

I. Review

- A. In Hebrews chapter 5, the writer is expounding upon Jesus being the great high priest according to the order of Melchizedek, who is both faithful and merciful. Near the end of chapter 5, the writer has to stop his train of thought and bring both correction and strong warning to the readers since they have grown dull in their faith and digressed in their maturity.
 - 1. The correction is for them to move forward and grow in their maturity by being reestablished in the elementary principles of Christ in their faith, and then move on to more mature themes in the beauty and glory of the revelation of Jesus. He warns that if they don't move forward in maturity they will continue to move backwards to the point they will be in great danger of falling away or departing from the faith.
- B. After giving the harsh correction and strong warning the writer now takes the entire rest of the chapter to encourage and strengthen the struggling believers to whom the letter was written.

II. Verse-by-Verse

- A. Confidence in better things - This is the first and only time the writer calls the readers, "beloved" which means "dear friends". I believe this heartfelt identification is meant to soften the emotional blow of the strong clear warning that was just given. The tone of the rest of this chapter now intends to give heartfelt encouragement and clear hope to the receiver in order to help strengthen their hearts to overcome their current drifting and dull state of faith.
 - 1. Confidence - The original word translated "confident" literally means "cause to believe". The writer has cause to believe that the readers will heed the multiple strong warnings given and repent of their drifting and turn to wholehearted pursuit of their inheritance in the fullness of salvation.
 - 2. Accompany Salvation - I believe the "things" that the writer is referring to are all the blessings that will be felt and received in the age to come. The reason for this is the writer's immediate pointing to and speaking of the realities of the messianic age that those who persevere will inherit. This is a very important point to consider when faced with a drifting and

dull-hearted believer. The antidote that the writer gives is connecting them to the beauties of Jesus and the hope of the age to come.

B. Eternal rewards - There is actually a growing idea in the church today that seeking eternal rewards is a selfish motivation, and that your motivation for obedience and good works should only be done out of love for Jesus and to expect nothing in return. As pious and virtuous as this may seem it is an absolute contradiction to the clear commands of Jesus and the rest of scripture.

1. Jesus - How can something be selfish or evil if God Himself commands us to do it and who does it Himself? Jesus Himself was motivated by the rewards that He would receive based upon His obedience in this life to the suffering and death that He was called to. (Is. 53:11-12; Heb. 12:2; From the lips of Jesus: Mt. 6:1-21, 10:42, 16:27, 19:21, 25:14-30; Rev. 2-3, 22:12. Additional scriptural examples: Ps. 19:11, 58:11; Prov. 11:18, 25:22; Is. 40:10, 49:4, 62:11, 1 Cor. 3:8, 14, 4:5; Col. 2:18, 3:24; Heb. 11:26; 2 Jn. 1:8; Rev. 11:18)

2. God is not unjust to forget - The first thing the writer encourages the readers in is the eternal rewards that they have been building up and will receive in the age to come. This is one of the things that the writer is speaking of when he speaks of the “things that accompany salvation”.

C. Be diligent to press into the hope of salvation - This is the second time the writer calls the reader to action. The first time was a call to intentional daily community life to encourage one another in the faith. Now, the exhortation is to “work” or “strive” to grow into the hope of salvation. The idea of the “full assurance” is the full picture or full understanding of the hope of salvation, or in other words, to familiarize yourself with knowledge concerning all aspects of the age to come. (Hope of the Gospel: Acts. 1:6; Mt. 20:20-23; 170 Chapters have this as its main theme; 1Pet. 1:3-5, 13, 3:15; Rom. 15:4-13; 1 Co. 13:13; 1 Th. 5:8; Heb. 3:6; Heb. 6:19; 1 Jn. 3:3)

D. Do not become sluggish but imitate those who have gone before - The writer points out that we can become sluggish or lazy rather than diligent to grow in our faith concerning the fullness of salvation. Laziness in this sense can be referred back to the intentional use of our spiritual senses to press into the knowledge of salvation (Heb. 5:11-14). The idea here is that Abraham had to grow in his faith intentionally and patiently to be prepared for the moment God asked him to offer up his son.

