



# HEBREWS

Jesus is **GREATER THAN...SO STAND FIRM**

**THEREFORE...**

**DON'T FALL AWAY—CHAPTER 6**

## **FACILITATOR'S NOTE**

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Following from the author's rebuke of the audience at the end of the previous chapter, this chapter discusses the foundation of the faith and encourages us to move forward to maturity. This chapter contains one of the more disturbing passages (Vv. 4-6) in Scripture, which talks about those who move so far from God that He will not restore them. Regardless of how the discussion goes, make certain that the class is reassured that stumbling or struggling with doubt is **not** what the author is talking about when he speaks of those who cannot be restored.

**IMPORTANT:** As always, we encourage you to begin preparing for each lesson by committing the class and the teaching to God in prayer. After this, we encourage you to dig into not only the specific chapter in Hebrews for this week (Chapter 6), but also the book of Hebrews as a whole and the Scriptures at large. As you move through your readings, jot down any thoughts that come to you and particular passages that stand out and speak to you. We assure you that these will come into play as you facilitate this discussion. It is **ONLY AFTER DOING THESE THINGS** that you should approach this lesson plan and perhaps use it as a guide. Your group is different than all the rest and so your lessons should be adapted accordingly.

## **PRAYER**

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Begin your time with a prayer asking God for help toward spiritual maturity. Pray that we become a people who feast on solid food rather than become satisfied with spiritual milk.

## FOCUS

- Elementary principles vs. Spiritual Maturity
- WARNING: Do not crucify Jesus all over again!
- Jesus is the basis of our hope that serves as an anchor for our souls.
- Recognize that **JESUS IS GREATER THAN...THEREFORE**, Don't Fall Away.

## LESSON

### Discussion Starters (OPTIONAL)

- Do you feel that the church (in general, not just FXCC) struggles with spiritual immaturity? If so, why? How can we change this?
- Look at the words of the song below (or sing it) and ask, *How does this song make you feel?*

Can He still feel the nails

Every time I fail?

Can He hear the crowds cry, "Crucify" again?

Am I causing Him pain?

When I know I've got to change?

'Cause I just can't bear the thought of hurting Him.

- What is the purpose of an anchor? How is Jesus the Anchor of our Souls?

### FROM GOD'S WORD

- 6:1-3
  - Key Points
    - Despite rebuking the audience at the end of Chapter 5 for immaturity, the author opts to move on and discuss more challenging matters.
      - But first he lays out the foundation in six aspects or principles that are grouped as pairs. Each of these principles can be found in the OT, but that does not mean that the Christian and Jewish perspectives on them are identical.
        1. Repentance from dead works (or acts that lead to death) and faith in God.
          - a. These two acts are the process of conversion.
          - b. Repentance is turning away from sin. The act of repenting goes back to the Old Testament of course but was reiterated in their time by John the Baptist (Matt. 3:2, Mark 1:4, Luke 3:8), Jesus (Mark 1:15), and the disciples and apostles (O'Brien, 213).
          - c. Following repentance (turn away from sin) one completes the circle by turning to God: not merely

acknowledging His existence but actively trusting Him and seeking to please him.

2. Baptism and laying on of hands.
  - a. The word used for baptism here (or *cleansing rites* in some translations) is *baptismoi*, a plural form which may refer either to the Christian baptism or the historical cleansing rites of Jewish practice, or both.
  - b. In the NT the laying on of hands is associated with healing, intercessory prayer, commissioning for a task (such as mission work or leadership), and the onset of the Holy Spirit. The last function (the coming of the Spirit) is probably what the author is referencing since he ties it to baptism.
3. Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.
  - a. Despite the resurrection of Christ being the center of the Christian faith, the idea had been presented in the OT (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2) and was taught by the Pharisees.
  - b. The book of Hebrews teaches that all will be judged but Christians have hope in Christ.
    - i. The statement that maturation will happen "if God permits" is not vague piety but rather an emphasis on all believers' dependence on God for spiritual growth.

- For Discussion

- What are dead works or acts that lead to death? Is repentance alone enough?
- Throughout this book we will see the author go to great lengths to distinguish between passive belief and active faith. Is passive belief still a problem in the world? What does it look like in comparison to active faith?

- 6:4-8

- Key Points

- Verses 4, 5, and 6 constitute what is arguably the most disturbing passage in all of Hebrews and is certainly one of the most disturbing in all of the New Testament. Not surprisingly, this passage is one of the most controversial in the Bible. Many sincere believers have been troubled by it.
- As always, interpretation requires respecting the context and *not reading into it what is not there*.
  - The author speaks of those who have *fallen away*.

- Is this necessarily the same thing as simply stumbling in our walk, which happens to all believers?
  - Consider the consequences that result from falling away:
    - Crucifying Jesus again and holding him up to contempt. Does this happen every time a believer stumbles?
    - The nature and severity of the consequences suggests that the sin under discussion here is apostasy, which is deliberately rejecting and publicly denouncing your former faith.
      - The author concludes this passage by comparing those in apostasy to farmland that produces thorns and thistles. What can the farmer do other than burn it over?
  - For Discussion
    - What are some ideas that one could get from an initial reading of this passage?
    - Is apostasy different from stumbling in your walk, struggling with particular sins, or wrestling with doubt? If yes, how so?
- 6:9-12
  - Key Points
    - The author reassures the audience that he is not speaking of them specifically and expresses great hope for them despite their challenges.
    - He expresses concern that they may become lazy or sluggish if they do not rely on their hope in Christ.
  - For Discussion
    - How does discouragement kill our hopes? How does laziness follow from this?
- 6:13-20
  - Key Points
    - The author offers Abraham as a textbook example of patient endurance:
      - He trusted the Lord beyond all reason because the Lord not only made him a promise (which should be enough) but swore on His own name that He would make Abraham a father of many nations.
    - The Lord has made a promise of salvation to believers with the same commitment that he made to Abraham.

- What are the two unchangeable characteristics of God?
  - God's Promise/Purpose
  - God's Oath
- These serve as our hope and find their fulfillment in Jesus, the anchor of our souls, as He brings us behind the curtain into the Holy of Holies, where God is. PRAISE GOD!!!

## **REFLECTION**

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- Is legalism an "act of death"?
- Aside from verses 4-6, are there any other Bible passages that make disturbing implications?
- What are modern examples of apostasy?
- Aside from apostasy, are there other sins that cannot be made right?
- The author goes to great lengths to assure the audience of their salvation. What other passages would you use to ease your own fears or the fears of others about salvation?

## **PRAYER**

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**LESSON OUTLINE** – Here are the lessons we will be studying the weeks to come.

- INTRODUCTION (January 5)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Angelic Beings–Chapter 1 (January 12)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Angelic Beings–Chapter 1 (January 19)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...But Still Human–Chapter 2 (January 26)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Moses–Chapter 3 (February 2)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The High Priest–Chapter 4 (February 9)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The High Priest–Chapter 5 (February 16)
- THEREFORE, Don't Fall Away–Chapter 6 (February 23)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Melchizedek–Chapter 7 (March 2)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The Law–Chapter 8 (March 9)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...The Tabernacle –Chapter 9 (March 16)
- JESUS IS GREATER THAN...Sacrifices–Chapter 10 (March 23)
- THEREFORE, Have Faith–Chapter 11 (March 30)
- THEREFORE, Stand Firm–Chapter 12 (April 6)
- THEREFORE, Offer Acceptable Sacrifices–Chapter 13 (April 13)
- CONCLUSION (April 27)