

# *The Tragedy of Rejecting Full Revelation*

## *Part 3*

*Hebrews 6:9-12*

*"But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. 10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises."*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

### **ILLUSTRATION:**

Many American manufacturers are going to great lengths to protect themselves from getting sued. As a result, many companies now include stunningly obvious warnings about their product. Every year the Wacky Warning Labels™ Contest selects what it calls "the most absurd and silly warning labels attached to everyday products."

Here were the winners for the 2012 contest:

The Grand Prize Winner was for a 7-inch decorative globe with the following warning label: "These globes should not be referred for navigation."

The Second Prize Winner was for an electric razor for men with the following warning label: "Never use while sleeping."

Past winners have included the following warning labels:

- ✖ "Remove child before folding"—a warning label on a baby stroller
- ✖ "Does not supply oxygen"—a label on a common dust mask (2011 Contest Winner)
- ✖ "Never operate your speakerphone while driving"—on a hands-free cell phone product called the "Drive 'N' Talk"! (2010 Contest Winner)
- ✖ "Danger: Avoid Death"—a warning label on a small tractor
- ✖ "Harmful if swallowed"—a warning on a brass fishing lure with a three-pronged hook
- ✖ "This product moves when used"—a warning on a popular children's scooter
- ✖ A rotary tool includes the following warning label: "This product is not intended for use as a dental drill"
- ✖ "May cause drowsiness"—a warning label for Nyquil One-a-Night sleeping aids

- Paul's Warning to the Hebrew Unbelievers

- They were intellectually convinced unbelievers
  - They have had incredible enlightenment to the person of Jesus Christ
  - Yet because of fear, they have drawn back into further unbelief
  - They have drawn back so far that they are in danger of falling away completely—to where they could never be “*renewed to repentance*”
  - Be eternally lost
    - Hardened to the point that it would be impossible for them to be saved
- This was a severe warning
- And it was supposed to be a scary warning
  - It was supposed to shock those that heard it
  - It was supposed to strike fear in the hearts of those who were not taking Jesus Christ seriously
    - That they needed to be saved before it was too late
- At this point in the text, Paul shifts his emphasis to whom he is talking to
  - Paul has been talking to the group as a whole
    - In his audience there are both saved and lost people

- And periodically Paul has stopped to address both groups
  - Since chapter 5:11 he has been talking to the lost Hebrews—giving them this warning about their continued unbelief
  - But now (6:9) he turns his emphasis upon those who are the “saved” of his audience
    - He calls them the “*beloved*” ones
    - He writes to both comfort them
    - And to point them out among the lost as examples for the lost to follow
  - We can say that this passage is really a characteristic list of what true believers look like (as opposed to those who are just intellectually convinced)

### **CIT: What Are the Characteristics of True Believers?**

#### **I. What They Don't Have (vs. 9)—“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you”**

##### **A. The Emphasis Change**

###### **1. The Contrast Word—“But”**

- a. It's a word that emphasizes that Paul is no longer talking to the lost crowd
- b. He's talking to a different group

- i. He's no longer talking to hardened unbelievers—who are in danger of falling away
- ii. He no longer talking to those who are “*rejected, and nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned*”
- iii. He's no longer talking to those who are about to be guilty of “[*crucifying] to themselves the Son of God afresh, and [putting] him to an open shame.*”

## 2. He Calls Them “*Beloved*”

- a. That is a word reserved only for the saved
- b. You never see in all of the Scripture the word “*beloved*” used for apostates and unbelievers
  - i. It's the highest form of the word “*love*” used in the NT
  - ii. It is a love that is found between the Father and the Son, and between the Father and His children (saved)

## 3. Then Paul says—“*we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation*”

- a. Paul has done a thorough investigation—and is persuaded that those whom he is talking to **are true believers**

- i. He's persuaded better things of them (**as opposed to those whom he has been talking to**)
- ii. He's persuaded that they have evidence of salvation (**as opposed to those whom he has been talking to**)

## 4. “*Though we thus speak*”

- a. That phrase is a way of saying—“*I've been speaking tough towards the whole group—warning them about not taking salvation too lightly—BUT I am NOT TALKING ABOUT YOU!*”

- i. Though I am speaking hard—I am not speaking of you
- ii. I am persuaded that you are the real deal—that you do have evidence of being saved

**“*But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you*”**

## B. They Don't Have Attitudes of Neglect Toward the Gospel

## 1. Paul 1<sup>st</sup> Warning to These Intellectually Convinced Lost Hebrew

**Hebrews 2:1-4**—“Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. 2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; 4 God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?”

