

Saved by Fire or No Hope for Repentance

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Bible Text: Hebrews 6:1-8

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Hebrews chapter number five. Here is our sermon title for tonight. Saved by Fire or No Hope of Repentance. We are going to start with verse number 11 of chapter number five and then I want to read all the way to verse number eight and I want you to follow along with me as I read and comment.

I am going to stop at verse number eight because in verse number nine it says it says “beloved” and I believe that he, the author, is switching to a new focus with that word. I am going back to verse number 11 in chapter number five because of the word “therefore” in verse number one of chapter six.

So I am going to preach one through eight. I am going to back up to 11 because of the word “therefore.” I am going to stop at verse number eight because of the word “beloved.”

“But, beloved, we are persuaded...”¹ We will tackle that two Sundays from now.

The author of Hebrews writes to us from chapter five of verse number 11, “Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.”²

Now tonight you will not be able to be dull of hearing and get anything out of this because we are jumping into the deepest end of the pool in the book of Hebrews. We are going to the deepest end. We are in the 12 foot section. You can jump as deep as you want and you won’t hit bottom in this section.

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.³

It takes a mature person to discern.

¹ Hebrews 6:9.

² Hebrews 5:11.

³ Hebrews 5:12-14.

Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection [or maturity]; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.⁴

Now verse four.

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened [all right, there is the first one], and have tasted of the heavenly gift [number two, three:], and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, 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. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God: But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.⁵

Tonight I am going to show you the four main interpretive possibilities for this passage. And I want to give you right off the bat a disclaimer. I am going to give a disclaimer right now to give myself the freedom to change my opinion two years from now or three years from now or five years from now, ok? That is how difficult this passage is. You read one commentator and you study it and you go in one direction and you read another one and you are ready to go a different direction.

In verse one the author says, Leaving or the idea is moving forward. “Therefore, let’s move forward. Let’s leave behind this, not in the sense of the abandoning it, but we are ready to go on. We are ready to build on top of this. The foundation of the house has been laid. Everything has been poured. We are now ready to start building. Not that we don’t need the foundation anymore, not that we don’t want the foundation, but we don’t want to live on a foundation. We want some walls. We want a roof. We need something more than the foundation. So let us go on to maturity.”

Look back at verses number 14. What does he say in verse 14?

He says, “But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”⁶

So moving from these people who need to be taught, let’s move forward to some maturity.

The word “principles” there is the Greek word A R C H E. It is translated many other times as

⁴ Hebrews 6:1-3.

⁵ Hebrews 6:4-8.

⁶ Hebrews 5:14.

“beginning.” The beginning things about Christ is what the author is referring to in this verse. Let’s grab the beginning things of Christ and we have set them and now let’s move forward.

“Therefore leaving the principles [or the beginning things] of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation...”⁷ The foundation of what?

And then he shows it to us. Number one is repentance from dead works. Number two is faith toward God. Number three is doctrines of baptisms. Number four is laying on of hands. Number five is the resurrection of the dead. And, number six is eternal judgment.

Now some try to read a Hebrew bias into these things and turn everything into a Jewish ceremony or relating to Jewish things. For us that is really not necessary. We are living in the 21st century in the body of Christ in a Christian Church. So let me show you some thoughts of what I think some of this might entail.

Repentance and faith in my mind is the gospel. It is the idea of teaching new converts the gospel. It is the idea of teaching them how to be saved, making sure that they understand what repentance is, what faith is, eliminating wrong conceptions of it.

I believe that perhaps baptism or washing or these type things and the laying on of hands could make reference to the ordinances to the Church, baptism and, perhaps, the Lord’s Supper. It could make reference to prayer and even spiritual gifts. In other words we want to see them saved and then learn about baptism, the Lord’s Supper, prayer, spiritual gifts and eschatology. And then, perhaps when we talk about resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment, maybe we are talking about the future. We are talking about the rapture of the Church and the Second Coming of Christ. We are talking about heaven and hell and those types of things.

