

# No Restoration to Repentance

*Hebrews 6:3 - 6*

Nutshell: There are those who come to Christ, then fall away, to whom God will no longer grant repentance.

I. Context: The foundation doctrines we must build from.

II. Text

**Heb 6:3** And this we will do, if indeed God permits.

Literal Standard Version with modifications

The next four outline items, III. - VI., are based on the 4 uses of Scripture listed in 2 Tim 3:16 AND the 3 depictions of preaching in 2 Tim 4:2.

III. Teaching

A. Paul wrote an inspired book to a Jewish audience; 2 Pet 3:15-16; 1 Pet 1:1; 2 Pet 3:1. Hebrews is the only possibility.

1. The “us” of Heb 2:3 only puts the author outside the original 12
2. Peter speaks of the Apostles in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person as well, 1 Pet 1:12

B. Outline of Hebrews

## **The Preeminence of the Son**

*Authority:* God has at last spoken In **Son** (*Ἰερωφητ*), ← follow this font  
His express image, 1:1-3a

*Theme:* **The SON** purified us from sin (Priest), then sat in authority (**King**), **1:3b**

I. **Supreme** over the angels, Inheritor by ordeal, 1:4-14

Therefore hear Him, 2:1-4

II. **Supreme** as man, 2:5-9

**Psalm 8**- Since man must inherit, 2:5-8a

but man failed, 2:8b, **Christ** became man, 2:9a

*Theme* reprise: crowned with glory and honor (**King**), **2:9b**

to taste the death of “each one” of His own (**Priest**), **2:9c**

to bond with them and help them, 2:10-18

freeing them from bondage to Satan and fear, 2:14-15

Therefore, think hard on **Jesus**, 3:1

III. A **better** stewardship than Moses, 3:1-6

Therefore hear Him, unhardening our hearts, (*Ἰερωφητ*)

**Ps 95-** for Moses' folk didn't inherit God's **rest**, 3:7-19  
IV. A **better Rest** than Joshua, 4:1-11

- ◆ Therefore, fear, 4:1a, lest we also miss God's **rest**  
**Ps 95-** David told his people not to miss that **rest**, 4:1b-3  
The Promised Land was a type of God's 7th day **rest**,  
which itself was a type of Salvation, 4:4-8  
**Christ's** Salvation has become the final *Sabbatismos*, 4:9,  
the Son **resting** from the work of **Salvation** as the  
Father had **rested** from the work of **Creation**, 4:10.  
We must **EXERT** ourselves to enter Christ's **Rest**, 4:11  
For the Word penetrates, exposing us before God, 4:12-13  
*Theme* reprise: Having the highest high priest (**P**riest), the  
**Son** of God (**K**ing),  
Let us hold to our confession of Him (*P*roph<sup>et</sup>), 4:14  
especially since He felt all our temptations +, 4:15

V. A **better priesthood than Aaron**, 4:14-10:18

**Kid-speak:** Hebrews is mainly saying that Jesus was a  
better \_ than Aaron. A better what?

VI. Exhortations based on Christ's supremacies, 10:19-13:21

VII. Concluding remarks, 13:22-25

- C. “**Let us approach**” (Προσερχώμεθα) in **4:16 and 10:22**  
brackets section V. above, telling us that Jesus' priesthood is  
so we will approach God. Prayerlessness, then, dismisses  
Jesus' priesthood.
- D. 5:1-10, OT priests from Aaron; Christ from *Melchizedek*
  1. 5:11-14, The Hebrews were too babyish to learn of  $\infty \mathcal{M}$
  2. 6:1-2, They needed to master and start building on six  
“beginner” doctrines, given in three pairs:
    - a. 1<sup>st</sup> pair: repentance (mental redo) from lifeless efforts  
= *not trusting my doings*  
+ faith toward God = trusting *Christ's* doings
    - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> pair: Washings (baptism and its OT background)  
+ laying on of hands (the Spirit conferring gifts and  
power to continue in our baptismal pledge),  
carrying us all the way to...
    - c. 3<sup>rd</sup> pair ...the resurrection of the dead  
and eternal judgment.
  3. Looking at it this way, laying on of hands is as crucial as

baptism as a symbol of faith and commitment

E. *Today, we will see how serious it is to build on correct foundational teachings. In brief, if we don't do so, we could be sealing ourselves off from salvation permanently.*

Outline:

- I. Spiritual progress ultimately depends on God, Heb 6:3
- II. Key phrase of 6:4-6, "Impossible to restore to repentance"
  - A. How the unregenerate can look regenerate
  - B. A native human alignment with truth
- III. The 5-fold description: who they are and aren't
- IV. The main description: "falling away"
  - A. Still confessing Christ, but fallen away
  - B. Necessary in order to define the approved/tested/passed
- F. 6:3, "And this is what we intend to do, if only God will allow *it to be done.*"
  - 1. The NET gives better expression to the subjunctive of "do" by adding "intend." "Allow" is subjunctive too.
  - 2. "If only" is a compound word, also in Heb 3:14. It expresses a solemn concern.
- G. "This." What? What do "we" intend to do? Two things:
  - 1. Leave the foundational teachings, 6:1
  - 2. Be carried on to full growth, 6:1

**Kid-speak:** Paul hoped that the Hebrews could keep getting stronger and better in believing Jesus, but they couldn't do it without whose help? God's!