- a. He spoke of how they were letting the gospel message slip away from them that had been delivered to them
- b. They had great privilege given to them
  - i. They had apostolic witness
  - ii. They had miraculous evidence given to them
  - iii. And yet they were still in unbelief
  - iv. They were neglecting the responsibility to believe

**“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you”**

## 2. These believer were not so

- a. When they heard—they were convinced and believed
- b. They were willing to overcome all the obstacles—and still believe

## C. They Don’t Have Hearts That are Harden by Unbelief

### 1. Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Warning

**Hebrews 3:7-12**—“ Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, TODAY IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, 8 HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS, AS IN THE PROVOCATION, IN THE DAY OF TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS: 9 WHEN YOUR FATHERS TEMPTED ME, PROVED ME, AND SAW MY WORKS FORTY YEARS. 10 WHEREFORE I WAS GRIEVED WITH THAT GENERATION, AND SAID, THEY DO ALWAY ERR IN THEIR HEART; AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS. 11 SO I SWARE IN MY WRATH, THEY SHALL NOT ENTER INTO MY REST.) 12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”

- a. Because they had continued to neglect believing the gospel—they were beginning to harden their hearts against the gospel
- b. They were doing the very same thing their forefathers had done in the wilderness
  - i. They had received the message of the promised land that God had provided for them

- ii. Yet they chose not to believe God's message
- iii. Therefore God swore in His wrath that they would never enter in the promised land

- c. These Hebrews were in danger of coming to the same place Jesus Christ

***“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you”***

- 2. These believers that Paul was talking to stood in direct contrast
  - a. They had believed
  - b. They had tender hearts for God
  - c. They were willing to obey

#### **D. They Don't Have Ears That are Dull of Hearing**

- 1. Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Warning

**Hebrews 5:10-11—**“Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec. 11 Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.”

- a. Paul's says that they had rejected so long—that they weren't even able to hear anymore
  - i. They had closed their ears to the gospel

- ii. They had gotten to the place that they no longer wanted to hear
  - Jesus said that was what was happening to the Israelites during his time

**Matthew 13:15—**“*for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.*”

***“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you”***

- 2. But these Hebrews that Paul is now addressing—**Do have Ears to Hear**

- a. They hadn't neglected the Gospel
- b. They hadn't hardened their heart
- c. They weren't dull of hearing

**NOTE:** Since they weren't dull of hearing...

#### **E. They Don't Have Minds That Have Become Immature in Understanding**

- 1. Paul's 3<sup>rd</sup> Warning Continued

**Hebrews 5:12-13—**“For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. 13 For

*every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.”*

- a. God will begin to take away the truth from those who won’t hear
- b. They have closed their ears—and God will begin close their heart

**Matthew 13:12**—“*For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.*”

**“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you”**

2. These Hebrews are not in such a position with God

- a. They were the ones like Jesus said

**Vs. 11, 16**—“*Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven ... But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.*”

- b. Or as Paul said in I Corinthians

**I Corinthians 2:9-10**—“*But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. 10 But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.*”

**NOTE:** The Final Consequence for Unbelief...

#### **F. They Aren’t In Danger of Falling Away From the Truth Forever**

**Hebrews 6:4-6**—“*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*”

1. Paul’s Final Strong Warning—was that if someone continues in unbelief—that if they fall away—it will become IMPOSSIBLE for them to be RENEWED TO REPENTANCE

