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THE DOCTRINES OF REPENTANCE AND HUMAN GOOD

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS
NUMBER 37
HEBREWS 6:1

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We will discover before we complete our study of Hebrews 6:1-6 that the writer of Hebrews is talking here about a saved man, and not about a man who has lost his salvation. He is talking about the man who gets out of the bottom circle, gets out of fellowship, and out of fellowship he refuses to rebound or repent, and therefore, it is impossible to restore him again to fellowship. This passage is not talking about being saved a second time.

Look again at a correct translation of verse 1--

"Therefore having graduated from the elementary doctrines of The Christ let us advance ourselves toward maturity (The super grace life), not laying again the foundation (1st) of a change of mind away from dead works (2nd) and faith toward God."

Advance is being held up in the lives of these believers because they won't rebound, and though they are saved, they are acting exactly like unsaved people.

Now we have "not laying again" and this is a present, middle, participial of "kataballo." It means to lay down a foundation and it has a negative with it. It means they must relearn what they once knew but have now forgotten and now disregard entirely. This was the very last chance these people had to make this change because this was 67 A.D. and in 70 A.D. destruction was coming.

Next we have the word "palin" which means "again." They must turn back and repeat a course of action. They must relearn what they once knew.

Two things

Two things are listed in this phrase that they must relearn. They must learn to repent from dead works, and turn to faith toward God. The word "repentance" here is the genitive singular of "metanoia" and means a change of mind. Then we have "apo nekros ergon" and it means "away from dead works."

So we have two doctrines here, repentance and dead works.

THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE

1. IN HEBREW THE WORD FOR REPENT IS "NACHAM."

This word is generally used of God in the Old Testament. Since it is used of God, you know it can't mean to feel sorry for sins, for God has committed no sins for which he is to feel sorry. It is a word to show that God has changed his policy. Genesis 6:6, Exodus 32:14, Judges 2:18, 1 Samuel 15:35, Psalm 90:13, Jeremiah 15:6 and 42:10, Amos 7:3 and 7:6. Now all of these passages say that God repents. And it doesn't mean to feel sorry for sins. The writer of the King James felt guilty writing this so he says it this way, "It repented God." He didn't want to come right out and say, "God repented." Now these verses simply mean that God changed his policy. (He knew millions of years ago what he was going to do.) It is language used so we will know what is going on.

2. GOD IS IMMUTABLE AND CAN'T CHANGE. SO "GOD REPENTS" IS AN ANTHROPOMORPHISM.

It is to show a change in policy. These are divine acts of discipline because of certain human acts. This is therefore what we call language of accommodation. This ascribes to God certain characteristics which he doesn't have, but using language we can understand. You see, we are often dumb and it takes God a long time to make us understand.

3. IN GREEK THE WORD FOR REPENTANCE IS "METANOEO."

"Metanoeo" means to change your mind, change your thinking. Something like "You were coming to Bible class but changed your mind not to come." Now that is "metanoeo." Repent is a mental word. God repents and has the ability to follow through on it.

4. THE EMOTIONAL WORD THAT IS USED FOR REPENT IS "METAMELOMAI."

This means to feel sorry for something you have done. It should be translated "regret." Now "regret" does not mean "repent." Please remember that "metanoeo" in Greek and "nacham" in Hebrew are transitive verbs and must have a subject and an object. The subject changes its mind about the object.

5. "METANOEO" IS USED FOR REPENTANCE IN SALVATION.

We have a subject, the unbeliever, and the object is always Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. We also have the expression "repentance toward God" because God is the author of the plan of salvation. Other passages talk about "repentance toward Christ." Actually these are synonymous terms. Changing your mental attitude is always followed by believing in Christ. Repentance and faith in Christ are not the same. Faith in Christ is what saves you, repentance is what sets you up for it. Repentance gets you in the frame of mind so you can believe and they both go together. They are heads and tails of the same coin. Now we have a lot of scripture on this and we will look at them because many people are confused at this point. Repentance is the car, the bus that gets you there so you can believe and every person must repent and believe for himself. Mark 1:15, Matthew 12:41, Luke 13:3 and 13:5 and 15:7 and 10. The sinner does the repenting and the angels in heaven rejoice over one sinner who repents. The subject is the sinner, and the object something not stated, but the object is always Jesus Christ. The Bible never says you are to repent toward your sins, but repentance is toward Jesus Christ. Repentance isn't directed toward your sins. You can repent toward your sins for a thousand years and you will never be saved. Direct your repentance toward Christ for he is the only one able to save you. The sinner is the subject, the nominative case. The sinner does the repenting, the changing of the mind. He doesn't repent of his sins, but repents toward Christ. Repentance is changing the mind. Luke 16:30 and 31, Acts 17:30 and 20:21 and 26:20, Hebrews 12:17 2 Peter 3:9.

