

# EXPLANATION OF 58<sup>TH</sup> BIBLEBOOK

## HEBREWS 6 (A.D. 64)

### OUTLINE

5:11 – 6:3 cont.	Exhortation to pursue spiritual maturity	1
6:4-8	Third practical warning. Do not apostate (fall away) from the Christian Faith	5
6:9-20	Encouragement that God is just and will keep his promise	8

**Hebrews 6** is the continued exhortation not to stand still at the rudiments or elementary doctrines of orthodox Judaism and Christianity, but to carry on to maturity (perfection) (6:1-3). The exhortation is backed-up by a warning not to fall away from the foundation: the teaching about Christ by Christ, that is, from the New Testament revelation and New Testament Church. ‘Apostasy’ is the deliberate renouncing of Christ by nominal/cultural (Jewish) Christians and is humanly impossible to remedy. But true regeneration produces a useful crop instead of thorns and thistles (6:4-8). An exhortation to imitate those who through faith, patience and loving works inherit God’s promise. God is just and will keep his promise! (6:9-12). God’s promise is very certain, because he confirmed it with an oath. Christian hope is anchored in heaven (6:13-19).

### 5:11 - 6:3 continued. Exhortation to pursue spiritual maturity

#### b. The foundation of God’s covenant.

**6:1a.** Therefore let us, leave behind the teaching of the beginning about/of Christ. Let us carry on to maturity,<sup>1</sup>

*‘Leaving behind’ does not mean ‘abandoning’ the elementary Christian teachings.* It rather means not to remain standing still at them! The author of Hebrews does not say with Paul to the immature Gentiles in Corinth, “Therefore I must continue to feed you with milk” (that is, the elementary and easy Bible teachings)<sup>2</sup>. He rather says to the immature Jewish Christians in Rome: “Let us press on towards maturity” learning the main and more difficult Bible teachings.

Because only by dispelling the ignorance about Jesus Christ as the True and Perfect High Priest will they be set free from their condition of ignorance and fear (of Jews putting pressure on them)<sup>3</sup>. *Their minds require to be stretched from standing still at Jewish notions about the ordinary high priest to the full knowledge of Christ as the High Priest!* When the Hebrew Christians grasp the truth of God’s covenant promise and “the unchanging nature of God’s purpose” (6:17), they will be set free to grow to maturity!

*“Carrying on to maturity (perfection) (6:1) happens through God, and not in one’s own human power.*  
The passive verb in the Greek indicates a personal surrender to an active Power!

*Do not stand still at the elementary teachings.*

‘The rudiments or the elementary doctrines about Christ’ (6:1) is exactly the same as ‘the beginning elements of truth’<sup>4</sup> of the sayings (revelations) of God<sup>5</sup> (5:12). The word ‘rudiments’ is used for the following in the Bible:

- the letters of the alphabet, the ABC, ‘the beginning doctrines of the Christian faith (5:12; 6:1).
- the ‘elements’ which make up the material universe (matter, energy, space and time), which will be destroyed or renewed by fire<sup>6</sup>.
- the ‘elemental spirits of the world’ which seek to bring people into bondage and from which the gospel delivers them<sup>7</sup>. *They are:*
  - the Gentile religions and the gods of these religions that enslaved the Gentiles<sup>8</sup>
  - the Old Testament Law together with its Jewish interpretations that enslaved Jews<sup>9</sup>.
- the collective writings of the Old Testament probably in the light of the New Testament revelation given by Christ.

*Do not lay the foundation all over again.* The ‘rudiments or elementary doctrines about Christ’ and ‘the foundation’ are the same thing described in two different figures. Six rudiments are listed, probably coming from a catechesis familiar to the writer and the readers. They were regarded as a suitable foundation of Christian teaching in a non-Pauline or Jewish Christian church. *Remarkable, however, is how little of these six rudiments is distinctive Christian!*

<sup>1</sup> **6:1a.** Therefore (διο)(ch=conjunction hyper/superordinating) let us, leave behind (αφεντες>αφιημι)(vpaanm xp) the teaching (ο λογος)(n-am-s) of the beginning (η αρχη)(n--gf-s) of Christ: [i] objective genitive: the beginning teaching about Christ (Christ is the Object)] or [ii] subjective genitive: the beginning/initial teaching of/by Christ (Christ is the subject, the Teacher)]. Let us carry on (press on) (φερωμεθα>φερω) (vspp--xp)(cohortative *subjunctive*: Let us ...) to maturity (completeness, perfection) (η τελειωτης)(n-af-s),

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 3:1-2

<sup>3</sup> cf. John 8:31-32

<sup>4</sup> το στοιχειον + η αρχη

<sup>5</sup> τα λογια

<sup>6</sup> 2 Peter 3:10,12

<sup>7</sup> Colossians 2:20

<sup>8</sup> Galatians 4:3-8; Colossians 2:8

<sup>9</sup> Galatians 4:9-10,24-25; Colossians 2:16-23

Everyone of these 6 items could have a place in a fairly orthodox Jewish community. Of course, in order to be the foundation of a Christian church, each item acquired a new significance in the Christian context. We get the impression that existing Jewish beliefs and practices (clearly based on the Old Testament) were used as a foundation on which Jewish Christians built Christian truth.

### **(1) Repentance from dead works.**

6:1b not again laying the foundation of repentance from dead works.<sup>10</sup>

‘Repentance’ means ‘a change of mind’. ‘Dead works’ are works or acts which must be repented of. They are works from which the conscience requires to be cleansed (9:14). They are probably not the works of the law, but works that are evil and belong to the way of death<sup>11</sup>.

*Repentance in the Jewish context.* In the Qumran literature<sup>12</sup> (100 B.C. to 70 A.D.) and in the pre-Christian book “Testaments of the twelve patriarchs”<sup>13</sup> (2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.) there are traces of *teaching ‘the two ways’*. The sectarians of Qumran described themselves as “the repentant of Israel”<sup>14</sup>. Note Deuteronomy 30:15-20, “I (the LORD) set before you today *life* and prosperity, *death* and destruction. ... I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life...” Read Deuteronomy 27-30.

*Repentance in the Christian context.* The Christian books “Didache”<sup>15</sup> (1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.) and “The Epistle of Barnabas”<sup>16</sup> (70-136 A.D.) contain *ethical treatises of ‘the two ways’* (the way of life and the way of death; or the way of light and the way of darkness). Didache says that ‘the way of death’ is “evil and fraught with a curse” and catalogues the sins that belong to it: murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, magic arts, sorceries, robberies, false depositions, hypocrisies, a double heart, fraud, arrogance, malice, obstinacy, covetousness, filthy language, envy, audacity, haughtiness, boastfulness ...<sup>17</sup>. Repentance from such works were insisted upon in the Old Testament<sup>18</sup> and in Jewish religion. John the Baptist’s preaching was “a call to repentance”<sup>19</sup>. Jesus’ preaching was “a call to repentance”<sup>20</sup>. Peter’s preaching was “a call to repentance”<sup>21</sup> and so was Paul’s<sup>22</sup>.

