

Hebrews 5, 6 (Conrad Bowman) (January 30, 2005)

This is going to be a capper on last week. So, it's going to be a race through Hebrews 5 and 6 again. I think I'll wrap up Hebrews 6 and Joe's going to start next week with Hebrews 7. So if you would, look at Hebrews 5. At the very beginning of it. There were some questions that came out of this. There always is, a few questions that come out of this. Phil and I got into some of them. Gary Rapp had a copy of Wuest's Notes, and we were reviewing that section that came from Wuest. If you remember, I said that Wuest's position was that when the verse said, it's impossible for them, for those who have once fallen, if they should fall away, to renew them to repentance. And I tie "renew them to repentance" to the works that are under discussion. And I think Gary's conclusion, after reading Wuest, was that the "them" refers to the people that are renewed to repentance. Now, I brought you the full text of Wuest. You've got it in there. There's also Darby and Newell in there too. You've got your hands full. Now, Wuest – to fully appreciate it, you have to understand Wuest's position on this thing. Wuest has a 3 ½ page introduction to his study of Hebrews, in which he lays out his methodology. And this is really good. Because in that 3 ½ page introduction, here's what he says. To properly treat a book, any letter, you have to first get it in its historical perspective. Then you have to do an analysis of the work. And you have to make sure that your work and interpretation does not move outside your analysis. And his analysis was pretty pointed. That the letter to the Hebrews was not written to the Church as such. It was written to that transitional group of Jews that we have studied for so long, and it was encouraging them as they move along in their own personal experience. And they moved from living under obligation to the Law, to living under grace. Their new faith in the ascended Messiah requires different work than the faith that they had under Law. Under Law, their faith was directed to the works of the Law. And when they did the work of the Law, what did it do? What does the Law always do? It condemns. It convicts. It condemns, and it brings you to the point of recognizing your sinfulness and your failure. That brings you to the point of repentance. It's the work of the Law that works repentance in the life of one under obligation to the Law. Now, since they have professed faith in the Messiah, and it's Wuest's position that they have professed faith in the Messiah without taking hold of it and gaining life. That's his terminology. Okay. Wuest's terminology is, they're gaining faith but not life, because they haven't thrust themselves out on their faith and laid hold on the freedom that's theirs under grace. Okay. So his position would be they're professors, but no possessors. Okay. The point is this. Once having come to the point of having the Spirit of God enlighten them as to the truth and accuracy of the Gospel of the ascended

Messiah, they cannot go back to the works of the Law and have those works bring them to repentance. It won't work any longer. Here's a Jew, after Pentecost. Now I want to make this real clear. Because in our own minds, we tend to associate Pentecost – well, not only tend to associate, we mark Pentecost out as the birth of the Church. The Church was born at Pentecost. Was it born universally all over the world for all men at Pentecost. No. The Church Age begins with each man's encounter with the ascended Christ and the power and enlightenment of the Spirit. You understand that? No. Didn't think so. That's new thinking for most evangelicals even. What that says is this. The Church Age began in an Upper Room at Pentecost, and there were 120 people there. That's when it began for them. When the Spirit of God took residence in their life, enlightened them as to the truth of the resurrected, ascended Messiah, and brought them into the Church. That's the birth of it. It was 120 Galileans. The Church Age really began for 3,000 or 5,000 more on the streets the next day when they heard the message taught by that 120 Galileans in the power of the Spirit, and the Spirit brought them in His own power of enlightenment, face to face, in an encounter with the resurrected, ascended Lord Jesus. This is a process that started at a point of time, at a point of history, in an upper room, right there in Jerusalem. And it began to spread. And it spread with the Gospels being preached. Understand that. That took time. The Church Age started like this, and it grew out of Jerusalem and spread until it covered the whole world. So they're Jews who were faithful living under the Law, or attempting to, who came to encounter the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, taught by the Spirit, enlightened by the Spirit, because you know, based on your own experience, that's the only way to get to God. If He didn't reach into your dark life, open your dark mind, and infuse it with the truth of the risen Christ, it wouldn't have happened for you either. We are entirely dependent upon that. And the Spirit of God leads us to the Lord Jesus Christ, who presents us to the Father as His own. That's the work of the Gospel, in transforming us from LOST to REDEEMED. LOST to SAVED, and brings us into the Church through union with Him, the Son of God. Okay. Now as that happens – here's a Jew, and he's heard the Gospel, he's tasted the power of the age to come. Okay. He understands the truth of the Gospel. Now he's got to consider that. And there were some who chose to back away and re-embrace the comfort of their tradition. What he says, in his letter to the Hebrews, is that you've got to move on. You've got to lay aside those principles of the oracles of God that were delivered to you. Laying on of hands. Washing. Resurrection of the dead. And this will do, if God permits us to. See, there's that dependency on the power of the Spirit of enlightenment. This will do, if God permits us to, and move on to a life by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Leave those things behind. Leave your tradition behind. Leave the works of the Law behind,

