

Week 10:

Entrance into “Rest” Hebrews chapter 4:

*My Presence* will go with you and [I] *will give you rest*:

1. **Jesus is our “super-Sabbath.”** He is the personification of God’s rest.
  - a. In Him we enter now into what will be our eventual, eternal “rest.”
  - b. The seventh day did not call for a withdrawal of activity but for a renewal of vitality. “[The Sabbath] will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed, renewed his being” (Exod. 31:17).
  - c. By comparison with the context of the six days, the seventh day alone was “open ended.” It stood without an evening and without a morning (Gen. 1:31 comp 2:2-3). Linked to the completion of the universe, the Sabbath pointed to the “eschaton,” the final manifestation of Israel’s Messiah.
  - d. The Christian “rest” referred to in Hebrews is speaking of that point of entrance into “eternity”—the new existence that shall be ours in the resurrection, without time and space, day and night, mortal limitations of any kind.

The book is for preparing believers not to miss the final “rest” prepared and provided in Christ.

2. **The Letter to the Hebrews locates this rest in Jesus Christ,** Himself as we are made partakers in the promise of all that is His (John 14 “In My Father’s house are many rooms, I go to prepare a place for you”). Therefore the writer urges us with strong warnings and exhortations not to neglect the message, but to be vigilant to keep ourselves from unbelief as it inevitably leads to apostasy, going away from God through a deliberate decision of will, and continuing in sin against God. No one who neglects it will escape judgment. Our sweet spot is found in the fear of the Lord.
3. **Creation fulfilled** is the new creation expected by the prophets and the psalmists. The Sabbath of God is recreation in both senses of the word.
  - a. Wisdom dances and plays in the presence of the Creator (I was the architect at his side. I was his constant delight, rejoicing always in his presence. Rejoicing in the world, His earth, and having my delight in the sons of men. Prov. 8:31).
  - b. And mankind celebrates the Sabbath in anticipation of the fulfillment of time.

By observing the Sabbath, man becomes “present to both locations.” Not only his work but also his rest is transfigured into “an act of presence,” which is the basis of all worship.

#### 4. Rest & the Glory:

- a. Isaiah 40 foresees a return to Zion pictured such an event as a new exodus in the context of a new creation. A way across a blossoming desert would lead directly from Babylon to Jerusalem. The rebuilding of the sanctuary would usher in the final revelation

of Israel's God: "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and the whole of mankind shall see it" (Isa. 40:5).

**b.** The recollection of the glory in the wilderness (the Presence of the cloud and pillar of fire that would bring them into rest) was invoked. The return did take place, but the hoped-for final establishment of God's resting place among His people was delayed. The prophet Haggai (1:8) sounded a note of urgency "build the house, that I may delight in it and appear in my glory, says the Lord." At about the same time, the prophet Zechariah (2:10) announced the imminence of the Lord's advent\* in a language reminiscent of the priestly description of the wilderness Tabernacle. "Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion, For, behold! I am about to come and I will sojourn in the midst of you," says the Lord, "and I will give you rest" (John 1: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. Jesus our Sabbath.)

Mal 3:1 – Last great prophet before 400 years of silence – said, "I will send My Messenger. The Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple. I will fill My house with My glory."

**c.** The "house" is Christ's body:

**1 Peter 2:5** "you also, as **living stones**, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."

**John 16:19-22** Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?" But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

**d.** The ultimate conclusion will come in the new creation as the Lamb tabernacles in the midst of His redeemed people: Revelation 21 the Bride of the Lamb is the eternal city and the Lord is its Temple in its midst.