### **(2) Faith toward God.**

6:1c and of faith towards God.<sup>23</sup>

*Faith in the Jewish context.* Faith was the essential foundation of true religion in the Old Testament<sup>24</sup>. Unbelief kept the generation of Israel during the Exodus (1447-1407 B.C.) from entering the Promised Land (4:2).

*Faith in the Christian context.* The Hebrews are urged to apply this absolute need of faith to their own situation (4:1). *This Old Testament preparation required the New Testament application*<sup>25</sup>! *The preaching of the gospel about Jesus Christ calls for faith in Jesus Christ (4:2).* “The righteous one will live by faith”<sup>26</sup>. If you do not believe the message of the gospel, it will be of no value to you when you hear it (4:2).

### **(3) The teaching about washings.**

**6.2a.** of the instruction about washings (Jewish purification rituals),<sup>27</sup>

<sup>10</sup> **6:1b** not (μη)(ab=adverb) again (παλι)(ab) laying (casting down) (καταβαλλομενοι>καταβαλλω) (νρρmmxp) the foundation (ο θεμελιος) (n-am-s ) of repentance (η μετανοια)(n-gf-s) from (απο)(pg=preposition genitive) dead (that cannot lead to life)(νεκρος-α-ον)(a--gn-p) works

(το εργος)(n-gn-p)

<sup>11</sup> Romans 6:23

<sup>12</sup> Rule of Community, Qumran cave 1, 3:18-4:26

<sup>13</sup> Judah 20:1-5; Asher 1:3 - 6:3

<sup>14</sup> Damascus Document, 4:2

<sup>15</sup> Didache 1:1 - 5:2

<sup>16</sup> Barnabas 18:1 - 20:2

<sup>17</sup> Didache 5:1; cf. Romans 1:21-31; Romans 6:20

<sup>18</sup> Isaiah 59:20; Ezekiel 18:11-13,30-32

<sup>19</sup> Mark 1:4

<sup>20</sup> Mark 1:14-15

<sup>21</sup> Acts 2:38-41; Acts 3:19

<sup>22</sup> Acts 20:21

<sup>23</sup> **6:1c** and (και) of faith (η πιστις)(n-gf-s) towards (επι)(pa=preposition accusative) God (ο θεος)(n-am-s)

<sup>24</sup> Genesis 15:6; Isaiah 7:9; Habakkuk 2:4

<sup>25</sup> cf. 1 Corinthians 10:6,11. “These things (recorded in the Old Testament) occurred as examples to keep us (New Testament believers) from setting our hearts on evil things as they did.”

<sup>26</sup> Habakkuk 2:4

<sup>27</sup> **6.2a.** of the instruction (η διδαχη)(n-gf-s) about washings (Jewish purification rituals) (ο βαπτισμος)(n-gm-p),

*Washings in the Jewish context.* The Greek word is not ‘baptisma’<sup>28</sup>, which is regularly used to denote Christian baptism, but ‘baptismos’<sup>29</sup>, which is used in the New Testament to denote *Jewish ceremonial washings*:

- Jewish purification (washing) of hands<sup>30</sup> by pouring water on and over the hands<sup>31</sup>, cups, pots, vessels and beds<sup>32</sup>.
- Baptism of John questioned by a Jew whether it is ‘a ceremonial purification’<sup>33</sup>.
- Different ceremonial washings associated with the sacrificial cult of the Old Testament<sup>34</sup>.
- The plural is against the straightforward interpretation in terms of Christian baptism<sup>35</sup>.

Numbers 19:9,13,19,20 requires ceremonial sprinkling, washing of clothes and taking a bath before being ceremonially ‘clean’. A ceremonial ‘unclean’ person must be cut off from the community (the people of God/the Church).

Ezekiel 36:25 uses the terminology of the Old Testament rites of cleansing to describe God’s inward cleansing of his people in the age of restoration.

*Washings in the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D.* During the beginning of the Christian era, Baptist groups flourished in Judaism and they found scriptural authority for their ceremonial washings beyond what the letter of the law required<sup>36</sup>. The Qumran community practised ceremonial washings in terms of Numbers 19 and Ezekiel 36, but did not regard such ablution as a means of removing iniquity from a man’s heart. They believed that only submission to the commands of God could purify a man inwardly. Only after inward purity would outward ceremonial washings have any value for them<sup>37</sup>.

Apparently such Baptist groups were also found in the Jewish Dispersion and were carried over into Roman Christianity. The ‘Apostolic tradition of Hippolytus’ (beginning 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D.) says, “And let those who are to be baptised be instructed to wash and cleanse themselves on the 5<sup>th</sup> day of the week”. According to Hippolytus, *baptism as the central Christian initiation took place on Sunday, but on the preceding Thursday the candidate was required to have a ritual bath for the removal of impurity*. This pre-baptismal ceremonial bath has no warrant in the New Testament, but may well have been a legacy from the Jews living in Rome.

If this letter to the Hebrews was sent to a group of Christian Jews in Rome, the reference to ‘instruction about baptisms’ may have had a more direct significance than meets the eye today.

*Washings in the Christian context.* The expression is commonly regarded as a reference to Christian baptism. There are Christians who regard the six foundations as part of the early Christian initiation ceremony, but it is *rather a reference to Jewish ceremonial rites of cleansing*.

#### **(4) The laying on of hands.**

6:2b and the laying on of hands,<sup>38</sup>

*Laying on of hands in the Jewish context.* This symbolic acts was also inherited from the Old Testament, where it was used especially in the commissioning for public office<sup>39</sup> or part of the sacrificial rite<sup>40</sup>. In rabbinical Judaism the term appears regularly in the sense of ‘the ordination’ (of elders)<sup>41</sup>.

*Laying on of hands in the Christian context.* This was an early Christian practice<sup>42</sup> associated especially with the impartation of the Holy Spirit. *It symbolises the impartation of the Holy Spirit, something only Jesus Christ can impart*<sup>43</sup>. Most probably it has this symbolic significance here (2:4; 6:4; 10:29).

