

## SECTION SIX

### FOURTH WARNING AGAINST APOSTASY

#### 1. TEXTS

a. Hebrews 5:11 – 6:20.

b. Complementary relevant texts

(1) 2Thessalonians 2:9-12—“They perished because they refused to love the truth, and so be saved.”

(2) Genesis 22:9-18—“I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky ...”

#### 2. TRANSITION FROM PREVIOUS SECTION TO THIS SECTION

a. Hebrews 5:8-10.

b. Matters to recognize about the messianic priesthood which provide the transition to this section

(1) Jesus, Son, Messiah, became perfected for his role as high priest by learning obedience through suffering.

(2) Having become thus perfected, He was designated by God as eternal priest in the order of Melchizedek.

#### 3. DANGER OF LACK OF GROWTH (5:11-6:3)

a. A reluctant recognition that the subject at hand will not be given a desirable level of consideration

(1) They are “... dull of hearing ...”—no longer making the effort to listen or to try to understand.

(2) Unlike the high priest, who reached His objective of obedience, they have begun the work of acquiring knowledge, but have not been willing to finish it.

b. Because they do not put the effort into study and thought, they do not grow in their knowledge

(1) Enough time has passed that they ought to be teachers.

(2) They still are receiving, and in fact still need, instruction in basic matters of the divine revelation.

(3) It is as though they were physically past infancy, but still had to be fed milk instead of solid food.

(4) Advanced instruction, like solid food, is for those who have grown past the need for elementary things

(a) Those who are mature/have reached certain goals (*teleios*).

(b) By practice/habit/ability acquired by constant use (*hexis*) ...

(c) ... have trained/exercised/developed (*gymnazo*) their senses (*aistheterion*) ...

(d) ... to discern/to judge between/to make distinction between good and evil.

(e) By implication, reaching this desired state of maturity is a matter of both learning in the abstract and putting into practice that which has been learned!

(5) By implication, the only healthy approach is to strive for growth

(a) “Standing still” is not a viable option!

(b) Those who do not press onward to perfection are in danger of turning back, and falling.

**c. Exhortation: become what you ought to be!**

- (1) Therefore, in light of that deficiency between what they are and what they ought to be.
- (2) Move onward, toward the goal, from immaturity to maturity.
- (3) Do not go backward, and make it necessary to have someone instruct you in the foundational material again.

**4. A GREAT CONTRAST**

**a. The risk (6:4 – 8)**

- (1) For anyone who has experienced the advantages of the new life and new covenant in Christ, if such a person falls from that state, there is no further appeal that can be made to that person—no further form of inducement which would disclose to that person an unknown benefit to be sought.
- (2) Such a one is like a person who, having been saved from the sin of crucifying the Son of God, turns back to crucify Him again.
- (3) Or, like a piece of land that receives all the benefits of the blessings of rain and produces no fruit, and is therefore good for nothing but destruction.
- (4) The point does not appear to be that God would reject such a person who sincerely turned back to the faith, but that, having experienced the advantages of the Christian covenant, anyone who would reject those advantages to take up an inferior relationship could not be convinced to change by any conceivable entreaty.

**b. The promise (6:9-20)**

- (1) The message: “We are giving you these stern warnings, but we are in fact persuaded that you will act so as to achieve your own salvation.”
- (2) They have accomplished some noteworthy things, and those achievements have been taken account of in the divine record; it would be regrettable if those accomplishments went for nothing.
- (3) Continue to show the same diligence/haste/urgency (*spoude*) all the way to the end/goal/objective (*teleos*).
- (4) Rather than becoming lazy/slow/indolent (*nothros*), imitate those who through faith and patience continued with the intensity required to inherit/receive as one’s own possession (*kleronomeo*) the **promise**.
- (5) To Abraham, God issued a **promise**—a statement of intent based upon a divine initiative, not human merit or human achievement—which He further confirmed with an oath.
- (6) Note that this is the second mention of oath—the first one was God’s swearing that those who had failed to press onward toward their goal would never enter His rest (**4:3**).
- (7) By continuing to strive with patience and endurance (*macrothymeo*) Abraham obtained the thing that was **promised**, the goal toward which he had been striving.
- (8) The oath was added to the **promise**—the statement of divine intent—because God wanted to confirm, if such confirmation were needed, that what He intended to do could not possibly be changed.
- (9) Since there is no other power in Creation that can oppose God’s purpose, by swearing upon Himself God explicitly guaranteed that neither any other agent nor He Himself would change the **promise**.
- (10) Thus, those who participate in the covenant mediated by Jesus have in connection with that **promise a hope** which is anchored behind the veil, in the inner-most sanctuary ...
- (11) ... into which Jesus, our high priest and forerunner/one who is sent ahead where it is intended that others should follow (*prodromos*) entered ahead of us, by His actions securing for Himself the eternal priesthood of the order of Melchizedek.