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THE A B C'S OF DOCTRINE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 83
HEBREWS 6:1-2

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maturity
ABC's
HEBREWS 6:1-2 "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment."

Jerusalem was the city where the church came into being as an organized institution. Jerusalem was the city where Pentecost took place. But it is necessary to follow great spiritual experiences like Pentecost with the learning of Bible doctrine, and it is at this point where the Jerusalem church failed. Instead of learning Bible doctrine they became legalistic and failed to grow in Bible truth. As a result the spiritual center moved from Jerusalem to Antioch and then on to Ephesus. The great spiritual church in Antioch launched the first great missionary movement and they sent out Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. It came from Antioch and not from Jerusalem as we might have expected.

We are about to study the last eight chapters of the Book of the Acts and in this study we are to discover that Paul, at this point in his missionary career, made the greatest spiritual blunder of his entire life. Because of this blunder for four years he is going to be slowed down, and for four years he is going to be in prison in Caesarea and in Rome. He was warned again and again, both by God and by the Holy Spirit and by friends not to go back to Jerusalem. In Jerusalem we will study how Paul took the advise of some legalistic believers and took a vow and sponsored certain other young men who took a legalistic vow. On the last day of his vow there was a mob in Jerusalem and if the Roman soldiers had not rescued him, he would have been killed. Now I am aware of the fact that even though Paul made a great spiritual blunder, God protected him and God spared his life again and again. I am also aware of the fact that while in the Roman jail he wrote the four great prison Epistles--Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. This is a beautiful illustration of how God turned cursing into blessing.

The writer of Hebrews in the first ten verses of chapter 5 gives an explanation of the doctrine of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ. At the end of those ten verses we saw that the author came to a dramatic halt and inserted a parenthesis which goes down through chapter 6 to verse 19. One of the greatest catastrophes of history was about to take place in Jerusalem and the author of Hebrews knew that this was their last chance to get with Bible doctrine. However, the people in Jerusalem went on negative signals as far as doctrine was concerned. They were absolutely ignorant as far as the mind of Christ was concerned. These Jews in Jerusalem were suffering from the cancer of legalism and the disease had spread to the entire church body. They had one foot in Christianity and one foot in legalism and they were in a terrible condition. Therefore in verse 1 of Hebrews 6, we are brought face to face with the idea of learning simple doctrine so you can move on and learn advanced doctrine.

ABC's
HEBREWS 6:1 "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God". "Therefore" means they were urged to move on from shadows and immature things to more mature things. "Leaving" carries with it the idea of graduation. In other words "Move on up". Very much like the slogan we had some years ago at Immanuel, "Let us go on". This is always so important for the Christian. But you have to learn the A B C's of doctrine and learn basic truth before you can advance to maturity in doctrine.

We know the soul is composed of self-consciousness, mentality, volition, conscience, emotion, and the old sin nature. So doctrinal truth must be stored in the mentality of the soul before it can spill over into other facets of life. These Jerusalem Jews didn't ever learn the A B C's and therefore they were never powerful, stable Christians. In verse 6 we read these words--

HEBREWS 6:6 "If they shall fall away, ^{to fellowship} to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." "They crucified Jesus Christ afresh." The believers in Jerusalem maintained their friendship and business relationships with unsaved Jews. They went right on with animal sacrifices just as though Jesus had never died for them. Once the reality comes, which is Jesus Christ, you don't need shadows and you don't need animal sacrifices. But these Jerusalem Jews were eternally carnal and they were going around in spiritual circles. The author of Hebrews attempted to show them how to get out of this vicious circle. He urged them to learn doctrine and move on up in their Christian living. They were admonished to advance into maturity, which was the spirit-filled life. The word is "Let us advance" and it carries with it the idea that advancement is potential. They were admonished to keep on advancing which is the whole purpose of learning the Word of God. This word for advancement is in the passive voice and it means we receive this advancement from God as we study and learn. "Not laying again the foundation" means that you have already laid the foundation and now you can move on to deeper things. *advance doctrine*

Let us look at the six items mentioned in these two verses.

