

# CHURCH GOD'S WAY

*is not church as we know it today*  
*Hebrews 5:1-11:8*

[Part I: The Principles of Doctrine -page 1](#)

[Part II: Moving on Toward Perfection – page 4](#)

## PART I: THE PRINCIPLES OF DOCTRINE

What would you think if I asked you to make a milkshake in the same way that you would make a nice hot cup of tea? You would immediately recognize the foolishness of such a proposal. You would intuitively know that the method for making shakes is quite different from making tea, even though they are both drinks. It appears we have a similar situation in what we call “church.” We say our goal for the church is to help people to know God, but the opposite appears to be happening. Instead of people coming into relationship with an actual God, they are exposed to compromising doctrines and values, toleration of sin, and misrepresentation of Christ. All this naturally leads to compromised behavior so that instead of true Christians being developed we have what we might term pagan Christians: Christian in name, but pagan in behavior.

I was amazed when I read the following quote by Martin Luther, the man responsible for our present protestant method of “doing” church:

“If we look aright at what people now do who reckon themselves as Evangelical and know how to talk much about Christ, there is nothing behind it. Most of them deceive themselves. The number of those who began with us and had pleasure in our teaching was ten times greater; now not a tenth part of them remains steadfast. They learn indeed to speak words, as a parrot repeats what people say, but their hearts do not experience them. They remain just as they are; they neither taste nor feel how true and faithful God is. They boast much of the gospel and at first seek it earnestly, yet afterwards nothing remains; for they do what they like, follow their lusts, become worse than they were before and are much more undisciplined and presumptuous...than other people, for peasants, citizens, nobles, all are more covetous and undisciplined than they were.”

Martin Luther went on with this train of thought, then made the statement: “we are almost utter heathen with the name of Christian...”

People came into the church on fire, with zeal, truly searching for God, but the longer they continued “in church,” the more pagan they became. Why is this? It seems that what we do in the church is not what true Christianity is: the structure is wrong, therefore the end result comes out wrong. What is the answer to all this? Simply to realign our individual Christianity to the Christianity outlined in the Bible. To do this will require a hard, prayerful, Holy Spirit enlightened examination at this thing called church. To help in our examination the writer of Hebrews brings out some soul wrenching truths that appear to contradict what is happening in our present churches. In this discussion we are looking at Hebrews 5:9- 6:12. This portion of Scripture looks at why we are in the mess we're in.

*Observation: From the start of denominations, true Christianity could never be merged with its structure.*

### THE ABC'S OF CHRISTIANITY 6:1-2

The writer of Hebrews starts this section stating he will leave the principles of the doctrines of Christ and move-on to perfection, maturity, in the things of Christ. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to understand that if you want to write a sentence or write a book, you must start by learning your ABC's. It is the same with learning higher math like calculus or geometry; you must start by learning how to add, subtract, multiply, and divide. This concept is no different in becoming a mature Christian. First we must learn the principles, ABC's of doctrine, before we can move on to maturity in faith. These doctrines are outlined in Hebrews 6:1-2:

1. Repentance from dead works.
2. Faith toward God.
3. Doctrine of baptisms (notice the plural)
4. Laying on of hands.
5. Resurrection of the dead.
6. Eternal judgment.

So far so good. The writer of Hebrews recognizes his hearers are knowledgeable of these doctrines yet tells them they are "dull of hearing" (5:11) and need to be re-taught Christianity when they should be teaching others (5:12-14). The problem was that the church remained with the principle doctrines instead of advancing toward Christian maturity. Look at the above list of doctrines again. Think about what is being taught in the church you attend. You will conclude it teaches mostly what is in the above list of foundational doctrines. No wonder Martin Luther observed that new converts start out good but end up pagan the longer they remain "in church." The ABC's of doctrine are essential for laying the foundation of our faith but do nothing to move our faith toward maturity if we don't advance to the next grade.

