

Hebrews, Part 6

And here we are ... Buckle your seatbelts. We are going to slay a few dragons. We are about to enter what some consider to be the most challenging chapter in the Bible, and it is indeed difficult. As a result, interpretations of this chapter are many and varied – and mostly wrong. It is easier to understand what the author is saying if you remain focused on the context and keep in mind some basic, already-established truths.

One such primary truth is the doctrine of eternal security. That is, if you are indeed born again, you cannot lose your salvation through any act of your own including even renouncing your faith in Christ. For any believer who thinks they can renounce their faith and/or live the lifestyle of a heathen, I am here to tell you that the remainder of your life will be one of chastisement and pain, a life likely ending prematurely, with the penalty of the “sin unto death,” when God gets fed up with your shenanigans and the fact that you are a poor witness for Him, and He takes you home, “home” as into Heaven–home.

We saved are said to be eternally secure in our salvation. The Bible teaches that in many different ways:

- It speaks of the possession of a new life based solely upon faith in Christ as Savior John 3:1-16; 5:24; 10:28; 20:31
- The Bible calls this life “eternal,” which means forever and implies no interruption. John 10:28; 11:25-26 If you can lose your salvation then this eternal life is misnamed.
- Salvation by grace is an unconditional gift that does not depend upon a person’s works, conduct, or condition after salvation. Rom 3:24; 4:5; Eph 2:8-9 It depends solely on the believer’s trust in what Christ did on the Cross.
- The Bible teaches that God’s predestining purpose and initial justification result in eventual glorification without exception for every believer. Rom 8:29-30; Eph 1:4-5
- The Bible presents eternal salvation as a legal and binding relationship with God that cannot be separated by anyone, including ourselves, or anything. Rom 8:1, 31-39

- The Bible presents eternal salvation as an irrevocable relationship to the Father by adoption which results in eternal blessings. John 17:3; Rom 8:15-17; Gal 3:26
- We are sealed with the Holy Spirit guaranteeing our glorification. 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13-14; 4:30
- We are kept secure by the power of both the Father and the Son. John 10:28-30; 17:9-12; Jude 24
- Since all of our sins (past, present, and future) were judged and forgiven through the work of Jesus Christ on the Cross, there can be no sin that can cause us to lose our relationship with Him. Col 2:13-14; Heb 10:12-14
- The intercessory prayers of Jesus Christ and His advocacy when we sin guarantee that our salvation will be eternal. John 17:9-12, 24; Heb 7:25; 1 John 2:1
- The Bible speaks of salvation in the passive voice, which indicates its causality is with God and not with us, therefore it is based on His work and not ours. Eph 2:5, 8; 2 Thes 2:10; 1 Tim 2:4
- The Bible demonstrates by example (Abraham, David, Israel) and by the precept that God is faithful to His eternal promises even when we are not. Ps 89:30-37; Rom 3:3-4; 4:16; 2 Tim 2:13

To this we must ask:

- Who does these things? God does them all!
- Who is in charge, man or God? God is in charge!

Can a person once saved ever lose his salvation? The Bible emphatically says, “No.” A person once saved remains saved throughout eternity. Let’s ask the question differently. Can a person who was “justified” ever be unjustified? Is God no longer propitiated by what Christ did on the Cross because of something you did? Was there some sin you might commit after salvation that was somehow missed and not judged on the Cross? Or, can the human spirit born at salvation be unborn – or executed? Does God ever take the imputed righteousness of Christ away from the wayward believer? Or, is eternal life somehow not eternal? Doesn’t make any sense that way either, does it?

Regarding these gifts from God and this divine calling, foreknowledge, and predestination by God ...

Rom 11:29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.

One must conclude that salvation in the past tense (deliverance from our sins and condemnation to the fires of hell) is irrevocable, otherwise, all those things God did would have to be somehow reversed, and there is no reference in Scripture of that happening, no description of that process, and no warning against it. Romans 11:29 says it cannot be revoked. There is nothing a believer can do that will reverse what God has done for him.