And he says, “We have got to move on from there. We have got to leave those behind and press on to maturity.”

And so I say to you all, though there is not complete agreement upon what each of these pairs and three statements mean, this is just another example of a scriptural basis for executing discipleship training for all converts.

And so now let me cast the vision for us that perhaps we can get to in the year 2011 or 2012. I would love for us to get to the point in Berean Baptist Church where we have people who are, quote, certified on discipleship and on Wednesday nights a new believer comes in and they do one-on-one training together. They hang out in the fellowship center. They go to a conference room and they just, the two of them, just one-on-one, are mentored and discipled and grow the new believer and you can work them through a baptism booklet. You are going to work them through a prayer booklet. You are going to work together. And we could just have people in the congregation who are, quote, trained and ready to take them through these things right there setting the foundation so that they could move forward into maturity.

And this is what he says:

⁷ Hebrews 6:1.

“Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.”⁸

Let us go on unto maturity. We don't want a church full of babies.

And then he says in verse number three—and we are pretty good so far. This is not too difficult at this point.

“And this we do, if God permit.”⁹

And here our author is acknowledging the sovereignty of God. He is acknowledging the role that the Holy Spirit has in maturation. He is acknowledging the fact that you can't mature as a Christian outside of the work of God. This isn't something that you decide, you know what? I am going to lose 10 pounds. And so you set about dieting and exercising and you lose 10 pounds and you cannot say from saying, “I am going to get more mature.”

No, outside of the work of God, you will not get more mature, that you need God's divine Holy Spirit leading you and guiding you. And if you are not praying about spiritual maturity, then you are not taking into account that God is the one that leads you into growth.

So here is where we get into the challenge, verses four, five, six, seven and eight. And these are the interpretive challenges. And my intention is to show you all four of them tonight. Please notice in verse number four the change that occurs.

Did you notice in verse number three? He says, “And this we do, if God permit.”¹⁰

And then in verse number four he says, “For it is impossible for those...”¹¹

Those, this is a different group of people now. He is moving here. First he is talking about “we.” We understand “we,” that is “us” and then it is “those” over there. He is defining a different group of people.

And this group of people were once enlightened. They tasted of the heavenly gift. They were partakers of the Holy Spirit. They tasted the good Word. They had a sensing of the power of the world to come.

Now, folks, those are five incredible descriptions. That is why we have such a difficult time with this passage because these people, they have tasted the heavenly gift. They have interacted with the Holy Spirit. They have enjoyed the Word of God. They know about the power of the world to come. They have been enlightened. And we wonder: What does all this mean? Are these people saved? I mean, are we talking about a saved person here?

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Hebrews 6:3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Hebrews 6:4.

This is the difficult part of the passage because when we use those descriptions that we just saw in your own text, we say, “Those are good descriptions.”

So here are our four possibilities. I am going to take you through them one at a time and let us consider all of them.

Possibility number one is yes and they lose their salvation. Because notice, please, it is impossible for those who, if they should fall away... So this is somebody that has this incredible walk with the Lord and then if they should fall away, it is impossible, please notice, to renew them again unto repentance. They cannot repent again. If they fall away, there is no more repentance for them. That is exactly what the author is saying. If these people fall away, it is not a matter of repent again. There is no repentance for them again seeing they crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh and put him to open shame.

So what does the author mean by fall away?

Well, this is what the National Free Will Baptists believe and I show you their words so that you understand our differences.

They write, “There are strong grounds to hope that the truly regenerate will persevere unto the end and to be saved through the power of divine grace which is pledged for their support. But their future obedience and final salvation are neither determined nor certain since through infirmity and manifold temptations they are in danger of falling away and they ought, therefore, to watch and pray lest they make shipwreck their faith and be lost.”

So this is our difference and this is exactly where the free will Baptist go. This passage is one of the primary passages that they use to say, “Look, five different descriptions right there. Look at these great descriptions. These are incredible descriptions of somebody who tasted of the good Word and participated in the Holy Spirit. And then they fall away. And the Bible says and if they fall away they cannot be restored again unto repentance.”

