

1 Verses 1-3<sup>1</sup>

2 **Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us**  
 3 **press on to maturity** (perfection NASB, completeness AMP), **not laying**  
 4 **again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith**  
 5 **toward God,** <sup>2</sup>**of instruction about washings and laying on of hands,**  
 6 **and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.** <sup>3</sup>**And this**  
 7 **we will do, if God permits.**

8  
 9 **A** One of the keys to understanding verses 1-3 is knowing what verse one  
 10 means, specifically: “leaving” and “pressing on”. According to Wuest (after  
 11 lengthy explanation) it means,

12  
 13 **“Therefore, having put away once for all the beginning word of the**  
 14 **Messiah, let us be carried along to that which is complete.”-Wuest**

15  
 16 **B** This is completely opposite of what many have come to believe; namely,  
 17 that “elementary teachings” is speaking of the foundational truths of the  
 18 Christian faith. However, many a person has asked themselves,  
 19 **1** “How are THESE the basic foundations?” and more importantly,  
 20 **2** “If these ARE the basic foundations, why are we being told to leave them  
 21 once for all?”

22 *The six items enumerated—“repentance from dead works,” etc.— have nothing*  
 23 *to do with the “foundations of Christianity,” nor do they describe those things*  
 24 *relating to the elementary experiences of a Christian. Instead, they treat of*  
 25 *what appertained to Judaism, considered as a rudimentary system, paving the*  
 26 *way for the fuller and final revelation which God has now made in and by His*  
 27 *beloved Son. -A.W. Pink*

28 *“The act of abandoning is the pre-requisite to that of going on. One cannot go*  
 29 *on without first separating one's self from that to which one is attached.”-*  
 30 *Wuest*

31 *“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ.” The rendering of*  
 32 *the A.V. of this clause is very faulty and misleading. The verb is in the past*  
 33 *tense, not the present. Bagster's Interlinear correctly gives **“Wherefore***  
 34 ***having left.**” This difference of rendition is an important one, for it enables*  
 35 *us to understand more readily the significance of what follows. The apostle*  
 36 *was stating a positive fact, not pleading for a possibility. He was not asking*  
 37 *the Hebrews to take a certain step, but reminding them of one they had*

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38 already taken. They had left the “principles of the doctrine of Christ,” and to  
39 them he did not wish them to return. A.W. Pink

40 “Wherefore, having left the beginning of the Christ discourse.” This expression  
41 is parallel with the “first principles of the oracles of God” in Hebrews 5: 12. It  
42 has reference to what God has made known concerning His Son under Judaism.  
43 A.W. Pink

44 The phrase, “the beginning word of the Christ,” refers to that teaching  
45 concerning Him which is first presented in the Bible. And what is that but the  
46 truth concerning His Person and work found in the symbolism of the Levitical  
47 sacrifices. The tabernacle, priesthood, and offerings all speak of Him in His  
48 Person and work. And this interpretation is in exact accord with the argument  
49 of the book. All dependence upon the Levitical sacrifices is to be set aside  
50 in order that the Hebrews can go on to “perfection,” as we have it here.-  
51 Wuest

52 It is to be remarked that there is no definite article in the Greek here, so it  
53 should be read, “a foundation,” which is one of several intimations that it is  
54 not the “fundamentals of Christianity” A.W. Pink

55 As the “foundation” bears the building, so the truth of Christianity rests upon  
56 the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament, of which the New  
57 Testament revelation records the fulfillment. A.W. Pink

58 “Not laying again a foundation,” etc. This is exactly what the Hebrews were  
59 being sorely tempted to do. To “lay again” this foundation was to forsake  
60 the substance for the shadows; it was to turn from Christianity and go  
61 back again to Judaism. A.W. Pink

62 “Not laying again a foundation,” etc. It will be noted that the apostle here  
63 enumerates just six things, which is ever the number of man in the flesh.  
64 Such was what distinguished Judaism. A.W. Pink

65 **3** As long as a believer is living in both covenants, he/she will not be able to  
66 grow properly.