Rom 3:3 What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God? 4 By no means! ...

2 Tim 2:13 if we are faithless, he remains faithful— for he cannot deny himself.

There you have it, a brief study of eternal security that puts to rest that these are believers in danger of losing their salvation.

Hebrews 6

Let's dive into the deep end of the pool.

With the conclusion of chapter 5, we saw that the recipients of this epistle were called "dull of hearing." They should have been teachers by then but were not because they had not progressed in their faith; they were still babes in Christ in need of milk and unable to handle "solid food," the red meat of advanced doctrines. As a result of this failure of growth, these immature believers were unable to distinguish "good from evil".

Contrary to what some expositors claim, these are indeed born-again believers and have been referenced as such in the previous chapters being called "holy brothers who share in a heavenly calling". They were told by the author to "consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession". The author refers to them with the pronoun "we" indicating they were just like him. Clearly, we are dealing with believing Hebrews. As we progress through Chapter 6, we will see further evidence of their status.

Heb 6:1 Therefore we must progress beyond the elementary instructions about Christ and move on to maturity, not laying this foundation again: repentance from dead works and faith in God,

“Progress beyond the elementary instructions about Christ” is literally “leaving the word of the beginning concerning Christ”. For a builder, it means leaving the foundation and going up with the building. For a Christian, it means leaving the fundamental doctrines of salvation and going forward to spiritual maturity.

Somewhat surprisingly and despite his estimate of their spiritual state of dullness, the author declined to go over old ground. Instead, he urged them to go beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and move on to maturity. (Note: You can’t “move on to maturity” unless you are first saved.) For the author to have reviewed the fundamentals would only have left them where they were. The author preferred “radical surgery” and decided to pull them forward as rapidly as he could.

If they progressed properly, they would avoid the danger of laying again the foundation of repentance from “dead works” which is a reference to the works of the Mosaic Law, dead because it produced nothing by way of righteousness. “Dead works” literally means “leads to death”. “Repentance from ... faith in God” is a reference to the Old Testament ritual that presented faith in God by approaching Him through the Temple sacrifices, not through Christ as High Priest which they are to do now. The rituals (dead works) they had left behind were lifeless and incapable of imparting the experiences of the vitally alive spiritual life they had found in Christ. These “dead works” are truly dead now because they have been replaced by the genuine spiritual life of a believer which is a product of faith in the power and leading of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Heb 6:2 teaching about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

“Teaching about baptisms” has nothing to do with New Testament baptisms. The word is, of course, *baptismos* and means washing or purification effected by means of water. Used here it refers to the washings of Old Testament rituals, and there were many of them. “Laying on of

hands” was also an Old Testament ritual. When a man brought an animal offering, he laid his hands on the animal’s head to signify identifying with it and his sins being imputed to the innocent animal taking his place on the altar of sacrifice. “Resurrection of the dead” and “eternal judgment” were also taught in the Old Testament, but now they needed to come up to the resurrection of Christ, to the living Christ.

The return to ordinances of Judaism would only be a return to “dead works.” One who took that backward step would need to be taught all over again that acceptance was obtained by “faith in God,” not by rituals or works.

Heb 6:3 And this is what we intend to do if God permits.

What he wanted them to do was to press forward, to “go on to maturity” (v. 1). But he was perfectly aware that this required more than his effort to challenge his readers to make progress. God must help, and He alone could help them achieve these goals. The writer had said, “Let us ... go on to maturity” (v. 1), but in a spirit of dependence on divine aid, he then added, and God permitting we will do so.

The alternative to progress.

In an extremely solemn pronouncement, the author then explained the tragic alternative to the progress he desired his readers to make. If they did not advance, they would retreat. Should anyone so retreat, his situation would be grim.

Heb 6:4 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

7 For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessings from God; 8 but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. 9 But, beloved, we are

confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

Verse 9 is the key to this passage, but we need to establish the context to understand what the author is saying.

