

Jesus Gives Us Hope That Keeps Us Safe



SABBATH—FEBRUARY 5

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Hebrews 6:4, 5; Romans 6:6; Galatians 5:24; Hebrews 10:26–29; Hebrews 6:9–12.

MEMORY VERSE: “This promise gives our hearts something to hold on to [to trust]. It [this promise] keeps our hearts strong and steady [loyal to God]. It [this promise] will take us into the Holy Place right inside God’s house. Jesus has gone there ahead of us. He has been made high priest [top spiritual leader] for ever like [the same in many ways but better than] Melchizedek” (Hebrews 6:19, 20, WE).

IN HEBREWS 1–4, PAUL EXPLAINS THE WORK THAT JESUS does for us in heaven. Then Paul changes the topic in Hebrews 5:11–Hebrews 6:20. In these verses, Paul gives his readers a strong warning. They are in real danger of losing their faith.

Paul tells his readers to keep following Jesus. Paul knows that many Christians give up when they have doubts about God. Christians must not stop seeing all the wonderful things Jesus does for them. Or their faith and knowledge about Jesus will stop growing.

We are all in danger of losing faith at times, right?

The warning from Paul ends with words of loving encouragement. Paul tells his readers that he believes in them. Paul also shows his readers that Jesus is the Savior that God promised to send. This promise can never be broken (Hebrews 6:9–20). In Hebrews 10:26–39, Paul gives more words of warning and encouragement. This week, we will study Paul’s words of encouragement from God in Hebrews 6 and 10.



The warning from Paul ends with words of loving encouragement.

**“TASTING” THE GOOD THINGS FROM GOD
(Hebrews 6:4, 5)**

What good gifts does Jesus give His followers who obey Him? For the answer, read Hebrews 6:4, 5.

Paul talks about people in the past who “have seen the light” (Hebrews 6:4, NIV). The “light” shows us that the people knew Bible truth. The people turned from Satan and his “dark” ideas or false teachings to the “light” or knowledge from God (Acts 26:17, 18). The “light” shows us that God frees us from sin (Ephesians 5:8–11) and saves us from the “dark” (1 Thessalonians 5:4, 5). The “dark” is a word picture for people with no understanding. Look at the verb in Hebrews 6:4 that is written as “seen the light” (NIV). This verb shows us that we see God because of Jesus. Jesus “shines as bright as God” (Hebrews 1:3, WE).

Paul also says that the people from the past “had the Holy Spirit” (Hebrews 6:5, WE). “They knew the gift from heaven” (Hebrews 6:4, WE). The word written as “heaven” shows us that the gift comes from God. What is this gift? People who have the Holy Spirit know the gift of mercy (Romans 5:15; John 7:36–39; 1 Corinthians 12:13). This mercy gives us strength to live for God. His Spirit will live in us and control us. Our behavior will change. Then we will become holy (Galatians 5:22, 23).

The words written as “had the Holy Spirit” show us another Bible truth (Hebrews 6:5, WE). When the Spirit lives in us, we will “know that the Lord is good” (1 Peter 2:3, WE). In Hebrews 6:5, NIV, the words written as, “they have tasted . . . the powers of the age to come” show us the future miracles God will do. God will wake us up from the dead (John 5:24, 28, 29). He will change our bodies so we will live forever. Christians may enjoy a small “taste” of these gifts now. How? When we accept Jesus as our leader, we start a new life (Colossians 2:12, 13). Jesus gives us a new way of thinking (Romans 12:2).

When Paul wrote Hebrews 6, he thought about Israel in the desert, for sure. God gave Israel many gifts: light to guide them, His protection (Nehemiah 9:12, 19; Psalm 105:39), bread from heaven (Exodus 16:15), His Spirit (Nehemiah 9:20), special messages, and promises of good things (Joshua 21:45). God gave Israel a “taste” of heaven when He freed them from Egypt (Acts 7:36). But Israel left their faith in God (Numbers 14:1–35). Paul warns his readers that they can leave their faith in the same way.

How have you “tasted” the gifts that Paul talks about?