- a. To have such enlightenment and yet reject all of it—will seal a person’s fate forever
- b. It puts the person on the level of Jesus’ murderers

**“But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you”**

2. These Hebrews were NOT IN DANGER of FALLING AWAY because **THEY HAD BELIEVED**

**NOTE:** These Believers were a complete contrast with those whom Paul has been warning in the last few verses.

**II. What They Do Have** (vs. 9-12)—“*But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. 10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. 11 And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*”

#### A. They Have Things That Accompany Salvation

1. We Could Spend a Long Time Listing Out the Evidences of a Person’s Salvation
2. But Paul Lists at Least 3 that We Can Pinpoint

#### B. They Have Works of Love—“*For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love*”

1. One of the marks of a true believer is that they have works that follow them

**James 2:14-17**—“*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and **have not works?** can faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, 16 and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?*

*17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*”

- a. If a person claims to be a believer, yet shows no sign of love for God’s people in their works—they are making a profession that is not true

**1 John 3:14**—“*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.*”

**Vs. 16-17**—“*Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?*”

- b. The kind of works that WILL BE SHOWN are works of SACRIFICE on the behalf of GOD’S PEOPLE
- c. Even Jesus said that on the day of Judgment—we will not be judged on our profession of faith, but on our WORKS

**Matthew 7:21**—“*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*”

2. Paul says that he has examined these professed believers and is PERSUADED that they are the real deal
  - a. They didn’t just have works

- i. Mindlessly doing what they were told to do
- ii. But they did them in love

**NOTE:** And look at their motivation...

**C. They Have a Love For God's Name**—“*which ye have shewed toward his name*”

**1. Their Motivation was the Honor of God's Name**

- a. They served the saints because they loved God
- b. A love for God is the supreme motivation for the believer's ministry
- i. Jesus said the greatest command

**Matthew 22:37**—“Jesus said unto him, ***Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.***”

- ii. Paul told the Corinthians that believers are to love God

**1 Corinthians 16:22**—“*If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha.*”

- iii. Peter said

**1 Peter 1:8**—“*whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*”

- iv. James said

**James 1:12**—“*Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.*”

**James 2:5**—“*Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?*”

**2. Paul had examined their life—and saw that their works pointed to a sincere love for God**

- a. What they did was for God
- b. And as a result they were able to serve and minister to the saints

**D. They Are Faithful in Their Works**—“*in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister*”

- 1. They have (past tense) ministered to the saints
- 2. And they are (present tense) continuing to minister to the saints
- 3. The mark is that they are faithful to their work

- a. They don't make a temporary commitment and then quit on God

- b. They are consistent
  - i. No matter how difficult it was to be consistent
    - Hardships
    - Persecution
    - Unfaithfulness of Others
    - None of those things pulled them away from serving the saints out of a heart of love for God

**NOTE:** These were the marks that Paul said he saw in these believers. And because of that, he was persuaded that they were genuinely saved and had nothing to worry about.

### QUESTION: Are Those Marks in Your Life?

- **If You Profess to be a Believer—they Should Be**
- **And if They're Not—Could Paul be Persuaded That You Were One of Christ's Genuine Believers?**
- **Are You Really Saved?**

**III. What They Are** (vs. 11-12)—“*And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: 12 that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*”

#### A. They Are Examples

- 1. Paul’s Change in Direction of Audience—  
“*And we desire that every one of you*”

### QUESTION: Who is the “*everyone of you*” that Paul is now talking to?

- a. Paul has been speaking to believers—comforting them (vs. 9-10)
- b. Now Paul turns to the rest of his readers to again challenge them
- i. The rest of his readers were those who were **lost**
  - The ones he had been warning
  - The intellectually convinced, yet lost Hebrews
  - The ones who had been **neglectful** to respond to the gospel message that had been so evidently given to them
  - The ones who were **hardening their heart** against God Who wanted to give them rest
  - The ones who were NOW **dull of hearing**
  - The ones who were **becoming ignorant** –even over the first principles of the doctrine of Christ

