

We are in the 3rd of 5 warnings given to the Hebrew believers who were in the process of turning their away from Christianity.

It was very hard living the Christian life in the midst of heavy persecution

Their sin has caused them to become babies in Christian life

The writer says that he is **not** going to coddle them but expects them to grow up!

V.1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again **a foundation** of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

V.2 of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

V.3 And this we shall do, if God permits.

V.4 For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

V.5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

V.6 and *then* have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

V.7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

V.8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

There are about 5 different interpretations of this passage

Normally I wouldn't give but the one that makes the most sense

In this case I think it is imperative to give all 5 so that you can not only see the right interpretation – but so that you will know why it is right

So here are the 5-6-7 erroneous interpretations:

I. **The most popular interpretation of this passage is – they were ALMOST saved** – but were **not really believers**

- 1) They looked like believers but their ^(walking away from Christianity) proved them not to be believers
- 2) Is that a possible answer?
- 3) Listen to the wording – **V.4&5**

Heb.6:4 For in the case of those who have once been **enlightened** and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

- 1) "once been **enlightened**"
 - a) Used in **Heb.10:32**
 - b) It is used as a synonym for being "saved"
Heb.10:32 (NP)

Heb.10:32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

Heb.6:4 x For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

2) "have **tasted** of the heavenly gift"

a) Used in **Heb.2:9** to speak of fully experience – in this case death

b) They had known how the heavenly gift tasted

Heb.2:9 But we do see Him who has been made for a little while lower than the angels, *namely*, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God He might **taste** death for everyone.

c) **What is the "heavenly gift"?** – **Salvation!**

3) "have been made **partakers** of the Holy Spirit"

a) Believers are **partakers** of the Holy Spirit at **moment of salvation**

i) The Holy Spirit taking up residency in us

Jn.14:16 "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever;

¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, *but you* know Him because He abides with you, and will be in you. ^(day of Pentecost)

ii) The **indwelling Holy Spirit** is **not** an **option in salvation**

Rom.8:9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if ^(1st class condition) indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.

V.5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

1) "have tasted the good word of God...the powers of the age to come"

a) This is language that is only applied to believers – never, never applied to nonbelievers

b) No nonbeliever can "taste" – i.e. understand the Word of God or anything spiritual

c) Nonbelievers can't embrace the Christian truths

1 Cor.1:18 For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1 Cor.2:14 (NP)

1 Cor.2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

- d) The most obvious problem w/ these people being saved is in **V.1-3**
V.1 Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,
²of instruction about washings, and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
³And this we shall do, if God permits. <<<
- e) **No nonbeliever** is encouraged to leave the basics to **move toward perfection**

Summary: This is written to believers

II. The second most popular belief is – these folks were saved but lost their salvation

V.4 x For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

V.5 x and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

V.6 and *then have fallen away*, it *is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God*, and put Him to open shame.

- 1) "then have fallen away"
 - a) The word translated "have fallen away" – is combination of 2 words literally means "to fall alongside"
 - b) The key question is what does falling away mean?
 - i) Is it speaking of losing salvation?
 - ii) Or does it mean being out of fellowship w/ God?
- 2) "it is impossible to renew them again to repentance since they...crucify...the Son of God"
 - a) **Something is permanently lost** in **whatever** is **described**
 - i) **If** it is **salvation** being **discussed** – it is permanently lost
 - ii) This would be an unpardonable sin #2.
 - b) A rule for interpreting Scripture is –
 - i) "**Never** take **vague / unclear** portions of Scripture **to explain** the **clear / obvious** Scripture
 - c) With that in mind – can you lose your salvation?

- d) While this isn't a study of can you lose your salvation – it must be addressed here
- e) **What it means to be saved is paramount**
- f) Believers are not people who have taken on a **new mindset, positive attitude, cleaned up their lives, become good neighbors, adopted a religion, dedicated themselves to God,** etc.

g) The saving work done in a believer's life is done by God Himself

i) It is the **regenerating work** of the **Holy Spirit**

ii) Believers **become something** they were not before salvation occurred

2 Cor.5:17 Therefore if any man is in Christ, *he is a **new creature**; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.*

***Believers** are literally a **new creation** at salvation

Eph.2:10 For we are His **workmanship, created in Christ Jesus** for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Gal.6:15 For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a **new creation**.

i) We were **literally joined thru baptism** into His **death, burial, resurrection**

Rom.6:3 Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been **baptized into His death**?

