

Hebrews 6:1-3

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/heb/heb-6/hebrews-61-3/>

Things like repentance, belief, cleanliness, resurrection, and eternal judgement — these are all basic, foundational aspects of Christianity. They are not signs of mature believers. There are deeper teachings to understand beyond them. The Pauline Author's believing Hebrew friends have wandered from the path of maturity and need to repent and return to that path or risk losing blessings. The window of repentance does not stay open indefinitely.

The Pauline Author intends to move on from the basic teachings about Jesus. He wants his audience to mature, to grow up as believers. He's not concerned with their justification in the sight of God. He knows that is already secured. He is disappointed that they are acting like babies in their faith, rather than adults. The author urges them to grow up: *Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity* (v 1).

Aspects of the *elementary teaching* include *repentance from dead works, faith toward God, instructions about washings, laying on of hands, the resurrection from the dead, and eternal judgment* (v 2).

The Pauline Author asserts these listed teachings are basic elements of Christianity, *not laying again a foundation*. The Pauline Author calls these things a part of *elementary teaching*. Simply believing God's promise is the starting point of faith. All that is necessary to be justified in the sight of God and receive the free gift of eternal life is to believe on Jesus. The Pauline Author will tell us in Hebrews 9:14 that when we repent in the presence of God, the blood of Christ also cleanses our conscience from *dead works*, to free us to serve the living God in our daily walk.

Washings likely refers to religious ceremony, such as Levitical priests who were to be perpetually clean. The *laying on of hands* possibly refers to putting one's sin onto the animal sacrifice. It could also refer to the appointment of leaders. Whatever the case, these things are *elementary* for believers under the New Covenant. The *resurrection of the dead* and *eternal judgement*—these both are easily understood starting places for a believer's faith.

God's *eternal judgment* awaits every human after death. Believers will gain entrance to heaven by the blood of Jesus, but will be judged at the Judgment Seat of Christ, where deeds are judged to determine rewards (2 Corinthians 5:10). *Resurrection* from death comes for every believer in Jesus who dies before Christ's return.

All of these tenets are the foundation of living a faithful life toward God, and don't need to be retaught to these believing Hebrews. The Hebrew audience should already understand all these things; the Pauline Author wants to move forward. However, they need to repent of their current path and begin anew. The time to repent is now, for the window of time to repent does not remain open indefinitely. Therefore, regarding moving on toward maturity, the Pauline Author states: *this we will do, if God permits* (v 3).

What is a situation where God would not permit repentance? There are numerous instances in the Bible where God allows a period for repentance, then that period ends. There are examples for unbelievers and His children alike. Noah and his family were on the ark for a week, then God shut the door. It seems likely people tried to board the ark at some point, but it was too late. God had closed the opportunity for those who did not heed His warning to enter the ark and be saved. That window was open for 120 years, but it finally closed.

The window of repentance can also close for God's elect children. When Israel refused to enter the promised land after the report of the twelve spies, Numbers 14 tells us the people longed to return to Egypt and refused to enter the promised land. So God judged them and told them they were no longer allowed to enter the land, and all above age 20 would die in the wilderness. The next generation would receive the blessing, this generation would lose it.

After hearing God's judgement, the people tried then to obey the Lord, but their attempt failed, and Moses chastised them (Numbers 14:41–43). Their window of opportunity was closed. God did not permit repentance. God's judgment was to give them the fruit of their disobedience and not allow them to enter the land.

The Pauline Author will now explain the circumstance of the Hebrew believers, and why their window of opportunity remains open. But the Pauline Author has already emphasized the importance of immediate action in chapters 3 and 4, emphasizing the need to repent "today" while God is calling. The theme of Hebrews (Hebrews 2:9-10) is that maturity in faith should be the end-goal of this life; that we can, through suffering like Christ, come to a finish line which shares in His reward—a glory and honor that will never fade (Romans 2:7).

This is what the Pauline Author does not want his readers to miss out on.

Biblical Text

¹ Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do, if God permits.