*Observation: Our present church focuses upon the ABCs of Christianity, thereby leading to a departure from faith versus a continual advancement in faith.*

### SHIPWRECKED: HEBREWS 6:3-11

The consequence of constant re-teaching and hearing of the basic doctrines lead to a departure from faith and not to maturity. What would happen if a person learned only the alphabet over and over and over and over without being taught how to make words, sentences, and paragraphs? First, the person would be very adept at reciting them forward and backward. Second, they would eventually become very bored with the basics of writing and perhaps even question their usefulness and purpose for life. Third, they would never learn to write nor read and would miss out on what might be termed, "the fullness of life." In an article written December 6, 2010, the headline read: "Christian" Leaders Leaning Towards Atheism." The leaders in this article were a Canadian Christian talk show host, a Southern Baptist pastor, and an evangelical Bible Belt pastor. This article hits the target concerning the condition of the church today. One of the reasons given by the talk show host for departing Christianity is enlightening:

"My reasons for feeling like 'jumping' are plenty. However, they would best be explained by the following illustration: „Imagine a soldier at war, overseas for 30 years. Each week he would write at least one letter to his father back home. Each week he would expectantly wait for the one who supposedly loves him unconditionally, to write him back or phone or possibly even come for a visit. Any kind of personal interaction would do. He’s heard through his friends and other soldiers just how much his father loves him, but those rumors of Glory aren’t enough to sustain his faith in his father anymore.”

Did you see what he said? There was no entering into maturity and the actual, continual presence of God. There is no doubt that these Christian leaders were good at what they did; but what they did was to focus on the ABC’s of Christianity: repentance, faith, baptisms, eternal judgment, etc. at the neglect of leading themselves and their hearers to an actual God.

The writer of Hebrews acknowledged that his hearers had knowledge of the basic doctrines (6:1) and that Christ was their work and labor of love (6:10), yet he was to-the-point in telling them they were in danger of departing their entire faith and deliberately rejecting Christ. Why? Because they did not move from the basics to maturity. Not going further than the basics almost guarantees the death of your faith. The sad condition of the church is that most do not understand the basics to even lay a foundation to experience true Christianity.

*Observation: The faith of most is shipwrecked because they have not advanced to meet the actual, living God.*

### HOPE: HEBREWS 6:9-12

Now if we find our own faith shipwrecked there is hope. The writer of Hebrews does not believe his readers had gone to the point of no return and encourages them toward mature things (6:9). What he taught them, and you and I, starts with not giving up, as the leaders above did, but continue in faith and perseverance (6:11-12), then we also will become mature, understanding all that God has promised to us (6:13-18); our guarantee that God will not change His mind and will fulfill His promise to us is Jesus, who is also in heaven with the promise on our behalf.

*Observation: If we find that our growth has been stifled there is hope, but it does require commitment, striving, and perseverance—no turning back, but a continual pressing on.*

### THE CORRECT STRUCTURE – MARTIN LUTHER

Martin Luther wrote the following enlightening words concerning the order/structure of the church:

"The right kind of evangelical order cannot be exhibited among all sorts of people, but those who are seriously determined to be Christians and confess the Gospel with hand and mouth, must enroll themselves by name and meet apart, in one house, for prayer, for 4 reading, to baptize, to take the Sacrament, and exercise other Christian works. With such order it would be possible for those who did not behave in a Christian manner to be known, reprov'd, restored, or excluded, according to the rule of Christ (Matt. 18:15). Here also they could, in common, subscribe alms, which would be willingly given and distributed among the poor, according to the example of Paul (2 Cor. 9. 1-12). Here it would not be necessary to have much or fine singing. Here a short and simple way of baptism and the Sacrament could be practiced, and all would be according to the Word and

in love. But I cannot yet order and establish such an assembly, for I have not yet the right people for it. If, however, it should come about that I must do it, and am driven to it, I will willingly do my part. In the meantime I will call, excite, preach, help, forward it, until the Christians take the Word so in earnest that they will themselves find how to do it and continue in it.”

Isn't this absolutely astounding? The father of the protestant movement recognized that the order of the church could not promote true Christianity; he encouraged those “seriously determined to be Christian” to meet in another place—at home. It appears that Martin Luther's quote implies the intimacy of a family versus the structure of an institution.

*Observation: the present “church” structure was acknowledged by Martin Luther to be not what God intended and unable to lead others to God.*

In part two we will look at the missing element in today's church which keeps it from advancing in faith.

