

## Lesson Fifteen — The Book of Hebrews, Part II

*Day One — The Fourth Warning*

*Day Two — Willful Sin*

*Day Three — Words of Encouragement*

*Day Four — Our Role Models*

*Day Five — The Fifth Warning*

Last week we began to peruse the Book of Hebrews. We covered the first three of the five warnings found in this epistle. The essence of the first warning is — don't drift away from what the prophets and the Lord Jesus spoke about the coming kingdom, because for all Christians there will be a just recompense. (A recompense is exactly commensurate with the services rendered.) The essence of the second warning is this — don't miss out on *the rest*, as the Children of Israel did. Rather, strive to enter the rest. The essence of the third warning is this — press on toward maturity and if the Lord allows, you will come into a mature knowledge and understanding of the priesthood of Melchizedek, a type of the future ministry of Christ in His coming kingdom. But beware! If you come into this mature knowledge, and then scorn it, you will not be brought back to a place of repentance concerning this knowledge, for God will not allow it.

### Day One — The Fourth Warning

As we draw closer to this fourth warning, let's be sure we remember where we are and where we have been in the Book of Hebrews. Notice all the *future* gazing we are to do throughout the Book of Hebrews.

Chapter one lays the foundation for the book, presenting seven Old Testament passages, all of which have to do with some facet of the coming kingdom. This foundation must be in place in order to understand this epistle. Note that chapter one ends by calling attention to an inherited salvation — a salvation to be realized at a *future time*.

Chapter two contains the first warning. We are warned to be careful not to drift away from what we have heard from the Father through the prophets and the Son. A drifting away from these things (things mentioned in chapter one) will bring about a just recompense on the negative side of things (Remember all Christians will receive a just recompense.) Then the author stated plainly what he was speaking about — *the world to come which will not be subjected to angels* (v. 5) — a world which will exist at a *future time*.

Chapters three and four deal with the second warning. This warning deals with our striving to enter the rest and uses the Children of Israel as an example, showing how they failed to enter the rest in the promised land through unbelief and disobedience. We must *not* follow their example, but rather, through faithful obedience, strive to enter the rest — a rest to be realized at a *future time*.

Chapter five speaks of the high priestly ministry of Aaron, comparing it to the high priestly ministry of Christ, Whose blood has been offered once for all time as a propitiation for our sin. Then the author leads us to look from this present ministry of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary to His coming ministry when He appears as a King/Priest after the order of Melchizedek during the Messianic Era — pointing to His ministry at a *future time*.

Comparisons are made along the way, one of which is made between the milk of the Word and the meat of the Word, the latter having to do with the Word of Righteousness, surrounding an understanding of Melchizedek.

Chapter six spells out six items which are elementary in our spiritual growth, and the author admonishes us to press on to maturity. Herein is the third warning. *If the Lord allows* a believer to press on to maturity — coming into an understanding of these things — *and then that individual falls away*, there is no repentance on the part of God concerning the future inheritance, the rest. The Children of Israel did just that. They came into a full knowledge of the blessings which God had in store for them in the promised land, but they didn't believe what He had told them about it, and became disobedient — refusing to go in. He turned them back to the wilderness (Num. 14:29-35 [not back to Egypt]), and even though they repented (Num. 14:40), they could not change the mind of God concerning their inheritance in the land (Num. 14:41-45). However, pressing on to maturity gives us a greater understanding of what the hope is before us; this hope has to do with the coming era and it becomes the anchor of our very soul.

The next three and a half chapters were not covered in our workbook, but were mentioned in the lecture. Chapters seven through the first half of chapter ten flow together to make a large parenthetical thought — that of the present ministry of Christ — with a view to the future. As with the rest of the epistle, everything here propels us forward. Christ's ministry in the heavenly sanctuary is on behalf of believers, offering us cleansing for our sin as we travel this journey to the Promised Land. But His ministry as High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary is only for the present time. There is coming a time when He will come as King/Priest after the order of Melchizedek. His acting in the order of Melchizedek is during the Messianic Era out ahead.

