

The Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews XVI

Going Backward Spiritually

(Chapter 5)
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Let's go back and review just little bit here. I think this is really something that we need to understand of God and Christ.

Hebrews 5:8: "Although He was a Son, yet He **learned** obedience..." There is a difference between being God in spirit—you are righteous, righteous by nature—and you give that up and become a human being and take on human nature. He *learned* how it is for human beings to be obedient. That is all a very important part of being a High Priest Who can understand and have compassion and sympathize with those that He is High Priest for—**us!** That's quite a thing!

- Does God have all knowledge? *Of course!*
- With all that knowledge can He still learn?
- Why not?
- Does that mean that He's deficient because He learns? *No!*

Verse 9: "And having been perfected..." In spirit, as a spirit being, God is perfect. *No question about it!* But when He gave up being a spirit being to become a human being, He was *spiritually perfected* by the things that He did. Though God is perfect, can He become more perfect? *Yes!* It's the same with us, and this is given to us as an example that since Christ learned—and He was God—and in the flesh He was perfected:

- that helps us to understand that we can be perfected
- that helps us to understand that God wants us to become one as Christ was

Let's see where this is carried through:

Hebrews 6:1: "Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, we should go on to perfection..." Christ is the example. That's why we have the Gospels telling all about His life, what He did, how He did it and so forth. All of this then relates to our salvation.

Hebrews 5:9: "And having been perfected, He became *the* Author of eternal salvation to all those who obey Him." Let's just plug some Scriptures in here for this:

John 14—here we find exactly the same thing; it reiterates that Jesus is the Author of salvation and it also reiterates obedience to Christ. Here's a basic, fundamental Scripture in which the

whole New Testament is built upon:

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him, '**I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.**'" As we've seen in the past, that's a very exclusive statement:

- it excludes everything else
- it excludes all other religions
- it excludes all other beliefs
- it excludes all of those who use the name of Christ, but preach lawlessness

When we put these verses together with Heb. 5:9, then it has even more power and understanding. As we go through here, what we are learning is that the reason that they became sluggish in understanding and dull of hearing is because they were not doing the things in Isa. 28: 'precept upon precept; line upon line.'

Verse 15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments." That is basic and fundamental. People can talk about love all they want, but lawless love is *you love the Lord and whatever you do is okay!* He understands and you have grace and forgiveness. That's not what He's saying. Then other people will say, 'Keep My commandments.' Those are the commandments of Jesus. Those are not the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament.

When they don't know that Christ was the Lord God of the Old Testament, they don't understand that He's the One Who gave the Ten Commandments. Let's just give them the benefit of doubt and say, 'All right, Jesus' commandments.' Which commandment did Jesus give which is contrary to any of the Ten Commandments? *Not a one!* That's very important for us to understand and realize, especially when we come to a couple more verses later where it says the time ought to be that you be teachers. Now, that doesn't mean that you're going to be teachers in a pulpit or anything like that necessarily. But it means all of those who are the disciples of Christ or the believers in Jesus Christ for salvation. They ought to be able to explain the Scriptures to other people; to '*give an answer to the hope that lies within them.*' These things are very important.

Now we come down here to the real nitty-gritty, v 21: "The one who has My commandments..." Not only do you know them, but

you have them, indicating that you understand that it's a way to live.

"...and is keeping them, that is the one who loves Me..." (v 21).

1-John 2:3: "And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. The one who says, 'I know Him' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him" (vs 3-4). When we put all the Scriptures together then it agrees completely.

John 14:21: "...and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him." Judas (not Iscariot)... [did not understand that] ...said to him, 'Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?'" (vs 21-22). It's a spiritual process by the Spirit of God, by the Word of God.

The world doesn't know it or understand it. It's not that He's going to appear in vision, or He's going to appear in person. He's going to manifest Himself through the Spirit of God, and through the love and commandments of God. Notice how He answers:

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word... [that's everything that Jesus said, *every* word] ...and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. The one who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the Word that you hear is not Mine, but the Father's, Who sent Me'" (vs 23-24).

He gave commandment to Christ, what He should say and what He should do. If you reject the New Testament as well as the Old Testament, Who are you really rejecting? *You're rejecting God the Father, the Sovereign of the universe; the greatest being that there is!* This shows that He gives eternal salvation to those who obey Him and then obedience and love go hand-in-hand.

