

APOSTASY AND ITS AWFUL CONSEQUENCES! PART 2

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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 continue a sermon from 3 weeks ago on October 10th on the subject of apostasy. The title to my sermons is, **“Apostasy and Its Awful Consequences! Part 2”** We remind you again that this is not an easy message to preach because of its contents and consequences, nonetheless, we must preach on the whole counsel of God as the Apostle Paul would declare in Acts 20. We emphasize again that preaching on apostasy is a solemn and sobering warning to nominal Christianity that permeates many churches in our day. Many church pews are filled with mere professors who are still dead in their trespasses and sins. The Word of God deals with this subject in careful detail with such clarity, firmness and with such a fearful warning, so that no one is without excuse. Thus, this is a fearful and sobering message to which I hope you take heed to its warning. I will be speaking in particular to those who profess faith in Christ, but if you are without Christ this morning, oh I admonish you to come in repentance to God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We came to this fearful and terrifying topic, again, because of the news we heard regarding ex-Baptist preacher Bruce Gerencer, posted on the internet site, Debunking Christianity. What I am about to share with you this morning, I share with love in warning every one of us who professes to be a Christian of the importance of persevering unto the end, because I don't want anyone of us to make shipwreck of their faith in Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Peter says that those who are ministers of Christ should keep their hearers in remembrance of these things, in other words, ministers of Christ should not neglect to put their hearers in remembrance of these things, even though we might know these things and be established in the present truth. Turn to 2 Peter 1:12. Read verses 5 – 12. Thus, the purpose of this message is to put you in remembrance of the awful doctrine of apostasy, that is, that we would not apostatize from the truth.

Bruce Gerencer, by his own testimony willingly and knowingly renounced, yea departed from God, The Bible, and the Christian Faith which makes him an apostate! This is the definition of an apostate which the Bible so clearly identifies: I John 2:19, *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.”* Any student of the book of

Hebrews realizes that this book deals specifically with this subject. The book of Hebrews is written with 5 serious warnings against apostasy. Remember many Jews had made professions of faith in believing on Jesus Christ, but when persecution arose many were reverting or going back to Judaism. The the book of Hebrews has stern warnings against those who would renounce their faith in Jesus Christ, one is found in Heb.3:12 *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, **in departing from the living God.**”*

Remember our Lord Jesus Christ also addressed this issue in His kingdom parables as He warned that there would be some who would revert back to their formal lifestyles because of the word of God, persecution and/or the love of the world. Matt.13:20-22, *“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but **dureth for a while:** for when tribulation or persecution ariseth **because of the word, by and by he is offended.** 22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and **the care of this world,** and the deceitfulness of riches, **choke the word,** and he becometh unfruitful.”* In Mark 4: 16 & 17, *“And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when **they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;** 17 And have **no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.**”* These are the most dangerous persons in the church, that is, those who are easily offended. Then we have the account of Luke in 8:13 & 14, *“They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these **have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.** 14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are **choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life,** and bring no fruit to perfection.”* What fearful warning from a Savior who loves sinners.

Again, there are 5 fearful warnings in Hebrews:

- **Hebrews 2:1 - 4 – The Danger of Drifting.**
- **Hebrews 3:7 - 4:11 – The Danger of Disbelief.**
- **Hebrews 5:11 – 6:8 – The Danger of Departing.**
- **Hebrews 10:19-39 – The Danger of Despising.**
- **Hebrews 12:14-29 – The Danger of Denying.**

The one we are considering again at present is the third warning:

Hebrews 5:11 – 6:8 – The Danger of Departing.

Paul's (I believe he wrote Hebrews) warning begins in chapter 5:11 all the way to chapter 6 which we saw 3 weeks ago. He proceeds in chapter 6 with those two heart wrenching

phrases: In verse 4, “**For it is impossible...**” and in verse 6, “...**to renew them again unto repentance...**” It’s the damning dagger of dreadful condemnation without any means of hope, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO RENEW AGAIN!!!!!! This ought to bring us to tears of holy fear in our own hearts. Thank God for His Sovereign Omnipotent Preservation! I thank my Lord Jesus Christ for those comforting words in John 6:37 & 39, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. 39 And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” We preach this morning from a fearful, caring yea warning heart, whose main concern is the souls of men. May God help us this morning!

