Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Tragedy of Rejecting Full Revelation, Part 1
Scripture: Hebrews 5:10-14
Code: 1612

INTRODUCTION

A. The Content

Hebrews 5:106:112 is a difficult passage of Scripture to interpret. Through the years there have been many conflicting views, even among those who would call themselves evangelical.

This portion of Scripture deals with spiritual maturity. The first section (5:106:8) is addressed to unbelievers, and the second (6:912) to believers. The theme of the epistle to the Hebrews is the immeasurable superiority of Christianity over Judaism.

B. The Crowd

The epistle to the Hebrews was needed because a small community of Jewish people had been led to Christ by some of the apostles and prophets of the first century church. In addition were some that were convinced about Christ, but had neglected to make a commitment to Him for fear of reprisal from their Jewish friends.

1. The possessors of salvation

The writer of Hebrews affirms that the believers had done the right thing in responding to Christ. He encourages them not to go back to Jewish legalism with all its trappings.

2. The professors of salvation

Some people in the community were intellectually convinced and had believed the facts concerning Christ, but had never made a commitment to Him. They were not unlike those in Matthew 7:21 23 of whom Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out demons? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Someday they will stand at the Judgement Seat, having known all the information about Christ yet failing to commit their lives to Him. To this group the writer of Hebrews

says, "Come all the way to salvation. Don't just stand there and neglect the most important thing of all: receiving Jesus Christ. Don't come to the edge of Christianity only to rush out again because of your lack of commitment."

3. The predecessors to salvation

The writer also addresses in Jewish people who were being exposed to the New Covenant for the first time. They had not yet heard the reality of the gospel of Christ.

C. The Contrast

Throughout the book of Hebrews, the many comparisons and contrasts are basically between Christianity and Judaism. That is the key element in having a proper interpretation of this epistle.

1. The significance of the New Covenant

The Holy Spirit is not contrasting two kinds of Christiansthe immature versus the maturerather the contrast is between the substanceChristand the shadowthe Old Covenant: the pattern as opposed to the reality, the visible as opposed to the invisible, and the type as opposed to the antitype. The Old Testament is a picture of what is fulfilled in Christ in the New Testament. The central theme of the book of Hebrews is the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old, that is, of Christianity to Judaism.

2. The superiority of the Lord Jesus Christ

One fact of the New Covenant is that it has a better mediator the Lord Jesus Christ. The Old Covenant was mediated by angels in some cases, and also by certain men of God, such as Moses and Aaron. The New Covenant, however, comes through Jesus Christ and is better than angels and prophets, including Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Melchizedekanything and everyone. The writer of Hebrews is encouraging fellow Jews to go from Judaism to the New Covenant, which is Christianity. Judaism is the picture that points to the Messiah, Christ Himself. Since Jesus is the perfect fulfillment of all the pictures and types in the Old Covenant, the Jewish people should not cling to the shadow, but to the reality behind it. The book of Hebrews, therefore, compares and contrasts the two parts of God's revelation that the division in our Bibles reflects.

D. The Counsel

Hebrews 5:106:12 is the third parenthetical warning given to Jews who were intellectually convinced only. Interspersed throughout the book of Hebrews are several warnings to those who were on the edge of decision, but had not yet come to faith in Christ. These warnings can also be seen as encouragement and counsel to Jewish people who had trusted Christ, but were tempted to turn back into Judaism because of doubts, criticism, and persecution. But the main thrust is to unbelievers.

1. The first warning

The first warning is about neglecting the gospel of Christ. The writer says in chapter 2, "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with diverse miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will" (vv. 14)?

2. The second warning

The second warning is about hardening one's heart to the gospel. Hebrews 3:712 says, "As the Holy Spirit saith, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore, I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

3. The third warning

The third great warning is in Hebrews 5:106:12. It concerns the issue of spiritual maturity, focusing on the danger of staying with the elemental truths and promises of the Old Covenant, even though it had been superseded by the New. It is a warning to those who have made a shallow profession of faith, but are not true believers.

E. The Changeover

The third warning follows the same pattern as the first two. The only difference is that the writer is exhorting his readers to grow up to the mature truths of the New Covenant. It was time for them to no longer involve themselves with the shadow of the Old Covenant, for they were in danger of eternal judgement. The warning is not for one who is a baby Christian as opposed to a more mature Christian, but for one who is still locked in Judaism as opposed to one who has come to full faith in Christ. Each warning passage in Hebrews is directed to those who are on the edge of a decision for Christ, but could also be applied to a Christian who needs encouragement to continue in his knowledge of the blessings of the New Covenant.