Also, the old covenant, having to do with the Law and the earthly kingdom in Israel, is to be replaced by the new covenant with Israel, when God will write His Law on their hearts in the coming age. God will forgive them and remember their sin no more. If that is so, how much more does the present ministry of Christ cleanse us from sin, and give us hope!

All that which is pictured from the Old Testament and depicted throughout the Book of Hebrews draws our attention forward to the coming age. And during the present time, Christ offers us hope and cleansing from sin through His present ministry, with a view to His future ministry. We only need to repent, confess, and look ahead.

With a clearer understanding of these things, we come to the fourth warning. We will observe the text today and then look at it more closely tomorrow. The text is printed out in double-space for you to make thorough observation. Study the text carefully today, then we will work through some questions on it tomorrow. (Be sure to note the use of the personal plural pronoun “we” in the opening section of this passage.)

Hebrews 10

26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and **THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.** 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, **“VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY.”** And again, **“THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE.”** 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 **FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.** 38 **BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.** 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

NOTES:

## Day Two — Willful Sin

Yesterday we observed the last half of Hebrews chapter ten. Within this passage there is such a stern warning that some might be inclined to think that it is not directed toward believers. But neither the text nor the context will allow any part of it to be directed to anyone other than to believers. Yesterday we spelled out the *context* of the chapters leading up to this fourth warning, reviewing each chapter leading up to it. The context is dealing only with believers and their future hope; so it is with this warning.

The *text* of this warning is also dealing with the future hope — a hope reserved *for believers alone*. This hope has nothing to do with unbelievers! Sinning willfully will never condemn a non-saved person. Rather, it is in having a lack of faith in Christ as the Passover Lamb that condemns a non-believer (John 3:18). A non-saved person would only be expected to sin.

So what does this fourth warning have to do with in regard to believers? How should it be applied? Please pray for more understanding.

Comparing the third and fourth warnings may help us understand that which is involved in *sinning willfully*. The question is: Is the author dealing with *all* willful sin or willful sin *in particular*? Let's look at it.

The three and a half chapters preceding this fourth warning (chs. 7-10a) constitute a large parenthetical thought dealing with the priesthood of Christ. We will not spend time on this except for a brief mention of details of Christ's priestly ministry in the lecture — noting that within these chapters God lays out specifically how we are cleansed from sin's defilement. And though these chapters are placed between these two warnings for this purpose, sometimes it is helpful to go back to the third warning, take out these three and a half chapters (7-10a), and read the fourth warning exactly on the heels of the third. Let's try that.

The third warning —

### Hebrews 6

**3 And this we shall do, if God permits. 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.**

For in the case of whom?

If they do what?

What becomes true and why?

So let's say that God does allow an individual to press on to maturity, and he becomes enlightened, and tastes the heavenly gift, and partakes with the Holy Spirit, and tastes the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come. What if that individual *then goes on to sin willfully*? (Watch how the fourth warning follows the third warning.)

**Hebrews 10**

**26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

For if *who* goes on sinning willfully?

After what?

Then what?

In v. 29, what three things has the person done to deserve punishment of this kind?

Was the person described in this passage sanctified? If so, by what was he sanctified?

Did you catch similarities between the third and fourth warnings? They are as follows:

From Hebrew 6 —

**For in the case of those who have once been enlightened ...and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance...**

and from Hebrews 10 —

**...For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge <1922> of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins...**

So again, what would be the reason that God may not allow maturity to take place?

If an individual, after receiving a mature knowledge of *this* truth — concerning things related to Melchizedek in the age to come, etc. — then falls away (6:6 [falls away from the knowledge]) and willfully sins against this mature knowledge (10:26), what is awaiting that person (10:26ff)?

