

Divine Accountability
A Study of the Warning of Hebrews Chapter 6

- *In the Epistle to the Hebrews we see at least two central themes running through it.*
- *The preeminence and centrality of Christ.*
- *Divine Accountability.*

Hebrews 2:3 (NKJV)

³how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

- *“how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation” – This introduces the warning that runs through this epistle and is seen in chapters 6 and 10.*
- *Salvation consists of three parts:*
- *1 Justification – deliverance from the penalty of sin – Deliverance from Hell. This is the new birth that has taken place in our spirits.*
- *2. Sanctification – deliverance from the power of sin – being conform into the image of Jesus Christ in our souls.*
- *3. Glorification – deliverance from the presence of sin – receiving eternal incorruptible bodies at the resurrection and the accompanying reward, crowns and inheritance.*
- *Once we have received Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and are born again, we are now justified; our life’s journey now involves sanctification and the resulting eternal rewards (glorification).*
- *The warning in Hebrews 10:26-31 does not deal with so much the eternal consequences of sin as much as the immediate consequences that a believer will experience in this life if one chooses to walk in willful sin.*

Hebrews 12:6 (NKJV)

⁶For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.”

- *Hebrews 12:6 gives us insight into God’s dealings as described in the warning of Hebrews 10.*
- *God’s love for us as His sons and daughters motivates Him to teach us, instruct us and discipline us.*
- *If a believer walks in willful sin, then God in His love and jealousy for us will even discipline us very severely and this is what Hebrews 10:26-31 is describing.*
- *Hebrews 10:26-31 deals with God’s divine discipline.*
- *Hebrews Chapter 6:4-9, in contrast to the warning in Hebrews 10, deals with the theme of spiritual maturity and fruitfulness and the corresponding rewards and inheritance as a result. It speaks about the eternal consequences of continuing to walk in sin and the eternal loss of the rewards, crowns and inheritance that God has for believers in Heaven.*

Hebrews 6:4–9 (NKJV)

⁴For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,
⁶if 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.

⁷For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God;

⁸but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.

⁹But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

- *For us to properly understand the warning found in Hebrews chapter 6 we must first understand the context of the warning.*

Hebrews 5:11–14 (NKJV)

¹¹of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

¹²For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

- For though by this time you ought to be teachers – *They had been believers already long enough that they should have been mature enough to teach others but instead they were still wrestling with the basic principles of faith.*
- ¹³For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe – *They were still babies (infants) because they were unskilled in the word of righteousness. In other words they were immature and childish Christians who still did not understand how to live according to God's Word.*

¹⁴But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. – *The passage is not speaking about justification but sanctification and spiritual maturity.*

Hebrews 6:1–3 (NKJV)

¹Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

²of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

³And this we will do if God permits.

- *Hebrews 6:1-2 reviews the elementary doctrines or “the milk truths”.*
- “not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God” – *we are not to be like spiritual babes that continue to wrestle with the basic concepts of repentance and faith but we are to build upon that*

foundation and bring forth maturity.

- ³And this we will do if God permits. – *Why would God not permit us to go onto maturity?*
- *The following verses in Hebrews 6 explain what will stop us from maturing spiritually and being fruitful.*

Hebrews 6:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,
⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,
⁶if 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 above verses warn us if a believer continually resists and rebels against the work of the Holy Spirit they can come to a place where they are not able to repent (change one's mind or course).*
- *This inability to be renewed to repentance is due to a hardness of heart combined with self-condemnation.*
- *As we study these verses we must keep in mind that the theme of this portion of Scripture is not justification but sanctification and ensuing spiritual maturity.*
- *Two Types of Repentance:*
- *Repentance for an unbeliever that leads to justification.*
- *Repentance for a believer that leads to sanctification and spiritual maturity.*
- *In Luke 18:9-14 Christ gives us a parable to show the type of repentance that leads an unbeliever to justification.*

Luke 18:9–14 (NKJV)

⁹Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

¹⁰“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

¹¹The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

¹²I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’

¹³And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

¹⁴I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

¹³And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’

- ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ - *The key that led this tax collector to a right relationship with God was not that he confessed his sins but that he confessed his sinfulness.*

- *When we acknowledge our sinfulness we recognize we are sinners incapable of saving ourselves or doing anything truly good. This leads us to acknowledge our need for the Lord Jesus Christ to be our Saviour.*
- *“I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other” – The confession of the tax collector that he was a sinner led him to be justified before God.*
- *Repentance for a believer leads to sanctification and spiritual maturity.*

1 John 1:9 (NKJV)

⁹**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

- *The promise of 1 John 1:9 is not written to unbelievers but to Christians.*
- *When we as Christians confess our sins He “cleanse us from all unrighteousness” thus leading us to sanctification so that we can continue to grow and mature.*

Mark 11:26 (NKJV)

²⁶**But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses.”**

- *This same principle is found in the Lord’s Prayer and is directed toward Christians not unbelievers.*
- *If a believer allows unforgiveness to enter into his heart he is defiled and hindered in his walk and relationship with God.*
- *Un-confessed sin does not affect our justification but it does impact our sanctification and our quality of life.*

