

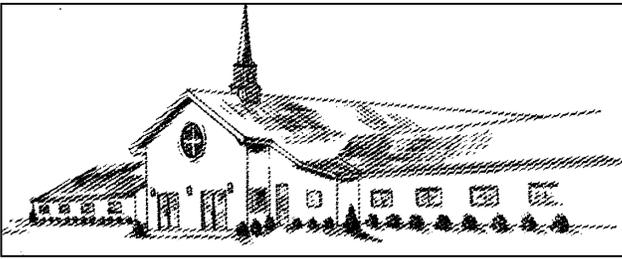
The Caller

A Weekly Newsletter of the Elizabethtown church of Christ

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No. 6



Confidence Corner

In this week's *Confidence Corner* a question has been asked regarding Hebrews 6:1-6. We will begin this study in our *Confidence Corner*, and due to its length, we will continue it in the

inside page of *The Caller*. I have included the American Standard of 1901 translation as I feel it provides the best translation of the passage:

Wherefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on unto perfection; not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do if God permit. For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

In order to understand Hebrews 6:4-6 we first need to understand 6:1-3. Most often 6:1-3 is interpreted that the Jewish Christians were to leave the first principles of Christianity...ABC's of Christian faith. Keeping the book of Hebrews in context there is a need to remember the writer is writing to warn Jewish Christians from falling back under the OT system of faith. They needed to understand Christianity and Christ was the new and "better" way (better is a keyword in Hebrews).

Whatever is under discussion by the writer is something he encourages these Jewish Christians to "leave." The Greek indicates something that is to be sent away. As used in other places the term is translated let go, send away, cancel, leave, and forsake. Arndt and Gingrich render the word in Hebrews 6 as "leave behind."

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DEACON WORKSHOP

Saturday, February 22, 2020

9:00am to 3:00pm

Elizabethtown Church of Christ

With

Aubrey Johnson

Session 1– The Deacon's Role: Understand Your Purpose

Session 2– The Deacon's Requirements: Refine Your Character

Session 3– The Deacon's Responsibilities: Improve Your Performance

Session 4– The Deacon's Relationships: Treasure Your Team

Session 5– The Deacon's Reward: Keep Your Focus

*lunch will be provided

Please RSVP to 270-765-6446 by February 15, 2020

Sunday's Sermons:

A.M. — I Will Build — Growing Churches

Acts 20:24-32

P. M. — Don't Put These Off

2Tim 4:9-22

In the Greek (aorist participle as an imperative or command preceding the action of the main verb) the indication is that the writer of Hebrews is encouraging the reader to “leave one thing” before they go on to another. Here the Christians are to leave the doctrine of the first principles of Christ in order to go on to perfection.

The first principles are more literally “the word of the beginning of Christ.” The “teaching of baptisms” (not baptism) is indicative of the Levitical Jewish ceremonial baptisms...not Christian baptism. The word in Hebrews 6:2 (baptismon) is not the word used in connection with baptism of the NT (baptisma). In each of the unquestionable occurrences of the baptismon, the word is translated “washings” and is referring to the Jewish cleansing rites. Further, none of the occurrences of baptisma refer to Jewish washings and all occurrences of baptismon (the root of baptismon) refer to Jewish washings, a very strong argument can be made that the Hebrews writer is discussing Jewish ceremonial washings and not Christian baptism.

The laying on of hands in Hebrews 6 is also most likely referencing the laying on of hands in the Jewish religion. It is repeatedly required that the Jewish worshipper lay hands on the animal sacrifice in order to transfer from themselves to the animal the intended goal (wholehearted devotion, removal of sin, etc). This was true of the priest (Lev. 4:4), the elders representing the nation (Lev. 4:15), as well as the common people (Lev. 1;4; 3:2-13; 4:29 & 33). See as well Exodus 29 and Leviticus 16 for more examples of how “laying on of hands” was a major part of the system of Judaism. Though space does not permit, the other elements listed (resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment) are also elements of the Jewish faith.

Let us take all of the information regarding an understanding of the “the word of the beginning of Christ” as elements of the Jewish faith and look at the question, “what does impossible to renew them again unto repentance mean in the context?” The writer of the book of Hebrews is trying to convince the new follower of Christ not to fall back under the old ways of worship to God. Why is the writer encouraging the new Christian to abandon the Old Testament way of worship? It is because, under the old system, sin could no longer be forgiven. Since Christianity and the new covenant had replaced the old covenant, the old covenant was now null and void. It could no longer be practiced in order to receive any forgiveness of sin. The old covenant can do nothing because it has been taken away (Heb. 10:9). That is why if someone sought repentance and forgiveness under the Old Law, it was impossible to gain such forgiveness. It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance (6:6) because under that OT system “there remained no longer a sacrifice for sin” (Heb. 10:26). The only way for the new Christians to find forgiveness was through Christianity—the new and better way. It would no longer be through the Old Testament way of the Jewish religion and rites that sins would be forgiven, but only through Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

It is not impossible to return to Christ and be saved—all who repent can do that. It was impossible for a person who went back to the OT Jewish religion to be forgiven. Why? It was because Judaism (OT system) was the old way (no longer valid) of limited forgiveness; it had been done away with and nailed to the cross. Even if the old covenant provided full forgiveness of sins, it was no longer a system that God recognized to provide the forgiveness of sins. Christianity was the current, full and only way to forgiveness.

John F Board

Elizabethtown, KY