## **PART II: MOVING ON TOWARD PERFECTION**

In Part I of this discussion, it was established that remaining only with the principle doctrines of our faith does not encourage a person to be Christian. In Part II we will look at where we need to be to move from being “utterly heathen” to “truly Christian.”

### **THE GREAT HOPE: HEBREWS 6:13-20**

Where we need to be to be truly Christian is in the actual presence of the living God. To get there we need to understand that God has an enormous inheritance for everyone belonging to Him. This great hope began with God's promise to Abraham that he would be blessed with many descendants. To these descendants would be given an inheritance of eternal life and the privilege of being joint heirs with Jesus. To emphasize that this promise would not change, God confirmed it with an oath so that we who embrace the hope of the promise may have great assurance. This hope and promise is located in the inner, heavenly sanctuary behind the curtain where God is and where Jesus has now entered on our behalf, as our eternal high priest (6:19-20). This inheritance is not found anywhere upon the earth, it is in heaven in the true Holy of Holies with God. After Jesus died upon the cross and rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven to this same place to be our high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

*Observation: Understanding the location of our hope points us in the direction we are to travel.*

### **THE ETERNAL PRIESTHOOD: HEBREWS 6:20-7:10**

This priest and king, Melchisedec, reveals an ever-existing eternal priesthood that was before Abraham and the Levitical priesthood. Melchisedec was unique in that he had no father or mother or descendants; he had no beginning to life and will have no end; he will remain a priest forever. I have to admit, I don't have a clue about this priest who seems more like God than a priest of the most high. The important thing about Melchisedec is that after Jesus ascended into heaven, he was “made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec” (6:20).

*Observation: Jesus changed the earthly priesthood from a temporary, continually changing priesthood, to an eternal never changing priesthood.*

### **A NEW RELIGIOUS SYSTEM REVEALED: HEBREWS 7:11-28**

After Jesus ascended into heaven and became the High priest of the heavenly tabernacle, of which the earthly high priest and tabernacle represented, there was then a change in the earthly priesthood and the laws governing worship and service to God (7:11-12). This change was necessary because the Levitical system could not make God's people mature (7:11); also Jesus was not of the same tribe of the priests (Levi), but came from the tribe of Judah, of which no priests had ever come (7:13); he was not a priest because the Levitical law through lineage made him one, but because he had an endless life, not having a beginning or end, after the order of Melchisedec (7:14-17).

The old spiritual system/law, with its regulations and order, was replaced by the new system in Christ for the following reasons:

1. The first law was weak (7:18).
2. The first law was not profitable to cleanse the conscience (7:18).
3. The first law made nothing perfect, lead no one to maturity (7:19).

The new law/priesthood was greater because it gave to God's people a greater and better hope for the following reasons:

1. It brought perfection/maturity to God's people (7:19).
2. It draws God's people near to God; no longer is God "out there," but is now with man, within (7:19).
3. It was made with an unchangeable oath (7:20-21).
4. It gives to us an eternal priest (7:22-24).
5. Christ saves us to the uttermost (completely, perfectly, finally from the inside out, instead of from the outside in) (7:25).
6. Christ meets our needs because he has no weaknesses or infirmities--no sin (7:26-28).

*Observation: When Jesus became our high priest, the priesthood changed with its order and structure; how we serve Christ and God on earth also changed.*

### **IN SUMMARY: HEBREWS 8:1-13:**

With the replacing of the Levitical religious system, Jesus became the mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises because the first had many faults (8:6-7). Even the Old Testament 6 prophets prophesied of this new covenant (8:8-9). The old covenant was based upon commandments written on breakable tablets of stone. The new covenant is written on the mind and heart allowing us to serve God within our hearts and spirits (8:10). Through the new covenant the person of God can now be known by anyone who wants to know Him (8:11-13). This is not knowing God through words and commandments, but knowing Him, the actual person.

