

One Farmer, Two Crops

Hebrews 6:7 - 8

Nutshell: God's gracious influences are sufficient to convince all men to turn to Christ, but especially those who once tasted the goodness of the Gospel.

I. Context: The impossibility of bringing some back to repentance.

II. Text

Heb 6:7 For the **land**

having drunk the rain often coming upon it,
and producing VEGETATION
SUITABLE for those for whom it is also cultivated,
receives a share of benediction from God;

Heb 6:8

"but land yielding THORNS and SPIKES,"
is disapproved and near a curse,
whose outcome *is* for burning.

Literal Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. Paul wrote an inspired book to a Jewish audience; 2 Pet 3:15-16; 1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 3:1. Hebrews is the only possibility.

1. The "us" of Heb 2:3 only puts the author outside the original 12

2. Peter speaks of the Apostles in the 3rd person as well, 1 Pet 1:12

B. Outline of Hebrews to this point:

The Preeminence of the Son

Authority: God has at last spoken In **Son** (*Ἰερωφῆτ*), ← follow this font

His express image, 1:1-3a

Theme: **The SON** purified us from sin (Priest), then sat in authority (King), **1:3b**

Kid-speak: ↑ Who did God send us to show us exactly who God is?

I. Supreme over the angels, Inheritor by ordeal, 1:4-14

Therefore hear Him, 2:1-4

II. Supreme as man, 2:5-9

Psalm 8- Since man must inherit, 2:5-8a

but man failed, 2:8b, **Christ** became man, 2:9a

Theme reprise: crowned with glory and honor (King), 2:9b

to taste the death of “each one” of His own (Priest), 2:9c

to bond with them and help them, 2:10-18

freeing them from bondage to Satan and fear, 2:14-15

Therefore, think hard on **Jesus**, 3:1

III. A better stewardship than Moses, 3:1-6

Therefore hear Him, unhardening our hearts, (*Prephet*)

Ps 95- for Moses’ folk didn’t inherit God’s rest, 3:7-19

IV. A better Rest than Joshua, 4:1-11

♦ Therefore, fear (4:1a), lest we also miss **God’s rest**

Ps 95- David invited his generation into that same rest of

Creation, a type of Salvation, 4:1b-8

Christ’s Salvation has become the final *Sabbatismos*, 4:9-

10, which we must EXERT ourselves to enter, 4:11

Kid-speak: Are we supposed to keep the **Sabbath**? ↑ Yes, because that means that I **stop** trusting in how good I am, and I start trusting in what Jesus did *for* me.

For the Word penetrates, exposing us before God, 4:12-13

Theme reprise: Having the highest high priest (**Priest**), the

Son of God (**King**),

Let us hold to our confession of Him (*Prephet*), 4:14

especially since He felt all our temptations +, 4:15

→ V. A better priesthood than Aaron, 4:14 - 10:18

VI. Exhortations based on Christ’s supremacies, 10:19-13:21

VII. Concluding remarks, 13:22-25

C. “**Let us approach**” (Προσερχώμεθα) in 4:16 and 10:22 tells us that Jesus’ priesthood is so we will approach God.

Prayerlessness, then, dismisses Jesus’ priesthood.

D. 5:1-10, OT priests from Aaron; Christ from *Melchizedek*

1. 5:11-14, The Hebrews were too babyish to learn of *M*

2. 6:1-2, They needed the FUNDAMENTALS again: repentance + faith toward God; Washings (esp. baptism) + laying on

of hands (for the Spirit's gifts and power); the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment,

- E. Or, 6:4-6, be in danger of repenting only temporarily, then, falling away, unable to repent again.
1. Why? They would effectively be re-crucifying God's Son, and the Father won't tolerate that.
 2. That is, short of regeneration, they still made real connection with Christ's cross, having:
 - received God's light- but without dousing counterfeit lights
 - tasted the free gift from Heaven- but without ingesting it
 - partaken of the Holy Spirit- but without giving Him sway
 - tasted God's good speech- minus spitting out forged words
 - tasted the powers of God's future kingdom- while retaining the option of self-rule
 3. Those 5 descriptions also describe the elect, but the elect, with a new spirit implanted by God,
 - douse imitation lights,
 - ingest and digest God's grace,
 - walk in submission to the Holy Spirit,
 - distinguish God's speech from its competitors, and
 - have the mechanism of God's rule working in them
 4. Does this describe you? *Is it even your desire?*

Kid-speak: Paul said the Hebrews needed *baby* Bible teaching. Did they need to *grow up* in their Bible learning?