6. SALVATION REPENTANCE IS DEFINED AS A CHANGE OF MENTAL ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD--TOWARD JESUS CHRIST.

The Holy Spirit is the agent who performs this illumination. (1 Cor. 2:14 says the soulish man can't understand the things of the spirit.) The Holy Spirit doubles for the human spirit. John 16:8-11, 2 Timothy 2:25.

7. THE VERB "METANOEO" AND THE NOUN "METANOIA" ARE ALSO USED IN LIVING THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

We are to change our attitude toward human good. Our passage here in Hebrews 6:1. Also it is used as a change of attitude toward doctrine when we are in reversionism. Rev. 2:5 and 16 and 22, Rev. 3:19, 2 Cor. 12:21

This must be the continuous attitude of the believer if he is to grow.

8. "METAMELOMAI" SHOULD BE TRANSLATED REGRET.

- a. Regret of a previous action. Matthew 21:29
- b. Of the action of Judas Iscariot. Matthew 27:3
- c. God has no regrets in saving people and in giving to them spiritual gifts. Romans 11:29
- d. God has no regret in appointing Jesus Christ as the Great High Priest. Hebrews 7:21

9. "METANOIA" IS USED IN IMPORTANT PASSAGES.

Romans 2:4, 2 Cor. 7:9 and 10, 2 Peter 3:9, Acts 20:21

Now this gives you some idea of what the word "repentance" means in the passage we have before us.

But we also have the words "dead works" and the answer to this is the explanation of human good.

THE DOCTRINE OF HUMAN GOOD

1. HUMAN GOOD IS DEAD TO GOD'S PLAN.

That's why here in Hebrews 6:1 "nekros" is used. Every believer who is working his heart out is dead to God's plan. Every bleeding heart who thinks he is making points with God because of his human activity is guilty of human good. God is not impressed with the energy of the flesh. So much of our Christian service today is done on an emotional basis or on an ambitious basis or even on a selfish basis and it is all human good. God is not impressed with the energy of your flesh. Jesus Christ will not recognize dead works which come from the energy of the old sin nature. Christ has always rejected human good and one of the issues of the cross is human good versus divine good. Neither God The Father, nor Christ, nor the Holy Spirit has any regard for human good. (I pray every day--O Lord, let my work be divine good!)

2. HUMAN GOOD IS NOT ACCEPTABLE TO GOD AT ANY TIME.

The Holy Spirit led Isaiah to write Isaiah 64:6. "Human good is like filthy rags in his sight."

3. HUMAN GOOD HAS NO PLACE IN THE PLAN OF GOD.

It never has and it never will. 2 Timothy 1:9

4. ALWAYS SEPARATE HUMAN GOOD FROM MORALITY.

When you classify human good, you have to be very careful not to step on the toes of morality. Always distinguish between what is morally right and what is human good. Romans 13:4-5
Morality is necessary for the proper function of the human race. So morality is necessary for man's survival. Human good is immoral. Morality lines up with the laws of divine establishment. Human good rejects the laws of divine establishment.

5. HUMAN GOOD WILL NOT SAVE MANKIND.
Titus 3:5. It is criminal for a person to believe that he can be saved by something he does--like being baptized or like changing his behavior pattern. When human good is substituted for salvation, then it becomes one of the greatest evils in the Angelic Conflict.
6. THE BELIEVER'S HUMAN GOOD IS REVEALED AND DESTROYED AT THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST. So there will be no one in dirty clothes in heaven. 1 Cor. 3:11-16. The Bride is going to be dressed up in clean clothes. The Bride is going to be dressed up in a resurrection body. The Bride will be cleansed forever of an old sin nature. We are not going to be permitted to take any human good with us into heaven. (Many truck loads of our human good will make a big bonfire and thank God we will say goodbye to it forever.)
7. HUMAN GOOD IS THE BASIS FOR THE UNBELIEVERS INDICTMENT AT THE GREAT WHITE JUDGMENT THRONE.
Revelation 20:12-15. Just think of all the unbelievers who think they are going to get to heaven by all their good deeds, and their sins will never be mentioned because Christ died for those sins on the cross. The one sin for which Christ did not die is our unbelief, neither did he die for human good. You see your unbelief involves your volition and you are free to believe or not to believe. There will be enough human good of the unbelievers to burn with them forever. No energy shortage there.
8. HUMAN GOOD CAN ONLY PRODUCE HUMAN BOASTING.
Ephesians 2:8 and 9, Romans 4:2

Then this verse says "and of faith toward God." The word for faith is "pistis" and this word "pistis" is used in three ways.

1st, faith is used directed toward Christ and this faith produces salvation.

2nd, we direct our faith toward the written word and this leads to spiritual growth and maturity. It also leads to faith-rest.

3rd, this word "pistis" meaning faith is used for the body of information we call doctrine.

And notice this verse says that this "pistis" is toward God.