## 5. Entrance into Jesus Himself is entrance into the rest God has provided:

His Presence *"Come to Me all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."*

Matthew 11 The Message (27-30): Jesus resumed talking to the people, but now tenderly. "The Father has given me all these things to do and say. This is a unique Father-Son operation, coming out of Father and Son intimacies and knowledge. No one knows the Son the way the Father does, nor the Father the way the Son does. But I'm not keeping it to myself; I'm ready to go over it line by line with anyone willing to listen. "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

**DP Greek:** (End of Ch. 4): *Having therefore a great High priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God let us hold fast the confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses But one who has been tempted or tested in all*

*points in a way like us but without sin. Let us therefore approach with freedom of speech to the throne of grace in order that we may obtain mercy and find grace for help at the time we need it. (Hebrews 5:1) For every high priest being taken from among men is appointed on behalf of men in things relating to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; he can deal gently with the ignorant and those who are going astray, since he himself also is surrounded with weakness. And because of this, he is obligated, as for the people also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no one takes this honor for himself, but only one called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself to become a high priest, but the One who said to him, "You are my Son, I today have begotten you;" as He says also in a second place, "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek." Who in the days of his flesh, (Christ), having offered up petitions and supplications with strong cries and tears and having been heard because of his holy fear, he offered them to the One who was able to save him out of death. Although he was a Son, he learned obedience from the things which he suffered. And having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all those who regularly obey him. Having been designated by God a high priest in the order of Melchizedek. Concerning whom [Melchizedek] we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become sluggish in your hearing. For when by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you what are the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God. You've become those who need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes of milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for those who are mature, those who have their spiritual senses exercised through use or practice to the result of discerning between good and evil.*

## I. A Better Priesthood:

1. "For every high priest being taken from among men is appointed [or ordained] on behalf of men in things relating to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins." And He is a better gift because those gifts could only remind of sin, they could not atone and cleanse the worshipper.

**The ministry of a Priest** is to;

- a. offer to God *the gifts* brought by men and to
- b. offer to God *the sacrifices* required to atone for sin.

He is better because Jesus is himself both the Offerer & Offering.

### 2. He had to:

- a. **be made fully human** in order to legally & adequately represent man to God and effectively become our Mediator before God.
- b. be "tempted in all points like as we." This is an absolute requirement for a priest to be a proper representative. Jesus' apostolic mission of redemption in mortal flesh in human time and space was an absolute necessity. Therefore, "He can deal gently with the ignorant and those who are going astray, since he himself also is surrounded with weakness."
- b. **be without sin** Himself. The Levites had to offer sacrifices for their own sins as well as for the people; Jesus became the sacrifice for our sins through his sinlessness. He is better than the old priesthood on this account.
- c. **He is better** because And no one takes this honor for himself, but only one called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify himself to become a high priest,

but the One who said to him, 'You are my Son (preexistent), I today have begotten you (in the Incarnation)'; as He says also in a second place, 'You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek.'"

***"No one voted for Aaron.** God chose him. He didn't ask anybody's approval, he didn't put it before the Board; he just said, "Aaron is the high priest." When his high priesthood was **challenged by leaders** of the other tribes he said, "We'll have an end to this once and for all. Tell every tribal head to bring his tribal staff into the tabernacle and put it out before the ark." Then he said to Moses, "Go in twenty-four hours later and take out the rods." Every tribal head had his name on his rod. When Moses went in there was one rod that had budded, blossomed and brought forth almonds in twenty-four hours. That was the rod that had on it the name of God's chosen high priest, Aaron. God said, "Let that be an end. Let there be no more dispute about this from now on." Derek Prince on the priestly ministry of Jesus.*

The supremacy of the SON, not by genealogy, not by ordination or approval or appointment of man, but chosen, and approved by God Himself as GOD'S LAST WORD ON THE ENTIRE SUBJECT OF HUMAN EXISTENCE, PURPOSE, RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

Jesus embodies the message and the REVELATION ABOUT THE ENTIRETY OF THE CREATED WORLD, VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE: WAY, TRUTH, LIFE, SUMMED UP IN ONE PERSON. PREEXISTENT, MADE INCARNATE, RESURRECTED AFTER DEATH, SEATED ON HEAVEN'S HIGHEST THRONE: IT'S JESUS: EVERYTHING ELSE IS ANTI-CHRIST AT SOME LEVEL OR IN SOME FORM OR THE OTHER.

