

## Hebrews 5:12-6:20 - It's Time! The Need for Growth

### Hebrews 5:12-14 – It's Time to Grow Up!

1. “For though by this time you ought to be \_\_\_\_\_, you need someone to teach you again the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ of God, and you have come to need \_\_\_\_\_ and not \_\_\_\_\_ food.”

[“first principles” – “first” from the Greek arches (S #746), meaning “beginning,” as it appears as such some 40 or so times in the New Testament. “Principles” is from a word that has a variety of meanings in the ancient language, including the idea of a single syllable or the alphabet. The meaning is clear. We might say it thusly, “When you ought to be teaching others to read, you need someone to teach you the ABCs.”

“Oracles” is from the base logos, meaning word, except in this case it is more specific, referring to the spoken word. As Paul referred to the Scriptures (written word) as being inspired, lit., “God breathed” in 2 Timothy 3:16, the Hebrews writer speaks of the doctrine of the church as being spoken by God Himself. See Hebrews 12:25.]

2. “For everyone who partakes only of milk is \_\_\_\_\_ in the word of righteousness, for he is a \_\_\_\_\_.”

[unskilled – ignorant or lacking experience. Only here in the New Testament.]

3. “But solid food belongs to those who are of \_\_\_\_\_, that is, those who by reason of \_\_\_\_\_ have their senses \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ both good and evil.”

[“full age” – from the Greek teleios (S #5046), meaning complete, having both mental and moral character, perfect (whole).

“Use” – habit or practice. Only here in the New Testament. “Senses” – perceptive abilities, judgment. “Exercised” – trained by reason of practice.

“Discern” – to discriminate (in the purest sense of making a distinction), to make decisions in a judicious manner.]

## Hebrews 6:1-8 – It's Time to Move On!

4. Therefore, \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ principles of Christ, let us go on to \_\_\_\_\_.”
- a. Does “leaving” mean to set aside and forget? \_\_\_\_\_ What does it mean? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. What is meant by “go on to perfection?” \_\_\_\_\_
5. What six doctrines does the author include as being among “the elementary principles?”
- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Discussion: What is meant by leaving the foundation of:
- a. Repentance from dead works? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Faith toward God? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Doctrines of baptisms? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. Laying on of hands? \_\_\_\_\_
- e. The resurrection of the dead? \_\_\_\_\_

[NOTE! I could find NO consensus, even among conservative scholars, as to what each one of these doctrines alluded! Given the fact that the fundamentals of the faith are here under consideration, I am inclined to reject any interpretation that identifies these with Jewish practices as held by Arthur Pink and FF Bruce.]

8. The author identifies five criteria of those who fall away that makes it impossible to renew them to repentance. What are they?

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

To what do you think these descriptions refer? \_\_\_\_\_

What words in vv 4-5 might lead one in this direction? \_\_\_\_\_

9. “For the \_\_\_\_\_ which drinks in the \_\_\_\_\_ that often comes upon it, and bears herbs \_\_\_\_\_ for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; but if it bears \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, it is rejected and near to being \_\_\_\_\_, whose end is to be \_\_\_\_\_.”

[The writer here describes the Christian as soil blessed by God with rain and the care of the farmer (those who cultivate it). But rather than bearing the intended good fruit, it brings forth thorns and briars causing it to be called cursed, and the resultant “fruit” is good only to be burned.

So it is with Christians who have been blessed by God with the greatest of blessings: the gospel and its associated blessings, and in these cases, the miraculous manifestation of God’s approval. These ought to be the most fruitful citizens of the kingdom. But not only are they not so, they completely abandon and reject all the provisions of the Divine Cultivator.

This is why it is said of them that they cannot be renewed to repentance. For what else remains to win them back or convince them to follow God? The spiritual cupboard is empty, and nothing remains to call them back to God.

It bears noting that the impossibility of repentance is not possible in this same sense today, for the spiritual gifts that were present in this scenario have ceased. It is not unlike the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which is also impossible to commit today as it is not possible to witness the miraculous power of Jesus in person and attribute his power to the Devil (cf Mark 3:20-30).]

## Hebrews 6:9-20—It's Time to Believe God!

10. But, beloved, we are \_\_\_\_\_ of better things concerning you, yes, things that \_\_\_\_\_ salvation, though we speak in this manner.”

[The writer assures the brethren that, though he has spoken very definitively and harshly in the previous paragraph, he does not consider them as apostates or as incorrigible.

“Things that accompany salvation” - this is in keeping with the theme begun in verse 1. Obedience to the gospel begins at baptism; it continues for a lifetime (cf Gal 5:7). There are things to be added as one walks with God (cf 2 Peter 1:5-11).]