#### **(5) The resurrection of the dead.**

6:2c and the resurrection of the dead,<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> το βαπτισμα

<sup>29</sup> ο βαπτισμος

<sup>30</sup> εβαπτισθη

<sup>31</sup> εκχεω. 2 Kings 3:11

<sup>32</sup> Mark 7:3-4; Luke 11:38-39

<sup>33</sup> ο καθαρισμος. John 3:23-25

<sup>34</sup> Hebrews 9:10

<sup>35</sup> Hebrews 6:1

<sup>36</sup> cf. Zechariah 13:1

<sup>37</sup> Rule of the Community from Qumran cave 1, 3:4-9; 5:13f

<sup>38</sup> **6:2b** and (τε)(cc=conjunction coordinating) the laying on (η επιθεσις)(n-gf-s) of hands (η χειρ)(n-gf-p),

<sup>39</sup> Numbers 27:18,23; Deuteronomy 34:9

<sup>40</sup> Leviticus 1:4; 3:2; 4:4; 8:14; 16:21

<sup>41</sup> Mishna Sanhedrin 4:4 (190-230 A.D.)

<sup>42</sup> Acts 6:6; 8:17; 9:12,17; 19:6

<sup>43</sup> Mark 1:8

<sup>44</sup> **6:2c** and (τε)(cc) the resurrection (η αναστασις)(n-gf-s) of the dead (ο νεκρος)(ap-gm-p),

*The resurrection of the dead in the Jewish context.* The resurrection of the dead is taught in the Old Testament<sup>45</sup>. The (orthodox) Jewish Pharisees emphasized this over against the (liberal) Jewish Sadducees<sup>46</sup>.

*The resurrection of the dead in the Christian context.* Jesus<sup>47</sup> and the apostle Paul<sup>48</sup> taught the resurrection of the dead.

## **(6) Eternal judgement.**

6:2d and eternal judgement.<sup>49</sup>

*Eternal judgement in the Jewish context.* God is the Judge of all the earth<sup>50</sup>. Some will go to everlasting life and others to everlasting contempt<sup>51</sup>. God's recurring judgements in history will be summed up in the last judgement<sup>52</sup>.

*Eternal judgement in the Christians context.* God has entrusted all judgement to Jesus Christ<sup>53</sup>. God will judge the world with justice by a man he has appointed (Christ)<sup>54</sup>. The evil people will go to eternal punishment and the righteous people will go to eternal life<sup>55</sup>.

**c. Maturity through the teaching of righteousness.**

**6:3.** And this we will do, if God permits.<sup>56</sup>

### **(1) What is needed is growth towards maturity.**

*The Hebrews already possessed the Old Testament foundation.* When the gospel was preached to those Hebrews, the first coming of Jesus Christ gave a fresh and fuller significance to this Old Testament foundation. *The Hebrews (the Jewish believers/Christians) had received the gospel and based their Jewish Christian life on a foundation already laid in the Old Testament.* Insistence on the (Christian) foundation does not help the Hebrew Christians.

- *Apostasy of a pagan convert.* If a convert from paganism gave up Christianity and reverted to paganism, there would be a clean break between the Christian faith which he renounced and the pagan faith to which he returned.
- *Apostasy of a Jewish convert.* But if a convert from Judaism gave up Christianity and reverted to Judaism, there would be no clean break between the New Testament foundation of faith and the Old Testament foundation of faith. *It would be possible for the recipient of this letter to yield gradually to the pressures from the world and from the Jewish community, to give up more and more those features and practices, which were distinctive of Christianity, and yet to feel that they had not abandoned the basic foundational principles in the Old Testament!*

The writer of Hebrews says that *to keep on insisting on these foundational things or elementary doctrines of the Bible would not help the Jewish Christians to continue as real and distinct Christians or grow to spiritual maturity as Christians!*<sup>57</sup>

*The only way forward for the Jewish Christians is to keep on growing to spiritual maturity! 'Growing', that is, 'getting acquainted with the teaching of righteousness in Christ' (instead of law-righteousness of Judaism/Islam), is the only way to spiritual maturity (and the only way to hinder a threatening apostasy (5:13-14)! 'The teaching about righteousness in Christ' consists of the teaching about Jesus Christ as the Reality of what the Old Testament foreshadows (illustrates as a picture)(8:5; 9:8-10; 10:1)<sup>58</sup>.*

### **(2) What is needed in knowing Jesus Christ.**

Jesus Christ is:

- the Final Word (revelation) of God to man (instead of standing still at the Old Testament prophets)(1:1)

<sup>45</sup> Job 19:25-27; Psalm 16:10; 49:15; Hosea 13:14; Isaiah 25:6-8; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2,13

<sup>46</sup> Acts 23:8, cf. Matthew 22:23-33

<sup>47</sup> Mark 12:26f; cf. Exodus 3:6

<sup>48</sup> 1 Corinthians 15

<sup>49</sup> **6:2d** and (καί)(cc) eternal (without end)( αωνιος-α-ον)(a--gn-s) judgement (το κριμα)(n-gn-s).

<sup>50</sup> Genesis 18:25; Isaiah 33:22; Ecclesiastes 12:14

<sup>51</sup> Daniel 12:2, cf. Matthew 25:46

<sup>52</sup> Daniel 12:9-10

<sup>53</sup> John 5:22,27

<sup>54</sup> Acts 17:31

<sup>55</sup> Matthew 25:46

<sup>56</sup> **6:3.** And (και)(cc) this (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdan-s demonstrative) we will do (ποιησομεν>ποιεω)(vifa--xp), if (εανπερ)(cs) God permits (επιτρεπη>επιτρεπω)(vsra--zs).

<sup>57</sup> Application: The writer of Hebrews says that *to keep on insisting that Jews/Muslims who become Christians hold onto their Jewish/Muslim cultural*

*values and practices in order not to be persecuted and rejected by their families and fellow-citizens would not help these Jewish/Muslim Christians to continue as real and distinct Christians or grow to spiritual maturity as Christians!* Note also the exhortation in Hebrews 13:13-14, "Let us go outside the camp (outside the Jerusalem/Mecca of our religion where we feel safe and accepted) to Jesus bearing the disgrace he bore, for here (in Jerusalem/Mecca) we do not have an enduring city." Christians are looking for the city that is to come (the New Jerusalem/the new heaven and new earth). Cf. also 2 Timothy 3:12, "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."