and embrace the new work of faith in an ascended Lord. That's true today. Someone said, but I can't go back under the Law, can I? Sure. We'll make our own law. We do. We make our own law. The churches that have their own laws and rules about behavior and practice. And if you don't follow those, you're somehow not in. That's embracing tradition and Law again. We do it ourselves. We get ourselves in a bind. We get ourselves in a place where it's hurtful. Where we're scared. Where we're insecure. Where our faith waivers. And we start bargaining with God. That's the same process. Lord please. If You'll just do this, here's what I'll do. Ok. Like the genie in the lamp. Rub that thing, and if I can rub hard enough, the genie will pop out. You see. That's not what He asks of us. That's not the light he gives us.

Now, in chapter 5, verses 1 through 4, the priesthood under the Law is described for us.

1. Every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he can offer both gifts and sacrifices for sin.

Alright. That's the operation of a priest under Law. But when Christ came, He didn't need to offer sacrifices for Himself, because He had no sin. So He was different from the priesthood. And last week we talked about that. How Christ was appointed a priest, not after the Aaronic order, as every priest among men was, appointed after the order of Aaron. But Christ was appointed after the order of Melchizedek. Melchizedek. Melchizedek was called the King of Peace. The reason he was called the King of Peace – he was the King of Salem, and Salem is a word that means peace. He was the King of Peace. Christ was appointed in His priesthood after the order of the King of Peace. Okay. Jerusalem. Jerusalem. The city of peace. Okay. That's what the very name stands for. So Christ was appointed into His priesthood by God Himself after the order of Melchizedek. Does anybody have any questions on that? No? It's a simple point but it's profound. It's profound. Yes Ed?

Ed Welbourn. [Inaudible. Question and comment about the priesthood].

Conrad Bowman. That's right. That's right. He was eternally in the past appointed to His office of priesthood. Eternally in the past. Okay.

Alright. Alright. Now, that's its fulfillment in Christ, and it's from 5:5 to 5:10. Okay.

Thou are a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.

Is what you see in Hebrews 5:6. Then what follows that is 7 and 8. I'm stuttering a little bit because I laid my Bible up on the counter that I use every Sunday and I put Evelyn's book on it so that I wouldn't forget it, and then left them both. But, I have a set of notes with a full text in it, so I'm doing okay, but it doesn't come in the right order that I want it to be. In verses 7 and 8,

7. Who in the days of His flesh [refers back to Christ], when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears [there's Gethsemane] under Him who was able to save Him from death, and was heard because of His righteousness or His piety.

8. Though He were a Son, yet learned He learned obedience through the things which He suffered.

9 And being made perfect, He became the author of our salvation....

In my opinion, there's no other place where the humanity of Christ is laid so bare as it is in these two verses. Christ in the garden, knowing what He was facing, prayed to His Father,

if there's any other way, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done.

What you have is His humanity imploring the Father. Yet, submitting His will to the Will of the Father. There is no greater source of comfort in difficulty than this process right here. When the pain's great, when the uncertainty is out there, your cry to the Father is relief. Nevertheless, your conclusion to that prayer, "Your will be done, not mine," gives you strength to endure. Gives you strength to endure. Okay. My desire is for relief. My prayer is for strength and endurance. And we'll all hit that point at some time in our life, with regard to many things. When we do that, remember the Lord Jesus on His knees, on His face, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

"When He was made perfect," same word that is translated "mature," or "complete." It's used of the lampstand in the temple, and it means – that same

word means, to behold and enabled and prepared to complete your task. A lampstand which is perfect or mature, is one that has a reservoir of oil. It has a wick. It has something to hold it up so that it's light shines in the temple. And it burns brightly. That's the sense of the word "maturity." Christ was made mature when He hung on the cross, before men, between heaven and earth. And that's the same thing He does for us. He fills our life and leads us on to maturity of perfection in Him.

