

Sunday October 9<sup>th</sup> 2011  
The Letter to the Hebrews  
Part Twenty

1). Heb 6:9 ¶ *But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,*

a). We have seen in previous weeks how the recipients of this letter had received a very serious warning concerning the consequences of ‘falling away’ from the truth concerning Christ and His coming Kingdom. We had seen that God has set in place a point of no return that could be reached with respect to rejecting the inheritance, which would result in exclusion from Christ’s Millennial Kingdom for the whole 1000 years - Heb 6:4 *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

b). Just as the first generation of eternally saved Israel to come out of Egypt all perished in the wilderness without receiving the inheritance that should have been theirs because of their rebellion, through unbelief, so in a like manner eternally saved Christians who rebel against the knowledge of the truth through unbelief, after the same fashion with respect to their inheritance, will find themselves eternally saved, but without an inheritance in the Millennial Kingdom.

c). This is a serious situation that must not be taken lightly and in order to emphasize the seriousness of this, exclusion from the Kingdom is variously described as being cast into ‘the furnace of fire’, cast into ‘the outer darkness’ and cast into ‘Gehenna’ and is pictured for us in the examples of Esau and Simon Peter as well as in the historical record of Israel - Nu 14:32 *But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness.*

d). Heb 12:16 *lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright. 17 For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.*

e). Lu 22:59 *Then after about an hour had passed, another confidently affirmed, saying, "Surely this fellow also was with Him, for he is a Galilean." 60 But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!" Immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. 61 And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how He had said to him, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times." 62 So Peter went out and wept bitterly.*

f). This same truth was then reinforced through the use of a farming metaphor in v7-8 of Chapter 6 where ‘the earth’ pictures for us the eternally saved Christian and ‘the rain’ the Word of the Kingdom. In the metaphor ‘the earth’ received rain that often came upon it and had then, as a result of the rain, the potential to be fruitful and receive blessing from God or to be unfruitful, producing only thorns and briars, with the consequence of being rejected and near to being cursed.

g). And what we would realize then for ourselves as we study this, is that we receive ‘the rain’ on a very regular basis and we therefore have the opportunity to be fruitful or unfruitful, to receive blessing from God or to be rejected and which of these outcomes it will be of course will be dependent upon our response to the Word of the Kingdom.

h). To be fruitful we must - Jas 1:21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. 22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

i). Eph 5:26 *that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, 27 that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.*

j). Ro 12:1 ¶ *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.*

k). Col 3:9 *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,*

l). Eph 4:22 *that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind,*

m). Eph 5:18 *And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be [continually]filled with the Spirit,*

n). If then we should follow the clear teaching of the scriptures then we will allow ourselves to be ‘cultivated’ through the work of the Holy Spirit and will be fruitful for the Kingdom - Mt 21:43 *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.*

2). Ro 11:22 *Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off.*

a). The verses we have looked at thus far would certainly fall in the category of the ‘severity of God’ that we see here in Romans. Not that the nature of God is severe, but our actions do have consequences and those consequences may be severe if we do not give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard.

b). What then follows in our Hebrews verses is that which we would see as ‘the goodness of God’, something that our writer now wants us to focus on so that we may be reassured and encouraged - Heb 6:9 ¶ *But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

c). According to our scripture the ‘goodness’ of God will not be neglectful towards the recipients of the letter’s ‘work’ and ‘labor of love’. And we will remember from last week that this work and labor of love involves ministry to the saints whilst walking in the Spirit.

d). And for ourselves it would be prudent to see the ‘saints’ in the time in which we live as those who are of the household of the faith - Ga 6:10 *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.*

e). Now there are many facets to ministry to the saints from very practical issues to accountability in the race of the faith, but there is one more facet that we need to remind ourselves about from our study of the Book of Ephesians that will impact all the other facets directly - Eph 4:11 *And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, 13 till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, 15 but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ-- 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by*

***what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.***

f). We are all individually members of this body, and both individually and as a whole we are to ‘grow’ – not in numbers, but in maturity. And according to our scripture this happens because we are ‘joined and knit together by what every joint supplies’.

