

Let Us Go On

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FOREWORD

There is a logical progression in thought as one moves through the five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews. And all the warnings are directed to Christians alone, centering around the same subject matter — Christians either realizing or failing to realize the salvation of their souls/lives, synonymous with Christians either realizing or failing to realize the rights of the firstborn; and this salvation has to do strictly with the position which Christians will occupy in the coming Messianic Era (Heb. 6:12, 18-20; 10:36-39; cf. James 1:21; I Peter 1:9).

In the first warning, the salvation set before Christians is called, *so great salvation*, and is specifically stated later in the epistle to be “the saving of the soul.” This is the greatest thing God could ever design for redeemed man, for it centers around man being removed from the earth, placed in the heavens, and occupying the throne as co-heir with the “heir of all things” (Heb. 1:2-2:5; 10:39; cf. 3:1).

Then the second warning outlines the route which one must travel during his pilgrim journey if he would one day come into a realization of *so great salvation*. The route is *from Egypt to Canaan*.

Spiritual lessons are drawn from the historic account of the Israelites under Moses, forming the type. And these spiritual lessons are seen in the antitype surrounding the experiences of Christians under Christ. The Israelites under Moses had been called out of Egypt and were being led toward an earthly land, wherein their calling was ultimately to have been realized. And Christians under Christ have been called out of the world and are being led toward a heavenly land, wherein their calling is ultimately to be realized.

With these things in mind, the third warning then continues with one major overriding thought: *Let Us Go On!* (6:1). The thought has to do with moving from immaturity to maturity; and this maturity, contextually, centers around Christians coming into a knowledge and understanding of the things surrounding the land set before them, for a revealed purpose.

In other words, *so great salvation* has been set before Christians (warning one), and *the route* which Christians must travel to realize this

salvation has been well marked (warning two); then, with these things as an established background, the writer exhorts Christians *to go on* unto a mature knowledge and understanding of those truths which God has revealed concerning the land set before them (warning three).

Entering into that land and realizing the rights of the firstborn therein is the goal of the Christians' calling. And pressing toward this goal or any goal apart from knowing and understanding certain things about the goal, or things which may lie in the pathway preventing one from reaching the goal, would be *unheard of*.

This is easy to see from the manner in which Christians are commanded to array themselves for the spiritual warfare in Eph. 6:11ff, for they cannot properly array themselves apart from a *knowledge and understanding* of that which lies out ahead.

The "helmet of salvation," for example, is identified as the "hope of salvation" (*cf.* Eph. 6:17; I Thess. 5:8); and the "hope of salvation" has to do, not with the salvation which Christians presently possess, but with the salvation of the soul (Heb. 6:12, 18, 19; 10:36-39), which is the central message of the Book of Hebrews.

The "helmet of salvation" cannot be possessed apart from a "hope" based on *knowledge and understanding*. But it is only one part of the armor, and the possession of other parts of the armor require a similar *knowledge and understanding* surrounding the goal of the Christians' calling. And, apart from being properly arrayed for battle after the fashion revealed in Eph. 6:11ff, Christians will suffer defeat time after time and ultimately fail to realize the goal of their calling.

Drawing from the previous two warnings in order to understand the third is the progressive manner in which the things in this book, LET US GO ON, have been structured; and this is also the progressive manner in which any correct exposition of Hebrews, chapters five and six must be viewed.

Scripture must be understood in the light of Scripture. There is first *the near context*, and there is then *the far context*. The near context, in this case, takes one back to the previous two warnings; and the far context takes one to the various other related points in Scripture throughout both the Old and New Testaments. One must compare "spiritual things with spiritual" if he would come into a correct knowledge and understanding of the things which God has revealed to man in His Word (I Cor. 2:9-13).

1

From Aaron to Melchizedek

For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, today have I begotten thee. As he said in another place, Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 5:1-6).

Aaron was a minister in the sanctuary during that period when the children of Israel, under Moses, traversed the wilderness on their pilgrim journey from Egypt to Canaan. These Israelites constituted a nation which had experienced death (via a substitute) in Egypt, burial on the western banks of the Red Sea in Egypt, and resurrection on the eastern banks of the Sea in the wilderness. The *first* had been set aside and the *second* established (Heb. 10:9); and this nation, under Moses, passed through these experiences for *one central purpose*. This nation was to be established within a theocracy in the land of Canaan as God's firstborn son; and, occupying this position, the Gentile nations of the earth were to be both subject to and blessed through Israel.

God had previously made certain promises to Abraham, and He had established a covenant with Abraham concerning the land wherein these promises were to be realized. Before Abraham ever left Ur of the

Chaldees, God revealed His plans and purposes in relation to Abraham, his progeny, and the Gentile nations of the earth. Then, once Abraham had left Ur and entered into the land of Canaan, God established a covenant with him concerning the land itself (Gen. 12:1-3; 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:7, 8).

Within God's plans and purposes, a nation, separate and distinct from the Gentile nations, was to be brought into existence through Abraham. The descendants of Abraham (through Isaac and Jacob [Gen. 17:18, 19; 21:12; 27:29]), comprising this separate and distinct nation, would come under God's *direct blessing*; but such would not be the case with any Gentile nation. The Gentile nations of the earth were to be blessed *only through* the nation emanating from the loins of Abraham, the nation of Israel.

And these blessings were to be realized by and through Israel *only* as this nation dwelled in a particular land — the land of Canaan, to which Abraham had been called when he left Ur. God, through an unconditional and everlasting covenant gave this land to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 13:14-17; 15:18-21; 17:7, 8; 26:3, 4; 28:13, 14); and the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob has held (and continues to hold today) the title deed to this land for one central purpose, recorded in Gen. 12:1-3.

Then, in keeping with Gen. 9:26, 27 (*cf.* Zech. 14:21), the Gentile nations being blessed through Israel were also to be subject to Israel. Israel was to be placed at the head of the nations (*cf.* Gen. 22:17, 18; Ex. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 28:1), within a theocracy. God Himself was to dwell in the midst of His people (*cf.* Ex. 40:34-38; Lev. 26:11, 12; Joel 2:27-32), blessings were to be poured out on the people of Israel (Deut. 28:2-14), and these blessings were to flow through Israel to the nations of the earth (Gen. 12:3). That is, the nations of the earth were to be subject to Israel — God's firstborn son, a kingdom of priests — and, in this manner, be blessed through Israel.

This is how it was to have been under the old covenant during the days of Moses, and later Joshua; and this is how it one day will be when God makes a new covenant with the house of Israel during the days of the Son of Man.

During Moses' day, Aaron was a minister in the sanctuary on behalf of a people who had been redeemed from Egypt for the purpose

at hand. This was an *earthly* sanctuary, and the purpose at hand was *earthly*. The Israelites had been redeemed and called out from one part of the earth to occupy a particular position in another part of the earth, within a theocracy.

In the antitype, Christ is presently ministering in a *heavenly* sanctuary (after which the earthly was patterned), and He is ministering on behalf of a people who have been redeemed from the present world for a particular purpose. Christians are presently being called out from this world to one day occupy positions in *heavenly places* (paralleling Israel's earthly calling in a type-antitype framework [called to be "kings and priests," "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people"]), within a theocracy (I Peter 2:9; Rev. 5:10; cf. Ex. 19:5, 6).

And Christ, ministering in the heavenly sanctuary today, is ministering *after the order of Aaron*. He is ministering on the basis of shed blood on behalf of a redeemed people removed from this world for a purpose, paralleling Israel's removal from Egypt for a purpose.

The Melchizedek priesthood though is an entirely different matter and comes into view at a later point in time. Melchizedek was a king-priest in Jerusalem, not a minister in the sanctuary as Aaron in the past or as Christ during the present time. There's nothing recorded in Scripture about Melchizedek in connection with a sanctuary and shed blood. This was the type ministry Aaron occupied, not Melchizedek. And this is exactly the same type ministry Christ presently occupies.

Thus, to associate the present high priestly ministry of Christ with the Melchizedek priesthood is not correct at all. Christ though is *presently* a priest "after the order of Melchizedek," but only in the same sense that Christ was also *born* "King of the Jews" (cf. Matt. 2:2; Heb. 6:19, 20). Christ has yet to enter into either position; and both will be realized in that coming day when Christ comes forth as "King" in the day of His power. Or, to state matters another way, both will be realized in that coming day when Christ comes forth as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek.

The latter part of Hebrews, chapter four deals with Christ's present ministry in the sanctuary (patterned after the order of Aaron); but Hebrews, chapter five is transitional. Chapter five moves the

reader from Christ's present ministry in the sanctuary to that future time when He comes forth from the sanctuary and assumes a different type ministry. This chapter moves one from the antitype of Aaron (present) to the antitype of Melchizedek (future).

THE DEATH OF THE PRIEST

In Numbers, chapter thirty-five there is the account of God instructing the children of Israel to set aside six cities to be "cities for refuge." And within this account one will find central truths surrounding that future time — which we find in Hebrews, chapter five — when the present high priestly ministry of Christ, *after the order of Aaron*, is concluded and Christ comes forth from the sanctuary as the great King-Priest, *after the order of Melchizedek*.

Three of the cities of refuge were to be on the east side of Jordan, and the three remaining were to be on the west side of Jordan (Num. 35:14). The three cities on the east side of Jordan were selected by Moses prior to his death and the subsequent entrance of the Israelites into the land of Canaan (Deut. 4:41-43); and the three cities on the west side of Jordan were selected by the children of Israel under the leadership of Joshua following their entrance into the land (Joshua 20:1-7).

These cities were set aside to provide a sanctuary for any man who killed another man through an unpremeditated act. The Divine decree given to Noah and his sons following the Flood required the death of the slayer at the hands of man: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man" (Gen. 9:6). And God's injunction concerning capital punishment for a capital crime was later reiterated to Moses and is part of the Mosaic Economy as well (Ex. 20:13; 21:12).

The command concerning capital punishment for a capital crime was thus given to Noah and his sons 900 years before it was delivered to the children of Israel under Moses. Consequently, man not being under the Mosaic Economy today has nothing to do with the validity or nonvalidity of capital punishment for a capital crime, for not only does the Biblical origin of this injunction precede the giving of the law through Moses but the command given to Noah and his sons (approx.

2,300 B.C.) has never been repealed.

Although capital punishment for a capital offense has never been repealed, provision was later made for a man who killed another man unintentionally. This was the Divinely established purpose for setting aside the six cities of refuge (*cf.* Ex. 21:12, 13). These cities were to be located at points where at least one city would be easily accessible to any Israelite living in the land of Canaan. And should one Israelite kill another Israelite through accidental means — unintentionally — he could flee to the nearest city of refuge and be provided a sanctuary.

It fell the lot of the near kinsman of the person slain to fulfill God's injunction concerning capital punishment for a capital crime. The near kinsman was to confront the slayer and, in turn, slay him. God's requirement in the matter was *blood for blood* (Num. 35:16-21; *cf.* Deut. 19:21).

God's previous instructions to Noah and his sons remained *unchanged* within the framework of God's instructions to Moses. Something though was added to these instructions within the Mosaic Economy. Provision was made for the person guilty of accidental, unpremeditated murder. And once the Israelite guilty of such an act had taken advantage of that provision — once the slayer had fled to and was inside the walls of one of the six designated cities of refuge — the near kinsman, so long as the slayer remained in this place, couldn't touch him.

Any individual though who fled to one of the cities of refuge must, at a later date, be returned to the area where the slaying occurred and stand before a judicial court; and at least two witnesses were required to testify against the man.

If he was found to be guilty of wilful murder, he would no longer be granted sanctuary in a city of refuge. Rather, he would be turned over to the near kinsman to be slain; and the near kinsman, slaying the man, would not be guilty of blood himself. But if he, on the other hand, was found to be guilty only of involuntary manslaughter, he would be returned to the safety of the city of refuge to which he had previously fled (Num. 35:22-28).

Then there is the matter of a *ransom* for the life of the one found to be guilty only of involuntary manslaughter. No ransom though was provided for the life of a person guilty of wilful, voluntary manslaughter-

ter. Rather, he was to forfeit his own life (*blood for blood*). The ransom was a provision *solely* for the one committing involuntary manslaughter. But there was a stipulation: *The ransom could not be used until the death of the high priest* (Num. 35:28, 32).

Once the high priest in the camp of Israel had died and the ransom had been used, the individual previously found to be guilty only of involuntary manslaughter was then free to leave the particular city of refuge where he had been provided a sanctuary and return to the land of his possession. And once this had occurred, the near kinsman no longer had any claim on the individual.

1. ISRAEL, THE SLAYER

In the Old Testament (in the type) it was *individual Israelites* who found themselves guilty of manslaughter (voluntary or involuntary) and, consequently, in a position where they would either be slain or be granted protection in a city of refuge. Today (in the antitype) it is *the entire nation of Israel* which finds itself guilty of manslaughter and in a position to either be slain or be granted protection.

The nation of Israel is guilty of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. The paschal lamb was given to Israel, and *only Israel* could slay this lamb (Ex. 12:1ff). Jesus was the Paschal Lamb (I Cor. 5:7), to Whom all the sacrificial lambs in the Old Testament pointed; and *only Israel* could have slain Jesus, which is exactly what, according to Scripture, occurred (Acts 2:23, 36; 3:12-15).

But how is Israel's act to be reckoned? Was it a premeditated act? or was it an unpremeditated act?

If it was a premeditated act, the nation would have to be cut off. No ransom could be provided (it would have to be *blood for blood*; the nation would have to pay with its own life); nor, if a premeditated act, could the nation *ever* be allowed to return to the land of her possession (which would mean, in the final analysis, that God's promises to Abraham, beginning with Gen. 12:1-3, could *never* be realized).

However, if Jesus was delivered into Israel's hands after a manner which would allow the nation's act of crucifying her Messiah to be looked upon as *unpremeditated murder* — *i.e.*, allow the nation's act to be looked upon as having been done through *ignorance* — then Israel could be granted protection and a ransom could be provided. And

beyond that, the ransom could one day be used by the nation, at which time Israel would be free to return to the land of her possession (allowing God's promises to Abraham, beginning with Gen. 12:1-3, to be fulfilled).

The Biblical testimony concerning the manner in which the nation's act must be viewed was given by Jesus Himself at Golgotha; and the same testimony was later provided by Peter, following the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Christ.

Note the words of Jesus: "...Father, forgive them; *for they know not what they do*" (Luke 23:34a). Then note the words of Peter: "Ye men of Israel...ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead...And now, brethren, I wot that *through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers*" (Acts 3:12, 14, 15, 17).

Thus, Jesus was delivered into the hands of Israel (*cf.* Ex. 21:13; Acts 2:23) after a manner which not only allowed the Jewish people to act after the described fashion but also prevented them from acting after any other fashion as well. Consequently, Israel is to be granted protection, a ransom will be provided, and the nation will be free to return to the land of her possession *after the death of the high priest* — at which time all of God's promises to Abraham, beginning with Gen. 12:1-3, will be fulfilled.

2. THE HIGH PRIEST AND THE RANSOM

The word *ransom* (Num. 35:31, 32 [translated "satisfaction," KJV]) is from a cognate form of the word for "atonement" in the Hebrew text. The underlying thought behind "atonement" is *to cover*; and that is the same thought expressed by the "ransom" in Numbers, chapter thirty-five. The ransom provided a *covering* — a covering from view, a putting away, a blotting out — of the previous capital act (an unpremeditated act). And once the ransom had been used, which could be only *after* the death of the high priest, the whole matter was *put away*. The person was then free to return to the land of his possession; and the near kinsman of the one slain could no longer have any claim on him whatsoever, for the matter had been *put away* and could never be brought up again.

The ransom for Israel's capital offense has already been paid.

Jesus paid this ransom at Calvary. However, although atonement for Israel's sin has already been paid, the nation — presently blinded, in part — cannot avail herself of the atonement or return to the land of her possession *until* the death of the high priest.

In the camp of Israel there was only one high priest at any one time. At the time of the high priest's death, he was succeeded by another from the Aaronic line; and the high priestly ministry in the Aaronic line continued in this manner, after this fashion.

Aaron ministered in the sanctuary in the earthly tabernacle, with blood, on behalf of the people. Jesus, on the other hand, is presently ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, with blood, on behalf of the people. And, as evident from Hebrews, chapter five, along with other related Scripture, the Lord's present ministry after the order of Aaron *will not* continue indefinitely. There is coming a day when this ministry will end, and that day, along with events which will occur relative to Israel in that day, was typified by the death of the high priest in the camp of Israel and events which occurred relative to the slayer when the high priest died.

It will be in that day — not before — that Israel will have her national Passover (the nation will avail herself of the ransom which has already been paid) and be free to return to the land of her possession. So long as Christ occupies His present position in the heavenly sanctuary, Israel cannot avail herself of the paid ransom and return to this land. Israel must remain in her present condition (described in Rom. 11:25) throughout the present dispensation; and, according to related Scripture, Israel will not be removed from this condition until a few years beyond the present dispensation, at the end of the age, the end of the Tribulation.

Israel, as the two disciples on the Emmaus road in Luke 24:13ff, must continue in a blinded condition until the resurrected Christ, by His personal presence at His second coming, opens the Old Testament Scriptures to their understanding (*cf.* vv. 16, 25-27, 31).

Israel's eyes will be opened, and a nation will be born in a day through Israel availing herself of the paid ransom (*i.e.*, a nation will be born in a day through Israel having her national Passover in fulfillment of Ex. 12:7). And this will occur *only after* Christ terminates His present ministry, departs the heavenly sanctuary, and comes forth as

the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek. Christ *must* personally be in Israel's presence, here on earth, at the time the nation avails herself of the ransom which He has already paid (*cf.* Zech. 12:10-13:6; Rev. 1:7).

(Note that Christ will terminate His present ministry in the sanctuary at the end of the present dispensation, when the Church is removed into the heavens, preceding the Tribulation. However, He will not come forth as the great King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek, appearing to Israel after this fashion, until the end of the age, the end of the Tribulation.)

Only then can Israel be cleansed of her present defilement wrought through prior contact with the dead body of the Lord Jesus Christ (*cf.* Num. 19:1ff); *only then* will Israel be free to return to the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, realizing her calling in this land; and *only then* will God's promised blessings flow out through this nation to the Gentile nations of the earth after the fashion which God intended when He called Israel into existence.

(A knowledge of the preceding facts reveal not only truths surrounding Christ's present and future ministries but also truths surrounding Israel's present and future status as a nation in the Middle East. Christ is still in the heavenly sanctuary, the antitype of the death of the high priest has yet to occur, and, consequently, Israel *must* remain in unbelief and *cannot* return to the land of her possession during the present day and time.

To equate the present restoration of a remnant of the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob to the land of Israel with the fulfillment of any Old Testament prophecies dealing with Israel's restoration to this land [such as the prophecy of the valley of dry bones in Ezek. 37] is to ignore the fact that Israel is the slayer. *And this is a Biblical fact which cannot be ignored.*

The present restoration of a remnant to the land has *nothing whatsoever* to do with the fulfillment of any one of the numerous Old Testament prophecies concerning Israel's restoration. It can't! The fulfillment [after any fashion] of such promises today, from a Biblical perspective, is *impossible*, for Christ is still ministering after the order of Aaron in the heavenly sanctuary.

However, a remnant must be present in the land immediately preceding the end of the age for certain prophecies surrounding Israel and the nations to be fulfilled, though the existence of this remnant has nothing to do with Old Testament prophecies surrounding Israel's restoration being fulfilled. Thus, the existence of the nation of Israel [consisting of several million Jews] in the land today is neither the beginning of nor a partial fulfillment of any Old Testament prophecy concerning the matter. It is simply the existence of an end-time remnant which must be present in the land in order to bring about the fulfillment of numerous Old Testament prophecies surrounding Israel and the nations immediately preceding Christ's return.

The remnant in the land today is the remnant which will make the seven-year covenant with Antichrist. And this remnant will, in turn, later be uprooted from the land [something which will *never* occur after the Jewish people have been regathered in fulfillment of O.T. prophecy (cf. Isa. 2:1-4; Jer. 32:37-44; Ezek. 37:19-28; 39:25-29; Joel 2:27-32)].

In the middle of the Tribulation, when Antichrist breaks his covenant, the nation of Israel, as we know it today, will be uprooted; and the Jews dwelling in the land will either be slain or sold as slaves throughout the Gentile world [cf. Joel 3:6; Luke 21:20-24; Rev. 11:2].

During the last half of the Tribulation there will be no Jewish nation in the Middle East. Rather, Jerusalem, the capital of Jewry, will be "trodden down of the Gentiles" until the full end of Daniel's Seventy-Week prophecy, which marks the end of "the times of the Gentiles" [cf. Dan. 9:24-27; Luke 21:24; Rev. 11:2].

During this time, the entire world — particularly the center of Antichrist's kingdom in the Middle East [including the land of Israel as we know it today] — will become like Nazi Germany during the final six years of the Third Reich [1939-1945]. And when the holocaust of that coming day reaches its darkest hour, Messiah will return, and He Himself will effect the prophesied regathering of the nation [Matt. 24:15-31; Luke 21:20-27]. *Christ must return first. Only then can Israel return.*)

MY SON, A PRIEST

There are two quotations from the Old Testament in Heb. 5:5, 6, and both are Messianic in their scope of fulfillment. There is first the quotation from Psa. 2:7, "Thou art my son, today have I begotten thee"

(v. 5); and then there is the quotation from Psa. 110:4, “Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek” (v. 6).

These two quotations are used together, *referring to one and the same time*. They refer to that time in the second Psalm when God states, “Yet have I set my King upon my holy hill of Zion” (v. 6), and to that time in the one hundred tenth Psalm when God states, “The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies” (v. 2).

Both quotations in Hebrews are from Messianic passages in the Old Testament, leaving no room to question the time of their fulfillment. “Zion” is *Jerusalem* (Psa. 76:2; 126:1; Isa. 1:26, 27), and the Old Testament quotations in Heb. 5:5, 6 simply refer to that future day when Christ will exercise His kingly office in this city, on the earth.

1. PSALM 2:7

Psalm 2:7 is quoted three places in the New Testament. It is quoted by Luke in Acts 13:33, and it is quoted twice by the writer of Hebrews (1:5; 5:5).

The words, “Thou art my Son,” form an allusion to II Sam. 7:14 in the Davidic covenant: “I will be his father, and he shall be my son...”

And to view the second Psalm from the perspective of the Davidic covenant, this Psalm reveals the fulfillment of God’s threefold promise to David in II Sam. 7:12, 13: 1) David was to have a Son (v. 12), 2) David’s Son was to sit on his throne (vv. 12, 13), and 3) the kingdom, under this Son’s reign, was to be established forever (v. 13).

Accordingly, God’s promise to David, rather than being fulfilled through his son, Solomon, finds its fulfillment through his greater Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the One to Whom God will give “the *throne* of his father David”; He is the One Who will “*reign* over the house of Jacob forever”; and He is the One Who will possess a *kingdom* of which “there shall be no end” (Luke 1:31-33).

This is exactly what is in view in Acts 13:33, where Psa. 2:7 is quoted for the first time in the New Testament. Acts 13:34 goes on to state, “And as concerning that he raised him from the dead...” That is, concerning Jesus one day occupying the throne of David and reigning over the house of Jacob, fulfilling God’s promises in the Davidic covenant, God raised Him from the dead. And the same verse

concludes with the statement, “I will give you the sure mercies of David [*lit.*, ‘I will give you the holy things of David’ (which, contextually, can only be a reference to things surrounding the Davidic covenant)].”

