

Just Like a Christian, But...

Hebrew 6:4

Nutshell: Some people who have a real experience of the things of salvation, who then reject the real Jesus, can't come back.

I. Context: The six fundamental doctrines/practices we must build on.

II. Text

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

5 and ❹ having enjoyed the taste of *the* good Word of God, as well as ❺ *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.

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. Outline of Hebrews to this point:

The Preeminence of the Son

Authority: God has at last spoken In **Son** (*Ἰερεφῆτ*), ← 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, (*Ἰσχυρολογία*)

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 invited his generation into that same **rest** of Creation, a type of Salvation, 4:1b-8

Christ's Salvation has become the final *Sabbatismos*, 4:9-10, which we must EXERT ourselves to enter, 4:11

Kid-speak: How do we REST in Jesus for salvation? We say, "Jesus, we humans are always trying to save ourselves and make ourselves better *without You*. I'm STOPPING that, and resting in what You did on the cross to save me and make me good."

For the Word penetrates, exposing us before God, 4:12-13

Theme reprise: Having the highest high priest (**Priest**), the **Son of God** (**King**),

Let us hold to our confession of Him (*Ἰσχυρολογία*), **4:14**

especially since He felt all our temptations +, 4:15

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

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

VII. Concluding remarks, 13:22-25

B. "**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.

C. 5:1-10, OT priests from Aaron; Christ from *Melchizedek*

1. 5:11-14, The Hebrews were too babyish to learn of *Ἰσχυρολογία*

2. 6:1-2, They needed the three pairs of fundamentals:

a. 1st pair: repentance (mental redo) from lifeless efforts
= *not* trusting *my* doings

+ faith toward God = trusting *Christ's* doings

b. 2nd 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. 3rd pair ...the resurrection of the dead
and eternal judgment.

D. Because if we don't have and build on those, we'll lose the whole thing with no chance of getting back! 6:4-8

E. *Today, we'll consider three of the five traits of those who come to Christ and fall away. They receive God's light, they taste God's gift from Heaven, and they interact with the Holy Spirit.*

Outline: Hebrews 6:4

- I. There are those who come to Christ who, falling away, are locked away from repentance. God will not dishonor His Son, 6:6.
- II. These apostates (those who "lose standing") received God's light.
- III. They tasted what God's gift of grace is like.
- IV. Their souls interacted with the Spirit.
- V. Yet they turn aside to another Jesus.

F. Last time, we considered the key phrase of 6:4-6, "impossible... to restore to repentance."

1. It means what it looks like: some people *leave* Christ with no chance of *getting back* to Him
 - a. Meaning that they were never born again
 - b. Though humanly, they felt and looked like they were
2. They fit the 5-fold description, confessing Christ,
 - ★ a. *but according to some other mold* (with the Hebrews and many Christians since, the mold of the old ceremonial Law, Rom 10:1-4)

Kid-speak: Does everybody who says they love Jesus keep loving Him their whole lives? No.

- b. The telltale sign: look at 5:12-6:2- no **growth in right doctrine**
3. Last time, we said that the impossibility of their repentance wasn't due to a limitation of God's ability
 - a. It was the fact that they return to their natural, unrepentant state- no hope there;
 - ⚡ b. and God flatly refuses to shame His Son, effectively re-crucifying Him in their second repentance, Heb 6:6
 - c. *That tells us how significant a first repentance is!*

Kid-speak: Does everybody who says they love Jesus love the *real* Jesus? No. What is a fake Jesus? One we make up who's not in who God says the Bible.

