

Hebrews

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[0 : 0 0] I don't know if you recall or not, but in our last session I gave you an assignment. I'm just wondering how many of you even remember that you had an assignment or that you did anything about it.

Someone said that's one of the great advantages of reaching our age is you can tell your deepest, darkest secrets to your close friends because they can't remember them anyway.

So, it does have its advantages. And did anybody think to do a little bit of independent research on Hebrews chapter 6? Because we described it as one of the most controversial passages that has divided Christendom for several hundred years.

And you can line up the Calvinists on one side and the Arminians on the other and they go at it because of the content of chapter 6 in Hebrews and it talks about falling away.

And what it is that you would fall away from, of course, is the faith. And the Arminians say that this is proof positive that it is possible for a believer to fall away from the faith and lose the salvation that they once enjoyed.

[1 : 1 4] The Calvinists insist that it is not possible to lose your salvation because once you come to faith in Christ, you are sealed by the Spirit of God until the day of redemption.

So, this issue has divided these two factions for a long, long time. And I'm going to ask you, poll you, if you've got some thoughts or insights regarding it that you would like to share.

I'll just ask you to speak up if you do because my hearing aids are down for repair. And I have a little difficulty hearing, so you'll have to speak with some projection if you have something to say in order for me to hear you.

And then, I'd like to cap off our session, if I may, if we get that far, depending on your comments, with some thoughts that one of my friends and mentor has to share regarding the Hebrew 6 passage because he is Jewish and he is coming from a Jewish perspective who has come to faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior.

And he has offered commentary on Hebrews as well as many other things as well. His name is Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum and he was our tour leader for the extensive six weeks tour that we had in Israel in 1990.

[2 : 3 6] It was a historical geographical tour of the Holy Land which was unbelievably beneficial. And Dr. Fruchtenbaum has founded an organization called Ariel Ministries.

And Ariel in Hebrew means Lion of God. That's the name of his organization. And if you want some very insightful material, all you need to do is click on Ariel Ministries, A-R-I-E-L, ArielMinistries.org, and you will find a huge abundance of very worthwhile materials available to you there.

And he is able to speak to the biblical issues from a Jewish perspective, both the Old Testament and the New. And he will share his comments by me sharing what he has written regarding this Hebrew 6 passage.

I think you'll find it quite enlightening. Dan? I did my homework. Good. Good. Okay. I'm glad you did. This is an ex-school teacher, ex-school principal. If anybody did his homework, it better be him.

And the dog didn't need it either. Okay. What do you got? There's a second shoe that I picked up. It said that, in essence, it's like a house.

[4 : 06] You know, the house has to have a foundation. Okay. The foundation crumbles, so does the house. Right. And so, it is not necessarily aimed at those who profess Christ.

Okay. And then purposefully renounce him. Okay. That's an understanding I had. Okay. Well, that's one of the common interpretations, is that these who are described here in chapter 6 are not true believers.

And some go so far as to say, well, with the word that they have tasted of salvation, they would say, that doesn't mean that they actually partook of it.

It just means that they tasted it. They sampled it. But they did not really take it to themselves. So, they were not true believers. Therefore, they did not have real salvation.

So, what they fell away from was kind of like a false profession anyway. And that is one of the common interpretations. Joe? It's like Mark's, in Mark, the book of Mark, the parable.

[5 : 14] Okay. The seeds. Yeah. The seed. It's kind of like that. You know, some grew up real quick and then faded. You know, they didn't really have that deep, rough belief. Okay.

That they needed to be here. They had good soil. They never really believed deeply. They just skimmed it over. They were exposed to the truth, but they didn't fully buy it. That's right. Yeah.

Okay. Well, recall, if you will, we pointed out to you when we started this epistle to the Hebrews some time ago, that there are three basic groups to whom the writer is addressing himself.

And the first group has to do, and by the way, the whole of the constituency, the addressees of Hebrews, is as it says.

It's written to the Hebrews. That is not really too difficult to grasp. That means you can and should expect content in this epistle that would have a direct bearing to those who are the seed of Abraham, as opposed to those who are not.