Let us all understand very clearly that apostasy is a conscious or cognizant willful falling away or departing from Christ and His gospel. Apostasy is an intentional and deliberate denial and abandonment, a complete renunciation of Jesus Christ, God and the Bible to which it is an unforgivable sin, perhaps the unpardonable sin. This is what Bruce Gerencer has consciously done. There is such a fearful and solemn warning in the preceding phrases in verse 4 & 6. These are words are used to incite terror and disturb your conscience. 2 Cor. 5:11, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...” 2 Cor. 4:2, “But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.” 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.

This is what I want to consider this morning, that is, that a person can experience all of these 5 things and yet apostatized from the faith. If this does not bring fear to your heart, you are more than likely dead in trespasses and sins. This is not some subject you put under a carpet or a subject that you disregard as being unimportant. It is very real and relevant to our everyday life. If Judas apostatized what makes you so self-assured? Judas walked with Christ for 3 years, saw all His miracles, His prayers, His yearnings and compassion for sinners and at the end sells Him for 30 pieces of silver. What will you sell Christ for, family, friends, job security or you fill in the blank? May God stir up your heart, yea, your conscience to see where you stand before God this morning? We will only have time for the first one, that is, those who were once enlightened.

Now, as we get back to our text, you might ask, pastor Joe, how can a person experience those things in Hebrews 6:4-6 and yet be lost or worst apostatized? I believe this is the whole essence of the writer, that is, to provoke us to examine ourselves as he has already warned in Hebrews 3:12, “Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” In other words this is serious and significant matter, this is not

milk, but meat, yea strong meat. Paul is seeking to convey that a person can experience these things and yet be lost; therefore it is a warning to you and a warning to me. Remember also, this warning is preface by an encouragement in verse 1, “*Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, **let us go on unto perfection**; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.*” Not only the beginning, but also the ending has an encouragement, look at verse 9, “*But, beloved, **we are persuaded better things of you**, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.*” The writer’s intention then, is to perhaps keep us all from being at ease in Zion, (Amos 6:1, “Woe to them that are at ease in Zion...”) but rather having a conviction and commitment to the Most High God. Remember again as the writer of Hebrews encourages believers, but within the context of a warning, 10:38 & 39, “*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.*” I believe he is conveying the same idea here, but with a fearful warning and admonition that we do not find ourselves being one of those who draw back unto perdition; but of THEM THAT BELIEVE TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL! It is a charge to our perseverance with a stern warning that we do not get complacent in our Christian walk and to clearly let us know that if some do not continue to persevere to the end it is because, “*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*” 1 John 2:19.

The five things that he mentions in Hebrews 6 are to show us how far a nominal Christian, that is, a tare, a mere professor, a false believer can go and deceive themselves and those around them. As though he is saying don’t be surprise when you see this in your assembly, remember this same Paul would write in an earlier Epistle, 1 Timothy 4:1, “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times **some shall depart from the faith**, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.*”

Therefore, Hebrews 6 is just another way to show forth that some will depart from the faith, thus, the importance of guarding our own hearts that we do not deceive ourselves as those mentioned in 2 Timothy 3:1-17, please turn there. Notice the exhortation in verse 14, “*But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.*” Though, I understand he was writing first and primarily to Timothy, but it is also written to us, to CONTINUE in the things we have learned are assured of, that is the whole of perseverance, CONTINUE! This word continue is the Greek root word, ‘**meno**,’ which means to remain, abide, to tarry, not to depart, to endure, to survive and not to perish. Remember Wayne Hendricks sermon on spiritual heart burn, turn quickly to Luke 24:29, “*But they constrained him, saying, **Abide** with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to **tarry** with them.*” The words abide and tarry are the same Greek root words as here in 2 Tim.3:14. Same Greek word is used in John 15 for abide, continue and remain, 12 times. The Apostle John used this words many times and of course again in 1 John 2:19, “*They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have **continued** with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.*”