67  
68 **C** Not all commentators agree with the above explanation, however. Overall,  
69 there are two basic views which follow.

<p><b>View One (Wuest/Pink):</b> Verses 1-3 refer to teaching about the Law and that the author was urging these Hebrews to completely forsake (which was incomplete) and turn to only to Jesus.</p>	<p><b>View Two (F.F.Bruce):</b> These refer to the elementary teachings of the Christian Faith and the writer is encouraging the believers to come to maturity as a believer.</p>
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<p><b>Wuest:</b> Thus the words, "the principles of the doctrine of Christ," must refer to the First Testament sacrifices, <u>for these Jews are exhorted to abandon them.</u> Likewise, the word "perfection" must speak of the New Testament Sacrifice to which they are exhorted to allow themselves to be borne along." That the word "perfection" speaks of the New Testament Sacrifice, the Lord Jesus, and the Testament He inaugurated by His work on the Cross, is seen from the use of the Greek word here (teleios), referring to that which is complete, and in <u>7:11</u> where the writer argues that if perfection (same Greek word) were under the Levitical priesthood, then there would be no further need of another priesthood.</p>	<p>The problem with this point of view is that these are NOT the elementary teachings of the Christian faith as taught by the apostle Paul. Even F.F. Bruce who advocates for View Two admits that this list more closely represents the Jewish faith and quotes Alexander Nairne as saying, "the points taken as representing the foundation of penitence and faith are all consistent with Judaism. 'Doctrines of washings'—how unnatural are the attempts to explain this plural as referring to the Christian Baptism; 'impositions of hands, resurrection of dead, eternal judgment'—all this belonged to the creed of a Pharisaic Jew who accepted the whole of the Old Testament."</p>
<p><i>Hebrews 7:11</i> <i>Therefore, if <u>perfection</u> were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron?</i></p>	
<p>The application for Christians today (especially those who have adopted the Old Covenant as part of their Christian practice) is clear. We cannot justify living in two covenants. Let us leave behind the Old Testament system ONCE AND FOR ALL and move on to the perfection of the New Covenant.</p>	

## Old Covenant Foundations<sup>2</sup> Contrasted with New Covenant Perfection

**1. "Repentance from dead works" is First Testament teaching and is in contrast to New Testament teaching of "repentance toward God" (Acts 20:21).**

*The reference here was to the unprofitable and in-efficacious works of the Levitical service: cf. Hebrews 10: 1, 4. Those works of the ceremonial law are denominated "dead works" because they were performed by men in the flesh, were not vitalized by the Holy Spirit, and did not satisfy the claims of the living God. -A.W. Pink*

<sup>2</sup> Argument developed using Wuest Commentary of Hebrews

**Acts 20:21**

To solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance toward God** and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Acts 11:18**

*When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, "Then God has also granted to the Gentiles **repentance to life.**"*

**Repentance toward God IS repentance to life.**

**2. "Faith toward God" is First Testament teaching, and is contrasted to the New Testament teaching of "faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21-above).**

**Acts 20:21**

To solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and **faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.**

**3. "The doctrine of baptisms" (same Greek word translated "washings" (in Heb. 9:10) refers to the ceremonial ablutions or washings of Judaism, and is typical of (a type of) the New Testament cleansing of the conscience from dead works to serve the living and true God by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost (Titus 3:5).-Wuest**

**Titus 3:5**

*<sup>5</sup>He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.*

**4. Under the Old Covenant the sinner placed his hands upon an animal sacrifice. We lay hold of Jesus as our sacrifice for sin by faith.**

*The "laying on of hands" refers to the imposition of the offerer's hand upon the sacrificial offerings of the Levitical system (Lev. 1:4), and is typical of (a type of) the act of a sinner today laying his hand of faith upon the sacred head of the Lamb of God.-Wuest*