Not surprisingly, many commentators have avoided this passage. Even Dr. G. Campbell Morgan, the “prince of expositors,” bypassed it in his book on Hebrews. There are many interpretations of what is being said here. The least satisfactory one is that these are Christians who have lost their salvation. If you can lose eternal life then it isn’t eternal. Based on our opening study of eternal security in the beginning, we can toss this one.

Some contend this is only a hypothetical case. “If they shall fall away....” There is only the possibility this might happen. If so, then this might be the biggest “if” in the Bible.

A third interpretation points out in verse 6 there is no “if” in Greek and should be translated as “having fallen away”. They say this passage speaks of mere professors of faith who are not genuine believers. But the Bible never speaks of those who merely profess Christ. It does speak of those who once did but return to their lives before salvation, such as 2 Peter 2:22, “‘A dog returns to his own vomit,’ and, ‘a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire.’”

Dead horse beating time – again: The author is not discussing the question of salvation at all. Salvation cannot be lost or forfeited, as we have established with our earlier review of eternal security. He is describing saved people, as clearly established by the terms he used to describe them elsewhere and now here: They have been “enlightened,” “tasted the heavenly gift,” been “partakers of the Holy Spirit,” and “have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come”. There should be no question that we are dealing with saved Hebrews here.

Some who claim to believe in salvation by faith take the position you can lose it, and they use this chapter of Hebrews as one of their “proof texts”. They say maybe salvation is by faith alone and there are no works you can do to be saved, BUT works are necessary to keep your salvation. They

don't understand that works after salvation are not a cause but a result – the fruit of salvation, and THAT FRUIT is what the author is talking about.

Heb 6:6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

The day before the crucifixion of Jesus the recipients of this epistle had gone to the Temple with sin sacrifices in obedience to God's command. That was then, but now it is totally wrong for them to do that. Why? Because Jesus had become that sacrifice once and for all. Today if you were to offer a blood sacrifice, you would be sacrificing afresh the Lord Jesus Christ, you would be inferring that His death was to no avail, that you have no faith in His atonement, in His death, or His redemption. It is a serious matter to go back to a legal system.

As previously noted in verse 6, it says "if they fall away". There is no "if" in the Greek text. Literally, this should be translated as "and having fallen away" or as in the ESV here "then have fallen away". It is not an affirmation that any had actually fallen away, or that they would fall away, but the statement is on the supposition that had they fallen away it would be impossible to renew them again. It is the same as supposing a case, which, might never occur, as if we should say, "Had a man fallen off a high cliff, it would be impossible to save him."

The word rendered "fall away" means to fall near anyone, to fall in with, or meet, to fall aside from, to swerve or deviate from. Here it means to apostatize from the true faith not fall from salvation. Here, it implies a renunciation of Christian doctrines and going back to Judaism. The writer does not say that any true Christian ever had fallen away. He makes a statement of what would occur on the supposition that such a thing should happen, thus the translators supplied "if" in some translations.

"To renew them again..." The ESV uses "restore". The Greek *anakainizo* / *an·ak·ahēe·nid·zo*/ means to renew or renovate, implying something existed in a deteriorated or damaged state and is brought to a new or renovated state.

It says it would be impossible to bring them to repentance again, and verse 1 says this repentance is “from dead works” not salvation. John the Baptist preached, “Bring forth, therefore, fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). Both John and the author are referring to that which is the evidence of repentance. It does not mean shedding tears of regret. It means turning right around from the direction you were headed in back to Jesus, a change of direction in your life, in your way of living.

The reason this restoration to repentance is impossible is that “they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.” That is a reference to the sin offerings under the Levitical system. That system was designed to picture the future work of Christ on the Cross in the offerings. A perfect animal had to die in the Levitical system as a propitiation for the sins of the repentant offering Jew. But when this epistle was written, the Cross was some 30+ years in the past, and what the Levitical offerings had only pictured in looking forward to the efficacious work of Christ on the Cross was then a reality.

