

HEBREWS

Chapter 6

Verses 1- 8

After the resurrection, Jesus had a private encounter with Peter, who had the keys of the Kingdom. Being the leader of the twelve, through whom the new congregation of God was to be born, Yeshua spoke to him and asked: *Peter do you love me?*

Peter answered and said: *Yes, Lord; You know that I love you*

Then Yeshua said to him: *feed My lambs*. Again, He asked him: *Peter do you love me?*

Peter answered the same way and this time the Messiah told him: *Feed my sheep*.

Lambs and *sheep*, these were to represent two main groups which were to constitute the new body of the Messiah. The *sheep* would be the mature believers, and the *lambs*, the new believers; both groups are so dear to the Messiah, especially the new believers, for whom special care was to be given.

Judging from the epistles of Paul, those of Peter and of others, the mature believer's lifestyle was even asked to be altered and changed in order to accommodate and give the *lambs* time to grow; they were also asked to do all they could so as not to offend but help them in their sanctification. However, the distinction between the *sheep* and the *lambs* was not always clear; the lambs did not always grow the way they ought to, and stayed lambs for a long time while looking like sheep. This slow change, slow growth, with all the problems it entails, is the very subject of our Book of Hebrews today.

In our last reading, in Chapter 5:12, the writer boldly spoke to these slow growing believers and said *For though by this time you ought to be teachers... you have come to need milk and not solid food*. They looked like sheep but they acted like lambs so, as you can imagine, this created a problem for the church. But, as bad as this was, it was not the main problem; there was another, more subtle, one. There was a third group which was neither *sheep* nor *lamb* but looked like them and mingled among them. These, we will call the tasters. They come and taste the things of God and see if they like it or not, some stay a short time, others stay much longer, and it is when they stay a long time that one could not differentiate them from the slow growing believers, since they both did not grow; one could not grow, the other did not grow.

So, there we have the *sheep*, the *lambs* and the tasters, all in place, and this is what mainly disturbed the writer of **Hebrews**. This problem sets the tones. The tasters are fine, so long as they live by their names. Tasters move on to become either true lambs or true sheep, or they refuse to believe and are false lambs and false sheep, and end up leaving. So, really, we end up with 4 groups; the true and false lambs and the true and false sheep. Complicated is it not?

The pastor of the congregation to the **Hebrews**, as all other pastors of any other godly congregations, knew about these things but had their hands tied, because they could not differentiate one from the other. They knew of the mature ones, but how could they know which ones were lambs, which ones were slow growing sheep and which ones were just tasters?

This is a great practice of love that pastors and elders are called to demonstrate, because they have to serve them all. Again, it is so complex that this is when you remember the words of the Messiah who pronounced these liberating words:

I will build My church (Matthew 16:18).

Thank you Jesus, because no one else can. Our task, as believers, is to serve, to love and not to look further until Yeshua, whose congregation it is, reveals things to us. Just like these workers in the parable of the Wheat and the Tares, who came to the farmer and said in **Matthew 13:27**:

"... , 'Sir, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have tares?' let us uproot the tares"

Then the owner answered in **Matthew 13:29**:

No, lest while you gather up the tares you also uproot the wheat with them.

It is His field; we need to rely on Him to deal with His place. So, it is not that complex after all.

However, there are a few things we ought to know about these tasters when they decide to stay. This is what the writer of **Hebrews** is about to tell us in our text today, because this marriage of tasters, sheep and lambs, can, at times, create havoc in the church.

The writer uses strong words, even surprisingly powerful ones, which make this passage among the toughest, even to the writer's assessment. Let me bring you to the conclusion of it all and see what the writer says. It is often good to start with the conclusion; it gives a strong indication of the direction of the text.

Hebrews 6:9

But, beloved

For the first time in **Hebrews**, he calls the believers *beloved, agapitos*, speaking of a person who is in a special, close relationship with another.

Then, he says:

we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.

Speak in this manner, referring to the words in **Hebrews 6:4-6** which are severe and not easy to understand. He confesses that his words were indeed powerful; however he quickly pours out his love on them and speaks so highly of their assurance of salvation, until the rest of the chapter.

