

The Hebrew Warnings

Verse	Exhortation	Warning	Illustration/Example	Warning
Heb 2:1-4	Give earnest heed to the things which we have heard.	Lest we drift away from the things heard.	For if the word spoken through angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward/recompense.	How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, spoken first by the Lord and confirmed by those that heard Him.
Heb 3:12-15	Beware brethren and exhort one another while it is called "Today."	Lest there be in any of you an evil heart in departing from the Living God.	"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart as in the rebellion." compare v. 8.	For we are (have become) partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence to the end.
Heb 3:16-4:11	Let us fear (v1)...Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest...(v11)	Lest any of you should seem to fall short of it (rest).	Those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness(3:17)...So you see they could not enter because of unbelief(3:18), cf. "fell," "enter," (4:11).	Lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience.
Heb 6:1-8	Let us go on to maturity.	For it is Impossible...if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance.	Since by rejecting enlightenment, the heavenly gift, the Spirit, the Word, and the Power, they crucify the Son and openly shame Him.	For the earth drinks in the rain...if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.
Heb 10:26-34	Recall the former days.	If we wilfully sin after we receive the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin.	Anyone who rejected Moses' law dies without mercy.	How much worse punishment do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled under foot the Son of God...counted the blood of the covenant...a common thing...and despised the Spirit of Grace.
Heb 10:35-39	Do not cast off your confidence, which has great reward...For you have need of endurance...	...If any draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him.	The just shall live by faith(Hab 2:4) cf. Heb 11.	But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.
Heb 12:12-17	Strengthen the feeble knees...make straight paths for your feet...Pursue peace...looking diligently.	Pursue peace...and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.	Esau, cf. 12:16,17...he was rejected...,no place for repentance...,profane.	Lest anyone fall short of the grace of God...any root of bitterness...defile.
Heb 12:25-29	See you do not refuse Him..., Let us have grace...to serve God.	...If they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven.	...whose voice then shook the earth, but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I will shake not only earth but heaven."	Let us serve God acceptably, for our God is a consuming fire.

The Hebrew Warnings/Greek

English Word (NKJV, verse)	Greek Word	Comment	Parallels
Heb 2:1-4 1) neglect (v3) 2) slip away (v1) 3) salvation (v3)	1) αμελεω 2) παραρρεω 3) σωτηριον	1) the neglect is a positive rejecting, 1 aor. 2) the slipping away is 2 aor., definitive. 3) salvation is the subject clearly here, 6:9, and in 10:39.	1) Matt 22:5; Heb 8:9; 2 Pet 1:12. 2) Proverbs 3:21 (LXX). 3) Heb 1:14; 2:10; 5:9; 6:9; 10:39.
Heb 3:12-15 1) depart (v12) 2) have become (v14)	1) αποστηναι 2) γεγοναμεν	1) apostasy. 2) perfect tense, proof of our partaking.	1) 1 Tim 4:1; 2 Tim 2:19. 2) Jn 17:13; 19:30, (examples of perfect tense).
Heb 3:16-4:11 1) unbelief (3:12,17) 2) fall (4:11) 3) disobedience (4:11)	1) απιστια 2) πιπτειν 3) απειθεω/απειθεια	Note the connection between the unbelief/fall/disobedience of Israelite history and its parallel to the recipients of the Hebrew letter.	1) unbelief (3:12,19). 2) fall (3:17; 4:11). 3) disobedience (3:18; 4:11).
Heb 6:1-8 1) rejected (v8) 2) open shame (v6)	1) αδοκιμος 2) παραδειγματιζω	All uses of this greek word are of a reprobate/castaway/rejected spiritual state. In this difficult text, what IS clear is that the "rain" of verse 7 is illustrative of the privileges listed in v.v. 4-5.	See 2 Peter 2:20-22 for an exact parallel in a parallel context to Hebrews 6:4-6 (see 2 Peter 2:1ff). 1) see Rom 1:28; 2 Cor 13:5,6,7. 2) other use, Matt 1:9, is <i>public/open</i> shame.
Heb 10:26-34 1) certain (v27) 2) unholy (v29)	1) τις 2) κοινον	The certain judgment falls because turning from the faith is to crucify the Son again, put Him to shame (6:6), as well as trample the blood of the Son, count it as common (unclean), and despise the Spirit of grace (10:29).	1) See our Lord's words in Matt 10:32,33. 2) That which is common to Jews was also unholy/unclean, cf. Peter in Acts 10:14.
Heb 10:35-39 1) perdition (v39) 2) draw back (v38)	1) απωλεια 2) υποστελλω	Those who perservere display the true saving work of the Spirit, cf. Heb 3:14. To draw back is to perish. This is always the way the word is used (again, see 2 Peter 2:1-3).	For other "if" clauses, Rom 8:13; Col 1:23 1) used in Acts 8:13, "your money <i>perish</i> with you." 2) "withdraw" in Gal 2:12 (i.e. separate).
Heb 12:12-17 profane (NKJV)	βεβηλος	The verb is used in Matt 12:5 and Acts 24:6 of profaning the temple.	Esau is a reprobate man, cast off without hope of repentance (v17, cf. Heb 6:4-6), and even hated of God (Mal 1:3, cf. Rom 9:13).
Heb 12:25-29 turn away	αποστρεφω	Used of turning to or from God (cf. Acts 3:26; Tit 1:14).	The context is clear as to the turning being that of 2 Tim 4:4, that is, away from God.