9. When He was made perfect He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.

10. Called of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

And that takes us to chapter 5:11 to 6:20, where, between those verses, the rejection of their unbelief and confirmation of faith – Wuest points out too, that the tone of the Letter to the Hebrews never changes from a letter to transitional Jews to a letter to believing Church. That does not happen. What that means for us is this: The Letter to the Hebrews is the final, definitive argument for the superiority of Christ over the superiority of the Law, which came by Moses. Okay. It's a letter of particular importance to the transitional Jew who lived under Law and now is living under grace. Or has the opportunity to live under grace, and is faced with the Gospel, which is his point of departure. The Gospel is the end of the high board. He's walked out on that board, up in the air, and he's jumped down on the end of it. He's airborne. He is not going to come back down on the board. That's not going to happen. A previous illustration, is that he's gotten on the bus of the Law. And you remember when the Law was described as a schoolmaster who takes you by the hand, brings you from the home to the place where you're going to learn truth, brings you to the school. We don't use schoolmasters for that. We use buses. And you remember the illustration. The Law is our school bus. Well, the bus has arrived at the place it was intended. It's on the parking lot. It stops. Everybody has to get off. What they see before them is the cross. And you've got to go past the cross into the play land of grace. Some will say, Oh, that looks scary. So they get back on the bus. The bus is not going anywhere else. It's on the parking lot. The engine is dead. It's out of gas. Okay. The lights are broken out. There's no driver. And they're sitting on the bus of Law waiting for it to take them somewhere else. There's not anywhere else. There's just grace. I've been looking for somebody who could draw that, and I can't find them – yet. I'd love to see a poster about as big as the side of this room that illustrates that. The Law is our school bus. It's arrived at its destination. It's not going anywhere else. Okay. The windshield's

broke. The driver's absent. And here they sit, waiting for it to take them someplace else. It's not going anywhere else. It's there at the foot of the cross. These illustrations keep showing up, all the way through, especially to this generation. Now Hebrews is making this definitive argument. The next time this issue is addressed, it's to the Judaizers in Galatians. And he comes down hard on them. He's not making an argument for them. He's making an argument against them, condemning them in the strongest possible language. But in Hebrews, it's a systematic presentation. The superiority of the Gospel of Christ, and peace, and freedom, from Law. No condemnation. And that message begins to roll. Once you see the patience with which God dealt with His own people, of the past, and how consistently patient He is in presenting the Gospel of freedom to them, you get that firmly nailed down, and then you realize how unique the Church is. It's not Israel reworked. It's not. We do not have a Judeo-Christian ethic we live according to. We have an ethic that's unique to the Church. It's the ethic of grace, and freedom. It's not Judaism re-worked. There is nothing in that Law that pertains to life in Christ and the power of the Spirit. It takes you back into bondage. To put yourself in the position of the Law, you have to move to this side of the cross, in anticipation of Messiah coming. He's come. He's there. He rode the bus into town, and when He got off, everybody in the bus condemned Him and put Him to death. And He was resurrected on that side of the cross. Okay. Ten days prior to Pentecost. And when He hit heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to earth so that the work of the Father would continue in full power. Because that's the only way it can continue. And you are a microcosm of everything He did across all of history. You, individually. If there was not another human being, and you were alone here, the Church of Christ would be complete and total. You here in union with Him as the only representative in Houston, Texas. And the Church of Christ would be well and alive and operate in full glory and full power. Because He's deposited Himself in you, and joined you in union with His Son. So wherever you are, the Son is present. Wherever you are, the Father's power and will is being expressed. And that's the argument he's making here to the Hebrews. And he will continue to make it right on through to chapter 12. It just unfolds in glorious, glorious detail. If we try to make this a letter to believers in grace, the message gets confused and is not clear. If we see what it is – as a message to those who were of obligation to the Law but now are not, the message stays clear, and it just rings true. The babes in Christ, he says in verse 12, who should be teachers, he asks them to lead the oracles of God because there's a danger to a return to Jewish practices. In 6:1 through 6:8, it's significant that the first doctrinal principles have as their object "the Christ," which is His name before Israel. Use of the definite article "the" before "Christ," calls our attention specifically to the prophesied Messiah of

Israel. "The Christ" then, is a technical term that refers to Him as He was known by Israel. The call then is to let us go on the deliberate way, and the goal is to attain the perfection.

Mackintosh, Mackintosh – oh, I didn't bring you Mackintosh, did I Phil? I left one out. I didn't bring you Mackintosh. I'll have to do that. Can you get those before next week? Are you on next week? Oh, Joe's on next week?