- H. "We intend to do"
  - 1. "We" meaning Paul along with any of them going with him where God intends us to be
  - 2. He already said "us" in 6:1
- I. "If only God will allow it to be done"
  - 1. Huh? Would God *prevent* them from progressing from the 6 elementary doctrines?
  - 2. No, but the Hebrews had already prevented their *own* advancement, and it would be an *act of God's enlightening mercy to remove* them from their self-stuck rut

Heb 6:4 For *it is IMPOSSIBLE* in the case of those once having been given light, and having enjoyed the taste of the free gift from Heaven, and having become partakers of *the* Holy Spirit,

5 and having enjoyed the taste of *the* good Word of God, as well as *the* powers of a coming age,

6 then **falling away**, *it is impossible TO RESTORE* them again to repentance- *they* re-crucifying for themselves the Son of God and making *Him* a public example.

- J. The word “For” reaffirms that in v 3, Paul was depending on God to make the way for him to lead the Hebrews *out of* their ignorance
  - 1. Since the alternative he presents in 6:4-8 describes those who might *remain in* ignorance,
  - 2. those whose interest in Christ turned out to be a mere extension of EARTHLY elements, not a real connection with the Christ in HEAVEN
- K. For a long while, I’ve called this my scariest passage in the Bible. In looking at it more deeply, I still think that way.

**Kid-speak:** You know what Pastor Cain calls Hebrews 6:4-6? The scariest passage in the Bible.

- L. The key phrase is spread out between v 4 and v 6 in Greek, carried into most translations (Some translations connect them in v 4): “Impossible... to restore to repentance”
  - 1. Taking it at face value, that suggests that certain people will never have access to repentance again
    - a. Assumed in the phrase (and explicit in the context) is that they repented once
    - b. The 5-fold description suggests an initial robust familiarity with Christian experience/ God’s workings
  - 2. A repeated tac in commentaries is saying that this not saying that their renewed repentance is impossible for *God* to work, only that their case puts them beyond *human* help
    - ✦ † † a. But God’s *ABILITY* to work repentance is not at issue, only His *COMPARATIVE UNWILLINGNESS* to **shame His Son**
    - b. The described person’s renewed repentance IS impossible, simply because God refuses to initiate it
    - c. Not that they’re trying to repent and God is refusing it. They won’t repenting, and God will no longer initiate it.

**Kid-speak:** Paul says that some people who used to believe in Jesus and don't believe in Him anymore can never come back to Jesus again! Is that scary?!

M. Paul doesn't discuss eternal security here, but this means that any Hebrews who confessed Christ to the extent described and went back to the ceremonial law *had never been born again*

N. Clearly, by the 5-fold description, there are those who are not born again who can look, for all intents and purposes, like born-again people

1. How? Because the Gospel is a return to reality.
  - a. The human MIND can be intellectually convinced of the Gospel (Its competitors being based in nonreality\*)
  - b. The human CONSCIENCE can find peace in confessing the Cross as the covering of past misdeeds
  - c. The human HEART can perceive the love of Christ, since God has very openly demonstrated it, 1 Jn 4:9
2. As a trichotomist, I'd say that until our **SPIRIT** is reborn, our **SOUL** (including CONSCIENCE, HEART, and MIND) can plasticly flex all the way into Christian *shape*,
  - a. but it will always snap back to unregeneracy, preferring some sin *or* unwilling to uphold offensive Christian truth
  - b. The offense often being the unwillingness to identify some unsaved person or category of people as unsaved

**Kid-speak:** How can some people believe in Jesus, then not believe in Him? First, it's not that hard to believe what is true (e.g., Jesus). Second, if our heart didn't really change, it's easy to go back to sins we used to like.

3. For the Hebrews, it was largely unwillingness to recognize the ceremonial law as symbolic
  - a. \*After Christ came, *practicing* the ceremonial law became a competitor to Gospel reality as much as any other competitor!
  - b. (*Studying* the ceremonial law as the symbol it always was irreplaceably aids our knowledge of the Cross)
  - \* c. When we treat the symbol as **real**, we consign the **reality** (Christ) to symbol.
  - d. (The Jews were commanded to **live** the symbol, hoping they would **learn** the reality from it)