F. *Today, Paul will solidify and apply the description of apostasy with an illustration from the plant world*

Outline: Hebrews 6:7-8

- I. Aspects of the Agricultural Illustration
 - II. Comparison to the Parable of the Soils
 - III. Heb 6:7-8 phrase by phrase
- G. Heb 6:7-8 breakdown
1. The subject: **cultivated land**/earth
 2. The land's activity: **drinking**,
divided into two results:
 - a. producing suitable **vegetation**

- b. bearing **thorns** and spikes
 - 3. Their 2 ends, respectively:
 - a. God **blesses** it
 - b. **Disapproved**; In line for a curse and burning.
- H. What this illustrates
 - 1. Paul pulls back for a *broader view* to better understand the apostates he's described
 - 2. Particularly, he now takes in the **opposite** group, the elect
 - a. The elect are the 'cooperative' portion of the land, yielding to the farmers' intentions and methods, v 7
 - b. The apostates, despite the farmers' same efforts, yield non-useful, counterproductive plants, v 8

Kid-speak: Paul said that people are like a garden that's supposed to grow good things for God. Are we supposed to grow meanness and selfishness for God? No.

- I. Why the illustration?
 - 1. Partly to show that the rejection of castoffs is part of our own experience in the natural world as well.
 - 2. Mostly to help us better see what's going on in apostasy
- J. *Where* are the farmers in the passage and *whom* do they represent?
 - 1. *Where?* "Those for whom it [the land] is cultivated," v 7
 - 2. *Whom* do the farmers symbolize? God
 - a. Even though God appears in the illustration separate from the farmers, blessing the land
 - b. In that light, the farmers may *further* or *by extension* represent God's workmen, Heb 13:7, 17
- K. Note, the *same land* with *two crops*
 - 1. V 7, "For the land/earth..."
 - a. Absorbs the rain
 - b. Is cultivated/ tilled
 - 2. These describes **both** the part of the land yielding as intended *and* the part of the land 'rebelling'
 - a. The language allows both crops to be side-by-side
 - b. Or it could describe land which responds one way in one generation and another way the next
 - 3. The land corresponds to humans
 - a. **Both** elect and non-elect souls are capable of "drinking" the heaven-sent rains of God's gracious

- workings, as the 5-fold description depicts
- b. The 5-fold description portrays a *real* entry into eternal matters, but a *partial* entry
 - i. The non-elect go only that far
 - ii. The elect go that far *and farther*

Kid-speak: Does God show everybody that they need Jesus? Yes (Jn 16:7-11).

L. Similarities and differences with the Parable of the Soils (PotS)

1. The PotS emphasizes the *differences* in the soils. Heb 6:7-8 gives us the soils' *similarities*.
2. The thorns in the PotS grow *alongside* the Word. The thorns are the *natural* product themselves in Heb 6:7-8.
3. The PotS makes the *condition or situation* of the 3 soils the dooming factor. Heb 6:7-8 makes the soil's own *natural* condition its 'poison': the thorns weren't fully cleared, nor were the vegetables sufficiently strong.
 - a. (Note that the farmer is not blamed. He did his best.
 - b. The thorns were *too integral* to the soil and were stronger than the vegetables planted.)
4. YET the PotS and Heb 6:7-8 are telling the **same story**, just two different angles on it
 - a. In both, the good ground does right
 - b. In both, the bad ground contains its own doom
 - c. But Heb 6:7-8 *assumes the interim state* of the Word's temporary growth. That advantage is represented in the rain and cultivation.
 - d. And in the PotS, the thorns are natural to the ground. They just take back over.
 - e. So the PotS and Heb 6:7-8 help us understand each other

Passage Walkthrough

M. "For the land/earth"

1. "For," meaning this is an explanation of the 5-fold description just given
2. "The land/ earth"
 - a. The land that we can all see
 - b. Just as apostasy is simply part of the Gospel coming among fallen mankind. Both are just how things work.

- N. “Having drunk the rain often coming upon it”
1. *Much as* mankind experiences **God’s gracious influences**
 2. Both happen regularly and frequently. Note that the illustration is of arable land, not desert, etc.
 3. God’s gracious influences especially come to those who repent, including temporary repentance

Kid-speak: Kids, since you’re learning God’s ways from when you’re young, is God expecting you to follow Him your whole life? Yes.

