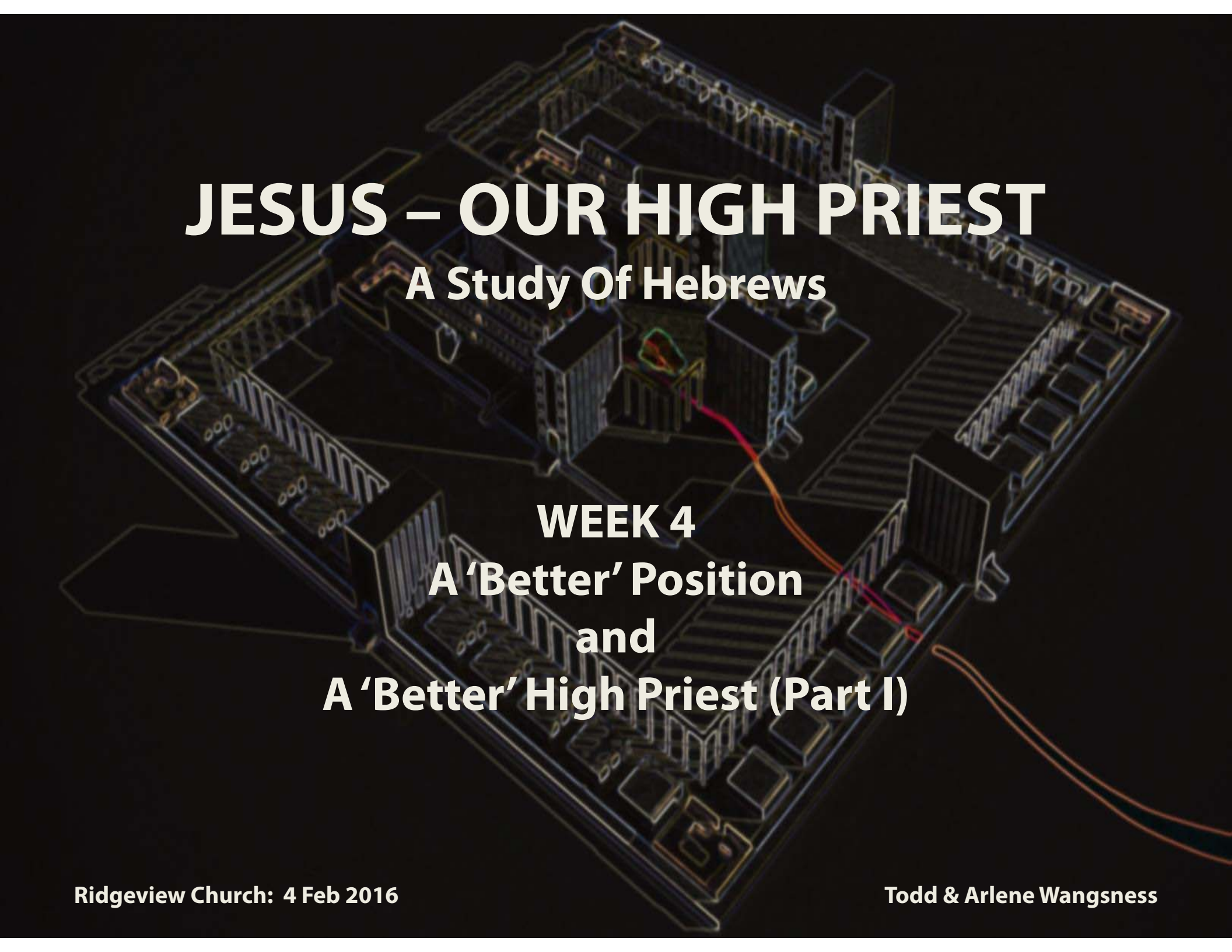


JESUS – OUR HIGH PRIEST

A Study Of Hebrews

WEEK 4
A 'Better' Position
and
A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

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HEBREWS: Jesus Our High Priest

Topics

• Week 1:	Theme, Background and Overview	1:1 – 1:3
• Week 2:	Superiority of the Son to Angels	1:4 – 2:18
• Week 3:	Superiority of the Son to Moses and	3:1 – 3:6
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Hebrews: A 'Better' Position

Heb 4:14–16

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. 15 For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- **In the Greek text, 'we have a great High Priest' emphasizes a continuous availability**
- **Our new High Priest is a heavenly High Priest**
  - **Since He is a heavenly High Priest, He has a far superior priesthood than did Aaron and the Levitical priesthood**
- **As mentioned previously, He is both God and Man**
- **Our High Priest was 'tempted' in all areas as we are (some commentaries emphasize He was 'tempted to the maximum')**
  - **Lust of the flesh**
  - **Lust of the eyes**
  - **Pride of Life**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

PREREQUISITES FOR LEVITICAL PRIESTHOOD (Heb 5:1–4)

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2 He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. 3 Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. 4 And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was.