Regardless of the complexity of the passage, there is enough to draw great blessings from it. It is my prayer that we will all learn from the Spirit of God who inspired every one of these Words and who wants us to be all well formed sheep, so that we can bless our congregation and the world around us.

Let us read and see what kind of problem this odd marriage, especially the Tares, may bring into a healthy congregation. Here, and in the next eight verses, we have the anatomy of the workings of the *Tares* and the slow growing *Sheep*; how they are, what they say, and how they work.

Let us begin with **Hebrews 6:1-3**

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this we will do if God permits.

Now, why is the writer speaking of baptisms, laying of hands, resurrection of the dead, eternal judgment; why are these things brought up; how do they fit in the context?

Let us go step by step. The writer says something of great importance that will open up the context for us. He speaks of *laying again the foundation*. Notice the word *again*. It is not a bad thing to have a refresher course on the basic teachings of the Bible, like the *elementary principles of the Messiah*. However, this is not what they were doing. What is wrong here is that the whole thing seems to have been put in question *again* and *again*. How many times can you lay a foundation?

Imagine laying foundation over foundation, you end up with a huge and heavy block of cement with nothing but cement; no windows, no rooms.

It also specifies what kind of foundation. This was *the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God*; that is salvation. But salvation itself is a onetime experience; you cannot have it over and over again. So, what were they doing laying it again and again?

You only need one foundation and on it, you begin to build a firm and strong structure. But these tasters could not move forward from their position, because they could never reach a satisfying answer. You know what happens when one is not satisfied; he tries to find all the possible problems around. This was a cause of concern for the pastor because these people mingled with believers in the congregation, even in a healthy and godly church. When there is a problem, these are the first to go, because they have no true affinity with the family of God. That is the argument of the letter of **1John**. These are the ones who are all ears and all eyes to any minor problems that could arise, and they rarely notice the blessings. These are the ones who are ready to cause a mutiny. They had to justify their stay elsewhere from the Word. We have been told that *the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*. (**1Corinthians 2:14**)

But they are not all tasters; they are either the slow growing sheep or permanent resident tasters. It is impossible to know. This is why we are often called to make sure of our faith and to work at it.

Now, what kind of problems do we find in a congregation?

This is what I believe the writer is telling us in the first three verses: In order to compensate for their lack of spiritual understanding, they major in minor things, they become legalistic about things to do and not to do, and in so doing they pull the believers' attention away from what is good and true.

In these three verses are presented three pairs of truth which, I believe, were used by the tasters and the slow growing sheep - believers and unbelievers.

The first pair that we have begun to see is the *Laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God*. Notice two key words here: *Repentance* and *faith*; this is what you find at the threshold of salvation. Of those who did not want to believe, they began to redefine salvation, laying a foundation over and over. The point is that *repentance* and *faith* are things given by God; these cannot be achieved by human effort, so of course they have to lay foundations over foundations.

The Scriptures tell us why people do not come to Him; this we find it in **John 3:19**
And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

They do not want to confess their sins to God and give them away, so they cannot reach the first step to *salvation* which implies *repentance*.

So, what do they do?

The second set in **Hebrews 6:2**

... of instruction over washings and laying on of hands (NASB).

What are these things and why are they mentioned here, suddenly?

Well, it is not so sudden, because these two things were quite popular at the time of the writing of **Hebrews** and they have become a great pool for legalism. *Washings* - some translations have *Baptisms* - but this word goes way further than *baptism*. *Washings*, in plural, were so popular at this time. Again, let us not forget that this letter was written to Jews who came out of Rabbinical Judaism, and this new religion was so strong and adamant about washing, washing everything and washing all the time.

The Mishnah, their book of the Law which they believe Moses also got from Mount Sinai, is divided into six orders. One of them, the *T^ehārōth*, is wholly concentrated on *washings*, about unclean things and their purification. For them all, everything was susceptible to impurity. All utensils were to be washed over and over, except those made of stone or clay. This is why at the marriage of Cana, right at the door, they had these water jars made of clay for washing and do you remember what Yeshua did?

He turned the water into wine, showing them that it is no more on the exterior that things needed to be washed, but in the heart where salvation occurs.