1. The appeal

There are, of course, many exhortations in the New Testament for immature Christians to grow up. Throughout the history of the church, there has been need for such counsel, but that is not what the writer of Hebrews is primarily trying to convey. The appeal is primarily evangelistic. It is not a call for a Christian to grow in the faith, but for an unbeliever to come into the faithinto the mature truths and blessings of the New Covenant. This is the same maturity or perfection described in Hebrews 10:1, 14, which uses the Greek word teleio[ma]o in the context of salvation, not Christian growth.

2. The approach

Judaism is the ABC's of Christianity. The Old Covenant is the spiritual alphabet on which the New Covenant is built. You do not use an encyclopedia to start teaching children to read. You use pictures and visual objects to explain what needs to be learned. Later you will begin to teach them truths from the foundational pictures you've built on. The Old Testament is God's elementary, foundational teaching. He has since moved on to the reality, which is Christ Himself (Col. 2:1617 NASB). All the feasts, sacrifices, and ceremonies pictured in the Old Testament pointed to the reality of Christ. The issue the writer of Hebrews was dealing with was that many of his readers had professed a belief in Christ, but were still clinging to the elemental patterns of Judaism. They were in great danger of reaching a point beyond salvation. The writer is pleading for them to leave the pictures, the milk, and the baby food of the Old Testament, and come to the fulfilled realities and solid food of the New Testament. He wanted them to leave Judaism and come to Christ.

LESSON

I. THE WARNING TO NONCHRISTIANS (5:106:8)

"[Christ is] 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 the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food 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. 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 judgement. And this we will 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 age 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. For the

earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh often upon it, and bringeth forth herbs fit for them by whom it is tilled, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is near unto cursing, whose end is to be burned."

A. The Problem (vv. 1014)

1. Dullness Prevents Understanding (vv. 1011)

Before the readers of Hebrews could fully understand the significance of Jesus' priesthood being like Melchizedek's, they needed to get beyond their limited, immature understanding of God. The Holy Spirit's desire in the heart of this epistle is to emphasize the priesthood of Jesus Christ. His reasoning is clear: Because of the centrality of the priesthood in the Judaistic system, it is important for the Jewish people to know that the great high priest in the New Covenant is Christ Himself (Heb. 4:14). To prove that Christianity is greater than Judaism, the writer shows that Jesus is a greater priest than Aaron, who was the greatest high priest in the Levitical system. Not only is Jesus greater than Aaron, but He is also of an entirely different order: the order of Melchizedek.

a) Understanding the priesthood of Melchizedek

Verse 10 says that Christ is "called of God an high priest after the order of Melchizedek." Melchizedek first appears in Genesis 14. The only other information about him appears in Psalm 110 and Hebrews 57. The writer of Hebrews endeavors to explain the relationship between Jesus and Melchizedek, but is unable to because of his readers were "dull of hearing" (v. 11). Their dullness of hearing was spiritual lethargy. The relation of Melchizedek and the priesthood to Christ is rich and meaningful, and important to the flow of the book, but it cannot be understood by unbelievers, even ones who intelligently accept the gospel (1 Cor. 2:1415).

b) Understanding the problems with dull hearing

The Greek word for "dull" is n[ma]othros, which is made up of the Greek words for no and push. When used of a person it generally refers to someone who is intellectually numb or thick. In this context it refers to spiritual dullness in terms of apprehending the truth.

When a person is spiritually dull, he is difficult to teach. You must be keen, alert, and awake in order to apprehend rich, deep truth. Because of their lack of commitment, those who were intellectually convinced only had been lulled to sleep by neglect, and that had hardened their hearts. The more someone hears the gospel without making a commitment to Christ, the more hardened and sluggish he will become toward it.

Although this passage is not addressed to believers, the same principle applies: When we do not trust or act on any part of God's truth that we know, we become hardened to it and less likely to benefit from it. That can happen to a preacher or a teacher who does not bother to teach the deeper, and sometimes harder, truths of Scriptureor is afraid to do so. Paul was able to say that he did not fail to declare the whole counsel, or will, of God (Acts 20:27). No faithful servant of God will accommodate his teaching for the dull, lazy Christian.

c) Understanding the cause of dull hearing

The implication of verse 11 is that those who were dull of hearing were not always like that. They had been alert, interested, and perhaps even eager to learn more of the gospel. They did not start that way; Their dullness was a gradual process. They were no doubt part of the group mentioned in 6:4 as having "once been enlightened" and had "tasted of the heavenly gift." They had come to the edge of salvation, but they began to neglect the gospel (2:14), hardening their hearts (3:1519) and, tragically, in danger of falling away (6:611). The Holy Spirit had been leading them stepbystep to faith in Jesus Christ, but they began to neglect His work in their lives (6:4). With their Judaistic friends pulling on them, they arrived at a settled state of spiritual stupidity.

