

“JESUS IS SUPERIOR TO...” SERIES

PUTTING JESUS TO OPEN SHAME

HEBREWS 6:1-8

Hebrews 6:1-8 [1] Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, [2] and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. [3] And this we will do if God permits. [4] For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, [5] and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, [6] and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt. [7] For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. [8] But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned. (ESV)

Introduction

In our previous studies (Hebrews 5:10-11), the Hebrews were told that Jesus was “*Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedek.*” But the writer was having a difficult time teaching them as they were “*dull of hearing.*” They were stuck in the past and could not or refused to move forward in their teaching and spirituality (Hebrews 5:12-14).

D. L. Moody, American evangelist recounts the story of a man who was drunk that recognized him on the street. With slurred speech the drunk stumbled up to him and said, “I’m one of your converts.” To which Moody responded, “You must be, because you’re certainly not one of the Lord’s.”

Christianity today is marked by people who say they are Christian and yet their lives speak just the opposite. I have seen many conversions in my life. People who have tears unabated running down their cheeks, having great joy and happiness. Many follow in baptism with great enthusiasm and joy. However, the truth concerning their conversion is revealed over time. I have seen many moving experiences at the altar that later fizzle, sputter and die. I even know one person who rejected the whole

idea of Jesus and God. He proudly became apostate. On the other hand, I have also witnessed most conversions develop a deep relationship with God.

Reciting the “sinner’s prayer” does not make you a Christian any more than if I recited the oath of office for the president of the United States would make me president.

Salvation requires real repentance and faith to enter into eternal life.

This is where the Hebrew’s were. The writer is trying to keep the Hebrews from apostasy by encouraging them to move into a deeper relationship with God. The ground work would be to remind them that they needed to understand the way to spiritual growth would be commit to the Lord, the strong meat as discussed in 5:14.

[1] Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, [2] and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity – this is the key! To move into a deeper relationship with God and Christ, to move from the Gospel into the meat of understanding, you cannot continue going over the same information concerning Christ.

For example, if you are going to learn algebra, you must have a thorough understanding of subtraction, addition, division and multiplication of numbers. For an Algebra teacher to spend an entire semester going over the basics of “arithmetic” would be foolish. They would find themselves at the end of the semester where they were at the beginning. This is the warning from the writer, “*Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ.*”

The writer now lists five areas that are the “arithmetic” of his Algebra, if you will.

1. *not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works* – the literal meaning is “repentance from acts that lead to death.” Let us remember that the Hebrews are Jews which have come to salvation through Jesus Christ and that meant a rejection of the Law for salvation. Their conversion would have be a conscious turning away from the old way of life. There is no way to salvation, including the Law, than by Jesus. He alone is the way of salvation.
2. *faith toward God* – turning away from dead works is not enough. Faith in God and the atoning work of Jesus the Christ.

3. instruction about washings, the laying on of hands – The KJV translation of the word baptisms is not the same word for baptism as we use it today. The word is a reference to the ceremonial act of washings for the Jew. The laying on of hands was for selection and ordination or setting one apart for service.
4. the resurrection of the dead – Resurrection is taught and understood in the Old Testament. For the believers, Jesus is the resurrection and it is through him that their resurrection from the dead is made possible.

The Old Testament teaches a general resurrection, but does not make the doctrine clear. The New Testament teaches a resurrection of the saved and also a resurrection of the lost (John 5:24–29; Rev. 20:4–6, 12–15).¹

5. eternal judgment – The Hebrews also understood judgment from the Old Testament as there are many cases where God judged the children of Israel. But for the Christian, that judgment has been paid in full by the work of Jesus on the cross.

The author is encouraging the Hebrews to not limit all their understanding on these important and key theologies, but to move to maturity.

[3] And this we will do if God permits.

The writer is basically saying, “Let God show you and teach you to maturity”

[4] For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, [5] and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, [6] and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

First and foremost I want to stress that this passage has nothing to do with someone losing their salvation. This passage along with a parallel passage in Hebrews 10:26-39 have caused people to rethink eternal security. These verses have been misinterpreted and therefore they have been mishandled in their application.

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 2, p. 296). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

People, taking the text out of context, have convinced themselves that they have committed the “unpardonable sin” and believe they cannot be saved.

Salvation is so important that I never want anyone to think they can lose their salvation or that they are without hope.

The author places the term translated “impossible” (adynaton) first in the passage for emphasis. He uses this word at three other points in Hebrews proclaiming it is “impossible for God to lie” (6:18), “...it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins” (10:14, and “...without faith it is impossible to please him” (11:6). The term clearly implies that something cannot happen. Therefore, those that have been enlightened refers to their initial exposure to the gospel or early instruction in Christian doctrine.²

There are basically three applications of this passage:

1. One view is that the writer is warning against apostasy by bona-fide Christians who willfully return to the old life and turning their back on Jesus. Their theology is that person becomes lost forever due to their actions with no chance of returning to Jesus. The parable of the “lost” in the 15th chapter of Luke teaches against this theology. Other passages would be Hebrews 6:13–20; John 10:26–30; 17:6-12; Romans 8:28–39.
2. A second view holds that those that fall away were never true believers. They never made a clean break from with Judaism. They played the part, but were simply looking for the Messiah and never accepted all the tenets of being “born again” (John 3:16-18). Remember, like the 21st century Christian, there may have been many Hebrews that from the beginning professed that Jesus was the Messiah, but when Christ tarried His return, they in turn lost their “hope” and returned to the only religion they knew, Judaism.
3. A third view is that this has nothing to do with Salvation, but concerns practice.

[7] For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. [8] But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

The example concerns agriculture. Plants drink in the rain and produce crops for peoples use. But if there is no crop and only weeds, the crop is useless, except to be burned.

² Guthrie, G. H. (1998). *The NIV Application Commentary, Hebrews*. Grand Rapids MI: Zondervon p. 218.

Conclusion

This is the greatest passage on eternal security. Look at the words with me. I will read this passage out of the English Standard Version. Compare it with the translation you hold in your hands.

Hebrews 6:1-8 [1] **Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity**, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, [2] and of instruction about washings, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. [3] And this we will do if God permits. [4] **For it is impossible**, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, [5] and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, [6] and then have fallen away, **to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.** [7] For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. [8] But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.

Therefore let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity...For it is impossible to have someone fall away and the Son of God return to the cross again for their salvation.

The passage becomes: "...those that have been enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, shared in the Holy Spirit, have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come and then fall away (go astray). It is impossible for the Son of God to be crucified again and subject Him to contempt (public disgrace).³

Jesus went to the cross. Took your sins upon himself. Died. Buried and was resurrected. He sits at the right hand of the Father. He will not come back to earth to die once more every time you sin.

*Hebrews 10:10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all.***

Bob Crowder

³ Guthrie, G. H. (1998). *The NIV Application Commentary, Hebrews*. Grand Rapids MI: Zondervon p. 219