Matt. 7 is another basic Scripture. If you don't understand these basic Scriptures, then it's impossible for you to go on to perfection as Paul says in Heb. 6:1. You will be hung up on 'should I' or 'shouldn't I' and which commandment and which commandment not. Then when you're hung up on that and you don't have enough spiritual understanding, then you end up being just like the one's noted here who became false prophets.

Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone who says to Me 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who *is* in heaven. Many will say to Me in

that day ... [we're going to see this more and more] ...'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?' And then I will confess to them, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness.'" (vs 21-23). This tells us that there is no salvation without obedience (Heb. 5:9). There is no salvation with lawlessness.

Verse 24: "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock." Christ is the Rock. 1-Cor. 3:9-12 about building on the foundation of Christ. We're all going to have difficulties. I don't think a one of us who's been converted would raise a hand or say 'since I've been baptized I haven't had a single trial and that's been 20 years. *No!*

Verse 25: "And the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house..." This is likened to everything in the world. What does Satan send out after those who were escaping he sends out water; He sends out a flood (Rev. 12). This is likened to the trial. Who is the 'prince of the power of the air'? So, we have wind.

"...and beat upon that house..." There are times when you feel *beat upon!* There are trials and difficulties that you will go through and you will feel that way. Sometimes they will come one after another just like gusts of wind, in waves!

"...but... [if you're built on the Rock] ...it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock" (v 25). That's what all of the book of Hebrews is about; that you stay founded on Christ all the way through. You understand that He is a great and fantastic and marvelous High Priest Who is interceding for us, Who is our propitiation. He sends the Holy Spirit to comfort us in all circumstances and He is there concerned for us day and night. That's what's important. That's why we have the Sabbath and study the Word of God on the Sabbath. When we come to Sabbath services:

- we can be strengthened spiritually
- we can be reinforced with the Word of God
- we can go out and beat upon this next week and make it back here next Sabbath

It happens to every single one of us! I don't say much of the trials and difficulties that I go through, but I go through plenty. Maybe of a little different nature than yours; many of them maybe of the same kind of nature as yours. It involves not just myself, but other people. We're all together; that's why we're brethren, and we can be rest assured that's

why Christ went through everything that He went through and suffered.

Hebrews 5:10: “After... [these things that He had gone through] ...He had been designated by God *as* High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec.”

Nearly all the rest of Hebrews thru chapter 10 has to do with the priesthood of Melchisedec. It has to do with showing a very important thing: that the New Covenant is *superior* to the Old Covenant. The priesthood of Christ is *superior*; you can't get anything greater or better than the High Priesthood of Jesus Christ after the order of Melchisedec. Can a man, as high priest, be as effective as God as High Priest? Maybe put in those terms it's easier to understand. *Of course not!*

Verse 11: “Concerning Whom we *have* much to say and hard to explain, since you have become dull of in hearing.... [understanding or dull] ...For truly, by this time you ought to be teachers, *but instead* you need to have *someone* teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* Word of Righteousness because he is an infant. But solid food is for those who are fully grown... [spiritually mature] ...who through repeated practice have had their senses trained to discern between good and evil” (vs 11-14).

Hebrews 6:1: “Therefore, advancing beyond the beginning principles of the doctrines of Christ, we should go on to perfection...”

Let me give you an example of what it is to stay with the beginning principles, and I'll use the example of the Baptist Church: Every Sunday when they get together they have an *altar call*. Everything stays at that elementary level. Then they keep themselves at that elementary level because they have a licentious, lawless grace. Therefore, once they've 'given their heart to the Lord'—as they have it; and once they have come forward to confess Christ publicly, then it's a *completed work*. Everything is done, and from that time forward all you have to do is have a 'good feeling' in your heart, and that tells you that what you're doing is right. So, they have just entered into the sandbox and haven't even gotten down to play in the sand.

