?

What happened to Caleb and Joshua (14:38)?

We have covered enough for one day. We'll pick it up tomorrow. Meditate on what you are leaning. You are chewing on some pretty solid food right now. (Meditating upon it is the way you chew it up well.) So chew it well before you swallow it. I don't want you to choke! I also don't want you to allow this so great salvation to drift by you. So be sure to meditate upon what this is saying.

Day Four — It is Impossible...

Be sure to pray for insight today.

Yesterday's study brought us to the point of revealing what happens to the one who having once been enlightened, etc., etc., but then falls away. Today we want to see what happens next. Remember, we are considering why God might not allow some to go on to maturity.

So what did happen after the children believed the bad and false report of the leaders who went in to spy the land?

After falling away and being told of the ramifications, did the Children of Israel *repent*? (Keep in mind that the word *repentance* simply means a change of mind.) Yes, the Children did repent. They did change their mind about going in the land. Pick up your reading where you left off yesterday. Read Numbers 14:39-45.

They repented, but what happened (Num. 14:44-45)?

Now, look back at our text in Hebrews. What does the author say would happen if someone who is at a place where the Children of Israel were — having moved from an immature knowledge to a mature knowledge — and then fell away from the living God? What would be impossible to do (Heb. 6:6)?

But in our example, the Children *did* repent. So what does this text mean? On whose side did repentance take place, and on whose side did it not?

Repentance did not take place in the type, and will not take place in the antitype...*on the part of God*. In this section in the Book of Hebrews (chs. 3 and 4), the Children of Israel are given to us as our example of what happens if anyone falls away after coming to a mature knowledge. Even in their repentance, they could not change the mind of God. God will not allow the one who has fallen away from a mature understanding (an epignosis) to return to the

place where he once was. And if you would like, jump ahead and see this same idea repeated in this epistle, read Hebrews 10:26ff. There remains no sacrifice for this type of *willful sin* (cf. Heb. 10:26) for those who have passed from gnosis to epignosis. (The contexts of these passages have to do with mature understanding, a knowledge of the kingdom when Christ comes in the order of Melchizedek.)

What a horrific judgment — at least from God’s perspective — though possibly not from our perspective! (So who should change their perspective?) In the mind of God, this is such a great judgment, that God would rather *not allow* a person to come to maturity — the point of understanding these things concerning the Messianic Era and the priesthood of Melchizedek — than to allow them to understand it and then fall away from the understanding. For there awaits a future judgment for those who, having come into this understanding, *fall away* through sinning willfully even against this knowledge. There awaits a horrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume those who become adversarial about this knowledge (10:26ff).

Wow! Now that is heavy! God’s perspective is sure different from our perspective. I think if our perspective is not in line with God’s, then *we* had better be the ones to change, for *it will be impossible* for Him to.

There is no possible way to look at this passage and think that it is speaking of anyone other than Christians. And we are not seeing nominal Christians spoken of here either. This passage is dealing with someone who has gone beyond the elemental things concerning Christ. This is speaking of someone who has understood the deep things of God (cf. 1 Cor. 2:10), things concerning Melchizedek, and then has fallen away. And from God’s perspective, the judgment upon this individual will be worse than if he had never coming into this mature knowledge. Do you understand that? (There is plenty food for thought here.)

And if a Bible teacher or commentator makes this passage to refer to someone other than a mature believer, then they destroy the very warning the Holy Spirit wants the readers to hear. Some will teach that this passage is dealing with Jews who have been told about Jesus Christ, but they have not decided to believe upon Him yet. This cannot be so, as you look at v. 6 in the passage:

“...*since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.*”

If not a Christian, then why the word *again* in the text?

Jesus, our Passover Lamb, has been crucified once for all. Once for *all* men. For *all* time. And all a person has to do is accept this by faith, appropriating His blood. Once this is done, then the focus is to be on the *purpose for this redemption*. The Children of Israel were bought out of bondage in Egypt by the blood of the passover lamb, *for the purpose of their being taken into the promised land, wherein God would set up in Kingdom and dwell in the midst of His people* (Ex. 19:4-6). This very group of people redeemed by the blood, rejected the end (the goal) of their redemption. While they were fully redeemed, they could not receive their inheritance, entering into their rest, because of their unbelief and resulting disobedience. And after *they* repented (changed their mind concerning their action), God would not change His mind about their entrance into the land, about their receiving their inheritance. They had spurned the very purpose for their redemption, and God would not change His mind on the judgment He passed upon them (Num. 14:20ff).

This is the very idea of Hebrew 6:4-6 and the third warning. To remove this passage from this context, and make it say something that it does not say, takes away even the possibility of our being able to understand the true meaning of what the Holy Spirit wants us to hear.

We’ll close today with considering the final portion of this third warning. Read the following passage —

Hebrews 6

7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; 8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

We'll deal with this passage tomorrow, but I wanted you to see it within the context.

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During the past few days, we have been considering the third warning in the Book of Hebrews. Today we will be looking at the summation of this warning. It has to do with fruit-bearing on the part of Christians. Please begin with prayer.

Would you take a moment and skim yesterdays' work?

OK. Today we will consider what Hebrews 6:7-8 means. At first glance, it seems a strange passage with which to end this warning. But is it really?