So why do the free will Baptists come to this conclusion? Well, please look at verse number seven and eight in your Bible. We will work through this passage all night long.

“For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed.”¹²

So in verse number seven we are saying we planted the seed. The seed is in the ground. The water soaks into the ground and the corn comes up and you get some great corn ears off of that. And this corn is good to eat and it is blessed by God.

“But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing.”¹³

¹² Hebrews 6:7.

¹³ Hebrews 6:8.

And then please notice “...whose end is to be burned.”¹⁴

And that is difficult right there because we understand what end is to be burned. We understand what the primary application of that is. Things that are burnt up normally refers to hell. And so the free will Baptists would say this is an example of they received Christ and then they went into apostasy and then they fell away.

Please notice.

“If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.”¹⁵

They are like the Jews saying, “Crucify him.”

This group’s departure from the faith is so extreme that they are not associating with those who crucified Christ.

And then we looked at verse number eight.

So what is the meaning of this idea of “whose end is to be burned”?¹⁶

So this is the free will Baptist position. Let me go over it with you.

One, a man get saved and gives evidence of conversion. Two, he falls away. This is what they would call apostasy. Three, it is impossible for him to be restored because it is the equivalent of crucifying Christ again. Four, he dies and spends eternity in hell.

Luke 8:13 says, “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.”¹⁷

The free will Baptist pull the two together. And this is the major issue with their stance from my perspective. What do you do with this? What do you do with this? This is black and white. This is really definitive, folks. I mean, this is really hard to ignore.

The other one is built on, ok, that is what this means. That is what this means. And based on that meaning this and that meaning that, then we are going to go to this conclusion. Do you follow me?

The burned means destroyed in hell, but it doesn’t say that. It is just assuming that that is what that means. However, it is a great possibility.

But wait a minute. Look at this. You know John 10:27-28

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Hebrews 6:6.

¹⁶ Hebrews 6:8.

¹⁷ Luke 8:13.

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.¹⁸

Now that is pretty strong, folks. You don't really have to wonder what does that mean. That is really strong. And so while we would not be obnoxious with the free will Baptists in their understanding, we would simply say we disagree.

We would say that the clear teaching in the Word of God is that Christians don't lose their salvation. We don't have a scenario where you are saved on Monday and lost on Tuesday. That is not what is happening here.

All right, option number two. So we have rejected option number one. In my mind we have set that one aside because we believe the overall teaching of the NT is that men do not lose their salvation. Let's look at option number two.

The answer is yes they are saved, but the harshness of the warning is designed to encourage people to persevere in the faith, but falling away is an impossible possibility.

So these people are the ones that say this is really just discussing a hypothetical situation that could never really occur, but if it could occur, it is so devastating that you really need to persevere.

It is hard for me to conceive of the author taking the time to develop an entire sermon based on a hypothetical situation that could never happen, but this is certainly a possibility.

All right, the third one. Yes and they lose reward, but not their salvation.

Southern Baptist Convention professor David Allen is a leading proponent of this idea.. He teaches out of Texas and let me show you what his idea is.

He would say that these people are, in fact, saved, but what happens is God locks them into an irrevocable state of spiritual immaturity with utter loss of reward. Ok? So that the idea of repentance is that you come to Christ. You are born again. This is what David Allen would teach. You are born again, but you go into this falling away and this falling away is immaturity or failing not to grow. It is no more interest in the things of God. You are just kind of locked into this state of a baby Christian, if you will.

Now he gets this from this idea of looking at verse number one, two and three, the call towards maturity. And he says that churches are full of immature Christians that the churches are just jam packed with people who come once a week, sit in a pew, occupy space. They have received Jesus, but they are not interested in moving forward. They never leave the elementary things of God and he says that what happens is these people have this departure in the sense of not moving forward or not growing the way God would have them to grow, that the falling away isn't falling

¹⁸ John 10:27-28.

away like apostasy, the falling away is not maturing the way God would have you to mature, not pushing forward.