1. Therefore, having abandoned once for all – leaving the first doctrinal principles of Christ, let's be carried along onto perfection, and not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,
2. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead,

Those are all Old Testament doctrines. Everyone of them. There're Old Testament doctrines. There not New Testament. So, even though the words sound familiar, you're not to identify with those, because those were Old Testament interpretations of those very doctrines. The apostle says that leaving these doctrines is exactly what he intends. He exhorts these Hebrews to abandon the Levitical animal sacrifices of the First Testament and allow themselves to be carried into the New Testament sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Understand, according to Wuest, in his analysis, he says we need to be careful that when he says he leaves the Old Testament – the First Testament – to establish the Second, that he's not talking about a New Testament covenant relationship with the Church, because ours is not a covenant relationship. He's talking about a New Testament covenant relationship with Israel. It's the second covenant with Israel, not a covenant made with the Church. Understand the difference. Our relationship to God is so different, so different. It's not a covenant relationship. We confuse that because we call the basis of the source of our doctrine the New Testament, or the New Covenant. Okay. That New Covenant terminology is specific to Israel. **Ours is not a covenant relationship. It's an intimacy through union relationship. That's completely different. Okay. It's completely different. Ours is through intimacy, through having been adopted into God's family. Through being sons of God. Not servants of God forever, as Israel is, and always will be. Our relationship to God is family.** Savor that difference. Savor it. How can God perform those things that He expects of us, through us? It's because we're family. Isn't it family that you expect the most of? Because you pour the most into. Who can disappoint you like your children? Who can thrill

your heart like your children? Nobody. Nobody. Because you see yourself in them. The same with Him. When He looks at us, what does He see? He sees Himself. He sees Himself in His Son. We're clothed in the righteousness of the Son. We have the Son's robe of righteousness on us. When He sees us, He sees His Son. And, He is infinitely satisfied with His Son. He's infinitely in love with His Son. He has given His Son all things, and has set His Son on a throne that is above all things. And you are joined to that Son. The question often comes up. What are we going to be doing for eternity? Well, we're going to be ruling with the Son. Yes.

Billie Wales. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Absolutely. Absolutely. They would have in effect denounced the old agreement, the Old Testament relationship with God, and have adopted or accepted the New. So the Jew who in the power of the Spirit comes to accept the Messiah as the risen ascended Lord Jesus, the Savior, has made a giant leap. He has placed himself in position – the same position we're in. The position of grace. The position of grace. Any other questions on that? Yes?

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. The old nature loves law. The old nature loves law. The old sin nature within. We love it. We love it. It's much easier, it's much easier to say to God, I don't know what You expect of me. And He says, trust Me. And we say, trust You for what? What do You want me to do? What am I supposed to do? Watch Me work. What are we supposed to do?

Lady. [Inaudible comment].

Conrad Bowman. We wait. We rest. It's the simplest approach to life, and the most practical approach to life you can possibly imagine.

Lady. [Inaudible question].

Conrad Bowman. No. No. Because what He requires of me is going to be completely different than what He requires of you. That's why it should thrill our hearts when we hear Ed describe where he's going and what he's going to set himself about. Okay. God's words put in his ear. Maybe even shouted. I don't know. Sometimes it takes both. And sometimes it takes just boxing you in a corner where that's the only direction you have left.

Gentleman. [Inaudible comment].

Conrad Bowman. I haven't heard that call. I hear a different call. I hear a call for right here. Ed hears a call to a different place. Okay. It thrills my heart to hear him describe where God is taking him. Same faithfulness on God's part. Same faithfulness. Same faithfulness. Same family. We're tied together in both those efforts.

Gentleman. [Inaudible. Something about chapter 6, verses 4 through 6, and the use of the word "impossible," a pretty strong word. Impossible to bring them back to repentance. Transitional Jew who jumped off the diving board, but then he said, oh, wait a minute, I'm going to go back and be under Law. Etc.].

Conrad Bowman. The first ...

Gentleman. Because they've gone back for good, is what I see them saying.