2. Dullness Prevents Teaching (v. 12)

The writer says in verses 12, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God, and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food."

a) The time involved

The phrase "for the time" gives us the backdrop for understanding these verses. Because of the length of time they had received instruction on New Testament truth, these Jewish readers should have known enough to be teaching it themselves. Not only were they not teaching it, but they also had never truly accepted it, or committed themselves to its transforming power. They had the truth in a factual and superficial way, but the truth did not have them.

There are many professing Christians, even wellknown theologians, who know Scripture and the biblical languages very well, but they do not accept or apply what it means. Because of the time they have spent studying the Word of God, they ought to be excellent teachers, but instead, they do not even comprehend the fundamentals. They may attempt to teach the Word of Christ, but they do not even know the Christ behind the word.

The apostles had labored long and hard among those who were intellectually convinced but not saved. The truth was in their grasps as Hebrews 6:4 suggests: "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 age to come." They had received full revelation from God, yet ultimately chose against Him.

A Spiritually Sluggish Young Girl

Some time ago I spoke at a Christian youth conference on the subject of choosing the right mate. After one of the sessions a young girl came to me and asked if we could talk about her relationship with her boyfriend. As we sat on the chapel steps, she began telling me that her boyfriend tried to convince her that whatever someone doesbe it premarital sex or anything elseis all right as long as no one gets hurt. After some questioning, I found out that her boyfriend was 21, yet she was only 14. When I reminded her of what God says about sex outside of marriage, she hung her head and said, "I know that. I need to be saved." She also revealed that she had not only been raised in the church, but also that her dad was a pastor. I replied, "Then you know how to be saved." "No," she responded, "I've heard my father preach on it, but I don't understand it." She was a picture of spiritual sluggishness, for she had heard the gospel all her life, but she had rejected Jesus Christ for so long that her senses were dulled by sin. The gospel became so unclear to her that she could no longer understand it. She thought her father's sermons were boring and made no sense. It was not that there was something wrong with the message; it was that she was indifferent to the Word of God. I carefully delineated the gospel to her, and then we prayed together and she confessed Christ as her Lord and Savior.

b) The terms involved

(1) "the first principles"

Because they had become spiritually listless, those who were informed but unbelieving needed to be taught again the basics of Scripture (v. 12). The Greek word for "principles" is stoicheia, which means "elementary principles" or "that which comes first." It is used to speak of the elementary letters of an alphabet, the basic elements of the earth, the basics of geometric proof, or the elementary principles in philosophy. Since verse 12 says "first principles," it is referring to the first in a series or the very beginning of something.

(2) "the oracles of God"

The writer of Hebrews is exhorting these unbelieving Jewish people of their need to be taught the basics. The phrase "oracles of God" in verse 12 does not refer to the gospel. Because this was a Jewish audience, the oracles of God to them would be God's laws as revealed by Him in the Old

Testament. And having been entrusted with the oracles of God was very meaningful and a great advantage to the Jewish people.

(a) Romans 3:12Paul said, "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? ... Much every way, chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God." This is a direct reference to the Jewish heritage of receiving the Old Testament law.

(b) Acts 7:38Stephen said of Moses, "This is he that was ... in the wilderness with the angel who spoke to him [Moses] in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, who received the living oracles to give unto us."

(c) 2 Samuel 16:23Scripture says this about David's former adviser: "The counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days, was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God."

It was the basic principles of Old Testament Law that the Jewish readers needed to remember. They were getting considerable exposure to the New Covenant, but had apparently forgotten the Old. They needed a teacher to instruct them again into the meaning of their own law. They needed to move from the picture and bring Christ into focus. The elementary principles or picturetruths were the ordinances, ceremonies, sacrifices, holy days, and washingsall foreshadowing the person of Christ. The Hebrews could not recognize Him unless they understood the pictures.

c) The tasks involved

(1) Getting the big picture

The New Testament goes beyond the ABC's of the Old Testament. The writer is calling for his Jewish audience to gain a more mature knowledge based on God's revealed Word. This is Paul's argument in Galatians 3:2325: "Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." "Schoolmaster" refers to the law's function as a tutor to lead us to Christ. Under the New Covenant, we're not under the schoolmaster [law] any more. Since Christ has arrived, the shadow is replaced with the substance, the picturebook is replaced with great writings we can read.