For these Jews to return to that system would be tantamount to them “crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt,” in effect saying Jesus deserved to die because He was a fraud! The author of Hebrews warned that those who succumb, that is, “fall away,” after all of the great spiritual privileges they had experienced, could not be brought back to repentance. The author is saying should they take this path and revert to Judaism, it will be impossible for them to demonstrate the evidence of repentance, the “fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8), meaning they would be out of fellowship with God, have no spiritual production, nor could they find “blamelessness” under the Levitical system as they had 30+ years before.

The reason is expressed in the words “to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace”. The words “to their loss” might be better rendered “with respect to themselves.” Those who renounce their Christian faith are, with respect to their own conduct and attitude, taking a step that amounts to a fresh public rejection of Christ. When they first trusted Him, they acknowledged that His crucifixion had been unjust and the result of man’s sinful rejection of the Savior. BUT by renouncing this, they reaffirmed the view of Jesus’ enemies

that He deserved to die on the cross. In this sense, “they [were] crucifying the Son of God all over again.” What was ordered by God under the Law, the sin sacrifices, was now itself a sin, and it was no longer possible to find forgiveness through that system. In that obsolete system, they could no longer enjoy the spiritual production under the leading and power of the Holy Spirit called the “fruits worthy of repentance” in Luke 3:8.

Their apostasy would be like expressing solidarity with their compatriots who wanted Jesus put on the cross. That this was most serious was precisely the writer’s point. The author’s words suggested a deep hardening of their hearts against all efforts to win them back, not to Christian conversion, but to Christian commitment. Such persons could not be won back to the state of repentance which marked their original conversion to Christianity. Having rejected Christ, they would effectively be crucifying Him again in their ritual animal sacrifices. Their attempts to find blamelessness under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant would not be honored because that system was “dead works” and no longer valid. In that system, no matter how repentant, they would remain perpetually in a state of sin and unable to find blamelessness for their sins, thus remaining isolated from the Holy Spirit and fellowship with God, and unable to produce any fruit as evidence of repentance.

(Even though no longer valid and somewhat ironically, the Levitical offerings these Hebrews wished to return to would exist for only a few more years after this epistle was written because Jerusalem and the Temple would soon be destroyed.)

Heb 6:7 For the ground that has soaked up the rain that frequently falls on it and yields useful vegetation for those who tend it receives a blessing from God. 8 But if it produces thorns and thistles, it is useless and about to be cursed; its fate is to be burned.

The writer now uses an illustration from nature to drive home his point. Naturally, the reference to “burned” has caused many to think of Hell, but there is nothing in the text to suggest this. God’s anger against His failing people in the Old Testament is often likened to the burning of fire (cf., e.g., Isa. 9:18-19; 10:17). Even the writer would later say, “Our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12:29).

The burning of a field to destroy the rank growth it had produced was a practice well-known in ancient times. Its aim was not the destruction of the field itself but the destruction of the unwanted produce of the field, the unwanted “thorns and thistles” that prevented proper fruit production. After burning, the field might be serviceable for cultivation. The writer is metaphorically speaking of ridding the believer of sinful activities that break his fellowship with God and hinders his production of spiritual fruit. “Burning” here is a picture of chastisement, which more properly should be seen as correction and instruction designed to restore fellowship and not simply discipline, although chastisement of a wayward believer can sometimes be painful – even very painful.

Whenever the rain-soaked ground is properly productive, it receives the blessing of God. Here the writer compared the spiritual privileges he had just enumerated (vv. 4-5) to a heavenly rain descending on the life of a Christian. Its effect should be a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed—a reference perhaps to the way other Christians benefit from the lives of fruitful believers such as mentioned in Heb 6:10 “For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do.” Such productivity brings divine blessings on fruitful believers’ lives.