And so he says that the key of this understanding is looking at verse number three.

“This we will do, if God permit.”¹⁹

And so what he suggests to us is it is like the children of Israel who were locked into you can't go into the Promised Land. God does the same thing for these carnal Christians in the body of Christ. He no longer permits them to mature. And no matter how much they want to, they have been locked into this.

According to David Allen the key to understanding this text is found in drawing from the Israelites who were not permitted to enter the Promised Land, but instead spent 40 years in the wilderness and then died and went to heaven.

All right, one of the weaknesses of his position (and I hate to criticize him because he has built a solid case and I certainly don't want to suggest that I am an expert by any means) is that the Bible doesn't clearly tell us that those people, in Numbers 14, went to heaven. That is the difficult part of it. We really don't know whether those Israelites went to heaven or not. We don't know whether they were converted or not. We know that they didn't go into the Promised Land and we know that they died. But we don't know whether they are in hell or whether they are in heaven. We don't know whether they had Abraham's faith or they had an illegitimate faith. All we know is they were not permitted to go into the Promised Land.

And so to suggest, as David Allen does, that these people cannot be lost because those people cannot be lost, is based on a premise that is not defined in the Old Testament. The Bible doesn't give us a clear indication that everyone who didn't go into the Promised Land made it to heaven instead.

Allen believes what is described in verses four and five must describe people who are truly converted. And that is the difficult piece, folks.

Look at four and five with me one more time so you don't forget how troublesome this is. Notice, please, these are great descriptions: Enlightened, taste of the heavenly gift, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost. Now if it said “sealed with the Holy Ghost” then we would be over the top, but it doesn't. It says partaker.

So it is right on the edge. Do you know what I mean by that? Like if it said “sealed with the Holy Ghost,” then you would say, “Well, sealed with the Holy Ghost is sealed.” But partaker, what does partaker mean? How much interaction are we talking about? Tasted. Swallowed or tasted? See? These are things that are right on the edge that make it so difficult.

Does that make sense to you? Do you understand what I mean by that?

¹⁹ Hebrews 6:3.

We wish that the text would go the distance, but it stops. It stops short of where we would like it to go, because, again:

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, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come...²⁰

And so professor David Allen says that these people are converted. He believes they are permanently immature Christians and Allen rejects the free will Baptist positions. And then he says, about “Something being burnt up.”

Well, what is being burnt up? And he takes us to the judgment seat of Christ and that is not a wrong choice because we know at the judgment seat of Christ something is burnt up. Notice the description.

“If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.”²¹

So Allen says that in verse number eight we are not talking about hell fire there. We are talking about judgment fire like in 1 Corinthians. And what he would say is that a person who falls away like this, a person who falls away is described in verse number five and six, that person then is not permitted to repent and is not permitted to move forward in spiritual maturity.

In other words, God’s judgment for their failure to press on and leave the elementary doctrines of Christ and onto greater maturity, God’s judgment for this prolonged immaturity is an irrevocable state whereby they can never progress into spiritual maturity and, thus, when they arrive at the judgment seat of Christ they will have no reward because it will all be wood, hay and stubble.

Now, again, the author doesn’t tell us in verse number eight what he means by burned. We wish he would, but he doesn’t.

Allen believes that verse number three is the key to understanding the text. He believes that God does not permit these to repent and be restored once they have spent too much time neglecting the things of God. This is divine punishment for not heeding the instruction in the Word to grow. And, perhaps, punishment would not be the right word. Maybe Allen would want me to use the word chastisement.

So here is the question that we need to ask and answer tonight. Does the New Testament teach that God locks believers into a permanent state of immaturity where it is impossible for them to repent and move forward spiritually? Do we have New Testament examples of this? Because Allen bases his whole case on the Old Testament and the people of God with the Israelites. But wait a minute. We are under what covenant, church? The new covenant. So we must be careful that we don’t draw too much from the old covenant.

²⁰ Hebrews 6:4-5.