[6 : 23] And there is a great tendency, simply because it is found in the New Testament, a great tendency among a lot of Christians who want to Christianize Hebrews. And I can understand that.

But I think it will lead to some false conclusions, because this is an epistle that is addressed specifically to Jewish people. And the first class has to do with Jews who have truly embraced Yeshua HaMashiach as their Savior, and they have believed on Him.

Then there are those Jews who have heard the gospel, they have heard the claims of Christ, and they flatly reject them.

Frankly, that is the majority position by far for the nation of Israel as a nation. The vast majority of Jews did not receive Jesus as their Messiah, and still do not to this day.

And then, there are those Jews who are vacillating, they're somewhat in the middle, they hear arguments regarding Jesus being the Messiah, and they kind of lean that way.

[7 : 37] Then they hear opposing arguments that He is not, and they kind of lean that way. These are fence straddlers, or people who are vacillating. They can't quite make up their mind.

They have not gotten on board, but they have not fully rejected. They're just trying to decide whether or not these things are so. So you've got those three groups.

All three of them are addressed in this epistle to the Hebrews. Any other thoughts that you'd like to share? Dan? One thing, a little while I've picked up in reading this, is that once you say you renounce it, there's a point where you don't go back.

Okay. Is that correct? I mean, is that, in other words, he can forgive sins, but if you say you renounce him, there's no repentance. Okay. Well, this is what the text is saying, that if you renounce Christ, then the hypothesis is, that if you renounce him, and why would anybody do that?

Now, let's think about this. Why would anybody, why would any Jew, in this first century setting, who has come to faith in Christ as their Messiah, why would they possibly, even consider, renouncing him?

[9 : 00] Because they had always heard, that he was coming as a king, to save them from their enemies. Not the role that he took. Not going to cross and die. That's not what they heard. They heard that he was going to, the king was coming to the Messiah, was going to save them.

That was going to be to, set them up as the leaders, the best in the country, and to overrule everybody else. And that did not materialize. That didn't happen, like they heard and taught, that this Messiah was coming.

Okay. He didn't do, what they thought he was supposed to do. So there's some disappointment, discouragement there. Yes. Second guessing. Did I put my faith in this one, who was supposed to bring the kingdom, but there is no kingdom.

Yes. He didn't deliver. Yes. So he's not worthy of my faith. So I'm going to withdraw, my faith from him. Peer pressure. Absolute. Peer pressure.

Hey, this is a really, really big item. When one, and actually what this has to do, what this has to do with, is an expression of one, changing one's faith.

[10 : 07] And here is a major sticking point. Not only was it in the first century, it is today. We were just talking, Brent and I were just talking, on the way here, about the Rabbi Zacharias ministry, and about Nebil Qureshi.

This is the young man, fully committed, solid Muslim. Went to medical school, graduated, became a practicing MD, and came to faith in Christ.

And his whole world changed, in so many ways. He's the author of the book, that some of you have read, Seeking Allah, Finding Jesus.

Tremendous book. Tremendous read. And this is the story, of his testimony. How he, as a committed Muslim, and a solid, loving family, of Muslims.

How he lost his family. And they literally, wrote him off. Because, to leave Islam, actually, is a capital offense. And, it is, it is considered, it is considered, the responsibility, of the nearest relatives, to put to death, any family member, who abandons Islam.

[11 : 40] And that, by the way, is prescribed, in the Quran. Of course, there are many Muslims, who do not, actually follow through, with that. But, there are many, who do, particularly, in countries, where Islam, is the dominant faith.

There, they can get away with it, under Sharia law. But, here in the United States, of course, they would be tried, for murder. But, to leave one's faith, is an enormous, enormous step.

Because, it is perceived, as not only, involving, the temporal, and the complexities, that that produces, in this life, but it is, sincerely believed, that it involves, the afterlife, in a permanent way.

And, we see this, even played out today, when someone, leaves, Judaism, to embrace, Christianity. If it is, an orthodox family, from which, they have, departed, they will, actually hold, a funeral, for that one, and, consider them, dead.