<sup>58</sup> cf. Colossians 2:16-17

*the True 'Firstborn Son of God' (instead of the nation-state of Israel<sup>59</sup>). He is the first-born of a new humanity destined to be glorified as their exalted Lord<sup>60</sup>, the first-born of those resurrected from the dead<sup>61</sup> (1:5)*

- *the Servant of the Lord, called Israel, in whom God displays his splendour<sup>62</sup>. Therefore not the nation-state of Israel, but Jesus Christ is the true Israel. He fulfilled everything the nation-state could not accomplish.*
- the permanent High Priest forever (instead of the temporary high priests Moses and the Aaron)(5:10)
- the Changer of the Law by being the Fulfiller of the Old Testament Law<sup>63</sup> (7:12)
- the Mediator and Guarantee of the better (new) covenant (instead of the old covenant of the law)(7:22; 9:15; 12:24)
- the True Inheritor of God's Old Testament promises<sup>64</sup> (9:15; 12:2)
- the Author and Perfecter of biblical faith (instead of continuing in Old Testament 'faith' (12:3)
- the Great Shepherd of the sheep (instead of the kings, prophets and priests of the Old Testament)(13:20).

### **(3) What is needed in knowing the Bible.**

- *The Old Testament revelation is fulfilled in the New Testament revelation.*
- *From now on the Old Testament must be read and explained in the light of the New Testament revelation.*
- *From now on Israel as God's people is continued and enlarged to include all the believers in Christ in all the nations in the world.*

## **6:4-8. Third practical warning. Do not apostate (fall away) from the Christian Faith**

### **a. The possibility and impossibility of repentance.**

'Apostasy' is irremediable. Apostasy is reverting from the New Testament foundation back to the Old Testament foundation. Humanly speaking, *when a person rejects the distinctive Christian beliefs, the foundation cannot be laid again*. If people, who have shared in the covenant privileges, 'fall away from' or deliberately renounce these covenant privileges, it is humanly impossible to turn such people back to faith in Christ. They are the most difficult to reclaim for the Christian faith. Of course, nothing of this sort is ultimately impossible for the grace of God. But in human experience it has often proved to be practically impossible.

The writer does not question the perseverance of the saints. He rather insists that *those who persevere are the true saints<sup>65</sup>!*

### **(1) Repentance of someone not yet born-again.**

For people who are attached to a formal way of professing the true faith without ever having experienced its power, it is quite possible to have an experience of God's grace. What was once a formal confession is then experienced as an inward reality<sup>66</sup>! The nominal/cultural Christian has become a born-again Christian.

### **(2) Apostasy.**

*Apostasy* is the sin committed by nominal/cultural (Jewish) Christians who participate in the new covenant while not being born-again and then deny or reject Christ. For people, who already clearly see where the truth lies and perhaps for a period of time conform to it, but then, for one reason or another renounce it, it is humanly impossible to be brought to repentance<sup>67</sup>.

### **(3) Sin against the Holy Spirit.**

*The sin against the Holy Spirit* is the deliberate closing of the eyes to the light, refusing to accept the evidence of God's revelation in Jesus Christ and ascribing the work of the Holy Spirit<sup>68</sup> to the power of the devil<sup>69</sup>.

### **b. Old Testament participation in the covenant people and still apostate.**

The Exodus and Wilderness narrative may still be in the background of the writer's mind. The Israelites:

- had their camp illuminated<sup>70</sup> by heavenly light
- had been baptised in the cloud and in the Red Sea<sup>71</sup>
- had received the provision of bread from heaven<sup>72</sup> and water from the rock<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> cf. Exodus 4:22

<sup>60</sup> Roman 8:29

<sup>61</sup> Colossians 1:18

<sup>62</sup> Isaiah 49:3

<sup>63</sup> cf. Matthew 5:17

<sup>64</sup> cf. 2 Corinthians 2:20

<sup>65</sup> cf. James 2:17,22; Ephesians 2:8-10; Matthew 3:8,10-12; Matthew 13:23

<sup>66</sup> For example Paul

<sup>67</sup> For example Hymenaeus and Alexander (1 Timothy 1:19-20)

<sup>68</sup> John 16:8

<sup>69</sup> Mark 3:20-30. For example the Pharisees

<sup>70</sup> Exodus 13:21

<sup>71</sup> Exodus 14:22; 1 Corinthians 10:2. εβαπτισαντο εν τη νεφέλη και εν τη θαλασση

<sup>72</sup> Exodus 16:15; 1 Corinthians 10:3

<sup>73</sup> Exodus 17:6

- had been instructed by God’s good Spirit<sup>74</sup>.
- But in spite of hearing God’s words and seeing God’s mighty works in their midst, they failed to enter Canaan, because they had hardened their hearts and chose not to believe (4:2,7).

c. **New Testament participation in the covenant people and still apostate.**

Among the Hebrews/Jews who have become Christians there were those who have fallen away.

**(1) They were once enlightened.**

**6:4a For it is impossible<sup>75</sup>**

**6:4b.** for those who once have been enlightened,<sup>76</sup>

This enlightenment took place ‘once for all’. The light of the gospel had broken in on the darkness of these people. After this, life could never be the same again. To give up the gospel would be to sin against the light, the one sin which by its very nature is incurable.

It is quite possible *to regard this enlightenment as Christian baptism*. Note the following allusions to baptism:

- Ephesians 5:14 (60-61 A.D.), “Wake up, o sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you”. This is frequently taken to be a snatch from a Christian baptismal hymn. The convert is exhorted to wake up from darkness of spiritual death into the light of Christ.
- Psalm 34:5 (LXX) “Come to him and be enlightened<sup>77</sup> was early used in the Christian baptismal liturgy.
- The Syriac Peshitta (2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D.) translates the word ‘enlightenment’ in Hebrews 6:4 and Hebrews 10:32 with the word ‘baptism’.
- Justin (First Apology, 61:12f, 65:1)(155-157 A.D.) uses the verb ‘to enlighten’<sup>78</sup> and the noun ‘enlightenment’<sup>79</sup> to describe ‘baptism’ and he does it in a way which indicates that this was a current usage among the Christians of his acquaintance.

Thus the Hebrews were ‘enlightened’ by the gospel message and may have received baptism as a sign that they had understood the message (light) of the gospel).

**(2) They had tasted the heavenly gift.**

6:4c and who have *once for all* tasted the heavenly gift,<sup>80</sup>

‘Taste’ refers to the experience and enjoyment of blessings.

- Psalm 34:8 (LXX) “Taste and see that the Lord is good”<sup>81</sup> may suggest the Lord’s Supper just as Psalm 34:5 may suggest baptism.

- 1 Corinthians 10:3-4 (spring 56 A.D.). “They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink”<sup>82</sup> ‘for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ’.

- Acts 20:11 (61 A.D.). “He broke bread and ate (taste)”<sup>83</sup> is a reference to celebrating the Lord’s Supper.

However, ‘tasting the heavenly gift’ need not be restricted to the Lord’s Supper, but may indicate that the Hebrews experienced the whole sum of spiritual blessings that were sacramentally signified and sealed by the Lord’s Supper.