4. Now it's time to begin considering the 5-fold list

G. "*With* those"

1. The case of anyone who fits this 5-fold description, who then "fall away," v 6
- 2. Meaning that a real Christian will also fit the 5-fold list
 - a. Only he *doesn't* fall away from it
 - b. Indicating that his human involvement in the 5 experiences was undergirded by a regenerated spirit

H. **Description #1**

"Once having been given light"

1. Or "...having been illuminated"
2. There is only one source of true Light. The temporary converts in question received it.
3. "Once." There was a definitive point in which he turned to Christ
- ◆ 4. Jn 1:9 says Christ enlightens every man who comes into the world, so Description #1 is not exceptional
 - a. Most respond to the light by shutting it out
 - b. But these "once illuminated" initially **welcome** it, then later prefer darkness, though they may continue to *claim* to have the Light
 - c. The most comprehensive test for having/ keeping the Light is the book of 1 John
5. So being "illuminated" all by itself doesn't guarantee rebirth
 - a. There is a way in which receiving light defines a Christian, Eph 5:8; 2 Cor 4:4
 - b. Perhaps we must add that real Christians ARE light as well, Eph 5:8
 - c. Can someone escape Satan's blockade of light temporarily? Yes, 2 Pet 2:18, 20.

Kid-speak: Does everybody who lets God's light in *keep* letting it in? No.

6. The fountainhead of light (connecting us to/ showing us Jesus) is the **Word**. We can determine it by objective criteria. Do you love and seek the Word?

I. **Description #2**

“And having enjoyed the taste of the *free* gift from Heaven”

1. “Taste” may be the key word here
 - a. Taste can connote eating/ full participation, 1 Pet 2:3; Heb 2:9
 - b. But the word itself doesn’t automatically denote ingestion. So here.
2. “Enjoyed” is from the middle voice, denoting self-involvement. Most translations just have “tasted” alone.
 - a. “Experienced the taste” would work too
 - b. A Faithful Version has “who personally obtained”
 - c. Weymouth has “tasted the sweetness of”
- ☞ 3. This means that these later turncoats had a *true experience*—they weren’t faking it. They tasted the real thing.
4. “*Free* gift”
 - a. This is the word *dorea* (11x), usually translated “gift”
 - b. But the adverb, *dorean* (9x), is translated “freely,” “without a cause” (Jn 15:25), “in vain” (Gal 2:21), and “free of charge” (2 Thess 3:8)
 - i. This “I add nothing” side of “gift” doesn’t necessarily come across in the word “gift” alone
 - ii. Hence, “*free* gift”
 - c. The most precise English word for *dorea* might be “gratuity,” but “gratuity from Heaven” sounds odd

Kid-speak: God’s salvation is a **gift** that some people take, and they thank God, but then they find out they don’t like God’s way of saving us. But they might still pretend they’re saved.

5. It is the same word describing the real “gift” of salvation, Rom 5:15 (second “gift”), 17
 - a. But it’s *also* used of the gift of Christ being *extended* without direct reference to *reception*, 2 Cor 9:15
- ☑ b. The Gospel is a gift freely and genuinely offered to all, Titus 3:4. For many, the initial taste is good.
6. “From Heaven”
 - a. Or “of Heaven.” The usual translation is “heavenly.”
 - b. “From Heaven” means that **God** is the source of the gift

- c. Paul has already used “Heavenly” in 3:1 to describe God’s “calling” of us.
 - d. “Heaven” is an important word in Hebrews, describing the *realities* behind the Tabernacle’s *furnishings*, 8:5; 9:23,
 - e. then of the goal we seek, 11:16; 12:22
7. Again, the backsliders described had a *real experience of what God gives in salvation*, straight from Heaven
- a. Sort of like the Israelites who ate Manna- of whom Paul already spoke, 3:17-19. Except God’s gift of grace is infinitely more serious than Manna was!
 - b. Because of the awareness of God which He puts in all, we can say that *everyone* interacts with Heavenly things
 - c. But *these* are people who “enjoyed the taste” of it, assenting to it and inviting it... for a time
8. Remember, their falling away is almost never, “Christ? Yuck!” It is almost always, “Christ = Y,” when the Bible says “Christ = Z”

J. **Description #3**

“And having become partakers of the Holy Spirit”

- 1. Outside of this context, we would certainly think that this described a reborn person!
- 2. The words for “partakers” and “(Holy) Spirit” only occur together here
 - a. “Partaker” is a compound *noun* based on the compound *verb*, “have with,” or “share with”
 - b. The noun and verb are used both in *permanent* and *non-permanent* contexts; e.g.,
 - i. Permanent, Heb 3:1
 - ii. Non-permanent, 1 Cor 9:12
 - iii. And Paul has already used it in a conditional context, Heb 3:14

Kid-speak: If you believe in Jesus, who gave you a new heart that believes? The Holy Spirit.