And, they will say, this, our son, was alive, he is now, dead. Well, he is very much alive, and up and walking around. But, as far as they are concerned, he is dead. They have written him off, they have ostracized him, he is no longer welcome, in their family, he is a traitor, to the faith, that kind of thing.

[13 : 11] This works that way, in Judaism, today, in Islam, and even to a certain extent, it involves those, between, Catholic and Protestant, and, if someone, is Roman Catholic, and is committed, to the, sacraments, and they, leave that, they are viewed, as having, cut themselves off, to any possibility, of eternal salvation, because, the sacraments, and the church, is no longer, available to them, therefore, there is no salvation, for them, and can you not, understand, the agonizing, that a family, would have to go through, overseeing, loved children, spouses, etc., consigned, to what they believe, is hell forever.

I mean, this is a, this is a really, big, big item. And, this is something, that the Jews, were dealing with, in that first century. If you, well remember, back in John 9, back in John chapter 9, the man who was healed, who was born blind, and Jesus healed him, and the authorities, came to his parents, and said, is this your son, whom you say, was born blind?

And if it is, how is it that he now sees? And his parents, were intimidated, by this authority, and they said, yes, this is our son, and yes, he was born blind, but by what means, he now sees, we don't know.

He is of age, ask him. And then, John adds, for the Jews, had already decided, that if anyone, should say, that Jesus, is the Messiah, he should be cut off, from the synagogue.

That means, excommunicated. Now, if you were a Jew, in the first century, and you are cut off, from the synagogue, synagogue, your life, is effectively over.

[15 : 34] Because, that's where children, were educated, that's where social, functions, were held, that's where weddings, and funerals, were held, that's where Jewish, social life, centered, that's where business, deals were even, struck.

That's where people, had community, and connection. And if you were a Jew, and you were cut off, from that, it's just like, your food supply, is ended. It was a heavy, heavy price to pay.

And not very many, were willing to pay it. Now, here's what was taking place, when, considerable numbers, of Jews, were coming to faith, in Christ, as the Messiah, we are told, in Acts 2, that there were, at least, 3,000 of them, all Jews, all Jews, every one of them.

And they were, so committed, to Jesus, being the Messiah, they submitted, to, John's baptism, in the Messiah's name. And those, 3,000, that we tend to, really, be fixated on, must be understood, as being, a very, very, tiny minority, compared to, the greater number, who did not believe.

because, this event, took place, in the courtyard, of the temple, the temple area, the temple mount, which would accommodate, huge numbers of people, a whole lot more, than 3,000.

[17 : 08] So, we do not know, how many, did not respond, to Peter's message, we only know, that 3,000 did, and we tend to lose, sight of that, because, any preacher, would be glad, for 3,000 converts, under any circumstance, you know, but there were, a whole lot more, that did not believe.

But anyway, as you go on, through the act, there are more, who are added, to that number, and it says, and the number of them, came to be about, 5,000. Well, these people, still had, friends, relatives, family, businesses, and they're, interacting with them, and they aren't, cut off, from them, and they're still, by the way, they are still, going to the synagogue, as for you, same as they always have.

And what do you, suppose the topics, of conversation, are going to be, in the synagogue, with the influx, of these people, who are convinced, that Jesus, is the Messiah, in the midst, of all of those, who are not.

Families are divided, neighbors are divided, kind of like, a north-south situation, we had here, with the civil war, and, arguments, are going to develop, and tempers, are going to flare, and eventually, eventually, these people, who are followers, of Yeshua HaMashiach, are going to become, what shall we say, persona non grata, unwelcome, in the synagogue, why don't you, just leave, and eventually, they are, because, they're going to be, given the cold shoulder, they're going to be, left out of things, they're going to, it's a kind of, it's a kind of, mild persecution, that, is going to, intensify, and, the one, who is, going to end up, being, a head, persecutor, and I, cannot escape,

I cannot escape, the charge, other than, assigning it, to Saul of Tarsus, he was, Saul of Tarsus, was the Adolf Eichmann, of his day, and he was a Jew, who was persecuting, his own countrymen, you could say, that, you could almost, you could almost say, that Saul of Tarsus, was an original, Gestapo type Jew, and those whom, he was persecuting, was his own countrymen, think of that, and this persecution, is going to, ramp up, and become more, and more severe, and do you not, do you not, suspect that some, of these Jews, who had embraced, that position, of Jesus being, the Messiah, are starting, to count the cost, and are asking, themselves, is it really, worth it?