**(3) They had become partakers of the Holy Spirit.**

6:4d and who have become a sharer of (in) the Holy Spirit,<sup>84</sup>

*The Holy Spirit is at work when the Word of God is preached correctly*<sup>85</sup>. The preaching of Jesus was accompanied by the mighty works of the Holy Spirit<sup>86</sup>. The preaching by the apostles was accompanied by God giving his Spirit and working miracles among people who believed<sup>87</sup>. The Hebrews experienced the goodness of God’s Word as instructed by the Holy Spirit and the power of miracles as done by the Holy Spirit as a sign that the new age or new order had begun.

<sup>74</sup> Nehemiah 9:20; cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12

<sup>75</sup> **6:4a** For (γαρ)(cs) it is impossible (αδυνατον)(a--nn-s)

<sup>76</sup> **6:4b.** those who (τους)(damp /npamzp) once (απαξ)(ab) have been enlightened ( φωτισθεντας> φωτιζω)(vrapam-p),

<sup>77</sup> Προσελθατε προς αυτον και φωτισθητε

<sup>78</sup> φωτιζω

<sup>79</sup> φωτισμος

<sup>80</sup> **6:4c** and (τε)(cc) who have *once for all* tasted (γευσαμενους>γευομαι)(vpadam-p) the heavenly (επουρανιος-ον)(a--gf-s) gift (η δωρεα)(n-gf-s),

<sup>81</sup> γευσασθε και ιδετε οτι χρηστος ο Κυριος

<sup>82</sup> παντες το αυτο πνευματικον βρωμα εφαγον και παντες το αυτο πνευματικαν επιον πομα

<sup>83</sup> κλασας τον αρτον και γευσαμενος

<sup>84</sup> **6:4d** and (και)(cc) who have become (γεννηθεντας>γινομαι)(vraoam-p) a sharer (ο μετοχος)(ap-am-p) of (in) the Holy Spirit,

<sup>85</sup> Ephesians 1:13, “You also were included in Christ, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.”

<sup>86</sup> Matthew 12:28-30

<sup>87</sup> Galatians 3:5. cf. Nehemiah 9:20,30

To 'share' or 'participate'<sup>88</sup> means:

- Partaking in the Holy Spirit or sharing some experience of the Holy Spirit
- partaking in the heavenly calling (3:1)
- partaking in Christ (3:14).

But 'being called'<sup>89</sup> is not the same as being 'being chosen'<sup>90</sup>. And 'being a partaker in Christ' includes the responsibility "to hold firmly till the end the confidence one had at first." *Christians have the responsibility to be 'finishers'- people who not only make a good start, but also make a good finish!*<sup>91</sup> Only those that continue in the faith and bear good fruit can have the personal assurance that they have really been born-again of the Holy Spirit.

But a briber or deliberate sinner is not born-again by the Spirit. Simon the sorcerer believed the good news and he was baptised with water. He experienced the conviction of the Holy Spirit, but did not submit to the Holy Spirit. He wanted to buy the Holy Spirit! He was not born-again by the Holy Spirit and remained a captive of sin<sup>92</sup>.

A person who received the knowledge of the truth/the gospel and yet 'deliberately or wilfully keeps on sinning' has trampled on the Son of God, has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him and has insulted the Spirit of grace (10:29).<sup>93</sup>

The writer has Hebrews in mind who have been enlightened by the gospel, had received baptism and underwent the laying on of hands as a sign that they had experienced the reality, presence and power of the Holy Spirit. But this does not necessarily mean that the Holy Spirit was actually imparted to them or that they experienced rebirth! The sense in which they became partakers of the Holy Spirit lies in the following words:

#### **(4) They had tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come.**

**6:5.** And who have tasted the (moral) goodness of the word of God, and the powers of the coming age,<sup>94</sup>

'Tasted' means that they had really experienced and enjoyed: they had heard 'the spoken word'<sup>95</sup>, the preaching of the gospel or sermons in the church. They had seen 'the powers of the coming age', the miracles of the apostles (2:4).

#### **(5) Falling away.**

**6:6a.** And (then) they fall away (go astray),<sup>96</sup>

The root meaning of the Greek word is 'to trespass'. But here the context determines its meaning as 'apostasy' (3:12). *Thus it is possible for people who can be described in the language of Hebrews 6:4-5 to fall away irretrievably!* This solemn warning should not be exaggerated by saying that there can be no repentance for sins committed after baptism with water. This solemn warning should also not be underestimated because "an evil heart of unbelief" can result in "falling away from the Living God" (3:12)! *The attitude and the condition of the human heart are determinative!* The writer himself distinguishes (as the Old Testament does) between deliberate or wilful sin (2:2) and inadvertent sin (5:2). The context of Hebrews 4:6-8 shows that he has *deliberate apostasy* in mind. People, who commit this sin, cannot be brought back to repentance.

#### **(6) (Impossible) to be brought to repentance.**

6:6b (For it is impossible for those) ... to be brought back again to repentance,<sup>97</sup>

*Falling away is a possibility for people who share in the covenant privileges of the people of God (the Christian Church). Because they do not persevere in faith and in bearing fruit (which is the test of a true born-again believer), they for one or another reason reject the truth (the Bible, Christ, gospel). The Bible and experience alike suggests that it is possible for people to arrive at a state of heart and way of life where they can no longer repent*<sup>98</sup>.

God's patience is not without a limit! When the Israelites continued to refuse to repent after many prophets had been sent, the time came that Jesus Christ shut the door and those outside could not enter any more<sup>99</sup>. Once the door is shut, it will no longer be possible to repent! There will not come a second chance to repent!