The second thing in the pair was *the laying on of hands*. At the time, they laid hands for a number of things and it was a popular thing to do, both in Judaism and also in the Hellenistic religions of the time. They laid both hands on the sacrifice at the temple, so the sin is transferred to the animal. They laid hands to import blessings, and healing. They laid hands especially to consecrate someone to a ministry, to a leadership. In fact, we read that all Jewish religious leaders had to have hands laid on them before they were permitted to perform any judicial function regarding the law.

Perhaps the main problem with the laying on of hands is that through this means one attempted to transfer what is legitimately not transferable, like holiness or even leadership, to those who are not fit for it. James, who had a similar congregation, had a similar problem with some who wanted to have hands laid on them. In **James 3:1**, we read: *let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.* This was done by the laying on of hands. It is not that he did not want to have as many good teachers as possible around him; he did not want immature or false believers.

The third pair, at the end of **verse 2** is *resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment*. As for resurrection, some had a serious problem with it. The resurrection of our Lord had happened just some 30 to 40 years prior to these writings and some in the congregation had begun to put it to question.

In **1Corinthians 15:12**, Paul who also was tackling this same problem asked a simple question; *how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

If there is no resurrection, as he added in the next verse, *then Christ is not risen*. Some went as far as teaching these things in the congregation. This belief was also prevalent at the time. The Sadducees, the priesthood in Israel, believed there was no resurrection (**Matthew 22:23**); the priests themselves did not believe it. This was taught in some of the best seller books of the time. The Apocrypha books, such as the Book of

Sirach, which taught that the future hope was experienced through one's children and not to look elsewhere but in this life (Sir 46:12, etc.).

When you speak of resurrection you also touch on *eternal judgment*, the second subject in the third pair. There was a distorted view filling the air for this teaching also. According to the Talmud, *all Jews went to heaven*; it guaranteed heaven without the Messiah. But belonging to a religious group can never guarantee eternal life. When Yeshua spoke to the high ranked Rabbi Nakdimon Ben Gurion, whom we know under the name of Nicodemus, He told him *that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:6)*. Yes, there will be a judgment and only those who are born of the Spirit of God will be saved. One's belonging, pedigree, or denomination cannot guarantee eternal salvation. Salvation and holiness cannot be contagious; they do not come from washing or from the laying on of hands. This was a problem which began a few centuries before. At the time of Haggai, like at the time of Jesus, they have deceived themselves into thinking that holiness, which is the outcome even a solid proof of salvation, came by associations with special things and special men. But God, through Haggai, asked them one pertinent question.

Haggai 2:12

"If one carries holy meat in the fold of his garment, and with the edge he touches bread or stew, wine or oil, or any food, will it become holy?" "Then the priests answered and said, "No."

They answered correctly, but not for long; a few centuries later, they acted contrarily. Legalism itself will pull us away from the love of God; it puts rules above God and above human needs. This is when some put confidence in a practice rather than in God and this is contagious. Unfortunately, there is something very comfortable about relying on a list of do's and don'ts. We love laws like this because we don't have to think much, since it does not require wisdom; it is also said that it reduces anxieties. This problem is found in the first churches. In **Colossians 2:21**, Paul complained about those who say *"Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,"* these were the legalists. The resurrection and the afterlife were subjects prone to be used by legalists. Coupled with these things, some were laying the foundation of all biblical belief again and again.

Now before we go into **Hebrews 6:4-6**, we have seen how the tasters and the slow growing sheep fall into legalism to compensate for the demanding study of the Word. But how about the mature sheep; how does one become a full grown sheep?

The answer is to keep our eyes focused on Yeshua; in Him, we have the perfect example. We have been taught at the beginning of **Hebrews** that He:

was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15) that *He can have compassion on [us], since he himself is also subject to weakness. (Hebrews 5:2)* So, we can go to Him and see how He did it and follow His example.

For instance, how did He come to know all that he knew, even from the age of twelve, when He was discussing theology in the midst of teachers; how did He become a mature sheep Himself?

He had to learn all of this and he could not get all of this knowledge from the school system in Nazareth or from the synagogues. Luke tells us that He had to undergo all that a young child needed to experience.