**The “light” shows us
that the people knew
Bible truth.**

THE ONES WHO CAN'T COME TO GOD AGAIN
(Hebrews 6:4–6)

Compare Hebrews 6:4–6; Matthew 16:24; Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 5:24; and Galatians 6:14. These verses talk about our nailing Jesus to the cross or our nailing our old lives there. Some of the verses talk about picking up our cross. What do all these word pictures show us? What does it mean to nail Jesus to the cross again?

When people “leave their faith in Christ [Jesus], they cannot [can’t] come to God again” (Hebrews 6:6, WE). The word “cannot” shows us something that keeps God from doing what He wants to do. God can’t save people who turn away from Him. Why? “Because those [people] who leave Christ are nailing him to the cross again” (Hebrews 6:6, ERV). Paul wants us to see that we can be saved only by Jesus (Acts 4:12). If we turn from Jesus, we can’t be saved.

When we “nail God’s Son up on the cross again” (Hebrews 6:6, WE), what are we doing? We end our personal connection with Jesus when we turn from Him. To help us better understand this idea, think about Jesus in the court of Pilate. Why do the Jewish leaders shout at Pilate to nail Jesus to the cross? The leaders are afraid of Jesus. They see Jesus as a powerful enemy and a danger to their plans. So, the leaders want Jesus dead. In the same way, the person who wants to control his life sees Jesus and His Good News as a danger. Jesus asks us to pick up our cross (Matthew 16:24). We can carry our cross only if we turn away from our old way of life. Then, we can say with Paul, “Because of the cross, the ways of this world [this life] are dead to me, and I am dead to them” (Galatians 6:14, NLV). So, if we want to live as Christians, we must first “die” (Romans 6:6; Galatians 5:24). “Dying” shows us we must turn from our old thoughts and behaviors. Then we can enjoy the new life God wants to give us (Romans 6:1–11).

The fight between Jesus and our old way of life is a fight to the death (Romans 8:7, 8; Galatians 5:17). We do not win this war after one fight. In Hebrews 6:6, Paul does not show us someone who sometimes fails in this fight. Paul shows us someone who turns away from Jesus after he accepts Him as Savior (Hebrews 6:4, 5). This person decides Jesus wants him to give up too much to follow Him. The man does not want to give up his old way of life. So, he “kills” his friendship with Jesus. But there is hope. As long as the person does not fully turn from Jesus, he can be saved.



Jesus asks us to pick up our cross (Matthew 16:24).

NO OFFERING LEFT FOR SIN (Hebrews 10:26–29)

Read Hebrews 10:26–29. What three things does Paul say in these verses about the person that God can't forgive?

Does Paul say that God will not forgive us if we sin after we accept Bible truth? Of course not! God made Jesus our Lawyer in the court of heaven, right (1 John 2:1)? Jesus helps us ask forgiveness from the Father (1 John 1:9). But in Hebrews 10:26–29, Paul talks about the sinner that God can't forgive. What three things does Paul say about this person?

1. This person “walks on and hates the Son of God” (Hebrews 10:29, NLV). This terrible word picture shows us the person who refuses to allow Jesus to control his life. The name “Son of God” helps us remember that God tells Jesus to sit at His right side. God then makes Jesus a promise. God will make the enemies of Jesus the same as a “footstool” where Jesus can rest His feet (Hebrews 1:13, ESV; read also Hebrews 1:5–12, 14). The “footstool,” or place for Jesus to rest His feet, is a word picture. This picture shows us that God will let Jesus control His enemies. The words written as “walks on . . . the Son of God” show us that the person who hates Jesus starts to behave as if Jesus is his enemy. This behavior shows that the sinner removes Jesus from the throne and puts himself on it! Then the sinner makes Jesus his footstool. Lucifer tried to do this same thing to God (Isaiah 14:12–14). The “Man of Evil” will try to do this same thing at the end times (2 Thessalonians 2:3, 4, ERV).

2. “He acts as if the blood of God’s New Way of Worship is worth nothing” (Hebrews 10:29, NLV). This person rejects the offering that Jesus made for his sin (Hebrews 9:15–22). The blood of Jesus no longer has the power to remove the guilt of this person and make him clean.

3. The person “laughs at the Holy Spirit Who wanted to show him loving-favor” (Hebrews 10:29, NLV). The words written as “laughs at” come from the Greek word “enybrisas.” “Enybrisas” shows us someone who makes insults. Compare the evil behavior of this person to the behavior of the Holy Spirit who wants to show the sinner “loving-favor.” So, we see that anyone who turns against God insults His offer of mercy.