[20 : 06] Maybe, maybe, if I were to, renounce Jesus, repent, of my believing, in him, apologize, to my, family, and to my friends, and say, it was all, a big mistake, and I made it, and I'm sorry, and would you, welcome me back?

Maybe, they would, welcome me, with open arms, after I've seen, the error of my way? Do you not think, that some of those, had those thoughts, crossing their minds?

Absolutely. Absolutely. And let's look, at the text. Hebrews chapter 6. There is a price, to pay, and it is, sometimes, in isolation, persecution, intimidation, deprivation, whatever goes with it.

Therefore, leaving the principles, of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on, unto perfection. Excuse me. And what he's talking, about here is, you have already, embraced, the ABC's, of this faith.

And what, you desperately, need to do now, is you need, to begin, growing, and developing, and maturing, in your faith, so that, you will become, more, and more, steadfast, more settled, more solid, more convinced, and convicted, and more worthy, of this salvation, that you have received, in a better light, for the person, of the Messiah.

[21 : 49] So he's saying, not laying again, the foundation, and this has to do, with the ABC's, of the Christian life, of repentance, from dead works, and here is the formula, of course, first thing, anyone has to do, before they can come, to faith in Christ, whether they were, a first century Jew, or whether they are, a 21st century Gentile, the first thing, you have to do, is acknowledge, and recognize, that you have, a need.

And whatever, it was counting on, whatever it was, that you were counting on, to make you, in a right relationship, with God, is something, that you're going, to have to change, your mind about.

You're going to have, to repent about that. And you know, as well as I, what most people, are counting on. First of all, when it comes to, being acceptable, with God, most people, most people, the majority, is going to say, well I don't know, for sure, but I like to think, that maybe, I'm okay.

Because, I'm as good, as most people, I'm not as bad, as a lot of people, and, I've never really, hurt anybody, too bad, intentionally. I've always, tried to do, what was right, well maybe not always, but most of the time, and I think, God will cut me, some slack.

Hey, this is where, most people are coming from, when it comes to, their standing with God. And what this text, is saying is, you've got to change, your mind about that.

[23 : 26] You have to change, your position, from thinking, I'm okay, you're okay, most of us are okay, somehow we're going to make it, because God's going to cut us, some slack, and we're not as bad, we're not as good, as the best, but we're certainly not, as bad as the worst, and we're somewhere in between, we're in a comfortable middle, and that's probably good enough, and I'm okay with that.

And what, the gospel is saying is, that's the first thing, you have to give up. You have to repent, you have to change, your mind about that, and come to the place, of where you, know and understand, you are not acceptable to God, and there is nothing you can do, to make yourself acceptable.

This I call, the hard part, of the gospel. This is the difficult part, that it is for people to come to, because, they tend to think better of themselves, and we all do.

Roger? Oh yeah, well, that's a big item, that we've got, you know, that we've got to deal with, and evolution has certainly, made its inroads, there's no question about that, and the, I don't want to get too far afield, but, there are, there are legitimate, intellectual, questions that people have, about the existence of God, and, and one of the, one of the big items, is, is what I refer to as, the hiddenness of God, and, God's, God's, seeming, absence, in connection, with the world affairs, that are taking place today, the injustices, and atrocities, that are happening, all throughout the world, and, if there is a God, who is worth anything, why is he putting up with that?

Because, I don't have the ability, to stop it, but if I did, I would, but I'm not God, but he is, so what's his excuse?

