



Hebrews: The Whole Way

A Bible Study with John N. Oswalt at the Francis Asbury Society

SESSION 5

Hebrews 5:11–6:20

This is the second part of the unit is Hebrews 4:14–7:28, “Jesus the Great High Priest.” The final part is “Melchizedek and the Better Priesthood,” Hebrews 7:1–28. This is the third “warning passage.” It consists of two parts: the Admonition (Heb. 5:11–6:8) and the Encouragement (Heb. 6:9–20).

Background: The oath being talked about in Hebrews 6:13 and following appears in Genesis 15. When God, symbolized by the torch and the incense pot, passed through the animal and bird parts (Gen. 15:17), he was calling down a blood curse upon himself if he failed to keep his promise.

1. Look at Hebrews 5:10 and 6:20. What do they tell you about the intervening material?
2. In Hebrews 5:11–14, two statements appear to contain *non sequiturs* (things that don't follow). They are “Anyone who lives on milk... is not acquainted with the teaching on righteousness” and “...the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.” What do you think the author is trying to say? How do these matters mark the immature or mature Christian?
3. According to the author, what are the “elementary teachings about Christ”? In this light what do you think are some of the advanced teachings?
4. Do you think Hebrews 6:4–8 is one of the advanced teachings just referred to? Why or why not?
5. Note carefully the statement, “It is impossible (Heb. 4) ...to bring them back to... (Heb. 6).” What? What did he not say? What is the importance of this distinction?

6. List the characteristics of the person described in verse 4. Would you call them a “nominal” (name only) Christian? What is the problem in bringing such a person to... ?

7. If we fall away from the faith, how are we subjecting Jesus to “public disgrace” (Heb. 6)?

8. In verses 9–20, the author gives two reasons why he does not think his readers will fall away. What is the reason in verses 9–12? What is the reason in verses 13–20?

9. “Hope” appears in verses 11, 18, and 19. It not a weak word (“I *hope* Jim will come!”) but a strong one (“Jim said he is coming: I’m sure he will.”). It is the intellectual side of faith. Why can we be sure of our faith, according to verses 13–20?