Hebrews speaks of Melchizedek 8 times; he is mentioned only 2 times in OT:

- Gen. 14: The event of meeting Abraham  
"And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High."
- Prophetically in the messianic Psalm 110:4 "The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind, 'You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek.'"

6. **Fear of the Lord:** holy reverence/piety: "Who in the days of his flesh (Christ), having offered up petitions and supplications with strong cries and tears and having been heard because of his holy fear he offered them to the One who was able to save him out of death."
  - a. Gethsemane prayer: loud cries and petitions
  - b. To God who was able to save Jesus out of death is speaking of Christ's trust in the Father's faithfulness toward him in resurrection, not avoidance of crucifixion which was necessary in order to atone for sin and conquer death.
  - c. "Holy fear"—Is. 11: "The Spirit of the fear of the Lord; His delight is in the fear of the Lord." Jesus prayer and His life was lived out in "the fear of (absolute obedient

reverence and submission to) the Lord. “Not My will but Your will be done” is the epitome of the fear of the Lord.

d. The fear of the Lord is mentioned 119 times in the Bible. Here are some examples:

- **Exodus 9:20-21:** The one among the servants of Pharaoh who *feared the word of the LORD* made his servants and his livestock flee into the houses; but he who paid no regard to the word of the LORD left his servants and his livestock in the field.
- **Prov. 1:7** The **fear of the Lord** is *the beginning of knowledge*; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.
- Fear of the Lord *delivers you from the fear of man*. Numerous Old Testament & New Testament examples: Israel/ grasshoppers, David/Goliath, Apostles after Pentecost: Peter was transformed. Paul on numerous occasions.
- The fear of the Lord is *“clean”*: In the Law (ie. throughout Deuteronomy) the key for keeping the statutes God gave Israel is the fear of the Lord; Psalm 19:9 *“The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;”*
- The fear of the Lord is *eternal*. Psalm 19:9
- The *key to obedience*: Deut. 31:12 *“Gather the people together, men and women and little ones, and the stranger who is within your gates, that they may hear and that they may learn to fear the LORD your God and carefully observe all the words of this law:”*
- *Causes you to call to mind what God has done and teach your children*: Joshua 4 crossing the Jordan entering the land: *“When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, ‘What are these stones?’ <sup>22</sup> then you shall let your children know, saying, ‘Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land’... that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever.”*
- Gives you *strength and courage*, keeps you from other kinds of fear: in the example of Joshua and Israel before Ai, a stronghold that had never been conquered by anyone.
- In the good report of the 2 spies of 12: the fear of the Lord was *the “different spirit”* Joshua and Caleb had; it gave them eyes of faith to see the promise as bigger than the problem.
- 1 Samuel 2: the fear of the Lord *leads to repentance*; is the *key to hearkening to God’s voice and guarding against rebellion*. Samuel before the congregation of the Israelites who sinned when they asked for a king like other nations. When confronted they *“feared the Lord”* and repented.
- 1 Kings 18: the fear of the Lord is *to be attained in one’s youth*. It became the key to David’s success and his *“heart after God”*; David refers to the fear of the Lord 15 times in his Psalms and *passed it on to his son* (Solomon refers to the fear of the Lord 15 times in his Proverbs).
- Made *provision* for the widow: 2 Kings 4: *“your servant feared the Lord”*