Can you learn how to be a full, mature human being—even in the world—if you stay in grades one, two and three. You go to school 12 years and four times you go 1, 2, 3. By time you have gone through it you know what's going to be said, and if you know what's going to be said, what

happens? *You've heard it before so you don't listen!*

Just like when I travel on a plane, what do the stewardesses instruct the passengers all the time? Just look around and you can see all the 'seasoned' travelers. The stewardess is up there explaining it and demonstrating—they have it now on a little video projected screen—and they tell you about the basics of the plane. Here is the plane and here are the emergency exits, the lights, the white lights lead to red lights and the red lights lead to the exits and look at the exits in front and look at the exits behind and find out where it is. In case of air pressure loss; the masks will come down and put it on yourself first, and even though the bag is not blown up there is oxygen flowing and then you put it on someone else who is in need of you. And in case of an accident, you bend over and grab your knees and hold on tight. If you need to have a flotation device, there's one under the seat and you can pull the cord and blow it up, and all of us know that.

All of those who are travelers who have heard this over and over again, what do we do? *We're sitting there reading or writing or doing something else!* Likewise, when it comes to 'religion,' and if they hear the same thing over and over again, it's just like I reiterated with what the stewardesses do. They also show you how to put on the seatbelt. I mean, that's elementary. How did we get there? *Most people drove in a car!* What did we wear? *A seatbelt!* Listen, if we don't know how to put on seatbelts... But, what happens? I'll give you another example: Driving in the car you get so use to the seatbelts that many times you don't even use it. Why? *Because it's there!*

This is what happened to those that Paul wrote the book of Hebrews to. They just stayed with the basics and got so dull of hearing that in Heb. 2 it says, 'you're in danger of slipping away.' And then all the warnings—chapters 2-4—now into chapter five he's explaining how it came about.

They're "...dull of hearing" What happens when that occurs? If you're not constantly learning and growing and maturing, what happens? What happens if you become dull or sluggish of hearing? *You begin to lose it!* That's what happens, and then:

Matthew 13:14: “And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which says, 'In hearing you shall hear, and in no way understand... [they're sluggish in hearing] ...and *in* seeing you shall see, and in no way perceive.'”

Isn't that true with the Word of God; *especially* with the Word of God. Many people have the Bible—the Word of God—but they don't perceive what it is, or understand what it is. And it's

the greatest book in the world, which tells you about eternal life!

Yet, isn't it incongruous that the same people who have closed their eyes and their ears to it and don't understand it, what do they want? *They want peace, God's blessing!* You know they do because they don't want God's cursing. I have yet to hear anyone say, 'Oh, God, please curse me.' Of course, that's incongruous! Yet, they have the Word of God, and because they won't read it—and more particularly because they won't obey it—and if they're a religious person and then they hear the same thing over and over again, they just become dull of hearing and they shut their ears and close their eyes just like this:

Verse 15: "For the heart of this people has grown fat, and their ears are dull of hearing... [just like Heb. 5] ...and their eyes they have closed... [it's something *they do*] ...lest they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them."

If you are in the category then of sluggish of hearing and 'dull of hearing' and so forth, then pretty soon you're going to get to the point that you just even forget that. I wonder how many millions of 'marginal Baptists' are out there who have gone to church so many times and they've heard the same thing over and over again that they could pay very little attention to it and don't even go to church, even on Sunday, likewise with the people in the Church of God. This is where it's very important in knowing, learning and understanding the Word of God. That if the one who is doing the teaching does not increase in his knowledge and understanding, how can he increase the knowledge and understanding of the brethren?

Here's a very profound principle for those who are teachers, because we have to be learning all the time, too. When we teach and preach, we should also be doing so to ourselves. Not only can the hearers become dull of hearing and dull of understanding and sluggish, mentally, but also those who are teaching. If they get themselves so busy in doing so many activities that they have no time for prayer or study, no time for really thinking, no time for preparation, then what do you think they're going to give to the congregations that they teach? *Milk toast!* And if they get milk toast what's going to happen? *They will stay babes forever!*

How would like to have a diet of just milk and pabulum your whole life? *You talk about dull and uninteresting!* You could never have a nice juicy steak, never have a nice breakfast of eggs. No, just

milk and pabulum! If you had that everyday, you'd be bored stiff, plus you'd be malnourished!

Paul is chiding the Jews because they thought themselves to be teachers, but they were the ones who were violating the ways of God, because they weren't teaching and they weren't doing:

Romans 2:17: "Behold, you are called a Jew..."

Verse 29: Rather, he *is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly... [we can apply this to ourselves if we are converted and we have the Spirit of God] ...and circumcision *is* of *the* heart, in *the* spirit *and* not in *the* letter..." If we have received the Holy Spirit and have had our hearts circumcised by that.