(2) Showing faith

All that the Hebrews knew of the truths of God should have lead to a response of faith, but instead they were holding to old Judaistic patterns and would not let go. They had been taught to the point of being able to be teachers themselves, but because of their rejection and continual hardheartedness, they had become spiritually sluggish and needed to be reminded the basic elements of their own

Scriptures. They had to relearn the alphabet! How could the writer of Hebrews speak of Christ, the high priest after the order of Melchizedek, when they couldn't begin to understand it (vv. 1011)?

(3) Understanding the basics

Paul said in Romans 2:1721: "If thou art called a Jew, and resteth in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, who hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the lawthou, therefore, who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" The Jewish people had prided themselves in that they were great teachers, but in Hebrews 5:12 the Holy Spirit says they themselves needed to go back to kindergarten.

d) The truth involved

The writer of Hebrews ends verse 12 by saying they had "become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food." It is characteristic of a baby that he can handle only milk. He does not come to need milk; he is born with that need. The only person who comes to need milkto need baby food is one who has reverted back to childhood. Instead of becoming more mature, these people were slipping back into spiritual infancy. If you aren't progressing, then you are regressing. It is so easy for people to hear the gospel time and time again until it becomes commonplace and they gradually turn their backs on Christ.

3. Dullness Prevents Righteousness (vv. 1314)

a) Understanding the problem

(1) Their lack of experience in righteousness

The writer of Hebrews says in verse 13, "Everyone that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe." The word for "unskillful" is the Greek word apeir[ma]os, which means "without experience." The a at the beginning of the word is called an alpha privitive and is used to negate the meaning of the word following it. These Jewish readers were without experience in righteousness, and were therefore unprepared to receive true knowledge of God. Those who fail to go beyond the elemental things (milk) have not really experienced true righteousness.

A spiritual babe is not accustomed to deeper truths. He cannot digest them any more than an infant can digest a steak. One who constantly lives on nothing else but the Old Testament is going to find himself lacking in righteousness. A spiritual child could get some meaning out of the pictures and types of the Old Testament but not the full picture unless he also studied the word of righteousness,

which is in the New Testament. Verse 13 cannot refer to a Christian because a Christian has been made righteous in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21). The term "babe" never refers to a new Christian in the New Testament, only to those who are immature.

(2) Their lack of discernment in spiritual matters

The writer of Hebrews goes on to say, "Solid food 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" (v. 14). The contrast here is simple: A baby will stick almost anything into its mouth, for it is unable to discern what is good or bad. Likewise, one who continues to feed only on God's elementary revelations is not going to grow or have adequate discernment. The mature adult, on the other hand, has developed considerable discernment about what is right and wrong, true and false, helpful and harmful, righteous and unrighteous.

The unsaved Hebrews were sluggish and dull of hearing, unable to discern that true righteousness comes only through Jesus Christ. Jesus told the Jewish leaders of His day to "search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). The readers of the book of Hebrews needed to go past the elementary principles of the Old Covenant and develop an understanding of Christ and the New Covenant. Maturity comes through exercise, alertness, and awareness.

b) Understanding the word "babe"

The writer uses the word "babe" in verse 13 to refer only to one who is without spiritual knowledge. The term does not necessarily imply salvation. Many have used the term "babe in Christ" to refer to someone who is a new Christian. It may be true that some are new in Christhence a babebut the Scriptures never use the term in that context. Instead it refers to immature believers.

(1) Romans 2:1921Paul chastised the Jewish teachers of his day, saying "Art [thou] confident that thou thyself art ... an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, who hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the lawthou, therefore, who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?" In Jewish culture, a babe was anyone who was uninstructed. This passage is simply describing an individual who was ignorant in his knowledge of God. The term "babe" could be used as an analogy for someone who is a new Christian, but the writers of Scripture didn't choose to use it as such. It is used to talk about immature Christians, not new ones.

(2) 1 Corinthians 3:12Paul said to the Corinthians, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with solid food; for to this time ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able." For one and half years, the apostle Paul had taught the Corinthians. Now he was writing them as much as five years later, so

they were believers for approximately six years at the time. Paul's assessment of these believers was not that they were new Christians, but carnal ones. The Corinthian problem was not their infancy but disobedience, including divisions, envying, and strife. He could not feed them with solid food but with milk. The difference between the Corinthians and those to whom the writer of Hebrews spoke was the term "babes in Christ" (emphasis added).