#### **(7) Crucify Christ.**

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<sup>88</sup> μετοχοι

<sup>89</sup> κλητοι

<sup>90</sup> εκλεκτοι. Matthew 22:14; cf. Matthew 24:24

<sup>91</sup> cf. John 17:3; Acts 20:24; Colossians 4:17; Hebrews 6:11-12

<sup>92</sup> Acts 8:9-13,18-23. cf. 1 John 3:9

<sup>93</sup> Hebrews 10:26-29

<sup>94</sup> **6:5.** And (και)(cc) who have tasted (γευσαμενους>γευομαι)(vpadam-p) the (moral) goodness (καλος-η-ον)(a--an-s) of the word (το ρημα) (n-an-s) of God, and (τε)(cc) the powers (η δυναμις)(n-af-p) of the coming (μελλοντος>μελλω)(vppagm-s) age (ο αιων)(n-gm-s),

<sup>95</sup> το ρημα

<sup>96</sup> **6:6a.** And (then)( και)(cc) they fall away (go astray) (παραπεσοντας>παραπιπτω)(vraaam-p),

<sup>97</sup> **6:6b** to again (παλιν)(ab) be brought back (renewed, restored) (ανακαινιζειν>ανακαινιζω)(vnpa) to (εις)(pa) repentance (η μετανοια)(n-af-s),

<sup>98</sup> cf. Isaiah 6:9-10; Matthew 13:11-15; Luke 8:10; Acts 28:26-27

<sup>99</sup> Matthew 25:10-12

6:6c (seeing that) they are afresh/again crucifying on their own account the Son of God and subject (him) to public disgrace.<sup>100</sup>

The Greek participle is causal and indicates why it is impossible for such people to repent. “On their own account, (to their own disadvantage) they crucify the Son of God all over again.” We translate, “They crucify the Son of God on their own account” (RSV), that is, they are guilty of deliberately rejecting Christ. It is impossible for them to repent because on their own account, like the Jews and Romans in 30 A.D. they chose to reject Christ and hand him over to be crucified.

If the readers were to return again to Judaism, there would be no possibility for them to begin a Christian life. This would require a second crucifixion of Christ and putting him to open shame. By renouncing Christ, they put themselves in the position of those Jews and Romans who, by deliberately refusing Christ’s claim to be the Son of God, crucified Christ and subjected Him to public disgrace.

*People, who reject the salvation which has been procured by Christ, will find no salvation anywhere else!* Within the salvation history of God, Jesus Christ will not be crucified a second time (9:26). And within the salvation history of a nominal or cultural Christian who finally refuses Christ’s claims and rejects Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, there will (humanly speaking) not come a second chance/opportunity to be saved!

For this reason Christians must continue toward maturity despite the difficulties, problems and persecutions which attend their walk.

**d. The test of genuine faith is perseverance in bearing good fruit.**

**6:7.** For the land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and produces vegetation useable (well-placed) to those for whom also it is cultivated, receives the blessing from God.<sup>101</sup>

**6:8.** But (land that) produces thorns and thistles is disapproved and (its) curse (is) near of which the end (is) heading for burning.<sup>102</sup>

Like the vineyard of God in Isaiah 5:1-7 and the comparison of Jesus in Matthew 12:33-37 *the test of a true born-again believer is that he perseveres in the faith and continues to bear good fruit.*

Those who fail the test are rejected! They are near God’s curse and final burning<sup>103</sup>.

## **6:9-20. Encouragement that God is just and will keep his promise**

### **(1) Confidence that God is just**

**6:9.** But we are confident concerning you, beloved, of better things that also have (possess) salvation, if/when also we speak in this manner.<sup>104</sup>

The writer reassures his readers that he is confident that they are not reprobate soil that bears thorns and thistles, but fertile land that produces a crop useful to its owner.

**6:10.** For God is not unjust to forget your work and the love which you showed for his name, helping the saints and *continuing* to help (them).<sup>105</sup>

The fruits of righteousness had beyond question manifested themselves in the lives of these Hebrew Christians. The presence of fruit in their lives was also a token of the presence of salvation! Their act of love is described in Hebrews 10:32-34.

<sup>100</sup> **6:6c** (seeing that) they are afresh/again crucifying (ανα+σταυρουντας>ανασταυρωω)(vppaam-p)(causal participle indicating why it is impossible for such people to repent and make a new beginning) on their own account/to their own hurt/disadvantage (εαυτος-η-ον)(npdmzp (dative of advantage) the Son (ο υιος)(n-am-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s) and (και)(cc) subject (him) to public disgrace (make a public example) (παραδειγματιζοντας>παραδειγματιζω)(vppaam-p).

<sup>101</sup> **6:7.** For (γαρ)(cs) the land (η γη)(n-nf-s) that drinks (πιουσα>πινω)(vpaanf-s) in the rain (ο υετος)(n-am-s) often (πολλακις)(ab) falling on (ερχομενον>ερχομαι)(vppnam-s) it and (και)(cc) produces (brings forth) (τικτουσα>τικτω)(vppanf-s) vegetation (green plants)(n-af-s) useable (well-placed) (ευθετος-ον)(a--af-s) to those (εκεινος-η-ο)(apddm-p=adjective pronominal *demonstrative* dative masculine plural) for (on account of) (δια)(pa) whom (ους)(apram-p *relative*) also (και)(cc) it is cultivated (farmed) (γεωργειται>γεωργεω)(vipr--zs), receives (μεταλαμβανει>μεταλαμβανω)(vipa--zs) the blessing (η ευλογια)(n-gf-s) from (απο)(pg) God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s).

<sup>102</sup> **6:8.** But (δε)(ch) (land that) produces (εκφερουσα>εκφερω)(vppanf-s) thorns (η ακανθη)(n-af-p) and thistles (ο τριβολος)(n-am-p) is disapproved (rejected after examination, failing the test)(αδοκιμος-ον)(a--nf-s) and (και)(cc) (its) curse (η καταρα)(n-gf-s) (is) near (εγγυς)(pg) (close to being cursed) of which (ης)(aprgf-s *relative*) the end (το τελος)(n-nn-s) (is) heading for (unto) (εις)(pa) burning (η καυσις)(n-af-s).

<sup>103</sup> cf. John 15:6

<sup>104</sup> **6:9.** But (δε)(cc) we are confident (persuaded) (πεπεισμεθα>πειθω)(virp--xp) concerning (περι)(pg) you (υμων)(npg-yp), beloved (ο αγαπητος)(ap-vm-p), of better things (κρεισσονα>κρεισσων/κρειττων>αγαθος)(arman-p *comparative*) that also (και) have (possess) (εχομενα>εχω)(vppman-p) salvation (η σωτηρια)(n-gf-s), if/when (ει)(cs) also (και)(ab) we speak (λαλουμεν>λαλεω)(vipa-xp) in this manner (ουτως)(ab).

<sup>105</sup> **6:10.** For (γαρ)(cs) God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s) is not (ου)(ab) unjust (αδικος-ον)(a--nm-s) to forget (επιλαθεσθαι>επιλανθανομαι)(vnad) your (υμων)(npg-yp) work (το εργον)(n-gn-s) and (και)(cc) the love (η αγαπη)(n-gf-s) which (ης)(aprgf=adjective pronominal *relative* genitive feminine) you showed (demonstrated) (ενεδειξασθε>εκδειγνυμι)(viam--yp) for (εις)(pa) his name (το ονομα)(n-an-s), helping (διακονησαντες>διακονεω)(vpaanmp) the saints (God’s people) (αγιος-α-ον)(ap-dm-p) and *continuing* to help (διακονουντες>διακονεω)(vppanm-p) (them).