Then this applies to us, v 17: "Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God, and know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; and are persuaded *that* you yourself are a guide of *the* blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the Law" (vs 17-20).

That's all well and good. We find another principle here, which we already covered back in Matt. 7—*why call Me, 'Lord Lord' and do not the things which I say*. Likewise, Paul is taking that principle and expanding it here even more, and applying it to those who are teachers.

Verse 21: "You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?..." That's very important, very profound. A teacher—whether a minister, elder—if he doesn't teach himself... In other words, if he says one thing to the congregation or brethren and does something opposite himself, he falls into the same category of hypocrisy as the scribes and Pharisees, *because they say and do not!* Sooner or later that's going to take a toll on:

- his understanding
- his relationship with God
- on those who listen, because they are not activating the Spirit of God
 - ✓ to know
 - ✓ to study
 - ✓ to realize the things that need to be

You become dull and bored! He really gets them, v 21: "...You who preach, 'Do not steal,' are you stealing? You who say, 'Do not commit adultery,' are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege? You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law?" (vs 21-23). That's quite a thing! Paul was in the category of one who did

what?

- taught himself
- let Christ teach him
- studied
- grew in grace and knowledge and understanding

—so he could teach the brethren! I'm sure as did all the other apostles. So, that's an example for any of us who are teaching. Here's what happens when you find hypocrisy within the ranks of the teachers:

Verse 24: "For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written." I tell you what, the movies today really depict all of the Protestant ministers as stupid, sinning oafs! What does it do? *It turns people off toward finding out anything about God the Father and Jesus Christ!* I don't know about you, but when I was a youngster, my few encounters with religious people did that to me. It turned me off and I wanted to run the other way as fast as I could.

As a matter of fact, when my folks wanted me to—at that time they started attending the Lutheran Church for a while—take confirmation. Well, you have to go to the minister's house and study. I think I was about ten or eleven and my mom would drive me up and drop me off. I'd wave goodbye and start walking up toward the porch, making sure she had already left, and I'd walk up on the porch, jump down on the side and I'd run off and go play someplace. I was so turned off by these sickly, sweet ministers that it was unreal!

So, the conduct of many of those ministers in the world—and would have to include at least some within the Churches of God today in what they have done in throwing away doctrine and Truth—that they are causing the rest of the world to blaspheme against God because of their conduct and their lack of teaching.

Let's put it this way: If you're going to be a teacher, then you cannot be living on milk yourself. It won't work! Let's talk about those who are in need of milk. Who needs milk? A lot of the things that we teach here, and learn here, would be like giving a newborn babe an un-ground piece of meat. Who needs the milk? *These are the ones who are beginning!*

1-Peter 2:1: "Therefore, having put away all wickedness, and all deceit, and hypocrisies and jealousies, and all slanders, as newborn babes... [we're not to stay that way, because Heb. 5 tells us that we're to grow up and become mature] ...yearn after the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow" (vs 1-2).

That is to start you out, and it is the milk of the Word, not the teachings of men. We can liken the milk of the Word to mother's milk. If babies are breast-fed with mother's milk they are more intelligent, more healthy, become stronger, have a greater immune system. We can liken the other—the formula and Similac and all of those artificial things—to *insincere* milk of the manufacturers. What happens to children reared on that? *Well, I think the jury is still out, but I think a lot of the evidence is in:* the babies are not as healthy. They also know that they're not as intelligent. They also know it creates havoc with their digestive system because it's too hard for their little systems to digest. Mother's milk is the perfect formula, because God made it. You don't have to have any great knowledge to do that. We can liken to it, but you are to grow.

Verse 3: "If you yourselves have indeed tasted that the Lord *is* gracious." We have to grow beyond that, so we have the admonishment by Peter. He's talking about the Epistles of Paul:

2-Peter 3:16: "As *he has* also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them concerning these things; in which are some things *that are* difficult to understand..." That doesn't mean they can't be understood, but you have to apply yourself to them.

"...which the ignorant and unstable are... [as they do the other Scriptures] ...twisting *and* *distorting*, as *they* also *twist and distort* the rest of the Scriptures to their own destruction. Therefore, beloved, since you know this in advance, be on guard against *such practices*, lest you be led astray with the error of the lawless ones, *and* you fall from your own steadfastness; rather, be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him *be* glory both now and into *the* day of eternity. Amen" (vs 16-18). We are to grow!