1. **He must be human**
2. **Offers both gifts and sacrifices for sins**
3. **Must be <u>compassionate</u> and <u>sympathetic</u>**
4. **He is <u>appointed</u> for man…He must also represent man**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

THE QUALIFICATION OF THE SON AS OUR HIGH PRIEST (Heb 5:5–10)

So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: "You are My Son, Today I have begotten You." 6 As He also says in another place: "You are a priest forever According to the order of Melchizedek"; 7 who, in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications, with vehement cries and tears to Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His godly fear, 8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, 10 called by God as High Priest "according to the order of Melchizedek,"

1. **Jesus was divinely appointed (:5-6)**
2. **Jesus was human (:7)**
3. **He is compassionate and empathetic due to His suffering (:8)**
4. **His sufferings were 'perfected' (completed) upon the Cross and through His suffering, we are 'made' perfect through His substitutionary death (:9)**
5. **Jesus is called to the 'Order of Melchizedek' priesthood, which is a higher order than the Levitical priesthood (:10)**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

3RD PARENTHETICAL WARNING: THE DANGER OF NOT PROGRESSING TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY (Heb 5:11-6:12)

A. ADMONITION AGAINST SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY (Heb 5:11-14)

11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. 12 For 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. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But 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 Hebrews had become dull, lazy and sluggish (:11)**
- **They had regressed and were in need of being taught the ABC's all over again (:12)**
  - **If we don't progress…we regress!**
- **They were unskilled in applying and exercising God's Word (:13)**
- **All believers are required to make proper use of what they know (:14)**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

3RD PARENTHETICAL WARNING: THE DANGER OF NOT PROGRESSING TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY (Heb 5:11-6:12) continued:

B. GROW BEYOND THE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPLES (Heb 6:1-3)

Therefore, 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, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits.

- **Elementary Principles**
  1. **Repentance from dead works: Levitical system was temporary/ineffectual**
  2. **Faith towards God: Positive side of conversion…commitment to the Messiah**
  3. **Doctrine of baptisms: Refers to the ceremonial washings under Judaism**
  4. **Laying on of hands: Refers to priest laying hands on the altar sacrifices**
  5. **Resurrection of the dead: Clearly taught in OT…no need to rehash**
  6. **Eternal judgement: The 'Prophets' spoke extensively about judgment**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

3RD PARENTHETICAL WARNING: THE DANGER OF NOT PROGRESSING TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY (Heb 5:11-6:12) continued:

C. THE NEED FOR PROGRESSION (Heb 6:4-6)

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.

- **These scriptures need to be interpreted in light of the entirety of the Book of Hebrews**
- **It was written to Judean Christians who were considering a return to Judaism**
- **The immediate context is established in Heb 6:1, 'going on to perfection',**
  - **It is discussing SPIRITUAL MATURITY (important)**
- **He is addressing Believers (:4-5)**
  - **There is no way to construe these verses as addressing non-believers**
- **Scripture does not contradict itself…an important rule of hermeneutics is to interpret the *unclear* in light of the *clear***
  - **There are an abundance of passages in the NT that clearly teach the security of the believer**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

C. THE NEED FOR PROGRESSION (Heb 6:4-6) continued

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,

Five Spiritual Privileges:

1. **Once enlightened: Involves regeneration. 'Once' emphasizes this occurred at a specific moment and is not repeated**
2. **Tasted the heavenly gift: 'Tasted' means a genuine experience…not just a 'nibble'**
3. **Partakers of the Holy Spirit: Means to have 'real' participation. Root is 'indwelt'**
4. **Tasted the good Word of God: 'Rhema' word of God…the personal character and experience of God's goodness.**
5. **Tasted the powers of the age to come: Experienced the powers of God's greatness through fulfilled prophecy and miraculous healings**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

C. THE NEED FOR PROGRESSION (Heb 6:4-6) continued:

For it is impossible … 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.

Summary of various common interpretations of this passage

1. **This passage applies to 'professing' believers, but not <u>real</u> believers**
   - **This view – we believe – can be rejected out-of-hand**
2. **These people were 'truly' saved, and are now 'truly' lost…they cannot be saved again**
   - **Has in view that the believer has committed the 'unpardonable' sin**
   - **Cannot be rejected…it is possible the passage <u>is</u> dealing with salvation**
3. **The word 'impossible' means 'difficult'**
   - **The Greek word <u>really does mean 'impossible'</u>! Can be rejected.**
4. **It refers to someone who is saved, falls away, renewed…ad nauseum…until God says enough is enough**
   - **The text does not allow the possibility of iterations**
   - **'For it is impossible' means the believer has only one chance**
   - **Can be rejected**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

C. THE NEED FOR PROGRESSION (Heb 6:4-6) continued:

For it is impossible … 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.