g). The word ‘joint’ speaks of the point where two or more parts come together, and so as we come together each one of us has something to supply. And that which we have to supply must come ‘according to the effective working’ of the Holy Spirit in our lives. It is only that which we bring that comes from walking in the Spirit that will have value for us all.

h). And of course ‘the effective working’ of the Holy Spirit in our lives would take us back to the verses we looked at earlier concerning our response to ‘the rain’, the Word of the Kingdom that we receive.

i). And so according to the effective working of the Holy Spirit ‘every part does its share’. Every part, each one of us, is to do our share of laying aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness; our share of receiving with meekness the implanted word; our share of being doers of the word; our share of being sanctified and cleansed by the washing of water by the word; our share of being a living sacrifice, of not conforming to this world, of being transformed by the renewing of our mind; our share of putting off the old man and putting on the new man; our share of being filled with the Spirit.

j). What we see described here is the most powerful way that we can minister to the saints, not only to those who gather here, but also to those in the extended family wherever in the world they might be – And doing this is the good work we are prepared for, it is a labor of love and God will not be unjust to forget it.

k). And so with this in mind let’s hear again the words of - Heb 6:11 *And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

3). Heb 6:13 *For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, 14 saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." 15 And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. 16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible*

*for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.*

a). The ‘goodness’ of God is further demonstrated through His swearing of an oath to Abraham concerning His promise with respect to rulership in both the heavenly and earthly realms of the Kingdom - Ge 22:15 ¶ *Then the Angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, 16 and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son - 17 "blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. 18 "In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice."*

b). God’s promise to Abraham was of itself sufficient and needed nothing to be added to it, however, knowing the frailty of man and our need for reassurance, He overlooks what we might see as the questioning of His integrity to come into the realm of human experience to confirm the validity of His promise - *16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute.*

c). And God did this, according to v17, ‘determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel confirmed it by an oath’.

d). So let’s look at a few things in this verse – firstly, the word translated ‘abundantly’ has the sense of way over and above that which is necessary.

e). ‘The heirs of promise’ refers specifically to eternally saved Christians who have the very promise that God gave to Abraham concerning rulership in the heavenly realm of the Kingdom - Ga 3:29 *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

f). Ro 4:13 *For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*

g). The word translated ‘immutability’ comes from a word that means, ‘not a turncoat’, therefore we are dealing with no changing of the mind, that which is absolutely certain.

h). ‘His counsel’ refers to the desire of the Triune Godhead in unity together with respect to the promise.

i). And so in order to demonstrate to us the absolute certainty of that which the Trinity had desired and agreed together with regards to the promise, God confirmed it with an oath.

j). And He did this - *18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.*

k). Two is the number of witness - 2Co 13:1 ¶ *This will be the third time I am coming to you. "By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."*

And so we have two things which are immutable, unchangeable, in which it is impossible for God to lie, thereby establishing every word. And these two immutable things are God's promise and God's oath concerning the promise.

l). The immutable promise and the immutable oath concerning the promise bear witness to the absolute validity of God's promise that 'we might have strong consolation'.

m). Strong = Greek – 'ischuros', *is-khoo-ros'* = forcible (literally or figuratively):--boisterous, mighty(-ier), powerful, strong(-er, man), valiant. This word speaks of indwelling strength embodied or put forth either aggressively or as an obstacle to resistance, as an army or a fortress.

n). Consolation = from Greek – 'parakaleo', *par-ak-al-eh'-o* = to call earnestly, to exhort, to encourage.

o). Therefore we can see that the encouragement that the two immutable things, God's promise and God's oath, afford us is a strong army or a fortress against doubt and discouragement.

p). And this strong consolation is provided for the heirs of the promise, those 'who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us'.

q). The words translated 'have fled for refuge' are a translation of a single Greek word – 'katapheugo' and this same word is used in the Ancient Greek translation of the OT in Deuteronomy in relation to the cities of refuge – De 4:41 ¶ *Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, 42 that the manslayer might flee [katapheugo'] there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live:*

r). And that which the scripture teaches here about the cities of refuge provides us with an apt parallel with what we find in our verse in Hebrews.

