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# Spiritual Dullness of the Hebrews

Hebrews 5:11 thru 6:12

Week 6

# Review: key thoughts

But we see him who for a little while was made lower than the angels, namely Jesus, crowned with glory and honor because of the **suffering of death**, so that by the grace of God he might **taste death for everyone**.

2:9

Therefore **He had to be made** like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a **merciful and faithful high priest** in the service of God, to **make propitiation for the sins of the people**.

2:17

And being made perfect, he became the **source of eternal salvation** to all who obey him,

5:9

**Christians “view the gospel as something that has fully served out its purpose the moment they believed in Jesus for salvation.”** M. Vincent; *Gospel Primer*

# Review: simple message

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## Encouragement to Jewish believers to hold on to their faith

- Keep in mind that Jesus Christ is God, brother, high priest
- Understand that Christ is superior to angels, Abraham, Jacob, and Moses
- Know that the new covenant under Christ is superior to the Law
- Trust in His willingness and ability to deliver them from persecution
- Don't make the same mistake as your forefathers in the wilderness

# Review: strategy for interpretation

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- ❖ Purpose of the letter
- ❖ Literary “devices”
- ❖ Hermeneutical spiral
- ❖ Let Scripture speak
  - Apostolic doctrine vs. pre-belief
  - **Pray for insight**

# Contextual Spiral

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Wilderness  
generation

Exhortation to  
Jewish believers

Superiority  
of Christ





# what picture is being painted here?

As it is said,

“Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”

<sup>16</sup>For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? <sup>17</sup>And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? <sup>18</sup>And to whom did he swear that they **would not enter his rest**, but to those who were disobedient? <sup>19</sup>So we see that they were unable to enter because of **unbelief**.

Hebrews 3:15–19 (ESV)

# Go on to maturity

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*And being made perfect, he became the source of **eternal salvation** to all who obey him, <sup>10</sup> being designated by God **a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.***

Hebrews 5:9–10 (ESV)

# Go on to maturity

*About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become **dull of hearing**.<sup>12</sup> For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the **oracles of God**. You need milk, not solid food,<sup>13</sup> for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.<sup>14</sup> But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment **trained by constant practice** to distinguish good from evil.*

Hebrews 5:11–14 (ESV)



# Go on to maturity

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*Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a **f**oundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, <sup>2</sup> and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

*<sup>3</sup> And this we will do if God permits.*

Hebrews 6:1–3 (ESV)

# Go on to maturity

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*For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit,<sup>5</sup> and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,<sup>6</sup> and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.*

Hebrews 6:4–6 (ESV)

# Go on to maturity

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*For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God.*

*<sup>s</sup> But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.*

Hebrews 6:7–8 (ESV)

# Go on to maturity

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*Though we speak in this way, yet in your case, beloved, we feel sure of better things—things that belong to salvation. <sup>10</sup> For God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that you have shown for his name in serving the saints, as you still do. <sup>11</sup> And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup> so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

Hebrews 6:9–12 (ESV)

# Intro to Warning Passage

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What does the warning concern?

Who are being warned?

What is the consequence for NOT heeding the warning?

What exactly is it that's IMPOSSIBLE?

# Observations: *dull of hearing*

*About this [concerning him] we have much to say,  
and it is hard to explain, since you have become **dull of hearing**.*

Hebrews 5:11 (ESV)

- Choosing to be lazy, *sluggish*
- No longer excited to learn
- No longer trying to understand
- Unwilling to act on what you hear; know
- Unwilling to seek understanding & insight



# Observations: *oracles of God*

*For though by this time you **ought to be teachers**, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the **oracles of God**.* Hebrews 5:12a (ESV)

*... to teach you the elementary truths of **God's word** all over again. You need milk, not solid food!* (NIV)

*... to teach you the beginning elements of **God's utterances**. You have gone back to needing milk, not solid food.* (NET 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)

**Oracles** – with **τοῦ θεοῦ** or **θεοῦ** added, relates to His commands in the **Mosaic law and His Messianic promises**; Greek Lexicon; Thayer

# Observations: *solid food*

*You need milk, not solid food, <sup>13</sup> for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child.*

<sup>14</sup> **But** *solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.*

Hebrews 5:12b–14 (ESV)

# Observations: *Therefore*

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***Therefore** let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of –*

*repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,*

*<sup>2</sup> and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.*

*<sup>3</sup> And this we will do if God permits.*

Hebrews 6:1–3 (ESV)

# Observations: *impossible*

*For it is impossible,*

*in the case of those who have **once been** enlightened, who **have tasted** the heavenly gift, and **have shared** in the Holy Spirit,<sup>5</sup> and **have tasted** the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,  
<sup>6</sup> and then **have fallen away,***

*to restore them again to repentance,*

***since** they are **crucifying once again** the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.*

Hebrews 6:4–6 (ESV)

# Observations: *immediate context*

***Therefore** let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and **go on to maturity**, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, <sup>2</sup> and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. <sup>3</sup> And this we will do if God permits.*

*<sup>4</sup> **For it is impossible**, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, <sup>6</sup> and then have fallen away, to **restore them again to repentance**, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.*

Hebrews 6:1–6 (ESV)

# Observations: *basic concern*

*Therefore . . . let us go on to maturity . . . and this we will do if God permits.*

*For/ because it is impossible to **restore [those] again to repentance**  
who don't go on to maturity even though *they* once . . .*

*since they are crucifying once again the Son of God . . .*

Hebrews 6:1 – 6 (UAV)



# Observations: *Who are they?*

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*“... in the case of those who have once been enlightened,  
[and] who have tasted the heavenly gift,  
and have shared in the Holy Spirit,  
<sup>5</sup> and have tasted the goodness of the word of God  
and the powers of the age to come,  
<sup>6</sup> and then have fallen away, ...”*

# Observations: *the land*

For *land* that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God.

<sup>s</sup> **But** if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be *burned*.

Hebrews 6:7–8 (ESV)

# “Reasonable” Paraphrase 6:4 - 6

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*For it is impossible for true (actual) believers who have been once enlightened, and have accepted the heavenly gift, and have been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and have experienced the good word of the gospel and the power of the coming kingdom; and then they fail to live their daily life by faith in Christ, to return by means of repentance to a place where they can escape God’s curse (temporal chastisement and eternal loss of reward), because they have openly claimed that Christ’s sacrifice was insufficient to maintain fellowship with God and they have publicly embarrassed and dishonored Christ, their patron.*

# “Reasonable” Paraphrase 6:7 - 8

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*Let me illustrate the impossibility of escaping God’s curse by means of an allusion to the OT blessing/cursing motif:*

The earth which drinks in the rain (accepts the gospel) and produces good fruit (lives by faith) for the one who tends the crops receives blessing from God. However, the land that drinks the rain (accepts the gospel) and does not produce good fruit (does not live by faith) receives the curse of God.

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