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BASIC DOCTRINES WE MUST LEARN

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
NUMBER 84
HEBREWS 6:1-4

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HEBREWS 6:1-4 "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. And this will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost"

We can't understand the church at Jerusalem apart from legalism. Hebrews was written in 67 B.C., three years before the downfall of the legalistic Jerusalem Church. Paul made his greatest blunder in Jerusalem and for this disobedience he was disciplined by God. The 6th Chapter of Hebrews explains the situation that prevailed in Jerusalem at the time Paul visited the city contrary to the will of God.

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." This simply means they left the A B C's of the doctrine of Christ. Certain doctrines have to be learned if people are to live in fellowship with Christ. But in Jerusalem they were crucifying Christ afresh. They were taking offerings to the temple and offering animal sacrifices contrary to the will of God. Once the cross came, all animal sacrifices came to an end. These weak believers compromised with the unbelieving business leaders in the city so they could keep their business going. They also wanted to stay in the good graces of the unbelievers in their social life, therefore, they kept on offering animal sacrifices. In verse 6 this practice is called "Crucifying the Son of God afresh and putting him to an open shame". Now in order to recover, these Jews would have to learn certain basic doctrines. The first one of these doctrines was "repentance from dead works". Repentance means a complete change of mental attitude. They had to change their attitude about good and morality. The next doctrine mentioned was "faith toward God". Verse 6 shows that they were blaspheming against the cross. They refused to believe the principle of 1 John 1:9. They failed to believe the promises of God and they failed to confess their sins and get back into fellowship with God. The next doctrine mentioned was "the doctrine of baptisms". You will notice that baptisms is plural, and this refers to the seven baptisms taught in scripture. Baptism means "identification" and we find four real baptisms and three ritual or water baptisms in scripture.

Look first at the four real baptisms.

1. The baptism of Moses.
1 CORINTHIANS 10:2 "And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea"
2. The baptism of the cross and the cup.
MATTHEW 20:22 "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able."
3. The baptism of the Holy Spirit.
ACTS 1:5 "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."
4. The baptism of fire.
MATTHEW 3:11 "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:"

Now Look at the Ritual or Water Baptisms

1. The baptism of John.
ACTS 19:4 "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."
2. The baptism of Jesus.
MATTHEW 3:16 "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him"
 (The baptism of Jesus was unique. No one can ever be baptized as Jesus was. His baptism meant his acceptance of the Father's will for his life. So in a literal sense "We cannot follow the Lord in baptism".)
3. The baptism of the believer in the Church Age.
MATTHEW 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost"

These Jerusalem church members didn't understand the doctrine of baptisms. Therefore, they didn't understand the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

These are some of the things they didn't understand.

1. Retroactive positional truth. This means that at the point of salvation we are entered into union with Christ and the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us.
2. The baptism of the Holy Spirit means the rejection of human good.
3. Now being in union with Christ we are able to produce divine good. That is what baptism actually means; down with human good and up with divine good. Baptism actually says, "There is no place for human good. Down with human good and up with divine good".

The baptism of the Holy Spirit means there is no place for human works. Baptism means I have repented toward dead works. I have rejected dead works. Please get this statement--"KNOWLEDGE OF DOCTRINE PLUS THE FILLING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT MEANS THE PRODUCTION OF DIVINE GOOD".

We are baptized because we understand these things. And if you don't understand these things, remember that ritual without reality is meaningless. I fear that so many baptisms today don't mean very much. An empty-headed preacher dunking an empty-headed believer is not baptism and it is completely ridiculous. Baptism doesn't mean a thing to the new convert unless he understands these truths. Paul on one occasion told the Corinthians that he was glad he had baptized just a few of them and then he named those he had baptized. Paul understood what baptism means and he didn't want a lot of people run through the baptistry so you could count numbers.

The fourth doctrine mentioned here is the doctrine of The Laying On Of Hands. This was used quite extensively in Jewish times.

1. It was used in Levitical sacrifices.
LEVITICUS 1:4 "And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him." The animal was placed on the altar and the Priest would put one hand on the animal and one hand on the head of the one bringing the sacrifice. The man would name his sins and in form the Priest would transfer his sins to the animal, and then it would be offered as a sacrifice. This was the way they pictured the transfer of sins from the man to the animal. The animal died and took away the sins. So this is what they needed to know--that having believed in Christ they didn't have to offer animal sacrifices anymore, all they had to do was to confess their sins and he would take them away from them. This is what they needed to understand and not crucify the Son of God afresh.

