

Hebrews 6:4-6 and Hebrews 10:38 &39

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” “38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.”

We come to our last study on the subject of apostasy. Our title has been “**Apostasy and Its Awful Consequences!**” This is part 4. We remind you again that this is not an easy message to preach because of its contents and consequences, but to understand that the Word of God deals with this subject in careful detail with such clarity and with firmness in such a fearful warning, so that no one is without excuse.

You can hear the first 3 messages to get the essence of why we came to this fearful and sober topic. I want to get to the text as soon as possible to hopefully conclude this series. We said that the writer of Hebrews set forth particular descriptions of professing believers, not true born again believers but mere professors who have fallen away into apostasy. The alarming words that pricks the heart which the writer uses are found in verse 4, “***For it is impossible...***” and in verse 6, “***...to renew them again unto repentance...***” It is that decisive dagger of dreadful condemnation without any hope of salvation: IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW THEM AGAIN!!!!!!

We must all understand very clearly that apostasy is a conscious and willful falling away or departing from Christ and His gospel. Apostasy is an intentional, deliberate, and denying of the Living and True God. It is an abandoning and a complete renunciation of Jesus Christ, God and the Bible to which it is an unforgivable sin, perhaps the unpardonable sin. This is what a person consciously does. There 5 specific things Paul mentions regarding those who apostatized:

1. They were once enlightened.
2. They tasted of the heavenly gift.
3. They were made partakers of the Holy Ghost.
4. They tasted the good word of God.
5. They tasted the powers of the world to come.

We have already dealt with the first 3, they were enlightened, that is, they had knowledge of God, they also tasted of the heavenly gift, that is, they had a profession of Christ and we saw that, they also tasted of Jesus Christ, that is, they did not eat of

the wholeness of His person and they were also partakers or mere participators with the Holy Ghost. Thus, Paul continues fourthly:

The fourth thing that is mentioned in Hebrews 6:5, *“And have tasted the good word of God...”* The word tasted here is used in the same sense as the one in verse 4. By the good word of God, the writer perhaps means the gospel, that is, the good news and or the whole of Scripture. So sad that these had been enlightened, tasted of Jesus Christ and were partakers of the Holy Ghost and tasted of the good word of God and yet it brought forth no fruit or salvation to their souls. We must understand that every time a person hears the gospel preached they taste of the Word of God. Every time you open the Bible to read it, you taste of the Word of God. The important question is ask, do you just taste of the word of God or do you digest the word of God, do you eat of the word of God? Jeremiah 15:16, *“Thy words were found, and **I did eat them**; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.”* Job 23:12, *“Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.”* Do you hunger after the word of God? The Lord Jesus Christ said to Satan when tempted by him in Matthew 4:3 & 4, *“And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”* The word of God is compared to food, to meat and milk. The comparison of eating the word of God spiritually like as to eating physical food. We need the word of God for spiritual nourishment as we eat food for nourishment for the body. The eating of manna in the Old Testament is a type of eating the word of God as they both have their origin from HEAVEN! Jesus told Peter 3 times ‘feed my sheep!’ 1 Peter 5:2, *“Feed the flock of God which is among you...”* Acts 20:28, *“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”* Feed with what, feed with the WORD OF GOD!

Many enjoy just tasting of the Word of God because of their religious nature instead of digesting and eating the Word of God for spiritual nourishment. This was the rebuke of Jesus to the Jews in John 5, please turn there: in verse 24 He shows the importance of salvation and in verse 34 shows His concern for their souls, but the sad thing is that, they really had no interest in Him or in the Word of God. They tasted God’s word as they search the Scriptures but they did not eat or digested them, the word of God was not in them: verses 38-40. John 8:30-32, *“As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue (abide, to be kept, to remain, not just a tasting but a keeping and eating of them) in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”* Herod heard John the Baptist gladly, but he did not eat of the word: Mark 6:20, *“For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.”* Herod was like those stony hearers who heard the word with gladness but had no root, Mark 4:14 & 17, (18-20) Matt.13 & Luke 8. Reminds me of those in Ezekiel’s day, Ezek.33:30-32. What shall we say of those in Matthew 7:24-27, both of these

groups tasted of the word of Christ as they heard Him, but some just tasted what He said, while the others tasted, ate and digested His words! In Acts 24:24-26, Felix not only tasted of the word, but even trembled, but did not eat of it. In Acts 26:22-29, King Agrippa, tasted of the word and was almost persuaded to eat of them, but sad, he only tasted of the word of God. How many are in hell this present moment that have but tasted of the word of God. May this provoke you this morning as you are tasting God's holy word in the preaching, not to be content with a mere taste, but oh to God that you would eat of it so that you might believe it and be like those in Thessalonica in 1 Thess.2:13, "*For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually **worketh also in you that believe.***" Yes, those in Hebrews 6:5 only tasted of God words which brought no salvation to their souls.

