

HEBREWS: THE INFINITE SUPREMACY AND SUFFICIENCY OF JESUS CHRIST

VIII. Parenthetical Warning Against Turning From Christ, Hebrews 5:11-6:20

C. Encouragement To Grow Out Of Stunted Spiritual Growth (Hebrews 6:9-20)

I. Introduction

- A. We live in an era of great need for an encouraging word amid man's discouraging spiritual failure, so a word from God on the infinite supremacy and sufficiency of His Son Jesus Christ is both desirable and fitting.
- B. The Epistle of Hebrews offers it, and Hebrews 6:9-20 that follows a strong parenthetical warning against turning from Christ encourages believers to grow instead of remaining stunted. We view it for our insight:

II. Encouragement To Grow Out Of Stunted Spiritual Growth, Hebrews 6:9-20.

- A. After warning about possibly becoming so hardened against the truth that they would never repent (Hebrews 6:4-8), the author of the epistle sought to encourage his readers. He assured them that he and his fellow workers were confident that his readers would repent unto the "salvation" of moving out of stunted spiritual growth and hardening to mature in Christ, Hebrews 6:9 with 4:1; 6:1-3. (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 796)
- B. The author added that God was not unjust as if He were about to punish them severely, for He would not forget the work and love that his readers had shown and still showed for God's people, Hebrews 6:10. Yet, the author wanted his readers diligently to stay committed to Christ, making their hope of blessing sure, Hebrews 6:11. He did not want his readers to become *nothroi*, "slow" or sluggish in stunted growth, but through faith and patience to inherit the promises of God for spiritual fulfillment by maturing in Christ, Hebrews 6:12.
- C. The author then referred to Abraham's example of inheriting God's promise by faith and patience, v. 13-15: After Abraham endured by faith and patience God's test that he offer up Isaac, the son of promise, the Lord in reward gave him the great promise in that God took a promise invoking His own name that He would surely bless Abraham and multiply his descendants, Hebrews 6:13-15 with Genesis 22:1-14, 15-17; *Ibid.*, p. 797.
- D. The author of Hebrews then applied that very Genesis 22:17-18 promise of God to his readers to encourage them to trust God and endure trials contrary to that trust for their own spiritual fulfillment, Heb. 6:16-20; *Ibid.*:
 - 1. Significantly, Genesis 22:18 of God's promise to Abraham affects all believers, for God there claimed that He would bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham's offspring, Jesus Christ, cf. Galatians 3:16!
 - 2. Now, the oath God took by using His own name in making that Genesis 22:17-18 promise differs from regular oaths by men, for men take oaths by invoking God's name, not their own, as they seek to confirm their oath by a being who is greater than themselves, Hebrews 6:16-17.
 - 3. However, it was technically unnecessary for God to take an oath, and for Him to take an oath in own His name, for God never lies, anyway: the mere word of God is all that is required to establish the reality of His promise. (Hebrews 6:18b).
 - 4. Nevertheless, God wanted to convince **US** believers in Christ, the heirs of the Genesis 22:17-18 promise, how unchangeable was His purpose in fulfilling that promise that **we** might gain full confidence that God would truly keep that promise to bless **us**, Hebrews 6:18.
 - 5. Accordingly, we believers in Christ have this special divine oath for the fulfilling blessings we are to gain through Christ as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that through Christ enters into the inner place behind the curtain in heaven's holiest of holies where Jesus is gone as our forerunner, Heb. 6:19-20a.
 - 6. Christ is there as our High Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek (Hebrews 6:20b), and His ministry there is fully backed by God's promise that was made with God's oath that He took in His own name!

Lesson: *Though it is very possible that believers who have experienced stunted growth can backslide into a state of permanent hardening with a loss of divine blessing, God is not quick to let that happen to those who have begun their Christian walk righteously. Rather, the Lord longs for believers who suffer stunted spiritual growth to mature in the Lord, and He seeks to assure them that real, bountiful spiritual blessings are ahead for them in Christ by having made an oath in His own name to Abraham to bless all nations of believers through Christ.*

Application: *(1) If we have experienced stunted spiritual growth in our Christian walk, may we on the one hand fear the potential hardening that we might experience were we to remain stunted, but may we also realize the sure wealth of spiritual blessing that awaits us were we to go on and mature in Christ. (2) Since God has gone the extra mile to take an oath in His own name to bless us if we mature in Christ, that blessing must be very great, so we should be highly motivated to grow in the Lord by taking advantage of His intercessory work in our behalf.*