- O. “Impossible to restore to repentance”
1. “Impossible,” almost literally, “No can do”; “not able”; “not capable”
    - a. We’re about to have a clear statement of something impossible for God, Heb 6:18
    - b. Strictly speaking, *this* is also something impossible for God, though in effect it is simply His choice not to act
    - c. It is saying that renewed repentance is an impossible state to reach, meaning simply that God won’t grant it
    - d. And He alone is the one who grants it, Acts 11:18
  2. “To restore,” literally, “to make new again”
    - a. Their initial repentance brought them to this 5-fold state
    - ◆ b. Crucial Caveat: Not everyone who experiences some kind of repentance matches the 5-fold state described:
      - i. E.g., members of a cult
      - ii. In an evangelical assembly, they may not have entered into Christian experience TO THE EXTENT described;
      - iii. that is, they may have never [sincerely/ fully] adopted the Christian sentiments of believers around them

**Kid-speak:** If we start believing in Jesus, should we be scared that we might stop believing in Him? Kinda, yes. Mainly, we should just love Jesus, praise Him, trust Him, and serve Him. When we think, “What if I stop?”, we should say, “I *won’t* stop loving Jesus. God, help me.”

3. “To repentance”
    - a. Same word as the first of the six fundamentals of 6:1-2!
    - b. The repentance in this very specific context is one that has sought God through Grace, abandoning my *own* law-keeping, and accepting *Christ’s* law-keeping on my behalf
    - ★ c. Therefore, being “renewed” to repentance would signify that, in the meantime, you had once again begun trusting your *own* law-keeping/ your own “lifeless efforts,” 6:1, perhaps returning to aspects of the ceremonial law
    - d. Therefore, your “faith towards God” (6:1) was renounced along with the renounced repentance
  4. Again, the big point is that there are some people whom God will no longer savingly restore
- P. Who, then, are the ones whom God refuses to grant renewed interest in the real Christ?

1. The main description is after the 5-fold list, in v 6, “falling away,” a phrase reflecting the 2-part Gk word (a 1x word)
2. The root, “fall,” occurs similarly in Rom 11:22 (also about the Jews), and in Heb 3:17 and 4:11
  - a. Heb 4:11 already talked about this kind of falling
  - b. Now he just adds a prefix, *para* (beside, apart, away) to connote the **separation** brought about by the fall
  - c. In 10:31, he will add the prefix *em*, “fall into” to the same effect
3. What are they falling away from? CHRIST, the reality of salvation and the realization of salvation (realizing all OT typical fulfillment)
4. Does this mean they SAY they no longer confess Christ?
  - a. No. That’s the hard part.
  - b. Ask yourself, which group that has fallen away from orthodoxy stopped confessing Christ?\*

**Kid-speak:** Do all the people who stop believing in Jesus SAY they don’t believe in Him anymore? No, they just start believing in a made-up Jesus.

- Q. The ones who stop confessing Christ and leave churches behind don’t form groups for the most part
  1. They just become unaffiliated atheists or agnostics
  2. Though many of them join some group. The Democrat Party, for instance, *seeks* to be a person’s conscience.
  3. (Not all Democrats are atheists or agnostics, of course, but they are generally comfortable there and can fill their human religious longing there [Politics: Lk 13:32; 3:19-20])
  4. \*But many of them also belong to churches that have become entrenched in ceremonial law
- R. Most of those who stop confessing the true Christ continue confessing *their own Christ* (1 Jn 2:19, 22; 4:3; 2 Cor 11:4), accusing real Christians of the heresy (3 Jn 1:9-10)
  1. Hence, Church history is the story of those “falling away” SO THAT the “approved” may be manifested, **1 Cor 11:19!!**
    - a. We see that that’s how it was from the start!
    - b. So it’s not a surprise nor a problem we have to fix
    - c. Seeking broad unity among Christians, then, must first clearly demarcate those who are *outside*
  2. If you want to say, for instance, that Roman Catholics are

*inside* Christ's body, you must realize that you're confessing oneness with them

- a. You think you're magnanimously granting that *they're* in Christ with *you*
- b. You're really saying that *you're* in Christ in with *them*, by whatever means *they* are supposedly in Him

**Kid-speak:** How do we know if somebody believes the real Jesus? By the Bible.

S. Next time, we will pick up with considering these fallen ones "having been given light," 6:4

V. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")  
Temptation to fall away from Christ is real and debilitating, to some extent, for all of us.

VI. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong?  
How have I lost righteousness?**  
Do I build and maintain protective walls around my love and knowledge of Jesus?

VII. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):  
**How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?**  
I will take stock of the boundaries within which I stand.

VIII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How do I take this on the road?**  
Lord, *You* define falling away. Let *me* fear falling away.

Wrap-up: "Impossible to restore." Whether or not it's the scariest passage, it's scary!

"Matured love casts out" every fear (1 Jn 4:17-18) except the fear of God (2 Cor 7:1). Ironically, the Hebrews who were best situated in Christ were the ones who took this warning most to heart.

It's always that way. That's what warnings are *for*. There's nothing "in my flesh" (Rom 7:18) that is different from those who fall away. I feel it, so I press tighter to God.