²¹ 1 Corinthians 3:15.

Now I say to you. Make no mistake. There are cases where the humans are locked into irrevocable courses with no hope of repentance. God does do that.

Turn back to Deuteronomy 2:30 for an example that you might not be familiar with. We talked about Pharaoh a couple of weeks ago, but here is one that you might not be familiar with, a simple one.

Deuteronomy chapter number two verse number 30, just a simple example, but let's not forget about these kind of examples. Don't forget the same sun that melts the wax is the same sun that hardens the clay.

“But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him: for the LORD thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that he might deliver him into thy hand, as appeareth this day.”²²

So make no mistake about it. God does lock unbelievers into hardened hearts. Make no mistake about that. So if someone was to say, “Well, Allen's position is predicated upon the idea that God intervenes and God never intervenes,” that is not a true statement. God does intervene. That is difficult.

What we want to know, though, what we want to know is not whether God hardens hearts. We want to know does God harden hearts who are filled with the Holy Spirit and sealed under the new covenant? That is the question.

We would not say that God's relationship with us is the same as all people. If that was the case, then what is point of being adopted into the family of God?

So to suggest that God can't harden hearts is ridiculous. Did God harden Judas Iscariot's heart? Sure. Did he end at a point in which there was no more repentance? Yes. Did Satan actually fill him? Yes.

The question is: Does God do that with the people of God? My answer to you is no and this is my reasoning.

Paul says, “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.”²³

So I think that we would really struggle with the idea of suggesting that along that path God locks a believer into an irrevocable course of unrepentance. That seems to me to be very contrary to the idea that God looks at a believer who he has been drawing and sanctifying and working progressively and that believer has been neglecting and neglecting that God says, “Stop, end.” And then this person would live 40 more years on this planet in this irrevocable state of

²² Deuteronomy 2:30.

²³ Philippians 1:6.

spiritual immaturity whereby you were saved, but no amount of repentance would ever push you into further growth.

I would wonder. How do we reconcile that position? I would love to ask David Allen to help me understand how he reconciles, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ,”²⁴ because that seems to suggest to me that he is performing it. He is performing it today. He is performing it next week. He is performing it next month. He is performing it six months from now. He is performing it five years from now. He is performing it until he calls you home. And he never stops performing it.

Does that make sense? Do you understand what I mean by that?

And so I am almost left with this last option and I don’t know about this option. I mean, I am struggling. They only appeared to be saved. And I am struggling with this. And why am I struggling? Because of the descriptions in the text. The descriptions are so strong that I am not... it is not easy for me just to go, “Oh, they are lost.” That is not easy for me and yet that is very, very difficult for me to do that because it is personal for just me. When I look at my own father’s conversion in which I was there as a boy when I saw my father get converted, I saw him do these kind of things or have these kind of things in his life. And, folks, in many regards, these are the kind of things that are you are looking for for fruit. And so that is what makes this so difficult. You want to see them (new converts) enlightened. Enlightened is the idea that they would begin to think about the things of God, talk about the things of God, more aware of the things of God, their understanding of the things of God would grow.

So I want to say, “Man, that is awesome that he has been enlightened by God.”

Remember, according to 2 Corinthians 4:4 the God of this world has blinded their eyes and so we do want their eyes open and we want them enlightened. So that makes it difficult for me. It is not easy. I don’t easily say option number four.

Tasted of the heavenly gift? Partakers of the Holy Ghost? Tasted of the good Word of God? Can you imagine the idea that you could have a lost person in your assembly who enjoyed the Word of God week after week after week? That the Word of God was profitable to them, that they got life lessons from it, that they parented from it, they instructed from it, the orchestrated their marriage from it, they received from the Word of God lots of good practical teaching. That is difficult to think about, isn’t it?

But, you see, it happens. That is week after week they got something out of the message. They actually talked about the Word of God. They sent out an email with a devotional and they talked about how the Word of God spoke to them.

And we would say, “Surely, they are converted.”

²⁴ Ibid.