s). According to the law of Moses if someone killed his neighbor unintentionally then he could flee to one of the cities of refuge, and once in that city he could not then be killed by his neighbor's family [the avenger of blood] in revenge - Nu 35:24 *'then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood according to these judgments. 25 'So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and he shall remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil. 26 'But if the manslayer at any time goes outside the limits of the city of refuge where he fled, 27 'and the avenger of blood finds him outside the limits of his city of refuge, and the avenger of blood kills the manslayer, he shall not be guilty of blood, 28 'because he*

*should have remained in his city of refuge until the death of the high priest. But after the death of the high priest the manslayer may return to the land of his possession.*

t). For ourselves we have, as it were, fled from the penalty of sin, which is death, to take refuge in the High Priestly ministry of our Savior and we need to stay in this place of refuge until the death of the High Priest – Now Christ of course as our High Priest does not die, but the idea of the death of the High Priest points to the termination of the Lord's present ministry at the resurrection/rapture of the church when He will then become Judge. And we might also see our city of refuge as the hope of the New Jerusalem – that city which we look for whose builder and maker is God.

u). Now if we should be found outside of our place of refuge, if we are not hidden in the ministry of our High Priest, then only one thing can surely follow – death - our exclusion from the Millennial Kingdom – the earth that is rejected and near to being cursed. And this death will of course occur at the Judgment Seat when the Lord will take on the role pictured for us in the avenger of blood – the blood He will be avenging is the blood of His Son – let's remember what we read in connection with those who will have rejected the refuge of Christ – Heb 6:6 *if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

v). Heb 10:29 *Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*

4). To return to the encouraging - Ps 91:1 ¶ *He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust." 3 Surely He shall deliver you from the snare of the fowler And from the perilous pestilence. 4 He shall cover you with His feathers, And under His wings you shall take refuge; His truth shall be your shield and buckler.*

a). But for those who have fled for refuge, who remain hidden in the Lord's High Priestly ministry, who abide under the shadow of the Almighty, then this same one, who would otherwise have 'died', will have the Lord as his fortress against the world, the flesh and the devil – And in that Day he will 'return to the land of his possession', he will receive the inheritance which is incorruptible and does not fade away, which is reserved in heaven. And receiving this inheritance is exactly the hope that is set before us that we are to lay hold of – In fact we will have fled for refuge for the very purpose of laying hold of that hope, for it cannot

be attained in any other way - 1Th 5:8 *But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*

b). Ro 8:23 *Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. 24 For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? 25 But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.*

5). Heb 6:19 *This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, 20 where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.*

a). This hope, the promise of everything connected with the salvation of the soul, we have as an anchor of the soul. Now the purpose of an anchor is to keep that to which it is attached firmly secured to one location.

b). The idea of the anchor gives rise to the image of the soul being tempest tossed on the sea of life as the world, the flesh and the devil seek to draw it away to shipwreck and destruction, but if we have seized the hope with all our strength and cling to it, then that hope will keep our soul firmly attached to the salvation that yet awaits it.

c). In fact our scripture says that this hope is ‘both sure and steadfast’.

d). Sure = Greek – ‘asphales’, *as-fal-ace* = not to make totter, not to baffle or foil.

This word then speaks of something that cannot be made to totter when put to the test.

e). Steadfast = Greek – ‘bebaios’, *beb'-ah-yos* = sustaining one’s steps in going.

This word speaks of something that does not break down under the weight of something that steps on it.

d). Together then this hope, which is sure and steadfast, is the anchor of the soul, something that cannot be made to totter or breakdown when put under stress and strain.

e). Heb 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

f). Not only this, but the hope which is the anchor to the soul, has its place of mooring in the ‘Presence behind the veil’ – and this of course is imagery that takes us once again to the Tabernacle in the Heavens.

g). Behind the veil would direct us to the Holy of Holies where the presence of the fullness of the Godhead is to be found.

h). Jesus has already entered here as a forerunner for us ‘having become High Priest according to the order of Melchizedek’.

i). However, a full explanation of that which is recorded in these concluding 2 verses of Chapter 6 will have to wait until next week – if the Lord is willing.