- The ones who were in danger of **falling away**—and being eternally lost

**ii.** Paul calls them the “*slothful*”

**vs. 12**—“*that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*”

- He doesn’t want them to be slothful—as they have continued to be
- The word slothful—*Nothros*—it is the same Greek word that is used in 5:11 for being “*dull of hearing*”
- Paul is calling his readers to stop being “*slothful*” or “*dull of hearing*”
- **HOW?**

**2.** The Sluggish Lost Were to **Look to (be followers of)** the Diligent Saved (**vs. 12**)—“*that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*”

- a. They were to be followers of those who had believed the gospel

**i.** They were to stop making the excuses for their unbelief

- ii. They were to look to those who had been **diligent** in believing the Gospel

**vs. 11**—“*And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence*”

- The word carries the idea of **eagerness** or **haste**
- When they heard the gospel they were eager to truly believe
- They made haste
- They didn’t make excuses about why they should continue to hold on to the old

- iii. They were to look to those who had hastily made the **difficult decision to believe**

**QUESTION:** Why was it difficult to believe?

- Because it meant turning their back on everything that was dear to them
  - Turning their back on their old life
  - Their old faith
  - Their family
  - Their community
  - Their friends
  - Everything that was dear to them

**b.** “*them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*”

**i.** To believe in Christ would take both faith and patience

- Initial faith to be saved
- Afterwards a lifestyle of faith
- And patience to endure the hardships that would come
  - The resistance they would receive
  - The difficulties that would come

**Hebrews 10:32-33**—“*But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; 33 partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.*”

**3.** The Diligent Saved are Inheritors of the Promises

**a.** The Promises

**i.** Paul is speaking of all the OT promises that were given about the person of Christ

**ii.** All that comes with belonging to the person of Christ

**b.** It is not enough to be Jewish—to be an heir to the promises

- i.** You have to be in Christ
- ii.** Paul wrote to the Galatians who were questioning whether the promises come by Law or Christ

**Galatians 3:18-22**—“*For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.*

*19 Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. 20 Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.*

*21 Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*

*22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”*

**B. If You Are a Believer, What Kind of Example are You Setting?**

1. Could your pastor point you out to an unbeliever as an example for them to follow?
2. Or would they be ashamed to mention you?

## **CONCLUSION:**

## **ILLUSTRATION:**

**At the age of 23, Second Lieutenant Karl Marlantes was in charge of 40 marines during an intense battle in the Vietnam War. Marlantes had moved his men into the jungle as they waited for U.S. jets to bomb a hill that North Vietnamese soldiers had overtaken.**

**Unfortunately, the jets came and dropped their bombs on the wrong hill. So when Marlantes led his men out of the jungle, they were instantly under fire from untouched machine-gun positions. Marlantes knew it would only take a few minutes before the enemy rockets and mortars found his troops. The entire mission ground to a halt as the U.S. soldiers ducked behind downed trees and huddled in shell holes.**

**Marlantes knew what he had to do next. He writes:**

**If I didn't get up and lead, we'd get wiped out .... I did a lot of things that day ... but the one I'm most proud of is that I simply stood up, in the middle of that flying metal, and started up the hill .... I simply ran forward up the steep hill, zigzagging for the bunker, all by myself, hoping [my own soldiers] wouldn't hit me in the back. It's hard to zigzag while running uphill loaded down with ammunition and grenades.**

**But then in the midst of his solo charge up the hill to take out the enemy, Marlantes suddenly saw some movement in his peripheral vision:**

**It was a marine! He was about 15 meters below me, zigzagging, falling, up and running again. Immediately behind him a long ragged line of Marines came moving and weaving up the hill behind me. Behind the line were spots of crumpled bodies, lying where they'd been hit. They'd all come with me .... Everyone was intermingled, weaving, rushing and covering, taking on each hole and bunker one at a time in groups .... We, the group, just rushed forward all at once. We couldn't be stopped. Just individuals among us were stopped ... but we couldn't be .... I was we, no longer me.**