**5. The Old Covenant concept of "resurrection of the dead" was not complete. First of all, they had no concept that their Messiah would die bodily and be resurrected bodily. The Hebrews understood that there was an afterlife and a judgment, but did not understand that believers are resurrected with Christ at salvation, and that they will eventually be bodily resurrected, incorrupt and immortal, unto eternal life at His return. Note also that belief in Christ's resurrection from the dead is required for salvation.**

*"The resurrection of the dead," an Old Testament doctrine, is more fully*

developed in the doctrine of the out-resurrection from among the dead... which indicates that there are two resurrections, one of the saints, the other of the lost.-Wuest

It is this aspect of resurrection which the New Testament epistles emphasize , an elective resurrection, a resurrection of the redeemed before that of the wicked: see Revelation 20: 5, 6; 1 Corinthians 15: 22, 23; 1 Thessalonians 4: 16.-A. W. Pink

**Romans 10:9**

If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and **believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead**, you will be saved.

**1 Peter 1:3**

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has **begotten us again** to a living hope through **the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead**.

**1 Corinthians 15:51-53**

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but **we shall all be changed—**<sup>52</sup> in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the **dead will be raised incorruptible**, and **we shall be changed**.<sup>53</sup> For this corruptible must put on **incorruption**, and this mortal must put on **immortality**.

**6. Under the Old Covenant, sin was judged, and judged severely. Under the New Covenant, those who believe in Jesus will not come into judgment.**

"Eternal judgment" of the old dispensation is in contrast to the "no judgment for the believer in Christ" of the new. Thus, these Hebrews are exhorted not to return to First Testament teaching, but to go on to faith in the New Testament Sacrifice.-Wuest

**John 5:24**

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and **shall not come into judgment**, but has passed from death into life.

71

72 Rather than this, he urges them to be carried forward to "perfection" or "full  
73 growth." That meant to substitute "repentance unto life" (Acts 11: 18), for  
74 "repentance from dead works;" trust in the glorified Savior , for a national  
75 "faith toward God;" the all-cleansing blood of the Lamb, for the inefficacious  
76 "washings" of the law; God's having laid on Christ the iniquities of us all, for  
77 the Jewish high-priest's "laying on of hands;" a resurrection "from the dead,"  
78 for "a resurrection of the dead; " the Judgment-seat of Christ, for the  
79 "eternal judgment" of the Great White Throne. **Thus, the six things here**

80 mentioned belonged to a state of things before Christ was manifested.  
81 A.W. Pink

## 82 Verses 4-8

83 **For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have**  
84 **tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the**  
85 **Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup>and have tasted the good word of God and the powers**  
86 **of the age to come, <sup>6</sup>and then have fallen away, it is impossible to**  
87 **renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to**  
88 **themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. <sup>7</sup>For ground**  
89 **that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth**  
90 **vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives**  
91 **a blessing from God; <sup>8</sup>but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is**  
92 **worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.**