This person rejects Jesus, His offering, and the Holy Spirit. So, God can't forgive him.



Anyone who turns against God insults His offer of mercy.

BETTER THINGS (Hebrews 6:9–12)

In Hebrews 6:4–8, Paul gives his readers a strong warning to continue following Jesus. Then Paul tells his readers he feels sure they have not left Jesus. Paul also believes his readers will not leave Jesus in the future. That is because Paul believes his readers will obey his warning and change their lives. Then they will get the blessing God promises: they will be saved (Hebrews 6:7, 9).



Christians show their love for God with their kind acts.

Read about the good things in Hebrews 6:9–12 that Paul says his readers did and continue to do. Make a list of these things. Explain what these things show.

Christians show their love for God with their kind acts. The Christians in the book of Hebrews did many kind acts in the past. They also continued to help and serve people. Our love for God is not shown only in the big things we do. We also show our love for God by the little things we do for people every day. We really show we love God when we help the poor and needy (Matthew 10:42; Matthew 25:31–46). So, Paul tells his readers not to forget to do good (Hebrews 13:2, 16).

Paul warns his readers not to become “lazy.” They must “be like those who . . . have not given up” (Hebrews 6:12, WE). Lazy people fail to grow in faith. They also are in danger of turning from Jesus (Hebrews 5:11; Hebrews 6:12). Paul wants his readers to have hope. We keep hope alive by doing acts of love for other people (Romans 13:8–10).

Paul also wants his readers to copy the lives of people who showed faith and were patient. Paul already warned his readers not to follow the bad example of the Israelites in the desert. The desert Israelites did not believe God. They gave up too easily. So, they did not get what God promised them. Paul then writes about Abraham (Hebrews 6:13–15). Abraham is an excellent example of faith. Abraham was patient. So, God gave Abraham the promises. In Hebrews 11, Paul gives us a list of powerful examples of faith. The list ends in Hebrews 12 with Jesus. Jesus is the best example of faith. Jesus is patient (Hebrews 12:1–4). Revelation 14:12 shows us that the end-time people of God also are patient, show faith, and keep the law of God.

Sometimes we must give warnings to the ones we love. What can we learn from Paul about the best way to warn and encourage people?

JESUS GIVES US HOPE THAT KEEPS US SAFE (Hebrews 6:17–20)

Paul ends his warning with a beautiful explanation about the hope we have in Jesus to save us.

Read about the God’s promise to us in Hebrews 6:17–20. How does God show us that He will keep His promise?

God wanted to show in several ways that He will keep His promise to us. First, God made an oath or an important promise (Hebrews 6:17). God also made oaths to Abraham and David. These oaths show us that God always will show His loving-favor to His people. Remember when Moses asked God to forgive Israel after they worshiped the gold cow? Moses asked God to remember His oath to Abraham (read Exodus 32:11–14; Genesis 22:16–18). This promise from God can’t be changed or broken (Romans 9:4; Romans 11:28, 29).

Psalm 89 shows us the same thing. Ethan the Ezrahite wrote this psalm. In this psalm, Ethan asks God to help Israel. Ethan is sure God will help. Why? Because Ethan trusts in the promise God made to King David. God said: “ ‘I will not break my agreement with David. I will never change what I said. By my holiness [my holy Name], I made a promise to him, and I would not lie to David. His family will continue forever. His kingdom will last [continue] as long as the sun. Like [just as] the moon, it will continue forever’ ” (Psalm 89:34–37, ERV). The New Testament shows us that Jesus kept both promises God made to Abraham and David (Galatians 3:13–16; Luke 1:31–33, 54, 55).

Second, God showed us that He will keep His promises to us when He told Jesus to sit at His right side after Jesus came back to heaven. “Jesus has gone there ahead of us” (Hebrews 6:20, WE). He went there ahead of us to make “the way for man to go to God” (Hebrews 6:20, NLV). So, when Jesus went to heaven, He showed us that we can trust in the promise God made to save us. God gave Jesus much praise and honor in heaven. But Jesus needed to suffer and die for everyone first. His death will save many people (Hebrews 2:9, 10). “This promise gives our hearts something to hold on to. It keeps our hearts strong and steady. It will take us into the Holy Place right inside God’s house” (Hebrews 6:19, WE).