- 2 Kings 17:49: “He will *deliver you from the hand of all your enemies.*”
- 2 Chron. 19:9 and Psalm 86:11: it is *your key to a “whole” heart.*
- Psalm 25:14 “*The secret of the Lord* is for those who fear Him, And He will *make them know His covenant.*
- Is the *key to blessing.* Ps. 128:1
- Invokes *God’s lovingkindness* towards you Psalm 103:17
- Gives you ability to make *proper judgment* and have *good discernment:* Is. 11:3
- *Security* and it is *the Lord’s treasure:* Isaiah 33:6: “And He will be the stability of your times, A wealth of salvation, wisdom and knowledge; The fear of the Lord is his treasure.”
- *Light in darkness* and “*trust*” towards God. Isaiah 50:10.
- It is *missing in the lives of the godless.* Jeremiah 5.
- *Makes you identifiable, “distinct” from all other people.* Jonah: “I am a Hebrew who fears the Lord.”
- In Jonah’s example it is the *key to obedience.*
- It is “*sound wisdom.*” Micah 6:9.
- The fear of the Lord causes the Him to *listen to your every conversation, remember you, write your name in his book, save you as an only child, become His treasure.* Malachi 3:16.

7. “Although he was a Son, **he learned obedience from the things which he suffered.**” Became, experienced, practiced obedience by being tested; the ultimate obedience was “death on a cross.” Phil. 2:8 “Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

8. “And having been made perfect **he became the source of eternal salvation,** to all those who regularly obey him; having been designated [or addressed as or called as] by God a high priest in the order of Melchizedek.”

9. **Rebuke for “laziness”** regarding the word of Christ which is given for each of us to know and share with others: Concerning whom [Melchizedek] we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become sluggish [dull or lazy] in your hearing. For when by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you what are the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God.

10. Hebrews is about “perfection” which is the word for **spiritual maturity:** “You’ve become those who need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes of milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe but solid food is for those who are mature [grown up, perfect], those who have their spiritual senses exercised through use or practice to the result of discerning between good and evil.” We recall the event at the Tree of knowledge of good and evil where it was for man to discern what God had determined and obey it. Training our spiritual senses takes place through continual exercise.

**DP Greek Hebrews 6:1-8**

*Wherefore leaving behind the word of the beginning of Christ, [the teaching of the basic truth of Christ], let us be carried on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God, instructions about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. This we will do if God permits. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened [illuminated] and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they then fall away, to renew them again to repentance, crucifying as they do for themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame. For the soil [the ground] that has drunk in the rain that comes frequently upon it and brings forth vegetation suitable for those for whom it has been cultivated [is cultivated], receives blessing from God; but the soil which brings forth thorns and thistles is rejected and is near to cursing, of which the end is burning.*

**BREAKING IT DOWN V 1-8:**

1. *Wherefore leaving behind the word of the beginning of Christ or the teaching of the basic truth of Christ*
  - a. The writer lists specific things as the foundation of the beginning of the teaching or word of faith about Jesus: repentance from dead works; faith toward God; baptisms; laying on of hands; resurrection of the dead; eternal judgment.
2. *Let us (go on) be carried on*
  - a. This refers to ongoing cooperation with the work of the Holy Spirit: 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation because no prophecy ever originated through a human decision. Instead, *men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*" The same root word is used by Jesus referring to servants and their masters, for leading, ruling, governing, being taught how to do something, and for being "led by the Holy Spirit." We can contrast this with the warning against *apostasy* that follows in the next verses(ref. note on apostasy below\*).

Apostasy refers to a decision of the will to deliberately continue moving forward into sin, error, human willfulness against the will of God. In modern social culture the trends within the "progressive" cultural/political movement infiltrating the church and insisting we "get with the times" and so accept and change the fundamental orthodoxy regarding God, scripture, sin, etc. exemplifies "apostasy" as the writer of Hebrews speaks of it.