Let's see the process from milk to growth. This is not only for growth for individuals, but it is also growth for those who are teaching, because it says, 'the time that you ought to be teachers.' We could look at some of the ministers that we knew in the Church of God and we could also look at what happened to them as teachers. They did not apply themselves in all these things, too. It's quite an interesting process that God has. This whole process that we are talking about works two ways:

1. for the good for those who love God and keep His commandments, that they can grow and understand
2. the opposite way for those who reject God's way or are the spiritually drunk

We can tie that in with Rev. 17, *drinking out of the*

goblet or cup of Mother Babylon!

Isaiah 28:7: “But they also stagger through wine, and reel through strong drink... [talking about *spiritually*] ...The priest and the prophet... [they’ve gotten off of the Word of God and gotten into ‘religion’] ...stagger through drink; they are confused by wine; they reel through strong drink...”

What is the way? *The way of the Lord!* They’re out of it! They don’t know it! They’re not teaching it!

“...they err in vision, they stumble in judgment, for all tables are full of vomit and filthiness; no place *is clean*” (vs 7-8). If that does not describe the Roman Catholic Church! That’s something else!

God asks the question in the midst of all of this drunkenness and vomit and spiritual confusion; v 9 “Whom shall He teach knowledge?...” How is anyone going to learn anything in this kind of environment?

“...And whom shall He make to understand doctrine? *Those* who are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts” (v 9).

That’s why He says in Heb. 6:1 we’re going to advance beyond the beginning principles of Christ. In other words, we’re going to go beyond the milk. You have to come to the point that you are weaned from the milk, and when you’re weaned from the milk you can begin to eat solid food.

Here is how you put together the Truth of the Bible, v 10: “‘For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, there a little.’... [that’s how you understand it (on the other hand): ...for with stammering lips... [drunken spiritual stupor we just read about; they don’t understand] ...and foreign tongue He will speak to this people” (vs 10-11). That’s the way they view it.

Verse 12: “To whom He said, ‘*This is* the rest He gives to the weary’ and ‘*This is* the refreshing’...” In other words, if you are drawn from the breast and weaned, if you learn ‘precept upon precept and line upon line’ then it will cause the *weary to rest* in the Word of God and it is a *refreshing* because it renews you and converts you.

“...yet, **they were not willing to hear**” (v12). Just like we’re talking about in Heb. 5 and Matt. 13.

Then what happens? Just like we’ve been discussing, v 13: “So then the Word of the LORD was to them... [in the same way] ...precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line

upon line; here a little, there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken and snared and taken.”

The Word of God being a two-edged sword works both ways. You can grow to spiritual maturity by using it properly. You can end up in spiritual destruction if you are in a spiritual drunken stupor and misuse the Word of God. Pray tell, what other book in the world could do that? *No other book! None whatsoever!*

This also tells us that only the mind of God and the Spirit of God could have inspired and put together the Bible this way, through the Holy men moved of the Holy Spirit, to write it the way that He wanted it written, so that it would have the effect that God designed it to do, which then is another miracle, indeed! It tells us then that the longer we’ve been in the Church and the more that we understand, the more awesome and fantastic the Word of God becomes. The more that we can approach God in this way, the more that He is going to lead is in understanding and Truth!

Let’s see that. What we just read here is a *spiritual* operation. It cannot be accomplished without the Spirit of God.

John 16:13: “However, when that one has come, *even* the **Spirit of the Truth, it will lead you into all Truth...**” How? *Precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little as you put the Word of God together!*

“...because it shall not speak from itself...” (v 13). Because it’s going to convey the words of God through the power of the Holy Spirit; it’s going to convey His thoughts and His Truth to those who have the Holy Spirit.

“...but whatever it shall hear, it shall speak. And it shall disclose to you the things to come. That one shall glorify Me because it shall disclose to you *the things that* it receives from Me. Everything that the Father has is Mine; for this reason, I said that it shall receive from Me and shall disclose *these things* to you” (vs 13-15).