[25 : 31] And, this is the reason, that a lot of people use, for rejecting the concept, that there is such a being, as God, and, it's, it's, it's worldwide, and, the best selling books, that have been offered, by the top, by the top five atheists, throughout the world, aren't helping either, because, they've turned some heads, and they've turned some minds, and, people are, you know, legitimately wondering, so that's, that's an item, yes.

Jeff, John, Harry, and, and, Sorlo, after you have a movie called, that would be right. Yes. And, I guess, the same year, go away, yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, the Christian community, is making a pretty valiant effort, but, but of course, as always, we're, underfunded, and under publicized, and so on, because, Christianity, Christianity, has, fallen into, a kind of, just downright opposition, that we did not experience, a generation ago, and as I've often said, the screws are tightening, and, Christians, and the Christian position, is becoming less, and less tolerable, in a whole lot of circles, and we see it, in the secularization, of our own, of our own culture, where, where the effort, is afoot, to get God, out of everything, you know, and, these people, they are small, in number, but they are big, in influence, they have the media, on their side, and they all have, really big mouths, and a lot of them, have deep pockets, so they are making, an impact, and secularism, is really, is really guiding, the ship of state, in many areas, yes Roger,

I know we are all, of course, but writing in this morning, I was thinking, about Ronald Reagan, and how he fought, the communists, in Hollywood, and now Trump, fighting the perverts, and the homeless, yeah well, so the fight goes on, the fight goes on, but these conflicts, have always existed, and they, they probably always will, until the Lord returns, Dan?

I guess the ultimate, if someone pointed, a machine gun, at your head, said you believe, in the Lord Jesus Christ, as your personal savior, what are you going to say? Yeah well, there were, you know there were, there were great numbers, of Christians, who faced that, in the first century, and many of them, many of them, paid for their faith, with their life, and it is, it is no wonder, that the saying, was developed, that the blood, of martyrs, is the seed, of the church, and indeed, that is true, and martyrdom, is still going on, we're not facing it, here in the United States, but let me tell you, Christians in Africa, have been paying, a dear price, for their faith, for a long time, and persecution, and the slavery, the slavery, that's going on, in Africa, is just, mind boggling, and, and this is, this is, this is, black upon black, the slavery, that's taking place there, and, in almost, every case, it has to do, with,

[29 : 07] Islam, dominating, the Christians, and, forcing conversions, or, simply, executing them, and, this has happened, thousands, in, Senegal, and, in, Dakar, and, numerous other places, in Africa, where Christianity, is really hazardous, to your life, so, many of these people, have paid the ultimate price, for their faith, just because, they profess Christ, as their savior, and, if you understand, Islam, especially, if you understand, if you understand, the Quran, as it is interpreted, by radical Islamists, anyone, who is, not, Islamic, is an infidel, and, they are subject, to, forced, conversion, and, if they, refuse, to submit, to Islam, by saying, the Shahada, there is no God, but Allah, and Muhammad, is a prophet, and, they refuse, to recite that, then, they are fair game, for execution, or, for a kind of, enslavement, taxation, etc., and, this is going on, in countries now, where Islam, is the dominant faith, so, anyway, all I'm saying is, there's always been, a price to pay, for embracing truth, because, truth, has always been, surrounded, by a greater, amount, of error, error, has always been, dominant, and it is, dominant today, and, those who, profess the truth, in doing so, are automatically, putting, anyone, who opposes, that position, in, a light, of, untruthfulness, untruthfulness, and that is not, appreciated,

