

Soteriology

(The Truth About Salvation)

Craig Campesi and Peter LaRock

Week 11

Last Week

We looked at

- **Hebrews – Warning Passages relayed to Salvation**
 1. **Heb 2.1-4, How shall we ESCAPE?**
 2. **Heb 3.7-4.13, Entering His REST**
 3. **Heb 6.1-8, If they FALL AWAY**

This Week

This week, we will examine:

- **Hebrews – Warning Passages relayed to Salvation**
 1. Heb 6.1-8, If they **FALL AWAY** (review)
 2. Heb 10.26-39, The **WILLFUL SIN**
 3. Heb 12.25-29, **HOLINESS** to see the Lord
- **Scenarios – Questions of Salvation**

To Whom Was Hebrews Written?

- It was written **mainly** to **Hebrew Christians** (perhaps second-generation Christians, 2:3)
 - who may have been considering a return to Judaism,
 - immaturity, stemming from a lack of understanding of Biblical truths.
 - strong possibility that **professing Christians** (not actual believers) are addressed.
- Jewish Christians (or professing) were probably undergoing fierce persecution, socially and physically, both from Jews and from Romans.

4 Views on the Warning Passages

- 1. Christians who lose their salvation**
- 2. Professing “believers” who abandon their profession**
- 3. Hypothetical situation for genuine believers who abandon their faith**
- 4. Christians who are in danger of willfully rejecting Christ by returning to the safe haven of Judaism**

Purpose & Message

- To present the sufficiency of faith in Christ and the superiority of Christ to all things.
- To warn true believers and those professing to be believers of the danger of *returning* to Judaism (old way).

Key Verse, 1:3

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. After He had provided purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.”

Fallen Away

Hebrews 6:4-6

HEBREWS 6:4–6

HEBREWS

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, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 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

- What is Fallen Away?

Interpretations

- Those who fall away
 1. Have lost their salvation
 2. Who have professed to be believers but really are not
 3. Hypothetical – if you could lose your salvation – would be impossible to be saved again.
 4. Only those Hebrews before the destruction of temple could commit this sin
 5. believers who turn away from God's truth and embrace error (i.e., apostates)

Warning #3

5:11–6:20

Warning of desertion of the better priesthood



Truths?

- A Truth Interpretation: Those who depart from the Christian faith either lose their salvation or prove they were never really saved and go to hell.
- B Truth Interpretation: Those who depart from the Christian faith have no other plea before God and will be disciplined severely.

Warning: risk and result of falling away, 6:4–6

The Basic Problem, vv. 4-5.

- They have been enlightened, v. 4.
- They have tasted the heavenly gift, v. 4
- The writer describes some who “have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit” v. 4.
- They “have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come” v. 5.
- All four could be references to those who are under deep conviction by the Holy Spirit.

The problem of verse 6

The participle is *parapesontas* (parapesovnta", *fall away, commit apostasy*) = FIVE POSSIBILITIES

- **First**, some take this to describe a saved person who loses his or her salvation.
- **Second**, some say this teaches that it is impossible to be saved over and over again
- **Third**, some attempt to interpret the passage as purely hypothetical.

The problem of verse 6 (cont.)

The participle is *parapesontas* (parapesovnta", *fall away, commit apostasy*) = FIVE POSSIBILITIES

- **Fourth**, some see this as a reference to the believer's works and his rewards.
- The **Fifth** view is that the passage says it is a warning to those who had professed faith in Christ but were in danger of leaving Christianity to lapse back into Judaism.

Hebrews 6

- 6:1 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God,
- 6:2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
- 6:3 And God permitting, we will do so.

History

All are found in
Jewish teaching
and in early
Christian teaching

Hebrews 6

6:4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit,

6:5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age,

Language

All are ambivalent terms

One possibility:

These people may have never actually become Christians!

Hebrews 6

6:4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit,

6:5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age,

Language

All are ambivalent terms

Another possibility:
This refers to true Christians.

