

Text: Hebrews 6:1-3

Title: Moving Beyond the Basics of Christianity

Date/Location: January 9, 2011 at FBC

Introduction

The end of chapter 5 talks about the spiritual immaturity of the readers under the expression “dull of hearing.” It then gives three manifestations of spiritual immaturity. The result of the slowness in the readers was that it was difficult to explain the truths about Melchizedek and Christ, the subjects of the previous verses.

1. Summary of the Passage

- A. The call of the opening verses of chapter 6 is for the reader to advance to spiritual maturity. The main verb is “let us go on to maturity.” The “leaving” and “not laying again” are subordinate to that main idea and they explain the movement of maturity is away from more immature things.
- B. By necessity, going on to maturity involves moving beyond the elementary, foundational principles and avoiding going back time and again to the foundations. The foundations are never to be denied or abandoned as if they are irrelevant. Such would constitute an abandonment of the faith itself. The foundation always lies at the foundation but does not always appear in direct fashion.

2. The Tension Between 5:11-14 and 6:1-3: Re-Teaching or Moving On?

- A. There is a potential contradiction here between 5:12’s “teach you again” and 6:1’s “not laying again the foundation” Does the author need to go into review mode or does he not?
- B. So, the Bible encourages us to leave the elementary truths and move on. How do you think the author could best accomplish that? How do you move someone beyond the immature state?

3. Some Basics of Christianity

A. The Overall Structure of the List

There are six key items listed as foundational truths.

B. The Summary Content of the List

The list does not contain all that is necessary for Christianity. The list starts at the required response to the gospel. It says nothing of the person of Christ or His two natures; of His teaching or cross work; of His resurrection or ascension; or of His second coming.

C. The Six Foundations

1. Repentance from dead works.

Repentance is a massive change of mind regarding dead works, sins, and their impact on our life.

2. Faith toward God.

If repentance is on one side of the coin, faith toward God is on the other side.

Basic Content: Faith believes that Jesus Christ is both man and Lord; that He lived a perfect life; that He died as our substitute for our sins; and that He rose again from the dead. There is more that the believer will come to understand and appreciate.

The nature of true saving faith has to do with a committed believing response of the whole person to Jesus Christ's person and work. It has to do with certain knowledge (the content); with a personal acceptance of the truth of that content as relevant for oneself; and with a change of will that desires pardon and to wants to follow Jesus.

3. Doctrine of baptisms.

It is most natural to interpret the plural baptisms to refer to the two important Christian baptisms given attention in the New Testament: water baptism and Holy Spirit baptism.

4. Laying on of hands.

That this is a basic is somewhat surprising to our ears, because we do not emphasize laying on of hands. This laying on of hands could have been associated with the water baptism ritual in the early church.

It seems to be an "early church thing" since it is nowhere mentioned or instructed in the epistolary literature to the churches.

5. Resurrection of the dead.

This refers to the fact that everyone will be raised from the dead. Annihilism is not a Christian option.

6. Eternal judgment.

Hebrews 9:27 lays out the basic program. Everyone dies, and then they are judged. This judgment has eternal consequences attached to it.

The Revelation 20 passage along with 2 Corinthians 5:9-10 teach us about these judgments. We understand that this judgment comes in two primary parts—one for believers and one for unbelievers—but the point is that

4. Moving on Depends on God's Permission

- A. The "this" refers to the main verb of verse 1, to go on to perfection or maturity.
- B. If God permits is how all progress in life is conditioned. James 4:15 teaches us that much—"if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."
- C. God desires we move on in maturity. This is made clear by His many injunctions to that end and His provisions to accomplish it.
- D. Hebrews 6:4 seems to imply that there are some that God will NOT permit to go on.

Conclusion

We should move on in maturity both now and all of our days. That's what God wants to happen to us as we are involved in the ministry of a local church and receive instruction and practice in the faith. The path that leads to more maturity is the path that works on understanding the Bible, God's Word.

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