The point is that when a plot of ground that has been rained on is productive, God blesses it, but if it only produces thorns and thistles, it is rejected (*adokimos*, “disapproved”). This is the same word Paul used in describing himself in 1 Corinthians 9:27 “But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.” “Disqualified,” translated as “castaway” in some translations, is the same word translated as “rejected” in verse 8. Paul is saying he did not want to be found “unapproved” by God when he stood before Him at the Bema. He did not want the Lord Jesus to say, “You failed! Your life should have been a testimony but it wasn’t.” Paul won’t hear that, but you will, if your life was not a testimony for God.

The land is in danger of being cursed. In the end, it will be burned. Burning is not the fires of Hell but is the metaphorical idea of the chastisement of

the believer to restore him to a condition of fruit production by removing that which is hindering it.

By choosing this kind of metaphor, the author showed that he did not totally despair of those who took the backward step he was warning against. Prior to severe divine chastisement, usually all efforts to recall such people to Christian faith are futile (6:4-6), but it cannot be said that the impossibility applies in an absolute sense. What the author probably meant is that nothing can deter apostates from the fiery retribution toward which they are headed, but once their “land” has been “burned,” so to speak, it is entirely another matter. Restoration to fellowship is the purpose of chastisement, and pain may be required as part of that process.

Paul believed that those who “have shipwrecked their faith” could profit from the chastisement to which they were exposed (1 Tim. 1:19-20). But of course, the writer of Hebrews was reticent about the issue of subsequent restoration. That some might not respond to the chastisement was perhaps in mind, but he was mainly concerned about warning against the course of action which leads to such potentially calamitous divine judgment. Nevertheless, his deft choice of this agricultural image serves to point out that the “burning” is both temporary and essentially hopeful.

The concluding encouragement.

The author knew that his words were both heavy and solemn, and he felt that a word of encouragement was then in order. This pattern—stern warning followed by warm encouragement—has already appeared in the previous warning section (3:1-4:16) which concluded in a distinctly positive manner (4:14-16). Similarly, the writer drew his warning section here to a conclusion that is alive with hope.

Heb 6:9 But in your case, dear friends, even though we speak like this, we are convinced of better things relating to salvation.

The author did not want his readers to believe that he had despaired of them. Instead, he was convinced of better things for them. The words are like those of a pastor who, after warning his congregation of a dangerous course of action, might say: “But I am sure you people would never do

that!" The words are not a theological proposition, as they are sometimes wrongly taken, but an expression of hope.

The "better things" about which he had confidence were the things that accompany salvation, meaning a productive spiritual walk. The "salvation" referred to should be understood in agreement with its meaning in 1:14, that experience of victory and glory which the persevering companions of the King "inherit". It is the inheritance-rest (saved in the present tense) that those persevering are allowed to enter. The writer insisted here that he had every expectation that the readers would persevere to the end and acquire these faith-rest blessings, even though he felt constrained to warn them against a contrary course.

Heb 6:10 For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the love you have demonstrated for his name, in having served and continuing to serve the saints.

The author knew that God is not unjust. His readers would not be forsaken. God would remember their work and the love they had shown Him in their helping other believers. In speaking of them, he reminded his readers of what they had done for their fellow Christians and were still doing. He thus encouraged them to keep it up. The nature of this work is described in Hebrews 10.

Heb 10:32 But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, 33 sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. 34 For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. 35 Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

The active exercise of love, which is itself a sign of the divine presence, carries with it the assurance of a divine reward. The deed and the result are regarded from the human side as cause and effect, service and reward, while essentially the one includes the other. The thought is of character

shown in life, and not of any special works which have a merit of their own. The “reward” is the power of more perfect service.

Heb 6:11 But we passionately want each of you to demonstrate the same eagerness for the fulfillment of your hope until the end, 12 so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and perseverance inherit the promises.

If they would only diligently hold onto the good course they already were pursuing—and of which God was fully mindful—they would thus guarantee the hope which is duly awarded to those who so persevere.

He added we do not want you to become sluggish. The word “sluggish” (*nōthroi* lazy) is the same word in 5:11 rendered “dull of hearing.” The sluggishness which marked their immaturity was to be shrugged off. (The Greek of this verse can mean, “We do not want you to be lazy.”) Their real goal should be the inheritance that is set before them. They were to be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit God’s promises.

