
Words of Truth

Hebrews 6:3

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We have been studying about how the saints to whom the Hebrew letter was written needed to grow beyond where they were (Hebrews 5:12-6:2). Their lack of growth was preventing them from being capable of fully understanding the teachings about our Lord (Hebrews 4:14-5:11). The penman of this letter then stated this: *“And this will we do, if God permit”* (Hebrews 6:3).

This epistle does not state who wrote it. There were multiple people involved. We read “we” in this verse we are studying now. “We” is also used later in this context. Notice: *“But, beloved, **we** are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though **we** thus speak... And **we** desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end”* (Hebrews 6:9 and Hebrews 6:11). We also saw the usage of “we” in Hebrews 5:11. Later in this epistle we will read the following: *“Now of the things which **we** have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens”* (Hebrews 8:1). There are many other statements that speak of “we”, but the aforementioned were set forth because they indicate, with clarity, the involvement of multiple people in the writing of this letter.

The learning process the saints in this epistle needed to go through included themselves and those that were going to teach them. The teachers were committed to the cause of their growth. Those teachers were also convinced that these saints were more capable than they were showing at this time (again; Hebrews 6:9). The need for teachers in the growth process is an inescapable truth (II Peter 1:1-13). Even when someone already knows something, it is needful to have a teacher stir up that person’s mind (Philippians 3:1 and II Peter 3:1-2). Contextually, we read that they needed someone to teach them again from the first principles of the oracles of God (Hebrews 5:12). Even in the age of spiritual gifts, those capable of teaching were necessary for the perfecting of the saints (Ephesians 4:7-16).

The text proceeds with the assumption that there is a readiness, on the part of the saints being addressed, to learn. We know that a readiness of mind is necessary for the word of God to be learned by the hearer (Acts 2:41, Acts 17:10-11, I Thessalonians 2:13, James 1:21-25, and I Peter 2:1-2). So, the right things appear to be in place for these saints to grow. If they are ready, their teachers are ready too. There is one other factor that needs to line up. Will God permit their growth to occur? What does that even mean?

We know that it is certainly the will of God for all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (I Timothy 2:1-4). The evidence is undeniable. Our Lord sent forth His Apostles to teach the Gospel to the whole world (Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:14-20, Luke 24:36-48, Acts 13:46-47, Romans 16:25-27, and Colossians 1:3-6). So, we know the Lord is not desirous for the Gospel to be kept from those willing to learn it.

Teachers in the first century were guided by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26, John 16:1-13, and I Corinthians 2:1-13). That guidance was not just in what to teach, but also where to teach. Consider this: *“Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them”* (Acts 16:6-10). This is not to say that the messenger had no choice in the matter. Who can forget the choices of the prophet Jonah (Jonah 1:1-3:3)? Remember, the spirits of the prophets were subject to the prophets (I Corinthians 14:32).

First century teachers could not be in every place they wanted to be at all times (I Thessalonians 2:1-3:13). Even if God would send them, sometimes other things hindered them. For example, Paul desired to go to Corinth (I Corinthians 4:19, I Corinthians 11:34, and I Corinthians 16:1-7); yet it didn't happen (II Corinthians 1:1-18). We can see the Lord's will for Paul to get to Rome and how God worked to make that happen (Acts 23:1-11 and Acts 27:1-44). So, if God wanted Paul in Rome He could not also have Paul in Ephesus at the same time. There were only so many teachers with a whole world needing to be taught.

Sometimes the statement “if God permit” or “Lord willing” is simply put forth with an understanding that tomorrow is not promised to anyone. Consider: *“Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that. But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil”* (James 4:13-16). Whether in the first century or today, we do not know if the world will even exist tomorrow (II Peter 3:9-14). Therefore, we cannot assure anyone that we will or will not be at a place on the morrow (Proverbs 27:1).

In conclusion, what was written in Hebrews 6:3 only applies today in the principle of not counting on tomorrow. Therefore, we should take careful note of that point. When there are souls at stake, we cannot control how long we will have to teach them. Think of every day as *“now is the day of salvation”* (II Corinthians 6:1-2).