## (2) Exhortation to show the same diligence to the very end.

**6:11.** We desire that each of you to *continually* show the same diligence leading towards the full assurance of hope until the very end.<sup>106</sup>

By continuing to be diligent, that is, to show eagerness they make their hope (expectation) very sure, the hope that God would continue the work which he began<sup>107</sup>, and that they would inherit the kingdom in its final form<sup>108</sup>.

## (3) Exhortation to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what God has promised.

**6:12.** So that you do not become lazy, but imitators of those who through faith and patient endurance inherit the promises.<sup>109</sup>

An exhortation to become imitators of the Old Testament believers described in Hebrews 11.

## (3) God's promise to Abraham makes his promise to the Messiah equally sure.

**6:13.** *When* God made his promise to Abraham, since he had no-one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself.<sup>110</sup>

**6:14.** Saying "Surely I will *certainly* bless you and *certainly* multiply you."<sup>111</sup>

**6:15.** So *after* waiting patiently, he (Abraham) obtained what was promised.<sup>112</sup>

Abraham believed God. He did not withhold his only son, Isaac. Therefore he obtained God's promise. God would multiply him to an uncountable number of descendants<sup>113</sup>!

- John the Baptist quotes this promise by saying that God will have children of Abraham, even if he had to create them from stones<sup>114</sup>!
- Paul quotes this promise to prove justification by faith without the works of the law<sup>115</sup>.
- James quotes this promise to insist that faith apart from works is dead<sup>116</sup>.
- The writer to the Hebrews quotes this promise to present Abraham as the supreme example of someone who received promises from God and lived in the good of these promises, persevering to the end in faith and hope<sup>117</sup>.

God's faithfulness to his promise to Abraham in Genesis 22:17-18 is a token of his faithfulness to his promise to the Messiah in Psalm 110:1 and 4, namely that the Messiah would be the King and High Priest in the order of Melchizedek! These two promises hang together. Paul worked out the promise to Abraham in Galatians 3:6-18 and the writer to the Hebrews worked out the promise to the Messiah in Hebrews 6.

God's promise to Abraham regarded multiplying his descendants through his 'seed'<sup>118</sup>. After Isaac was born, God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac up to God. Abraham's faith and obedience was severely tested, but shown in his readiness to sacrifice his son. Abraham received Isaac back from the dead "in a figure" (11:19)<sup>119</sup> and received a reconfirmation of the promise, but this time together with God's oath<sup>120</sup>. Thus, through faith and patient endurance Abraham received what had been promised - a son, even though that was only the first instalment of God's promise (cf. 11:39-40).

## (4) God's promise is confirmed by God's oath.

<sup>106</sup> **6:11.** We desire (επιθυμουμεν>επιθυμειω)(vipa--xp) that each (εκαστος-η-ον)(ap-am-s) of you (υμων)(npg-yp) to *continually* show (ενδεικνυσθαι>δεικνυμι)(vnpm)(infinitive expresses the object) the same (αυτος-η αυτη-το αυτο)(a--af-s) diligence (earnestness, endeavour) (η σπουδη)(n-af-s) leading towards (προς)(pa) the full assurance (certainty) (η πληροφορια)(n-af-s) of hope (η ελπις)(n-gf-s) until (αχρι)(pg) the very end (ο τελος)(n-gn-s).

<sup>107</sup> Philippians 1:5

<sup>108</sup> Matthew 25:34

<sup>109</sup> **6:12.** So that (ινα)(cs) you do not (μη)(ab) become (γενησθε>γινομαι)(vsad--yp) lazy (sluggish, slow, dull) (νωθρος-α-ον)(a--nm-p) (the word is also used of the numb limbs of a sick lion), but (δε)(ch) imitators (ο μιμητης)(n-nm-p) of those (των)(dgmpr/npgmzr-p) who through (δια)(pg) faith (η πιστις)(n-gf-s) and patient endurance (η μακροθυμια)(n-gf-s) inherit (κληρονομουντων>κληρονομειω)(vppagm-p) the promises (η επαγγελια)(n-af-p).

<sup>110</sup> **6:13.** *When* God made his promise (επαγγελιαμενος>επαγγελλομαι)(vpadnm-s) to Abraham, since (because) (επει)(cs=conjunction subordinating) he had (ειχεν>εχω)(viaa--zs) no-one (ουδενος)(apcgm-s cardinal ) greater (μειζονος)(a-mgm-s=adjective comparative genitive masculine singular) by whom (κατα)(pg) to swear (ομοσαι>ομνυμι)(vnaa), he swore (ωμοσεν>ομνυμι)(viaa--zs) by (κατα)(pg) himself (εαυτος-η-ον)(npgmzs).

<sup>111</sup> **6:14.** Saying (λεγων>λεγω)(vppanm-s), "Surely (ει)(cs) (μην)(qs=particle *sentential* ) I will *certainly* bless (ευλογων ευλογησω>ευλογειω)(vppanmxs + vifa--xs)(equivalent to Hebrew "by continually blessing I will bless") you (σε)(nra-ys) and *certainly* multiply you (πληθυνων>πληθυνω)(vppanmxs + vifa--xs) (equivalent to Hebrew "by continually multiplying I will multiply") you.

<sup>112</sup> **6:15.** So (in this manner, thus) (ουτως)(ab) (μακροθυμησας>μακροθυμειω)(vpaanm-s), he (Abraham) obtained (received, arrived at) (επετυχεν>επιτυχανω)(viaa--zs) what was promised (η επαγγελια)(n-gf-s).

<sup>113</sup> Genesis 22:17

<sup>114</sup> Matthew 3:9

<sup>115</sup> Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6

<sup>116</sup> James 2:21-22

<sup>117</sup> Hebrews 6:12-15

<sup>118</sup> Genesis 12:1-3

<sup>119</sup> εν παραβολη

<sup>120</sup> Genesis 22:16-18

**6:16.** For men swear by someone greater (than themselves), and (putting) an end to every argument against them, the oath served as a confirmation (of the promise).<sup>121</sup>

**6:17.** With this (oath) God especially wanted to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable (nature) of his purpose, he (as a mediator/peacemaker) guaranteed (it, the promise) with an oath.<sup>122</sup>

By swearing God guaranteed his promise. The supreme oath in Israel was to swear by God<sup>123</sup>. That put an end to all argument or controversy.

But because God had none greater than himself, he confirmed or guaranteed his promise with his oath<sup>124</sup>. *The bare word of God is guarantee enough*<sup>125</sup>. But confirming it with his oath makes the assurance double sure.