This brings us to our 5th and last thing Paul mentioned about these apostates, "*...and the powers of the world to come.*" They tasted of the powers of the world to come. By this I think Paul is speaking of those blessed privileges which the saints are made partakers of in heaven. In other words they had an apprehension of that future glory. Within themselves they believed they would go to heaven because they had a profession and so used the language of the saints. Balaam did this also as he cried out in Num.23:10, "*Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!*" How many are in hell even now that spoke of heavenly things that tasted of the powers of the world to come? They spoke of heaven, of the glory and of who they would see, but they were self-deceived, they continued for a while and then went right back to the world. Judas used this language, Demas used this language and I'm sure many times Bruce Gerencer, spoke of the powers of the world to come, I'm sure he even preached of the powers of the world to come.

Reminds me of those mentioned in Psalm 50 who have but a false profession: verses 1-6, now the contrast in verses 16 – 22. (Verse 17 word of God is in the mouth to taste only; they do not have the word of God in their hearts, mere religious) Amazing how far a professor can go without truly possessing Christ. So close but yet so far from heaven, because when they die they will come short of it. Paul clearly and succinctly exposes these apostates as he again says: "*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, 5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 6 If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*"

I want to again let A. W. Pink define what apostasy is, "*What is apostasy? It is a making shipwreck of the faith (1Ti 1:19). It is the heart's departure from the living God (Heb 3:13). It is a returning to and being overcome by the world, after a previous escape from its pollutions through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pe 2:20). There are various steps that precede it. First, there is a looking back (Luk 9:62), like Lot's wife, who though she had outwardly left Sodom, yet her heart was still there. Second, there is a drawing back (Heb 10:38): the requirements of Christ are too exacting to any longer appeal to the heart. Third, there is a turning back (Joh 6:66): the path of*

godliness is too narrow to suit the lustings of the flesh. Fourth, there is a falling back, which is fatal: "That they might go and fall backward, and be broken" (Isa 28:13)." This is a good description of those who apostatized from the faith, they willingly and knowingly depart from the living God amidst all the warnings in the Bible not to do so. It is a complete renouncing of the faith in Christ, a forsaking of Christ and returning back to the world. We are not talking about a believer who doubts or falls into sin, or one who is in a heavy trial and wonders if God has forsaken him. We are not talking about a believer who backslides for a while or one who feels like a hypocrite because of wrong decisions or sin in their lives. Again, we are not talking about someone who goes through unfaithfulness; that is spiritual infidelity in their service of Christ or a Christian with apathy or antipathy, or like Peter who denied Christ, no we all some time or at some point in our Christian life can experience these things. A child of God goes through changes, Ps.50:19, not the lost. No, what we are talking about; is one who knowingly and willingly gives up the faith in renouncing Christ.

Apostasy is not by some accident or by some mistake or misunderstanding but from a willful, intentional and deliberate denial and abandonment by a complete renunciation of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. This is conscious decision that will be embedded in their conscious in the eternal fires of hell! Perhaps this is what Christ spoke about the worm that never dies, that is, the conscience, in Mark 9:48, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Apostates consciously sealed their doom!

It is so frightening to consider that it is possible for a person to have such an undisturbed peace and an unshaken assurance in their carnal security in regards to their eternal destiny and yet at the same time have no interest in Christ or His Word. This ought to be alarming to our souls. We forget at times that Satan is a very crafty and subtle foe and likes to give sinners a soothing religious experience or feeling that everything is ok. But the word of God warns us, "Woe unto them that are at ease in Zion!" Even Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" In other words, DON'T BE DECEIVED! There are many that have a false peace because there never has been pardon from sins. There is also a form of godliness that possesses a man who denies the power of it. Hell is filled with eternally damned souls who went to that place thinking they were going to heaven as they sat on the church pew Sunday after Sunday. Just when Lot's wife was so secured she turned back and was plunged into hell. When all the disciples were gripped with fear in declaring, "Lord is it I?" Judas was the only one with confidence. There is nothing more deceiving and fearful than the awful confidence of the carnal security of a religion without CHRIST!