(3) 1 Peter 2:2Peter did speak to believers when he said, "As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that ye may grow by it." This is not a contradiction to Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 3:1. He is simply using the same metaphor in a different way. This reference is simply describing what every dependent child needs: nourishment. While Paul says to move on from the milk, Peter says to desire the pure milk of the word. Paul uses the metaphor of a baby and milk in one way and Peter uses it in another. Peter uses the Greek word brephos, which refers to a newborn, while Paul uses the Greek word n[ma]epios, which refers to someone who is childish, unskilled, or simple.

The writer of Hebrews uses n[ma]epios in verse 13 to refer to someone who is spiritually ignorant of the New Covenant. He was encouraging his Jewish audience to leave Judaism and arrive at the truth of Christianity.

(4) Ephesians 4:1314Paul said, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine." Here, Paul uses the Greek word teknon which refers to an infant or a small child. It does refer to Christians in this passage but uses a completely different word than Hebrews 5:13.

(5) Galatians 4:3Paul also said, "We, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." This clearly refers to our former unregenerate state. Before you were saved, you were a babe and were under the slavery of the world's evil system.

The New Testament uses three different words to communicate the term "babe." You cannot say that since it is used sometimes to refer to Christians, that it refers to Christians at all points (cf. Gal. 4:3). Hebrews 5:13 refers to unsaved Jewish people who were enlightened about Christ, but had not yet received Him. The writer goes on to warn them in 6:46 that they were in danger of being eternally lost.

CONCLUSION

Because the writer of Hebrews goes on to explain the significance of Melchizedek in chapter 7, he obviously expects his readers to mature spiritually before they read this part of his message. Dr. Charles Feinberg, one of my old seminary professors, used to say that Judaism is the infancy the

Jewish person must leave to go on to the maturity of faith in the New Covenant Messiah. Don't come to the edge of salvation and harden your heart toward Jesus Christ. Come to Christ while there is still time and the excitement is still there. And the message for the Christian is this: If it's intolerable for someone who is convinced of the truth to be ignorant, how much more intolerable is it for someone who not only knows the truth but also trusts in the Son of God to be spiritually immature!

Focusing on the Facts

1. Who is being addressed in Hebrews 5:106:12?

2. What is the theme of the epistle to the Hebrews?

3. List three types of people the writer of Hebrews is concerned with.

4. Throughout the book of Hebrews, the many comparisons and contrasts are basically between _____ and _____ .

5. True or False: The Holy Spirit is contrasting two kinds of Christians in the book of Hebrews: mature Christians verses immature ones who are struggling with their faith.

6. Who is the mediator of the New Covenant? Who was the Old Covenant mediated by?

7. Describe the warnings given in the book of Hebrews. Is there any difference between the warnings? Explain your answer.

8. What is meant by the term Old Covenant?

9. The Holy Spirit's desire in the heart of this epistle is to emphasize the _____ of Jesus Christ.

10. True or false: The more someone hears the gospel without making a commitment to Christ, the more hardened he will become toward it.

11. Although Hebrews 5:106:8 is not addressed to believers, does it have any application for believers? Explain.

12. What should have been the response of the Jewish people who had been under the instruction of New Testament truth (Hebrews 5:12).

13. Explain what is meant by the term "the oracles of God."

14. Is verse 13 referring to a Christian? Explain your answer.

15.True or false: You can be a Christian without being made righteous positionally, in Christ.

16.How does the writer of Hebrews use the word "babe" in verse 13?

17.How does Scripture use the word "babe"? Explain your answer from the passages given.

18.What does the author of Hebrews warn his Jewish readers about in 6:46?

19. What is the message for Christians in Hebrews 5:1014?

Pondering the Principles

1. Hebrews 5:106:12 is a warning to those who had made a shallow profession of faith in Christ but were unwilling to submit their lives to Him. Believing in Christ involves more than just an acknowledgement of various facts about him; it is committing your life in obedience to Him because of who He is and what He did. John 8:3132 says, "Then said Jesus to those Jews who believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Look up the following verses, which define how a person is saved, and ask God to let you know for sure whether you are really saved: Ephesians 2:810 Titus 3:5, and 2 Thessalonians 1:79.

2. First John 3:10 says, "By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God" (NASB). As a Christian, your life ought to be marked by righteous behavior. Does righteousness characterize your life? Do you desire to live in daily obedience to God? If not, you are, as were the first readers of Hebrews, in danger of selfdeception. Verbally inviting Christ into your life does not make you a Christian; Committing your entire life in obedience to Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior does. Read Titus 1:16 and Hebrews 12:14 and ask Jesus Christ to give you a new heart and make you the kind of person He wants you to be.

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