- 93
- 94 **A The question remains, to whom was the author of Hebrews speaking? Here**  
95 **we part with Wuest due to the precise description in verses 4-5 which**  
96 **accurately describe a born again believer. We believe that the author is**  
97 **exhorting the Jewish believers to not return to temple worship, for to do so**  
98 **would constitute apostasy.**
- 99 **1 Enlightened—*photizo*: enlighten, give light to, illuminate, cause to see,**  
100 **shed light upon**
- 101 **a This describes someone whom God has given light to understand the**  
102 **gospel.**
- 103 **2 Once—*hapax*: one single time**
- 104 **3 Tasted of the heavenly gift— *geuomai*: tasted, eaten, to have experienced**  
105 **a Tasted does not mean, necessarily, that they just took a little sample,**  
106 **but more likely refers to them having eaten the heavenly gift, salvation.**
- 107 **4 Partakers of the Holy Spirit—*metochos*: participant, that is, a sharer; by**  
108 **implication an associate: - fellow, partaker, partner.**
- 109 **a The does not describe a casual inquirer. This is someone who has**  
110 **received the Holy Spirit and is a fellow/partner with Him.**
- 111 **5 Tasted (eaten/experienced) the good word of God—This most likely refers**  
112 **to them having received the word of God, the gospel.**
- 113 **6 Tasted (eaten/experienced) the powers of the age to come—This group**  
114 **had experienced and knew of the power of God, both in this life, and the**  
115 **hope of the life to come.**
- 116 **B Thus, we conclude that by giving so many witnesses as to the position of the**  
117 **group he is describing, the author (Paul) has gone out of his/her way to**  
118 **articulate that He was speaking to born again believers.**
- 119 **C The term “to fall away” means to apostatize. According to Webster, apostatize**  
120 **means “to abandon one’s profession or church; to forsake principles or faith**

121 which one has professed.” Apostasy is seen by most commentators as  
 122 something that is done knowingly and deliberately.

123 *It is a complete falling away, a total abandonment of Christianity which is*  
 124 *here in view. It is a willful turning of the back on God’s revealed truth, an*  
 125 *utter repudiation of the Gospel. A.W. Pink*

126 **D** “Impossible” means impossible.

127 **E** “To renew them again to repentance” makes it clear that this group had  
 128 been previously renewed to repentance. It would be impossible for those  
 129 who had committed the sin of apostasy to be “renewed again”.

130  
 131 Some commentators held the view that no human would be able to bring this  
 132 person back to repentance. Others believed it meant that they would have  
 133 crossed a line that cannot be crossed again. Someone who would have so  
 134 deliberately and knowingly rejected faith in Jesus would not tend to soften  
 135 with time, but rather harden himself.

136 *“The apostate crucifies Christ on his own account by virtually confirming the*  
 137 *judgment of the actual crucifiers, declaring that he, too, has made trial of*  
 138 *Jesus and found Him no true Messiah but a deceiver and therefore worthy of*  
 139 *death”–Wuest*

140 *The nature of their particular sin is termed a “treading under foot the Son of*  
 141 *God (something which no real Christian ever does) and counting (esteeming)*  
 142 *the blood of the covenant an unholy thing,” that is, looking upon the One who*  
 143 *hung on the Cross as a common malefactor. For such there “remaineth no*  
 144 *more sacrifice for sins.” A.W. Pink*

145 *“They thus identify themselves with His crucifiers– they entertained and*  
 146 *avowed sentiments which were He on earth and in their power, would induce*  
 147 *them to crucify Him. A.W. Pink*

148

Summary of Viewpoints	
<b>View One:</b> The author is addressing Jews who had only been enlightened but not born again who were considering going back (Wuest).	<b>View Two:</b> The author is speaking to believing Jews (Christians) who were considering forsaking Christ and going back to the temple worship. (F.F. Bruce).
<i>Someone holding this view would be someone who believes that a born again person can NEVER walk away from his/her relationship with God. “Once saved, always saved”, even if the person were to deny Jesus. Some in this group (including Wuest) say that if someone were to not continue in the faith, it would be a clear indication they were never true believers in the first place.</i>	<i>Someone holding this view believes that a born again person is capable of rejecting Christ and thus being lost because he/she still has a free will. Since our salvation is based on faith in Jesus, to no longer have faith in Jesus would be apostasy. This group does concede that the likelihood of someone walking away from Christ who fully understands Him is unthinkable, but still possible.</i>

All mainline denominations agree on this:  
**FAITH in Jesus is essential to salvation.**  
**Without faith in Jesus, there is no salvation.**

Whatever you believe these verses mean, they ARE NOT referring to sinning after becoming a believer. Apostasy does not refer to sinning, rather the one unpardonable sin of rejecting Christ. Sin, while strongly discouraged and condemned in scripture, is forgiven by the blood of Jesus for all who believe in His Son.

