

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2022: *In These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews*
Lesson 7 “Jesus, The Anchor of the Soul”

Read for this week’s study

Hebrews 6:4–6; Matthew 16:24; Romans 6:6; Hebrews 10:26–29; Hebrews 6:9–13; Hebrews 6:17–20.

Memory Text

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

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Tasting the Goodness of the Word
- III. Impossible to Restore
- IV. No Sacrifice for Sins Left
- V. Better Things
- VI. Jesus, the Anchor of the Soul
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Hebrews 5:11–6:20 interrupts the theological exposition about Jesus’ priesthood in our behalf. Paul inserts there a severe warning about the danger of falling away from Christ. [...] The severe warning culminates, however, in an affectionate encouragement. Paul expresses faith in his readers and exalts Jesus as the embodiment of God’s unbreakable promise of salvation to them (Heb. 6:9–20). This cycle of warning and encouragement is repeated in Hebrews 10:26–39. We will study this cycle and focus on the strong words of encouragement that Jesus provides for us.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. A certain understanding of Hebrews 6:4-6 & 10:26-29 (together with Matthew 12:31-32) caused unspeakable agony to sensitive Christians throughout the centuries. Therefore, a proper understanding of these texts is paramount, both exegetically and pastorally.

3. How does seeing the **structure** of the letter to the Hebrews help us towards a proper understanding of the meaning? What is the purpose of the four main sections where the author compares and contrasts Jesus with key people and events from Israel's history? Why does the author, in every section, include a strong **warning** not to abandon Jesus? What is the purpose of these warnings? [The two sections 6:4-6 & 10:26-29 are the third and fourth (final) warning.]
4. It is crucially important to understand that these warning passages are intended to make us feel uncomfortable, but they are not there to make us afraid. Their purpose is to demonstrate that rejecting Jesus makes no sense after all He accomplished as the ultimate revelation of God's love and mercy. There is no need to repeat the fate of the wilderness generation. Instead, we can participate in the inheritance which God has prepared (6:9-12; 17-20).
5. The lesson for Sunday & Monday addresses the third warning found in 6:4-6. What Scriptural clues help us understand what the author is talking about?
6. The usual discussion is around determining which group the author is talking about? 1) Genuine Christians who turned away from Christ and suffer eternal judgment? 2) Lethargic Christians who come under divine discipline for failing to advance to maturity? 3) People who were part of the Christian community but have turned away from Christ, thus showing that their faith was never genuine? Of course, whether you start from Calvinistic or Arminian presuppositions will greatly determine what you see in these texts!
7. Which verbs indicate that this is not a matter of everyday sin or occasional failings but a serious, permanent fall (cf. 3:12; 10:29)? The author is mirroring how the wilderness generation decisively rejected Moses and the Lord (Numbers 14).
8. Tuesday's lesson discusses the fourth warning found in 10:26-29. What are the similarities and differences between these two warnings? In what sense is the last one a continuation of the previous one?
9. What indication is in the text that these verses describe someone who deliberately and defiantly repudiated Christ and His sacrifice? "Sinning" mentioned generally in v. 26 and then defined specifically in v. 29 is arrogantly rejecting and repudiating Christ. Therefore, this does not refer to Christians falling prey to everyday temptations and failings (2:18; 4:15-16; 12:1-6). Why is this significant?
10. While there are enough textual (exegetical) clues about the intention and the meaning of these [four] warnings, what can we learn from looking at them in the context of the biblical storyline? How different is the consequent understanding from a typical proof-texting approach?
11. What can we learn from the encouragement found in 6:9-13? (Wednesday's lesson) How do the verses in 6:13-20 provide a "soaring exposition of assurance in Christ"? (Thursday's lesson)

12. How does Jesus provide access to God (*within the veil*)? How does this provide hope which is an “anchor for the soul, firm and secure”? How is that related to what kind of person people believe God to be? (2:10; 4:14-16; 10:20-22; 12:1-2)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now this passage is significant in and of itself, and we need to compare it with the one over in chapter ten in a moment, but first of all, isn't it significant to notice the immediate context of his saying it's impossible to restore again to repentance those who've once been enlightened. It's right after he speaks of people who aren't growing up. Why would he put it there? He wants to talk about the leadership of righteousness and peace, God's way of running the universe. It's always been his way.

When the new covenant is fulfilled and God's laws of love have been written in our hearts and minds there'll be righteousness and there'll be peace. But he pauses and says, “You still need the old ways that are suitable for children, to be sure, but by now you ought to be grown up. Let's grow up,” he says, “and we'll talk about these other matters.” And he does in the rest of this letter.