God made an oath to you. How does that thought make you feel? Why should that promise help you trust God to save you?



When Jesus went to heaven, He showed us that we can trust in the promise God made to save us.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “John the Beloved,” pages 539–545, in *The Acts of the Apostles*; “Judas,” pages 716–722, in *The Desire of Ages*.

“The war we must fight against self and sin is the biggest and most important war we will fight. So, we must give ourselves to God. We must put our lives under His full control. We will need to fight hard to do these things. But we must give ourselves to God first. Then He can make our lives new and holy.”—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, page 43, adapted.

“John wanted to become the way Jesus was. The love of Jesus changed John. This love removed the pride from the heart of John. Then John became gentle and kind. Jesus fully lived in the heart of John. More than any of the other followers of Jesus, John gave himself to Jesus and allowed Jesus to live in him. . . .

“John loved Jesus with a deep love that did not fail. This love caused John always to want to be close to Jesus and at His side. The Savior loved all Twelve of His followers. But John loved Jesus the most. He was younger than the other followers of Jesus. So, John trusted Jesus the way a child trusts his father. John gave Jesus his heart. In this way, John grew very close to Jesus. Jesus gave John His deepest and most spiritual teachings. John wrote these precious teachings for us in the Bible. . . .

“The holy life of Jesus made John beautiful. John was a new person. His face shined with the beauty of Jesus. John looked at Jesus with love until his one wish in life was to become the way Jesus was and to be close to Him always. The life of John showed the life and love of his Master.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, pages 544, 545, adapted.



“The holy life of Jesus made John beautiful. John was a new person. His face shined with the beauty of Jesus.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

① Compare the lives of John and Judas. When Jesus saw John and his brother, Jesus called them Boanerges, which means the sons of thunder. This name shows us that John had an evil temper. Judas also had faults. But his faults were no worse than the faults John had. So, why did John change and become the way Jesus was? Why did Judas sin against the Holy Spirit?

② Why does God ask us to give our lives fully to His control? What is the connection between our free choice and being saved?

SHOCKED BY ELECTRICITY

Oung works in a sugar factory in the country of Laos. Laos is a country in Southeast Asia. Oung gets baptized. But he stops going to church after three years.

The pastor visits Oung at home. The pastor invites Oung to come back to church to worship on Sabbath.

“Yes, I will come,” Oung promises.

But Oung does not come.

The pastor visits Oung again and invites him to church. Oung tells the pastor that he did not go to church because a friend came to visit him that Sabbath.

“I will come next Sabbath,” Oung says.

But Oung does not come.

The pastor comes back to invite Oung again. During that visit, Oung explains that his bicycle broke.

The pastor visits Oung many times. Oung always has an excuse about why he cannot go to church. Church members start to pray for Oung. The pastor keeps inviting him. But Oung turns away from Jesus more and more.

After some time, Oung starts to drink. Many times, when he is drunk, Oung beats his older sister who loves Jesus. Oung hits his sister so hard that he leaves bruises on her face, arms, and legs. Finally, his sister moves out of the house.

Oung’s sister comes to church with tears in her eyes. “Please do not stop praying for Oung,” she says.

One day, Oung goes to work at the sugar factory. Oung climbs a steel ladder to get sugar from a big steel container. The sugar container connects to an electric wire. Each day Oung climbs the ladder many times to get sugar. But on this day, something goes wrong. Oung reaches out to touch the top of the container. Then a shock of electricity goes through his hands and body.

The electricity glues Oung’s hand to the container. Oung cannot remove his hand. In that instant, Oung thinks about his family, children, and his wife.

Then Oung remembers God. “God, please help me!” Oung prays.

All of a sudden, the electricity stops. Oung falls to the floor. His left hand is badly burned. But he is not hurt anywhere else.

Villagers cannot believe that Oung is alive.

Oung tells his wife, “I must go to church. God has given me a new life,” he says. “So, I must tell other people about Him. I should be dead, but I am alive! I must go back to Jesus.”

Thank you for your 13th Sabbath Offering. This quarter, your offering will help church workers share the Good News about Jesus with the people in Laos and other countries in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division.

INSIDE
Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



The electricity glues
Oung’s hand
to the container.