

Many of these notes were included in the previous session but have been revised in this session.

MOVING ON | VV. 1-3

- What the writer is doing: *moving on*
 - **Leaving the principles** is literally, "having left."
 - This is more testimony about what the writer is doing than instruction on what the reader should be doing. Though such instruction would be valuable, the primary meaning of the words is that the writer is saying, "Now I'm moving on to deeper subjects." Since this is in the plural, the writer is making an assumption that the recipients of the letter are with him, "having left."
 - Translation alert: **leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ**
 - Literally, it is "the beginning of the Christ discourse" which Judaism needed to leave behind, and which the author was doing.
 - KJV "the principles of the doctrine of Christ" is a poor translation. Such principles should never be left behind. The Greek contains no word that could rightly be translated as "principles" (as in 5:12) or "doctrine" (as in 6:2)
 - NASB, NKJV, HCSB, ESV, and NIV all go with some version of "elementary principles of Christ." This also confuses *principles* in v. 1 with *principles* in 5:12
 - TEV says we are to, "leave behind the first lessons of the Christian message." This makes the same error as the KJV, since what follows is not at all the first lessons of the Christian message (nor should the first lessons be left behind).
 - *The Message* gets ridiculously artsy, saying, "Let's leave the preschool finger-painting exercises on Christ and get on with the grand work of art."
- Where is the writer going? **Let us go unto perfection**
 - This is a passive verb, but translators are making it an active verb.
 - The word (phero) is "to bring," and in the passive would be "to be carried or taken."
 - Therefore, "let us be carried on to perfection."
 - Thus, again, the primary meaning of the words is the author's testimony, "I'm moving on to bigger subject matter, and I'm hoping I can carry you on the journey."
 - A foundation is only laid once. What the text is about to declare has *been laid* but now the writer is ready to move on.
- What the writer is leaving: *Jewishness without the Messiah*
 - The author is about to mention six things that are each fully explained in the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) (vv. 1-2)
 - There is no need for the writer to further dwell on Judaism. Rather, it is time to move on to the full completion of these things.
 - If these six things are the foundation for Christianity, then it is a Christ-less Christianity.
 - The six things are: **repentance from dead works**, **faith toward God**, **doctrine of baptisms** (ceremonial cleansings), doctrine of **laying on of hands** (ordination), the **resurrection from the dead** in the last day, and the doctrine of **eternal judgment**.
 - The writer explains that these six elements of *Judaism* have been taught enough, but now it is time to go to maturity, to build on the foundation rather than laying it again.
 - The message is that the writer has moved on, and he is hoping the nation will as well.
 - Verse 3 - The writer is saying they have already left the elements of Christ in Judaism, and now, if God permit, they will **go on** to the full maturity of Judaism as it was designed to ultimately become.

MISSING OUT | VV. 4-6

- These verses are some of the most disconcerting verses in all the Bible for those who are looking for answers to eternal security.
 - If you want to find passages about security, read Paul's epistles to the gentiles. If you wanted verses about losing salvation, the Hebrew epistles would be the place to find them.
 - The biggest problem of interpretation of these verses is that covenant theology has so infiltrated our thinking that we never question the assumptions about the topic of these verses. Most commentators completely ignore the fact that *these verses might not be about being saved nor the loss of salvation*.
 - Most commentaries and preachers present this passage with only a single item of question: *are the people of vv. 4-5 saved or unsaved?* From this determination, they will then answer the question: *is the judgment temporary/earthly or eternal/spiritual*. That is, a loss of rewards or a loss of salvation.
 - The problem with this is that the passage is not about your salvation experience at all. Rather, it is about the need for the nation of Israel (the Hebrews) to "leave the beginning of the Christ discourse," "not laying again the foundation" of Jewish works, and recognize Jesus Christ as Messiah.
- The five things of vv. 4-5 are things which Judaism had experienced.
 - **Those who were once enlightened** - Judaism had both the revelation of God through the Prophets and through His Son (Hebrews 1:1).
 - The use of the adverb **once** gives indication of something that had happened in the past.
 - **Tasted of the heavenly gift** - likely a reference to Christ Himself, sent from Heaven to Israel.
 - **Made partakers of the Holy Ghost** - Partaker does not need to mean that they were filled with the Spirit. Israel was a partaker of the Spirit in that the Spirit came to Jerusalem, a city which became "bewildered, amazed, and astonished" (Acts 2:6-7, 12) when they saw what was happening.
 - **Tasted the good word of God** - as with the Heavenly gift, this was more than "hearing" to a real experience of "tasting."
 - Tasted of the **powers of the world to come** - the miraculous works of the Gospels and the Pentecostal era were a display of the powers of the coming age (the Messianic age).
- Can these five things be claimed of Christians today?
 - On some level 5 of the 6 could be claimed by Christians today, although not in the manner in which Israel had experienced them. The final one, however, is not something we have experienced except through reading about it.
 - It is significant that there is nothing here that speaks of justification by faith (nor can it be implied).
 - In short, the description is of unsaved Israel, with no other people in the history of man having less excuse for not coming to Christ for salvation.
- **If they shall fall away** - Because this is an active verb, it is not by accident or neglect that they **fall away**.
- Summary of vv. 4-6: Israel experienced five blessings which inexcusably bring them to the point of an impossibility of renewal should they walk away.
 - If that generation of Jews (having received the 5 things they experienced) were to walk away from Jesus as the Christ, they would have no refuge.

MAYHEM ONCOMING | VV. 7-8

This particular illustration is of the ground and its crop. Israel as the vineyard had received the five blessings (above), yet the vegetation it had brought forth was "thorns and thistles." At the time of the writing of the epistle, Israel was then **nigh unto cursing**. When the land is burned, it is the vegetation that is destroyed, not the land itself, which remains to give another (and healthier) crop in a future day.