### (5) To the heirs of the promise.

**6:18.** so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we may have strong encouragement - we who (the ones who) have taken refuge (fled) to take hold of the hope set before (us).<sup>126</sup>

The heirs of the promise are not so much Abraham and his descendants during the Old Testament period (the believers under the old covenant), because they had not yet inherited the promise (11:39-40).

All believers under the new covenant are those who inherit the fulfilment of God's promise (9:15). They are the writer and readers of the Letter to the Hebrews who experience in the gospel the fulfilment of the oath which God swore to Abraham. They have taken refuge (from all the difficulties in chapter 11) to take hold of the hope (the expectation of the New Jerusalem) set before them.

### (6) The heirs have hope as an anchor for the soul.

**6:19.** (the hope) which we have as an anchor of the soul, firm and secure, and entering into the inner (part) of the curtain.<sup>127</sup>

**6:20.** where the forerunner, Jesus, has entered in behalf of us, becoming the high priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek.<sup>128</sup>

The two unchangeable things that make it impossible for God to lie are his promise and his oath. Our hope, based on this promise, is our spiritual anchor, which is firmly secured to God's throne in heaven.

Christ is the Forerunner in our Christian journey to heaven. His accomplished work of salvation guarantees our participation in this salvation. Christ is now present in heaven at the right hand of God on our behalf (9:24)! He is there to prepare a place for us<sup>129</sup>! He is there to intercede for us (7:25)! Christ is our Representative with God<sup>130</sup>. He is the Safeguard of the Church and the Guarantee of her complete glorification<sup>131</sup>. Christ is our perpetual High Priest, but not in the line of the Old Testament law (the priesthood of Aaron), but in the line of Melchizedek. Where the Head is, the Body will also be. The High priestly prayer of Jesus will be heard! "Father, I want those you have given me to be with

<sup>121</sup> **6:16.** For (γάρ)(cs) men (ο ανθρωπος)(n-nm-p) swear (ομνυουσιν>ομνυμι)(vipa--zp) by (κατά)(pg) someone greater (μειζονος) (apm-gm-s *coMparative*) (than themselves), and (και)(cc) (putting) an end (conclusion) (το περας)(n-nm-s) to every (πας)(a-gf-s) argument (controversy) (η αντιλογια)(n-gf-s) against them (that swear) (αυτοις)(n-pdmzpr), the oath (ο ορκος)(n-nm-s) served as (εις)(pa) a confirmation (η βεβαιωσις)(n-af-s) (of the promise).

<sup>122</sup> **6:17.** With (εν)(pd) this (ω)(aprdn-s) (oath/swearing or method of appeal to remove all uncertainty) God (ο θεος)(n-nm-s) especially (περισσοτερον)(apman-s *coMparative*) wanted (βουλομενος>βουλομαι)(vppnm-s) to show (point out, make clear) (επιδειξαι>επιδικνυμι) (vnaa) to the heirs (ο κληρονομος)(n-dm-p) of the promise (η επαγγελια)(n-gf-s) the unchangeable (immutable, irrevocable, incapable of being

set aside)(nature)(αμεταθετος-ον)(ap-an-s) of his (αυτος-η-ον)(npgmzs) purpose (resolve of the divine will)(η βουλη)(n-gf-s), he (as a mediator/peacemaker) guaranteed (εμεσιτευσεν>μεσιτευω)(viaa--zs) (it, the promise) with an oath (ο ορκος)(n-dm-s).

<sup>123</sup> Genesis 14:22; Genesis 21:23-24; Genesis 24:3

<sup>124</sup> cf. Psalm 110:4

<sup>125</sup> Numbers 23:19; cf. "Simply let your 'yes' be 'yes' and your 'no' 'no'. Anything beyond this comes from the evil one (Matthew 5:37).

<sup>126</sup> **6:18.** so that (να)(cs) by (δια)(pg) two (δυο)(a-cgn-p *cardinal*) unchangeable (αμεταθετος-ον)(a-gn-p) things (matters) (το πραγμα)(n-gn-p) in

(εν)(pd) which (οις)(aprdn-p *relative*) it is impossible (αδυνατος-ον)(a-nm-s) for God (ο θεος)(n-am-s) to lie (ψευσασθαι>ψευδομαι)(vnad), we may have (εχωμεν>εχω)(vspra--xp) strong (ισχυρος-α-ον)(a--af-s) encouragement (η παρακλησις)(n-af-s) - we who (the ones who) (οι)(dnmp=determiner/definite article nominative masculine plural /nprnmxp=noun pronoun nominative masculine 1<sup>st</sup> person plural) have fled (καταφυγοντες>καταφευγω)(vpaanm-xp) to take hold (κρατησαι>κρατεω)(vnaa) of the hope (η ελπις)(n-gf-s) set before (us) (προκειμενης>προκειμαι)(vppngf-s).

<sup>127</sup> **6:19.** (the hope) which (ην)(apraf-s *relative*) we have (εχομεν>εχω)(vipa--xp) as (ως)(cs) an anchor (η αγκυρα)(n-af-s) of the soul (η ψυχη) (n-gf-s), firm (ασφαλεις-εις)(a--af-s) and secure (βεβαιος-α-ον)(a--af-s), and (και)(cc) entering (εισερχομενην>εισερχομαι)(vppnaf-s) into (εις)(pa) the (το)(dans=determiner/definite article accusative neuter singular) inner (part) (εσωτερος-α-ον)(apman-s *coMparative*) of the curtain (veil) (το καταπετασμα)(n-gn-s) (thus behind the curtain separating the inner sanctuary from the sanctuary).

<sup>128</sup> **6:20.** where (οπου)(abr=adjective adverb *relative*) the forerunner (ο προδρομος)(ap-nm-s), Jesus, has entered (εισηλθεν>εισερχομαι)(viaa--zs)

in behalf of (υπερ)(pg) us (ημων)(npg-xp=noun pronoun genitive 1st person plural), becoming (γενομενος>γινωμι)(vpadnm-s) the high priest (ο αρχιερευς)(n-nm-s) for (εις)(pa) ever (ο αιων)(n-am-s) according to (κατα)(pa) the order (η ταξις)(n-af-s) of Melchizedek.

<sup>129</sup> John 14:3

<sup>130</sup> 1 John 2:1-2

<sup>131</sup> 1 John 3:1-3; Revelation 21:1-2; 1 John 2:1-2

me where I am, and to see my glory. The glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.<sup>132</sup>”

*With these words the writer of Hebrews comes back to the point from which he digressed (5:11 – 6:20) consisting of Christ being forever our High Priest in the order of Melchizedek.*

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<sup>132</sup> John 17:24 ; cf. 1 Peter 1:20