Conrad Bowman. Yes. They have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit, which means the Spirit has given them the truth of the work of the Messiah. Okay. It's impossible for those who are once enlightened – and this is enlightened by the Holy Spirit – it's not just an intellectual consideration – and have tasted of the heavenly gift – Okay – this is the same word that's translated "Christ tasted death on the cross." Did He stay dead? No. Okay. There's much argument made over the "tasted" word. You know. That if they've tasted of the heavenly gift and they took it into themselves as Christ took death. But Christ didn't stay dead. Neither did these people stay committed to what they took in. And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come. If they should fall away, fall short, as an arrow falls short of it's target, they fall short, never having reached their intended target, to renew them again to repentance, and to renew them – some verses translate that to renew themselves again to repentance. But it's not, as I said last week, it's the works that are in view here. It's the works of the Old Testament Law that's in view, and is being discussed. To renew them, those works again, unto repentance. They are brought to repentance by the works. They were. But they won't be now. So, what in effect there're doing, is they're rejecting the work of Christ, they're going back to the works that led them to repentance, and doing so – last part of that verse – they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh. So there's the problem. Having rejected Christ, they go back to the Law, where Christ has not paid the price, and they're doing the works in anticipation of the price being paid. They're rejecting the Gospel, fully.

Gentleman. [Inaudible]

Ron Wales. In the matter of what God wants from us. In John, chapter 6, verses 28 and 29, and interesting exchange with Jesus. After the feeding of the 5,000, they followed Him, and they kept asking Him some questions. And in verse 28, it says,

They said therefore to Jesus, what shall we do, that we may work the works of God?

What shall we do? It's interesting His reply, verse 29.

Jesus answered and said to them, this is the work of God as you believe in Him who He has sent.

It's so simple, but ... [inaudible].

Lady. And glorifying Him.

Conrad Bowman. Yeah. The work of God is this. To believe in the One He has sent, in 29. The work is simple enough. It's to believe. The object of your belief is to believe in the One He sent. To go back to the work that's in anticipation of His coming, is what we're looking at in Hebrews, is what Tom was pointing out, is to reject the one He sent, and to do the work that is to draw Him in. What they're doing is, they're doing the works that condemned Him. It was the Law that condemned the Lord. He died under the Law, and all aspects of it. Innocently. But they condemned Him under the Law. *So, that would be to reject that Gospel, to which they had been enlightened, and crucify Christ all over again, in anticipation of His coming, and reject the price He paid. That is the sin against the Holy Ghost. If you wanted to know, is there an unpardonable sin, that is the sin against the Holy Ghost. Which is, to reject His enlightenment in your life, and thrust yourself out upon your own work.* Okay. Other questions?

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. No there's not. But here's a special generation, and you have to be careful with that. This is a special generation. They're walking on this side of Pentecost. Okay. And they're dragging the Law with them. And they come to an encounter with the Holy Spirit, who opens their eyes to the reality of the Gospel, the saving Gospel of the resurrected ascended Christ. The weight of the rejection, at that point, is so much greater than the weight of rejection on the other side of

Pentecost, when He was presenting Himself as their Messiah. To really understand this, what we ought to do, what we ought to do next is we ought to study the four Gospels. Okay. We ought to cover the four Gospels, because then we get the flavor of that whole transition completed. You see, we've gone through the Books of Genesis, and James, and 1st and 2nd Peter and all that. And we went through all of that on this side of Acts. It would be marvelous to look at the way Christ presented Himself to His own, and that would complete the picture. We studied in Genesis the presentation of God's Gospel according to Moses. Now we see grace and truth, and we jump over the Gospels, and we jump right into the middle of the message to the transitional Jewish generation. And we skip the presentation of Himself by the Lord Jesus. And that would complete that picture. So, let me encourage you to do that on your own. Gary?

Gary Rapp. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Right. Because that's not there. Right. See, that's not fresh with us, because it's not there. But the other part of that is, if we could see the presentation of Himself by the Lord Jesus in the Gospels to His own people, and their rejection, right up to the crucifixion, we skipped all that part. And the danger is, in the middle of all that skipping, the "Passion of the Christ" hit the screen and that's flavored a whole lot of our thinking – Oh, it's after 12 noon again already. "The Passion of the Christ" has flavored our view of that thing. And it's cut us off from a whole lot of truth. You know. It's a wonderful depiction of some things that happened there, because it compacts the four Gospels into one set of individual entities which doesn't carry the story at all. At all. It doesn't carry what's happening. It just brings us the visuals of it, without bring us to reality of what Christ was doing, to the Jews who were condemning Him under the Law. And I've got to stop. I'm sorry.

Phil Richman. [Inaudible. Encouraged everybody to read Wuest on the New Testament to go into this more deeply].

Conrad Bowman. Thank you so very much. I appreciate it.

[This recording was transcribed on a tape recorder, and transmitted to a digital format. The earlier recordings, of which this is one, were made on a tape recorder. Some are more audible than others].