2-Tim. 2 applies not only to brethren, but this also applies to anyone who is a teacher. When it says that ‘they are not skilled in the word of righteousness.’ Why? *Because they’re not doing it the way that we just read!*

2-Timothy 2:11: “This is a faithful saying: If we have died together with *Him*... [through baptism (Rom. 6)] ...we shall also live together with *Him*... [by the power of the resurrection] ...if we endure, we shall also reign together with *Him*; if we deny *Him*, He will also deny us; if we are unfaithful, He

remains faithful—He cannot deny Himself... [because God is!] ...See that *they* remain mindful of these things, earnestly charging *them* in the sight of the Lord not to argue over words that are not profitable in any way..." (vs 11-14). If you want an example about striving about words to know profit, take a look at *The Journal*.

Let me give you an example: An evangelist in the Church of God who said that after he studied it, anointed cloths are not Scriptural; shouldn't use them. It's the striving over words, "...*but which lead to the subverting of those who hear*" (v 14).

He says now that when someone is sick that he doesn't send out anointed cloths, he just has them call and they pray for them. Well, pray tell, why did Paul send out 'anointed cloths or handkerchiefs' to those that were sick or had demons? And they were healed! Some people have said, 'Well, that's not just for healing, that's for a special miracle.' *Of course!* Is there anything wrong with anointing a cloth and asking God to perform a special miracle because you can't be there? *Of course not!* But it's subverting a lot of people! And 'striving of words'; boy, I tell you, *The Journal* is full of it!

Here's what we need to do, v 15: "Diligently *study* to show yourself approved unto God... [How do you do that?] ...a workman who does not *need to be* ashamed, **rightly dividing the Word of the Truth.**" How? As we've already covered: *precept upon precept; line upon line; here a little, there a little!* Properly put together "...**rightly dividing the Word of the Truth.**"

Because, if you don't *rightly divide the Word of Truth*—if you wrongly divide it—then you can make it say something that it really doesn't say, and yet, claim that you're using the Scriptures. Isn't that what most of the ministers of the world do with the Word of God?

Verse 16: "But avoid profane and vain babblings because they will *only* give rise to more ungodliness... [that is self-evident and we have seen that through the years] ...and their words will eat away at the body like gangrene..." (vs 16-17)—like a cancer.

It is will come in unknown, unawares and begin to eat away. Then what happens? *You get into a spirit of criticizing the Word of God!* Rather than looking into it to see what it says that you ought to do and you ought to teach and how you ought to live, you take the Bible as a task or a project to tear it apart, to pull it down, to make it say something that it doesn't say!

Here's an example here, v 17: "...of whom

are Hymeneus and Philetus, who have gone astray from the Truth, claiming that the resurrection has already taken place, and are destroying the faith of some" (vs 17-18).

What do we have here? *We have the first beginnings of preaching of going to heaven!* It's always incongruous to go to some of these funerals where there's a Protestant or Catholic minister and they give the nice purring words: 'Well now, so-and-so is up in heaven looking down on us and then you go out to the gravesite and he mentions something about the resurrection. It's incongruous, because if you go to heaven, why is that you need a resurrection?

If you want to read a contorted doctrinal discussion on that, read that in the Catholic catechism sometime. This fits in with 'let the dead bury the dead.' That means let the *spiritually dead leaders* bury the *spiritually dead* people.

Verse 19: "Nevertheless... [in spite of all this that men can do] ...the foundation of God stands firm, having this seal..." That in spite of all of this; think of this with the scattering of the Church of God:

"...*'The Lord knows those who are His'...*" (v 19). All of those who have the Holy Spirit of God, **God knows where they are!** And He knows them! No doubt about it!

"...and, 'Let everyone who calls upon the name of Christ depart from unrighteousness'" (v 19). So, there we have the solution.

2-Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture *is* God-breathed and *is* profitable for doctrine, for conviction, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." We'll see how righteousness, what the problem is there (Heb. 5) because they are not doing the things that we have just covered.

Verse 17: "So that the man of God may be complete, fully equipped for every good work." This has two applications:

1. to the one who is a teacher
2. to anyone who is of God

—because it says that the Lord knows those who are His. (2-Tim. 2:19).

Hebrews 5:12: "For truly, by this time you ought to be teachers..." Being able to fully explain the Word of God to someone. Haven't we seen this with the breakup of the Church? *Yes!* It is amazing the people that really didn't know anything that you thought really knew something. *Absolutely amazing!*

"...*but instead* you need to have *someone*

teach you again what *are* the beginning principles of the oracles of God, and have become those in need of milk, and not of solid food. For everyone who is partaking of milk *is* unskilled in *the* Word of Righteousness because he is an infant” (vs 12-13).