Psalm 2:7 must likewise be looked upon as Messianic in its two usages in the Book of Hebrews. In the first chapter the verse comprises one of seven Messianic quotations which make up most of the chapter, and it is used here in connection with the parallel quotation from the Davidic covenant in II Sam. 7:14 (v. 5). And in the fifth chapter of Hebrews the verse is used in connection with that future time when Christ will come forth from the sanctuary and exercise the Melchizedek priesthood (vv. 5, 6).

2. PSALM 110:4

Melchizedek is mentioned eleven times in Scripture — two times in the Old Testament (Gen. 14:18; Psa. 110:4) and nine times in the Book of Hebrews (chs. 5-7). And the manner in which Melchizedek is presented in the Old Testament will govern the manner in which he *must* be viewed in the Book of Hebrews.

Melchizedek first appears in Scripture when Abraham was returning from the battle of the kings (Gen. 14:18, 19). Melchizedek was “king of Salem [‘king of Jerusalem’ (Psa. 76:2)]” and “priest of the most high God” (v. 18). Thus, he was a king-priest in Jerusalem.

Meeting Abraham, following the battle of the kings, he brought forth bread and wine and blessed Abraham, saying, “Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of *heaven* and *earth*” (vv. 18, 19).

It is evident that Melchizedek’s actions in the type during the days of Abraham were Messianic in their scope of fulfillment in the antitype. Immediately prior to Christ’s death at Calvary, He partook of the Passover with His disciples (Matt. 26:19ff). And at the end of the Passover feast — after Jesus had participated with His disciples in the breaking of bread and drinking from the cup, along with His instructions to them concerning both (vv. 26-28) — Jesus said, “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom” (v. 29).

This could only be an allusion to one thing — that future day when

Christ will come forth in the antitype of Melchizedek as he is presented in Gen. 14:18, 19, with bread and wine to bless Abraham and his descendants, both *heavenly* and *earthly* (cf. Gen. 22:17, 18). And this is an event which will occur following the battle of the kings (cf. Rev. 19:17-21).

The one hundred tenth Psalm, where Melchizedek is referred to the only other time in the entire Old Testament, as previously seen, is also Messianic in its scope of fulfillment. It must be, for this is the way Melchizedek is presented in Genesis, and there can be no change when one comes to the Book of Psalms.

The Son is told to sit on the Father's right hand until such a time as His enemies are made His "footstool" (v. 1). Then, after His enemies have been made His footstool, He is going to *rule* "in the midst" of His enemies (v. 2). He is going to "strike through kings" and "judge among the heathen [Gentiles]" in that coming day of His "power" (vv. 3, 5, 6), a day when He will be revealed as the great King-Priest in Jerusalem, "after the order of Melchizedek" (v. 4).

Genesis 14 and Psa. 110 *must* be understood in the light of one another (actually, Psa. 110 draws from Gen. 14), and Heb. 5-7 *must* be understood in the light of both Old Testament references. Thus, all eleven references to Melchizedek in Scripture can only be looked upon after one fashion — *as Messianic in their scope of fulfillment.*

2

Author of Eternal Salvation

Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him (Heb. 5:7-9).

Christ, during what the writer of Hebrews calls, “the days of his flesh,” passed through certain human experiences. “Wisdom and stature,” in connection with Christ’s growth from childhood to manhood, were part of these experiences (Luke 2:52); testings, emotions, hunger, sufferings, and numerous other things which man experiences were, as well, things which Christ also experienced (Luke 4:1-13; 22:44; John 11:35; Heb. 4:15; 5:7, 8).

One thing above all else must be kept in mind when viewing these human experiences which Christ passed through. Christ’s deity, during His earthly ministry, cannot be separated from His humanity. That is, He, during this time, was not God and Man; rather, He was the God-Man. At no point, beginning with the incarnation, can one be separated from the other.

The question thus becomes, How could Christ increase “in wisdom and stature,” be “tempted,” learn “obedience,” or pass through certain other human experiences after a similar fashion if He was, at the same time, fully God? Or, to ask the question another way, How could Christ, being God Himself, and Omniscient, increase in or learn human traits and characteristics through becoming a member of the human race which He Himself had brought into existence?

After all, at the age of twelve, He entered into the temple in

Jerusalem and confounded the “doctors” with His wisdom and understanding of matters; and, at the same time, He exhibited knowledge of that which He must accomplish completely outside Joseph and Mary’s understanding of the matter (Luke 2:41-50). Then, on numerous occasions, He either exercised His deity or could have exercised it (Matt. 26:53; Mark 1:24-26; Luke 22:61; John 1:48; 11:25, 43, 44; 18:5, 6).

Probably the most graphic testimony which Scripture presents pertaining to the inseparability of Christ’s humanity from His deity surrounds the events of Calvary and the empty tomb.

It was *the blood of God* which was shed at Calvary, the same blood which is presently on the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies of the heavenly tabernacle today (*cf.* Acts 20:28; Heb. 9:11, 12). And *Jesus raised Himself from the dead*, restoring life to *the Temple of God* (John 2:18-21).

The day of the Passover, 30 A.D., was *the day God died*; and not only did *the Son raise Himself*, but *God the Father raised Him* (Rom. 10:9), and *the Spirit raised Him* (Rom. 8:11). This would have had to be the case, for an inseparable identification exists between the members of the Godhead.

Jesus, prior to His crucifixion, referred to His “body” as *the Temple of God* (John 2:21). There are two Greek words used for “temple” in the New Testament — *hieron* and *naos*. The former refers, not to the temple proper, but to the outer porches, porticoes, etc. It is the latter word which refers to the temple proper, with its innermost place, the Holy of Holies where God Himself dwelled among His people for over eight centuries during Old Testament days.

The Glory of the Lord (the manifestation of God among His people) though had departed from the Holy of Holies long before Christ was upon earth. It departed shortly after God allowed His people to be taken captive into Babylon (Ezek. 10:4, 18; 11:22, 23), about six centuries prior to Christ’s first appearance; and during the entire times of the Gentiles — though a temple was built following the Babylonian captivity (constructed during the days of Zerubbabel and rebuilt during the days of Herod), and another will be built during the days of Antichrist — there neither has been nor will be Deity within the Jewish temple. The Glory of the Lord will return to the temple *only*

after the times of the Gentiles has run its course, Christ returns, and the millennial temple has been brought into existence (Ezek. 43:2-5).

The Greek word used relative to the body of Christ being the Temple of God is *naos*, not *hieron*. That is, this was a structure in which Deity dwelled. Christ was “the Word,” Who “was God,” Who “was made flesh, and dwelt [*lit.*, ‘tabernacled’] among us” (John 1:1-3, 14).

(Different words are used in the Greek text for verbs translated the same in the English text of John 1:1-14. The verb used in vv. 1, 2 — “In the beginning was the Word...” — has no reference to a time of beginning or a time of ending. Also, there is no article before “beginning” [here or elsewhere] in the Greek text. The thought is simply, “In beginning [there are different beginnings in Scripture (for the earth, angels, man, etc.)] the Word existed without reference to a beginning or an ending [for the Word has neither]...” Then in v. 14 a different verb is used, which has reference to a definite time of beginning — “And the Word was made [*became*] flesh...” There was a point in time when the eternal Word “became flesh, and tabernacled among us,” though the incarnation wrought no change relative to the way in which the Word is presented prior to this time in vv. 1, 2. The Word was just as much fully God following the incarnation as before the incarnation.)

Thus, the true Tabernacle or Temple in Israel during the days Christ was upon earth was not the earthly structure on the Temple Mount (though Christ referred to this structure as, “My house” [Matt. 21:13]) but “the Word” *Who became flesh and tabernacled among His people*. It was this individual — God Himself, tabernacling among His people — that the priests of the earthly tabernacle (the tabernacle which no longer housed Deity) reviled, mistreated, and turned over to Pilate to be crucified (Matt. 26:59ff).

A verse often misunderstood, though one of the clearest and strongest verses in Scripture relative to Christ’s deity, is Mark 13:32: “But of that day and that hour [the time of Christ’s return] knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

Seemingly, the way the text is structured, Christ separated Himself from the Father and stated that He, like fallen man, did not know certain things which the Father *alone* knew. However, such was not

the case at all.

The text clearly states that the Father *alone* had knowledge of the things involved, but the simple fact of the matter is that the Father and Son were “one” (John 10:30 [cf. v. 33]; 14:9). The Son, thus, had to, of necessity, possess the same knowledge, for He was then, and remains today, *God of very God* (cf. Col. 1:9).

The problem lies in the English translation of Mark 13:32, and a proper translation will not only reveal that the Son of Man was the God-Man but it will also reveal the inseparability of his humanity from His deity. The *Son of Man* was, and remains today, *fully God* as well as *fully Man*.

The word “but” in the latter part of Mark 13:32 is a translation of the Greek words, *ei me*. Literally translated, these two words mean, “if not,” or “except.” What Jesus said was that He couldn’t know “that day and that hour” *if He were not the Father*, for the Father *alone* knew.

Archbishop Trench, one of the great authorities from a past generation on word studies in the Greek text, translated this verse, “If I were not God as well as Man, even I would not know the day nor the hour.” And this appears to capture the exact thought of the passage about as well as any English translation, for not only is the translation true to the text but it is true to the testimony of the whole of Scripture.

Thus, returning to the human experiences which Christ passed through, one thing above all else must be kept in mind: At no point in Christ’s earthly existence — from the incarnation to the ascension — can His deity be separated from His humanity. He was the God-Man. He was just as much fully God as He was fully Man; and from the point of the incarnation forward the matter is as stated in Heb. 13:8, “*Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.*”

Consequently, not only must the passages in Luke 2:52 and Heb. 4:15; 5:7-9 be understood in this light but any part of Scripture touching on Christ’s humanity must be understood after the same fashion.

SUFFERINGS, DEATH

During events surrounding Christ’s crucifixion, He suffered like no other man could possibly suffer, for, along with His *physical*

sufferings, He suffered from a *spiritual* standpoint after a fashion which it was impossible for anyone else to suffer. And the latter sufferings, according to Scripture, were far worse than the former.

1. PHYSICAL SUFFERINGS

Insofar as His physical sufferings were concerned, the Prophet Isaiah, over seven centuries before this time, stated, "...his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Isa. 52:14).

He was spat upon and beaten by the Jewish religious leaders; then He was turned over to Pilate, who, after dealing with Him a second time, had Him "scourged" and "delivered" into the hands of his soldiers to be crucified; and the Roman soldiers, following His scourging, arrayed Him as a pseudo King and repeatedly mocked Him, spat on Him, and struck Him on the head with what was apparently a hard bamboo-like reed (Matt. 26:67; 27:26-31).

A literal rendering of Isa. 52:14 would reveal that His physical appearance would be so altered by the time He was placed on the Cross that it would appear to actually not be that of a man; and the same verse states that because of His mutilated physical appearance *many* would be "astonished" when they looked upon the One about to be crucified.

Actually, Isa. 52:14 is set between two sections of Scripture dealing with that future day when Christ rules and reigns over the earth (vv. 1-13, 15). Verses one through thirteen introduce the subject (His coming day of glory and exaltation), verse fourteen moves the reader back 2,000 years in time (referring to His suffering and humiliation), and then verse fifteen moves the reader forward once again to that time introduced in verses one through thirteen.

A parallel is shown between that which would occur at the two advents of Christ. *The degree of His suffering and humiliation* would parallel, in an opposite sense, *the degree of His glory and exaltation*. This is why the writer of Hebrews could state, "...who for the joy that was set before him [the day when He would rule and reign over the earth]" Christ "endured the cross, despising the shame..." (Heb. 12:2).

In that coming day the same scenes which witnessed His suffering and humiliation are going to witness His glory and exaltation. He is

going to be “exalted,” “judge among the nations,” and “rebuke many people” (Isa. 2:2-4; 52:13). And “kings shall shut their mouths at him” and see and hear things which they had neither “been told” nor “considered” (Isa. 52:15).

Those who look upon Him in that coming day will once again be “astonished,” though after a different fashion, for His coming glory and exaltation *must*, in an opposite sense, parallel His past suffering and humiliation. And, as *His physical appearance* resulted in the people being astonished in the past, so will *His physical appearance* result in the people being astonished in that future day.

In the past Christ appeared apart from His Glory. He possessed a body like unto the body which man possesses today, void of the covering of Glory in which man was enswathed prior to the fall. It was in this body that He suffered, bled, and died; it was in this body that the very God of the universe, in the person of His Son, appeared in humiliation and shame on behalf of sinful man; and it was in this body, in the person of His Son, that God Himself was so beaten that people looked upon Him in astonishment.

But in that coming day matters will be just the opposite. Though Christ will return in the same body which He has possessed since the incarnation, it will no longer be void of the covering of Glory. Nor will He return as the *suffering* “Lamb of God.” All of this will be past. In that coming day He will return as the *conquering* “Lion of the tribe of Judah.” And when men see Him in that day, they will look upon One Whose “countenance” is “as the sun shineth in his strength” (*cf.* Rev. 1:16; 19:11ff). And man will once again be *astonished*.

2. SPIRITUAL SUFFERINGS

Christ’s spiritual sufferings began in the Garden, continued with His being arrayed as a pseudo King (twice [first by Herod, then by the Roman soldiers]), and terminated with the Father turning away from the Son while He hung upon the Cross.

In the Garden, anticipating that which lay ahead, Christ requested three times of the Father that “this cup” might pass from Him; but the prayer was always followed by the statement, “Nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt” (Matt. 26:39, 42, 44).

The “cup” which Jesus had to drink should be understood in the

light of His present spiritual sufferings. Drinking this cup could have no reference to the events of Calvary per se, for Jesus — in view of the purpose for man's creation in the beginning and the necessity for redemption's price being paid — could never have made such a request. But the sufferings which Jesus began to endure in the Garden, anticipating the events of Calvary, were another matter.

Jesus requested of the Father that these sufferings be allowed to pass, but such was not to be. And, resultingly, Jesus "being in an agony...prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44).

Then, shortly thereafter, following Jesus being delivered to Pilate by the Jewish religious leaders, the nation of Israel sank to a new low. Pilate, after interrogating Jesus, sending Him to Herod, and having Him returned by Herod, sought to release Jesus; but the Jewish religious leaders persuaded the multitude to ask for the release of Barabbas (an insurrectionist, robber, and murderer) instead and insist on Jesus' crucifixion. Pilate, seeing that "he could prevail nothing," finally "gave sentence that it should be as they required." He released Barabbas and had Jesus scourged. And following the scourging the Roman soldiers arrayed Jesus as a pseudo King, which, along with the humiliation, involved further beatings.

Then Pilate, making one last attempt to save Jesus from crucifixion, brought Him forth in the mutilated condition described in Isa. 52:14 and presented Him to "the chief priests and the rulers and the people" with the words, "Behold your King!" But the Jewish people who were present would still have nothing to do with Christ. They cried out to Pilate, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him." Then, in response to Pilate's question, "Shall I crucify your King?," the chief priests climaxed the whole matter by stating, "We have no king but Caesar." Jesus was then led away to be crucified (Matt. 27:15-31; Mark 15:7-20; Luke 23:13-26; John 18:39-19:16).

It was through all this, preceding the Cross, that Jesus not only suffered physically but spiritually as well. The Jewish religious leaders had persuaded the people to ask for the release of a notorious imprisoned criminal rather than Israel's King; then Christ was again arrayed and mocked as a pseudo King. He had previously been arrayed, treated with contempt, and mocked in Herod's presence; but

this time, following His arrayal, Christ was not only repeatedly mocked but He was also repeatedly spat upon and beaten.

And to bring the whole matter to a close, preceding the crucifixion (where mocking and expressions of contempt continued with Christ hanging on the Cross [Mark 15:24-32]), the Jewish religious leaders echoed the ultimate insult when Pilate brought Jesus forth to them. They not only rejected their true King, calling for His crucifixion, but *they pledged allegiance to a pagan Gentile king* (cf. Mark 15:16-20; Luke 23:6-11).

(The Jewish religious leaders, through this act, placed the nation of Israel in a position diametrically opposed to the reason for the nation's very existence. Israel had been called into existence — as God's firstborn son — to be the ruling nation on earth, within a theocracy. Israel was to be the nation through whom God would rule and bless all the Gentile nations [cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 22:17, 18; Ex. 4:22, 23; 19:5, 6; Deut. 7:6].

However, the religious leaders in Israel had placed the nation in subjection to a pagan Gentile power, rejecting their true King and, in His stead, claiming allegiance to a pagan Gentile king. Such an act not only removed the One Who must reside in Israel's midst at the time these blessings would be realized [cf. Joel 2:27-32; Acts 2:16-21; 3:14, 15, 19-23; 7:54-56] — affixing Him to the Cross rather than seeing Him seated on the Throne — but it also placed both nations in completely opposite positions from the respective positions which they were to occupy for their well-being in God's plans and purposes, proving detrimental to both nations.)

Then at Calvary there was both a climax and conclusion to Christ's physical and spiritual sufferings. He had already been physically beaten to the point that those who looked upon Him were astonished, but now He must suffer something far worse. He must now suffer after an entirely different fashion. He must now take upon Himself the sins of the world, and He must perform this act *alone*.

Christ took upon Himself the sins of the world during the last three of the six hours He hung on the Cross. God caused darkness to envelop all the land, and He then turned away from His Son while redemption's price was being paid. And this resulted in the cry from the Cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt.

27:45, 46).

(Though the Father turned from the Son at this point, leaving the Son to act *alone*, the Son remained just as much fully God as He had always been and would always be; and, resultingly, it was *the blood of God* which was shed at Calvary.)

But at the end of those three hours it was all over. The Son's work of redemption had been accomplished. God had "laid on him the iniquity of us all" (Isa. 53:6); and the Son could then cry out, "It is finished [*lit.*, 'It has been finished']" (John 19:30).

And that is the way matters stand today. Because of the Son's finished work, a finished salvation is available for fallen man. God's Son has paid the price, and all man has to do — *all he can do* — is receive that which has already been accomplished on his behalf. A *Barabbas* can be set free, for the *Just One* has died in his stead.

(The same perfect tense is used in the Greek text relative to both *Christ's finished work* and *man's salvation*. The perfect tense refers to action completed in past time with the results of that action existing during present time in a finished state. This is the tense used in John 19:30, recording Christ's cry from the Cross, "It has been finished"; and this is the tense used in Eph. 2:8, referring to man's salvation by grace through faith: "For by grace are ye saved [*lit.*, 'you have been saved'] through faith...")

Both acts involve, in their entirety, Divinely finished work; the latter work [man's salvation] is based on the former [Christ's work at Calvary]; and insofar as the state of redeemed man is concerned, one work is just as *finished*, *complete*, and *secure* as the other. Refer to the author's books, SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH [pp. 13-15], JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST [pp. 5-7], SALVATION OF THE SOUL [pp. 5, 6].)

BEING MADE PERFECT

Through suffering (Heb. 4:15; 5:7, 8), Christ was brought to a position which Scripture calls, "being made perfect" (v. 9), something which the writer had already stated in an earlier passage in the book (2:10). This though was not perfection in the sense of the way the word is often used and understood today. Rather the word is used in this

passage referring to an “end result” or “goal” of that which is in view.

“Perfect” is the translation of the Greek word, *teleioo*, which means, “bring to an end,” “bring to its goal,” “bring to accomplishment.” Christ, by passing through these sufferings, as a Man, was brought into a position which He had not previously occupied.

In one sense of the word, Christ was brought into this position through learning obedience, resulting from sufferings which He experienced; but, in another sense of the word, such an act was impossible.

Hebrews 5:8 states that Christ *learned* “obedience by the things which he suffered.” However, John 7:15 states that Christ possessed knowledge about certain matters, “having never learned” (*cf.* v. 16). The Greek word translated “learned” is the same in both verses, the word *manthano*. But, the thought behind what is meant by learning in the two verses is not the same. It can’t be.

The Omniscient One has perfect knowledge apart from life’s experiences. But, on the other hand, Scripture states that the same Omniscient person learned through life’s experiences. How can one be reconciled with the other?

The learning is within the framework of Christ personally, as a *Man*, passing through the same experiences as man. He personally experienced, as a *Man*, that which man experiences. In the words of Heb. 4:14b, 15, “...let us hold fast our profession [‘confession’ (the confession of our hope)]. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted *like as we are*, yet without [‘apart from’] sin.”

However, this still leaves unaddressed the issue of how the Omniscient God, as Son, could learn obedience through suffering. But the answer to the matter is really very simple:

Christ learned through personal experience that which He already knew in the same sense that God learns through angelic “watchers” who report to Him at scheduled times that which He already knows (*cf.* Dan. 4:17, 23-25). Or, as in the case of the cities of the plain during Abraham’s day, God came down to see for Himself that which the watchers had previously told Him. This was something which He not only knew about before the matter was revealed by the watchers but also something which He didn’t need to see in order to know if the

matter was “altogether according to the cry of it” (Gen. 18:20, 21).

This is simply the way Scripture reveals God’s intervention in the affairs of man. He is, at times, revealed as learning, through personal intervention, that which He already knows.

As in the case of the cities of the plain, God is seen as personally coming down to view matters Himself before allowing the cities to be destroyed; and, in the person of His Son, *as a Man*, God has personally passed through certain experiences which man passes through, attributing to Himself the same qualities which man acquires by passing through these experiences.

And God has done this for revealed, related purposes, with one such purpose being revealed in Heb. 5:7-9. Through *learning* “obedience by the things which he suffered,” matters have been brought to a *goal*. Christ has become “the author [‘source’] of eternal salvation” unto all those who, in turn, “obey him,” which must, of necessity, also involve *suffering*.

It is suffering on His part and subsequent suffering on our part; and as the former resulted in learning obedience, so must the latter. As stated in I Peter 2:21, “...Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.”

ETERNAL SALVATION, OBEDIENCE

The word “eternal” in the English text is misleading. Those for whom Christ is the *source* of salvation (Christians) already possess eternal salvation; and, beyond that, this salvation was not acquired through obedience to Christ, as in the text. Rather, it was acquired through believing on the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:16).

Obedience to Christ, resulting from suffering, can come into view only *following* belief, never before. Only the saved have “passed from death unto life” and are in a position to suffer and subsequently obey. The unsaved are still “dead in trespasses and sins” (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1).

1. *ETERNAL*

The Greek language, from which our English versions have been translated, does not contain a word for “eternal.” A person using the

Greek language thinks in the sense of “ages”; and the way this language is normally used in the New Testament to express “eternal,” apart from textual considerations, is through the use of the Greek words *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, meaning, “unto [or, ‘with respect to’] the ages of the ages” (ref. Heb. 13:21; I Peter 4:11; Rev. 1:6; 4:9, 10 for several examples of places where these words are used, translated “forever and ever” in most versions).

Another less frequently used way to express “eternal” in the Greek New Testament, apart from textual considerations, is through the use of a shortened form of the preceding — *eis tous aionas*, meaning “unto [or, ‘with respect to’] the ages” (ref. Rom. 9:5; 11:36; II Cor. 11:31; Heb. 13:8 for several examples of places where these words are used, translated “forever” in most versions).

The word from the Greek text translated “eternal” in Heb. 5:9 is *aionios*. This is the adjective equivalent of the noun *aion*, referred to in the preceding paragraph in its plural form to express “eternal.” *Aion* means “an aeon [the word ‘aeon’ is derived from *aion*]” or “an era,” usually understood throughout the Greek New Testament as “an age.”

Aionios, the adjective equivalent of *aion*, is used seventy-one times in the Greek New Testament and has been indiscriminately translated “eternal” or “everlasting” in almost every instance in the various English versions. This word though should be understood about thirty of these seventy-one times in the sense of “age-lasting” rather than “eternal”; and the occurrence in Heb. 5:9 forms a case in point.