1 Corinthians 9:24–27 (NKJV)

²⁴**Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.**

²⁵**And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.**

²⁶**Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.**

²⁷**But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.**

²⁴**Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it.**

- *Paul is speaking about running the race of this life to receive the prize.*
- *The prizes are the things given to those who allow God to sanctify them and produce spiritual maturity and fruitfulness.*
- *“Run in such a way that you may obtain it” – We must run this race, live this life, in such a way as to fulfill God’s will.*

²⁷**But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.**

- *“Disqualified” in the Greek is ἄδοκιμος adokimos and it means, “worthless, unqualified, failing the test, unfit, unacceptable.*
- *“Lest I myself should become disqualified” – Paul was not questioning whether he would be in Heaven but whether he would fulfill the things God had put before him. He wanted to finish the race that he had begun to run.*
- *Paul “disciplined his body” so that he would not be in subjection to the “old man” but would be one that was led by the Spirit.*
- *Esau is an example of a son who lost his inheritance.*

Hebrews 12:15–17 (NKJV)

¹⁵looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;

¹⁶lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

Hebrews 12:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶lest there be any fornicator or profane person like Esau, who for one morsel of food sold his birthright.

Hebrews 12:16 (NASB95)

¹⁶that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it diligently with tears.

- *Esau wanted to inherit the blessing but he was rejected and found no place for repentance though he sought it diligently with tears.*
- *Not only was Esau sorrowful for his loss but so was Isaac his father who had wanted to give him the inheritance as the first born.*
- *Esau’s bad choices did not affect his standing as Isaac’s son but it did disqualify him from receiving the inheritance that was to be his through his sonship.*
- *Every person will be judge by God. Believers and non-believers.*
- *When a person receives Christ the place of judgment changes.*
- *When a person is born again the place of judgment changes from the White Throne to the Judgment Seat of Christ.*
- *It is at the Judgment Seat of Christ that Christians either receive their rewards or are denied them.*
- *The Judgment Seat of Christ will be a place of great joy for some and a place of great sorrow and tears for others as they realized they had wasted their lives.*

1 Corinthians 3:10–15 (NKJV)

¹⁰According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

¹¹For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

- *Paul speaks about a foundation that as a wise master builder he has laid.*
- *The foundation is Jesus Christ – He is the rock of our Salvation.*
- *Paul gives a warning to the believers, “But let each one take heed how he builds on it.”*
- *God has worked that salvation in us (our new birth) but we have to work it out (sanctification and spiritual maturity).*

¹²Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

¹³each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is.

- *The question is not about maintaining the foundation but what we are building upon that foundation.*
- *Gold, silver, precious stones picture precious things that are eternal.*
- *Wood, hay and straw pictures temporal and carnal things that have no value.*
- *“each one’s work will become clear” – We may try to fool others or even ourselves but at the Judgment Seat of Christ everything will become evident.*
- *“The Day will declare it.” – The Day is the day we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ.*
- *“because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is” – The method that God uses to test our work at the Judgment Seat of Christ is fire.*
- *Our work is tested not our works. It is not what we have done but what we have become as we have done the works.*
- *We can either go through a cleansing fire now and build eternal things or we can go through the fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ and suffer eternal loss.*

¹⁴If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward.

- *There is a reward for those whose work endures through the fire.*
- *This tells us two things:*
- *Some will not receive rewards.*
- *The rewards will vary depending on what and how much endures the fire.*

¹⁵If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- *The Greek word for “suffer loss” is ζημιόω zēmioō and it means, “to damage, suffer loss” and can be translated as forfeit.*
- *The Judgment Seat of Christ is not only the place of rewards but also the place of loss.*

- “he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved” - *Even if we suffer the loss of all the rewards, our salvation (justification) is still firm but the loss we will incur will be eternal.*
- *However, the process of fire is a cleansing process that strips away anything and everything that is in us that is not Christ centered.*

2 John 8 (NKJV)

⁸Look to yourselves, that we do not lose those things we worked for, but that we may receive a full reward.

- *The full reward – A reward that is complete and filled up to the top – the totality of fullness – the full and complete purposes that God has for our lives.*

Romans 8:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

- *Every heir is a son but not every son is an heir.*
- *Through our new birth in Christ we become sons and daughters of God.*
- “if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together” - *Through our obedience to Christ and our willingness to go through the sanctification process we mature, we become heirs.*

2 Timothy 2:12 (NKJV)

¹²If we endure, We shall also reign with Him. If we deny Him, He also will deny us.

- *The idea of inheritance is repeated in 2 Timothy 2:12.*
- *We are heirs of God if we allow God to prepare us for the throne but if we resist the work of the Holy Spirit and reject the suffering that needs to take place to cleanse our souls we will be denied that place beside Him on His throne.*

Revelation 21:4 (NKJV)

⁴And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.”