But he warns, right in that setting, that if a person has once started out and he has become a partaker of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit has led him to repentance, to conversion, to faith. He's the Spirit of Truth, and brings conviction. So we have experienced the Holy Spirit. We've been born of the Holy Spirit. So love has taken the place of rebelliousness and we've tasted the goodness of the word of God. You know how enthusiastic we are when we start out. If they then lose their way, they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold him up to contempt. Do you mean by refusing to grow up one is doing this?

Is he suggesting that it's very risky to remain too long satisfied with milk? What would the risk be? With Israel for example, it's quite apparent that they wanted to settle for the milk, for the ceremonies, for the symbols without asking for the meaning so that they might grow up. And one day there came a little boy, just 12 years old to the leaders of Jewish worship, faithful leaders always doing the right thing at the right time. That's why they were so very, very careful not to go into Pilate's judgment hall on Friday lest they be contaminated and they couldn't celebrate the Passover. I mean they were doing the right thing very, very carefully. And Jesus commented on how they followed the rules of tithing. And as we often mention because it's so dramatic, Jesus said you even practice health reform so carefully that when a gnat drops in your goat's milk you stop and strain it out before you'll drink it. He said I can't fault you for being careful.

But a little boy stood there and asked what do these things mean? Why are you going through all these ceremonies? This all must symbolize something. No, it was just something to be done. The law says do this, and do it carefully, and do it right, and do it regularly. And they did it. And they did it for years and years. But the little boy was right, by age 12 we should be asking what

do these things mean? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Hebrews, #10, recorded November 15, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/15MMHEBREWS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/16MMHEBREWS66> (Part 2)

First John 5:14:

And this is the confidence which we have in him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us. And if we know that he hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have obtained the requests made of him. If anyone sees his brother committing what is not a mortal sin, he will ask, and God will give him life for those whose sin is not mortal. There is sin which is mortal; I do not say that one is to pray for that.

Now what sin could that be? We have it here in Jeremiah. What could that conceivably be? Some condition concerning which God would say, "Do not intercede with me for that." Have any of us committed that sin? Is this the unpardonable sin, as it were? And that doesn't suggest that God is unwilling to pardon. He's forgiveness personified. But is there a condition it would make no sense to forgive; because there is no hope, there is no remedy, there's nothing more he can do? It would be like praying that God would heal someone who absolutely will not listen. There's no point to it.

Is it that Israel had reached this point? Remember 2 Chronicles, at the end, when he let them go into captivity, "There was no remedy." Did Jesus pray any longer over Lucifer when finally he had reached the place where the truth, spoken in love, would not touch him at all? There does come a time when nothing more can be done.

Now, I think we need to be very careful in deciding that about each other. I don't think we're able to know this. I think we go on anyway. But John and Jeremiah are simply warning us in very serious terms: There is a condition even God cannot remedy. If we finally in our stubborn rebelliousness, reach the place where we have lost both the desire and the capacity to respond to truth, since the truth spoken in love is God's only means of persuasion, then that's the end. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Jeremiah and Lamentations, recorded February 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/35MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/36MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

“But Peter said, ‘Man, I do not know what you are saying.’ And immediately, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. And the Lord turned and looked at Peter.” Which Gospel has that? I think it’s only Luke. Maybe that impressed Luke particularly. “The Lord turned and looked at Peter.” Does anyone have *Phillips*? He even has, “and looked straight at Peter.”

Now, if you were to paint Jesus’ face at that moment, what look would you put on his face? What do you think Peter anticipated, after all his bold promises? What do you think he expected, as he knew God? Did he know God very well yet?

Isn’t he the one who would say, “Do you want us to pray, as Elijah did, that fire come down from heaven, and bum up the opposition here?” “Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” You see, they didn’t know God very well yet. I would anticipate that Peter would expect to see in Jesus’ face disapproval, even righteous indignation, wrath is the biblical word. But instead, he saw sympathy, disappointment to be sure, but it was the face of the one who just the night before knelt down and washed his dirty feet.

“And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, ‘Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times.’ And he went out and wept bitterly.” And you put all four gospels together, and then Ellen White’s marvelous story in *Desire of Ages*. A very wonderful thing. Ellen White says he ran weeping from the courtyard, not knowing where he was going. And as he ran, he found himself back in Gethsemane, and he knelt down on the very spot where Jesus had prayed, and wished he could die; he was so ashamed of himself. But he didn’t die, and he didn’t commit suicide, either.

A little later Judas came in, threw the money down, and looked in the same face. Was it a different look? Did Jesus look on Judas with anger; on Peter with love? He’s not two-faced. Judas looked into the face of the one who’d washed his feet the night before. And Judas went out and committed suicide. What’s the difference? In God, or in us?