3. *To maturity, not laying again a foundation, this we will do if God permits: Six fundamentals are given as the undergirding to be put in place in the Christian life: repentance from (acts that lead to death as Adam and Eve in the garden) dead works and of faith in God, instructions about baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Then, with these permanently placed in the believers whole approach to life and faith from that point forward, he or she "builds", continue to grow in the disciple life.*

- **Repentance** means a change of mind; a decision to walk as Jesus, (Not my will, but Yours) for the rest of one's life. Phil 2:1-4, 6, "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves...Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus."
- **Faith** – (Heb. 11:1 "Now faith is" a present active state of thinking toward "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Faith is a decision. Every person is given a measure of faith to believe the gospel. This is a grace gift from the Holy Spirit and not to be lightly esteemed but to be received and increased by "hearing" the word of God (Rom. 10:17) by which more faith comes: "I am going to walk by faith from this point on." You keep walking forward in faith every day until the Lord comes or mortal life ends.
- **Baptisms:** *baptismo* is to submerge something in water by dipping or pouring over so as to completely drench. Contrast that to the word for sprinkling as Moses 'sprinkled' the blood on all the furnishings of the Tabernacle. They are two entirely different words with different action involved. There are two primary Christian baptisms: in water as into the death of Christ for sin, to cleanse the conscience upon awakening in new birth and turning to Christ in salvation; and in the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of Christ and as the guarantee of our resurrection in the age to come. Baptism correlates to the outward sign of the Old Covenant of circumcision. In the New Covenant the believer is "cut" in the interior heart by a work of the Spirit. Additionally, God pours His Spirit upon the new heart of flesh, transmitting His power and giving gifts of supernatural enablement. "My Presence will go with you and I will (be present to) give you rest (ceasing from laboring in your own human strength to accomplish the good pleasure of God)."
- **Laying on of hands:** transmission of God's power. There are three basic examples of this transmission in scripture. For ordination as a minister of God's service, for healing, for imparting spiritual gifts. Moses laid hands on Aaron and his sons to ordain them and "fill their hands" with the enabling for the work of ministry they were called to. Likewise, Jesus and His apostles, they and their disciples, Paul and Timothy, etc. Jesus laid hands on people to heal them. Likewise from the great commission onwards, laying on of hands is an operation of believers and of the church for healing.
- **Resurrection of the dead:** resurrection in the new creation is a fundamental of the gospel. "And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith." 1 Cor. 15:14. "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification." Rom. 4:25.
- **Eternal judgment:** "Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment" Hebrews 9:27; "For we must all appear before the judgment

seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad." 2 Cor. 5:10. "The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done." Rev. 20:13.

Repentance and eternal judgment are the A-Z of Christian foundation. The life of repentance brings us to assurance in the final judgment being found in Christ, having pleased Him, being faithful to His covenant and being received by Him with those wonderful words, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord!" Matt. 25:23.

The Building permit! *"This we will do if God permits."*

4. **Images from the Tabernacle:** The actions involved in those six fundamentals of the New Covenant have expression in various aspects of the Old Covenant wilderness Tabernacle if we imagine entering inside the fence and moving toward the Holy of Holies. Each movement through the ministry occurring at each successive station where a piece of the Tabernacle furnishing was placed become emblems of Christ's work on our behalf.

The worshipper:

[Repent:] Comes to the entrance called the "gate of salvation" a change in direction from moving away from God to moving toward Him.

[Faith:] Brings an offering for sin to the "holocaust altar of burnt offering" that represents personally receiving the sacrifice of Christ's death for our sins

[Baptisms:] To the "laver of washing"; baptism in water.

These three pieces of furniture and their ministry are all done in the outer court where the natural light of the sun provides sight to see and do. This corresponds to decision and action taken in our natural mind and with our body.

Matthew 3:13-17 Jesus was baptized in water and in the Spirit.

[Laying on of hands:] Moves into the "tent" out of natural light. Inside the tent only the light provided by the candlestick, representative throughout scripture of the Holy Spirit, illuminates the furnishing and ministry. There are three pieces of furniture of ministry there as we move closer to God's manifest Presence inside the Holy of Holies.

The candlestick represents the Person of the Holy Spirit. He alone illumines our "eyes to see and ears to hear" what God has prepared for us to walk in. That light cast represents the Spirit coming on us, bathing or baptizing us in His fullness (7 fold) (Is. 11; Is. 61; Lk. 4; Mt. 3; 1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12;) ""Speak to Aaron and say to him, 'When you set up the lamps, see that all seven light up the area in front of the lampstand.'" Num. 8:2; "I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands" Rev. 1:12; "These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks

among the seven golden lampstands.” Rev. 1:12.