Please note: This passage is not dealing with sin in general. Each of us will fall into sin, even willful sin. And it is for this reason that chapters 7-10a are placed within the text. These chapters reveal how God deals with sin in the life of a believer. It is for this expressed purpose Christ is presently ministering on behalf of saved people in the heavenly sanctuary. He is offering cleansing of sin, with His Blood on the Mercy Seat, and as we repent and confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from unrighteousness (I John 1:9). Each of us presently dwells in a body of flesh with all its attributed weaknesses. But if we avail ourselves through repentance and confession to Jesus Christ as our High Priest (Whose blood was offered as a sin sacrifice once for all time), we are washed clean and the confessed sin is *taken away* and remembered no more — forever! Therefore this fourth warning does not have to do with sin in general, even willful sin in general.

Rather, this fourth warning is dealing with willful sin on the part of an individual who *has been allowed by God the Holy Spirit (the Spirit of Grace) to come to maturity* (third warning). And after coming into this mature knowledge, if that individual falls away from *this knowledge* — *sinning willfully against the truths about the kingdom, treating as unclean the blood covenant by which he was sanctified, insulting the Holy Spirit* (Who graciously granted him to press on) — there no longer remains a sacrifice (fourth warning [10:26ff]).

**But the ramifications of that sin cannot be eternal, due to the finished work of Christ and the free gift of eternal life. The ramifications for this willful sin will be millennial. The believer (who has come to this kind of maturity) can expect a very harsh judgment during the Messianic Era.** Check the text and see if that is what it is saying.

(This kind of judgment can be seen in a gospel account. The ones to whom Jesus had been extending the offer of the heavenly kingdom fell into this kind of sin. In Matthew chapter twelve, Jesus spells out judgment to those who had full knowledge of the offer being made to them — the Pharisees. They knew who Jesus was — the Son of God. And when they attributed to Satan the power given to Jesus by the Holy Spirit, they blasphemed against the Holy Spirit [the Spirit of Grace (*cf.* Heb. 10:29)]. In Jesus' Own words, this sin would not be forgiven them in *this age* nor in *the age to come* [Mt. 12:31, 32]. Eternal judgment was not in view! It could not be in view [see Matt. 12:22-37].)

On the heels of this stern warning, the author goes on with his admonishment and encouragement.

**Hebrews 10**

**32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, 33 partly, by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners, and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. 35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. 38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving [saving] of the soul.**

Persecution has always been part and parcel with this message. From the days of Moses and the prophets, when God spoke to His people concerning *obedience* relative to the land, rest, and inheritance even to this present day, persecution has been the lot of a child of God who would believe, live out, and carry on this message. Let's reread this passage and think through a few things. Look at vv. 32-34. Circle the phrase *after being enlightened* in v. 32. From the preceding context and warnings, what do you think the author is referring to when he uses this phrase?

From this passage, list the things that were endured as part and parcel of the *great conflict of sufferings*. In other words, what did they have to endure *after having been enlightened*?

The end of v. 34 explains why they endured such treatment. Why was it?

Not forgetting all that we have learned throughout this epistle — all the author has been dealing with in the warnings — what would the author be referring to as a *better possession, an abiding one*?

We'll pick up tomorrow. I know these verses are tough! I wish we could just ignore them, but they wouldn't go away. We cannot ignore the tough verses in Scripture; we must deal with them if we are to grow. And if one has a heart for pleasing God, it is better to know these things than not to know them. But then vice-versa is true, also. If a person is not bent on pleasing the Lord, it is better for them not to know (II Pe. 2:21).

See you tomorrow.

## Day Three — Words of Encouragement

Today we will complete Hebrews chapter ten and introduce chapter eleven. Skim over yesterday's work so you will be in context. Then we'll pick up again at the end of chapter ten.

### Hebrews 10

**35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised. 37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. 38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM. 39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving [or, *saving*] of the soul.**

Write out the essence of vv. 35 and 36.

Based on v. 36, are the *things promised* conditional or unconditional?

Then in v. 37, the author quotes from the Old Testament, telling of the imminence of Christ's return with His reward — the positive reward is implied in the text, the negative reward is expressed. (It is interesting that it is laid out this way and not the reverse, don't you think?)

