

Sent: Wednesday, November 02, 2016 2:21 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Lesson on Hebrews 6

Last nite we discussed Hebrews 6 which is generally considered one of the tougher portions of Scripture to understand and teach, because it can be interpreted, and often used as a "proof text," by those on either side of the argument as to whether a believer can "fall away"--to the point of "apostasy"--and thus lose his or her salvation, without any chance of restoration! The issue essentially boils down to a question of whether the author is addressing believers or unbelievers--or a combination of both! It seems clear to be the latter!

The term "apostate"--which is not actually used in this text--refers to someone who deliberately abandons a formerly professed position, allegiance, or commitment. And in this case, would suggest (according to MacArthur) a professing, or nominal, Christian who associates with those who truly believe the gospel, but defects after believing lies and deceptions, thus revealing his or her true nature as unconverted! Judas Iscariot is a "good" example of a disciple who had no lack of knowledge, but lacked faith and became an arch-apostate! He's beyond salvation because he has ultimately rejected the only One who can cleanse him from sin and bring him into God's presence!

The prevailing idea from this passage, we believe, is that true believers will not "fall away" in that sense, and that those who do only give evidence of the fact that they were never saved to begin with! I John 2:19 supports this notion: "They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us!"

The author gives a stern warning that should be heeded by both believers and unbelievers alike! He specifically appears to affirm the "security" of the believers (in Heb. 6:9) with the words: "But beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and the things that accompany salvation." But, he also urges them to "show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end...and not to be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises"! And he offers them the example of Abraham who, "having patiently waited, obtained the promise"! This in the context of Abraham believing God, and evidencing it! by being willing to offer up Isaac, his "only son" as a sacrifice and thus receiving the promise from God that all the world would be blessed through his seed (Gen. 22:16-18)!

Hagner notes that "perseverance" is what finally demonstrates the reality of the Christian faith! Jesus Himself said--interestingly--"to those Jews who had believed in Him: "if you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

And, as you know, there are so many other verses in the Bible that confirm and give us assurance of the "security of the believer," including the following:

John 10:27-28--"Jesus said: My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me--and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of the Father's hand!"

Romans 8:35, 38-39--"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword...For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord!"

I Peter 1:3-5--"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy, has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time!"

And Philippians 1:6--"Being confident in this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you, will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ!" Whew!

Well--there's more we could cite--but our passage in Hebrews 6 ends on another highly encouraging note--which also turns out to be our memory verse for the week: "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and one which enters the veil, where Jesus has entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

And I just can't quit without adding the great benedictory statement of Jude 24-25 which also seems so relevant to our lesson: "Now unto Him is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever! Amen!"

And so, men, have a great week! And keep on keeping on! Or to cite the words of Joel Benson, an "old" Air Force jet pilot trainer: "Don't hover!"

Lowell