- doesn't know how to use the Word of God
- doesn't know how to study the Word of God

That's what happens. Remember that Paul is writing this to those who were baptized for a long time. The reason that we're going over this is because in Heb. 6 he talks about the *unpardonable sin*. I know what's going to happen when we get to Heb. 6. Those people who are conscientious and want to serve and love God are going to be worried that they have committed the *unpardonable sin* when they haven't.

The only unfortunate part of that is that the ones who ought to hear what Heb. 6 has about the *unpardonable sin* are not around to hear it! When I get there and I'm preaching on the *unpardonable sin* and you're loving God and trying with all your heart, mind, soul and being to overcome your sins and human nature, and you're very sensitive that you don't want to sin and you want to walk in God's way, ***you are not a candidate for the unpardonable sin!*** But he is leading up to it by showing the process of how a person comes to that state.

- by not hearing
- by not reading
- by not studying

They regress and become an infant!

Verse 14: “But solid food is for those who are fully grown, who through **repeated practice**... [this is where we have the trials and difficulties that we go through; you constantly go God's way] ...have had their senses trained to discern both good and evil.”

That's so when you read something you can see where it is good or you can see where it is evil. You can see the things that are right. You can see the things that are wrong.

Let me give you an example of something of how Satan can use a *hook of Truth* to further deceive people. Sometime back I went to a conspiracy conference. We know that Satan is the great conspirator of the world. We know that he is doing everything he can to deceive the governments of the world. We know that he's trying to form a one-world government. We know what is happening because of the changes in the law. And now with the mammoth reorganization of the federal government under George W. Bush, it is going to create a police

state if they get everything enacted that they want and the United States will be changed from a republic to a dictatorship. The only thing that will be needed will be a dictator! Many people in the world understand that. They write books and articles and they speak about it. They point it out and those things are true.

When I was there I heard the host get up and say, ‘Our next meeting is going to be in Santa Cruz and if all of you want to know how those like Shirley MacClaine and the other have succeeded where others have not, come to this very spiritual meeting.’ That's a good example that you can't have part of the Truth. Satan can use a *hook of Truth*, get these people by exposing what he's doing to ensnare them into something else that he is doing to get them into spiritism and the occult.

I sat there and it about blew me away! Well, the point is, many of those people sitting there, not knowing the Word of God, not understanding that they need to exercise their senses to discern *both* good and evil, couldn't understand that. So, what were they doing? *They were going up and signing up for the event!* Satan's famous saying: *Gotcha!* Get you one way or the other.

Let's see what happens if you don't have your senses exercised to discern good from evil. You will end up thinking that evil is good. It's a progressive thing that takes place. Let's see the progression. Lot's of times we do not connect things that are taking place in the world such as this are resulting in spiritual problems. All you have to do is examine the cities of the world and you will see that that's true.

Isaiah 5:8: “Woe *to* those who join house to house, *that* lay field to field, until *there is* no place left, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land!” In other words, there's no place you can get away from it all. If you go to Yosemite to get away from it, half the world is there touring it because they're wanting to get away from it. This is what we're talking about. Look at the cities.

I marvel, even here in Fairfield you have over 100,000 people, and I think you have 200,000 cars on the road. You get people all jammed up together. What does that cause? *That makes sin easy to take place:* kidnapping, sexual abuse, adultery, stealing, breaking and entering—all of those things. To say nothing of being so jammed in and then have your mind's jammed with all of the things that come in the air: radio, television and all that sort of thing. I tell you what, we're living in an age that we have more things against us than perhaps any other people down through history. We ought to be the ones to

have our senses exercised to discern good from evil. Here you see it starts.

Verse 11: “Woe to those who rise up early in the morning to go after strong drink; who continue late into the night *while* wine inflames them!... [this is literally physical and spiritual] ...And the lyre, and the harp, the drum, and pipe, and wine, are *at* their feasts...” (vs 11-12).

We can just say rock concerts—how’s that? And instead of just wine and strong drink, we can say heroin, cocaine, speed, and methamphetamine. Some supposed famous base guitar player for the group that is called ‘Who’ died at 57-years-old in Las Vegas. Why is that all of these rock stars who just absolutely destroy their lives with the music and the drugs and their absolutely lawless living, die at a young age? What does the world say? *Oh, what a shame! What a loss!* I say, too bad it didn’t happen sooner and to more, so that more people would get the point that that way leads to death.