Several good examples of other places where *aionios* should be translated and understood as “age-lasting” are Gal. 6:8; I Tim. 6:12; Titus 1:2; 3:7. These passages have to do with running the present *race of the faith* in view of one day realizing an *inheritance in the kingdom*, which is the *hope* set before Christians.

On the other hand, *aionios* can be understood in the sense of “eternal” if the text so indicates. Several good examples of places where *aionios* should be so translated and understood are John 3:15, 16, 36. These passages have to do with life derived through faith in Christ because of His finished work at Calvary (cf. v. 14), and the only type life which can possibly be in view is “eternal life.”

Textual considerations must always be taken into account when

properly translating and understanding *aionios*, for this is a word which can be used to imply either “age-lasting” or “eternal”; and it is used both ways numerous times in the New Testament. Textual considerations in Heb. 5:9 leave no room to question exactly how *aionios* should be understood and translated in this verse. Life during the coming age, occupying a position as co-heir with Christ in that coming day, is what the Book of Hebrews is about.

2. SUFFERING, REIGNING

Suffering with or on behalf of Christ must precede reigning with Christ. The latter cannot be realized apart from the former. Such suffering is inseparably linked with obedience; and the text clearly states that Christ is the *source* of that future salvation “unto all them that [presently] obey him,” in the same respect that Christ is the *source* of presently possessed eternal salvation for all those who have (in the past) “believed” on Him.

I Peter 1:11, relative to the saving of the soul (vv. 9, 10), states, “Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify when it [He] testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ [*lit.*, ‘the sufferings with respect to Christ’], and the glory that should follow.”

The thought, contextually, is not at all that of Christ suffering. Rather, the thought has to do with Christians suffering with respect to Christ’s sufferings, subsequently realizing the salvation of their souls through having a part in the glory which is to follow the sufferings.

This is the underlying thought behind the whole book of I Peter, expressed in so many words by the writer in 4:12, 13: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

This is the “eternal [‘age-lasting’] glory” to which Christians have been called and in which Christians will be established after they “have suffered a while,” with *obedience to Christ* emanating from the sufferings (I Peter 5:10).

3

From Milk to Meat

Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil (Heb. 5:10-14).

In Heb. 5:1-6 there is a progression in thought from the present ministry of Christ in the sanctuary (after the order of Aaron) to the future ministry of Christ when He ascends the throne (after the order of Melchizedek).

Christ's ministry in the sanctuary occurs in heaven, He is ministering on behalf of those destined to ascend the throne with Him, and this ministry will extend throughout the present dispensation. At the conclusion of this ministry, Christ will come forth as the great *King-Priest* after the order of Melchizedek; and His co-heirs, for whom He is presently ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, will then reign as *kings and priests* with Him.

When Christ exercises the Melchizedek priesthood, He will have a dual reign. He will sit on His Own throne in the heavenly Jerusalem, ruling over the earth with His co-heirs, His consort queen; and He will also sit on David's throne in the earthly Jerusalem in the midst of His people, Israel (the nation which will look upon the Pierced One and be saved at His second advent). Occupying a dual reign of this nature, Christ will thus be a King-Priest in both the heavenly Jerusalem and

the earthly Jerusalem.

This will be in perfect keeping with both *heavenly* and *earthly* promises associated with Abraham and his seed, first brought to light in connection with the first mention of Melchizedek in Scripture (Gen. 14:18, 19). Melchizedek blessed Abraham as “possessor of heaven and earth”; and the seed of Abraham, both heavenly and earthly, are to “possess the gate of [rule over] his enemies” (Gen. 22:17, 18).

Beyond Gen. 12:1-3 in Scripture (*i.e.*, beyond the call of Abraham and God’s promises to Abraham), all Divine blessings which mankind receives *must* flow through Abraham and his seed (through Isaac, Jacob, and Jacob’s twelve sons and their descendants). The *nation of Israel* is Abraham’s seed (through Jacob and his twelve sons). *Christ* is Abraham’s Seed (through Isaac, Jacob, Judah, and David); and *Christians*, because of their position “in Christ,” are likewise Abraham’s seed (Gal. 3:16, 18, 29).

Thus, during the coming age, Abraham’s Seed (*Christ and His cohorts*) will rule from a heavenly sphere; and Abraham’s Seed (*Christ and the nation of Israel*) will rule from an earthly sphere. And through this rule, from both spheres, the Gentile nations of the earth will be blessed, in fulfillment of Gen. 12:3; 14:19; 22:17, 18.

Corresponding with the preceding, Heb. 5:7-9 deals with a “salvation” in connection with the One Who has been “Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek” (v. 10; *cf.* v. 6). Predating His present ministry in the heavenly sanctuary (after the order of Aaron), Christ *learned* “obedience by the things which he suffered”; and with God bringing matters to a predetermined goal in the person of His Son through this process, Christ “became the author [‘source’] of eternal salvation [‘salvation for the age’] unto all them that obey him” (vv. 8, 9).

This salvation is being extended to those for whom Christ is presently ministering in the heavenly sanctuary; and this salvation, contextually, has to do with that future time when Christ exercises the Melchizedek priesthood. This is the salvation of the soul (*cf.* Heb. 6:19, 20; 10:36-39), and it has to do strictly with the “kings and priests” who will ascend the throne with the great King-Priest in that coming day (Rev. 4:10; 5:8-10).

(Note in Heb. 5:6 that Christ is said to be “a priest forever after the

order of Melchizedek.” “Forever” is a translation of the Greek words *eis ton aiona*, which appear twenty-nine times in the Greek New Testament. Depending on the context, this expression can be understood either one of two ways — “with respect to the age [one age],” or “with respect to eternity [all the ages].” It is used both ways in the Greek New Testament [cf. Matt. 21:19; I Peter 1:23]. The word *aiona* [the word *aion* in a different case form] is the singular noun form of the adjective *aionios*, which is also used both ways in the Greek text [cf. Chapter II].

The four times this expression appears in the Book of Hebrews relative to Christ being “a priest *forever* after the order of Melchizedek” [5:6; 6:20; 7:17, 21] should, contextually, be understood, as Christ being “a priest with respect to the age after the order of Melchizedek.” The reference is to the coming age, that with which the Book of Hebrews deals.

It might help to note a plural form of this same Greek expression in Heb. 13:8 — *eis tous aionas*, “with respect to the ages.” This verse, literally translated, would read, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and with respect to the ages [all the future ages].” Christ exercising a priesthood “after the order of Melchizedek” in Heb. 5-7 has to do with one age, but Christ being unchangeable [for the Father and the Son are “one,” and God is unchangeable (Mal. 3:6)] has to do with *all the ages* — past, present, and future.

Christ will continue to reign beyond the millennium, but matters as they will exist *during the millennium* [one age] and *beyond the millennium* [the succeeding unending ages, comprising eternity] will be quite different. Christ’s reign “over the house of Jacob” [Luke 1:33], for example, is expressed in the Greek New Testament by the same words which appear in Heb. 13:8, *eis tous aionas* [“with respect to the ages”]; but there will be differences between His reign “over the house of Jacob” *during* the millennium and *beyond* the millennium [note that this is *the natural man*, “Jacob,” not *the spiritual man*, “Israel.” The nation will thus evidently dwell on earth in natural bodies of flesh, blood, and bones throughout not only the millennium but the eternal ages as well].

During the millennium, Christ will occupy the role of King-Priest after the order of Melchizedek, seated on His Own throne in the

heavenly Jerusalem and on David's throne in the earthly Jerusalem. Conditions during that coming age will necessitate a King-Priest. There will be sin, resulting death, etc. And Christ must reign until He has "put all things under his feet." "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." And when "all things" have been brought under subjection, *the kingdom* will be "delivered up" to the Father [I Cor. 15:24-28]. This is actually the purpose for the Messianic Era.

Then, when "all things" have been brought under subjection to the Son, and the Son has delivered "the kingdom" up to the Father, conditions will be quite different. During the ages beyond the millennium [the eternal ages] there will be "a new heaven and a new earth," the New Jerusalem will be on the new earth [possibly a larger earth than presently exists, easily accommodating a city of this size as its capital], and God Himself will reside on the new earth [apparently ruling the universe, from that time forth, from this new location rather than from the present location].

Sin and death, along with all the former associated things, will no longer exist. And it will no longer be necessary for God to have a Priest dwelling among men to represent men to God and God to men. In that day, God "will dwell with them [with mankind, on the new earth], and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" [Rev. 21:1ff].

And Christ, in that day, will continue to reign in a kingly position [which will apparently be of a *universal* nature rather than restricted to this earth, as during the millennium]. He will be seated on "the throne of God and of the Lamb [a throne from which universal rule will emanate]" [Rev. 22:1, 3], others will continue to occupy the throne with Him [Rev. 21:5], and Christ will also continue to occupy "the throne of his father David" [Luke 1:32, 33].)

In Heb. 5:11, the writer moves into a section of the book which has to do with spiritual growth, from immaturity to maturity. The broader picture — moving beyond the millennium — is really not what the writer had in mind though. Rather, he concerns himself with the Messianic Era itself. The broader picture has been presented only to show that Christ's ministry "after the order of Melchizedek" is a ministry having to do with activity during *one age alone*, activity during *the Messianic Era*.

The writer of Hebrews, leading into his statements in 5:1ff, had called attention to a progression in God's economy *from Christ's present ministry* in the heavenly sanctuary (after the order of Aaron) *to His future ministry* (after the order of Melchizedek), crowned and seated on the throne (vv. 1-6). Following this, the writer called attention to a salvation awaiting those presently obeying Christ (v. 9); and this salvation, contextually, is to be realized during the coming age when Christ exercises the Melchizedek priesthood (vv. 6, 10). It is to be realized *by Christ's co-heirs through* their ascending the throne with Him.

It is this whole line of thought — centering on Melchizedek (v. 10) — which the writer had in mind when he stated, “Of whom we have many things to say...” (v. 11). He wanted to say many things about that future day when Christ would be the great *King-Priest* after the order of Melchizedek, with others occupying positions as *kings and priests* alongside Him.

But, there was a problem...

MANY THINGS TO SAY

The writer of Hebrews could not just come out and begin relating to his readers various truths about Christ's coming rule and reign over the earth “after the order of Melchizedek.” This is what he wanted to do, but such was not possible; the recipients of this epistle lacked the necessary background in their spiritual growth to comprehend these truths. Though they were on the foundation, which is Christ (I Cor. 3:11), they had not built upon this foundation after a fashion which would allow them to understand things about Christ drawn from a type-antitype discussion of Melchizedek.

1. *HARD TO BE UTTERED*

The things pertaining to Christ's coming ministry “after the order of Melchizedek” were things “hard to be uttered.” That is, these things were “difficult to be explained.” And, to be able to grasp these things at all, it was absolutely necessary for a person to have grown enough spiritually that he could easily partake of solid food.

Things surrounding the antitype of the Melchizedek priesthood

were not simply *meat* or *solid food* per se, but these things were said to be *strong meat*, *strong solid food* (vv. 12, 14 [there is a qualifying word used only here in the Greek text in connection with the word for “food” — *stereos*, meaning, “strong,” “solid,” “firm”]). And these were, accordingly, not things for those still on the Milk of the Word, which was the problem that the writer of Hebrews faced.

Those to whom he was writing were still on milk and, correspondingly, “unskilful in the word of righteousness.” And not only did they need to be weaned from the milk but they also needed to be able to partake of solid food, after at least some fashion, before they could go on into and understand things surrounding the “strong meat” associated with Christ’s coming reign as King-Priest “after the order of Melchizedek.”

At the beginning of the Christian life a person can only partake of what Scripture calls, the “sincere [unadulterated, pure] milk of the word” (cf. Heb. 5:12, 13; I Peter 2:2). Milk is for “newborn babes,” whether in the spiritual or physical realm. And, as in the physical realm where individuals grow physically and leave the milk for solid food, so must it be in the spiritual realm to assure proper growth. A “newborn babe” is to begin on milk, but he is not to remain on milk indefinitely. He is to grow spiritually; and through this growth he is to progressively, in what could only be considered *a natural sense within this growth*, gradually leave the milk and, in its place, partake of solid food.

The solid food which he first begins to partake of is more easily assimilated and digested than solid food which he may partake of after additional growth. Growth is always progressive, and the object of growth is always the same. Whether in the physical or spiritual, progressive proper growth always leads toward the same goal. It always leads toward maturity, adulthood.

The whole panoramic picture of growth after this fashion is set forth in spiritual lessons drawn from events occurring during the six days of Genesis, chapter one; and the purpose for this growth is intimately connected with that which occurred during the seventh day in chapter two.

Events occurring during the first three days set forth divisions. Viewing the antitype, events occurring during the first day pertain to

man's salvation, wherein a division is established between the soul and the spirit (*cf.* Gen. 1:3, 4; Heb. 4:12). Then, events occurring on days two and three (a division of waters from waters, the land from the water, etc.) picture the newborn babe in Christ learning divisions, distinctions in the word — *i.e.*, learning the basics — elementary teachings which would have to do essentially with milk rather than solid food.

It is only when one reaches that point in his spiritual growth depicted by events on days four through six that solid food of any real substance comes into the picture. At this point in his understanding of Scripture he can begin to sink deep shafts down into the Word and mine its treasures. He can begin to scale the heights or the depths in his spiritual understanding, as the birds are able to ascend into the heavens (day four), or as the marine creatures are able to plunge to the depths of the sea (day five); or he can begin to roam through the Word with ease in his spiritual understanding, as the giant land creatures are able to easily roam the earth (day six).

And all of this is for a purpose, which has to do with man, on the seventh day, realizing the reason for his existence — "...let them have dominion." It has to do with man, on the seventh day (the seventh millennium, the earth's coming Sabbath, the Messianic Era), being placed in a position to exercise dominion with the "the second man," "the last Adam" (*cf.* Gen. 1:26-2:3; I Cor. 15:45, 47; Rom. 11:29).

It has to do with the same thing which the writer of Hebrews had in mind when he referred to things which were "hard to be uttered ['difficult to understand']" (5:11). He was writing to individuals who were, in their spiritual understanding, still in that period typified by events on days two and three in Genesis, chapter one.

And this whole matter was not something which could be discussed with individuals still on the Milk of the Word. This was *strong meat*, which, insofar as one's spiritual growth and understanding were concerned, could fit only within the framework of that depicted by events on days four through six, for it had to do with *the seventh day*.

(For a detailed discussion of Gen. 1:1-2:3, as these verses pertain to the Christian life [birth, maturity, purpose] within a type-antitype framework, see the author's book, FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN, Chs.

V-VIII.)

2. DULL OF HEARING

The word, “dull” in Heb. 5:11 is the translation of a Greek word (*nothros*) which means, “lazy” or “careless.” This is the same word also appearing in Heb. 6:12, the only other occurrence of this word in the New Testament — “That ye be not slothful [*nothros*, ‘lazy,’ ‘careless’], but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

The word *nothros*, as it is used in the fifth chapter, has to do with hearing and receiving the Word of God. Those addressed had become “lazy,” “careless” in this respect. Thus, the thought of *sluggish in hearing* or *hard of hearing* because of “laziness” or “carelessness” would best describe what is meant by the use of *nothros* in this section of Scripture.

Such an attitude toward the Word on their part would, in turn, have negative ramifications in two interrelated realms: 1) *their present spiritual growth* and 2) *the “end [goal]” of their faith, the salvation of their souls* (James 1:21; I Peter 1:4, 5, 9; cf. Heb. 6:11, 12, 19; 10:36-39).

Then a verb tense used in the Greek text shows that the individuals being addressed in Heb. 5:11ff had not always been in this spiritual condition. Rather, they had *become* this way. The latter part of the verse should literally read, “...ye have *become* sluggish in hearing [because of your carelessness, laziness (as it pertains to the reception of the Word of God and your spiritual growth)].” The same thought (their having *become* this way) is set forth in the latter part of verse twelve, which should literally read, “...ye have *become* such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.”

Thus, though the text deals with spiritual babes “in Christ,” it does not deal with spiritual babes who had never made a concerted effort to grow spiritually. Rather, the text deals with Christians who, at one time, were receiving the Word and growing in a spiritual manner. But something happened, *which is very common in Christian circles today*. They had *become* “lazy” and “careless” in the spiritual realm of their lives; and, correspondingly, they had *become* “sluggish in hearing” the Word.

They had been saved long enough that they should, themselves,

have been teaching the Word. But such was not the case at all. Rather, because of the spiritual condition in which they had *become*, they needed someone to take the Word and begin at the very basics of the Christian faith, teaching them once again things which they had previously been taught (v. 12).

WHEN FOR THE TIME

The whole area of spiritual growth from immaturity unto maturity as it is presented in Hebrews, chapters five and six needs to be understood contextually. Beginning on milk, being weaned from the milk, and partaking of solid food is not just moving from something relatively simple to something more complex in Biblical doctrine. Rather, proper spiritual growth involves moving from what could be termed the *letter* of the matter to the *spirit* of the matter (cf. II Cor. 3:6-18).

When Christ, following His resurrection, instructed the two disciples on the Emmaus road, He followed a certain procedure. Christ began “at Moses and all the prophets”; and, using the writings of Moses and all the prophets, “he expounded unto them *in all the scriptures* the things concerning himself.” And by so doing, He showed these disciples, from the Old Testament Scriptures, a dual picture of Himself. He showed them both the *sufferings* which He had just endured and His *glory* which would one day be revealed (Luke 24:25-27).

How did Christ do this? How did He go to the Old Testament Scriptures and draw spiritual truths from these Scriptures which not only dealt with His past sufferings and future glory but which also resulted in the eyes of these two disciples being opened?

The answer is very simple. Christ first went to the historic accounts in the writings of Moses, and then He went to the writings of other prophets (the writings of the other prophets could have been both historic accounts and/or prophetic accounts). And using these Scriptures to arrive at teachings of this nature, Christ could only have followed one procedure: He could only have dealt first with the *letter* of Old Testament revelation and then with the *spirit* of this revelation.

In this respect, to illustrate a basic distinction between “milk” and

“meat,” the *letter* would have to do with the historicity of the account itself. It would have to do with simply viewing the account as it is presented in Scripture from a literal, historic perspective. And this is where one must begin, for no progress in spiritual growth can possibly be made until one first learns and understands the basic things about that which is simply stated.

Then the *spirit* has to do with going beyond the simple historic account within the framework of the manner in which Scripture has been written. God has interwoven within the historic account an inexhaustible wealth of spiritual truth. All Old Testament history is fraught with types and meanings, which, after some fashion, reflect on the person and work of Christ in His three-fold office. Note in Luke 24:27 — “...in all the scriptures the things concerning himself” (cf. I Cor. 10:6, 11).

(One could take a lesson concerning proper Biblical interpretation from Stephen’s address to the Jewish religious leaders in Acts, chapter seven. Stephen began by calling attention to particular historic accounts in the Old Testament. Then, account by account [7:2ff], once he had these Jewish religious leaders’ attention properly focused on the *letter* of the matter, he drew certain *spiritual lessons* from the historic accounts. And, though the lessons were relatively simple, those whom he addressed got the message [7:54], resulting in Stephen’s death at their hands [7:57-60].)

The preceding is the evident manner of progression from milk to meat in Heb. 5:10ff. First, attention is called to Melchizedek from the Old Testament Scriptures. In this respect there is the brief historic account in Genesis, chapter fourteen. Then there is the account of Messiah’s coming reign over the earth in the one hundred tenth Psalm, which draws from the type in Genesis. And this is the extent of that which is directly stated about Melchizedek in the Old Testament.

The writer of Hebrews though went far beyond a reference to the historic account in Genesis and the use of this account in the Psalms when he stated that he had “many things” which he would like to relate concerning Melchizedek.

First, he had to have in mind understanding things about numerous other Old Testament Scriptures, for properly understanding the

things surrounding Melchizedek would, of necessity, be contingent on understanding numerous other parts of the Old Testament. Then, second, the writer had to have in mind going beyond the *letter* within one's understanding. And from that which is revealed in Hebrews, chapter five, it is evident that going beyond the *letter* had to do with moving into the type-antitype relationship involved in the Melchizedek priesthood.

In other words, there are two corresponding things which one must do in order to properly understand the various things about Christ's coming reign over the earth as the great King-Priest "after the order of Melchizedek": 1) He must relate that which is taught in Genesis, chapter fourteen and the one hundred tenth Psalm to Old Testament revelation as a whole, and 2) he must study the matter after the fashion in which the Old Testament has been structured. He must, in this respect, move beyond the type and view the antitype.

The account in Genesis, chapter fourteen, in reality, comprises the heart of the whole matter. This account, in the antitype, deals with that coming day when Christ, as the great King-Priest, will bless the descendants of Abraham (both heavenly and earthly); and these blessings will, in turn, flow out through the seed of Abraham to the Gentile nations of the earth. In this respect, the whole account is fraught with meaning, which the writer of Hebrews called "strong meat."

1. *THE WORD OF THE KINGDOM*

Another feature about proper Christian growth in its true New Testament sense is the fact that "meat" appears in passages having to do with Christ's return and Christian accountability in relation to His return. This can be seen quite graphically in two passages of Scripture — the text under discussion in Heb. 5:11ff and the account of the Householder and His servant in Matt. 24:45-51. And both are companion passages.

In Matt. 24:45-51, the command of the Householder to the servant placed over His house was to give those in the house "meat in due season" (v. 45). And, textually, "meat" has to do with a spiritual diet which will properly prepare the recipients for the Householder's return. Thus, "meat," as distinguished from "milk" in this passage

and in Heb. 5:11ff, has to do with the same thing. It has to do with the things surrounding Christ's return, the coming kingdom, and the place which will be occupied by both the great *King-Priest* and the *kings and priests* in that coming day.

The purpose for the entire present dispensation has to do with the coming kingdom. The call is presently going forth concerning proffered positions as co-heirs with Christ during the coming age, and the present dispensation covers that period of time when fruit relating to the kingdom will be brought forth by those destined to comprise the co-heirs.

The faithful servant, dispensing "meat in due season," teaches those placed under his care about the Lord's return and proffered positions in the kingdom, in view of extracting fruit for his absent Lord. At the time of the Lord's return, fruit will be in evidence; and not only will the faithful servant be positioned as "ruler [co-heir with Christ in the kingdom]," but through his previous ministry in the house others will be brought into this position as well.

Should the servant become unfaithful though, the opposite will be true. He will not teach those placed under his care about the Lord's return and proffered positions in the kingdom. At the time of the Lord's return, there will be no fruit; and not only will the unfaithful servant face severe chastisement, but those who had been placed under his care, failing to bring forth fruit (as a direct result of the unfaithful servant's ministry), will find themselves in similar straits.

In this respect, an awesome responsibility falls on the shoulders of those whom the Lord has placed in positions of household responsibility to dispense "meat in due season," for faithfulness or unfaithfulness in properly carrying out their calling will have far-reaching ramifications, affecting not only them personally but others as well. Through a proper response to their calling, the salvation of not only their souls (lives) will be realized but the souls (lives) of others as well. But through an improper response, the opposite will be true.

2. *BEYOND THE VEIL*

The strict *letter of the Word*, apart from the *spirit of the same Word*, could, in a sense, be likened to an intrinsic view of the strict letter of the Law given to Israel through Moses. In the words of Scripture,

pertaining to the latter, “the letter killeth...” And insofar as the understanding and interpretation of Scripture are concerned, there would be no difference in applying the same words to the former should the *spirit* be removed, for it is the *spirit alone* which “giveth life” (II Cor. 3:6).

Because Israel viewed matters from the letter alone, the minds of the Jewish people were blinded, there was a veil over their eyes, and “until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament [old covenant]” But, there was/is a solution. The veil could/can be “done away in Christ” (II Cor. 3:14-16). And such was/is accomplished through simply *looking beyond the letter*.