Hebrews 6

6:7 Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God.

6:8 But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

Could refer to
**Christian evaluation
at the Judgment
Seat — 2 Cor 5:10;
Rom 14:10–12**

Hebrews 6

6:7 Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God.

6:8 But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

Could refer to **professing believers (unsaved) who will suffer eternal judgment (Mal 4:1; Mat 3:10; 7:19; 25:41; Rev 20:15).**

Possibilities

1. Christians who defect will be judged eternally (lose salvation).
2. Christians who defect must repent or be **disciplined**.
3. Those who defect may have never become **authentic** Christians.

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- ~~1. Christians who defect will be judged eternally (lose salvation).~~
2. Christians who defect must repent or be **disciplined**.
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These are the same basic possibilities as in Ch. 10!

Possibilities

- ~~1. Christians who defect will be judged eternally (lose salvation).~~
2. Christians who defect must repent or be **disciplined**.
3. Those who defect may have **never become authentic Christians**.

Which one is right?

Both?



Any
questions
so far?
Agree,
disagree?

The WILLFUL SIN

Hebrews 10:26-39

HEBREWS 10:19–25

HEBREWS

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

HEBREWS 10:26–31

HEBREWS

For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- What is “Willful SIN” ?

Warning #4

10:19–39

Warning not to turn from the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.



Truths?

- A Truth Interpretation: Those who sin willfully cannot be forgiven and lose their salvation or prove they are not saved and will suffer in hell.
- B Truth Interpretation: Those who sin willfully by departing from the Christian faith will be severely disciplined by God.

Hebrews 10:19–39

- a. Draw near in **FAITH** — Better privileges of access under the sacrifice of Christ, vv. 19–22
- b. Hold fast in **HOPE** — A better hope based on the promise of God, v. 23.
- c. Better assembly for encouragement and strengthening in **LOVE**, vv. 24–25.
- d. **Warning:** The danger of contempt for the sacrifice of Christ and turning away from the new covenant, 10:26–31

Hebrews 10:26–30

- This is the fourth warning passage: 2:1-4, drifting; 3:7–4:13, disobedience; 5:11–6:20, degeneration.
- 10:26 makes it clear that this is *willful sin*, in the same concept as was taught in Num 15:30–36. The “willful sin” is to be distinguished from “unintentional sins;” the *willful sin* is *apostasy* (cf. v. 28, Deut 13:8; 17:2-6). In this case it involved the *deliberate rejection of the gospel*, as vv. 28–29 explain.

Hebrews 10:28–29

- Heb 10:28-29 describes the **willful sin**. 10:28 looks back to Deut 13:8 and Deut 17:2–6. A number of factors make this identification certain.
 - The sin deals with setting aside the Mosaic Law.
 - In *both* quotations from Deuteronomy the sin involves leaving the law of Moses to worship other gods.
 - The same stem translated “set aside” **atheteo** occurs in Heb 7:18 and 9:26.

Three-fold description of the sin in Hebrews 10:29

1. This sin means a person “has trampled under foot the Son of God.” The verb *trampled, katapateo*, is the same as is used in Matt 7:6. It parallels crucifying the Son of God mentioned in Heb 6:6

Three-fold description of the sin in Hebrews 10:29

2. Second, such a person “has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified.”

Three-fold description of the sin in Hebrews 10:29

3. The third sin in v. 29 is committed when one “has insulted the Spirit of grace.” The verb *insult, enubridzo*, is very strong. It is very hard to find a better description of the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (cf. Matt 12:32; Mk 3:29; Lk 12:10).

Lost of Salvation?

- Jesus did not mean that God would withhold pardon from the disciple who did this, or that he would lose his salvation.
- Warning that showed the seriousness of that type of denial in order to discourage apostasy.
- Speaking ill of the Holy Spirit by attributing Jesus' works to the power of Satan rather than to the power of the Holy Spirit.

Truths?