Luke 2:52

And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

He increased in wisdom and in favor with God, that is, mentally and spiritually. Have you ever asked yourself how He did this?

Isaiah chapters 40 to 53 speak of the Messiah, His life, His ministry and, in **Isaiah 50:4, 5** he spoke about how He grew spiritually.

“The Lord GOD has given Me The tongue of the learned, That I should know how to speak A word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned. The Lord GOD has opened My ear; And I was not rebellious, Nor did I turn away.

The Messiah tells us that God has given Him *the tongue of the learned*, but how?

This is where it is explained: *He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear To hear as the learned.*

Morning by morning, the Messiah was in communication with God the Father, perhaps through prayer, and through the study of the Word. Through the Spirit, Yeshua grew spiritually. Here is a pattern to follow, to get to maturity: Morning Prayer and reading of the Word and more prayer. This is how God spoke to believers in history as well. Their biographies tell us so and, in the Bible, men of God knew about this morning time. David said *My voice You shall hear in the morning, O LORD; In the morning I will direct it to You, And I will look up.* (**Psalms 5:3**)

Perhaps you prefer another time in the day; let it be so, but there should be a one on One with the Lord. Like Yeshua said:

“But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (**Matthew 6:6**)

Here is the key to maturity: staying close to God. The length of time we spend in God’s Word and in prayer, determines how deeply we get into it and it gets into us.

This is where we come to the heart of the argument of **Verses 4-6**.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Who is the writer speaking to; is it to believers or unbelievers?

I believe that all these elements, found here in verses 4 and 5, constitute the starting point leading to salvation. These elements are the offer. You will find them present with a believer before he comes to salvation, and you will find them in non-believers who came so close, and then refused. There are three things these people experienced of the things of God: that of being *enlightened* by God, that of having *tasted the heavenly gift* and the *good Word of God* and even the *powers of the age to come*, and third, of being *partakers* of the Holy Spirit. That sounds so much like what a believer goes through in his first stage of his spiritual life. All of this also sounds so much like what a non-believer may have gone through before he refused salvation, before he said no to God.

In the expression “*have once been enlightened*” we can see the message of salvation which led some to eternal salvation but others, to refuse salvation. Some see it as full salvation; however, it is better to see as marking a point of the offer of salvation, since most will refuse it. How can we be sure of this?

First, the word *enlightened* is also used in **Hebrews 10:32**, where it sheds light to its meaning. There, the writer speaks to believers and says:

But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings:

See that he brings the illumination or enlightenment in the *former days*, that is, before at the time of salvation. It is like a onetime happening, like when they began to believe, and I believe it is used in this sense in **Hebrews 6**. This light was seen by the others, as stated in **John 1:9**, where it says that:

That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

As for the word *taste*, this word means to experience something; it is mentioned 15 times in the Bible, 12 of which strictly means to taste while 3 times it implies eating; but the meaning is to taste, to experience something. Like when we read in **Hebrews 2:9** that Yeshua “*tasted death for everyone;*” He was dead for three days only and now He is alive; He is not dead. So, He only tasted it.

The third word, *partakers*, speaks of a companion, a friend. In secular Greek it was used of a business partner; but the Holy Spirit is not only our Friend and Companion. Our relationship with God goes beyond this to a much higher one, one like that of a marriage, of being one with Him. We are told that Jesus becomes the groom and we the bride, when we believe in Him. This new relationship with the Spirit is not only that of friendship, but that of being *born of Him* and *sealed* by Him. So, to be *enlightened*, to have *tasted*, to be *partakers*, these words imply all people, all men as it may represent the first stages of an offer to salvation.

These experiences can only be achieved by God's doing. All men need the intervention of God in order to be enlightened, in order to taste the things of the Spirit, and in order to see the way of salvation, so they can accept or reject it. It is written that *no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God (1Corinthians 2:11)*, so the Spirit must perform an initial miracle in the minds of all men in order for him to accept or refuse God. Is it not the work of the Spirit in these days to... *convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: (John 16:8)*

There is a work of the Spirit of God in the heart of all men in order for them to see God and make up their minds; and I believe, He uses these means of *enlightenment*, of allowing a *taste* of the Word and its power, and of blessing by being a *partner*.