That is exactly what occurred when Christ dealt with the two disciples on the Emmaus road following His resurrection. He opened the Old Testament Scriptures to their understanding. That is, He carried them beyond the *letter* to the *spirit*.

Through looking beyond the letter in the Old Testament Scriptures, they saw their Messiah. They then *turned to the Lord, the veil was removed, and their eyes were opened* (cf. Luke 24:25-31; II Cor. 3:14-16).

And therein is Jewish evangelism presented in its true Biblical form. The evangel (the bearer of “good news”) must present the Jewish Messiah to the Jewish people *from their own Old Testament Scriptures*, through more than the letter. He must move beyond the *letter* to the *spirit*.

Then, beyond the present day and time, the account in Luke, chapter twenty-four forms a type of Israel’s future salvation. The nation will one day *turn to the Lord, the veil will be removed, and the eyes of the Jewish people will be opened*; and this will be the direct result of Messiah Himself, in their midst at the time of His return, opening the Old Testament Scriptures to their understanding.

And therein as well lies the simple secret which will allow anyone to understand the God-breathed Word given to man. *Study Scripture after the fashion in which it was written*. Know the *letter*, but don’t stop there. Rather, look beyond the *letter* to the *spirit*, for this Word, unlike any other writing, is “spiritually discerned” (cf. John 16:12-15; I Cor. 2:14).

4

Leaving the Principles

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 (Heb. 6:1-3).

Beginning chapter six of Hebrews, the writer continues the thought from chapter five having to do with Christians who had become *sluggish* in hearing the Word because of the lazy, careless manner of living into which they had lapsed in their spiritual lives (v. 11). They had been saved a sufficient length of time that they should have been at a mature enough stage in their spiritual growth to be able to teach others. But such was not the case at all. Instead, they were still immature babes in Christ who needed to be taught themselves (v. 12).

Actually, according to the text, they had gone backwards in their spiritual growth. They, at one time, had been taught the elementary truths of the Word; but they had “*become* such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.” And now they were back at that point where they needed someone to *teach them again* “the first principles of the oracles of God.”

The writer wanted to discuss things pertaining to the Melchizedek priesthood with them, but dealing with them on this basis was completely out of the question. Things surrounding the Melchizedek priesthood had to do with the “strong meat” of the Word, which could be understood only by those who were “of full age [*i.e.*, by mature Christians who had left the milk and had grown to adulthood in spiritual matters through a progressive assimilation of solid food]” (v. 14).

These Christians, still on milk, were, as *every Christian* “that useth milk,” “unskilful in the word of righteousness.” Their spiritual perception of matters was of such an immature nature — *i.e.*, their spiritual senses were so insufficiently developed — that distinguishing between that which was correct and that which was incorrect in spiritual matters could only have presented a real problem for them (*cf.* vv. 13, 14).

One must know and understand the Word of God, else a normal Christian life — one based on that which is taught in the Word — can *never* follow. Thus, Hebrews, chapter six begins with an exhortation to those in chapter five. They were exhorted to leave the elementary teachings of the Word and begin building upon the foundation, with a view to spiritual maturity (vv. 1, 2).

Within the overall scope of that which is revealed in Hebrews, chapters five through seven, the first two verses in chapter six form a *connective*. These two verses, within the complete text, might be thought of as being similar to a conjunction in a sentence, for they *connect* that which has preceded with that which is about to follow.

Then, following the exhortation to go on unto maturity, there is the statement, “And this will we do [we will go on unto maturity], if God permit [if God permits us to go on]” (v. 3). The heart of the third of the five major warnings in Hebrews appears next (vv. 4-6). Then the writer uses an illustration pertaining to the warning, drawn from nature (vv. 7, 8). Next the writer deals with the “hope” which we possess and the “salvation” set before us, associated with this hope (vv. 9-19; *cf.* Titus 1:2; 2:13; 3:7; I Peter 3:15). Then he moves full-circle back to the subject of Melchizedek, which had been introduced at the beginning of this section in chapter five (6:20-7:1ff).

THE FOUNDATION AND BEYOND

Hebrews 6:1, 2 enumerates six different realms pertaining to a panorama of Biblical doctrine. And the things listed in these two verses must be understood contextually. The context has to do with *Christian maturity, for a revealed purpose*; and that’s exactly where one is led when moving through the six different enumerated areas of Biblical doctrine which are set forth in these opening two verses of the

sixth chapter.

The six realms listed are introduced by the words, “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection [‘maturity’]” (v. 1a). The “principles” are the “first principles” from verse twelve of the preceding chapter. These principles have to do with milk rather than solid food, and they are connected with the six enumerated areas of doctrine which immediately follow.

However, the six enumerated areas are not, themselves, part of the foundation. Rather, it is *elementary teachings* connected with these six areas of doctrine which have to do with the foundation. And, going beyond that, teachings connected with these same six areas can move far beyond foundational teachings. Such teachings can and do — they must, of necessity — move into the realm of the “strong meat” referred to in the previous chapter.

There is the “letter” and “spirit” of the matter, and this would apply to all six of the areas of doctrine listed in Heb. 6:1, 2. The “letter” is one thing, but moving out into the “spirit,” — moving beyond the “letter” into the “spirit” in Biblical teaching — is something entirely different (*ref.* Chapter III [*cf.* II Cor. 3:6-18]). And this is exactly what those in Heb. 5:11-14 were exhorted to do in Heb. 6:1, 2.

They were exhorted to leave the foundational teachings (which essentially surround the “letter” of the matter) and build upon the foundation (which would, of necessity, have to pertain to things beyond the “letter,” *i.e.*, to the “spirit” of the matter). And, whether “letter” or “spirit,” the various teachings would still be drawn from the six enumerated areas of Biblical doctrine.

These six enumerated areas logically fall into three categories, with two interrelated sets in each category. The Spirit of God has listed them after the fashion in which they appear, in a specific order, for evident, particular reasons; and they should be studied with this overall thought in view, which fits the contextual subject matter perfectly.

Viewing the six areas of Biblical doctrine after this fashion, there would be 1) “repentance from dead works” coupled with “faith toward God,” 2) “the doctrine of baptisms” coupled with the “laying on of hands,” and 3) the “resurrection of the dead” coupled with “eternal judgment.” And, as will be demonstrated, moving progres-

sively and orderly through the various Biblical doctrines in view — seeing and understanding the “letter” and then the “spirit” of the matter — will result in a progressive orderly growth toward maturity.

The beginning point concerns *repentance and faith*, the middle point has to do with *cleansing and identification*, and the terminal point centers around teachings concerning *the end or goal* of that which has preceded. And within these three categories one will find a complete panorama of Biblical truth, beginning with the “milk” of the Word and terminating with the “strong meat” of the Word.

1. REPENTANCE, FAITH

The first thing listed is “repentance from dead works”; but this cannot be separated from the second thing listed, which is “faith toward God.” “Dead works” would pertain to the works of a believer performed *apart from faith*. Works, in order to be viewed as other than “dead works,” must emanate *out of faith* (James 2:14ff). There must first be “faith toward God”; only then can works pleasing and acceptable to God follow, for, *without faith*, “it is impossible to please him” (Heb. 11:6).

There can be *no acceptable works* on the part of an unbeliever, for he cannot exercise “faith toward God” (he must first believe on the Son; only then will he find himself in a position to exercise faith toward the Father).

The believer, on the other hand, is in a position to exercise “faith toward God,” though he may or may not do so. Should he do so, he can perform *works acceptable and pleasing* to God in his life (for faith will exist, from which such works can emanate); but should he not do so, he can no more perform works of this nature than the unbeliever can (for faith will not exist; and, resultingly, there can only be “dead works”).

The unbeliever remains “dead in trespasses and sins,” while the believer has “passed from death unto life” (John 5:24; Eph. 2:1). Consequently, the believer, unlike the unbeliever, is in a position to perform acceptable works emanating out of faith (faithfulness). But, as previously stated, he may or may not perform works of this nature, for he may or may not exercise “faith toward God.”

“Repentance” has to do with *a change of mind*. Essentially, looking

at the matter from the other end, the Christian, bringing forth “dead works,” is to *change his mind* relative to “faith toward God.” His unfaithfulness has resulted in the “dead works”; and he is to *change his mind* about the matter and exercise “faith,” with a view to other than “dead works” following.

How does a person exercise “faith toward God”?

According to Rom. 10:17, “...faith cometh by [‘out of’] hearing, and hearing by [‘through’] the word of God.” The words “faith” and “believe” are the same in the Greek text. The former is a noun and the latter a verb. They both mean the same thing. That’s why “believe” (the verb) can be used in John 3:16 and “faith” (the noun) can be used in Eph. 2:8, referring to the same thing.

“Faith” is simply *believing God*, which will result in the person governing his actions or life accordingly.

For the unsaved, it is simply placing one’s trust, reliance in God’s Son. He is the Saviour, He has paid the price which God required, and a person places their trust in Him for salvation. *It’s that simple.*

Then once the person has been saved, once he has passed “from death unto life,” he is to exercise “faith toward God.” And a person does that simply through putting his trust, reliance in that which God has to say in His Word.

Thus, it’s easy to understand why the unsaved cannot exercise “faith toward God,” for, not having “passed from death unto life,” they have no spiritual capacity for such understanding. They do not have a saved human spirit into which the Word of God can be received; nor do they possess the indwelling Holy Spirit to take this Word and lead them “into all truth” (John 16:13). They, within the scope of their ability to comprehend and understand the Word of God, can only look upon that which God has to say as “foolishness” (I Cor. 2:14).

James 2:14-26 is the great section on “faith and works” in Scripture. And, within this section, the subject of works emanating out of faithfulness has to do with *the saving of the soul* (cf. James 1:21; 2:14). The saving of the soul, in turn, has to do, not with “milk,” but with “strong meat.” It has to do with the things surrounding the antitype of Melchizedek from Gen. 14:18, 19, dealt with in Heb. 5-7 (see the author’s book, SALVATION OF THE SOUL, Ch. IV).

Thus, in this respect, “repentance from dead works” and “faith toward God,” the first of the three categories listed in Heb. 6:1, 2, carries one through the entirety of the Christian experience — *from immaturity to maturity*. “Repentance” and “faith” are fundamental and primary. And viewing these together is, so to speak, where one *must* begin. Consequently, the two are listed first among the three categories.

But a Christian in the race of the faith is not to remain on the starting blocks (Heb. 12:1, 2; cf. I Cor. 9:24-27; I Tim. 6:12; II Tim. 4:7, 8). He, rather, is to move forward in the race, *always progressing steadily toward the goal*. And though “repentance” and “faith” are fundamental and primary, they are associated just as much with the *end* as they are with the *beginning*.

Thus, insofar as a person going on unto maturity is concerned, “repentance” and “faith” have just as much to do with the “strong meat” of the Word as they do with the “milk” of the Word. It is, as in the words of Rom. 1:17, “...from faith to faith [from the beginning to the end — it is *all* of ‘faith’]: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (cf. Hab. 2:4; Heb. 10:36-39; 11:1ff).

2. BAPTISMS, LAYING ON OF HANDS

The word “baptisms” is, in the Greek text as in the English text, *plural* in its usage in Heb. 6:2; and teachings surrounding that which is in view, along with teachings surrounding that which is in view relative to the laying on of hands, is taken from teachings surrounding God’s dealings with the Israelites in the Old Testament Scriptures.

The word “baptism,” transliterated from the Greek word, *baptizo*, simply means *to dip* or *to immerse*. And translating the word as “washing” (with the thought of dipping or immersing [in water] in mind) would perhaps best convey, to the English reader, that which the writer of Hebrews had in mind.

And to understand what is meant by “washings” in Heb. 6:2, one must refer back to the rituals performed within the ranks of the Levitical priests who carried on a ministry at the tabernacle on behalf of the people of Israel. The priests underwent a *complete washing, bathing* of their bodies upon their entrance into the priesthood. This was something which occurred once, *never to be repeated*. However, as

they subsequently ministered on behalf of the people, there were *continual, repeated washings* of parts of their bodies — their hands and feet, which repeatedly became soiled in the course of their ministry. These washings occurred at the laver in the courtyard, which lay between the brazen altar and the Holy Place (Ex. 29:4; 30:18-21; 40:12-15, 30-32).

The typology in view, from this Old Testament account, is where Christ drew His teachings surrounding complete and partial washings when He washed the disciples' feet in John 13:2-20. Christ used two different words for "wash" — *louo* and *nipito* — when dealing with Peter relative to that which He was doing.

He used *louo* relative to washing "the complete body" and *nipito* relative to washing "a part of the body." And, insofar as Peter and the other disciples (save Judas) were concerned, the former had already been performed (never to be repeated), but the latter needed to be performed repeatedly. And the One doing the cleansing would, of necessity, have to provide this service on a continuous basis.

That is, the disciples (save Judas) had been washed completely once (illustrated by Christ's use of *louo*). They had been saved, justified. But, following this complete washing, because of their coming in contact with the defilement of the world in which they lived, there was a need for subsequent partial washings (illustrated by Christ's use of *nipito*).

The need for partial washings would parallel the defilement experienced through contact with the world. The disciples were in continuous contact with a world which lay "in wickedness [*lit.*, 'in the wicked one' (in Satan, the incumbent ruler)]" (I John 5:19). And, because of their contact with the world after this fashion, there would be no possible way that they could keep from becoming defiled at numerous, various times (I John 1:8-10). Consequently, there would be a need for cleansing from such contact on a continuous basis.

Christians are New Testament priests, who have been washed completely once — at the time of justification. But, because of continuous contact with the surrounding world, defilement can and does occur. And when such defilement occurs, the defiled person is to avail himself of provided cleansing, a partial washing.

This is what the opening part of the Book of I John is about (1:3-2:2).

Christ, throughout the present dispensation, continuously occupies the office of High Priest in the heavenly sanctuary on behalf of Christians (2:1, 2). And, with Christ's high priestly ministry in view, a *present* cleansing is provided for those who have, in the *past*, been cleansed (in the antitype of activity surrounding the brazen altar [*past*] and the brazen laver [*present*] in the courtyard of the tabernacle; or in the antitype of the complete and partial washings performed by the Levitical priests).

“If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness [if we say that we have fellowship with Him but have failed to avail ourselves of cleansing through the use of the water in the laver in the courtyard, leaving us in the darkness outside the Holy Place (with its light — the golden candlestick)], we lie, and do not the truth.”

However,

“...if we walk in the light, as he is in the light [if we avail ourselves of cleansing through the use of the water in the laver, allowing admittance to the Holy Place, where there is light], we have fellowship one with another...” (I John 1:6, 7a).

The preceding is viewing the matter more from the framework of the type. Now note the antitype:

The seventh verse goes on to state,

“...and the blood of Jesus Christ his [God's] Son cleanseth us from all sin.”

Cleansing provided at the laver forms the type, and cleansing provided by “the blood of Jesus Christ,” which is on the mercy seat of the heavenly tabernacle, forms the antitype. Our cleansing today thus comes, not through the water in the laver in the courtyard, but through the blood of God's Son which is on the mercy seat. One must see and understand the antitype in the light of the type to see and understand the complete picture.

(For a more detailed exposition of complete and subsequent partial washings as set forth in John 13:2-20, in the light of Old Testament typology, see Ch. VIII in the author's book, FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.)

Doctrine surrounding the “laying on of hands,” in connection with doctrine surrounding “baptisms [‘washings’],” is an area of Biblical study which also has its basis in Old Testament typology. And, as in “the doctrine of baptisms,” this is where one must go to understand that which is referred to in Heb. 6:2.

Hands are used in a figurative manner numerous places throughout Scripture. And they are used in these numerous places various ways to represent *action* on both God’s part and man’s part (cf. Gen. 16:12; Num. 11:23; I Sam. 26:18; Eccl. 2:24).

They, for example, are used as symbols of “power,” or “strength” (cf. Ex. 15:6; Psa. 17:7; 110:1). They are used to demonstrate “pure” or “unjust” actions (cf. Psa. 90:17; Isa. 1:15). Or, washing the hands, as Pilate did when he was about to deliver Jesus over to the wishes of the Jewish religious leaders to be crucified, could, as he sought to do, symbolize an outward show of “innocence” (Matt. 27:24; cf. Deut. 21:6, 7; Psa. 26:6).

The “laying on of hands” then would represent a *type action* which carries a *particular meaning*. And the meaning is given, in so many words, in the account of that which the Lord instructed Aaron to do with one of two goats on the day of atonement (Lev. 16:5ff).

Aaron was to take a bullock and two goats. The bullock and one goat (determined by lot) were to be killed, and the blood of these two animals was then to be used “to make an atonement in the holy place” “for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel” (vv. 14-19).

After Aaron had finished with his work of sprinkling blood before and upon the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle, he was then to take the live goat and perform a climactic act. He was to lay both hands upon the head of the goat and confess all the “iniquities” and “transgressions” of the children of Israel. And through this act, the Israelites’ “iniquities” and “transgressions,” which had just been atoned for, were placed “upon the head of the goat.” The goat was then to be taken into “the wilderness” and released, never to return back into the camp of Israel (vv. 20-22).

Through Aaron laying his hands on the head of the live goat, there was both an *identification* and a *separation*. Through transferring the sins of the people to the goat, an *identification* was established. The

goat became identified with these sins rather than the people; and this established a *separation*, which would be even further shown through the goat being taken to an uninhabited part of the land and released.

This thought of *identification* and *separation* can be clearly seen in the action of the Apostles after they had chosen certain men to attend to a particular ministry in the early Church (Acts 6:1-6). They chose seven men who were “full of faith and of the Holy Spirit.” These men appeared before the Apostles, the Apostles prayed, and they then “laid their hands” on the men (vv. 5, 6).

There was an *identification* of the Apostles with these men who had been *separated, set apart* from the remainder of the Church for a particular task. And this was shown through the laying on of the Apostles’ hands.

Thus, viewing “washings” and the “laying on of hands” together, there is the thought of *cleansing, identification, and separation*; and these go together like a hand in a glove.

Christians constitute a people who have been *separated* from the world for a particular purpose (I Peter 2:9-11). They, forming the “body,” are inseparably *identified* with their Lord, Who is the “Head” of the body (Eph. 5:23-32; Col. 1:18). They, positionally, are part of an entirely *new creation, the one new man* “in Christ” (Eph. 2:13-15; II Cor. 5:17). And, occupying this position and understanding not only the reason why they have been saved but understanding that which lies out ahead as well, Christians are to keep themselves *clean* through repeated “washings” at the laver.

(The fourth of the five major warnings in Hebrews [10:19-39] concerns itself more specifically with this overall matter. Because of Christ’s high priestly ministry [which He performs on the basis of His shed blood on the mercy seat of the heavenly tabernacle], *present cleansing* is available for a *separated, set apart* people who are inseparably *identified* with their Lord.)

3. RESURRECTION, ETERNAL JUDGMENT

The third of the triad of teachings dealt with in Heb. 6:1, 2 can, as the other two parts, pertain to both “milk” and “strong meat” within the scope of that which is in view. There are elementary teachings when one comes to the overall subject of *resurrection* and subsequent

judgment, but there are also teachings which go far beyond the elementary.

Concerning *resurrection*, there is simply the teaching that the dead will, in the future, be raised. Then within this teaching one will find the more specific Biblical teaching that all the dead will not be raised at the same time. Every man will be raised “in his own order [‘company’].”

Christ was raised as “the firstfruits of them that slept,” anticipating the resurrection of *all others*, both the saved and the unsaved. “For as in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive” (I Cor. 15:20-22). The two uses of “all” in the verse are all-inclusive. All who die “in Adam” (which includes all humanity) will be made alive “in Christ.” That is, every man who dies (whether saved or unsaved) will one day be raised *on the basis of the fact Christ was raised*. But, every man will be raised “in his own company.”

The Church forms one company, the Tribulation saints another, and the Old Testament saints another. And at the conclusion of the Messianic Era there will be yet another company of individuals raised from the dead — the unsaved dead of all the ages (I Cor. 15:22-24; *cf.* Ezek. 37:1-14; Luke 24:5, 6; I Thess. 4:16, 17; Rev. 20:4-6, 11-15).

Then there is the Biblical teaching that *judgment* always follows resurrection. There is first death, with announced subsequent judgment (Heb. 9:27). This is the Biblical order, but this order doesn’t stand alone. Scripture elsewhere presents the dead being judged *only* following resurrection (*cf.* II Cor. 5:10; Rev. 1:10-18 [*cf.* 4:1ff]; 20:4).

Every man will not only be *resurrected* “in his own company” but he will also be *judged*, following resurrection, “in his own company.” Particular future judgments will occur *only* following particular companies of individuals being raised from the dead.

The Church will appear before the judgment seat of Christ, preceding the Tribulation (II Cor. 5:10, 11; *cf.* Rev. 1:10-20); Israel (along with Old Testament saints preceding Abraham) and the martyred Tribulation saints will be judged following Christ’s return at the end of the Tribulation (Job 14:14; 19:25-27; Ezek. 20:33-38; Rev. 20:4-6); and the unsaved dead of all the ages will be judged at the end of the 1,000-year Messianic Era, which follows the Tribulation (Rev. 20:11-15).

The basics of the preceding though would really have to do more with milk than meat within the framework of Biblical doctrine. This is merely the outline of the matter, apart from specifics. But a person must understand the outline before he can begin to properly understand specifics within the outline.

That which is in view concerning the “resurrection of the dead” and “eternal judgment” in Heb. 6:2, contextually, *must* pertain to Christians, not other companies of individuals — either saved or unsaved. The whole panorama of doctrine thus far in the opening verses of the sixth chapter has had to do with *Christians alone*, and the summation of the matter can be no different.

The words “eternal judgment” in this passage though would really convey an incorrect thought relative to a future judgment of Christians, for Christians have already been judged insofar as eternal verities are concerned (*cf.* John 3:18; Rom. 8:1); and the only type judgment awaiting them has to do with “an age” — *the Messianic Era* (decisions and determinations emanating from the things revealed at the judgment seat of Christ will have to do with *the Messianic Era alone*, not with the eternal ages).

The seeming textual problem though is easily resolved by understanding that the Greek word translated eternal in this passage (*aionios*) can mean either “age-lasting” or “eternal,” depending on the context. And the context here demands the former, not the latter (*ref.* Chapter II for a detailed discussion of how *aionios* is used in the Greek New Testament).

But what is there beyond simple, factual teachings surrounding the future *resurrection* and *judgment* of Christians which could be categorized as “solid food” rather than “milk”? The answer is evident. Beyond the simple facts there are teachings surrounding an *out-resurrection*, and the out-resurrection is inseparably connected with *the issues of the judgment seat*. The out-resurrection actually results from the *purpose* and *outcome* of this judgment.

The “out-resurrection” and that to which it pertains can be found in Phil. 3:10-14 (the word “resurrection” [v. 11] is a translation of the Greek word, *exanastasis*, which should literally be translated “out-resurrection”). And the context (vv. 10, 12-14) has to do with present Christian activity in view of future decisions and determinations

emanating from the things revealed at the judgment seat.

The Greek word *anastasis*, translated “resurrection,” is a compound word meaning “to stand up.” *Ana* means “up,” and *stasis* means “to stand.” *Anastasis* appears in Phil. 3:11 with the Greek preposition “*ek*,” meaning “out of [*i.e.*, ‘from within’],” prefixed to the word (becoming “*ex*” when prefixed to words beginning with a vowel, as in this case). Thus, *ex-ana-stasis* means “to stand up out of.”