- A Truth Interpretation: A person can commit this sin that makes salvation impossible, or if he is saved, will cause him to lose his salvation.
- Second A Truth Interpretation: A person can commit this sin that shows his heart is hardened to the Holy Spirit's convicting work that brings a person to salvation.
- B Truth Interpretation: If you are a believer, then you have responded positively to the Holy Spirit's testimony about Christ. This should bring assurance that you cannot commit this sin and your salvation is not in jeopardy.



Any
questions
so far?
Agree,
disagree?

HOLINESS to see the Lord

Hebrews 12:25-29

HEBREWS 12:25–29

HEBREWS

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” This phrase, “Yet once more,” indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

- What is Holiness?
- What is meant by “see the LORD” ?

Warning #5

12:25–29

Warning against indifference and rebellion toward faith in Christ alone as savior



Truths?

- A Truth Interpretation: Those who do not live holy lives will not be saved.
- B Truth Interpretation: Christians who do not live holy lives will not enjoy the intimate presence of God.

Warning #5

12:28–29

Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire.



Truths?

- A Truth Interpretation: Those who disobey God will not escape his punishment of hell.
- B Truth Interpretation: Those who disobey God will not escape His severe discipline.

Parenthetical warning & application

#5: HOPE

- The coming of the kingdom will be preceded by a shaking of temporal things (cf. Isa 13:13; Ezek 38:19).
- Hebrews 12:29 is clearly a warning against taking His ultimate revelation for granted



Any
questions
so far?
Agree,
disagree?

Two things to remember about Hebrews

1. **Christ is superior** to all things, past, present and future; to all religions and rituals; to all angels and human beings; to all laws and writings.
2. **Faith in Jesus Christ is superior** to all other means of reaching God and having a relationship with Him; there is no other way.

Hebrews chs 1–10: Christ Is Superior

...to the prophets (1:1–3)

...to angels (1:4–2:18)

...to Moses (3:1–4:13)

...to the old priesthood (4:14–7:28)

...to the old Covenant (8:1–13)

...to the old Sanctuary (9:1–14)

...to the old sacrifices (9:15–10:18)

Hebrews 11:1–13:25: Superiority of faith in Christ alone



1. Appointed heir of all things
2. Through Whom He made the universe
3. The radiance of God's glory
4. The exact representation of His Being
5. Sustains all things by His powerful Word
6. Provided purification for sins
7. Sat down at the right hand of Majesty in Heaven

WARNING #1 (2:1–18)

Danger of neglect of greater revelation

WARNING #2 (3:7–4:13)

Danger of unbelief. Failure to enter in to the rest by faith.

WARNING #3 (5:11–6:20)

Deserting the better Priest and priesthood

WARNING #4 (10:19–39)

Do not turn from the sacrifice of Christ

WARNING #5 (12:25–29)

Indifference and rebellion against the Christ

Hebrews Warning Passages

- Heb 2.1-4, How shall we ESCAPE? -
Warning #1 (2:1-4): THE PERIL OF NEGLECT
The path to glory is the path of suffering
- Heb 3.7-4.13, Entering His rest
Warning #2 (3:7–4:13): THE PERIL OF DISOBEDIENCE
The path to rest is the path of trusting
- Heb 6.1-8, If they FALL AWAY
Warning #3 (5:11–6:20): THE PERIL OF IMMATURITY
The path to growth is the path of obeying

Hebrews Warning Passages

- Heb 10.26-39, The WILLFUL SIN

Warning #4 (10:26-31): THE PERIL OF REJECTION

The path to reward is the path of enduring

- Heb 12.25-29, HOLINESS to see the Lord

Warning #5 (12:25-29): THE PERIL OF REFUSAL

The path to holiness is the path of discipline

Case Studies / Scenarios

- The belief that knowledge of trust in the Gospel is necessary for anyone to be saved...