But I promise you if we would have looked at Judas Iscariot two years and 11 months into Jesus' ministry we would have really thought that man was converted. That would have thrown us way off.

Don't forget, when Jesus said the one that dips the sop and... they didn't all go... Yeah it's him. They all looked at themselves. "Is it I? Who is he talking about here?"

The final option suggests that these people initially profess to be followers of Christ, but they were never truly born again.

Go to Matthew seven with me and I trust that you have this underlined and marked in your Bible, because to me while Hebrews is the most difficult to understand, Matthew in my mind is the most scary or the scariest. Is it scariest? Is that correct? Is that the superlative? Scariest. These are not easy verses.

Could these people really not be saved? Enlightened, heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted of the good Word, power of the world to come... yet please look in 21, 22 and 23 with me. You want to underline these verses in your Bible. Get your pen out and circle the numbers 21, 22 and 23.

Because our Lords himself said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."²⁵

What a scary thing. Man, this bothers me. It bothers me to think about the fact that I could develop relationships with teenagers for four or five years, teach them Bible in their sophomore year and go to camp with them and interact with them. It bothers me to think about the fact that my son or your son or your daughter could be lost. It bothers me to think about the fact that a guy who is in the church could say amen to a sermon week after week and be unsaved. That bothers me. I don't take that idea lightly. I want to have a church full of regenerate people, truly, authentically converted.

"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."²⁶

Not everyone who has been enlightened, not everyone who has partaken of the Holy Spirit, not everyone who has tasted of the Word of God is, in fact, converted.

You say, "No way."

What do you do with these verses then? If it is "no way" what do you do with these verses? How do you just ignore, "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"²⁷

²⁵ Matthew 7:21.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

Let's make sure we are perfectly clear tonight. It is God's will for you to leave the elementary principles of Jesus Christ and go on to spiritual maturity. That is God's will. That is God's will for every single person in this assembly. It is not God's will for an elite group of people to be teachers. It is not God's will for an elite group of people to be super Christians. It is not God's will for an elite group of people to be the ones that really know the Word of God and the rest of us can be around with dull of hearing in la-la land, pretty much ignorant. That is not God's will.

And so then what do you do with this?

“...but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”²⁸

It is not God's will that these people fall away. It is not God's will that they go into such a departure from the things of God that their behavior is like crucifying Christ all over again, but in the end we go, “Well, they are still saved.”

What kind of life would a person be living that he would say they are crucifying the Savior again in a fresh and anew? How much rejection would that be by their lifestyle, by their choices, by their words for the author to say that the way they are living, seeing them that they crucify the Savior again or afresh or anew? How much departure would there have to be for him to say something like that and then to conclude that you can depart that far down and still be regenerate is ridiculous.

Make sure we understand here that we are not talking about stuff like we had a rough day at work and we lost our temper. That is not the kind of backslidden that we are talking about in this passage when he uses the description they were crucifying the Savior again. That is huge. That is huge. These are people who talk ill of the body of Christ, who talk ill of the Word of God, who talk ill of the Lord Jesus Christ, but somewhere along there, prior to that you saw them make some type of profession and so you conclude they must be saved. They are just way, way, way, way, way, way, way, way, way, way, way, way, way, way backslidden.

Really?

Notice the next verse. And they began asking questions like, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?”²⁹

Now, I want to draw a parallel. Please stay with me. A person who prophesies in his name is either going to partake of the Holy Ghost or be enlightened by the Word of God. Do you understand what I mean by that? Prophesying in his name, that means they are speaking the Word of God in his name, speaking the Word of God. So a person who, in fact, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?”³⁰ So have we not spoken in thy name, either through a gifting, they would say a charismatic gifting or through the teaching and preaching of the Word, if you asked them: Have you enjoyed the Word of God? They would say “yes.” Have you tasted of the

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Matthew 7:22.

³⁰ Ibid.

good Word? “Yes.” Have you partaken of the power of the Holy Spirit? What would they say? They would say “yes.”