This “standing up out of” — the “out-resurrection” of Phil. 3:11 — simply refers to a further separation which will occur at the judgment seat. The resurrection of Christians will separate all Christians from all non-Christians (Jew or Gentile); and the subsequent out-resurrection will separate one group of Christians (the faithful) from the remainder (the unfaithful).

At the judgment seat of Christ there will be a “standing up” of certain Christians “out of” the remaining Christians, based on decisions and determinations rendered by the righteous Judge. And standing separate from the others within this select group in that day will be a privilege accorded those previously found to have exercised faithfulness in their assigned household responsibilities during the time of their Lord’s absence.

It is in this realm where one finds the meat and strong meat pertaining to *resurrection* and *judgment* awaiting Christians; and it is also in this realm where one finds the *end* or *goal* of all that which is referred to through the triad of doctrinal teaching delineated in Heb. 6:1, 2.

AND THIS WILL WE DO, IF...

Hebrews 6:3 introduces the heart of the third of the five major warnings in Hebrews (6:4-6). Verses one and two form the connection for that which preceded with that which follows. Then the third verse provides an additional connecting thought, which carries one directly into the heart of the warning itself.

Essentially, the verse states that we will follow the writer’s exhortation to go on unto maturity *if God permits us to go on*. This, of course, leaves one with the thought that God may not permit some Christians to go on into the deep things in His Word.

And that is exactly the case, with the warning itself answering the question, "Why?"
"For it is impossible..."

5

If They Shall Fall Away

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 Spirit, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame (Heb. 6:3-6).

The line of teaching thus far in the third of the five major warnings in Hebrews — in perfect keeping with the things set forth in the first two warnings — is with constant reference to that coming day when Christ will reign over the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords. The day is coming, during the Great Tribulation, when an angel will sound the last of seven trumpets; and at that time, “great voices in heaven” are going to be heard, announcing, “The kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ: and he shall reign forever and ever” (Rev. 11:15, ASV).

The whole of God’s revelation to man, beginning with the opening two chapters of Genesis, progressively moves toward the same goal — that coming day announced in Rev. 11:15. And revelation throughout the Book of Hebrews, in perfect keeping with revelation as a whole, views that future day as *central* in all matters surrounding the past or present.

THE WARNING PASSAGES

The first of the five major warnings in the Book of Hebrews deals with “so great salvation” (2:3), which is the greatest thing God has ever designed for redeemed man. This salvation has to do with Christians

being elevated from this earth and placed in the heavens on the throne as co-heirs with the King of kings and Lord of lords; and the time when this will occur is revealed to be in that coming day when Christ fulfills the things which are stated in the seven Messianic passages making up most of chapter one, leading into the first warning.

Also in connection with the first warning there is a revealed angelic ministry. Angels, who at one time ruled in the kingdom of this world (under Satan, in his unfallen state), are presented as presently ministering on behalf of Christians (1:13, 14; 2:5); and this ministry is with a view to Christians wearing the crowns presently worn by these angels when they one day rule in the kingdom under Christ (see the author's book, *SO GREAT SALVATION*, Ch. II).

The second of the five major warnings (chs. 3, 4) begins by addressing those to whom the warning applies: "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling..." (3:1). The parallel is then drawn between Israel's *earthly* calling and the Christians' *heavenly* calling, with the writer drawing extensively from the type (surrounding Israel's calling) for all his spiritual lessons (concerning the Christians' calling).

The land of Canaan during Moses and Joshua's day was occupied by the *Nephilim*, who had infiltrated and corrupted the Gentile nations in the land (Num. 13:32, 33 [the word, *Nephilim*, literally meaning, "fallen ones," is a name used in Scripture for the offspring resulting from a co-habitation of "the sons of God" with "the daughters of men"; cf. Gen. 6:4]); and the Gentile nations, infiltrated and corrupted by the *Nephilim*, were there at the pre-planned direction of Satan and his angels (who ruled from the heavens through the Gentile nations on earth [Dan. 10:13, 20; cf. Luke 4:6; Rev. 13:2]) to contest Israel's right to enter into and take possession of this land.

That heavenly land to which Christians have been called, on the other hand, is presently occupied personally by Satan and his angels (the one-third who went along with Satan in his attempted coup, separate from the two-thirds who refused [who presently minister on behalf of Christians]). And at the heart of all teachings surrounding the second warning is a type-antitype parallel between the Israelites under Moses (and later Joshua) and Christians under Christ.

The Israelites, in the type, were called to leave an earthly land

(Egypt) and dwell in another earthly land (Canaan) as “a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.” They were to dwell in that land, as God’s “firstborn son,” within a theocracy (cf. Ex. 4:22, 23; 40:34-38; Joel 2:27ff). And in this fashion, with God dwelling in Israel’s midst, the Gentile nations were *to be ruled by and blessed through the seed of Abraham*, in perfect keeping with Gen. 12:2, 3; 14:18, 19; 22:17, 18.

Christians, on the other hand, in the antitype, have been called to leave this earth and dwell in the heavens, as “kings and priests” and a “holy nation.” And they are to dwell in that heavenly land within a theocracy, seated on the throne with Christ (cf. I Peter 2:9, 10; Rev. 2:26, 27; 5:10). And in this fashion, with Christians occupying positions of rulership with Christ, the Gentile nations are *to be ruled by and blessed through the seed of Abraham* from a heavenly sphere as well (Gal. 3:29), also in perfect keeping with Gen. 12:2, 3; 14:18, 19; 22:17, 18.

And Satan and his angels are present in that land today — as the Gentile nations infiltrated and corrupted by the *Nephilim* were present in the land of Canaan during Moses and Joshua’s day — contesting the Christians’ right to one day enter and take possession of the land. This is what the “manifold wisdom of God” being made known “by [‘through’] the Church” to “the principalities and powers in heavenly places” is all about in Eph. 3:9-11, and this is what the warfare in Eph. 6:10ff is also all about.

The announcement has gone forth, “through the Church,” to Satan and his angels in the heavens, that they are about to be replaced. Both “Christ,” the *Head*, and the “Church,” the *body*, are on hand, awaiting that day. And Satan, through a knowledge of this fact, can only know that his time is short and his days are numbered.

Christ has shown Himself fully qualified to take the kingdom (Matt. 4:1-11), He has paid redemption’s price to redeem fallen man so man can be brought back into the position for which he was created in the beginning (cf. Gen. 1:26, 28; 3:15; John 19:30), and the Holy Spirit is in the world today calling out the bride who will ascend the throne with the Son in that coming day.

And Satan and his angels don’t any more like the thought of Christ and Christians one day occupying the heavenly places which they presently occupy than the Gentile nations in the land of Canaan almost 1,500 years ago (under Satan’s direction and control) liked the thought

of the Israelites coming in and occupying that land in their stead. Thus, the warfare of Eph. 6:11 rages.

And, because of this warfare, Christians are called upon to make the necessary preparations. They are called upon to *properly array themselves* for the ongoing “battle,” a battle which is *very real*. And there is a “prize” in view, which is also *very real*— that of one day being accorded the privilege of occupying a position as co-heir with Christ in His kingdom (*cf.* Phil. 3:10-14); and this prize can be either *won* (through overcoming in the battle) or *lost* (through being overcome in the battle).

Then the third major warning in Hebrews (chs. 5, 6) centers around Gen. 14:18, 19 for its spiritual lessons — the only historic account of Melchizedek in the entire Old Testament (Psa. 110:4, the only other reference to Melchizedek in the O.T., draws from Gen. 14:18, 19). And though the account is very brief, it is fraught beyond compare with spiritual significance. The *whole* of that which is taught in the spiritual lessons in Hebrews, chapters five through seven draws primarily from the *whole* of that which is taught surrounding Melchizedek in this one Old Testament passage.

Melchizedek was a king-priest in Jerusalem (*cf.* Gen. 14:18; Psa. 76:2), and though Christ is presently “a priest after the order of Melchizedek,” as He is presently “King [He was born ‘King of the Jews’],” He has yet to occupy either office (*cf.* Matt. 2:2; Heb. 5:10; 6:20; 7:11). He is presently ministering in the heavenly sanctuary, on the basis of shed blood, after the order of Aaron. It will only be when He leaves His present position in the sanctuary and comes forth as “King” that He will exercise the office of *King-Priest*, “after the order of Melchizedek” (*ref.* Chapter I).

The writer of Hebrews dealt with this subject (5:1-10), then he dealt with spiritual babes “in Christ” who were not mature enough to understand these things (5:11-14), and then he exhorted these immature Christians to leave the foundational truths and go on unto maturity (6:1, 2).

And there is no getting around *one central truth* in this section of Scripture: Maturity in the faith, as it is set forth in Heb. 5:1-6:2, has to do with coming into a knowledge and understanding of those things which the Word of God reveals concerning that future day when

Christ reigns over the earth as the great *King-Priest*, “after the order of Melchizedek.” That which is stated in Heb. 6:3 (“And this will we do, if God permit”) and the heart of the warning itself in Heb. 6:4-6 (“For it is impossible...”) *MUST* be understood within the framework of that which has preceded. These verses must, contextually, be understood as having to do with Christians coming into a knowledge and understanding of the things surrounding Christ’s coming reign over the earth.

Reading into Heb. 6:4-6 the thought of salvation by grace through faith (as so many do) is not only completely out of line with the context but it is also completely out of line with any Scriptural teaching concerning salvation by grace through faith, beginning with the opening two chapters of Genesis. The context has to do with Christian maturity (which centers on coming into an understanding of specific future things, for a revealed purpose); and salvation by grace through faith centers around the Christians’ present possession (based on two finished works of the Triune Godhead — 1) the finished work of the Son at Calvary, and 2) the finished work performed in the life of the believer [performed on the basis of and made possible through the Son’s prior finished work]).

Hebrews 6:4-6 has to do strictly with God’s present and future work in the lives of Christians, not with His past work, effecting their present position, “in Christ.” This section of Scripture is written to and has to do solely with those who are already saved, and it has to do specifically with bringing these saved individuals into a mature knowledge and understanding of the things surrounding Christ’s coming reign over the earth, as *King-Priest*, “after the order of Melchizedek.”

AND THIS WILL WE DO, IF...

Hebrews 6:3 should be taken at face value. That is, “We will go on unto maturity [vv. 1, 2], if God permits us to go on.” And one is then left with the thought that God may not permit some Christians to go on unto maturity.

Leading into Heb. 6:3, the writer had previously reprimanded a group of Christians for their lack of spiritual maturity. They had been

saved for a sufficient length of time that all of them should have been well enough grounded in the Word that they could do two things: 1) be able to understand teachings surrounding the coming Melchizedek priesthood of Christ, and 2) be able to teach others these things as well (5:10-14).

Then, following the reprimand, the writer exhorted these same Christians to leave “the first principles [the rudimentary things of the Christian faith]” and “go on unto perfection [maturity in ‘the faith’]” (5:12; 6:1, 2).

Then after this comes the statement that going on unto maturity is *conditional*. It is conditioned on God allowing the person to go on. But bear in mind that this is not maturity in what might be considered a general sense; rather, the reference is to maturity in a *specific sense*. This is maturity in that which Scripture calls “the faith” or “the word of the kingdom” (cf. Matt. 13:19; I Tim. 6:12; Jude 3) — maturity in things surrounding Christ’s coming reign over the earth “after the order of Melchizedek” (Heb. 5:10ff).

Thus, the writer is dealing with a *specific realm* of Biblical teaching which is little understood in Christendom today. And this would provide a basic explanation (in conjunction with the working of the leaven in Matt. 13:33) for the existing situation. Not only is there a present lack of knowledge (much less an understanding) concerning this whole overall message in Christendom but something even beyond this exists. Along with the lack of knowledge (and understanding), an overt aversion — more often than not — is exhibited toward any teaching on the subject.

(Note, by way of passing, that an aversion of this nature invariably emanates from two spheres: 1) ignorance rather than knowledge, and 2) immaturity rather than maturity.)

And, projecting the matter out to the end of the dispensation, this is the message Christ will not find being taught to Christians in the Churches at the time of His return. Though this is the central message which Christians are supposed to hear once they have been grounded in the rudimentary things of the Word, Christ stated that by the end of the dispensation, at the time of His return, conditions will have become so completely contrary to the way they should exist that He

will not find “faith [*lit.*, ‘the faith’] on the earth” (Luke 18:8).

The reason why God will not allow certain Christians to go on into an understanding of these truths is given in the verses which immediately follow (vv. 4-6), which comprise the heart of the warning itself. Verse three forms a connection between that which has preceded and that which follows; and this verse must, accordingly, be understood in the light of the complete context — verses both preceding and following.

Very briefly, note the verses leading into Heb. 6:3 before going on to the explanation. These verses explain the matter from the standpoint of one type, and then the explanation explains it from the standpoint of another type.

Hebrews, chapter five draws its spiritual lessons from Genesis, chapter fourteen (and Psa. 110, which also draws from Gen. 14). The subject has to do with Abraham meeting Melchizedek following the battle of the kings.

Melchizedek, at this time, brought forth “bread and wine” and blessed Abraham, “of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth” (Gen. 14:17-19). This, of course, points to that day in the antitype, following the battle of the kings (Rev. 19:17-21), when Christ comes forth with “bread and wine” — as *King-Priest*, “after the order of Melchizedek” — to bless Abraham and his descendants, *both heavenly and earthly* (Matt. 26:29).

Now note something about the type, which must carry over into the antitype. Abraham, after meeting Melchizedek, no longer manifested any interest in *the things of this world*. The king of Sodom offered him goods, but his response was completely negative. Abraham said to the king of Sodom:

“I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, That I will not take from a thread even to a shoelatchet, and that I will not take any thing that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, ‘I have made Abraham rich’: Save only that which the young men have eaten...” (Gen. 14:22-24).

Having met Melchizedek, Abraham manifested total disinterest in that which the king of Sodom had to offer. He had found something *so far greater* than the things this world could offer that he refused to

take anything (other than food) from the king of Sodom. Rather, his interest was focused on the things surrounding Melchizedek (cf. Heb. 12:2, “Looking unto Jesus... [*lit.*, ‘Looking *from* (the surrounding things of the world) *unto* Jesus...’]”).

Abraham, through this experience, could only have gained a whole new perspective on the present in relation to the future, and vice versa. Thus, Abraham, relative to the magnanimous offer of the king of Sodom, in a word, told the king, *No!* “I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, *the possessor of heaven and earth...*”

And that is where Christ comes into the picture in prophecy as the great *King-Priest*, “after the order of Melchizedek.” The Father — “*the possessor of heaven and earth*” (Gen. 14:22) — has given all that He possesses unto the Son (cf. Gen. 24:36; 25:5; John 16:13-15); and in that coming day, with the Son occupying both *His Own throne in the heavens* and *David’s throne on the earth*, blessings will flow out to the Gentile nations *through the seed of Abraham* (“*possessor of heaven and earth [through inheritance]*”) *from both heavenly and earthly spheres*.

And when a Christian sees Christ, within this framework, as *King-Priest*, “after the order of Melchizedek,” this *should* drive him to manifest the same attitude toward the things of this world as Abraham manifested toward the things of the world after he met Melchizedek. In the words of the song, “the things of this world” *should* “grow strangely dim.” The Christian *should* possess an entirely new perspective on the present in relation to the future, and vice versa.

But, how often is the preceding *really* the case in the lives of Christians? How many *really* understand these things? Or, how many *really* view matters within the framework of “the light of His glory and grace”?

And therein lies the secret to questions surrounding Heb. 6:3. We are dealing with the *very choicest* of God’s choice things which He has set aside for Christians, and God has placed certain *conditions* around allowing Christians to move into a knowledge of the Son in this realm (cf. Phil. 3:10-14). God knows what is in man; and He also knows what man coming into a knowledge and understanding of these things will, too often, do.

God knows that numerous Christians, after coming into a knowledge and understanding of Christ as *King-Priest*, “after the order of

Melchizedek,” would not manifest the same attitude at all toward the world as Abraham manifested after he met Melchizedek. They would, instead, either continue in or one day return to their worldly interest and involvement (*cf.* I John 2:15-17), which is within a world presently ruled by Satan and his angels. And by so doing, such Christians could only bring *shame* upon Christ’s name (this will be further dealt with later in the chapter within the framework of that which is stated in v. 6).

The matter surrounding God allowing or not allowing a Christian to go on unto maturity though should be viewed more within the framework of man’s attitude toward these things than it should within the framework of God’s omniscience *per se*. Scripture clearly states, “If any man will do [‘is willing to do’] his will, he shall know of the doctrine...” (John 7:17).

That is, Do you *really* want to know Christ as “author [‘source’] of eternal salvation [salvation for the age (the Messianic Era)]”? (Heb. 5:9). Are you *serious* about the present warfare and one day coming into a realization of the proffered inheritance? If so, there should be no reason why God would not allow you to go on into a knowledge and understanding of the various things surrounding His Son’s coming reign over the earth.

But, if on the other hand, an *interest* in and a *seriousness* about the matter are not present, there is no Biblical reason why God should allow such a person to go on into a knowledge and understanding of these things. In fact, within a Biblical perspective, the opposite would exist instead. From a Biblical perspective, God would not allow such a person to go on, for a revealed reason.

And with this in mind, we’re ready to go on into the heart of the warning and see the explanation to verse three from the perspective of another type.

FOR IT IS IMPOSSIBLE...

Hebrews 6:4-6 is looked upon by numerous Christians as probably the most difficult, and sometimes controversial, passage in all Scripture. And the reason why the passage is looked upon after this fashion is because of an erroneous interpretative approach. The

passage is invariably approached from the standpoint of teachings surrounding the Christians' presently possessed eternal salvation — salvation “by grace through faith.”

The passage though, as previously stated, doesn't deal with this subject. And, not dealing with this subject, it is understandable why those who seek to interpret the passage from the standpoint of teachings surrounding salvation by grace through faith find themselves in unfamiliar surroundings. And not only is this the case, but they also invariably find themselves being forced into erroneous views concerning salvation.

Then, beyond the preceding, the correct subject matter is not even being dealt with. Rather, through this erroneous interpretative approach, the correct subject matter is, instead, being completely obscured. And such can only foster the present work of the enemy as it is outlined in II Cor. 4:4 — *blinding the minds of Christians* relative to “the gospel of the glory of Christ” (ASV).

Contextually, Heb. 6:4-6 must be looked upon as dealing with four basic issues surrounding Christians, from the standpoint of *possibility*: a) Christians coming into a mature knowledge and understanding of the things surrounding Christ as *King-Priest*, “after the order of Melchizedek,” b) the same Christians falling away (apostatizing), c) that which would befall such Christians, and d) how such an act on the part of Christians would negatively reflect upon Christ Himself.

These four issues will be dealt with under two subsequent headings. Issues under “a” and “b” will be dealt with under the first; then issues under “c” and “d” will be dealt with under the second.

1. ONCE ENLIGHTENED...BUT FELL AWAY

Certain descriptive words appearing in verses four and five make it virtually impossible to look upon these verses as describing unsaved people.

There is the word, “enlightened” (v. 4), which is used in Heb. 10:32, translated “illuminated.” And according to I Cor. 2:14, “the natural man” cannot be enlightened or illuminated in spiritual matters. Then, beyond that, the passage is dealing with things other than the “milk” of the Word; it is dealing with “strong meat” (5:12-14).

Then there is the word, “tasted” (vv. 4, 5). This is the same word

used for Christ *tasting death* “for every man” in Heb. 2:9. The experiences entered into by those in Heb. 6:4, 5 *must* be looked upon as a *tasting to the same extent* that Christ *tasted* “death” at Calvary. The latter was full and complete, and the former must be also.

And the last descriptive word is “partakers” (v. 4). This is the same word translated “fellows” in Heb. 1:9 and “partakers” in Heb. 3:1, 14. This is the word *metochoi*, which could be better translated, “companions.” It is used in chapters one and three describing Christ’s co-heirs, His *companions*, in the coming day of His power.

Being “enlightened,” tasting “of the heavenly gift,” being made “partakers of the Holy Spirit,” tasting “the good word of God,” and tasting “the powers of the world [‘age’] to come” form a description of Christians progressively coming into a mature knowledge and understanding of the things surrounding Melchizedek from chapter five. It, thus, has to do with Christians coming into a mature knowledge and understanding of Christ’s coming reign over the earth, with His companions.

Then, spiritual lessons surrounding the possibility of Christians *falling away* after coming into this mature state is drawn from the type dealt with prior to the introduction of Melchizedek in chapter five — the account of the Israelites under Moses (chs. 3, 4).

The Israelites under Moses passed through similar experiences within the framework of their earthly calling, climaxed by their hearing the report of the twelve spies and tasting the actual fruits of the land which they had brought back with them. And that which happened to the Israelites at this point (in the type) is where one must go in order to understand the falling away and accompanying statements (in the antitype) in Heb. 6:6.

The Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea were in possession of the Word of God (received at Sinai), God dwelled in their midst (in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle, built and erected at Sinai), they had heard the report of the spies, and they had tasted the actual fruits of the land (brought back by the spies). And occupying this position, they were then ready to enter the land, conquer and possess the land, and subsequently realize their calling in the land as God’s firstborn son.

They, at this point, were in possession of what could only be looked upon as a *mature knowledge* of the whole matter. They under-

stood their calling and that which lay out ahead. And it is at this point that they fell away and, within the framework of that stated in the antitype in Heb. 6:4-6, found it impossible to be *renewed* “again unto repentance.”

2. IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW AGAIN...BECAUSE...

The report which the spies brought back concerning the land was both *positive* and *negative*. It was a good land, flowing with “milk and honey”; but the inhabitants, which included the *Nephilim*, were strong and lived in walled cities (Num. 13:26-29, 32, 33).

Caleb and Joshua, exhorting the people, said, “Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it.” But the remaining spies said, “We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we” (Num. 13:30, 31).

The people of Israel heard the report and both exhortations, but they believed the *evil report* of the ten spies rather than the *true report* of Caleb and Joshua. And their resulting actions said it all. They wept, began to murmur against Moses and Aaron, and then looked back to Egypt, wishing that they had never left. Then, to climax matters, they sought to appoint another leader and return to Egypt (Num. 14:1-4).

They, in the words of the antitype, *fell away*. They had turned their backs upon God, and God, correspondingly, turned His back upon them. Because of that which had transpired, the most severe judgment possible was pronounced upon the entire accountable generation. Every single individual comprising that generation, twenty years old and above, save Caleb and Joshua, was to be overthrown in the wilderness.

And once this apostasy had occurred (with its corresponding pronounced judgment), there could be no *renewal* “again unto repentance” (as in the antitype). And the reason, drawing again from the antitype (“crucify to themselves the Son of God”), is because they had brought shame and reproach upon the One (God) dwelling in their midst, Who was to have led them victoriously into the land.

(“Repentance” simply means a *change of mind*. And in both the type and antitype, the change of mind is *on the part of God*, not on the part of the Israelites [type] or on the part of Christians [antitype].)

The Israelites, the very next day, repented (changed their minds). They “rose up early” and sought to “go up unto the place” which the Lord had promised. *But the Lord didn't repent* (He didn't change His mind). He was no longer with them relative to their entering the land and victoriously combating the enemy; and, consequently, the Israelites, trying to enter apart from the Lord's leadership, were smitten and driven back (Num. 14:40-45).

And that's what Heb. 6:4-6 is about. If God allows a Christian to come into a mature knowledge of His Son's coming reign as *King-Priest*, “after the order of Melchizedek,” and that Christian apostatizes, the same thing will occur as that which occurred with the Israelites under Moses (it would have to, for the antitype must follow the type in exact detail).

The Christian would be *cut off* insofar as those things surrounding his calling were concerned. He would not be allowed to subsequently enter that heavenly land to which he had been called and victoriously combat the enemy therein. He could never be brought back to the position which he had previously occupied. Which is to say, he could not be *renewed* “again unto repentance.”