Is it then possible that **Verses 4 and 5** speak of the initial phase of Salvation?

But how can we be further sure of all this?

There are many examples of people in the Scriptures, who went through the process and refused. Let us look at some of them. The first people that we can think of are the Israelites who aimlessly walked around and around Kadesh Barnea for thirty eight years. They *tasted of the heavenly gift*; think of the miracle of the manna. Think of their clothes and shoes; the Bible says they never wore out for forty years (**Deuteronomy 29:5**). That was a long *tasting* time.

They also *tasted the good Word of God*, with the Torah that was given to them. They *tasted of the powers of the age to come* when they saw the great miracles that Moses performed and they even continually saw the *pillar of cloud to lead the way during the day, and by night, a pillar of fire to give them light (Exodus 13:21)*. They really *tasted* all these things and let me ask you; how many of the approximately three million souls entered the land of Israel?

There were only two; Caleb and Joshua.

We can think of many others in the Bible. Simon Magnus, in **Acts 8**, of whom it was said that he *believed; and when he was baptized...* (**Verse 13**).

When he wanted to buy the power of the laying on of hands Peter saw his game that he did all this for gain and said to him:

"Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!" (**Verse 20**). Here is one of those who fit so well with the description in **Hebrews 6:4-5**.

One can think of Alexander and Hymenaeus in **1Timothy 1**, whom Paul delivered to Satan because they blasphemed. Others are Hymenaeus and Philetus in **2Timothy 2**, whose false teaching spread, according to Paul, like cancer in the church, and Demas, in **2Timothy 4:10**, who forsook God *having loved this present world*. But there are two important individuals in the Scriptures that I want to bring to you. These two fit so well this description of Hebrews 6.4-6; one is from the New Testament and one is from the Hebrew Scriptures. The first and chief of them all is Judas Iscariot. If there is one who was *enlightened* and who partook with the Spirit of God and tasted so much of the power of God, it was this Judas Iscariot. Seven times, he is called *one of the twelve*, as if to stress the fact that this man was among the believers. Did you know that he preached the Word of God and that he performed miracles of healing and casting out demons and raising the dead, yet he was a phony?

We read in **Matthew 10:5, 8**

These twelve Jesus sent out and commanded them, saying: ...

"Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons..."

Judas Iscariot was a full partner with the Spirit and tasted the power of the age to come. More light, a man could not have had. What contributed to the fall of Judas Iscariot?

It was the love of money and jealousy of the other disciples; he was from Judea not from Galilee, so he was jealous of Jesus and against the other eleven.

In all of this, do you see the grace of God?

The case of Judas Iscariot is one of the strongest ones in the Bible to show the great and immense grace of God –Do you know why?

At no time did the other eleven disciples know or even suspect that he was a Tare. The fact that Jesus knew all along and the fact that He spread His love evenly among the twelve show this incomprehensible grace. It also tells us that no one will ever leave this earth without having been enlightened by the Spirit of the things of God. How they will know this, I don't know, but we can see how far God is ready to go in order to save one person.

Another individual is Balaam. Why Balaam of all people?

There are a few good reasons; the first one is given by Yeshua himself. In His last words to the churches, to the one of Pergamos, He says:

But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam... (**Revelation 2:14**)

So Balaam is present in churches. How is he present?

Jude also speaks of *the error of Balaam* (**Jude 1:11**) and Peter of *the way of Balaam* (**2Peter 2:15**).

But what was so special about Balaam, for him to be that popular in the New Testament?

Reading the first part of his history, one realizes that this man started well, like a true believer. Balaam spoke to the God of Israel and called Him by His proper name of the Hebrew “Yud-He-Vav-He.” When they asked for him to come to Moab, he said:

... I could not go beyond the word of the LORD my God, to do less or more. (Numbers 22:18)

In **verse 31** of the same book, we even see his encounter with the Angel of Jehovah who is the pre-incarnate Messiah. Balaam even gave us an important Messianic prophecy in **Numbers 24:17**

I see Him, but not now; I behold Him, but not near; A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Scepter shall rise out of Israel....