1. For Abraham obtained the promise - What we are to see here is that Abraham grew in his faith from the day that he believed God concerning his son Isaac up until the day his faith was given the ultimate test.
 - a. Abram at 75 years old receives the first promise of a son and being the father of a great nation (Gen. 12:1-3)
 - b. Abram's faith is tested by leaving his home, surviving famine, the king of Egypt desiring his wife, Sarai, his wife's barrenness, and allowing his nephew to choose the land. This testing period was roughly 10 years, with no promise fulfillment. Living in the mundane and testing strengthened and matured his faith. (Gen. 12:4-13:13)
 - c. God repeats His promise (Gen. 13:14-18)
 - d. Abram's faith is tested again through war and conflict, humility in great victory, continued barrenness, and offering his servant's child as his heir. This testing period is roughly another 10 years. (Gen. 14:1-15:3)
 - e. God repeats His promise with signs and wonders but still no actual fulfillment (Gen. 15)
 - f. Abram's faith was tested again through more barrenness, having a child by his wife's servant, This testing period was roughly 5 years. (Gen. 16)
 - g. God repeats His promise and changes Abram's (exalted father) and Sarai's (princess) name to Abraham (the father of a multitude) and Sarah (queen mother of nations) to reflect their growth and maturity in faith through testing. He also promises that Abraham's promised son will arrive in one year. (Gen. 17)
 - h. Abraham's faith is tested again through circumcision, more barrenness, the Sodom and Gomorrah intercession, and the king of Abraham's promised land desired his wife. This testing period lasted 3 months (Gen. 18-20)
 - i. God brings the promised son miraculously 25 years after the initial promise, well after it was possible for Abraham and Sarah to conceive. (Gen. 21:1-8)
 - j. Abraham's faith is put to the ultimate test roughly 20 years later when God asks him to kill and sacrifice Isaac. The scripture tells us that the result of 45 years of diligence to grow in faith through

perseverance, trial, and mundane is that Abraham did not waiver to do it.

2. This is the moment the writer of Hebrews is referring to, “when Abraham through patient endurance received the promise.” This is the moment when God swears by Himself to Abraham of the sureness of his inheritance of salvation as a sign to all of us who will inherit the same salvation as Abraham. (Heb. 11:17-19; Jam. 2:21-23)
- E. God's sure promise of salvation - God has promised the fullness of salvation to those who have faith, faith perfected and matured through time and trials. God swears to give salvation by two immutable or unchangeable things: His promise of salvation to those who believe, and His taking an oath to keep it.
1. By this we have “strong consolation” to endure in faith. What strong consolation means is that we have power through the truth of our inheritance by faith into salvation that overcomes or consoles us through unimaginable difficulty. There is no pain or darkness that we face that the truth of our coming salvation cannot overcome.

“It is a strong consolation that can deal with outward trials when a man has poverty staring him in the face, and hears his little children crying for bread; when bankruptcy is likely to come upon him through unavoidable losses; when the poor man has just lost his wife, and his dear children have been put into the same grave; when one after another all earthly props and comforts have given way, he needs a strong consolation then; not in your pictured trials, but your real trials, not in your imaginary whimsied afflictions, but in the real afflictions, and the blustering storms of life. To rejoice then, and say, ‘Though these things be not with me as I would have them, yet he has made with me an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure;’ this is strong consolation. - Spurgeon

- F. Hope of salvation as an anchor - The hope of salvation has to be clear and understood for it to be real hope. Abraham’s hope of the promise of salvation was not fanciful but concrete. He would bear a son and this son would bear more sons and he eventually would become the father of a nation; he would live forever in a land that he was walking on. Through his seed, the earth would be restored to the blessed condition it was in before the curse of sin and death devastated it.
1. In my opinion, the hope of salvation for most Christians is incredibly absurd and unbiblical. Most picture an eternity of boredom in the sky, floating on clouds and participating in some form of endless church service. Therefore, the hope of salvation is not the anchor for their mind, will, and emotions in the face of darkness and death.

- G. Hope of the Gospel - Jesus preached and confirmed the good news of the coming kingdom of God to the earth, not the church service in the sky. This is the rule and reign of the Christ of which the prophets have spoken of since the beginning. It is the glorious realities of the rule and reign of King Jesus upon His return. This is the hope of which the scriptures are replete with, the anchor of the soul. This hope is the hope that we must familiarize ourselves with, and cling to with all our might. (1 Pet. 1:13; 2 Pet. 3:13-14; 2 Tim. 4:8; Titus 2:11-15)