

7. Jesus, the Anchor of the Soul (1Q 2022— In These Last Days: The Message of Hebrews)

Biblical Material: Heb. 6:4-6; Matt. 16:24; Rom. 6:6; Heb. 10:26–29; Heb. 6:9–13; Heb. 6:17–20.

Quotes

- Hope is called the anchor of the soul (Hebrews 6:19) because it gives stability to the Christian life. But hope is not simply a ‘wish’ (I wish that such-and-such would take place); rather, it is that which latches on to the certainty of the promises of the future that God has made. *R.C. Sproul*
- This is why we need an anchor for the souls—it’s because we know ourselves, and we know that unless we are firmly anchored in the promise of what is and what’s to come, then we will settle for something less. *Michael Kelley*
- Anchors hold us fast when the waves come crashing down. Waves move; anchors do not. Waves toss us; anchors tether us. Waves make us wonder “What’s next?” Anchors let us hold to what’s known. Verse 19 tells us that the hope of Jesus is a *sure* and *steadfast* anchor of our soul. That hope isn’t based on us, but on one outside of us. *Danny Franks*
- The falling away here mentioned [Heb. 6:4-6], is an open and avowed renouncing of Christ, from enmity of heart against him, his cause, and people, by men approving in their minds the deeds of his murderers, and all this after they have received the knowledge of the truth, and tasted some of its comforts. Of these it is said, that it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Not because the blood of Christ is not sufficient to obtain pardon for this sin; but this sin, in its very nature, is opposite to repentance and everything that leads to it. *Matthew Henry*
- The word rendered “fall away”... here means undoubtedly to “apostatize from,” and implies an entire renunciation of Christianity, or a going back to a state of Judaism, paganism, or sin. *Albert Barnes*
- Melchizedek appears in several texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls... These texts are songs to accompany thirteen Sabbath offerings, and the officiants are angels with priestly roles. The songs chiefly describe the glories of God and the heavenly sanctuary... Melchizedek then would be a heavenly, angelic priest in the service of God. *Eric F. Mason*

Questions

If the focus this week is on Jesus as the anchor of the soul, why study the texts that seem to be very discouraging? While we must admit that sin results in death, why not focus on the positive gift of God that brings eternal life? What is Jesus doing exactly by taking us past the curtain into the presence of God? What is the basis for our confidence?

Bible summary

Heb. 6:4-6 is often understood to mean “once lost, always lost,” the opposite of the doctrine “once saved, always saved.” But this must be seen in the context of the “unpardonable sin,” which is sin against the Holy Spirit in not being willing to repent. Those who continue to choose rebellion cannot be saved, but those who come in true repentance received God’s forgiveness. We are called to follow Jesus and pick up our own cross (Matt. 16:24). Our old self

was crucified with Jesus (Rom. 6:6). We cannot go on sinning and think we won't experience the consequences that sin brings (Heb. 10:26–29). God keeps his promises (Heb. 6:9–13). “That’s why God wanted to demonstrate more clearly to those who would inherit the promise that he would never ever change his mind. So by these two actions that can’t be changed, and since it’s impossible for God to lie, we can have total confidence, having run for safety to take hold of the hope God presented to us. This hope is our spiritual anchor—it’s both certain and reliable, and it takes us past the curtain to the presence of God. That’s where Jesus went in on our behalf, because he had become a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.” Heb. 6:17–20 FBV.

Comment

There are some tough texts in this lesson, particularly Hebrews 6:4-6. This can be very discouraging to those who have once experienced God’s saving grace, but have later fallen back into sin. However the apostasy mentioned here is linked to a total rejection of Jesus in the same way that the priests and the crowds called for him to be crucified, saying their only king was Caesar. The public humiliation of the soldiers mocking and slapping Jesus, and the indignity of the cross, are also emphasized here. This apostasy is not just falling into sin, but a very deliberate rejection. In fact the word used for apostasy here (*parapesontas*) is only used once in the New Testament and relates to abandoning a former relationship. This is more than a denial of Jesus like Peter’s—it is the absolute denunciation of Jesus demonstrated by the Jewish leaders in their determination to kill Jesus. No one with such a contemptuous attitude would repent or ask for forgiveness. That Paul is not describing anyone he’s writing to is clear, since he immediately states “But dear friends, we believe better of you and your salvation, even if we talk like this!” Hebrews 6:9 FBV. He is talking hypothetically about someone who has completely and irrevocably rejected God and his offer of saving grace. Anyone who still wishes to come to God he won’t reject.

Jesus makes it clear that he won’t reject anyone who comes to him (John 6:37). (See also Matthew 11:28, Romans 5:20 etc.) Hebrews 7:25 FBV affirms that “He [Jesus] is able to save completely those who come to God through him.”

The central verse is Hebrews 6:19. Not a hope that is trivial, but certain and reliable. This is essential hope—hope for *our very lives*—and it is identified as safe and secure, sure and certain.

What’s an anchor for? To stop you drifting, from being wrecked on the rocks! Our hope is like that, says the Bible. To stop you drifting from the truth, the way to God. To stop you being wrecked on the reefs of disbelief and despair. This hope is truly Rock-solid. It’s anchored to the Rock that cannot move. It’s based on the unchanging nature of God himself. Consequently “we put on the hope of salvation as a helmet.” (1 Thessalonians 5:8 FBV). The helmet—the protection that surrounds our thoughts—is the hope of salvation!

Ellen White comments

Let faith pierce through the hellish shadow of Satan and center in Jesus, our high priest, who hath entered for us within the veil. Whatever clouds overcast the sky, whatever storms surge around the soul, this anchor holds firm, and we may be sure of victory. {HP 127.5}

Said Jesus: “The Father himself loveth you.” If our faith is fixed upon God, through Christ, it will prove “as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast”... It is true that disappointments will come; tribulation we must expect; but we are to commit everything, great and small, to God. {LHU 279.2}