Moreover, did Jesus kill Judas? He killed himself, like Saul, you remember, fell on his sword and killed himself. Although it does say, remember, “Thus God slew Saul.” Judas went out and hanged himself, and died. Wouldn’t you like to rewrite that story? In spite of what Judas had done, would God still want him to come back? Why do you think he washed his feet in the upper room? Still holding out the opportunity, still covering for him. They thought he’d gone to make an offering to feed the poor. Isn’t that true? That’s how Jesus covered for him.

What if Judas had thrown the money down and really confessed, and repented, and run weeping from the court, not knowing where he was going? And he had just come from Gethsemane himself, hadn’t he? He’d led the crowds there. And so instinctively he’d gone back

to the same place, and had run into Peter out there, and the two men had knelt down side by side and talked it over, and both of them been converted. I mean, what a story! What an ending to it! But it did not end that way. Jesus offered exactly the same opportunity to both men, didn't he? And one accepted. One liked what he saw. The other turned God down. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Through belief in Satan's misrepresentation of God, man's character and destiny were changed, but if men will believe in the Word of God, they will be transformed in mind and character, and fitted for eternal life. To believe that "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16), will change the heart, and reproduce in man the image of God. {1SM 346.1}

So long as the people of God preserve their fidelity to Him, so long as they cling by living faith to Jesus, they are under the protection of heavenly angels, and Satan will not be permitted to exercise his hellish arts upon them to their destruction. {OHC 92.5}

It is the greatest joy of the angels of heaven to spread the shield of their tender love over souls who turn to God. {OHC 92.6}

The world's Redeemer would not have man in ignorance of Satan's devices. The vast confederacy of evil is arrayed against those who would overcome; but Christ would have us look to the things that are not seen, to the armies of heaven that encamp round about those who love God, to deliver them. The angels of heaven are interested in behalf of man. The power of Omnipotence is at the service of those who trust in God. {FW 93.1}

God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

It is Satan's work to fill men's hearts with doubt. He leads them to look upon God as a stern judge. He tempts them to sin, and then to regard themselves as too vile to approach their heavenly Father or to excite His pity. The Lord understands all this. Jesus assures His disciples of God's sympathy for them in their needs and weaknesses. Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father's heart. {DA 356.2}

God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with

power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture. {DA 458.3}

The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression. {6BC 1110.4}

We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death. {6BC 1110.5}

All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against man. He does not make man spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable man to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force man to receive truth. He leaves him free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If man resists evidence that is sufficient to guide his judgment in the right direction, and chooses evil once, he will do this more readily the second time. The third time he will still more eagerly withdraw himself from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course he will continue until he is confirmed in evil, and believes the lie he has cherished as truth. His resistance has produced its harvest (MS 126, 1901). {6BC 1112.5}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of a lifetime. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ. Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome. We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last, there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, I have fully attained. Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience. {AA 560.3}

To be sanctified is to become a partaker of the divine nature, catching the spirit and mind of Jesus, ever learning in the school of Christ. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” It is impossible for any of us by our own power or our own efforts to work this change in ourselves. It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like His, that one looking at him sees Christ’s own character shining out as from a mirror. Imperceptibly to ourselves, we are changed day by day from our ways and will into the ways and will of Christ, into the loveliness of His character. Thus we grow up into Christ, and unconsciously reflect His image. {RC 20.3}

The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man’s sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. {AA 532.2}

No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. “Man turns from God, not God from him.” Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power. Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. Then even “the light that is in thee” has become darkness. The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul. {MB 93.1}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

All this is but a fulfillment of the principle of the law,—the principle that is illustrated in the story of the good Samaritan, and made manifest in the life of Jesus. His character reveals the true significance of the law, and shows what is meant by loving our neighbor as ourselves. And when the children of God manifest mercy, kindness, and love toward all men, they also are witnessing to the character of the statutes of heaven. {DA 505.1}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {5BC 1141.2}

In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammelled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education will be found—witnessing, and ever as we witness learning anew “the riches of the glory of this mystery;” “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27. {Ed 309.1}

In the darkest days, when appearances seem most forbidding, fear not. Have faith in God. He knows your need. He has all power. His infinite love and compassion never weary. Fear not that He will fail of fulfilling His promise. He is eternal truth. Never will He change the covenant He has made with those who love Him. And He will bestow upon His faithful servants the measure of efficiency that their need demands. {PK 164.3}

He who knows the end from the beginning has provided for the attack of satanic agencies. And He will fulfill His word to the faithful in every age. That word is sure and steadfast; not one jot or tittle of it can fail. If men will keep under the protection of God, His banner will be over them as an impregnable fortress. He will give evidence that His word can never fail. He will prove a light which shineth in a dark place until the day dawn. He, the Sun of Righteousness, will arise with healing in His beams. . . . {RC 129.5}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we “are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