- ★ 3. More to the point, let’s compare “partake” with descriptions of the Spirit’s *permanent* work. For the elect, the Spirit:
 - a. 1 Cor 6:11, washes, sanctifies, justifies
 - b. Jn 14:17, indwells
 - c. Eph 1:13, seals
- 4. Again, we must remember that the Spirit working in the

- unregenerate is a normal, expected work
 - a. Detailed by Christ, Jn 16:7-11
 - b. Very up-close-and-personal workings
- * 5. On another front, this description (and the others) of unregenerate men is of monumental importance
 - a. Consider in these traits how far a person can experience change *like* regeneration *without* regeneration!
 - i. Because man's *original* image was God's
 - ii. Coming back to God, even temporarily, *will have the earmarks of a blessed homecoming*
 - b. How can we tell the difference? Until they make a decisive move away from Christ, we can't.
- 6. What is a decisive move?
 - a. In Hebrews, going back to OT pictures when Christ the reality has come, as Roman Catholicism does
 - b. But going back to fleshly practices would be just as telling, Heb 12:16
- K. Let's sum up. What's God telling us here and why? 8 things.
 1. Salvation is a work of God
 - a. It's an exclusive 'club'. "No one comes to the Father except through Me."
 - b. Because of man's nature, only God can initiate salvation
 2. Salvation is naturally attractive
 - a. Men without new hearts and minds can still desire and receive it... for a time
 - b. They hear the Gospel call and know that it is right. But their natural will eventually prefers its own way.
 3. Mere involvement, however hearty and deep, is **not** salvation
 4. Millions are converted or born into a Christianity that had long rejected Paul's warning in Hebrews (and other warnings)
 - a. If they become truly born again, they will reverse the process of "falling away" and *reject their sect's falsehoods*
 - b. Again, Roman Catholicism is the biggest example
 5. The impossible repentance described is a hard reality. If there is a deserved Hell *and* salvation from it, those who show interest in salvation and turn aside are especially tragic cases.

Kid-speak: Some people who used to love Jesus will never be able to come back to Him. That's really sad, isn't it?

- 6. Men are *just that close* to salvation! Acts 17:27b

- a. Nothing holds them back on God's end!
 - b. The Spirit will generously work with them as long as they like
7. But in the end, it's a testimony of how DEEPLY fallen we are.
- a. Sin and self-will ultimately have the greater pull on us, even after we've fully enjoyed the very glories of God along with His saints!
 - b. Reminding us again what a MONUMENTAL change the new birth is!
 - c. But even born-again people get stuck in the mud and take the new birth for granted
 - d. At the risk of self-attention, we should loudly thank God for the new heart and mind in the new birth!
8. God is glorified by condemning sin, including the sin of temporary 'use' of the Cross, Rom 9:22

IV. For the Walking Wounded (1 Thess 5:14, "Uphold the strengthless")
Better a real limp than fake health.

V. Conviction (2 Tim 4:2, "Convince, rebuke"): **What have I done wrong?**
How have I lost righteousness?
Have I appreciated the marvel of the new birth?

VI. Correction/ Realignment (2 Tim 4:2, "Exhort/encourage"):
How will I correct my error? How will I regain uprightness?
I will not presume upon my light from Heaven by writing my own ticket to salvation.

VII. Schooling in Righteousness: **How do I take this on the road?**
Lord, You who keep Your own, *keep me!*

Wrap-up: Paul's "how will we escape" from 2:3 is for Christians. The work of salvation has been completed by Christ. We either receive it as is, or we don't.

We either receive it as is, or we alter it.

We either receive it as is *and walk in it*, or we are just prattling tongues, Jms 1:26-27