What kind of person is v. 38 dealing with — saved or unsaved? How do you know?

What are the two possibilities given for His "righteous one"?

And if His righteous one shrinks back, what does he shrink back to?

But what encouragement does the author give to his readers? He believes they will not be of those who shrink back, but rather of those who do what?

Now let's talk about that! In Hebrews chapter eleven, we are about to meet individuals *who have looked forward to these things*, displaying faith through their actions, and in doing so, have *preserved* [or saved] *their souls*. Introducing — the Old Testament hall of fame! These are individuals whose lives offer us

great examples of having done exactly what is mentioned in v. 39 — displayed faith to the saving of their soul. And...

**Hebrews 11**

**1 Now faith <4102> is the assurance <5287> of things hoped for <1679>, the conviction <1650> of things not seen. 2 For by it the men of old gained approval.**

Study the definitions in verse one and re-phrase what faith is.

faith <4102>

assurance <5287>

hoped <1679>

conviction <1650>

This is not as much a definition of faith as it is a statement relating *the result of faith*. Write what this passage says in your own words.

The kind of faith described in v.1 is based on what is mentioned exactly in the previous verse (10:39). In 10:39, what phrase describes the faith referred to in Hebrews 11: 1? (Remember there were not chapter or verse divisions in the original writing.)

And what does that kind of faith offer believers? (Compare 10:39 with 11:1.)

It is through *this kind of faith* — faith to the preserving [saving] of the soul — that these men of old gained approval by God (v.2).

And as we have seen in Lesson Thirteen —

**Hebrews 11**

**6 And without faith it is impossible to please <2100> Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder <3406> of those who seek <1567> Him.**

Feel free to look up the definitions in this verse —

please <2100>

a rewarder <3406>

seek <1567>

Today and tomorrow we will look at some of the individuals mentioned in chapter eleven and see *what they did* and *why they did what they did*; perhaps we will also understand their outcome as it is spelled out in the text.

As we peer into this Hall of Faith, we will see that these statements are God's own commendations of these individuals — commendations made of specific Old Testament saints who are mentioned by the author under the direction of the Holy Spirit for specific reasons. This is not a randomly chosen list of names. Because these individuals *looked forward* to specific things, they *acted* in specific ways; in the end, they will be rewarded for their actions. Please note as you read these statements that — in every instance — these individuals acted “by faith.” Don't let that phrase slip from your notice.

Let's get started.

#### **Hebrews 11**

**7 By faith Noah, being warned by God about things not yet seen, in reverence prepared an ark for the salvation of his household, by which he condemned the world, and became an heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.**

What did Noah do *by faith*?

Why did he do it?

What is the outcome for him?

**8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. 9 By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; 10 for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.**

What did Abraham do *by faith*?

Why did he do it?

What is the outcome for him?

**11 By faith even Sarah herself received ability to conceive, even beyond the proper time of life, since she considered Him faithful who had promised; 12 therefore, also, there was born of one man, and him as good as dead at that, as many descendants AS THE STARS OF HEAVEN IN NUMBER, AND INNUMERABLE AS THE SAND WHICH IS BY THE SEASHORE.**

What did Sarah do *by faith*?

Why did she do it?

What is the outcome for her?

**13 All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. 14 For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. 15 And indeed if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.**

What did all of these do *by faith*?

Why did they do it?

What is their outcome for them?

We'll pick up tomorrow. You're doing a great job! Hang in there!

## Day Four — Our Role Models

Yesterday we began to peruse the Old Testament Hall of Fame — Hebrews chapter eleven. Today we'll pick up where we left off. I hope you are seeing the developing picture of how one can *please God*. It is essential not only to understand these things, but it is also essential to act upon what we see!

We are continuing in Hebrews chapter eleven where the author brings us back to Abraham.

**17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son; 18 it was he to whom it was said, “IN ISAAC YOUR DESCENDANTS SHALL BE CALLED.” 19 He considered that God is able to raise men even from the dead; from which he also received him back as a type.**

What did Abraham do *by faith*? (Do you remember studying this?)

