

HEBREWS: THE INFINITE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST

VIII. Parenthetical Warning Against Turning From Christ, Hebrews 5:11-6:20

B. The Big Choice By Those With Stunted Growth

(Hebrews 6:1-8)

I. Introduction

- A. We live in an era of great need for an encouraging word amid man's discouraging spiritual failure, so a word from God on the infinite supremacy and sufficiency of His Son Jesus Christ is both desirable and fitting.
- B. The Epistle of Hebrews offers it, and Hebrews 6:1-8 that is part of a parenthetical warning against turning from Christ exposes the big choice believers with stunted spiritual growth must make. We view it for insight:

II. The Big Choice By Those With Stunted Growth, Hebrews 6:1-8.

- A. The author urged his readers who were suffering from stunted spiritual growth (cf. Hebrews 5:11-14) to solve their problem by going beyond the elementary teachings of Christ to spiritual maturity, Hebrews 6:1-3:
 - 1. The readers were to leave the basic doctrines of the Christian faith and go on into maturity, Hebrews 6:1a.
 - 2. To explain these basic doctrines, the author mentioned several basic Christian truths, Hebrews 6:1b-2:
 - a. They were to leave the teaching on repenting from sinful works and trusting in God, Hebrews 6:1b.
 - b. They were to leave the teachings on baptism, discerning the distinctions between the baptism of Jewish proselytes, baptism by John the Baptizer and Christian believers baptism, Heb. 6:2a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to Hebrews 6:2.
 - c. They were to leave the teaching of the laying on of hands, typical Hebrew rituals that had significance in the Judaistic cults and over which weak believers likely debated, Heb. 6:2b; B. K. C., N. T., p. 793.
 - d. They were to leave the teaching on the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, a big issue of debate in believers' confrontations with those of the Judaistic cults, Hebrews 6:2c; Ibid.
 - 3. God permitting, the readers of the epistle would indeed heed the author's urging here on these things, v. 3
- B. To motivate his readers to progress in their growth beyond the elementary teachings of the faith, the author gave a severe warning in Hebrews 6:4-8 on what would occur to them were they **not** to grow in Christ:
 - 1. "The central assertion" of the author's thought in Hebrews 6:4-8 is: "It is impossible for those who have . . . to be brought back to repentance," Ibid., p. 794.
 - 2. What the parties had done in Hebrews 6:4-5 NIV, ESV describes what occurs when people are truly saved, what was true of the readers of the Epistle of Hebrews according to the author (Hebrews 6:9) as follows:
 - a. These people had once been enlightened (Heb. 6:4a), a reference to conversion, 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, Ibid.
 - b. These people had tasted the heavenly gift (Heb. 6:4b), another reference to conversion (John 4:10).
 - c. These people had shared in the Holy Spirit (Heb. 6:4c), what Romans 8:9b states are saved people.
 - d. These people had tasted the goodness of God's Word and the powers of the future Age (Heb. 6:5), referring to the experience of miracles in Hebrews 2:4 that fit only true Christians, Ibid.
 - 3. Thus, were truly saved believers in Christ like the readers of this epistle to "fall away" (*parapesontas*, Ibid.), it would be impossible for them to be brought back to repentance, Hebrews 6:6a.
 - 4. This "fall away" cannot teach a loss of salvation, what Christ in John 5:24 and numerous other passages in the New Testament counter, so the "falling away" must refer to a defection from the Christian faith in a form of spiritual hardening were the readers to shift from Christianity into a Judaistic cult, Ibid., p. 795.
 - 5. The Hebrew nation had shamed Christ by crucifying Him, so for the readers to shift from Christianity back to a Judaistic cult would be to agree with the Hebrew nation that Jesus deserved crucifixion, what would be like crucifying to themselves the Son of God afresh and putting Him to an open shame, Heb. 6:6; Ibid.
 - 6. The author then gave an illustration of his point from nature, Hebrews 6:7-8:
 - a. If the rain-soaked ground is properly productive, it receives God's blessing and is productive for those who farm it much as the readers received God's blessing when they were first saved, Hebrews 6:7; Ibid.
 - b. However, if the ground receiving the rain produces thorns and thistles, a picture of saved people who slip back into dead Judaism, it is in danger of being cursed and its ground burned, Hebrews 6:8; Ibid.

Lesson: *Believers who are truly saved but who do not grow in Christ, drifting off into false cults, will not repent, but go into a form of apostasy without blessing. Thus, believers marked by stunted spiritual growth must decide to grow in their faith in Christ or face an unalterable future of hardening apostasy and a loss of divine blessing.*

Application: *May we overcome stunted spiritual growth by growing in the faith to avoid spiritual hardening.*