**04/20/2022**

**HEBREWS 6:7-8**

**INTRODUCTION**

We continue our study this evening of Hebrews 6:4-8. As we come again to this passage of Scripture, I want to remind us of FOUR PRINCIPLES of BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION that are not only helpful in general Bible study but that are especially helpful in the understanding of the more difficult passages of Scripture.

1. First, there is the PRINCIPLE OF SIMPLICITY – meaning, that we interpret Scripture according to it’s natural meaning, in the plain sense of it. Scripture is a REVELATION, it is an unveiling, God means for it to be CLEAR to us, to be UNDERSTOOD by us.
2. Secondly, there is the PRINCIPLE OF CLARITY – meaning, that we are to interpret the more difficult passages of Scripture, the less clear passages of Scripture, in light of the clearer passages of Scripture.
3. Thirdly, there is the PRINCIPLE OF CONSISTENCY – meaning, Scripture is not going to contradict itself. That there is an inner consistency to the Word of God.
4. Fourthly, there is the PRINCIPLE OF UNITY – meaning, that a particular TEXT must be considered in its CONTEXT. As there is a unity in the WHOLE OF SCRIPTURE so there is a unity in the PARTICULAR BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE. And as it is important to be minute in our study of a particular passage, so it is important to have a broad grasp of the overall argument of the book in which a particular passage is found.

These FOUR PRINCIPLES are extremely helpful in understanding what the author of Hebrews says in verses 4-6 of chapter 6 as well as other challenging and difficult Biblical passages. Now we have finished our study and exposition of those verses. And tonight, we begin our consideration of verses 7-8 of Hebrews chapter 6. As we do so let us be mindful of the overall message and argument of the book of Hebrews.

The writer of Hebrews is writing to ENCOURAGE and WARN these FIRST CENTURY JEWISH CHRISTIANS to HOLD FAST and FORSAKE NOT the Christian Faith. He knows that they are undergoing SEVERE TRIALS, especially by their FELLOW COUNTRYMEN. There is CONTINUAL and INCREASING PRESSURE on them to FORSAKE THE CHRISTIAN FAITH and return to their JUDIAISM, to their Jewish Faith. And the writer sees in some of these to whom he is writing, if not the majority of them, EVIDENCE OF SPIRITUAL WEAKNESS. They have not grown in their UNDERSTANDING OF THE FAITH nor in the LIFE OF THE FAITH as they should. And given the TIME OF THEIR PROFESSION and the ADVANTAGES they have had their lack of growth is not only a sign of spiritual weakness but also of a possible DANGEROUS DRIFTING AWAY on their part. This is the reason for the author’s GREAT and ALARMING WARNING in verses 4-6. He is warning these Hebrew Christians that their condition is the condition of those who MOST OFTEN FALL AWAY, LEAVE THE FAITH. And those who FALL AWAY, meaning as he is here writing, a TOTAL, a COMPLETE, and an OPEN, PUBLIC FALLING AWAY. He is not writing here of someone who has sinned in a moment of temptation, or one who for a season is overtaken in a particular course of sinning, or one who has backslidden for an extended season, BUT RATHER one or those who have TOTALLY and PUBLICALLY, OPENLY, RENOUNCED AND DEPARTED FROM THE FAITH. For such there is NO POSSIBILITY OF REPENTANCE. THEY ARE BEYOND HELP AND HOPE. Their ETERNAL DAMNATION, their FUTURE JUDGEMENT is DECLARED AND SEALED. There will be NO FUTURE ALTERATION OF IT. And this warning along with those of Matthew 7:21-23 and Matthew 12:31-32 are the MOST SOLEMN TO BE FOUND IN SCRIPTURE.

**INTRODUCTION TO OUR TEXT – HEBREWS 6:7-8**

Our text this evening, verses 7 and 8, speak further and enlarge upon what has been said in verses 4-6. Our text reads,

**“FOR THE EARTH WHICH DRINKETH IN THE RAIN THAT COMETH OFT UPON IT, AND BRINGETH FORTH HERBS MEET FOR THEM BY WHOM IT IS DRESSED, RECEIVETH BLESSING FROM GOD:**

**BUT THAT WHICH BEARETH THORNS AND BRIERS** *IS* **REJECTED, AND** *IS* **NIGH UNTO CURSING; WHOSE END** *IS* **TO BE BURNED.”**

In these words what the writer had DOCTRINALLY INSTRUCTED the Hebrews concerning in verses 4-6 he now sets before them in a PICTURE, a SIMILITUDE. And here he does more, he sets forth the condition of ALL MEN not just apostates.

Before beginning a detailed examination of these verses let us consider certain general matters.