Though the Christian may later change *his mind* about the matter (as the Israelites did), God would not change *His mind* (as in the type). The Christian, like the Israelites, would be overthrown on the right side of the blood but on the wrong side of the goal of his calling.

And the reason for such severe judgment on God's part results from the fact that, through this act, such a Christian could only bring shame and reproach upon the name of Christ. Note the entire expression, “crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh [‘afresh’ is not in the Greek text, though implied], and put him to an open shame” (v. 6). The thought has to do with the *shame and reproach surrounding Calvary*, not with subjecting the Son to a second crucifixion, for such an act is impossible (Heb. 7:27).

But subjecting the Son to this same type shame and reproach at the hands of the world is very possible today; and such shame and reproach can result from the act of any Christian falling away in the antitype of the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea.

A Christian though, to fall away after this fashion, would have to do two things: a) He would first have to come into a mature knowl-

edge and understanding of the things surrounding Christ's coming reign over the earth, and b) he would then have to apostatize after the same fashion in which the Israelites apostatized (looking away from Moses and the land [an earthly land], back to Egypt; *i.e.*, looking away from Christ and the land [a heavenly land], back to the world).

And doing this, a Christian would be subjecting God's Son to the same type *humiliation and shame* which He experienced at Calvary. The expression, "crucify to themselves," is actually explained by the remainder of the verse — "put [expose] him to an open shame." It is subjecting the world's coming Ruler to *humiliation and shame* through the one "in Christ" turning from that which lies out ahead and focusing his attention back on the present world system under the incumbent ruler, Satan.

And this is something which *God will not allow*. Thus, the verse, "And this will we do [we will go on to maturity in the things surrounding Christ's coming reign over the earth], if God permit [if God permits us to go on]."

6

Two Kinds of Growth

For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessings from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned (Heb. 6:7, 8).

The subject matter, contextually, must center around that which has preceded. The writer uses an illustration drawn from nature which corresponds to that which he has been discussing. It is an illustration concerning two kinds of growth, resulting in two types of fruit.

This illustration would refer back to the immediate context, which deals with maturity in the faith. It deals with Christian growth or nongrowth and a corresponding fruit-bearing in relation to each. The two types of fruit presented though are quite different, with one type being looked upon as *barrenness* in other passages of Scripture (*cf.* Mark 11:13; James 2:20 [*ref.* ASV; some mss. have the word *arge*, “barren,” rather than *nekros*, “dead,” in this verse. Regardless though, “dead” or “barren,” in the sense spoken of here, would be the same]).

The unsaved are not in view in Heb. 6:7, 8; nor is one’s eternal destiny in view. The passage deals strictly with those who are already saved, those in a position to bring forth fruit.

Drawing from the type in the context, the passage deals with things beyond Exodus, chapter twelve — with man at a point beyond the death of the firstborn. It deals with man in a position to bring forth fruit relative to the hope of his calling.

Preceding events surrounding the death of the firstborn, there is no such thing as man being placed in a position of this nature. Prior to the point of salvation, a person is connected only with the earth. He is connected with Adam, who was made from “the dust of the ground” (Gen. 2:7). And at the time of the fall, the dust of the ground came under a curse: “...cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee...” (Gen. 3:17b, 18a).

Fallen man is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 2:1). And insofar as works or fruit-bearing are concerned, he can only do two things: 1) He can only produce works or bring forth fruit in association with the earth, with which he finds himself connected (which is under a curse), and 2) he can only be active after this fashion within the sphere of the one life he possesses (“natural,” *i.e.*, “soulical” [cf. I Cor. 2:14ff]).

He could *never*, in an eternity of time, rise above his connection with the earth; nor, in the same eternity of time, could he remove himself from the “natural.” Thus, he, in and of himself, could *never* bring forth anything acceptable to God. All which he, in his fallen state, might consider as “righteous” would only be looked upon by God after one fashion — “as filthy rags” (Isa. 64:6).

Man has a *spiritual problem*, which had its origin in the fall. Man, at that time, found himself separated from God; and, apart from Divine intervention, resulting in redemption, that’s where he would not only continue to remain today but for all eternity as well.

Unredeemed man’s association with the “natural” leaves him *alienated from God*; and his association with the “earth” leaves him *destined for destruction*.

This is the reason man *MUST* be born from above, which is a spiritual birth. *There is no alternative*. If he would escape the state in which he presently finds himself, he *must* escape it through God’s provided means.

Unredeemed man has no capacity whatsoever to act either relative to or within the “spiritual realm.” Insofar as spiritual matters are concerned, unredeemed man has no more ability to act than any person in any graveyard has the ability to act physically. Both are *dead* — one spiritually, the other physically. And, apart from Divine intervention, neither could ever make even the most minute move

conceivable — one in the spiritual realm, the other in the physical realm.

Unredeemed man, to escape his present state, thus *must* be made alive spiritually (John 3:6). He *must* be brought from his dead, alienated state to a living, nonalienated state. That is, he *must* be removed from his present state and be placed in an entirely different state. He *must* pass “from death unto life” (John 5:24).

That’s why Jesus told Nicodemus, “Ye *must* be born again [*lit.*, ‘born from above’]” (John 3:7). *This is the great imperative.* A man can make no move toward the Red Sea and the things lying beyond (Ex. 13ff) until he has first settled the matter surrounding the death of the firstborn (Ex. 12).

Until he has settled this matter he can never be associated with anything other than *Egypt* and the things of that land. But once he has settled this matter, a *new land* comes into view. Once he has settled this matter, he finds himself associated with a land removed from Egypt.

But, there is still a problem.

And that still-existing problem is what Heb. 6:7, 8 is about. Though redeemed man finds himself associated with a land removed from Egypt, the land of Egypt is not done away with. The land of Egypt remains in existence.

And, correspondingly, though redeemed man possesses a new nature, the old nature is still present. It is as in the original type in Gen. 1:3-5 when God “commanded the light to shine out of darkness” (II Cor. 4:6). The darkness remained, though light now shined forth out of that darkness (*ref.* the author’s book, FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN, Ch. VII).

Redeemed man thus finds himself in a position where he can go in either of two directions. He can either fix his attention on the land out ahead, or he can turn and fix his attention on the land from which he was called.

Insofar as his eternal destiny is concerned, it could never make one iota of difference which direction he takes. But, insofar as the hope of his calling — the purpose for his salvation — is concerned, it would make every difference.

Hebrews 6:7, 8 presents man with a dual capacity in this realm. That is, he possesses the capacity to go in either direction. Thus, not

only contextually, but textually as well, it is evident that the passage is dealing only with those who have passed “from death unto life.” Those remaining “dead in trespasses and sins” do not possess this dual capacity and cannot be in view at all.

(Man must be made alive “spiritually” [John 3:6] *because* “God is spirit: and they that worship him *must* worship him in spirit and in truth” [John 4:24; NASB, NIV]. Consequently, in order for man to find himself in a nonalienated state once again, he must, through Divine intervention (for he himself is powerless to act), be restored “spiritually”; and this can be accomplished *only* through the spiritual birth from above.

John 4:24 has nothing to do with God in a physical sense, as the verse is often understood [stating, on the basis of this verse, that God does not have a physical existence]. The word “spirit” is anarthrous in the Greek text, referring to God’s *character* rather than to His *identity*. The expression is used in the same sense as another expression by John, “God is love” [I John 4:16]. And the latter has no more to do with the physical than the former, or vice versa. Both refer to God’s *character*.

This is the reason that the natural man finds himself alienated from God. He, within the framework of his *character*, acts in the “natural”; and that is the only sphere in which it is possible for him to act. But God, within the framework of His *character*, acts in the “spiritual,” *never* the “natural.” And one is totally incompatible with the other. Ishmael cannot act within the sphere occupied by Isaac. *It is impossible*.

Thus, the “natural man” cannot worship God “in spirit and in truth”; nor can he exercise “faith,” apart from which it is impossible to please God [Heb. 11:6]. Only the person having experienced the spiritual birth from above is in a position to do either.

But, such a person may or may not conduct his affairs in the realm of the spiritual, though Scripture, time after time, exhorts him to so do. Those things which characterize his life may or may not be in line with those things which characterize God, though they should be. He still possesses the old nature [the natural (soulical) man, connected with the earth], though he [unlike unredeemed man] also possesses the new nature [the spiritual man, connected with God, another land, etc.]. And a Christian is *fully capable* of following either nature, going in either direction.

And for this reason Scripture is filled with spiritual lessons, exhor-

tations, and warnings concerning the overall matter surrounding the Christians' calling. And herein, as well, lies the reason for the necessity of proper spiritual growth unto maturity, for redeemed man lives within the sphere of which ever nature is cultivated, nurtured, and fed.)

BLESSINGS FROM GOD

Several lines of teaching can be drawn from Heb. 6:7, 8. One would have to do with redeemed man in relation to two lands — one earthly, the other heavenly. Another line of teaching would contrast the two lands themselves — one land having to do with our natural birth and the other with our spiritual birth. However, the latter (referring to the two lands) would still have to be understood in conjunction with the former (referring to redeemed man), for one cannot be separated from the other.

1. *THE LAND OF CANAAN*

That heavenly land *to which* Christians under Christ have been called (in a place removed from the earth) is typified by the earthly land *to which* the Israelites under Moses were called (Canaan). And the land *from which* the Israelites were called (Egypt) would typify the land *from which* Christians have been called (the earth).

Just as the Israelites were to separate themselves from Egypt and fix their attention on the land set before them, Christians are to separate themselves from this world and fix their attention on the land set before them. Both callings thus concern two lands — one *from which the person has been called*, and the other *to which the person has been called*; and God draws spiritual lessons from the former calling (the Israelites under Moses) to teach His people great spiritual truths concerning the latter calling (Christians under Christ).

The land of Canaan was the place wherein the Israelites under Moses could realize both a “rest” and an “inheritance” (Deut. 12:9). God said of the land of Canaan, “But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven: A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year” (Deut. 11:11, 12).

“Rain,” in this respect, is associated with *God’s blessings*. In Deut. 32:2, the Lord states, “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.”

Then during the coming Messianic Era the presence or absence of “rain” is associated with the presence or absence of blessings. On the one hand, the prophesied “latter rain” is associated with blessings for Israel, which will result in blessings for the nations (Joel 2:23); and, on the other hand, the absence of “rain” is associated with a withholding of blessings from the nations (Zech. 14:17-19).

(Though the land of Canaan is part of the earth, which is under a curse, it is used in an eschatological sense within the framework of the type [referring to that day when the earth will be removed from the present curse]. In this respect, it is used of both *the rest set before us* [to be realized in that coming seventh day, earth’s coming Sabbath] and a *land contrasted with Egypt*. In the latter respect, *the land of Canaan* would be associated with “the spiritual” and *the land of Egypt* with “the natural.”)

Thus, the land of Canaan corresponds to the land of Heb. 6:7, which “drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it,” which “receiveth blessings from God.” And the land of Canaan (to which the Israelites under Moses were called) is set forth as a type of that heavenly land (to which Christians under Christ have been called).

Contextually, this verse would have to do with those who have been allowed to go on unto maturity within the framework of Heb. 6:1-6, remaining faithful to their calling. The blessings in view would have to do with being *enlightened* concerning the things out ahead — *tasting* “of the heavenly gift...the good word of God, and the powers of the world [‘age’] to come” — and with *being made* “partakers [‘companions’] of the Holy Spirit” in these matters, as He leads individuals “into all truth” (vv. 4, 5).

And further, contextually, the verse would have to do with that coming day when Christ will be the the great King-Priest, “after the order of Melchizedek” (5:5-14). That will be the day when the blessings of God will find their ultimate fulfillment insofar as man on the present earth is concerned. In that day the blessings of God will

flow out through the Seed of Abraham to the Gentile nations from both heavenly and earthly spheres. And the Seed of Abraham, in that day, will dwell in these lands (heavenly and earthly), corresponding to the land of Heb. 6:7.

2. CALEB AND JOSHUA

Caleb and Joshua — two of the Israelites under Moses at Kadesh-Barnea, and two of the twelve spies sent in to obtain a report concerning the land of Canaan — had a proper respect for God's calling and the land set before them. All twelve of the spies first presented a uniform report to Israel concerning the land (a land flowing with "milk and honey [they had brought back some of the actual fruits of the land for the people to see]," but strong Gentile nations, infiltrated by the *Nephilim*, dwelled in the land). Then Caleb and Joshua, apart from the other ten, "stilled the people before Moses" and exhorted them after a positive fashion: "Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:26-30; cf. v. 33).

Though the enemy was stronger and more numerous than the Israelites, Caleb and Joshua believed that which God had to say concerning their calling and the land set before them. They had seen God's previous dealings with the Egyptians the night of the Passover (Ex. 12:29ff), they had seen God's miraculous parting of the waters of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:21, 22), they had seen God's destruction of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:23-28), they had seen God's provision of food and water in the wilderness (Ex. 16:4-18; 17:1-7), and they had seen God's continued provision of victory over anyone who stood in the way of their march toward Sinai and their subsequent march toward the land of Canaan (Ex. 17:8-14).

(In fact, God's attitude toward anyone standing in Israel's way was such that He not only completely destroyed the Egyptian army which moved into the sea after Israel ["there remained not so much as one of them" (Ex. 14:28)] but He pronounced a terminal, annihilating judgment upon the "*first of the nations*" [Num. 24:20] to war against Israel in the wilderness. God said to Moses: "Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" [Ex. 17:14; cf. Deut. 25:17-19].

The Amalekite nation existed for hundreds of years following the Exodus under Moses; but, during the days of Hezekiah, this nation was finally destroyed after the fashion which God had previously stated at the time of the Exodus centuries before [I Chron. 4:39-43]. And, as a consequence, the only available record today that this nation ever even existed can be found only one place — in the pages of Scripture. Secular history knows nothing of the Amalekites, for God destroyed this nation to the extent that man, in his secular world, can find no trace of it whatsoever.)

Caleb and Joshua had seen and experienced these things; and they knew that it was through the Lord's strength and power, not their own, that deliverance or provision had been forthcoming at every point. The Lord had slain the firstborn in Egypt (Ex. 12:12), the Lord had destroyed the Egyptian army, and the Lord was the One Who warred with Amalek (eventually blotting him out of existence [Ex. 17:14-16]). And the Lord was the One Who, as well, over the previous one and one-half years, had miraculously provided food and water in the wilderness for the Israelites (Ex. 16:4; 17:5-7).

Thus, for Caleb and Joshua (and it should have been the same for the remainder of the nation), it was really a simple matter to look out ahead to the land set before them and believe, regardless of the strength of the land's inhabitants or the comparative weakness and seeming inability of the Israelites, that the people of Israel could "go up at once, and possess it." The people of Israel would be "well able to overcome it," but not *in their own strength and power*. They, as before, would have to rely upon the Lord, with *His strength and power*; and by so doing, through *faith* in the Lord, *nothing* could stand in their way as they marched into the land and victoriously engaged the enemy.

But there was another side to the matter, and that was the attitude exhibited by the ten remaining spies, with their "evil report." They, in a *faithless* manner, overlooking all God's works which had preceded, said to the Israelites, "We be not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we" (Num. 13:31).

It is these two reports, with the resulting action of Caleb and Joshua on the one hand and the remainder of the nation on the other, which establish a basis for much of that which is taught in Heb. 3-6. And nearing the end of this whole section in Heb. 6:7, 8, these two

totally incompatible ways in which the Israelites viewed the land set before them (typifying the two totally incompatible ways Christians can view the land set before them) are set forth in a very simple illustration, drawn from nature.

Within one sphere, there are *acceptance and blessings*; within the other, there are *rejection and curses*. And no middle ground lies between the two (*cf.* Matt. 12:30). Thus, these two verses outline the only two options open to any Christian: a) that of one day coming into a realization of his calling (v. 7), or b) that of one day being overthrown short of the goal of his calling (v. 8).

REJECTED...

The land of Canaan is set forth, on the one hand, corresponding to the land of Heb. 6:7; then it is set forth, on the other hand, as being sharply contrasted with the land of Egypt, which corresponds to the earth under a curse. And though the curse will be lifted for one thousand years (during the coming Messianic Era), at the end of this time “the earth...and the works that are therein shall be burned up” (*cf.* II Peter 3:10-13).

It is the land of Egypt which corresponds to the land in Heb. 6:8 — that which bears “thorns and briars...whose end is to be burned [set in sharp contrast to the land of v. 7].” And the land of Egypt is a type of the world in which man presently lives — a world under a curse, which brings forth “thorns also and thistles” (Gen. 3:17, 18).

Whether it be the earth under a curse or natural man connected with the earth, insofar as God is concerned, there can only be total, complete *rejection*. “That which beareth thorns and briars is *rejected*.”

The reference in Hebrews though is not to unredeemed man on the earth (although he has been rejected). The reference is to redeemed man who looks to that land which bears “thorns and briars” (v. 8) rather than to that land which brings forth “herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed” (v. 7). The reference is to the antitype of those Israelites under Moses at Kadesh-Barnea who believed the evil report of the ten spies concerning the land of Canaan, causing them to look back to Egypt rather than out ahead to the land of their calling (Num. 13:31-14:4).

These Israelites looked back to a land which bore “thorns and briars” rather than out ahead to a land which brought forth “herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed.” And their subsequent overthrow in the wilderness was completely in line with that which God had to say about Egypt, the land to which they had sought to return. Relative to their calling and the land set before them (called *out of Egypt* to dwell *in the land of Canaan* as God’s firstborn son), they were “rejected.” They were overthrown in the wilderness, short of this goal.

And the warning to Christians is that they can, by following the same example, only suffer the same fate. Eternally saved? Yes! But, just as the Israelites under Moses were overthrown on the right side of the blood at a place short of the goal of their calling, so can Christians under Christ be overthrown for the same reason, after the identical fashion (*cf.* I Cor. 9:24-10:11).

1. RIGHTEOUS LOT

The experiences of “righteous” Lot (II Peter 2:7, 8) form another Old Testament type — from a different perspective — concerning redeemed man’s calling from the world to a land removed from the world. And, within this account, the type is quite instructive concerning the inability of a carnal, worldly person (though redeemed) to act in any depth at all within the “spiritual.”

Lot was among those whom Abraham rescued in the battle of the kings in Genesis, chapter fourteen. And, from the record, it seems apparent that Lot was with Abraham when Melchizedek came forth with bread and wine following this battle. However, it was Abraham alone who was blessed by Melchizedek and was allowed to understand enough about that which was happening to make him lose all interest in the things which the world had to offer (Gen. 14:18-24).

Nothing like that which Abraham experienced is recorded concerning Lot. Though he, in all likelihood, was present with Abraham at this time, he apparently saw and understood little or nothing beyond the “letter” of the matter.

(Note one facet of teaching from this aspect of the type relative to Christians in the coming kingdom. All will be present when Christ exercises the Melchizedek priesthood, but not all will be blessed.)

Abraham and Lot, in this respect, would fit within the framework of Heb. 6:1-6. One was allowed to go on into an understanding of the things surrounding Melchizedek, but not so with the other. Viewing their individual backgrounds, the reason becomes evident; and viewing that which occurred in the lives of these two men in subsequent years, the end result is quite instructive.

Abraham lived in the “plains of Mamre,” near Hebron, located in the mountainous terrain of the high country (Gen. 13:18; 14:13; 18:1; 23:17-19; 35:27). Lot, on the other hand, lived in Sodom, in the “plain of Jordan,” in the low-lying country (Gen. 13:10-12; 14:12; 19:1).

The difference in these two places would be similar to the difference between Jerusalem and Jericho. Jerusalem was located in the mountainous terrain of the high country, but Jericho was located near the lowest point in the land, near the Dead Sea at the southern end of the Jordan Plain (where Sodom and the other cities of the plain are believed to have once existed).

Jerusalem and Jericho are set in contrast to one another in Scripture. One is “the city of the great King,” from which blessings for the nations of the earth will flow during the coming age (Psa. 48:2; Zech. 14:1-21); but “a curse” rests upon the other (Joshua 6:18, 26). And the two places where Abraham and Lot lived are set in similar contrast.

Lot’s downward path can be seen in different places from Gen. 13:10 to Gen. 19:1, and the results of his downward path can be seen in Gen. 14:12-24; 19:1-38.

Lot “lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere...” He then “chose him all the plain of Jordan...dwelled in the cities of the plain, and pitched his tent toward Sodom.” And in the process of doing this, he *separated* himself from Abraham (13:10-12). That is, the carnal believer *separated* himself from the spiritual believer.

The day came when Lot got into trouble and had to be rescued by Abraham (14:12-16 [numerous spiritual lessons could be drawn from this account]). But his long association with the cities of the plain apparently prevented him from seeing beyond the “letter” when Melchizedek subsequently appeared (14:18-24); and his failure to see beyond the “letter,” coupled with his long prior association with the cities of the plain, eventually resulted in his not only again living in

Sodom but also in his being actively involved within the affairs of the city (19:1 [affairs of a city were carried on by men seated at the gate, as was Lot]).

Abraham, during this same time though, dwelled in the high country, removed from the cities of the plain. And, apart from instances such as his rescue of Lot and his intercession on behalf of the righteous in Sodom (14:14-16; 18:23-33), the affairs of the people in the Jordan Plain were of no moment to him.

Thus, when the day arrived for the destruction of the cities of the plain — as the day will arrive for the destruction of the present world system — two completely contrasting saved individuals can be seen.

And that's what's in view in Heb. 6:7, 8, along with fruit-bearing in each sphere — one of value, the other worthless (*cf.* I Cor. 3:12).

Some Christians have been allowed to go on and see that which is taught concerning Melchizedek. Consequently, their interest doesn't lie in the things of the Jordan Plain but in the things of the high country. And they dwell where their interest lies.

Other Christians though, as Lot, have not been allowed to go on and see that which is taught concerning Melchizedek (and, invariably, for the same reason set forth in Lot's life). Consequently, their interest doesn't lie in the things of the high country (concerning which they have little to no knowledge) but in those of the valley instead. And they too dwell where their interest lies.

2. *ESCAPE FROM SODOM*

The Jordan Plain with its cities was destroyed during Abraham and Lot's day by "brimstone and fire" from heaven (Gen. 19:24, 25). And though Lot was delivered from Sodom prior to this destruction, his deliverance was, as in the words of I Cor. 3:15, "so as by ['through'] fire."

Prior to this destruction, Lot was placed outside Sodom and commanded, "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed" (19:17).

Note what's involved in this five-part command. First, "Escape for thy life ['soul']." This is the saving of the soul/life. Physical life in this instance? Yes! But far more than just the physical is involved, as

becomes evident from the remainder of the command.

The next three parts relate how the soul/life can be saved: a) “Look not behind thee” (cf. Luke 9:62; Heb. 12:1, 2), b) “neither stay thou in all the plain” (don’t remain in the low-lying country [equivalent to Egypt]), and c) “escape to the mountain” (a “mountain” is used in Scripture symbolizing a *kingdom*, particularly *Christ’s coming Kingdom* [cf. Isa. 2:1-5; Dan. 2:35, 44, 45; Matt. 17:1-5]).

(Note: Contrary to some English translations, the word “mountain” in the Hebrew text is singular, as in the KJV. the reference is to a “mountain” symbolizing a *kingdom*, not to “mountains” symbolizing *kingdoms*. A distinction between “mountain” and “mountains” in this respect can be seen in Isa. 2:2, 3 — “...the mountain of the Lord’s house [the kingdom of Christ] shall be established at the top of the mountains [all the individual earthly kingdoms]...”)