Heb 6:13 Now when God made his promise to Abraham, since he could swear by no one greater, he swore by himself, 14 saying, “Surely I will bless you greatly and multiply your descendants abundantly.” 15 And so by persevering, Abraham inherited the promise.

If the readers were searching for models to “imitate,” there was the case of Abraham who received an oath from God, the promise that assured the multiplication of his seed. In due time his patience was rewarded in that he “received the promise.” Since the reference is to the promise given in Genesis 22:17 after the offering of Isaac, the author may have been thinking of the reception of the promise itself as the reward. In that case, the idea is that after Abraham had patiently endured (the test involving Isaac), he obtained the promise.

Waiting patiently translates the participle *makrothymēsas*, related to the noun “patience,” *makrothymias* in Hebrews 6:12. This word, common in the New Testament, refers to the ability to hold one’s feelings in restraint without retaliation against others (cf., e.g., Col. 1:11; 3:12; James 5:7-8, 10). A synonym, *hypomonē*, “endurance, perseverance,” means the ability

to remain steadfast in the face of undesirable circumstances; cf. Col. 1:11; Heb. 12:1-3, 7; James 5:11).

Heb 6:16 For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. 17 Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.

At this point Abraham is left behind as a model and the oath made to him is treated as for the benefit of Christians generally. That the promise of Genesis 22:18 had messianic aspects is clear from these words: “Through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed.” Then the author of Hebrews affirmed that the messianic hope that the promise entailed was sure, not only to Abraham but also to the Christian heirs of what was promised.

An oath puts an end to all arguments, so too there can be no argument about this expectation since God confirmed it with an oath. If anyone, such as a sectarian, denied this eschatological anticipation, he was flying in the face of the strongest possible divine guarantee. Not only was it impossible for God to lie, but His ever-truthful Word was supported in this case by His oath. These are the two unchangeable things, which encourage those who take hold of the hope.

Heb 6:19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, sure and steadfast, which reaches inside behind the curtain, 20 where Jesus our forerunner entered on our behalf since he became a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.

The image suggested in verse 18 by the words “fled ... to take hold” of hope was that of a fortified refuge. The writer suggested that these promises from God were safe harbors where the soul may securely drop anchor. That anchor has been dropped in the safest point of all—the inner sanctuary behind the curtain of the Holy of Holies by Jesus, who went before us. The Greek *prodromos* (“who went before us”) means one who comes in advance to a place where the rest are to follow.

So too, the Lord Jesus, by His entrance into the heavenly sanctuary where He functions as a High Priest forever, has given to a Christian's hope, an anchorage from which it cannot be shaken loose. Since, therefore, the readers' hope was sure, they could cling to it tenaciously right to the very end.

What do we have?

What the author of Hebrews is stating is that if these Hebrews abandon their faith in Christ and attempt to go back to the Law, they will not find what they are seeking.

- The Mosaic Covenant and the Levitical system were but a mere shadow of what was coming with the Kingdom including access by believers to the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom available to them in the Church Age.
- That access to the spiritual aspects of the Kingdom offered the potential of "rest" and its associated blessings including any potential rewards in Heaven for "fruit production".
- Going back to Judaism meant they would forfeit all that.
- Furthermore, they would not be able to find judicial blamelessness that was previously available under the terms of the Mosaic Covenant because the "shadow" had been replaced by the "reality" that offered much more. They can't go back because back isn't there anymore.
- Resuming the animal sacrifices for sin would mean they had agreed with His accusers that Jesus was a fraud and deserved to be executed, and that would be a sin.
- Most importantly, under that obsolete system, they would not have a functioning spiritual life because they would be living in perpetual sin, "crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt" (Heb 6:6) and finding no relief from that sin.
- But the writer held out hope that the recipients would not do that, and he urged them not to go back but move forward to maturity.