Thus, this is our admonition to continue, to remain, to abide, to endure and not to depart from the living and true God. Turn quickly to John 8:30-32, 37, (versed 31, “*Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye **continue** in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.*” What a strong admonition to continue not only in God but in His Word also.) 44-47. Jesus Christ authenticates the sufficiency of the Bible with these powerful words. Remember those in Hebrews 6 had tasted of the good word of God, but like these imposters here in John 8 were found to be reprobates! Apostasy and reprobation are joined together at the hip. Let us quickly look at the first of these 5 things and conclude our message. Remember the contrast in our primary text between, the “let us & we, with those & they.” We shall again look at the first one only this morning.

1. They were once enlightened.

The first thing that is mentioned regarding those to whom is it impossible to renew them to repentance if they fall away is that they were enlightened. The Greek word for ‘impossible,’ is ‘**adunatos,**’ from the negative particle ‘a’ or ‘alpha,’ which means, no, against, not, without or unable with the root word, ‘dunatos,’ which means possible, able, to be powerful which comes from ‘dunamai,’ power, strength, might, capability. When combine it means incapable of occurring, that is, it is impossible, there is no possibility at all, disabled, impotent, and unable to be done. In the Greek sentence, the word impossible is first in the order to emphasize clearly that it is impossible. I’m told that it reads literally, IMPOSSIBLE IT IS! There is therefore no misunderstanding of this word; there is no way, no means, it is not possible, it is out of the question, it is unattainable, thus a hopeless case for one who experiences these 5 things, if they shall fall away, to renew them again to repentance, it is IMPOSSIBLE.

It is impossible that one who has been enlightened, if they fall away to be renewed unto repentance. The word enlightened in the Greek is: ‘**photizo,**’ it comes from phos which means light. The word ‘**photizo,**’ gives the idea of giving light, to bring to light, to shed light, to illuminate, to become clear, to be infused with knowledge and or to give understanding. This word can be used both of believers and unbelievers. This word also gives the idea of giving understanding or guidance in making something clear, that is, it can be used of causing something to be known or revealed that was not known or revealed before. This word enlightened can refer to those who not only experienced the light given or received, but that it also changed their lives, by the gospel message that was heard. There are many who hear the message of the gospel and are reformed, but never transformed. There is an outward change but there is no inward change. True salvation is from the inward out, religion is always but outward change, it is the covering of the fig leaves. Religion is but mere fig leaves, that is what Adam and Eve did as they stood before God in the Garden of Eden. Oh my dear ones you do not want to stand before God on judgment day with nothing but fig leaves.

For example, you can take an animal, like a pig and take it from his muck and mire, clean it up, pour perfume on it and put a bow on it. You have a good looking smelling pig, but turn that pig loose and it will wind up back in the mud, in the muck and the mire. There is an analogy of this in the Bible, maybe not with the perfume or bow, but a fearful example to warn us again. Turn to 2 Peter and as you turn there, let me share this. When a person is enlightened, he has received some or much knowledge and that knowledge can affect his lifestyle. When I first heard the gospel, I reformed, I quit smoking, I quit drinking, I quit taking drugs, I quit partying and I quit cheating and stealing, but I was still lost like a goose in a hailstorm and knew it not. I'm so thankful that a few years later, God opened my eyes to my mere reformation and was translated or transformed from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. When a person is enlightened by the gospel it is unbelievable how much that person can clean up. In 2 Peter 1 & 2 we have a good example of this. Remember to be enlightened is to be infused with knowledge. 2 Peter 1:1-4, "*Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you **through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord**, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, **through the knowledge of him** that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, **having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**" Compare this with 2 Peter 2:10-22. (For space only, printing verses 19-22) "*While they promise them liberty, they themselves are **the servants of corruption**: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. 20 For if after they have **escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, **the latter end is worse with them than the beginning**. 21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, **to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them**. 22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and **the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.**" What makes the difference between these two passages? Both declare to be delivered by the KNOWLEDGE of Jesus Christ? Both have escaped the world by KNOWLEDGE of Jesus Christ? What makes the difference between the two? They were both enlightened with knowledge, but what makes the difference? Notice the difference between the two: The true born again Christian, escaped the corruption of the world and the false professor only escaped the pollutions of the world. 2 Peter 1:4, "*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, **having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.**" With 2 Peter 2:20, "*For if after they have **escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, **the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.**" In other words, corruption means the inward heart was changed and pollution means the outward has only been changed. Those in 2 Peter 2 were not delivered from the corruption of their hearts, from the moral decay and depravity of their hearts, but those in 2 Peter 1 were, look again at verses 12 and 19 from 2 Peter 2: "*12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and **shall utterly perish in their own corruption**; 19 While they promise them liberty, **they themselves are the servants of corruption**: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." And, yes it is the*****