[Resurrection of the dead:] Stands before the candlestick illumines the Table of Showbread called “the bread of Face (or face to face) indicating intimate communion, sharing, partaking, picturized by literal eating, or sharing the meal of covenant. The Table is Jesus, the bread come down from heaven, and Jesus resurrected serving as our High Priest in the face of the Father on our behalf. This bread was baked weekly, replaced just before each Sabbath, it remained supernaturally fresh, retained LIFE in the Presence of the Lord, until the day it was taken out and given to the priests to eat as their allotment of food. By the word and through the Spirit Christ feeds and sustains us day to day and will raise us up in eternal existence.

[Eternal judgment:] Approaches the last article of furnishing, the altar of incense, just before we enter the Holy of Holies where the ark, or throne of God is and before which the High Priest only entered once yearly. On this altar of fire the priest would offer incense, representing the believer’s prayers (“The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God from the angel’s hand.” Rev. 8:4). In front of this altar the High Priest would receive instruction and judgments from the presence of the Lord communicated through the stones of the breastplate and the Urim and Thummin. The priest would then communicate those “answers” and judgments to the petitioner. There are two types of believer’s prayers: with the mind in words we understand and with the Spirit in words He gives and we don’t necessarily understand; ie. Eph. 6:18 “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.” In the Holy Place we see the connection between the Holy Spirit and our prayer life.

[Eternal Judgment:] finally, as we come through the thick veil separating the Holy of Holies from the two outer areas of the sanctuary, we are standing before the ark, the throne of God, also called the ‘bema’ or seat of judgments over which the Pillar of Fire rested (symbolizing God sitting here in the midst of His people). This is where Christ is “seated at the right hand of the Father making intercession for us having made the journey in advance and torn the veil of separation by offering His flesh for sin. Where all who receive His exchange by faith, repent of their own works and turn to God, will stand to give account and receive their just reward.

5. *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened [or illuminated] and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the age to come if they then fall away, to renew them again to repentance, crucifying as they do to themselves the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame” (see note on apostasy above\*).* Compare the incident and consequences of Adam’s having “once been enlightened” in receiving instruction from God concerning the tree he should eat of in the Garden: “But of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat.” In spite of this Adam determines for himself what is good to eat and makes a decision to go his own way rather than follow God’s instruction. This is the classic example of the error of humanity, a terrible event that man, not the devil, caused to happen in Eden through his unbelief, hardness of heart, decision,

and apostasy. He deliberately went against God, His word, and the “good” God had done for him and given to him.

6. The Letter to the Hebrews is a main New Testament source of explicit, serious warning about neglecting our salvation and hearkens to the several very serious warnings and statements that Jesus made about believers. For example:
  - a. Lord, Lord, have we not done many miracles in Your name? “Depart from me you workers of lawlessness.” Matt. 7:22.
  - b. Parable of the wedding feast, a man entered not wearing the wedding garment and was cast out. Matt. 22.
  - c. Exhortations to the seven churches in Revelation 1-3 “I know your works; I am coming quickly; repent; hold fast; this I have against you;” etc.
7. For the ground that has drunk in the rain that comes frequently upon it and brings forth vegetation suitable for those for whom it has been cultivated [or is cultivated], receives blessing from God; but the soil which brings forth *thorns and thistles is rejected and is near to cursing*, of which the end is burning.
  - a. Genesis 3:17-18 (God had planted and watered the garden and gave it to Adam to “work & watch” in Gen 2:15.) We are God’s “planting” and He faithfully cultivates our faith to produce faithfulness. Adam’s apostasy caused thorns and thistles to spring up from the ground which had before only born good fruit.

Hebrews 6:9 “But we are convinced, concerning you beloved, of things that are better and relate to salvation”