

Hebrews 6 Foundation of Repentance of Dead Works Part 2

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Pre-TEXT: Hebrews 6:1- The foundation of Repentance of Dead works

Repentance from dead works is the first act after believing upon Jesus as the Christ

Introduction

The phrase "dead works" can quickly become confusing, especially when we see verses like Revelation 3:1

1 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. 2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. 3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee. 4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. 5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels

I. Dead Works?

To understand what is meant in Hebrews 6:1, let us go to the only other place that the phrase is used, which happens to be in the same Book of Hebrews 9:14

V9 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

RED HEIFER Function of the red heifer ceremony was production of ash for the water used to remove ritual impurity contracted through contact with a corpse, bones, or a grave (Num. 19). The rite involved: slaughter of a sacrificially acceptable heifer outside the camp; sprinkling blood toward the tent of meeting seven times; burning the entire heifer, including its blood and dung, together with cedarwood, hyssop, and scarlet thread (cp. Lev. 14:4); and storing the ash in a clean place outside the camp. The water for removing the impurity contracted through contact with the dead was prepared by mixing running water with the ash. Impure persons and objects were sprinkled on the third and seventh days after contamination to remove uncleanness. Hebrews 9:14 uses the image of the red heifer ceremony to picture Christ's cleansing believers of the effect of "dead works." Dead works refer either to acts that lead to death (NIV), "useless rituals" in view of salvation (TEV), or works produced prior to being made alive in Christ (cp. Heb. 6:1).¹

¹ Red Heifer. (2003). In C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen & T. C. Butler (Eds.), *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*. 2003 (C. Brand, C. Draper, A. England, S. Bond, E. R. Clendenen & T. C. Butler, Ed.) (1369). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

Thus, from the only other place in the Scriptures that the phrase "dead works" is used, the context indicates that this means that man cannot be justified by the works of the law, but only by the blood of Jesus Christ. In other words "repentance from dead works" is the doctrine that we must repent from trusting in our own dead works to save us. Instead, we must trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation.

Galatians 2:16 - "man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ... for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified."

Ephesians 2:8-9 - "not of works"

2 Timothy 1:9 - "not according to our works"

Titus 3:5 - "not by works of righteousness which we have done"

Romans 3:21-22 - "by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight"

Romans 4:4-5 - "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt."

Isaiah 64:6 - "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"

II. It appears that the Bible talks about two kinds of dead works:

1. Those works we do before we are saved as a means to try to please God (e.g. filthy rags as in Isaiah 64:6)
2. Those works we do after we are saved that are not pleasing to God (e.g. wood, hay, and stubble as in 1 Corinthians 3:11-12).

A. Before Salvation

1. Who is dead and who is alive?

John 3: 15-21 That whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 17For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. 19And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. 20For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. 21But he that does truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

When we understand that dead works cannot save us and Good works cannot keep us saved and bad works cannot take your salvation, we live different. We are living based off what Christ did through the blood for us. To add works to this, we negate what Christ has done on the cross. If we should die spiritually it is because we have been cut off from Christ's life. For this to happen we must apostate ourselves and completely reject Christ altogether. Then we would do dead works again, and be blotted out. Dead works become the indicator of dead lives. Hebrews 6:4-6

2. Dead works are the actions of zombies. The walking dead. Before the cross our works are dead.

Gal 5: 19 Now the works of the flesh are clearly revealed, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lustfulness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatreds, fightings, jealousies, angers, rivalries, divisions, heresies, 21 envyings, murders, drunkennesses, revelings, and things like these; of which I tell you before, as I also said before, that they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 6: 9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Therefore, unbelievers are DEAD. Whatever they do is worthless and in vain. Their works are dead works. They are condemned no matter how much “good” they might do on this earth.

2. After Salvation

The Bible tells us that to become spiritually alive, we need to believe in Jesus.

a. So what does it mean to “believe in Jesus?”

Is it enough to just believe that Jesus existed, that Jesus was a special person that came to give guidelines on how to live our lives? The answer is NO. There are certain absolute principles in the Bible that determine what belief in Jesus Christ is all about.

John 3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

John 3:5 Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

1 Cor 15:50 And I say this, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

Luke 3: 3 I tell you, No. But unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any person is <ingrafted> in Christ (the Messiah) he is a new creation (a new creature altogether); the old <previous moral and spiritual condition> has passed away. Behold, the fresh and new has come! AMP

Romans 10:9 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Once we have believed that Jesus is the Son of God, once we have truly repented, then we

die to our old self and are born again with a new Spirit. Once this has happened, we are washed clean of all our old dead works and we strive from then on to walk in newness of life, following the Bible's commandments by the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

b. Dead works that believers do? Going back into the law to be righteous

Galatians 3:1 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

2 This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

c. Good works are good and living- Do them!

Hebrews 6 9 But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.¹⁰ For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

III. Repentance

What does the word repent mean?

The word that is translated as repent in the New Testament is the Greek word "metanoeo". It means to change one's mind, to turn back or to turn away. Therefore when one repents, we turn away from old things and leave them behind.

True salvation is repentance or a turning away from dead works;

NOTES: