

## Hebrews 5:11- 6:12

### An Earnest Plea...

The writer of Hebrews has been aiming at a target, he has been building his argument and as he is about to embark on the task at hand, he has a sudden realization... the audience he is speaking to is not capable of understanding what he is going to tell them! They have become hard of hearing and it means that he is not going to be able to proceed as he had planned. He then begins an aside that will last for almost all of chapter 6 and is a strong and earnest warning that the Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem really need to grow up, they need to either obey and follow Christ and not rely on the law, or they need to be Jews who do not have a relationship with Messiah and will thus suffer the consequences of refusing the only means of salvation. He warns them that if they continue to stand in the middle, they will incur the destruction of all their hopes for they will never be able to return to the place they have fallen from in knowledge if they end up rejecting Christ as they are currently doing. There is a window of repentance for them but it is closing fast.

Before we dive in deep and pull this apart in the weeks ahead, we are going to take a fairly high-altitude fly-over of this whole section to see the structure of the argument and the reasoning behind it... because it can be easy to get lost in the details and thus miss the point he is trying to make.

This section is comprised of complaint, warning, exhortation and encouragement.

## **I. TARGET AUDIENCE –**

a. the church at Jerusalem had been made up of Jews who confessed outwardly that they have believed and followed Christ.

b. But there was clearly an element among them of those who wanted the law to retain its place in the new church of Christ Jesus.

**Acts 21.15-25**

c. This leaves a church that is struggling with its identity because it is made up of both true believers and false converts, or perhaps more

generously, unsaved people who are possibly *becoming*, but have themselves believed that they have believed.

- d. It is to this latter group of people that the writer of Hebrews is focusing his attention.

## II. COMPLAINT –

in general, they are determined to keep the law in their estimation. They want to revere it, and obey it and are still shackled to it. They are having a hard time letting go of the old ways, and have allowed them to pollute their new understanding. They were trying to make Christ subservient to the system He surpassed. To the Aaronic priesthood, and the sacrifices of animals, to the works of the law.

a. They are hard to teach and hard of hearing - v11

- i. They are become hard of hearing. They were not always so, but it is a finished work from a long process. They have fallen from the

knowledge and relationship they were pursuing, but they have not been saved, have not been born again... they were being drawn and had shown initial signs... but as they neglected spiritual things and returned to works and gave themselves over to legalism and false teaching they grew dull and stupid, and are ENTIRELY culpable for the ruin they are making in their lives.

- ii. It was the hardening of the heart against the ministrations of the Holy Spirit (3:7, 8). It was a deterioration of spiritual apprehension on the part of these unsaved Hebrews who had been the recipients of the pre-salvation ministry of the Holy Spirit, who had been leading them on step by step toward the act of faith in the New Testament sacrifice, the Messiah. The use of the perfect tense here tells us that the process had gone on to the point of completion, with finished results. Their neglect had done its work, and they as a result were in a settled state of spiritual stupidity so far as their ability to apprehend New Testament truth was concerned.

- b. They should be teachers but cannot - v12
  - i. Because they have been under sound teaching for such a long, extended period of time (v12) they are under the moral obligation that they should already have become TEACHERS of the truth.
  - ii. Instead, they are needing an increase of time from someone else to teach them again the basics of the faith. And this word is in the perfect tense, showing a continuous process will be required. They need to be reminded of the very first things that God has said in the NT.
  
- c. They are immature spiritually - v13

They are unable to digest real food, but need to again be sustained on that which is for babes.

- i. Unskilled, inexperienced
- ii. Unable to understand and take in hard truth

- iii. Un-useful - babies are cute but don't contribute anything. And a large part of the joy they bring to us is their PROGRESS... we love to see them grow.
- d. They have had some beginning work of the Spirit in them (tasted of the heavenly gift) made a partaker of the Spirit - 6.4
- e. They had tasted of the Word, and knew something of the powers of the age to come - 6.5
- f. They had outwardly professed repentance - 6.6

### **III. WARNING –**

in a nutshell they are warned that they cannot have both Christ and the Old system. They will not mix.

- a. Jesus Himself warned His followers about this –

**Luke 5.36-39**

- b. They cannot hope to come back toward Christ if they continue down this path of compromise.
  
- c. They who have had this initial working of the Spirit show some signs and have had some degree of spiritual understanding given, those who began to follow in some manner but then leave off, may find themselves in a position where they will never again hear the voice of the Spirit drawing them. And if that is the case they WILL go to hell. For apart from the working of the Spirit, there is no hope of eternal life. It is the Spirit who draws us to Christ and who makes us alive so that we might believe and be saved. It is the Spirit who grants us the faith TO believe!! There is NO other path to Christ except that which is made by the Spirit. So to lose the working of the Spirit is to lose everything.

#### **IV. EXHORTATION –**

Return to the path of knowledge, come back to Christ ALONE before it is too late. Note that the plea

is to return to Him, not to seek the Spirit. The Spirit always exalts Christ, never Himself. Leave off the basic things that were given in the OT and seek Christ alone.

- a. Forsaking the dead works - come out from among them and live holy lives
- b. Believing that God is - cannot serve the false gods of the pagans
- c. Of baptism for a sign of repentance - John preached this baptism. His is NOT the NT baptism of the church
- d. Of the reality of a final resurrection - the argument between the Pharisees and the Sadducees
- e. Of the truth that judgment is real and that it IS coming for all of us... there will be no escaping the day of judgment ... we can only be prepared for it.



## V. ENCOURAGEMENT –

He does not believe that they will finally fall away, He is confident that they ARE, in fact, chosen of God and true, if immature, followers of Jesus Christ. He is confident that they will not finally fall away... "I am warning you but confident that you will heed it before it is too late..."

a. God has allowed you some beginning signs of life, they are not a tease.

b. You are diligent in your love for God, just confused about what that means. (your heart is better than your head)

c. You have faithfully ministered to the saints, and still do so

d. Diligently apply yourself to get back on track and do not lag.

e. Imitate those who have already given their lives for the sake of the gospel.

- i. Not sluggish - earnest and energetically striving after Christ
- ii. Faith
- iii. Patience