149

150 *These verses can leave someone in doubt asking, “Have I committed apostasy? Have I*  
 151 *gone too far” Andrew Wommack, in his gift of logic, points out that if someone is*  
 152 *repentant, that is the evidence that this person has not gone too far, for the word*  
 153 *declares that it is “impossible” to renew someone who has committed apostasy to*  
 154 *repentance. Thus, a repentant heart indicates that the person has not committed*  
 155 *apostasy.*

156

### 157 **Verses 9-10**

158 ***But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you,***  
 159 ***and things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in***  
 160 ***this way. <sup>10</sup>For God is not unjust so as to forget your work and the***  
 161 ***love which you have shown toward His name, in having ministered***  
 162 ***and in still ministering to the saints.***

163

164 **A** These two verses are further indication that the author is addressing believers.  
 165 First of all, he calls them “beloved” which is only used of Jesus, the nation of  
 166 Israel, and believers in the New Testament. Secondly, he refers to the love  
 167 they have shown to each other which Jesus said would indicate that someone is  
 168 His follower. John also wrote, “We know that we have passed from death to  
 169 life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in  
 170 death,” (1 John 3:14).

171 **B** Notice also the comforting tone of these two verses. After having sternly  
 172 warned them in the previous chapters, he/she now expresses his/her belief  
 173 that they will not fall into the category he has just presented, that they will  
 174 indeed leave behind the Old and embrace only the New. He tells them that God  
 175 knows the love they have for each other and the way they have practically  
 176 shown their love.

177

### 178 **Verses 11-12**

179 ***And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as***  
 180 ***to realize the full assurance of hope until the end, <sup>12</sup>so that you***

181 *will not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and*  
 182 *patience inherit the promises.*

183  
 184 **AMPLIFIED** *But we do [strongly and earnestly] desire for each of*  
 185 *you to show the same diligence and sincerity [all the way through]*  
 186 *in realizing and enjoying the full assurance and development of*  
 187 *[your] hope until the end, <sup>12</sup>In order that you may not grow*  
 188 *disinterested and become [spiritual] sluggards, but imitators,*  
 189 *behaving as do those who through faith (by their leaning of the*  
 190 *entire personality on God in Christ in absolute trust and*  
 191 *confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness) and by practice of*  
 192 *patient endurance and waiting are [now] inheriting the promises.*

193  
 194 **A** *Diligence is spoude—speed, that is, (by implication) dispatch, eagerness,*  
 195 *earnestness: - business, (earnest) care (-fullness), diligence forwardness,*  
 196 *haste; to realize the full assurance of hope.*

197 **1** *Diligence keeps us from being sluggish (spiritually stupid). What should we*  
 198 *be diligent in, but the full assurance of hope, which includes knowing and*  
 199 *understanding the simplicity of the Gospel, knowing and treasuring the*  
 200 *Grace of God, believing in the finished work of Jesus, believing that we are*  
 201 *the righteousness of God, believing that we are completely forgiven,*  
 202 *diligence to move forward and not turn back.*

203 **2** *He encourages them to follow the examples of those who through faith and*  
 204 *patience are now inheriting the promise.*

205 **a** *Examine the lives of those who live in victory and freedom, those who*  
 206 *are right now living the life we've been given. Follow their example.*

207 **b** *The promises of God (referring to the next section which discusses*  
 208 *Abraham) were inherited through faith and patience.*

## 209 **Verses 13-15**

211 *For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear*  
 212 *by no one greater, He swore by Himself, <sup>14</sup>saying, "I WILL SURELY*  
 213 *BLESS YOU AND I WILL SURELY MULTIPLY YOU." <sup>15</sup>And so, having*  
 214 *patiently waited, he obtained the promise.*