GOSPEL Acronym

- **G**o (Matt 28:19-20, Acts 1:8, Rom 10:13-17)
 - Why have the Great Commission if Christ and the Gospel were not the only way?
- **O**nly Way (John 14:16, Acts 4:12)
- **S**on of God (John 3:16)
 - the uniqueness of Christ and His works
- **P**luralism Condemned (Ex 20:2-3)
- **E**xclusive Truth (Luke 1:4, John 1:17, 8:30-31, 14:6)
 - the Bible claims that there is truth and that it can be known (Nature of propositional literature)
- **L**ake of Fire (Rev 20:15, Matt 7:13-14, 25:46)
 - Bible teaches the destruction of those who do not accept Christ

GOSPEL Acronym

- **G** – **God** created us to be with Him (Psalm 100:3).
- **O** – **Our** sins separate us from God (Romans 3:23).
- **S** – **Sins** cannot be removed by good deeds (Romans 5:8).
- **P** – **Paying** the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again (Romans 5:8).
- **E** – **Everyone** who trusts in Him alone has eternal life (John 3:16).
- **L** – **Life** with Jesus starts now and lasts forever (John 10:28).
- **GOSPEL** stands for God Offers Sinful People Eternal Life

Unevangelized

You have a friend at work named Tom. He has always seemed rather spiritual, but he has also been skeptical about Christianity. You have been intimidated by him because he is very intellectual. He seems to respect the teaching of the Bible; he can quote Scripture better than you! The biggest problem he has with Christianity is the idea that Christ is the “only way” to God. Because of his exposure in college to comparative religions, he believes that there are many ways to God. While he believes Christ was a great and unique person, he does not believe He is the *only* way to Heaven.

Unevangelized

A witnessing opportunity arises while discussing spiritual matters during lunch one day. Tom asks you about your spiritual convictions. You know where he stands on the exclusivity of Christ, and you know that he is a pluralist. Nervously, with cold sweat beading on your forehead, you begin to explain what you had learned at church the previous Sunday. (Thankfully, your teacher had been teaching on the subject of the exclusivity of Christ!). You use the “GOSPEL” acronym to explain your belief that Christ was the only way to God.

Unevangelized

After you finish your presentation, Tom throws an unexpected wrench into your otherwise flawless argumentation. He questions you: “So, you believe that the Bible teaches that Christ is the only way to God and that there is no way to Christ but the Gospel?”

“Yes I do,” you answer with confidence.

“And you also believe that all people, *no matter what*, must hear and believe in Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection to be saved.”

“That is what the Bible teaches,” you respond with renewed vitality.

Unevangelized

He then asks you, “What about those people in the Old Testament—David, Abraham, Adam, and others? Do you believe they are in Heaven?” You hesitate to respond, knowing that he is entering territory where you have not treaded. You tell him that you do believe they are in Heaven. He then asks you, “Did they hear and believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ?” There is a long silence.

Unevangelized

You finally respond . . .

1. “Yes, they had to know about and believe in Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection.”
2. “No, I see your point. Maybe belief in the Gospel is not the only way to Heaven.”
3. “No, the content of what they believed was different, but the basis of their salvation was to trust in the revelation that God gave them.”
4. “Can we talk about something else?”

Unevangelized

Objection Stated: What about the Old Testament Saints, how were they saved?

- Did Adam, Noah, Rahab, Abraham, etc. trust in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (the Gospel message)?
- What was the content of their faith (Gen. 3:15; Josh. 2:1–12)?

Unevangelized

If they did not know the Gospel as we know it, and they were saved, doesn't that mean that others don't have to know the Gospel as we know it to be saved?

Unevangelized

Answer:

- Progressive revelation.
- Key Scripture: Heb. 1:1–2

Unevangelized

Your new friend Mary, who attends your Church, has been a Christian for a few years now. Recently you have been disturbed by some objections she has been raising to the doctrine of the exclusivity of Christ. You have the opportunity to talk to her about the subject one evening at dinner.

Unevangelized

You have been preparing yourself for this conversation for some time. With the help of the “GOSPEL” acronym you recently learned, you definitively make your case that Christ is the only way to Heaven and that the only way to Christ is through hearing and believing in His death, burial, and resurrection (the Gospel).