- O. “And producing vegetation suitable for those for whom it is also cultivated”
1. The farmer plants a crop and works it
 2. The land gives him the crop he worked for
 3. *As with* those who fully agree with and continue in God’s gracious workings
- P. “Receives a share of benediction from God”
1. “Benediction,” Gk., *eulogia*, good speech; usually translated “blessing”
 2. This is an aftermath. God, in effect, says, “Good job” to the land. It did its job.
 3. Amazing! For at the Fall God cursed the ground, Gen 3:17
 - a. But God graciously rescinded that curse, Gen 8:21
 - b. Such that Joel 2:3 said that pre-locust Israel had been, once again, like Eden!
 4. Oh let us take reverent note! God doesn’t say “Good job” to the ground in its opposition to rebellious mankind! (Though the thorns *are* only doing their duty)
 - a. He says “Good job” when the land helps us!
 - b. The mercies of God overflow the earth, Ps33:5; 104:24; 119:64
 5. In our analogy, the elect are like the God-blessed land: achieving the fullest intentions of His deepest goodness
 - a. God Himself is our rain, Ps 72:6; Deut 32:2
 - b. Are we a garden with an umbrella?

Kid-speak: We’re like a garden and God is watering us. What does He water us with? Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, love, joy, peace... all kinds of good stuff!

- Q. “But *land* yielding thorns and tri-spikes”

1. Literally “tri-spikes,” a word mostly known to us from the Roman weapon apparently named after the plant part
 2. This analogy is fundamentally from man’s perspective: what the land does for *him*
 - a. That, then, equates to what *man* is supposed to do for *God*
 - b. Thorns and stickers aren’t what we *plant*, aren’t what we *eat*, and they *deter* us in our quest for food from the earth
- R. “Is disapproved and near a curse”
1. “Disapproved,” each of its other 7x, spells out rejection; e.g., Rom 1:28; 2 Cor 13:5; 2 Tim 3:8; Titus 1:16
 - a. It’s not talking about probation. It’s a goner.
 - b. And the worry of it is never altogether gone from a believer, even a blameless one! 1 Cor 9:27
 2. “Near a curse,” meaning next in line; immediately awaiting. *Not* near but untouchable; rather, near and nearly there!
 - a. Because, again, man’s response to the Cross is his response to God’s favorite, His Son
 - b. If converts waste their proximity to the Cross- impossible to renew them to repentance
 3. Yet Cursed is man’s natural state! Gal 3:10
 - a. Jesus took the Curse of the elect, Gal 3:13
 - b. How much greater, then, the curse of those who *simulate* the message of the Cross! Gal 1:8-9, or who buy into the fake
 4. Can whole institutions be cursed?
 - a. Yes. The curses of Deut 28 have come upon the people of Israel.
 - b. Can Christian branches or denominations be accursed? Yes, if they carry a counterfeit Gospel and cross.
 - c. Can *individuals escape* from these institutions? Of course. But there’s no option for remaining in apostate bodies.
- S. “Whose outcome *is* for burning”
1. In agriculture, the land itself won’t catch fire, of course; but the crop of thorns will.
 - a. By extension, the land is burned.
 - b. The hope is that the thorns won’t like the soil’s new pH (can’t do any worse anyway).
 2. Either way, the thorns don’t survive, and they’re the focus: what was “carried forth” into the world. No second chance. No Purgatory.
 3. Just as in Jn 15:6; Rev 21:8

- T. Remember, thorns and spikes were *all we were* or could be
 - 1. Therefore, successful cultivation from our souls means that the thorns had to be effectively nullified, Ezek 36:26; 11:19; Deut 30:6; Col 2:11
 - 2. and outdone, 1 Jn 3:7-10, purchased by the Cross
- U. Good ground is in the minority in the world, Matt 7:14
 - 1. How much more must it cooperate with all the workings of the Spirit!
 - 2. Lk 8:15- Keep the Word, bear fruit with patience, both from a sound and virtuous heart

- V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, “Uphold the strengthless”) Matt 13:23, “100x, 60x, 30x.” Better lower-yield than spiky.

- VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, “Convince, rebuke”): **What have I done wrong?**
How have I lost righteousness?
 Where do I give evidence of persistent spiritual thorns?

- VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, “Exhort/encourage”):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?
 I will cooperate with the Spirit as weeder, Col 3:5.

- VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How do I take this on the road?**
 Jesus, Vine, thanks for this warning to secure my tie to You.

Wrap-up: Isa 5:1-7 tells a very similar story of old Israel. It was about to repeat itself in Paul’s day. Especially tragic were those who found Jesus, then repainted Him as Conservator of the Old Covenant.

Are New Covenant symbols exempt from the same misuse? No. We may attribute reality to what is only symbol, as in baptism or the Lord’s Supper. Baptismal regeneration (water baptism is what ‘causes’ the new birth) does that.

Should God just do away with symbols because of the danger of their misuse? No. Apostates will find and embrace counterfeits no matter what.

Remember, too, the danger of robbing from a symbol what God has put there, 1 Cor 10:16.