I can tell you that, and this is why, this is why, this thing called, religious pluralism, has been so popular, today, because, with religious, pluralism, with religious pluralism, no faith, can claim, truth, in an absolute way, or in an exclusive way, because, all faiths, and all beliefs, are viewed, as being, on an even keel, and one, is just as right, and true, as another, nobody, has the right, to say, theirs, is true, because, in doing so, you are declaring, everyone else, to be wrong, and that's offending, and you pay a price, for offending people today, so, religious pluralism, recognizes, the validity, and the legitimacy, of all faiths, being equal, and of course, this, gives the death knell, to anything, like missions, because, the whole missionary, enterprise, becomes illegitimate, because, missionaries, seek to convert people, from what they believe, to be error, to truth, but that's considered, an insult, because, whatever anybody, already believed, even if, it is atheism, is just as valid, as what anybody, else believes, and no one, has the right, to say otherwise, that's what, religious pluralism is, that's what we're, dealing with, so, they didn't have, that problem, in the first century, but they had, other problems, and, the idea, of embracing truth, in an exclusive way, can be hazardous, to your health, so, these people, are told that, get away from the ABCs, of repentance, from dead works, which you've already done, and faith toward God, which you've already done, and of the doctrine, of baptisms, this is, the ceremonial purification, cleansing, such as, was experienced, with the baptism, of John, and of the laying on of hands, which was identifying, with the recipient, and so on, and of the resurrection, of the dead, and of eternal punishment, all of these, are basic, elemental, key, primary factors, to the Christian faith, and what the writer, of Hebrews, is saying, is, these things, you have already embraced, and have already believed, put them behind you, you needed them, for a starting point, but don't dwell there, what you need to do now, is move on from those, and, that's what he's talking about, when he says, this we will do, if God forbid, and then he begins, this hypothetical, for, or because, because, 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, fellas, there is no way, that I can assign, these qualities, to anyone, and call them, an unbeliever, when you come, to faith in Christ, you are sealed, by the spirit of God, unto the day of redemption, and what he is talking about here, is not, the possibility, of falling away, not at all, he tells us, what he's talking about, he's talking about, the, impossibility, of falling away, and if it were possible, what would that entail, a whole list of things, including,

Christ being crucified again, which is unthinkable, and impossible, that's the argument, that he is setting forth here, and I haven't even gotten, to Dr. Fruchtenbaum's, explanation of that, but this is where he's going, and since the food is here, I think it is time, for me to quit, but I will entertain, any last comment, or question, that you may have, we're just in the middle, of this, keep your seats, by the way, because I've run out of them, so don't forget, to bring your seat next week, and we will pursue this further, and oh, by the way, I've got, handouts here, many of you have already, gotten these at church, excellent, excellent, regarding the Reformation, just a couple days ago, we celebrated, the 500th anniversary, of the Reformation, here's an excellent article, why the Reformation, you really will want to read this, and, another, written by, a former, by a former, Roman Catholic, what was he, a former Roman Catholic, seminarian, that says, we believe the same way, right, regarding Catholics,

Protestants, you'll want to read that, and then there's a third article, from Answers in Genesis, which Kenahan talks, talks about replacing Darwin, during Reformation month, I know many of you guys, have already gotten, these articles at church, but for those of you, who are not from grace, you'll sure want to pick them up, because they're very, very worthwhile, so thanks again, for being here, yes, Dana, forgive me for asking again, but, when you started today, you mentioned the Calvinists, and what was the other group?

The Arminian, Arminian, A-R-M-I-N-I-A-N, founded by, Jacobus Arminius, and it was, kind of a, kind of a response, to the writings, and the teachings, of John Calvin, so, they were, kind of on one side, and the reforms, are on the side, of the Calvinist, and the Calvin, the reformers, and the Arminians, are principally made up, today, of, Methodist, Church of God, Nazarene, et cetera, and, they are still, pulled apart, regarding this issue, so, more to come on that later, but, thanks for your input, I appreciate, yes, the author of what, oh, Nabil, Nabil Qureshi, is, Q, Q, U, R, E, S, H, I, fascinating book, and, and, he, by the way, he just passed away, at the tender age, of 34, and, if you want, if you want to hear, something about his story, you can, you can, get online, to,

[37 : 55] R, Z, I, M, that's, Ravi Zacharias International Ministry, R, Z, I, M, dash, dot, org, and, and, if you, click on the right thing, you can even hear, Ravi Zacharias's, funeral message, for Nabil Qureshi, and, it was, it was, it was quite a, it was quite a thing, quite a thing, I would really recommend it.

Thank you.