Unevangelized

Once you have finished, Mary asks if you truly believe that is what the Bible teaches. “You mean the Bible teaches that no one can get to Heaven without hearing and believing the Gospel?” she questions rather defensively.

Unevangelized

You reply with confidence, “It is what the Bible teaches, there is no way to deny it.”

Unevangelized

She suddenly and unexpectedly begins to cry. Surprised, you ask her what is the matter. After a brief period of sobbing, she informs you that she miscarried her baby boy when she was seven months pregnant. She tells you that her only comfort has been in knowing that one day she would be with the child in Heaven. “If a person *must* hear and believe the Gospel,” she cries, “then my child is in Hell because he was never able to hear or believe.”

Unevangelized

You are completely taken off guard. What should you do?

1. Stick to your guns, telling her that while her child may be in Hell, she can do much to help others escape the same fate?
2. Back off and state that hearing and receiving the Gospel is not the only way to Heaven—God may have other ways?
3. Revert to the doctrine of purgatory?
4. Explain that the exclusivity of Christ only applies to those who are able to hear and believe. Therefore, her unborn child may be in Heaven even though he never heard.
5. “Check, please.”

Unevangelized

Objection Stated: What about infants who have died (abortions, miscarriages, early deaths, etc.) and those who are mentally unable?

- Do they go to Heaven? (2 Sam. 12:23; Matt. 18:3–5)
- Is there such a thing as the “age of accountability”? (Isa. 7:15; Rom. 5:12–21)

Unevangelized

Possible Solutions:

Unevangelized

1. The mentally unable (esp. children) are innocent and, therefore, do not need to be saved.
 - Pro: The mentally unable (esp. infants) go to Heaven.
 - Con: The doctrine of Original Sin. All people are born sinners and are separated from God (Ps.51:1, Rom. 5:18–19).

Unevangelized

2. Children must be baptized to remove imputed/original sin (Roman Catholic view).
 - Con 1: No Scriptural support.
 - Con 2: Misunderstands the purpose of baptism.

Unevangelized

3. The mentally unable cannot exercise faith and, therefore, are not saved.
 - Pro: Consistent with faith as a requirement.
 - Con 1: Does not seem just.
 - Con 2: David believed that he would one day be with his son (2 Sam. 12:23).
 - Con 3: Christ said that you must become like children to enter into heaven (Matt. 18:3).

Unevangelized

4. The mentally unable have a different way to Heaven.

- Pro: All infants and mentally unable go to Heaven. This seems just.
- Con: John 14:6

Unevangelized

5. The mentally unable have the same way to Heaven (Christ), but the requirements are different based upon their capabilities.
 - Pro 1: Christ is the only way.
 - Pro 2: Rightly understands that faith is the first response of regeneration, not necessarily the initiator of it (1 Cor. 2:14; Eph. 2:1–5).
 - Con: *If not understood correctly*, could open the door of possibility for God to use different means of salvation for those who have not heard.

Unevangelized

Therefore, while it is wrong to say that the Bible teaches that there is an “age of accountability,” there is a theological precedent of a “state of accountability.”

Unevangelized

Abiding Principles:

1. Presentation of the Gospel assumes a capability to respond.
2. Therefore, the Gospel is necessary for all those capable of response.

Unevangelized

3. Since Christ, that response has been acceptance of the Gospel.
4. Ultimately, we can trust in the perfect justice of God.



Any
questions
so far?
Agree,
disagree?

Application

- **We can have confidence in our positional righteousness and still earnestly strive for reward by being obedient to God**
- **We can quickly enter back into fellowship by confessing our sins and, when necessary, repenting of them as well**
- **We can be certain of our eternal life and new birth**
- **We should remember that acts of obedience serve to strengthen our faith!**

Looking Forward

We have been examining passages and books that relate to the three phases of salvation (past, present, and future)