THE DOCTRINE OF REPENTANCE FROM DEAD WORKS

Repentance means to change your way of thinking, your way of looking at something. When you go on negative signals toward God, your mind is filled with mental attitude sins. These things have to be removed. In other words, sometimes there are certain things we have to "unlearn". Repentance does not mean to feel sorry for your sins or to weep over your sins. Repentance means to change your mental attitude. When the word "repent" is used concerning God, it is an anthropomorphism and makes it possible for us to understand what is going on in the mind of God. It indicates the change of policy concerning the action of God. This is illustrated by such passages as the following--Genesis 6:6--Exodus 32:14--Judges 2:18--Amos 7:3--Hebrews 7:21.

The word "repent" is also used in connection with salvation and is the other side of the coin we call "believe". Believe and repent are the same. It means to reverse your thinking. It has to do with thought--change your thoughts about Christ.

But why does it say repentance from "DEAD WORKS"? We are born physically alive but spiritually dead. We are not spiritually dead because we have sinned, but because we were born with an old sin nature. All men got their old sin nature from Adam, and that is explained in Romans 5:12. We sin because we are spiritually dead and have an old sin nature. Human good is just another indication of having an old sin nature and human good is called "DEAD WORKS". Both sin and human works are classified as "DEAD WORKS". This is why Isaiah 64:6 says that our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in his sight. Since we are born spiritually dead there is no production from the old sin nature which God can accept. Therefore at the cross God rejected all good works of mankind and substituted the good work of Jesus Christ for our salvation. So it is our good works versus his good work. "Believe" is the absence of human good. In the perfect plan of salvation, God did all the work. Now if we could have done any of the work of salvation, then salvation would have been of no value for the plan would have been no stronger than its weakest link. But salvation is God's perfect plan with no human work connected with it. But today we have salvation by works, and salvation by feeling sorry for your sins, or salvation by joining a church, or salvation by baptism, or salvation by Christ plus something. But salvation is by Christ plus nothing. "Grace" equals God doing the work and man receiving the result of the work God has done. All we can do for salvation is to believe in Christ, for

Christ did all the work for our salvation. We confess and are forgiven for God has already done all the work. Since the sins we confess have already been judged at the cross, all God can do is forgive us and cleanse us. So there is just no way for human good to enter into the plan. These Jews in Jerusalem were just loaded up with human good and they needed to reverse their thinking concerning good works. What they thought were good works were dead works in the sight of God. You see, most people think morality, a moral system, keeping the Ten Commandments is Christianity. But Christianity is not morality, it is not a system of doing certain things and not doing certain other things. Christianity is a relationship with Jesus Christ. Christianity also produces a supernatural way of life. Christianity produces within the soul everything that works for the glory of God.

THE DOCTRINE OF MORALITY

1. Christianity is not morality but is a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
2. Morality is a by-product of Christianity--one of the many by-products.
3. Morality has no dynamics in itself.
4. The dynamics of Christianity are found in the filling of the Spirit.
5. Morality is absolutely essential for the perpetuation and survival of the human race. Without morality the human race would destroy itself.
(This is what was about to happen when the Lord sent the flood and saved the human race.)

Morality was designed by God to make it possible for the four divine institutions to operate--Namely, Volition, Marriage, The Family and The Nation. Morality is for the good of the unbeliever as well as for the believer.

Morality is very important to both believer and unbeliever. Many unbelievers have better morality than legalistic believers.

6. Morality cannot provide salvation or spirituality. You are not spiritual because you keep the Ten Commandments.
7. Morality has two sources--
Human good and the old sin nature. The filling of the Spirit produces a super-morality. The Ten Commandments do not cover mental attitude sins. The Ten Commandments say we are not to commit adultery but Jesus said we are not to think adultery. The Mosaic law covered overt morality but Jesus moved on farther and covered mental attitude morality. We walk according to the Spirit and this fulfills the law.
Anything the unbeliever can do is not Christianity.

The people in Jerusalem were very nice people. They were witnessing, praying, giving, but many of them were doing these things for the wrong reason. These things are human good and it is only when the Spirit controls your life that these things are divine good. Your good works can be wood, hay, stubble and these will be burned at the Judgment Seat of Christ. So it all depends on who controls your life. You can't get out of the baby stage unless you get out of human good. Good moral people can be the most carnal people of all. This is why the author of Hebrews says that we must repent of dead works.