*Observation: What has been said to this point is that you and I can now enter into the actual presence of God because Jesus is the mediator of a better covenant between God and man.*

### NEW ORDER OF WORSHIP: HEBREWS 9:1-15:

This section reveals that the rules and regulations directing worship and service to God were changed as well as the doing away with the physical structure (temple) of the old law (9:1). The old temple consisted of two areas called tabernacles. A tabernacle was considered the dwelling place of God and the place where God could be met (Exodus 25:8; 29:42). In the first were the candlestick, table, and the showbread and is where the priests would go to perform their service to God (9:2,6). In the second tabernacle, called the Holiest, or Holy of Holies, only the high priest could go in alone and only once a year, to offer a sacrifice for himself and the people (9:3,7). This second tabernacle had great significance in that while the first tabernacle continued to exist, the way into the Holy of Holies would remain closed to all except the high priest (9:8). This second tabernacle was a reminder that the performance of service in the first tabernacle could not make the priest perfect, nor could it renew or transform his inner man and conscience (9:9-10).

When Christ came, he became our true and last high priest, revealing a third tabernacle, which is the real tabernacle of which the Levitical tabernacle was only a representation. This tabernacle was not made of any earthly material, nor was there any need for any earthly sacrifice since Christ became the only sacrifice needed to obtain our eternal redemption (9:11-12). The earthly sacrifices of the first covenant cleansed and purified our bodies but could not cleanse our conscience. Christ's sacrifice cleansed and purified our conscience to enable us to truly serve the living God (9:13-14). For the first time ever, it is now possible to eliminate the temptation to sin (inner man) before it ever becomes sin (outer man).

Since Jesus is the mediator of a whole new agreement between God and man, and because of his death on the cross to redeem the transgression that was under the first covenant, those who belong to God are now able to receive the promise of an eternal inheritance (9:15).

*Observation: The old structure of serving and meeting God in a building and through spiritual ritual was done away with through Christ.*

### THE BLOOD REQUIREMENT: HEBREWS 9:15-23:

The new order of serving and meeting God, so that God's people might receive the promised eternal inheritance, required death to redeem the transgressions under the first covenant (9:15). A testament requires the death of the testator because a testator has power only after the person is dead. That is why the first covenant/testament required blood, symbolizing the reality of the blood of Christ as God's sacrificial lamb (9:16-23).

*Observation: Christ is the final blood sacrifice, fulfilling the earthly sacrifices of sin that was necessary under the Levitical religious system.*

### THE SHADOW VS. THE REALITY: HEBREWS 9:24-10:21:

This section stresses the importance that all the religious ritual, order, and physical structure that were in place were only an image of that which is in heaven and revealed and fulfilled in Christ.

Understanding this will make it easy to let go of anything earthly that represents the old structure, order of worship, and service to God that the majority of churches/denominations, synagogues, etc. call worship.

When Christ entered heaven, he entered into the Holy of Holies which was not made with hands—he entered the actual tabernacle of which the earthly tabernacle was a shadow. He is actually in heaven appearing before God on our behalf (9:24). Because he is an eternal sacrifice for sin, no other sacrifice needs to be offered (9:25-28).

The tabernacle, the law, the priesthood, and all the rules and regulations of the first covenant were only a shadow of the reality to come. Here are some ways that the first covenant was fulfilled in the second covenant:

1. The law was a shadow, Christ the reality (10:1).
2. The law made continual sacrifices, Christ one eternal sacrifice (10:2).
3. The law remembered sin year after year, Christ forgot sin once and for all (10:3-14, 17, 18). (Christ came in a body (10:5); to do God's will (10:7); to establish a new relationship with God) (10:9)
4. The law was written on a scroll, Christ wrote the law on our hearts and minds (10:16).

The first covenant did not allow us to enter into and meet the very presence of God. Through the second covenant we now have full freedom and confidence to enter the actual Holy of Holies to meet with God one-on-one in spirit and in truth in this life and face-to-face in the life to come (10:19). This was made possible when God split the earthly curtain separating the Holy of Holies from the first tabernacle (Matthew 27:51) and replaced it with the body of Jesus, who is now our high priest (10:20-21). Now everyone doing service for God may enter His actual presence. No longer is an earthly mediator necessary to enter God's presence on our behalf—we can go there ourselves.