Don't deceive yourselves, make sure of your eternal destination, make sure you are in Christ and not just in religion. The true saint of God will do what Paul says in verse 1 of Hebrews 6, LET US GO ON! Let us not draw back to perdition, but let us go on persevering in believing to the saving of our soul. Let us take the admonishment of

Paul in Phil.2:12 & 13, *“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. 13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*

Notice what is said in Heb. 6:6 *“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”*

The phrase fall away means to turn aside in the aspect of apostasy, to fall away from the reality of true faith. If this happens, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance. Then we have the end result of apostasy, *“...seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”* They crucify afresh the Son of God. The word crucify give the idea of the apostate forming a willful and intentional wicked resolution in continuing to spurn and disparage Christ, not just a careless ridicule but a willful contempt and reviling. This is in the active voice, which means a personal active betrayal of Christ. Like in the time of Christ, they were praising Him and then a week later they were screaming; crucify Him crucify Him! Seeing they crucify to themselves, that is, as far as they were concerned, the Son of God deserved to be crucified, a commentator says, *“This signifies a deliberate, malicious spurning of Christ, not just a careless disregard of Him. It indicates a positive betrayal of him, a joining of forces against Him and a ridiculing of His Person and work.”* From Vincent’s Word Studies, *“So that Christ is no more available for them. They declare that Christ’s crucifixion has not the meaning or the virtue which they formally attached to it...Marking the enormity of the offence.”* Thus, they put Him to an open shame, that is, they show a public disregard in deriding Him as the Romans did in disgrace. The Greek word gives the idea of exposing Him to public disgrace like an executed criminal. The Amplified Version says, *“If they then deviate from the faith and turn away from their allegiance--[it is impossible] to bring them back to repentance, for (because, while, as long as) they nail upon the cross the Son of God afresh [as far as they are concerned] and are holding [Him] up to contempt and shame and public disgrace.”* It they fall away it is impossible to renew them again to repentance while they are publically crucifying Him to an open shame.

The phrases *“...seeing they crucify ...”* and *“...put him to an open shame,”* are in the present tense which pictures a habitual action. This is not just a onetime action, but a continuing rebellious attitude of heart. They actively and repeatedly crucify the Son of God in putting Him to an open shame. What a horrific effect does apostasy have on those who fall away and renounce their faith in Christ: not only are they not able to repent, but willingly and maliciously spurn Christ in a habitual way: *“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.”* The writer of the book of Hebrews has stern warnings against those who would renounce their faith in Jesus Christ, Heb.3:12 *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, **in departing from the living God.**”*

Bruce Gerencer again says, *“Since I do not believe the Bible to be the Word of God, and I no longer embrace the beliefs and teachings of the Christian faith, I am no longer a Christian. My deconversion came at the moment where I finally admitted to myself that I no longer believed the Bible to be the word of God.”* He has consciously sealed his doom!

Oh dear brethren I encourage you not to make ship wreck of your faith, but to persevere in following Christ to the end. We must be overcomers if we are to continue in the faith amidst all of our sins, shortcomings, setbacks and struggles of life. (Read Heb.10:38 & 39) Romans 8:35 – 39, “*Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*”

Phil.1:6, “*Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*” 1 John 5:4 & 5, “*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. 5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*”

Revelation 2:7, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*”

Revelation 2:11, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.*”

Revelation 2:17, “*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.*”

Revelation 2:26, “*And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations.*”

Revelation 3:5, “*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.*”

Revelation 3:12, “*Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.*”

Revelation 3:21, “*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*”

Revelation 21:7 & 8, “*He that overcometh (conqueror) shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful (coward), and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.” If you die without Christ you will go to the same place apostates go, so I encourage to come to Christ this morning, come in repentance towards God and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ!*

At death will you be pronounced a CONQUEROR or a COWARD?

May God grace us, not to take one step back but to go forward in being overcomers!