2. The laying on of hands was used in blessing.
ACTS 19:13 "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth."
3. The laying on of hands was used in ordination.
ACTS 6:6 "Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them." The concept here is that the one being ordained is identified with the ordaining body. In other words "You are now one of us"

The fifth doctrine was The Doctrine Of The Resurrection From The Dead. To understand the resurrection, you must understand three principles.

First, you must understand the difference of resuscitation and resurrection. In resuscitation the person raised up from the dead dies again. The illustration is Lazarus Christ resuscitated him, but he died again and is in the grave until this day. Lazarus came back in his body of corruption, but when he will be raised in resurrection, he will come back in his body of incorruption. Resurrection means you are brought back from the dead and you never die again. Thus far, Jesus is the only one who has experienced resurrection. Christ is called "The firstfruits of them that slept". No one, up to this point in history, has experienced resurrection save Jesus Christ. Next, remember that there are two resurrections found in Scripture. One is the resurrection of the believers, and the other is the resurrection of the unbelievers.

DANIEL 12:2 "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-22 "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

JOHN 5:24-29 "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

REVELATION 20:6-13 "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, God and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever. And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Therefore we have the first and second resurrections. There are four sections to the first resurrection, and in the second resurrection all unbelievers are raised at the same time.

Look at the outline of the First Resurrection

1. Jesus Christ has been resurrected.
1 CORINTHIANS 15:20-22 "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."
ROMANS 1:4 "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead"
1 THESSALONIANS 1:10 "And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come."
1 PETER 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"

2. The second group to be resurrected is the believers in the Church Age. This is the body of Christ. This comes at the end of the Church Age. This does not include Old Testament believers. They will be raised later. These who are raised in the Church Age are called "The dead in Christ". "In Christ" refers to New Testament saints. The dead in Christ rise first then those who are alive.
1 CORINTHIANS 15:54 "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."

3. The next group to be resurrected is made up of the martyrs of the Tribulation and all Old Testament saints. This occurs at the second coming of Christ.
DANIEL 12:13 "But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."
ISAIAH 26:19-20 "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast."
REVELATION 20:4 "And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."
MATTHEW 24:31 "And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other."

4. The fourth group of believers to be resurrected are the Millennial saints. People who live through the Tribulation and all the believers who live in the Millennium. They then receive their resurrection bodies.

This is the first resurrection. And it takes quite a time for all these companies to pass the great reviewing stand. Then at the end of the Millennium comes the second resurrection and this is for unbelievers only.

REVELATION 20:12-15 "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

This is the last doctrine here and we have read about this in Revelation 20. The principle of the doctrine is described in HEBREWS 9:27 "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." "Once to die and after that the judgment." JOHN 5:22 "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son". This is the great white throne judgment. Christ will be seated on that throne. At that time all unbelievers are raised and they stand before that throne and are judged on the basis of their unbelief. JOHN 3:18 "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." They stand there for one reason and one reason only--They rejected the Lord Jesus Christ. They will not be judged on the basis of their sins but on the basis of their good works. Under the doctrine of unlimited atonement, Christ judged the sins of every man at the cross. The only part of the old sin nature of the unbeliever not judged at the cross was the unbeliever's human good. In the judgment every good deed of the unbeliever will be mentioned. The question arises, what about the human good of the believer? That is answered in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:12-15 "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." This happens before the judgment seat of Christ. All the human good of the believer will be burned and only the divine good will remain. Our sins were judged at the cross and now at the judgment seat of Christ our works are evaluated and all human good is burned. The unbeliever is indicated on the basis of his human good. The believer's human good is separated from him and put in the fire.

Now these were the doctrines these Jews in Jerusalem needed to learn. The list of these things is summarized by the phrase "Repentance from dead works". From now on when this list will be referred to in Hebrews the writer will just refer to "Repentance", but it is quite clear that he is referring to the whole list. These six things mean knowledge of doctrine. When in verse 6 the writer of Hebrews refers to "Renew them again unto repentance" he is referring to all these doctrines. In Greek the writer never gave the whole list, he just referred to the first one and the reader knew immediately what he was talking about.

So this passage is not referring to salvation at all. It is referring to the carnal believer who will not learn doctrine and in this way crucify Jesus Christ afresh.

HEBREWS 6:3 "And this will we do, if God permit." This refers to learning Bible doctrine.

"We will do" is aorist, active, indicative. So this refers to a point of time when they will learn this doctrine. And each one must learn it for himself. The indicative mood means the reality of this truth.

"If God permits" means "If God permits us to live on this earth". Remember, every second we live on the earth God permits us to live.

"If God permits" is a present, active, subjunctive. And that means that God is the one who lets us live and whether we live or not depends on our response. What we need to get back in fellowship, we will study next time.