*Observation: No longer do we need to perform the Levitical order of service and establish temples because these only represented the reality which has come to replace these through Christ.*

## HOW TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD: HEBREWS 10:21-25

Now that we have this privilege to enter into the actual presence of God, we are given instruction on how to approach God with a clean heart and spirit. We are to:

1. Draw near with a true heart (10:22).
2. Draw near in full assurance of faith (10:22).
3. Draw near having our heart's purified from an evil conscience (10:22).
4. Draw near having our bodies cleansed with the Holy Spirit (10:22).

Notice that we cannot have a true heart, full assurance of faith, our conscience cleared, or receive the Holy Spirit if we have not embraced and engrafted the foundational doctrines. This deeper relationship with God is not possible if we have not prepared ourselves for it.

Now that we are in God's presence, we are to live life:

1. Holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering (10:23).
2. Considering one another to provoke to love and good works (10:24).

3. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together (10:25).
4. Exhorting one another (10:25).

*Observation: We can enter the actual presence of God. Like the instructions given to the high priest before entering the earthly holy of holies, so are we given instructions for entering the heavenly holy of holies.*

#### **NO TURNING BACK: HEBREWS 10:26:**

Once we have entered the Holy of Holies and have met God, we are cautioned to not turn back:

1. If we sin willingly after meeting God in the Holy of Holies, there is no more sacrifice for sin (10:26-27).
2. The judgment under the second covenant is harsher than under the first (10:28-29).
3. We are to guard ourselves from casting away our confidence in the promised inheritance (10:35).
4. We are to exercise patience, since this is the key to holding on until God fulfills His promise (10:36).
5. Christ will not tarry his coming; it's all planned out and he will be here on time (10:34).
6. We are to live by faith: having the assurance the promise will be fulfilled though we don't have it yet (10:38).

Keep in mind that the readers were departing from the living God. The writer is warning them of the harsh consequences if they continue their path. The writer reminds them of their commitment at the beginning and how they should not cast away their confidence in God, what they need is patience and not a weariness in well doing. Christ is coming and will not delay his coming. It is needful for God's people to live by faith and to continue to believe until we see God fact-to-face (10:30-39).

*Observation: Without diligence and patience, we can also depart from faith in God.*

#### **A BRIEF WORD ON FAITH: HEBREWS 11:1:**

1. Faith is the substance of the things we hope for, the evidence of the things we do not yet see (11:1).
2. Faith opens our understanding (11:3).
3. Without faith it is impossible to please God (11:6).
4. Faith hears God and takes action (11:7).
5. Faith obeys without knowing all the details (11:8).

*Observation: As we understand faith, we will gain strength to not give up in our hope regardless of the obstacles and challenges that come to us.*

#### **LAST WORDS**

Scripture is clear that the old Levitical religious system was replaced with a new system. No longer are the rituals and regulations once performed necessary since the reality they symbolized has now



come. There is also no need for temples and buildings for God to dwell in and where we enter to meet God. The physical temple was replaced by our bodies, which is now the temple of God, and is where God dwells and meets us, as the Scripture reveals:

1 Corinthians 6:19: What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

2 Corinthians 6:16: And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Ephesians 2:19-22: Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together grows unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

The difficulty with our present church is that its focus is on ritual, buildings, and the foundational doctrines. If these have been replaced by a whole new religious system, why do we revive the old Levitical system and call ourselves protestants? Granted, our rituals and buildings take on a different form, but they are nevertheless no different than the Levitical structure and has the same effect as the Levitical system: it does not draw us into God's actual presence.

In these days we need to throw aside what we think we know about Scripture and hit the sixty-six books in an entirely fresh way. We also need to separate from the present structure which will do more to make you "utterly heathen" than to make you "truly Christian." The goal of Christianity is to bring you into the actual living presence of God. Our present "Church" structure won't get you there. God wants to dwell in you and to live life with you; this cannot happen if we continually think God is in the denominations and we can meet Him there. If God is not living in you, He will not be with you regardless of where you are.

Most people "go to" church to have an emotional experience. What about you? Are you ready "to be" the church to experience an actual 24/7 God?

~2010