

Session 2: Warnings and Encouragements (3:6b, 14; 6:4-20)

The book of Hebrews contains a number of warnings, using strong and challenging language. But it also contains many equally strong encouragements about the faithfulness of God. This session considers who the warning passages are directed to, and how we should understand them.

Warnings and Encouragements (3:6b, 14)

How do 3:6b and 3:14 help us understand the warnings in Hebrews?

'We are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.' (3:6b)

'We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end' (3:14)

Cause > Effect Conditional	Evidence > Inference Conditional
<p>The Cause leads to the Effect:</p> <p>e.g. 'If her husband dies (cause) she is released from the law of marriage (effect)' (Romans 7:2)</p> <p>'If you persevere, you will share in Christ'</p>	<p>The Evidence leads to the Inference</p> <p>e.g. 'If you are left without discipline (evidence) then you are illegitimate children and not sons (inference)' (Heb 12:8)</p> <p>'If we persevere that will show that you have come to share in Christ'</p> <p>'The writer to the Hebrews has deliberately made a past event dependent on a future condition, because perseverance in faith is a defining mark of those who are truly believers.' (Wilson, <i>Hebrews 3:6b and 3:14 Revisited</i>)</p> <p>'Hebrews virtually defines true believers as those who hold firmly to the end the confidence that they had at first.' (D.A. Carson, <i>Reflections on Assurance</i>, p267)</p>

Warnings and Encouragements (6:4-12)

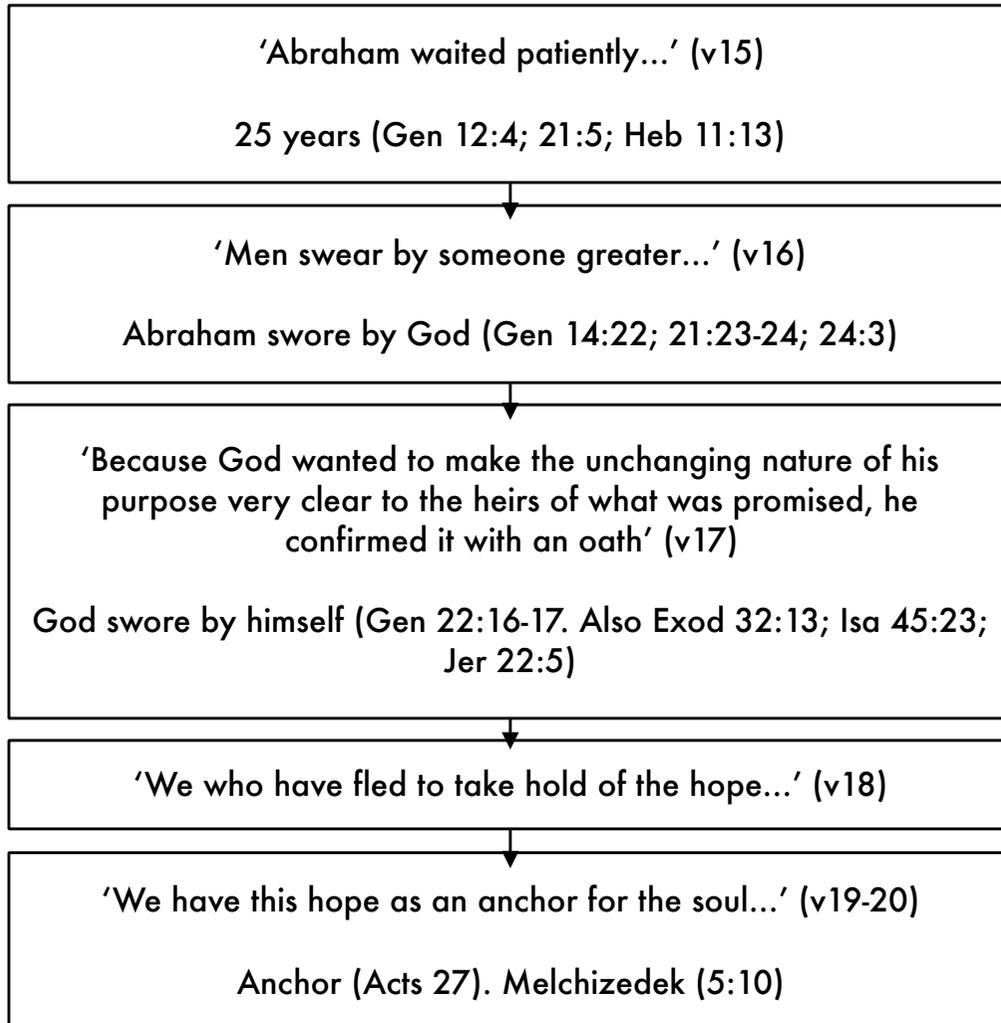
How should we interpret the warnings in Hebrews 6:4-8?

'It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.' (Hebrews 6:4-8)

Are these verses referring to believers?		What do the warnings achieve?
<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<p>The warnings are 'a means of preserving God's people in faith to the end. This causes him <i>both</i> to urge perseverance and warn against apostasy in the strongest possible terms, <i>and</i> to have confidence that the readers will heed his warnings if they have in fact become partners with Christ, since he sees his warnings are God's way of preventing the readers from apostasy.' (Wilson, p265)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Acts 27:21-26, 31-32</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hebrews 6:9-12</p>
<p>Compare to passages like Romans 8:29-30; John 6:39-40, 44</p> <p>Hebrews 'recognises a kind of transitory faith, a form of conversion which, like the seed sown on rocky places [Mark 4] has all the signs of life, but which does not persevere.' (D.A. Carson)</p>	<p>The author includes himself in four of the five major warnings (2:1-4; 4:1; 10:26; 12:25-29)</p> <p>They are 'brothers' (3:12) who 'received knowledge of the truth' (10:26), have been 'sanctified' and then 'outraged the Spirit of grace' (10:29)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Acts 10:44-48</p>	

Warnings and Encouragements (6:13-20)

What is the basis of the author's confidence?



Warnings and Encouragements in ch 10-13	
Verses	Content
10:19-22	Draw near to God
10:23	Hold unwaveringly to the hope we possess
10:24-25	Encourage one another
10:26-31	Warnings about apostasy
10:32-39	Encouragement to persevere
11:1-40	Examples of OT faithful perseverance
12:1-2	Run with endurance, fixing your eyes on Jesus
12:3-17	Endure discipline from your Heavenly Father
12:18-24	Rejoice in your identity in the heavenly church
12:25-29	Warning not to reject the one who speaks from heaven
13:1-21	Encourage one another to remain faithful