- *At Judgment Seat of Christ there will be tears for those believers who had wasted their lives and have forfeit the inheritance, crowns and rewards that God had prepared for them.*
- *God will wipe away all their tears for there will be no tears in Heaven but the loss they will have suffered will continue on in eternity.*
- *In summary, repentance for a believer is essential for a Christian to grow in sanctification and maturity.*
- *Failing to live lives of repentance and faith will rob us of the crowns, rewards and inheritance that God desires to give each of His children.*

Revelation 3:21 (NKJV)

²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.

- “I will grant to sit with Me on My throne” – *These crowns, rewards and*

inheritance represent among others things the depth of intimacy and closeness to God.

- *Unconfessed sins rob us of intimacy with God in this life and in eternity.*

Hebrews 6:4–6 (NKJV)

⁴For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,

⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

⁶if 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.

- *These verses describe the process of a believer who continues to harden his heart so that eventually he has totally hardened his heart and no longer is willing to repent or respond to God.*
- *This process can take many years and many decades and many times it may appear that someone has reached this point but God is still able to get through and see them renewed unto repentance.*
- *The hardening of a heart is the hardening of one's soul senses that can be seen to correspond with our physical senses.*
- *"who were once enlightened" – smell - memory – the Fear of God (conscious of God)*
- *"having tasted of the Heavenly gift" – touch – affections (phileo) – love (agape)*
- *"have become partakers of the Holy Spirit" – hearing – conscience – faith*
- *"have tasted the good word of God" – taste – reason – revelation knowledge*
- *"the powers of the age to come" – sight – imagination - hope*
- *Hebrews 6:6 says, "it is impossible to renew them again to repentance."*
- *It is important to note that the reason they cannot be brought back to repentance is not because of a lack of willingness on God's part but because of the hardness that has overtaken them through their willful rebellion.*
- *"they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame"*
- *Another thing that hinders them from repentance is the condemnation that is being heaped upon by the devil for how they have treated Christ their Saviour.*
- *In the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32 we see an example of this strategy of the enemy.*
- *It was rebellion that drove the prodigal son from the presence of his father into a life of destructive living.*
- *However, it was the realization of how he had shamed his father that hindered him from returning.*
- *The prodigal son believed a lie about his father's love. He believed that because of his sinful actions he was no longer worthy to be his son and that he would never be received by his father.*

Hebrews 6:7 (NKJV)

⁷For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God;

- *This verse speaks metaphorically about spiritual fruitfulness.*
- *The Bible sometimes pictures the earth as a man's soul.*
- *1 Corinthians 3:9 describes the soul of a believer as a worked garden.*
- *The parable of the sower also describes the soul in terms of soil or ground.*
- *The purpose of God's blessings upon us is so that we will become fruitful*
- *The reoccurring theme in the warning of Hebrews 6 is not justification but sanctification and spiritual maturity and fruitfulness.*

Hebrews 6:8 (NKJV)

⁸but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned

- *In this verse we see a picture of a piece of land, which, after it has been cultivated only produces thorns and briers.*
- *It is rejected because its crop is useless.*
- *This is a picture of a backslidden believer standing before the Judgment Seat of Christ and their life's work consists only of wood, hay and stubble and everything they had done in their lives is consumed and reduced to ashes.*
- *It is important to note that the land is not consumed in the fire but only the bad crop that it produced.*

1 Corinthians 3:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

- *"near to being cursed" – The Greek word for "near" is ἐγγύς engys and means, near; close; close to a place. It is significant that the land is not cursed but it is described only as being close to the place of cursing.*
- *Even though the land has produced nothing but a crop of thorns and briers and its crop has been totally burned up, it is not cursed even though it is worthy of being cursed for it took the blessings and only produced weeds.*
- *Why is the unfruitful land not cursed?*

Galatians 3:13 (NKJV)

¹³Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"),

- *Christ has taken the curse upon Himself so that we would not be and could not be cursed.*
- *God's cleansing fire at the Judgment Seat of Christ is actually as expression of His love for us.*
- *Nothing unclean or impure can enter into Heaven.*
- *Whatever impure things remain in our souls when we stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ will be consumed by His purifying fire.*

Hebrews 6:9 (NKJV)

⁹But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

- “yes, things that accompany salvation” – *The writer of Hebrews summarizes this warning by repeating the theme of the warning which is “those things that accompany salvation” referring to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness.*

Joel 2:25 (NKJV)

²⁵“So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you.

- *God is here today to bring restoration and not destruction.*

Revelation 22:12 (NKJV)

¹²“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

- *Don’t waste the opportunities that the Lord has given us because the time is short.*
- *Today is the day of salvation.*
- *Points of prayer:*
- *If anyone has never received Christ as his or her Lord and Saviour now is an opportunity.*
- *We can take a spiritual inventory of our lives.*
- *Pray for a fresh excitement and appreciate for all the things that God has done for us.*
- *We can thank the Lord for the areas of victory and fruitfulness we are experiencing.*