11. “For God is not \_\_\_\_\_ to forget your \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the \_\_\_\_\_ and do minister.”

[This text is reminiscent of several others, including Matthew 10:41-42, 1 Corinthians 15:58 and Colossians 2:23-24. I am also reminded of Nehemiah 13 and the great restorationist's final request to God in verse 31, “Remember me, O my God, for good!”]

12. “And we desire that each one of you show the same \_\_\_\_\_ to the full assurance of hope until the end, that you do not become \_\_\_\_\_, but imitate those who through \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ inherit the promises.”

[Earnestness is set in contrast to sluggishness. The word here translated “sluggish” is the same as “dull” back in 5:11. The power of example is also seen here in the exhortation to imitate the patience and faith of others. Who these are is not specified, but likely refers to Abraham, who is held up as an example of faithfulness in the next verse, and may also include those who will be noted in Hebrews 11.

Like much of this great epistle, this sentence contains a refutation to the error of once saved, always saved. The writer is clear—those brethren were to be diligent to the end, imitating others who inherited the promises by reason of their continued faith and patience (James 5:10).]

13. “For when God made a \_\_\_\_\_ to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by \_\_\_\_\_, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” And so, after he had \_\_\_\_\_, he obtained the promise.”

[This is an interesting statement in light of the Old Testament account. The actual statement of swearing did not take place until Genesis 22:16-17, after Isaac was already born. So what then is meant that he patiently endured and then received the promise? There are a number of factors:

First, God's promise to Abraham was not only that He would give Abraham a child. The promise was at least three-fold: 1) Abraham would have a child by Sarah (Gen 15:4, 18:10); 2) Abraham's descendants would be numerous as the stars of the sky (Gen 15:5, 22:17); and 3) A descendant of Abraham would bless all nations of the earth (Gen 12:2-3, 22:18).

Second, even after Isaac was born, Abraham was commanded to offer him up as a sacrifice to God. Abraham's faith and diligence in this matter is also connected to his patient endurance. When God commanded Abraham to offer Isaac, this child of promise was as good as dead in his father's eyes, thus the statement later in Hebrews that Abraham received him back as though raised from the dead (11:19).

Third, it was not necessary for God to make an oath (swear) to Abraham. What He had promised the first time did not need repeating or reaffirming. However, God condescended to the ways of man to reassure Abraham of His intent and ability to keep His original promise (Lightfoot, 129).

14. "For men indeed swear by the \_\_\_\_\_, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute."

["As the Lord liveth" was the supreme oath in Israel. Abraham himself swore by God and made others do the same (Gen 14:22, 21:23ff, 24:3)." (Bruce, 130). However, as the text indicates, there is nothing greater than God Himself, thus He swore upon Himself. This was not unusual, as God did so saying "as I live" more than 20 times in the Old Testament (cf Num 14:20-21, 28).

This makes Jesus' statement about the oaths of the first century Jews interesting. They swore by the greater (the temple) and the lesser (the gold of the temple), yet considered the oath of the lesser as more binding than that upon the greater (cf Matt 23:16-17).

As Christians, we are to forego foreswearing ourselves as a pledge to keep our word (Matt 5:33-37, James 5:12). We are to let our yes be yes and our no, no.]

15. "Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ of His \_\_\_\_\_, confirmed it by an \_\_\_\_\_, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong \_\_\_\_\_, who have fled for refuge to \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ set \_\_\_\_\_ us."

["The heirs of the promise" to whom God here exhibits His faithfulness are the recipients of the epistle. In other words, these things are held forth for our benefit as an encouragement to continued faithfulness to the hope we have embraced which is still yet to come (cf Rom 5:5, 8:24).

The "two immutable (unchangeable) things" are God's impossibility to lie and His inability to swear falsely.]

16. “This \_\_\_\_\_ we have as an \_\_\_\_\_ of the soul, both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the \_\_\_\_\_ has entered for us, even \_\_\_\_\_, having become High Priest \_\_\_\_\_ according to the order of Melchizedek.”

[The confirmed and permanent presence of Jesus in heaven is the guarantee of our entrance to the same. Jesus is our forerunner to heaven in the same sense that John the Baptizer was a forerunner for Jesus. Consider the following texts in light of this teaching: Philippians 3:20-21, 1 John 3:2-3, 1 Corinthians 15:50-58.

This final verse reintroduces us to Melchizedek, of whom the author wanted to speak earlier, but had to temporarily exhort his audience to maturity. Chapter 7 is devoted to a discussion of Melchizedek as a type of the Christ.]