Summary Comments on Hebrews

Opening Comments: The foremost idea needed to correctly analyze the warning passages of Hebrews is to understand that with only differences is some of the wording, all the passages deal with the same basic issue which is faith and its consequences, or rather unbelief/disobedience and its consequences. These readers are given differing truths regarding the faith they confess to hold to, followed by warnings concerning departing from the faith which includes the truth previously expounded (e.g. the Sonship of Christ vs. angels/warning-1:1-2:4, the once-for-all atonement of Christ/warning-10:10-10:39) etc. Thus the ideas, truths, and vocabulary of The Hebrew warning passages are more or less interchangeable — the changes being not in the basic dangers warned against — but the warnings as they related to the truths just expounded upon (e.g. Christ's priesthood, Christ's Sonship, etc.).

Heb 2:1-4	The issue at hand is summarized by "how shall we escape (flee) if we neglect so great a salvation." The reason for such a warning of this type is because of the statement and exposition of v4, "(Christ) being made so much better than the angels" and that angels "are ministering spirits...", v14. The obvious superiority of the Son over angels causes the writer to press home the obvious: if the word of angels was steadfast, and every transgression...received a just recompense (judgment)- v2, how would these readers escape neglecting the words of the Son of God which had been witnessed to by God Himself as well as some of the saints of God, v.v. 3,4? We will find this logic again of greater punishment because of greater transgression (i.e. O.T. hardening and its judgment vs. N.T. hardening and its greater judgment) in chapter 3-4, 10, 12, as well as other places.
Heb 3:12-15	Here we find a clear example of Paul's principle in his famous Eph 2:8-10. God's gifts of grace and faith are not isolated in salvation but include good works, works that He has ordained to come from the grace He has given each saint. To put it another way: true salvation can be understood as a <i>gate</i> , and a <i>way</i> , which leads to <i>life</i> (Matt 7:14); or, as Paul expresses it theologically in Rom 6:22, "...having been set free from sin, and having become servants of God (<i>gate</i>), you have your fruit unto holiness (<i>way</i>), and its end, everlasting life (<i>life</i>). In Hebrews, the writer warns the readers not to depart from the living God (v.12 - greek, ἀποστηνα/english, fall away), for we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end (v14); that is, the <i>gate</i> ("have become partakers of Christ"), the <i>way</i> (our confidence/faith), <i>life</i> everlasting ("to the end").
Heb 3:16-4:11	Just as in the O.T. history of hardening/unbelief/disobedience led to a generation never entering the promised rest of Canaan, so the same was true of the Hebrew readers spoken to in 3:16-4:11. There was still a rest to be entered (4:11), and they stood in the position of failing to enter (4:1 cf. 3:19). That a great rest was promised in the Old Testament is proven by comparing 4:4, 4:8, and 4:9-11). For the readers to trust and return to the Old Covenant way as understood in the first century was to forget that even with the sabbath rest (Gen 2, Ex 20) and the promise land rest of Joshua, there was a greater rest that David spoke of long after both (Ps 95). The warning is that as those of long ago hardened their hearts, sinned, fell, and therefore did not enter Canaan, so to is the fate of all those who turn from the gospel (4:2). They shall also fall short of the Christian promised rest, that is, entering glory.