The escape *from the plain to the mountain* is an escape *from Egypt to Canaan* — to that land associated with the coming kingdom. This is where one’s attention is to be centered. This is where he is to dwell.

Then the last part relates what will happen to a person should he not follow the Lord’s command in this respect: “lest thou be consumed.” That is, he will be consumed by that which will itself be consumed; and, as a consequence, he will lose his soul/life.

Lot though had no concept of that which was being stated; and, in reality, even though the Lord had given him this five-part command, he couldn’t follow it.

His spiritual senses had not been sufficiently developed or exercised. He could do no more than act after a carnal fashion, which he did (19:19, 20). And this is the apparent reason why the Lord, apart from remonstrance, honored his request to be allowed to go to Zoar instead of the mountain (19:21-23).

However, Zoar — a city in the plain, spared for Lot — wasn’t the last stop. After the destruction of the other cities of the plain, Lot became afraid to dwell in Zoar and moved out into the mountain to which he had previously been commanded to escape. But, unlike Abraham, Lot dwelled on the mountain in “a cave” (19:30) rather than standing in a place “before the Lord” (19:27; cf. 18:22). He, in effect, dwelled in a place of *shame* rather than in a place of *honor*.

And therein is the account of two pilgrims who governed their lives after two entirely different fashions, one day arriving at the same destination and finding themselves occupying positions completely commensurate with the fashion in which they had governed their lives during their previous pilgrim journey. Thus will it be with Christians *on the Mountain* in that coming day.

7

Things That Accompany Salvation

But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end: That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises (Heb. 6:9-12).

In the third of the five major warnings in Hebrews, the writer first dealt with the negative side of matters. He began by revealing that the recipients of his message were spiritually immature; but, at the same time, he exhorted them to “go on unto perfection [‘maturity’]” (5:11-6:6). Then, by way of illustration, drawing from nature, he looked at the matter from both positive and negative aspects (vv. 7, 8). And following that, the writer turned entirely to the positive side and finished the exhortation (begun in v. 1) after this fashion.

Verse nine could perhaps be better understood by translating:

“But, beloved, though we are speaking this way, we are persuaded better things of you, things which accompany [*i.e.*, ‘things which have to do with’] salvation” (*ref. NIV*).

Concerning that to which the writer referred — that which he had been speaking about — he had begun by dealing with the fact that the recipients of his message were “dull of hearing,” *babes* in Christ (5:11-14). Then he dealt with the possibility of a Christian *falling away* after he had been allowed to go on unto maturity, resulting in the Christian (through such a falling away) bringing shame and reproach upon the

name of Christ (6:1-6). And all of this would compare, in the world of nature, to bringing forth fruit (works, resulting in fruit-bearing) comparable to “thorns and briers,” which could only be “*rejected... whose end is to be burned*” (6:8).

But before paralleling *falling away* with the thought of bringing forth fruit comparable to “thorns and briers,” the writer introduced another type fruit-bearing — comparable to bringing forth “herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed” (v. 7) — anticipating the positive side of the matter beginning in verse nine.

The nurturing source for this type fruit is “the rain [from heaven],” and this fruit is associated with “blessings from God.” And both the nurturing source and the blessings come *from above*. The thought has to do with *fruit-bearing through the proper nurturing source, followed by blessings from God*.

Contextually, for a Christian, this would have to do with drinking in the Water of life, the Word of God, which comes from above (*cf.* John 2:6-9; 4:14); and, through normal growth and activity after this fashion (feeding upon the Word, and, at the same time, allowing works to emanate out of faith [faithfulness]), the individual would mature in the faith and bring forth fruit of a proper kind. That is, as illustrated from the world of nature, he would bring forth “herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed” rather than “thorns and briers.”

BETTER THINGS

The recipients of this message were exhorted to leave the infantile things upon which they had been feeding and go on unto maturity. They were exhorted to stop laying foundations and begin building upon the foundational truths which they already understood (vv. 1, 2). And the writer was persuaded “better things” of them than a falling away in the process, with its corresponding fruit-bearing described by the words, “thorns and briers” (vv. 3-9).

Within the text, “better things” are the “things that accompany [‘have to do with’] salvation.” One parallels the other in this respect. Or, to state the matter another way, that encompassed within the expression “better things” from verse nine is associated with fruit-bearing from verse seven, which, in turn, is intimately connected with

works from verse ten (works emanating out of faithfulness, resulting in fruit-bearing of a proper type); and the goal in view — through this interrelated process of faith and works, resulting in fruit-bearing — is “salvation” (v. 9).

Viewing the matter within the scope of the revealed fashion, one should easily be able to see what *salvation* is in view. It can't be salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9; Heb. 1:3), for our presently possessed salvation cannot, after any fashion, be associated with man's works, with fruit-bearing. The salvation which is ours as a free gift through faith in Christ was wrought, in its entirety, through the work of Another. And not only has the work been completed, but God is satisfied with this finished work. Nothing can ever be added or taken away (John 19:30).

The salvation referred to in Heb. 6:9 is the same salvation to which the writer referred earlier in the warning (5:9). And, before that, he had referred to this salvation as “so great salvation” (2:3). Then later in the book he refers to this salvation in connection with Christ's return (9:27, 28). And then after that he refers to the same salvation as “the saving of the soul” (10:39).

The salvation in view is connected with *a future inheritance* (1:2, 14), which is acquired “through faith and patience” (6:12, 15). It is “the hope set before us,” which is “an anchor of the soul” (6:18, 19).

This is the salvation with which Hebrews concerns itself throughout. The entire book deals with this salvation, not with salvation by grace through faith. And when an individual grasps this fundamental truth, not only will the Book of Hebrews begin to open to his understanding but so will numerous other sections of Scripture as well.

1. SALVATION BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH

Let it be forever said that a Christian's presently possessed eternal salvation was acquired completely separate from any works or merit on unredeemed man's part. Works or merit, pertaining to eternal salvation, *all* have to do with Christ's finished work at Calvary; and man is saved solely on the basis of *that which Christ has done*, not on the basis of *anything which man has done, is doing, or will ever do*.

The simple fact is that Christ completed the work, in its entirety, because unredeemed man is totally incapable of acting in this realm,

even in the most minute degree. Not only is he *dead*, rendering him powerless to act, but he is also *alienated* from God. And apart from Christ's action on his behalf, he would forever remain in his present *dead, alienated* state (Eph. 2:1, 12).

To illustrate man's inability to act in this realm, refer to a Greek word used in I Cor. 15:52 — the word *atomos*, from which we derive our English word "atom." The word is translated in this verse, "a moment." The reference is to the length of the time which will elapse within the scope of Christians being removed from the earth (raised from the dead and translated) and appearing in the Lord's presence in the air. This will occur in an *atomos* of time, further described as comparable to the time-lapse in "the twinkling of an eye."

The word *atomos* has to do with "minuteness"; and in I Cor. 15:52 it refers to the smallest unit into which time can be divided, beyond which there can be no further division. A microsecond (one millionth of a second) is a common expression used in our computerized world today. But there are divisions beyond that — a billionth of a second, a trillionth of a second, etc.

Atomos, in I Cor. 15:52, referring to "time," goes to the farthest point conceivable. This word refers to a particle of time so minute that the only way to really describe it is through the use of the word *atomos* itself. That is how fast the future resurrection and translation of Christians will occur.

Now, bring the word *atomos* over into the realm of works. Insofar as man's eternal salvation is concerned, he cannot do even an *atomos* of work in this realm. It is *impossible* for him to perform even the most minute particle of any type work conceivable, for, in the spiritual realm, he is *dead*.

And salvation, in its totality, has to do with a *spiritual birth from above* (John 3:3-6) — a realm in which unredeemed man is totally incapable of acting. In order for man to act in the spiritual, to even a degree described by the word *atomos*, he must first be made alive spiritually. He must first pass "from death unto life" (John 5:24). And this is effected through — *only and completely through* — the birth from above.

All man can do is receive that which has already been done on his behalf. He can do no more than "believe on [put his trust, reliance in]"

the One Who has performed the Work on his behalf. This is the clear testimony of Scripture *from the opening verses of Genesis* (depicting events which occurred 4,000 years preceding Calvary [and also prior to this period]) *to the closing verses of Revelation* (depicting events which will occur 3,000 years following Calvary [and also after this period]).

God's means for redeeming fallen man *never changes* throughout Scripture. God established a first-mention principle relative to the matter at the very beginning of His revelation to man, in the opening verses of the first chapter of Genesis; and once the matter had been established after this fashion, *no change could ever occur*.

Scripture, at the very beginning, presents the matter of man's passage "from death unto life" as *a work performed entirely through Divine intervention*. The Spirit moved, God spoke, and light came into existence (Gen. 1:2b, 3). The ruined creation (Gen. 1:2a) had no part in the matter at the beginning, and the ruined creation (Eph. 2:12) can have no part in the matter at any subsequent point in time (*ref.* the author's book, FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN, Chs. V-VIII).

To say that individuals were saved or will be saved via other means in either past or future dispensations (through keeping the law, through any type works, etc.) is a total misunderstanding (to use stronger language, it is a violation, a corruption) of that which God has established as unchangeable at the very beginning of His Word.

Unsaved man simply cannot act in the spiritual realm. *Such is impossible*. And there is no such thing as man, at any point in his history (past, present, or future) being partly saved and able to perform works to complete his salvation. It is either *all or nothing*. Man is either completely saved or he is not saved to even an *atomos* of a degree.

As stated in Jonah 2:9, "Salvation is of the Lord." It has always been that way, it remains that way today, and it always will be that way.

2. SALVATION OF THE SOUL

The salvation of the soul though is another matter entirely. The spiritual birth from above — salvation by grace through faith — has to do with man's *spirit*, not with his soul. Redeemed man, a trichotomous being, has a redeemed spirit, an unredeemed soul (that part of

man which is in the process of being redeemed), and an unredeemed body (not presently being redeemed, as the soul, but to be redeemed at Christ's return).

Insofar as man's *spirit* is concerned, salvation is a finished matter. This is the part of man which was made alive at the time of the birth from above (John 3:3-6). Then, redeemed man's *soul* is in the process of being saved (cf. I Cor. 1:18; Heb. 1:14; 10:36-39), a salvation to be realized in its completeness (or not realized) at the time Christians appear before the judgment seat of Christ at the end of the present dispensation (I Peter 1:4-9). And the salvation — "redemption" — of the body is entirely future and will be realized at the time of Christ's return for his Church, immediately preceding events at the judgment seat (Rom. 8:23).

Thus man, as a trichotomous being, *has been saved, is being saved, and is about to be saved*. Salvation, within its complete scope, is not only past but is also present and future as well.

However, one must exercise care when dealing with these different aspects of salvation so as not to confuse one with the other. Verses of Scripture which pertain to one *must not* be removed from their contexts and applied to the other. If this is done, the end result will be two-fold: a) *confusion* concerning the salvation message on the one hand, and b) *corruption* of the salvation message on the other.

For example, the salvation of the spirit is dependent entirely upon the finished work of Christ at Calvary, but the salvation of the soul is dependent on the works of the individual who has passed "from death unto life." Such works emanate out of faithfulness (James 2:14-26), and it is these works (or lack of these works, resulting from unfaithfulness) which will come under review at the judgment seat.

And one can easily see what would happen if a person took Scriptures having to do with the present aspect of salvation and applied them to the past aspect, or vice versa. Man's works would either be brought over into an area where works of this nature cannot exist (brought over into the message of salvation by grace through faith), or such works would be rendered meaningless through trying to place the message of salvation by grace through faith (where man's works cannot exist) within the present aspect of salvation (where man's works must be operative).

Through the salvation effected by the birth from above (which has to do with the *spirit*), man has been placed in a position where he can perform works acceptable or pleasing to God (which has to do with the *soul*). Works are now possible, for he now has spiritual life and can exercise faith in the realm from which man's works can ensue.

That is, *after* he has passed "from death unto life" he can then exercise *faith* in his spiritual life — a life which he did not possess prior to the birth from above — and works, pleasing to God, can emanate *only* out of faithfulness of this nature.

It is this aspect of salvation with which the Book of Hebrews deals. The warnings apply to the saving or losing of the soul, never the spirit. The former can be forfeited, but not the latter; and a person must be in possession of the latter before anything in the former would even apply in his life.

(For a comprehensive treatment of this overall subject, see the author's books, SALVATION OF THE SOUL and FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN.)

WORK AND LABOR OF LOVE

The "better things" being manifested by those whom the writer addressed in verse nine are described through the use of two words in verse ten — *work* and *love*. They were manifesting a "work and labour of love" with respect to Christ *through* ministering to other Christians.

Such a ministry could take any number of forms — from giving "a cup of water" to "teaching and admonishing one another" (Mark 9:41; Col. 3:16). And there is an underlying principle upon which the inseparable connection between ministering with respect to Christ and ministering to others rests (as in Heb. 6:10), which is clearly revealed in Matt. 25:31-46.

Though the passage in Matthew's gospel has to do with a judgment of the Gentile nations, based on their treatment of Israel during the coming Tribulation, the revealed principle remains unchanged in Scripture. This principle is the same in the Gospel of Matthew, the Book of Hebrews, or any other place in Scripture which touches on the matter. It is *an unchangeable part of the unchangeable*

Word.

According to Matt. 25:34ff, Gentiles coming out of the great Tribulation will be judged on the basis of specific works. They will have previously been divided into two groups — saved and unsaved (v. 33). Then, Christ will judge the saved first, on the basis of their having performed specific works (vv. 34-40). After that, He will judge the unsaved, on the basis of their not having performed the same specific works (vv. 41-46).

Neither judgment will have anything whatsoever to do with the eternal salvation of those being judged (no more so than issues at the judgment seat of Christ will have to do with a Christian's eternal salvation). The entirety of the judgment of both groups will occur solely on the basis of the works of those being judged (something which can never have anything to do with man's eternal salvation). But note the principle drawn from the judgment of both groups.

Those in the first group, the saved (*judgment* must begin "at the house of God" [I Peter 4:17]), are presented as being judged solely on the basis of their treatment of "my brethren [the Jewish people]" during the Tribulation. And even "the least" of Christ's brethren (the most insignificant Jewish people within the nation) are singled out as being in view within this treatment.

Then the principle is clearly given: Through ministering to Christ's brethren, these Gentiles had ministered to Christ Himself. That is, they had accorded Christ the same treatment which they accorded the Jewish people (vv. 37-40).

The same thing is again taught — though from a negative aspect — relative to Christ's dealings with the second group, the unsaved. Those in this group had not ministered to the Jewish people, and "the least" of Christ's brethren are also in view within the scope of His dealings with this group.

And the principle is again clearly revealed, though reversed: Through not ministering to Christ's brethren, these Gentiles had not ministered to Christ Himself. That is, they had accorded Christ the same treatment which they accorded the Jewish people (vv. 44, 45).

In Heb. 6:10 the principle remains the same. Through ministering "to the saints" these Christians had shown the same "work and labour of love" "toward his [Christ's] name." That is, in the light of the way

the matter is set forth in Matt. 25:34ff, they, in reality, were ministering to Christ Himself through their ministry to the saints.

These Christians were performing works because of their love for the brethren. But these works were not emanating out of love per se. Rather, these works, along with the manifested love itself, were emanating out of *faith*.

“Faith” must come *first*; and even though love is placed above faith in the sense of greatness (I Cor. 13:13), love cannot exist apart from faith. This is fundamental and primary. Apart from faith there can be neither love for the brethren nor a ministry to the brethren.

The matter must be looked upon as in Hebrews, chapter eleven: “By faith Abel...By faith Enoch...By faith Noah...” The entire pilgrim walk is as stated in Rom. 1:17: “...from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (cf. Hab. 2:4).

Consequently, there must first be “faith” (i.e., “faithfulness” on the part of the individual — simply “believing” that which God has said). Then “love” and resulting “works” can issue forth. Love is the motivator for the works, but the source for love is the same as the source for works. They both emanate out of faith (cf. James 2:14-26; I Peter 1:9).

FULL ASSURANCE OF HOPE

The recipients of this message had been praised for their “work and labour of love” (v. 10), and their actions were mentioned after this fashion for a purpose. Immediately following (vv. 11, 12), the writer uses their faithfulness in this realm in order to exhort them in another realm. He turns from one thought to another, and the thought to which he turns is the same thought which is emphasized over and over throughout the epistle. At this point in the book it is seen to be — both textually and contextually — *his one driving, burning desire underlying everything which he wrote in the epistle*.

In order to grasp the full force of the writer’s frame of mind and that which is being said, note the word “desire.” In the Greek text, the preposition *epi* is prefixed to the word translated “desire” in the English text (forming *epithumeo*), intensifying the word. A more literal rendering when bringing the thought conveyed by the intensified

Greek word over into English would be, “earnestly desire.”

Note, for example, the difference between how the word *agonizomai* (‘strive’) is used in Luke 13:24 without the preposition *epi* prefixed and in Jude 3 with the preposition prefixed. In Luke the word is simply translated “strive,” but in Jude the word is translated “earnestly contend [or, ‘earnestly strive’].” The passages set forth a *striving* with respect to entering the “strait gate,” and an *earnest striving* with respect to “the faith.”

Hebrews 6:11 reveals an *earnest desire* on the part of the writer to see every single individual to whom he was writing show *the same diligence* “to [‘toward,’ or, ‘with respect to’] the full assurance of hope” that they had shown in their “work and labour of love” among the saints. He called attention to their present positive actions as they ministered among the saints and exhorted them to manifest the same positive actions with respect to “the full assurance of hope.”

What though is meant by “full assurance of hope”? This is the heart of the matter, with the whole thought turning on these words.

“Full assurance” is the translation of a Greek word which conveys the thought of *full conviction, certainty, assurance wrought through understanding*. Note the same word in this respect as it is used in Col. 2:2 and Heb. 10:22. “Understanding,” as in Col. 2:2, is really not part of the strict definition though. But the thought would have to be there by implication, for there could be no confident conviction or confident assurance apart from an understanding of the matter in view.

And, viewing the context, the whole overall thought of “understanding” could only fit perfectly within that which is stated in Heb. 6:11, for the verse appears toward the end of a section in which the main thrust of the entire matter has to do with an exhortation to “go on unto perfection [‘maturity’]” (vv. 1ff). The end result of this maturity is presented in verse eleven (further explained in v. 12) as bringing them into a position where they could understand and, consequently, have a confident, expectant conviction of the *hope* set before them (in the sense of one day realizing this hope).

The “hope” itself is simply *that blessed hope* from Titus 2:13, associated with the “appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (ASV). In Titus 1:2; 3:7 this hope is clearly revealed to be associated with *an inheritance awaiting the saved* which

will be realized in the coming age.

Note Titus 3:7. There is first a *justification*; then there is an *inheritance* awaiting the justified, connected with the “hope of eternal life.” The words “eternal life,” from *aionios* in the Greek text, could be better translated “life for the age” in this passage. This word is used in different places in the Greek text in the sense of both “eternal” and “age-lasting,” and the manner in which it is used in any given passage will always be governed by its textual usage (*ref.* the author’s book, SALVATION OF THE SOUL, pp. 57, 58; also see Chapter II in this book).

The manner in which *aionios* is used in Titus 3:7 is evident. The justified (those in possession of eternal life) cannot be made “heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” There is no “hope” connected with eternal life (the salvation of the spirit, which is ours through simply believing on the Lord Jesus Christ [John 3:16]). “Hope” is connected in Scripture with the saving of the soul, life for the age, the inheritance awaiting Christians (*e.g., cf.* Heb. 6:18, 19; 10:23, 36-39 [Heb. 10:23 should literally read, “Let us hold fast the confession of the hope...”]).

And this “hope” is exactly where the writer of Hebrews wanted those to whom he was writing to fix their attention. He earnestly desired that every one of them show the same diligence which they were expressing in their “work and labour of love” *to a full conviction and expectation of the hope set before them*. And he wanted them to hold this conviction and expectation “unto the end.”

(One can easily see, from these verses, a parallel problem existing in Christendom today. Christians involve themselves in numerous ministries — some with “diligence” — but how many of these same Christians know anything about “the full assurance of hope”? How many exhibit the same “diligence” *in this realm?*)

THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE

Continuing with this same line of thought, the writer called attention to something which he had previously stated (*cf.* 5:11; 6:12); and he then brought the exhortation to a close (v. 12), prior to once

again going back to the Old Testament Scriptures to furnish the background and support for the subject under discussion (vv. 13ff).

Those being addressed were spiritually immature, but the exhortation, as previously given, was, “let us go on...” (v. 1). In verse twelve, the word “slothful” is a translation of the same word rendered “dull of hearing” in the previous chapter (5:11). The writer used the word in chapter five to best describe the present immature condition of those in view. And now, in chapter six, he uses the same descriptive word again as he exhorts these Christians to not remain in their present immature state but to go on unto maturity, *for a revealed purpose*.

To perhaps better understand exactly where the writer had been and was going with this whole line of thought, note verse eleven and the first part of verse twelve in a more literal rendering, with a few explanatory thoughts:

“And we earnestly desire that every one of you [those in 5:11ff] do show the same diligence [as exhibited in their ministry among the saints (v. 10)] with respect to a full conviction and expectation of the hope [derived through knowledge, as they moved from immaturity to maturity] unto the end [that is, hold this ‘hope unto the end,’ with a full conviction and expectation that it will one day be realized]: In order that you might not remain dull of hearing [5:11 (or ‘slothful’ as rendered)], but...”

The latter part of verse twelve, immediately following the preceding rendering, then provides *the stated purpose* for the entire exhortation; and the remainder of the chapter provides background and support from the Old Testament. The remainder of the chapter is thus simply Scripture substantiating, supporting, and explaining Scripture.

Those being addressed were exhorted to go on unto maturity so they could be “followers [‘imitators,’ in the sense of governing their pilgrim walk] of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises” (v. 12b).

There is a future inheritance in view (which is the manner in which the Book of Hebrews begins [1:2] and continues [1:14], revealing an inheritance belonging to firstborn sons [*cf.* 2:10; 12:16, 17, 23]); and

Christians will come into a realization of this future inheritance only through governing their present pilgrim walk after a manner described by the words, “faith and patience.”

Note the exact words of the text: “...through faith and patience [*lit.*, ‘patient endurance’] inherit the promises” (v. 12b). “Patient endurance” would go hand in hand with “faith,” for there could not be a continued walk by faith apart from patient endurance (James 1:2-4).

And this is exactly what one finds at the capstone of the book (chs. 11, 12a), leading into the heart of the last of the five major warnings (12:16, 17) — a warning which deals specifically with *the rights of the firstborn*.

Chapter eleven is the great chapter on *faith* in Scripture, but this chapter must be understood in conjunction with the preceding ten chapters. Throughout chapter eleven, drawn entirely from the experiences of faithful Old Testament saints as they patiently endured under various trials and testings, one will find the words, “By faith...By faith...By faith...”

That is the key to inheriting the promises. The matter is simply as stated, “By faith” — remaining faithful (continuing to believe God, a continuance involving patient endurance) under various trials and testings. These Old Testament saints “all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (11:13). It is faithfulness “to the saving of the soul” (10:39).

Then note how Heb. 12:1 begins: “Wherefore seeing we [Christians] also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses [the Old Testament saints in ch. 11], let us...”

The implication is clear. These Old Testament saints ran the race after a particular fashion, with a goal in view; and Christians are to run the race after the same fashion, with the same goal in view — *an inheritance out ahead, to be realized in the coming age.*

8

Inheriting the Promises

That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself. Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whether the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Heb. 6:12-20).