Summary of various interpretations of this passage (cont.)

5. **The verse is hypothetical…it doesn't say that believers can and do fall away. It just presents the hypothetical situation that would occur if they did.**
   - **If this is purely hypothetical, then why does the author give the warning?**
   - **Cannot reject this view. Can be construed as a stern admonition.**
6. **The passage applies(d) to believers who will suffer a physical judgement if:**
   a) **They return back to Judaism or**
   b) **Fail to progress spiritually by compromising with sin in their lives**
   - **This view seems to match the overall context of Hebrews in general and the immediate context of spiritual maturity better than any of the other views**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

For it is impossible … 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.

Detailed discussion of the 6th view:

6. The passage applies(d) to believers who will suffer a physical judgement if:

a) They return back to Judaism or

b) Fail to progress spiritually by compromising with sin in their lives

REFERENCE #1: God's judgement on the Israelites for rejecting the command to enter in to Canaan at Kadesh (Num 14:29-32)

> ***"The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. 30 Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. 31 But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. 32 But as for you, your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness."***

- **The Israelites' decision was irreversible. They were guilty of refusing to press on.**
- **They received a 'physical' judgement for their unbelief (death in the wilderness)**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

REFERENCE #2: God's judgement on Jerusalem for rejecting Jesus (Mat 23:37-39)

> ***"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! 38 See! Your house is left to you desolate; 39 for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'"***

- **Jesus pronounced a judgement on Jerusalem (Israel) for rejecting Him as Messiah and the rejection of the gospel message**
- **They received a 'physical' judgement…God would no longer deal directly with Israel…until the 'fullness of the Gentiles' referenced in Rom 11:25-26 is fulfilled.**

Rom 11:25-32 ***"…that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; 27 For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins." 28 Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. 29 For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. 30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. 32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all."***

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

Comparison of the Kadesh event to Heb 6:4-6 passage:

Hebrews 6:4-6	Judgement of Israelites at Kadesh
1. Had been enlightened	Had seen pillar of cloud and fire over tabernacle
2. Tasted of the heavenly gift	Eaten of the manna
3. Made partakers of the Holy Spirit	Experienced the Spirit on the 70 elders
4. Tasted the good Word of the Lord	Witnessed the giving of the Law
5. Tasted of the powers of the Age to Come	Witnessed the miracles of God through Moses
➢ *Hebrew believers wanted to return to Judaism*	*Israelites wanted to return to Egypt – wandered 40 years*

Comparison of God's rejection of Jerusalem to Heb 6:4-6 passage:

Hebrews 6:4-6	Judgement on Israelites in Jerusalem
1. Had been enlightened	Heard message of repentance by John the Baptist
2. Tasted of the heavenly gift	Had seen the miracles of healing by Jesus
3. Made partakers of the Holy Spirit	Witnessed the Spirit working through the disciples
4. Tasted the good Word of the Lord	Had heard the gospel message directly from Jesus
5. Tasted of the powers of the Age to Come	Had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus
➢ *Hebrew believers wanted to return to Judaism*	*Jerusalem/Israel to wander spiritual wilderness during the Age of the Gentiles*

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

D. THE FRUITS OF NOT PROGRESSING (Heb 6:7-8)

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

- **Progressing on to spiritual maturity results in blessings and rewards for fruitfulness**
- **The lack of progression results in *fruitlessness,* which – in turn – results in physical judgement and loss of reward**
- **Ref 1 Cor 3:12-15: *Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, 13 each 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. 14 If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.***

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

SUMMARY POINTS OF WARNING

- **Author was warning the Hebrews to not make the same mistake as OT Israelites**
- **The Hebrews had not yet crossed the line, but were quickly approaching it**
- **The failure to walk by faith is the "falling away" referenced in Heb 6:6**
- **The emphasis of this view is that such judgement does not result in loss of salvation**
- **Rather, it is a chastening that is referred to again in Heb 12:5-11, which agrees with the context of the entire message to the Hebrews**

Hebrews: A 'Better' High Priest (Part I)

E. CONSOLATION OF HOPE (Heb 6:9-12)

"But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner. 10 For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end, 12 that you do not become sluggish, but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

- **The author is persuaded that the believers *will* press on to maturity**
- **Their progression will be evidenced by works that 'accompany salvation'**
- **The stern warnings given by the author were necessary to focus their attention on this serious issue**
- **The fact he calls them 'Beloved', shows they are believers**
- **He does recognize their past works (that accompany salvation)**
- **And he exhorts them to be diligent to progress in the faith**