same Greek word as in 2 Peter 1:4 for corruption. I believe the Spirit of God clearly guarded this passage in such a way that there would be no misunderstanding. The word 'pollutions' is only used once in the NT Greek here in 2 Peter 2:20. These, whom Peter spoke about, in 2 Peter 2, that is, receiving knowledge or if you wish, being enlightened does not indicate that they were genuine believers. They were exposed to the gospel, made a nominal profession and continued until they were entangled by the world and were overcome by the world, they returned to the pit from where they came from. The end is made worse than the beginning, because being exposed to the truth does not assure a reception of the truth.

These that Peter and Paul are speaking about, intellectually heard, perceived and submitted to the teaching of the gospel. They received the gospel not by faith but by logical and reasonable persuasion, that is, by a mental acknowledgement in receiving the gospel as revealed in the Scriptures. We see this again in the words of Christ in Matthew 7:21-23, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not **prophesied** in thy name? and in thy name have **cast out** devils? and in thy name **done many** wonderful works? 23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."*

There are 3 things they did that Christ did not dispute their claims:

1. They PROPHESED.
2. They PUT OUT (cast out demons).
3. They PERFORMED. (done many wonderful works). (Let those be warned that perform from behind the pulpit, by drama, entertainment and or pragmatism)

These Christ (4th 'P') PROFESS unto them, I NEVER KNEW YOU, DEPART, wow what a play of words, these departed from the True and Living and now want to claim Him, as though Christ is saying, you wanted to DEPART from me, therefore, DEPART FROM ME YE THAT WORK INIQUITY! What a fearful warning by Christ, yes also by again in Hebrews 3:12, *"Take heed, **brethren**, lest there be **in any of you** an evil heart of unbelief, **in departing** from the living God."* I hope there is no one in this auditorium this morning who professes faith in Christ in contemplating walking away from the faith. Regardless of your circumstances or trials, may God grace you to endure and persevere to the end! May it be said of you and of me, *"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."*

Be warned, that one of the first steps in abandoning God is abandoning His Church, not necessarily Hillburn Drive Grace Baptist Church, but to whatever church they belong to. The beginnings of departing from God is begun in the departing from the Church, that is, the forsaking of God begins with the forsaking of the assembling of ourselves together, that is, the church of God. Remember the fourth warning to the Hebrews is: The Danger of Despising! This found in Hebrews 10:19-39.

Oh to God when it is all said and done that those of you who profess faith in Christ this morning are found in the crowd of verses 38 & 39 and not in verse 25! Once a person starts to forsake the assembling in God's house, they begin to forsake the saints, to forsake the word of God and it continues until that person abandons altogether the worship of Christ and to fall away and be lost forever, where sad to say, that:

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THOSE WHO WERE ONCE ENLIGHTENED, IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY TO RENEW THEM AGAIN UNTO REPENTANCE!

Do not trifle or play with the things of God. If there is a one in our assembly contemplating walking away all together from God, may God grant you repentance before you cross that particular line, or take that last step, wherein is no hope whatsoever only to be reprobated by a Holy **God, a God who a CONSUMING FIRE!**