“...but they do not regard the work of the LORD.... [no, God isn’t in their thoughts at all] ...Yea, they do not see the work of His hands.... [because God’s judgment is coming] ...Therefore, My people are gone into exile because *they have* no knowledge...” (vs 12-13).

See how that ties in with Heb. 5? *You’re dull of hearing!* You can’t discern right and wrong, and people are going to go into captivity because of that.

“...and their honorable men are famished, and their multitude is dried up with thirst. Therefore, the grave has enlarged its appetite, and opened its mouth without limit; and down goes her glory and multitude and brawlers, and he who rejoices in her, shall go down into it. And man is bowed down, and men are brought low, and the eyes of the lofty are humbled. But the LORD of hosts is exalted in judgment, and God, the Holy One, is sanctified in righteousness” (vs 12-16).

In the long run God’s way is going to happen. The truth is, *you can’t get away from God anywhere!* People may think that they can. People may think like Adam and Eve and become their own gods.

Verse 18: “**Woe to those** who draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin with cart ropes; who say, ‘Let Him hurry *and* hasten His work, so that we may see it; and let the purpose of the Holy One of Israel draw near and come, so that we may know!’” (vs 18-19).

But they’ve already rejected it. They challenge God! Sooner or later God takes you up on the challenge. Sooner or later God’s judgment

comes.

Here’s the thing that’s important; here’s the lesson here: Those that challenge God, because God doesn’t answer immediately—with a thunderbolt or something like that—they think they’re getting away with it. But the truth is, it’s going to come! ***Sooner or later, it will come!***

Here’s what happens when you no longer discern good and evil, v 20: “**Woe to those** who call evil good and good evil... [this all from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil] ...who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!”

So, when we talk about the world that is upside down, that’s exactly what we’re seeing. *No doubt about it!*

Verse 21: “**Woe unto them** that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! **Woe unto them** that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink, who justify the wicked for a bribe...” (vs 20-23). Hello, Wall Street! Hello, Washington, D.C.!

Yet, they can put a man away on the ‘three-strikes law’ for stealing a piece of pizza. Imagine that! Actually that is double jeopardy because they’re going back and taking past convictions so they can upgrade a misdemeanor to a felony, and actually go in the past and upgrade a past and paid-for crime as a felony and then you have three strikes and you’re in prison for 25 years for stealing of piece of pizza.

And yet, look at all the executives of these corporations that are finally admitting, ‘Well, we fudged a little on our books’—about \$3.5-billion! Now they’re laying off 17,000, so ‘we can balance the books. We’ll do it over the backs of these people and can their jobs.’ Yet, the executives get their golden parachute and leave with millions. It’s amazing!

Verse 24: “Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame burns up the chaff... [if you’ve ever seen that, it goes up POOF] ...their root shall be like rottenness, and their blossoms shall go up like dust because they have cast away the Law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the Word of the Holy One of Israel.” They rejected knowledge! They didn’t exercise their senses to discern both good and evil.

Verse 25: “Therefore, the anger of the LORD is kindled against His people, and He has stretched out His hand against them, and has stricken them; and the hills trembled, and their dead bodies *were* as filth in the midst of the streets. In all this His

anger is not turned away, but His hand *is* stretched out still.” Very important thing!

What a shame that a Church of God could get in that state—which it did, and have to suffer those things—which it did.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 5:8-9
- 2) Hebrews 6:1
- 3) Hebrews 5:9
- 4) John 14:6, 15, 21
- 5) 1 John 2:3-4
- 6) John 14:21-24
- 7) Matthew 7:21-25
- 8) Hebrews 5:10-14
- 9) Hebrews 6:1
- 10) Matthew 13:14-15
- 11) Romans 2:17, 29, 17-24
- 12) 1 Peter 2:1-3
- 13) 2 Peter 3:16-18
- 14) Isaiah 28:7-13
- 15) John 16:13-15
- 16) 2 Timothy 2:11-19
- 17) 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- 18) Hebrews 5:12-14
- 19) Isaiah 5:8, 11-16, 18-25

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1-John 2:3-4
- 1 Corinthians 3:9-12
- Revelation 12; 17
- Romans 6

FRC: bo
Transcribed: 4-22-11
Reformatted/Corrected: January/2017