Heb 6:1-8	The professed saints spoken to must move on in their spiritual lives. The illustration of the five gospel blessings (delineated in v.v. 4-5) is of rain falling and producing a crop. One is fruit blessed of God, the other is thorns and briers to be burned***, a symbol of destruction (or, to look at it conversely, the opposite of the writer's " <i>confident of...things...which accompany salvation</i> "-v.9). Note: fire is an awesome word in this epistle (here, 10:27; 12:18,29). As noted previously, 2 Pet 2:20-22 can give us light on this difficult part of the Word.
Heb 10:26-34	First, it must be noted that the "sin wilfully" of v.26 must refer in the context of Hebrews to apostasy and not just <i>any</i> sin, for surely most, if not all sin is willful. The resultant statement "no more sacrifice for sin"(a phrase analogous to the "impossible repentance" of chp 6:4,6), makes this interpretation sure for it fits the context (cf. v29), the other warnings, and the book as a whole. We meet people who have, by their "willful sin," trampled underfoot the blood of the Son, counting this symbol of the atonement as common (e.g. unclean, cf. Rom 14:14; Mk 7:2), and despised the Spirit of Grace. The same is said in chapter 6 (crucifying the Son and shaming Him, shaming being public, open shame, cf. Matt 1:19, greek).
Heb 10:35-39	It is enough to just look at and ponder the weight of verse 39. Those who cast away their confidence/faith are those who "draw back" and go to perdition (v.39a), for God has no pleasure in them (38b). The writer exhorts these readers to press on and endure to the saving of the soul (39b,36a, cf. "promise" v. 36b).
Heb 12:12-17	If there be any doubt that holiness is an absolute part of the salvation that God, having begun, will complete (see Phil 1:6; 1 Thess 5:23,24), Hebrews 12:14 should lay all such doubts to rest. Again we must call to mind the "impossible...to renew to repentance" of 6:4-6 and the "no more sacrifice for sin" of 10:26,27 because they lay the foundation for understanding the illustration used by the writer of Esau who, although he sought diligently and with tears the inheritance he had sold away, was rejected and he found no place with God. This man is the example put before the readers who might be thinking of leaving off diligence or allowing a root of bitterness to arise (v. 15). Such would leave them, as in 4:1, short of the grace of God and the issuance of that grace. The term "rejected" is terribly strong, always used for the rejection of Christ (see Matt 21:42; Lk 9:22; 17:25 1 Pet 2:4,7).
Heb 12:25-29	The danger of the book is evident to the end: "Do not refuse Him who speaks" (v. 25). The word "refuse" (greek, παρατεμαται, <i>mid. voice</i>) is used in 12:19 as "entreat(KJV)" or "begged(NKJV)," and is used of an urgent request, <i>in this case turned aside</i> . It is enough that the writer concludes that God is a consuming fire, an exhortation consistent with the "shaking" of v. 26,27. We serve God in the gospel, for to refuse what is true of Christ and the gospel is to "not escape" the wrath of God-who's holiness shakes worlds and consumes.

*** 1 Cor 3:1-15 is often used to teach rewards in such warnings as in Hebrews. Besides the error in Hebrews, 1 Cor 3 is discussing the judgment of *teachers* at Corinth, as is seen from the context of 1 Cor 3 ("who is Paul, Apollos" etc.-v.5), the planting/watering illustration-v.v.6-8, as well as the difference between the believers/building and *teachers/builders*-v.9 cf. v10b, 12. The "every man/everyone" of v.v.8,13, and 14 is contextually the teachers/builders at Corinth !! This must be true in light of the building-material terminology of Paul in 1 Cor 3:12. The "fire" and "test" of v. 13 is related to v. 12 (teachers), not to the saints (building, v. 9, cf. 16).