

### **The Wednesday Word Oct. 12, 2011, The Gospel and Authentic New Testament Ministry, Part 3**

It is sad to say but the gospel is often rejected in many of today's churches. Indeed, the appeal of many modern preachers is positively anti-gospel. . "We must move on to the deep things," they tell us as they hurriedly turn to Hebrews 6:1 and following verses. "See what it says," they declare with full confidence, "It says,

"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ let us go unto perfection not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms and the laying on of hands and of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment."

Yes indeed, that is exactly what we should do! We are called to go on to perfection and a thorough reading of Hebrews shows us that Christ and His New Covenant are the perfection spoken of.

The Book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers who were strongly considering going back to Judaism. Since God does not walk backwards, the writer to the epistle urges them not to take that wretched backward step. He exhorts them to put imperfect Old Covenant thinking behind them and move fully into the New, and better covenant. There's nothing left for them in Judaism. He tells them,

"The law made nothing perfect but the bringing in of a better hope did" (Heb. 7:19).

The book of Hebrews is a call to get immersed into Christ our gospel. In Christ, we have a full revelation of the mind, will and purpose of God (Heb. 1:1-2). In the Old Testament the prophets pointed to the 'Future One', in the New Covenant Jesus pointed to Himself. In Jesus, we have left the shadows of the Old Testament and have embraced the substance, the fulfilment of all the types and shadows. The Old Covenant was flawed in that,

"the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1)

But Christ Jesus, by His one all-sufficient offering of Himself, has "perfected forever", them whom God has set apart (Heb. 10:14).

We are told, therefore, to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ. Note, it is the principles of the doctrine of Christ we are to leave and not Christ Himself. Since the word 'principles' is the Greek word 'arche' (beginnings or origins) we are called to leave the origins and first principles of the gospel and move into the gospel itself.

This entire catalogue of doctrines presented in these verses of Hebrews 6 is found in Judaism. Notice how it says, "doctrine of baptisms". According to the New Testament we have but one baptism, not many (Eph. 4:5). Furthermore, the word translated as 'baptisms' is literally the word for washings (baptismos). These baptisms refer, therefore, to the ceremonial washings under the Law of Moses.

Leave the beginnings and get into the gospel is the message of Heb. 6:1-2! Many of our new preachers, however, have reversed this, teaching the very opposite. According to them, the gospel is for beginners and now we must move into the deep things of God by the Spirit. But how is this possible? How can God have a deeper work for us than the work which is already finished and complete? How can the Spirit take us away from the One whom He has been sent to magnify? We should ask, therefore, when we are offered

any new and 'deeper work', will this work of the Spirit take me nearer to the Christ of the cross or will it once more make me the centre of my focus? Anything, which makes my experience, feelings the core of my Christian life, must be shunned as being sub-standard.

There is no deeper work of God than the Christ event, the gospel. There is no more profound experience than Christ's experience on our behalf. It was His experience on our behalf which was and is the gospel. We cannot improve upon being complete in Christ (Col 2:10) and being already blessed with all spiritual blessings in Him (Eph 1:3)!

And that's the Gospel Truth