Jesus Christ is God's appointed "heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2a). This is the manner in which the Book of Hebrews begins, which sets the tone for the entire epistle. And a connected thought deals with the ages being planned around the Son's activity — as God's appointed Heir — within these ages (Heb. 1:2b). The Son is the central *figure* of Scripture, beginning with Gen. 1:1 (*cf.* John 1:1-3, 14); and His heirship is the central *subject* of Scripture, beginning at the same point in Genesis (*cf.* Psa. 8:1-9; I Cor. 15:45-50; Heb. 1:4-13).

Man was created for a *purpose*, which was revealed at the time of his creation (Gen. 1:26-28). He was created to "have dominion." And the Son being appointed "heir of all things" has its *basis* in the purpose

for man's creation in the beginning.

Man lost his right and ability to exercise dominion through the action of the first Man, the first Adam. Man, through Adam's action, found himself in a fallen state, necessitating redemption. Then the second Man, the last Adam, subsequently paid redemption's price through His finished work at Calvary; and man, through redemption, once again finds himself back in a position wherein he can ultimately realize the purpose for his creation.

The second Man, the last Adam, will realize His appointed position as "heir of all things" through exercising dominion over all of God's creation (as it pertains to the earth). He, along with numerous redeemed co-heirs, will exercise this dominion for 1,000 years, for the duration of the coming Messianic Era.

Thus, in the preceding sense, the central *subject* of Scripture is not really redemption per se but that which redemption makes possible (with the central *person* of Scripture being Christ, the One Who paid redemption's price).

Redemption entered the picture in Genesis only *after* man found himself in a position wherein he could no longer realize the purpose for his creation (Gen. 3:15, 21-24; cf. vv. 1-13). And redemption enters the picture today — or at any point in history — for the same purpose that it did 6,000 years ago. Unredeemed man is alienated from God and in no position to take the sceptre, and occupying a position of this nature he cannot realize the purpose for his creation. He must *first* be redeemed. *Then*, the purpose for redemption, going back to the purpose for creation, naturally follows.

Thus, whether dealing with man's creation, his fall, or provided redemption following the fall, the same central purpose is always present; and that purpose has to do with *man exercising dominion*. Man was created to exercise dominion, Satan brought about his fall to prevent him from exercising dominion, and redemption has been provided so man can be brought back into a position wherein he can one day exercise dominion.

The thought of man exercising dominion both precedes and follows redemption at any point in Scripture. It must, for that is the way matters are introduced in Genesis, establishing an unchangeable pattern.

It is as outlined in the opening part of the Book of Hebrews. This

book, as previously stated, opens through calling attention to the fact that the Son has been appointed “heir of all things” (1:2). Then reference is made to His redemptive work and His present position at God’s right hand (v. 3). And following this, the Spirit of God provides seven Messianic quotations from the Old Testament, pointing to that day when the appointed Heir will come into possession of His inheritance (vv. 5-13).

The book begins by centering on the Son after this fashion. But, again, redemption provided by the Son is for a *purpose*; and that purpose begins to be unfolded in the book immediately following the seven Messianic quotations through calling attention to the purpose for the entire present dispensation — to acquire the *co-heirs* who will occupy the throne with the “heir of all things” during the coming day of His power (1:14ff; cf. Rom. 8:17).

The second Man, the last Adam, has provided redemption so that fallen man (descending from the first Man, the first Adam) can be brought back into the position for which he was created. Thus, redemption is not an end in itself. Rather redemption is a means to an end. The end is “heirship,” and redemption places the person in a position wherein he can one day come into a realization of this heirship.

It is as in the type beginning in Exodus, chapter twelve. The death of the firstborn in Egypt was not an end in itself. That which occurred on the night of the Passover in Egypt was a means to an end. But the death of the firstborn *had to occur first*. The end of the matter revolved around an “inheritance” which lay in a land removed from Egypt, set before those passing through events surrounding the Passover.

And that is exactly what the Book of Hebrews is about in a type-antitype structure. It is about man who has been redeemed with an end in view. It is about redeemed man one day inheriting with the Son in a land removed from this earth. It is about redeemed man coming into possession of “so great salvation” in that coming “seventh day” — the seventh millennium — first spoken of in Gen. 2:2, 3 (Heb. 1:14-2:5; 4:4-9).

(See the author’s book, FROM EGYPT TO CANAAN, for a more comprehensive treatment of the preceding.)

God has set aside an entire dispensation lasting two millenniums, during which He is calling out the co-heirs who will inherit with His Son during that coming day when the Son exercises dominion. And these co-heirs are being called out from among the redeemed. Thus, in this respect, the central subject of Hebrews revolves around matters beyond redemption. It revolves around God's dealings with the saved relative to an inheritance in a land set before them. It revolves around redeemed man being brought into the position for which man was originally created.

An original type involving saved man in Hebrews can be seen in the account involving Eve in Genesis, chapter two. Viewing the antitype, this chapter in Genesis presents Christ's co-heirs from Hebrews occupying the position of consort queen, typified by Eve. Christ is the second Man, the last Adam, typified by the first Man, the first Adam (Rom. 5:14). The redeemed of the present dispensation form His body (Col. 1:18); and as Eve was removed from Adam's body to reign as consort queen with him ("let them have dominion" [both the male and the female; Gen. 1:26, 27]) so will the bride of Christ be removed from Christ's body to reign as consort queen with Him.

Then in a subsequent type the central mission of the Holy Spirit to the earth during the present dispensation is seen to center — not around redemption per se — but around the purpose for redemption. According to Genesis, chapter twenty-four, the central mission of the Holy Spirit in the world today is to acquire a bride for God's Son.

In Genesis, chapter twenty-three the wife of Jehovah is seen set aside following Calvary (through events surrounding the death of Sarah, following the offering of Isaac [ch. 22]). Then in chapter twenty-five Israel is seen restored through Abraham's second marriage when he took Keturah as his wife. And between Sarah's death (ch. 23) and Abraham's remarriage (ch. 25), the events of chapter twenty-four occur.

Events in chapter twenty-four have to do with one central subject — *Abraham's servant sent into the far country to acquire a bride for Abraham's son, Isaac*. And the bride was to be acquired *only from within Abraham's family* (vv. 3, 4).

Matters surrounding redemption, allowing unsaved man to become a member of the family, occur, in the type, back in chapter twenty-two (the offering of Isaac); and the whole of that dealt with in

chapter twenty-four pertains to matters occurring within the family, to matters subsequent to and separate from redemption.

(More specifically, viewing the type and antitype together, the *basis* for redemption occurs through the Father offering the Son in ch. 22 [typifying events surrounding Calvary], with redemption itself occurring throughout the time depicted by events in ch. 24 [events throughout the present dispensation]. But, the fact remains, ch. 24 doesn't deal with redemption *per se*. This chapter deals with family members [typifying those already saved] and the search for the bride.)

The Holy Spirit, in the antitype of Abraham's servant, is in the world today; and His primary mission revolves around calling out a bride for God's Son. Redemption must occur first. That is fundamental and primary. But there is a purpose for redemption, and the realization of that purpose follows and is contingent upon the events typified in chapter twenty-four occurring first.

The order is threefold: 1) redemption, then 2) the acquisition of the bride, and then 3) the Son's reign over the earth with His bride. And, in this respect, the bride of Christ — in perfect accord with Eve being removed from Adam's body (Gen. 2) or Rebekah being removed from the family of Abraham (Gen. 24) — is to be acquired from the family of God. That is, the bride is to be called out from among the saved.

And events depicted in Genesis, chapters two and twenty-four rather than events depicted in Genesis, chapter twenty-two is where one finds himself in the Book of Hebrews. This book deals with the Holy Spirit calling out a bride for God's Son, offering to redeemed man the privilege and opportunity to one day participate in activities surrounding the bride. This book centers around a salvation out ahead, a rest, an inheritance. The Book of Hebrews is about Christians one day entering into positions with the Son as co-heirs, comprising the Son's bride, the one who will reign as consort queen in the antitype of Eve or Rebekah.

THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE

Accordingly, Scripture clearly reveals, in numerous places, that a future position with God's Son as co-heir is not something which a

person automatically enters into on the basis of his position “in Christ.” Rather, a Christian’s *present actions* will determine his *future position* in this respect (Rom. 8:17).

The matter is probably stated in Heb. 6:12 in the simplest terms to be found anywhere in Scripture. This verse reveals *two things* which must be present in a Christian’s life in order for him to have a part in God’s promise to Abraham in Gen. 22:17, 18 — “*faith and patience* [‘*patient endurance*’].” These two indispensables — two things which really encompass everything else — point to the Christian exercising “faith” throughout the pilgrim walk (Rom. 1:17) as he “patiently endures” under all the various trials and testings which come his way (James 1:2-4).

But though the matter is stated in what would be considered a relatively simple manner, the journey along the route leading to the goal is far from simple or easy. To the contrary, it is difficult and hard. The pilgrim path is strewn with pitfalls all along the route. Nothing throughout the pilgrim walk really comes easy.

Nor are things intended to come easy. That’s not the way God arranged matters. A thing of incalculable value — the greatest thing God has ever designed for redeemed man — is being offered to man through the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the world today; and man has been called upon to fight, to struggle. The bride, in the final analysis, will be made up of those interested enough in that which is being offered to pay the price.

And a central crux of the matter involves the knowledge and resulting action of the enemy — the present world rulers (Satan and his angels) in heavenly places. Christ with His co-heirs will one day replace Satan and those ruling under him. Satan and his angels know this (Eph. 3:9-11), the warfare rages (Eph. 6:10ff), and the enemy will do everything within his power to prevent Christians from achieving victory in the present race of the faith.

But, on the other side of the picture, Christians have “an advocate [Gk. *parakletos*, ‘One called alongside to help’] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (I John 2:1) and a “forerunner” presently seated at God’s right hand (Psa. 110:1; Heb. 6:20). And our “forerunner” is the “author [‘source’] of eternal salvation [‘age-lasting salvation’ — refer-

ring to the saving of the soul in relation to the 1,000-year Messianic Era] unto all them that obey him” (Heb. 5:9).

There are numerous, unending problems strewn all along the route; but that which God deems of incalculable value is shown, numerous different ways, to be worth every effort Christians can possibly expend. We are to keep our eyes fixed on the goal, casting all our care upon Him, committing our way unto the Lord and relying upon Him to bring matters to pass and to see us safely through (*cf.* Psa. 37:5; Heb. 12:1, 2; I Peter 5:7).

We are to “count it all joy” when falling into various trials and testings, knowing that “the trying” of our *faith* “worketh patience [‘patient endurance’]”; and we are to faithfully endure under the various trials and testings after this fashion in order that the Holy Spirit can progressively perform a work in our lives (the metamorphosis of Rom. 12:2) which will, in the end, result in our being “perfect [‘mature’] and entire [‘complete’], wanting nothing [‘lacking nothing’]” (James 1:2-4).

And, governing one’s pilgrim walk after the instructed fashion, “through faith and patience [‘patient endurance’]” Christians will one day “inherit the promises.”

1. ORIGINAL PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

The example which the Spirit of God provides at this point in Hebrews, to illustrate “faith and patience” in relation to one’s calling, is that of Abraham. Abraham was called out of one land in order to realize an inheritance in another land. He was called from Ur of the Chaldees to realize an inheritance in the land of Canaan.

While still in Ur, God commanded and promised Abraham:

“Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Gen. 12:1-3).

Then, after Abraham had departed Ur and was in the land of Canaan, following several experiences, God said to him:

“Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee” (Gen. 13:14-17).

Then beyond that, the Lord made an unconditional, everlasting covenant with Abraham concerning the land of Canaan:

“In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates: The Kenites, and the Kenizzites, and the Kadmonites, And the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Rephaims, And the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Girgashites, and the Jebusites” (Gen. 15:18-21).

Placing the preceding in perspective, the seed of Abraham (through Isaac and Jacob [Gen. 17:19, 21; 21:12; 25:23; 26:3, 4; 27:37; 28:13, 14]) was to be multiplied in an innumerable manner and dwell as a separate, distinct nation in the land to which Abraham had been called; and, with the seed of Abraham in this land, God would bring matters to pass after such a fashion that all the other nations of the earth (all the Gentile nations) would be blessed through the nation emanating from the loins of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob.

2. *SUBSEQUENT PROMISE TO ABRAHAM*

The preceding outlines God’s promises concerning a seed and a land, along with God’s purpose, given to Abraham at the beginning of and at different times during his pilgrim journey. The reference in Hebrews though is to God’s promise to Abraham at a later point in time (“after he had patiently endured” [6:15; *cf.* vv. 13, 14]), moving the matter beyond the preceding promises. The reference is to God’s promise recorded in Genesis, chapter twenty-two, immediately following the account of Abraham offering his son on a mount in the land of Moriah (vv. 1-14; *cf.* Heb. 11:17-19), some five or six decades after God’s original promise to Abraham in Ur.

At this time God said unto Abraham:

“By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice” (vv. 16-18).

The previous promises given to Abraham — at the beginning of and at different times during his pilgrim walk (at the beginning of and at different times during the long period of “faith and patience”) — were, as previously stated, *unconditional* in nature. And though these promises pertained mainly to an earthly seed (with earthly promises), a heavenly seed (necessitating corresponding heavenly promises) was mentioned (*cf.* Gen. 12:1-3; 13:16; 15:5). Also, though there was nothing said about rulership in connection with the blessings in these promises, that subject was dealt with apart from the promises in the account of Abraham meeting Melchizedek following the battle of the kings (Gen. 14:17ff). Thus, the things stated about rulership and blessings in connection with both the heavenly and earthly seed of Abraham in Gen. 22:17, 18 were all revealed prior to this time.

That which is different and new within the scope of the promise in Gen. 22:17, 18 (also Heb. 6:14) concerns *God swearing by Himself* — an act bringing to pass the highest verbal security possible (*cf.* Gen. 22:16; Heb. 6:13, 16, 17). There is no record that God previously acted after this fashion in connection with any part of the overall promise. Abraham “obtained the promise” after the fashion revealed in Gen. 22:17, 18 and Heb. 6:13-17 only *after* “he had patiently endured [walked ‘by faith’ over a long period of time],” though the realization of the promise awaited a future date (Heb. 11:8-16).

The promise, as it is outlined in Gen. 22:17, 18, actually ties certain previously revealed particulars together. The subject was introduced in God’s original promise to Abraham in Ur (Gen. 12:1-3). Then reference was made to the land of Canaan to which Abraham had been called, along with both an earthly and a heavenly seed (Gen. 13:14-17; 15:5, 18-21). And particulars relative to this original promise (a revelation

concerning both heavenly and earthly spheres of rulership) were introduced when Abraham met Melchizedek following the battle of the kings (cf. Gen. 12:1-3; 14:18-20; Psa. 110:1-4). Then, tying it all together as it is set forth in God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 22:16-18, the nations of the earth were to be blessed through both the heavenly and earthly seed of Abraham possessing "the gate of" (an expression referring to *rulership*, i.e., "ruling over") the Gentile nations.

And the Lord, at this time, swore by Himself (for there was none greater by whom He could swear) that His promise to Abraham would be brought to pass. It would be brought to pass at the same time Christ exercised the Melchizedek priesthood, typified in Gen. 14:18, 19 (cf. Heb. 6:20).

And in this respect, note what the Father said to the Son in Psa. 110:4: "The Lord hath sworn [by Himself], and will not repent [He will not change His mind], 'Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek'."

THE HOPE SET BEFORE US

Insofar as Abraham having both a heavenly seed and an earthly seed which would one day rule over the Gentile nations and through whom the Gentile nations would be blessed, the matter is as certain as the veracity of God's oath. He has *sworn by Himself* concerning the matter.

Israel, Abraham's earthly seed through natural, lineal descent from Isaac and Jacob, will one day dwell in the land of Canaan at the head of the nations, with Christ seated on David's throne in their midst. And not only will Israel rule the nations after this fashion but the nations will be blessed through Christ and Israel.

And the Church, Abraham's heavenly seed through positionally being "in Christ" (Gal. 3:16, 28, 29), will one day dwell in a heavenly land at the head of the nations. The Church will occupy the position of consort queen, seated on the throne with Christ (Christ actually will have a dual reign — seated on *David's throne* in the earthly Jerusalem and on *His Own throne* in the heavenly Jerusalem. The Church though will reign as consort queen with Him only from *His Own throne* in the heavens, not from *David's throne* on the earth). And not only will the Church rule the nations after this fashion — as co-heir with Christ —

but the nations will be blessed through Christ and the Church.

Both Israel and the Church possess a *hope*, and that hope is in relation to the calling of each. For Israel it is *earthly* and has its basis in Gen. 22:16-18; and for the Church it is *heavenly* and has its basis at the same point in Scripture.

1. ISRAEL'S HOPE

The hope of Israel is mentioned in Acts 28:20. Paul was in Rome, imprisoned and bound by a chain, “for the hope of Israel.” And that hope is explained in Acts 26:6, 7. It has to do with “the promise made of God unto our fathers,” and it is connected with Israel’s future “resurrection” (Acts 23:6; 24:15). That is, “the hope of Israel” revolves around the promise given to Abraham and reiterated to Isaac and Jacob being realized following the resurrection of Old Testament saints at Christ’s coming.

And Israel is not going to realize this hope apart from the two indispensables — “faith and patience [‘patient endurance’].” Israel is going to have to pass through “the time of Jacob’s trouble,” a time of trouble “such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor every shall be” (Jer. 30:7-9; Matt. 24:21). Israel, during that time, will be brought into a position wherein the nation will be forced to cry out to the God of their fathers. They will actually be forced into a position of faith (belief) in God; and when Christ returns and the Jewish people look upon their Messiah, the nation will then believe in Him (*cf.* Ex. 2:23-25; 3:7, 8; Hosea 5:13-6:2; Joel 2:1-27; Jonah 2:1-10; Zech. 12:10-13:1; 14:1-9).

For individual Jews, “the hope of Israel” would be to have a part in events of that coming day when God’s promise will be realized. However, most Jews comprising the nation during the Tribulation will not live to see that day. Only a minority of Jews will survive this period and be alive when their Messiah returns, realizing the hope possessed by the nation (Zech. 13:8, 9).

2. THE CHRISTIANS' HOPE

The text relative to “hope” in Hebrews, chapter six (v. 18) though does not concern Israel. Rather, it concerns Christians alone — “...the hope set before us” — with Israel being in view within the larger scope

of the promise as given to Abraham (vv. 14, 15).

(Actually, Israel *alone* was in view within the original scope of the promise. The lineal descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob were made the repository for both heavenly and earthly promises. But the heavenly aspect of the promised rulership and blessings was later offered to, rejected by, and taken from Israel at a time when *the kingdom of the heavens* was “at hand” [Matt. 3:1, 2; 4:17; 10:5-7; 12:22-32; 21:43]. Then the *one new man* “in Christ” was called into existence to be the recipient of that which Israel had rejected [Matt. 16:18; Gal. 3:28, 29; Eph. 2:12-15; Heb. 3:1; I Peter 2:9-11].)

The Christians’ hope, with its basis found the same place as Israel’s — within God’s promise to Abraham in Gen. 22:17, 18 — is referred to numerous places in the New Testament; and different aspects of this hope are shown through the different references.

In Ephesians this “hope” has to do with an inheritance (1:11-18); in Colossians it has to do with the coming glory of Christ (1:5, 23, 27); in I Thessalonians it has to do with a future salvation (5:8); in Titus it has to do with an inheritance and life in the coming age (1:2; 2:12, 13; 3:7); in I Peter it has to do with an inheritance, the salvation of one’s soul, and participation in Christ’s coming glory (1:3-9; 3:14, 15; 4:12, 13); and in I John it has to do with being unashamed and like Christ when Christians see Him “as he is” at the judgment seat (2:28-3:3).

Hebrews, accordingly, should be no different; and that is exactly the case. “Hope,” in this epistle, is something set before Christians, which is associated with God’s promise to Abraham, an inheritance, and the saving of the soul (6:13-19; 10:36-39). The “confidence and the rejoicing of the hope” is to be held by Christians in an unwavering, steadfast manner (3:6; 10:23); and Christians are exhorted to assemble together for the specified purpose of discussing this hope and being a help to one another in things related to this hope (10:23-25 [in v. 23, “profession of our faith” should literally be translated “confession of the hope”]).

AN ANCHOR OF THE SOUL

This hope is presented as “an anchor of the soul” (Heb. 6:19). It is

an anchor “both sure and stedfast...which entereth into that within the veil [*i.e.*, beyond the veil, inside the Holy of Holies].” And Christ, beyond the veil, is presented as “the forerunner...for us” (the One Who has gone ahead on our behalf). He is presently acting as High Priest on our behalf, anticipating the coming day of His power; and He, as High Priest beyond the veil, is providing a present cleansing for the “kings and priests” (Rev. 5:10) who will ascend the throne with Him during that coming day.

Note how the preceding is reflected at the end of Hebrews, chapter six: “Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever [‘for the age,’ the coming Messianic Era] after the order of Melchizedek” (v. 20).

Our hope is not only firmly anchored on the person of Christ beyond the veil, but it is anchored upon Christ as He will appear *in that coming day*— as the great *King-Priest*, “after the order of Melchizedek.” It is a *present hope* which looks to a *future day* for its realization, and it has to do with *the saving of the soul*.

This is why, within the capstone of the book, Christians are exhorted to keep their eyes fixed upon Jesus (Heb. 12:1, 2). Christians are exhorted to keep their eyes fixed on the One beyond the veil, where the anchor of their soul lies; and, in this manner, they are to *faithfully run with patient endurance* “the race” set before them.

The summation of the matter surrounding “faith and patience [‘patient endurance’]” is possibly best stated in the words concluding the fourth major warning in Hebrews, introducing chapter eleven in the book, the great chapter on “faith”:

“For ye have need of *patience* [‘*patient endurance*’], that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live *by faith*: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; *but of them that believe* [are ‘*faithful*’] *to the saving of the soul*” (Heb. 10:36-39).

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Melchizedek is introduced in Scripture as a king-priest in Jerusalem, and he forms a type of Christ as King-Priest in Jerusalem during the coming day of His power, during the coming Messianic Era. This is clearly seen to be the case through both the two Old Testament references to Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18, 19; Psa. 110:4) and the place which Melchizedek occupies in Heb. 5-7.

Both Old Testament references are *Messianic* in their scope of fulfillment, as are the references in the Book of Hebrews. In this respect, Christ is not presently exercising a priestly ministry after the order of Melchizedek, for Melchizedek was also a king in Jerusalem as well. Rather, Christ, is presently exercising a priestly ministry after the order of Aaron, who ministered in the sanctuary on the basis of shed blood, on behalf of a redeemed people. Christ is presently ministering in the sanctuary (the heavenly), on the basis of shed blood (His Own), for a redeemed people (for Christians).

Christ *is* presently a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, as He *is* presently King (He was born King [Matt. 2:3]). Christ though has yet to exercise either office; and Scripture presents His exercise of both offices as occurring at the same time, during the coming age.

In keeping with the manner in which Scripture has been structured, Melchizedek appears in Genesis, chapter fourteen in a particular *setting* at a particular *time*; and, within this *setting* and *time*, God established fundamental truths from which He could later draw spiritual lessons in order to teach His people deep spiritual truths surrounding the various things having to do with His Son's coming reign over the earth.

These foundational truths were established during Abraham's day through the record of that which occurred in Genesis, chapter fourteen. Then the writer of the one hundred tenth Psalm drew from this account, as did the writer of Hebrews, chapters five through seven.

Thus, in all three sections of Scripture, the three different writers dealt with issues surrounding Christ in relation to the Messianic Era, not in relation to the present age. And sections of Scripture such as Heb. 6:4-6, contextually, must be looked upon and interpreted in this same light.