215 **A** *Genesis 22:16-17*

216 *"By Myself I have sworn, declares the LORD, because you have done this thing*  
 217 *and have not withheld your son, your only son, <sup>17</sup>indeed I will greatly bless*  
 218 *you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and*  
 219 *as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of*  
 220 *their enemies.*

## 221 **Verses 16-18**

223 **For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an**  
 224 **oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. <sup>17</sup>In the**  
 225 **same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the**  
 226 **promise the unchange-ableness of His purpose, interposed with an**  
 227 **oath, <sup>18</sup>so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible**  
 228 **for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong**  
 229 **encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.**

230 *The word "immutability" is the translation of ametatheton. That is, God will*  
 231 *not change His position as to His promise. Having made the promise, He will*  
 232 *stand by it. He is not a turncoat He will not change His position as to His*  
 233 *promise, because that promise rests upon His counsel, and that is ametatheton*  
 234 *also, immutable.-Wuest*

235 *Verse 18 speaks of an accomplished fact, of that which has been done. The two*  
 236 *accomplished facts, the two things which were done, are the act of God*  
 237 *making a promise and the act of God taking an oath. And these are not subject*  
 238 *to change. They are immutable.-Wuest*

239 *Thus the encouragement which God's promise and God's oath afford is a strong*  
 240 *army or a fortress against doubt and discouragement. God's promise and God's*  
 241 *oath should keep these Jews from apostatizing through the encouragement*  
 242 *they give.-Wuest*

243 *The Greek word meaning "to flee for refuge" katapheugo is used in the LXX*  
 244 *(Deut. 4:42) of the slayer who killed his neighbor unawares, and who, to escape*  
 245 *the avenger, flees for refuge to one of the cities of refuge. Here it speaks of*  
 246 *the sinner fleeing for refuge from the penalty of sin, to the High Priest who*  
 247 *has offered atonement for him and his sin. His only hope is in his High Priest,*  
 248 *the Messiah.-Wuest*

## 249 **Verses 19-20**

250 **This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and**  
 251 **steadfast and one which enters within the veil, <sup>20</sup> where Jesus has**  
 252 **entered as a forerunner for us, having become a high priest**  
 253 **forever according to the order of Melchizedek.**

254 *The Aaronic high priest did not enter into the Holy of Holies as a forerunner,*  
 255 *but only as the people's representative. He entered a place where the one in*  
 256 *whose behalf he ministered, could not follow.-Wuest*

257 **A** This passage alludes to the practice of a smaller ship entering a harbor with the  
 258 anchor of a larger ship that would surely perish if it entered during a storm.  
 259 The small ship would safely anchor the larger ship in the harbor. In this way,  
 260 Jesus has gone before us and has anchored our souls in heaven having entered  
 261 the holy of holies in heaven. One day, we will enter.

- 262     **B** Our hope (joyful anticipation/expectation of good) is described as both sure  
263     and steadfast (stable and secure).
- 264     **C** Melchizedek is going to be the topic of Hebrews 7 in which the author will  
265     compare Jesus priesthood with that of Melchizedek.
- 266     **D** This hope is all the promises contained in the New Covenant. What are these  
267     promises?
- 268     Jeremiah 31:33-34  
269     "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,"  
270     declares the LORD,
- 271         • "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it;
  - 272         • and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.
  - 273         • <sup>34</sup>"They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother,  
274         saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to  
275         the greatest of them," declares the LORD,
  - 276         • "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
- 277     Is. 54:9-10  
278     "For this is like the days of Noah to Me,  
279         When I swore that the waters of Noah  
280         Would not flood the earth again;
- 281
  - 282         • So I have sworn that I will not be angry with you
  - 283         • Nor will I rebuke you.
  - 284         <sup>10</sup>"For the mountains may be removed and the hills may shake
  - 285         • But My lovingkindness will not be removed from you,
  - 286         • And My covenant of peace will not be shaken,"
  - 287         • Says the LORD who has compassion on you.