Why did he do it?

The outcome is that he was commended by God.

**20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding things to come.**

What did Isaac do *by faith*?

Why did he do it?

And he was commended by God.

**21 By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning on the top of his staff.**

What did Jacob do *by faith*?

Scripture reveals that of all of Jacob's twelve sons, it was Joseph who received the double portion of the inheritance. Jacob gave the double portion to Joseph by giving each one of Joseph's sons a share of the inheritance (Gen. 48:8-22). In other words, Joseph's two sons received the same inheritance that Joseph's brothers received. And in this respect, Joseph received the double-portion.

The blessings Jacob gave to Joseph's sons are written out in Genesis 48:8-22. In these blessings, Jacob spells out his faith, reiterating what God had previously revealed to him. And Jacob was blessing Joseph's sons according to his belief. In other words, he acted upon what he believed.

And he was commended by God.

And then —

**22 By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the exodus of the sons of Israel, and gave orders concerning his bones.**

What did Joseph do *by faith*?

The orders that Joseph gave concerning his bones being carried with the Children of Israel in the exodus were based upon what his father told him at the conclusion of Jacob blessing his sons (Gen. 48:22). Joseph believed God through what Jacob had told him, and gave the instructions concerning his bones. Joseph's coffin, within the midst of Israel (Gen. 50:26), would be a testimony to Israel during the ensuing years of slavery, a testimony to the fact that God was going to one day take the people out of Egypt and bring them to the land God swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (*cf.* Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32). In this respect, Joseph's unburied coffin in their midst was a visual, constant reminder that God was going to deliver them from bondage — something they were to believe and look forward to.

And Joseph was commended by God.

(Notice something in the previous two verses. It is mentioned of both Jacob and Joseph that “when he was dying” he did something. This reveals that both men went to their deaths with these future things foremost on their minds! This is wonderful to see!)

Continuing —

**23 By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents, because they saw he was a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king's edict.**

What did Moses' parents do *by faith*?

Why did they do it?

And they were commended by God.

**24 By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; 26 considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.**

List all the things that Moses did *by faith*?

Why did he do such things?

What can be the assumed outcome for him?

**27 By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that he who destroyed the first-born might not touch them.**

What did Moses continue to do *by faith*?

Why did he do it?

Now let's look at a whole list of faithful people —

**29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned. 30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they had been encircled for seven days. 31 By faith Rahab the harlot did not perish along with those who were disobedient, after she had welcomed the spies in peace.**

**32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, 33 who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. 35 Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection; 36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment. 37 They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground.**

Generally what did these individuals do *by faith*?

Why did they do it?

What will be the outcome for them (see v. 35)?

And then a summary statement —

**39 And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect <5048>.**

perfect <5048>

Rewrite vv. 39-40 in your own words.

As we close for the day, compare this recap in vv. 39-40 to the one found previously in vv. 13-16.

I hope you get the picture. Based upon their faith, these people performed certain acts (works) that will have age-lasting ramifications because they looked forward to the very things which God desires us to look forward to. By looking ahead, these men and women believed that the things they could see (in the natural world) did not emanate out of that which they could see through faith (11:3), for what they saw in the natural world was disorderly, not God's original arrangement of things. However through faith, they saw that there is a day coming in which order will exist once more. And because they could see these things by faith, they acted in certain ways that exemplified their faith. This list of faithful saints in Hebrews chapter eleven is given to us for examples of the kind of faith which has the foundation of things seen through faith — future things. We are to reflect upon this as we live our lives here on earth, with the encouragement that these kind of blessings can be ours if we but heed the warnings given to us throughout the Book of Hebrews, believing what God saw fit to tell us through the prophets and His Son (bringing us back to chapter one).

Any thoughts?