1. FIRST, the APPLICATION of these words is not directly made but is IMPLIED. It is included in the picture itself.
2. SECOND, there is a COMMON SUBJECT in the picture, but it is BRANCHED OUT into DISTINCT PARTS and with DIFFERENT EVENTS ascribed unto each. a) The COMMON SUBJECT is **“THE EARTH.”** Note the words of our text, “**FOR THE EARTH WHICH DRINKETH IN THE RAIN…”** As we shall see there are TWO BRANCHES which belong to it. But both are **“THE EARTH.”** b) **“THE RAIN”** falls on, falls often on, and falls equally upon THE EARTH and BOTH BRANCHES of it. There is no distinction between made between the falling of the rain on the two branches. The rain is simply spoken as falling and falling oft on the earth. We read, **“FOR THE EARTH WHICH DRINKETH IN THE RAIN THAT COMETH OFT UPON IT…”** c) **“THE EARTH”** and both branches of it are EQUALLY DRESSED, PREPARED, TILLED, FERTILIZED. In verse 7and the first part of verse 8 the earth is spoken of as being **“DRESSED”** and in a manner that applies to both branches of it. We read, **“FOR THE EARTH WHICH DRINKETH IN THE RAIN THAT COMETH OFT UPON IT, AND BRINGETH FORTH HERBS MEET FOR THEM BY WHOM IT IS DRESSED, RECEIVETH BLESSING FROM GOD: BUT THAT WHICH BEARETH THORNS…”** The language of our text clearly implies both branches of the EARTH were DRESSED, PREPARED.
3. THIRD, there is a DISTINCTION made between the TWO BRANCHES of the EARTH. This distinction is TWOFOLD. a) ON THEIR OWN PART - For ONE PART brings forth **“HERBS”** and the other part brings forth **“THORNS AND BRIERS.”** AND b) On GOD’S DEALING WITH THEM**.** One receives **“BLESSING”** from God. And one receives **“CURSING”** and is **“BURNED.”**
4. FOURTH, we need to understand the SPECIAL MANNER in the which the writer of Hebrews utilizes these words. As respects those to whom he is writing the words in our text, **“THE EARTH,”** refers to the CHURCH AND NATION OF THE JEWS. This as proclaimed in the Old Testament was God’s VINEYARD. Isaiah chapter 5 is a very significant chapter regarding this matter. And as we read in the parable in Matthew 21:33-45 God sent His ministers and His SON to it. In that sense the **“RAIN…COMETH OFT UPON IT.” “THE RAIN”** in the form of the MINISRTY OF THE WORD OF GOD through GOD’S PROPHETS, MINISTERS AND HIS SON FELL UPON IT AND MAY BE SAID TO HAVE OFTEN FALLEN UPON IT. And the EARTH which **“BRINGETH FORTH HERBS MEET FOR THEM BY WHOM IT IS DRESSED”** refers to those Jews who believed and obeyed the GOSPEL bringing forth the fruits of REPENTANCE, FAITH, AND NEW OBEDIENCE. And the EARTH which brought forth **“BRIERS”** is a reference to the UNBELIEVING JEWS in the time of Christ and the apostles who REJECT CHRIST AND THE GOSPEL This includes both who never made a profession as well as those who after having made a profession fell away.

Interestingly, the language employed by the writer of Hebrews takes us back to the opening chapters of Genesis where after man’s sin the earth, ground, in Genesis 3:17- 18, was cursed and brought forth thorns. We read in Genesis 3:17-18,

**“AND UNTO ADAM HE SAID, BECAUSE THOU HAST HEARKENED UNTO THE VOICE OF THEY WIFE, AND HAST EATEN OF THE TREE, OF WHICH I COMMANDED THEE, SAYING, THOU SHALT NOT EAT OF IT: CURSED** *IS* **GROUND FOR THY SAKE; IN SORROW SHALT THOU EAT** *OF* **IT ALL THE DAYS OF THY LIFE;**

**THORNS ALSO AND THISTLES SHALL IT BRING FORTH TO THEE: AND THOU SHALT EAT THE HERB OF THE FIELD.”**

As well and tying this together we read concerning God’s vineyard in Isaiah 5:6-7,

**“AND I WILL LAY IT WASTE: IT SHALL NOT BE PRUNED, NOR DIGGED; BUT THERE SHALL COME UP BRIERS AND THORNS: I WILL ALSO COMMAND THE CLOUDS THAT THEY RAIN NO RAIN UPON IT.**

**FOR THE VINEYARD OF THE LORD OF HOSTS** *IS* **THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, AND THE MEN OF JUDAH HIS PLEASANT PLANT…”**

Israel’s rejection of the WORD OF GOD through Christ is thus compared to Adam’s rejection of God’s word in the Garden, and the same judgement is exercised against Israel as Adam. As the ground was cursed and brought forth briers and Adam was driven from the Garden and the immediate presence of God, so Israel is cursed and driven from the Land and God in God’s Old Covenant judgement in 67-70 A.D. in the destruction of the nation, Jerusalem and the Temple by the Romans.

Well, this serves to introduce these verses to us and next week we will begin our detailed study of them and their importance and meaning to us today.