Yet, while he knew of the power of God, and even experienced it, Balaam flatly went against God. Seeing he could not curse Israel, because every time he tried he blessed them, he thought of another scheme. He thought to send women in Israel’s camp to entice the men; the problem is that these women came with their false gods. So he did not really believe in God. That was his error; you can plan anything you want against the congregation of God, but God has the last Word.

Balaam is very much like a Hebrew Scriptures Judas Iscariot. Both began well and were partakers of the Spirit; both tasted the good things of God. While some hints were given as to their true nature, both ended up spewing out all the blessings and turned against God. By their action they turned out to be representative of many followers to come. John had already told us about these in **1John 2:19** when he said: *They went out from us, but they were not of us...* Here, he speaks of them again.

So among the congregation of **Hebrews**, there were people like Judas Iscariot and like Balaam, perhaps not as wicked, but there nevertheless. The worst thing is that young believers were among them and also the slow growing sheep. These three formed one group, and it was impossible to know who was who. Again, the tragedy that the writer brings out, is that many believers were still on the fence; not in and not out. Standing alongside with unbelievers, were the Tares that Jesus spoke about; those who follow the same path, but never, ever grow. It was a disturbing sight to the pastor, and it is at this point where he pronounces these very strong words in **verse 6** now. I believe that he was separating the Wheat from the Tares and now focusing on the Tares when he says:

and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. (NASB)

These, having fallen away, *it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.*

Again is a key word here because these have been *laying the foundation of repentance again and again*, but once they leave, they can’t come back. Notice the present tense in **Hebrews** - *they crucify* - not they crucified. Their denial is ongoing, and so we ought not to have fellowship with them. These are those who did not want to commit their lives to Yeshua. They came, they tasted, but they did not want to stay. There is no remission for them; they cannot come back. They themselves would not want to come back, because they already have gone through the process of being enlightened.

This is similar to what Yeshua called the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. At the time, the religious leaders clearly saw the special miracles that the Messiah performed, miracles only God would perform, as Nicodemus confessed in **John 3:2**, when he said to Yeshua:

Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.

Yet, they did not want to accept him.

Some say that **Hebrews 6:6** is also addressed to believers; in a sense it is because it shows the impossibility of the believers to fall like this. Believers do not go there and this will be his argument in the following verses until the end of the chapter. But before this, he gives a parable, one that is spoken to all believers to encourage them to produce fruits. After all, this whole section was really to encourage them to perform the works of God. See **verses 7-8**

*For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God;
but if it bears thorns and briars, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned.*

Here we have the two soils exposed to the same rain; one produces herbs and blesses *those by whom it is cultivated*, that is, the people around them, their congregation, and their families. The other, who received the same rain, *bears thorns and thistles*; these are spoken of in Genesis as a result of the fall. The verse says that they are *rejected, cursed and burned*. If this is addressed to unbelievers, then the earth is burned, and burned for good, because it can never produce fruits. If it is addressed to believers, we know that farmers will burn their fields in order to get rid of all bad weed, and the next season it does produce fruits.

This is true of the believers who do not show fruits fit for the Kingdom of God; there God will remove these things from them in order for them to become fruitful. This last point is the argument of the rest of the chapter in **Hebrews**. There, the writer concentrates on the believers and only the believers. After coming off this maze, he speaks his heart out to the lambs and the sheep; this we will see next.

To conclude, there is one thing that the writer makes clear in the following verses; do not doubt your salvation. But ask yourself, where are you within the different groups of believers.

Are you with the *milk group*; are you a new believer and are beginning to explore the great things of God?

Or, are you among the *meat group*, always desiring to know more about these great treasures of the Scriptures, always asking why this and why that?

Or, are you in between?

These are all good places to be as one continues to grow in the Word. You have been a believer for a long time, but you still did not fully grasp the main lines. If you are, don't feel bad because the majority is there, somewhere, and Hebrews was really written for you to encourage you to *go on to perfection*. As a believer, who committed your life to God, you now belong to the family of God and nothing, absolutely nothing, can take you away from the hands of God and of His Son.