## Day Five — The Fifth Warning

It is necessary to note once again that there is a flow of thought in the warnings of the Book of Hebrews. Let's reduce each warning to its irreducible minimum. The flow is this — Don't drift away from the words of the prophets and of the Lord (2:1-4 [reflecting back on ch. 1]); strive to enter the rest out ahead (chs. 3 and 4); also strive to understand what is involved in this rest; and should the Lord so grant that you understand (come to maturity), don't turn away from this knowledge (6:4-6), because if you heed the first three warnings and come into a mature knowledge of these things and then *sin against this knowledge*, there is a terrifying expectation of judgment (10:26-31). But don't stop here! The author goes on to point out that there are (as of yet) unseen blessings in heeding these warnings — unseen through physical eyes, but seen through eyes of faith. And this kind of faith is the firm foundation upon which our hope rests.

This is the flow of thought given throughout the Book of Hebrews and it is very important for us to see this. But we need to understand *the other side* of the fourth warning. It is this — *if you heed this warning there is great expectation of reward*; and you, the reader, only need endurance (10:35ff)! Then the author follows this encouragement with some examples of Old Testament saints who have endured conflict, looking ahead to that coming Day, living today *by faith*. They will *yet be rewarded* (ch. 11); they only await us! (Just think of that!)

Based upon the individuals mentioned in chapter eleven, the author goes on to bring us to the fifth warning. This fifth and final warning in the Book of Hebrews concerns itself with *the rights of the first-born son*. Keep in mind what you have learned as you read through chapter twelve. (This first verse mentions *so great a cloud of witnesses*. Referring to this group of Old Testament people in the previous chapter as “witnesses” doesn't mean that they *watch* us. Rather it means that they *are examples* to us. They are witnesses in the respect of being examples for us.)

Thoughtfully and carefully read through this chapter. Read with discernment, striving to keep it all in the context of this book.

### Hebrews 12

**1** Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2** fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. **3** For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may not grow weary and lose heart.

**4** You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; **5** and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, “MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; **6** FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES.” **7** It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? **8** But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. **9** Furthermore, we had earthly

fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness. 12 Therefore, strengthen the hands that are weak and the knees that are feeble, 13 and make straight paths for your feet, so that the limb which is lame may not be put out of joint, but rather be healed. 14 Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord. 15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; 16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.

18 For you have not come to a mountain that may be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, 19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them. 20 For they could not bear the command, “IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED.” 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, “I AM FULL OF FEAR AND TREMBLING.” 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel. 25 See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. 26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, “YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN.” 27 And this expression, “Yet once more,” denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, in order that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

Recap vv. 16, 17 in your own words.

Compare v. 25 with 2:1-3. What comparison do you see?

As first-born sons, the Children of Israel were warned by God *to heed His Words*. In chapter twelve, the Church is also warned by God *to heed His Word*. And it all has to do with individuals maintaining their first-born status in the family. Hence you have the fifth and final warning in the epistle —

**15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; 16 that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. 17 For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears.**

Notice that leading up to this fifth and final warning, the author tells his readers that the Father is going to discipline his sons, and he gives his readers encouragement as to what to do when they are disciplined by the Father (vv. 5-15). It is on the heels of this that the fifth warning is spelled out. And it is interesting that Isaac's first-born son, Esau (who sold his first-born rights in order to satisfy his fleshly desires) is given as our example.

Then the author brings the whole picture full-circle (12:18ff). He goes back to the type of the Children of Israel in the wilderness at Mt. Sinai (which was seen in 2:2 and chs. 3, 4), and brings things forward to another mountain. Reread vv. 18-29, and make the comparisons on the chart. (This will be great discussion material for your class this week. You can review what we have learned in Lesson Six, if you need to [pp. 94-97].)

### **The Children of Israel**

### **Christians**

The Book of Hebrews closes with some do's and don'ts listed in chapter thirteen. We'll cover this chapter in the lecture this week. If you have time, please read the chapter through, so that you are familiar with it.

You are doing a great job! This is difficult, I know. I leave you with this passage to consider.

#### **II Corinthians 5**

**9 Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.  
10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.  
11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men...**

That is why I am trying to persuade you!!!