Are you getting the parallel that I am trying to draw? I am trying to draw a parallel between those five descriptions in Hebrews to these kind of things right here. I want you to see that this kind of person right here fits the bill as described in Hebrews chapter number six. I want you to see that this person doesn't say, “I have never tasted of the good Word of God. I have never enjoyed enlightenment. I have never participated in the Holy Spirit.” That is not what they would say. They would say just the opposite because, “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils?”³¹

A person who casts out devils believes that they, in fact, have the Spirit of God working in their life. Therefore they would say, “I am a partaker of the Holy Spirit.” Yes or no? Are you all following me?

“And in thy name done many wonderful works?”³² That is the catch all.

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”³³

This is why the free will Baptist position doesn't work. Because he says very clearly, “I never knew you.”

Folks, I don't take pleasure in saying that. I don't want to hear these words. These words are too intimate. They are too personal. They are too in the face with my own family.

“I never knew you.”

Turn over to Matthew 13 and we will look at the four soils and then we will be done. Look at verses three through nine.

I want to call your attention to one idea.

Behold, a sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up: Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.³⁴

Pause right there. Stay with me for just a moment. I want you to notice this little section right here.

“....and forthwith they sprung up.”³⁵

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Matthew 7:23.

³⁴ Matthew 13:3-6.

³⁵ Matthew 13:5.

I want you to notice that idea right here. They sprung up and they sprung up.

If you were to be there on that given day when they both sprung up, you would not be able to tell the difference between the one that sprung up and then when the one that sprung up and grew more. You would not be able to tell the difference. On that given day if you were a gardener and you went out to your garden and you were looking at these rows of things and on that given Monday morning when you went out there and you had that soil number one that sprung up and soil number four that sprung up and you were to look at both of them in the “sprung up” state.

Sprung up, sprung up. It would only be until the sun came out a day or two later that you would see the difference between this one and this one.

Are you following me? So for just a moment of time, for just a window of time when you looked at soil number two in our illustration and soil number four in our illustration, both of those times you would say they were enlightened. Both of those times they are partakers of the Holy Ghost. Both of those times they have tasted of the good Word. Both of those times they looked the same.

And it would only be until the sun came out and there was no rain that you would identify the difference between the two. And that is why I believe that of the four choices, choice number four is the best choice because it goes best with verse number eight.

Remember in verse number seven water comes. One grows and provides a crop and the other one, what happens? Nothing. It is cursed, thorns, briars and fades away. Ultimately it gets burned.

All right, preacher, what is the application? What is the application for us?

The greatest assurance of your salvation is pressing forward unto spiritual maturity. Folks, if you are locked into the elementary doctrines of Christ and you are still being called to be a teacher and you are still drinking milk when you should be enjoying a steak sandwich and you are 10 years into the body of Christ and you still can't tell the difference between an Old Testament book and a New Testament book and you still can't explain the gospel and if someone came up to you and said, “Tell me how to repent and put my faith in Christ,” and you would stumble all over that, and if someone came up to you and said, “Why do you believe what you believe and you would be all over the map with that, I want to tell you, be careful.

You say, “Why do we need to be careful? What is the problem?”

Just please notice the text. It is not the believer who gets locked into an irrevocable course of action. It is the unbeliever who gets locked into an irrevocable course of action. So in the text, what we have is somebody who gives some kind of evidence of profession in an intimate and personal way and then they fall into apostasy or unbelief and they think, “You know what? I will repent when I want to repent.” And the fact is they can't repent. They can't. They can't. Because the author says this we will do if God permits.

It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, tasted, partaking and all of that for they are crucifying the Savior over and over again and they will not be granted another opportunity to fall on their knees, repent and put their faith in Christ because their heart has been hardened.

Wow. That is scary.

Imagine having a 25 year old son or a 30 year old son or a 35 year old daughter whose heart has been hardened by God. And they are locked into a state where they can no longer repent.

So what is our goal? Our goal is to keep them from getting there Repent today. Don't put it off another day. Do it now.