Throughout Scripture God has been intensely interested in His people bearing fruit for Him. What did He tell Adam to do in the garden? "***Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over...***" (Gen. 1:28). God told Noah and his sons, "***Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth***" (Gen. 9:1). Through the use of a parable, Jesus told the Jews about the kingdom of the heavens as it relates to fruit-bearing. He explained the kingdom of the heavens to be likened to that of a vineyard which God had planted and given to them to care for it. He expected them to bring forth fruit for Him, but they refused. Over and over again, they refused. Therefore, God took the vineyard (the offer of the kingdom of the heavens) away from them, in order to give it to a new nation who would produce the fruits of it (Lu. 20:9ff).

Then again, during the week prior to His death, Jesus visually dealt with this idea before His disciples. He cursed a fig tree, because, while it was fully leafed and looked perfectly healthy, it bore no fruit. At His curse, the tree withered and died immediately (Matt. 21:18-20). The fig tree represents the nation of Israel (*cf.* Joel 1:6, 7), and the scene depicted the fact that the nation was bearing no fruit. God was about to set the nation aside for the sin of fruitlessness.

Over and over again, one can read in the Scriptures passages referring to the idea of bearing fruit, as it relates to the kingdom of the heavens. And now, at the very end of this third warning, the author reiterates this idea in a couple of verses dealing with the same idea. Reread Hebrews. 6:7-8 printed at the end of yesterday's homework. What is it all about?

Fruit-bearing has to do with our works as a Christian, and *in the end* our works will be judged by fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Cor.3:12-13). Look again at the last phrase of this passage in Hebrews chapter six.

Hebrews 6

7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; 8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

After the rain falls upon the ground and it brings forth fruit, what does the ground receive?

What is the other possibility?

In the end, the land bearing thorns and thistles (bad fruit) is burned up. And *in the end*, the land yielding good fruit, fruit yielded for a particular group of people (v. 7), is blessed. This idea is often called a *just recompense* in Scripture. We have seen the implication of this just recompense in the previous warnings as well. There is a *just recompense* spoken of in the midst of the first warning (2:2-3); a judging of the thoughts and intentions of the heart in the second warning (4:12); and now judgment of fruit by fire in the third warning (6:8). Furthermore, the timing of these things is evident in each of these warnings. The first warning deals with a time when the earth will no longer be subjected to angels (the coming age [2:5]); the second warning mentions the rest being a Sabbath rest, a seventh day rest (4:9); and the third warning has to do with the time when Christ ministers according to the order of Melchizedek, which will be during the Messianic Era (5:10ff). (You may want to add some of this information on your sheet in the Appendix entitled *The Five Warnings of Hebrews*.)

How much clearer can this get?

The passage here in chapter six shows the recompense of positive fruit-bearing and of negative fruit-bearing. The land, which brings forth useful fruit (vegetation which is for the use of those God intends), will be blessed. But the land which does not bring forth useful vegetation, rather thorns and thistles, will be cursed. Again the contrast between is blessing and cursing — the same contrast seen in the warnings given to the Children of Israel throughout the Books of Exodus to Deuteronomy.

And notice something else about the end of this warning. The ground and the rain are given facts. Both lands received the rains often. The difference is the fruit. Vegetation, on the one hand, is useful to those for whom it is intended. And thorns and thistles on the other hand, not useful for anything. They are worthless and in the end are burned.

Now, how can we know that this passage is dealing with good works? Read the verses which follow this passage, paying particular attention to v. 10.

Hebrews 6

9 But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. 10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered and in still ministering to the saints. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Verse 9 follows on the heels of v. 8. And v. 10 can be connected with v. 7. Make those connections and write out what you think the meaning is.

All the warnings throughout the Book of Hebrews are interconnected! They all reveal some facet dealing with the same thing. Just to see how interconnected the warnings of Hebrews are, and to see that the author is trying to make an emphatic point concerning our endurance and the recompense thereof, compare 6:11 with 3:6, 14; 4:11, 14. What kind of connections can you make here?

Understanding Hebrews — Pressing Toward Maturity

Lesson Ten The Third Warning

Notice, too, that the word *sluggish* in 6:12 is the same Greek word translated *dull* in 5:11. What point is being made here?

With that idea in mind, note that the word *end* (<5046>) at the end of v. 10 is the root word *telos* — the very root word we discussed at the end of Day Two and the beginning of Day Three this week, making connections between Christ's reaching His goal, and our reaching ours.

Verse 12 ends with a mention of promises (referring to the promises of Abraham). What promises are we speaking about? This is another place in the text where the author presupposes his readers having a solid knowledge of the Old Testament. While I will cover some of this in this week's lecture, next week is when we get into chapter seven, covering more detail about the man Melchizedek. But for now, please understand that the promises of Abraham and Melchizedek are inseparably linked together. Read the rest of the chapter below. We'll pick this section up again next week in greater detail.

Hebrews 6

11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, **12** that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

13 For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, **14** saying, "I WILL SURELY BLESS YOU, AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." **15** And thus, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise. **16** For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. **17** In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, **18** in order that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. **19** This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters within the veil, **20** where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

We'll close with this question for your consideration. What does this third warning mean to you, personally? How would the Lord speak to you personally about it?

Be sure to add the third warning to your sheet *The Five Warnings of Hebrews*.

If you are doing commentary work, here is your assignment according to which book you are reading:

Arlen Chitwood's book Let Us Go On, read chapters four, *Leaving the Principles*; chapter five, *If They Shall Fall Away*; and chapter six, *Two Kinds of Growth*. (This will also be the assignment next week.)

Philip Mauro's book God's Pilgrim, read chapter eleven, *An High Priest After the Order of Melchizedek*; and chapter twelve, *Two Kinds of Ground...*