4 Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was **raised** from the dead through the glory of the Father, so **we too might walk in newness of life**.

Rom.6:5 For if we have become united with *Him* in the **likeness of His death**, certainly we shall be also *in the likeness of His resurrection*,

6 knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;

Col.3:3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

ii) The **new life** is **not** a matter of **changing your mind** or **new state of mind** – it is being **made new!**

- iii) What Christ said to Nicodemus^(religious ruler of the people) was revolutionary
Jn.3:3 Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."
- iv) Nicodemus understood that this was radically different from normal religion
Jn.3:4 Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born, can he?"
- v) The baptism accomplished by Holy Spirit literal & organic in nature – we really do become part of the body of Christ
1 Cor.12:12 For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ.
13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit.
- f) The Holy Spirit seals us as a down payment guaranteeing our redemption
Eph.1:13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

It appears that we are eternally safe – from our **enemies** & **ourselves**

Christ seemed to say that very thing in John

Jn.10:27 "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;

28 and I give eternal life to them, and they shall **never** perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand.

29 " My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.

30 " I and the Father are one."

Paul seemed to reiterate that truth in **Romans**

Rom.8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who is against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

V.33 (NP)

V.33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 Just as it is written, " FOR THY SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Summary: You can't lose your salvation so it isn't saying that!

III. The **third most popular interpretation** of this passage is – it is speaking of a **hypothetical situation**

1) That means it is saying – "you **can't lose your salvation** – **but** if you could – **you couldn't get it back** b/c that would be crucifying Christ all over again"

2) There is **no** another place in Scripture where there **is** a **hypothetical case like this** – **I don't believe it!**

IV. **The forth interpretation:** **believers** can **fall so far from God** that **He no longer will use them** for anything – their life becomes a wasteland

1) There may be some truth –

2) I'm not sure b/c we know that as long as we ask for forgiveness we find it in Christ

1 Jn.1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.<<<

a) Being forgiven is not the same as being qualified

- b) I can be forgiven for any sin – but I may disqualify myself from certain positions in the Church
- c) A deacon, elder, pastor can have an affair and be forgiven
 - i) But he is never qualified to be a deacon, elder, pastor again
 - ii) God will use him – but it won't be the same

Summary: It is not saying you can be put on the shelf

V. The fifth interpretation: The only plausible answer!

V.4 x For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

V.5 x and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

- 1) "been enlightened...tasted heavenly gift...partakers of Holy Spirit...tasted word of God...powers of age to come"
 - a) These most definitely are believers

V.6 x and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God, and put Him to open shame.

- 1) "then have fallen away"
 - a) They **most definitely quit living** for God
- 2) "it is impossible to renew them again to repentance"
 - a) Something is **most definitely lost** & **can't** be **recaptured** or **retracted**
 - b) **What could that be? – Wasted time!**
 - i) Every day that is wasted not living for Christ – can never be called back again.
 - c) The reason so many people believe you can lose your salvation is
 - i) Down deep they **know** an evil believer won't get by w/ sin
 - ii) So the only thing they understand is – to lose salvation
 - iii) **What they don't see** is – the serious consequences of living a **wastefully life**
 - d) The truth is – there is an accounting someday **that will be horrendous for believers** who have lived for themselves – **V.7&V.8**

V.7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls upon it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;

V.8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

- 1) "it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned
 - a) It is almost beyond our grasp – to come to terms w/ **what it means to waste life by just living!**
 - i) There is an accountability that should put fear in every believer not living for God
 - b) The fire mentioned is same found in **1 Cor.3**

1 Cor.3:10 According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it.

11 For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

12 Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw,

13 each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is *to be revealed with fire*; and the **fire itself will test the quality** of each man's work.

14 **If** any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward.

15 **If** any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.

***This is why Christ warned about living life for stuff!**

Mt.6:19 " Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

21 for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 " The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

23 "But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 " No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

***This is why we are warned over & over that a judgment is coming for Believers**

***There is no help for days that are lost – no salvation for those days**

Rom.14:11 (NP)

Rom.14:11 For it is written, " AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD."

12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Col.3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;

24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Rev.2:23 'And I will kill her children with pestilence; and all the churches will know that I am He who searches the minds and hearts; and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds.

Rev.22:12 "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward *is* with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.

2 Cor.5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Eph.5:15(NIV) Be very careful, then, how you live--not as unwise but as wise,

16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.