

HEBREWS SIX AND TEN

It is amazing how often these passages come up when the eternal security of the believer is mentioned. The assumption is that those described in Heb. 6:4, 5 and Heb. 10:26 - 29 are believers who lose their salvation. **If** this is true, we could also lose our salvation.

It is Seldom noticed, however, that -- **If** these passages teach a believer can lose his salvation -- they also teach, very clearly and emphatically, that when salvation is lost it is lost forever! In chapter six it is stated, "it is impossible" for those who "fall away" to be "renewed again unto repentance." Likewise chapter ten states, "If we sin willfully ... there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." This surely would deny the testimony of any believer who claims to have once lost his salvation; for if he ever lost it, he is still lost and can never be saved again. It would also make the ministry of those who preach to "backsliders" (who, supposedly, have lost their salvation) a useless and even wicked effort. If the backsliders could never be saved again, it would be a cruel mockery to urge them to return to Christ. Clearly, according to this interpretation of these passages, such a return would be "impossible."

What do these chapters really teach?

HEBREWS CHAPTER SIX

--- A quick answer:

The key to this chapter is verse nine. "But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak." This verse teaches there are things better than those listed in verses four and five. While those items do not "accompany salvation" these "better" things do! The writer is here saying very definitely and clearly that verses four and five do not describe a saved person.

--- A detailed answer:

What can be better than those things set forth in verses four and five?

To be "once for all enlightened" (Amplified Bible) is to know fully the message from the Lord. But to know a truth and to believe it are not the same. It is not said here that they believed. Salvation is not through knowledge, but through faith. A man may sit through a series of meetings, where the gospel is faithfully preached, and go away thoroughly "evangelized" -- but still **lost**. Faith is better, for it accompanies salvation!

What is better than to taste of the heavenly gift? Obviously it would be better to receive that gift. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God" (John 1:12). To receive the gift accompanies salvation.

But were not these people described as being made "partakers of the Holy Ghost [Holy

Spirit]"]?

In the 1917 edition of the Scofield Bible the margin suggests this verse be translated, "and were **going along with** the Holy Ghost." This thought is illustrated where the same Greek word is used in Luke 5:7 and translated "partners." There, when the disciples in one boat caught so many fish their net broke, they "beckoned unto their partners" (those who had **gone along with** them in their fishing venture) who were in the other boat. Applying this meaning of the word to Heb. 6:4, the verse appears to be saying that these "backsliders" have been under the convicting power of the Spirit, may even have made a profession of faith and urged others to do the same -- all without true faith themselves. What could be better? It would be better if they had been **born** of the Spirit (John 3:5), **indwelt** by the Spirit (Rom. 8:9), **sealed** by the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 4:30), and **baptized** by the Spirit into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13) -- for these things accompany salvation. ¹

Likewise it is better to **believe** the word of God than to merely **taste** it. How many, even today, enjoy a Bible study or good gospel preaching, but have not really believed the Word of God. Ezekiel was warned against such people in his ministry. "Thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument; for they hear [and evidently enjoy] thy words, but they do them not" (Ezek. 33:32). It is not the one who merely **hears** (tastes) the Word, but the one who **believes**, who has everlasting life.

But have they not tasted (here is that word again!) the "powers of the world to come"? Yes indeed. Similarly the Israelites at Kadesh Barnea tasted of the fruit of the land brought back by the spies, but they never entered the land. They never ate of the milk and honey, or the corn and wine (Num. 13:23, 27; Deut. 33:28). When they turned back (or "fell away") they found it was impossible to renew them again unto repentance. Their subsequent attempt to enter the land met with defeat, and they died in the wilderness (Num. 14:39 - 45). The "world to come," in Heb. 6:5, should be translated "**age** to come."

For these Jews referred to in Hebrews, the age to come was the millennial kingdom. They had tasted of the powers which will be characteristic of that kingdom. Not only had they seen the miracles wrought by the apostles, but also many of them may have actually experienced healing at their hands, or at the hands of Christ earlier. They may have eaten of the loaves and fish miraculously multiplied by Christ. They have enjoyed a sample of the coming kingdom, but they could never enter that kingdom without being born again (John 3:3).

By coming to the very brink of salvation, and then turning back, they would be knowingly and willfully rejecting Christ -- the very sin that was committed by the nation when they crucified Him. They would be crucifying Him afresh in their hearts.

This interpretation is further strengthened by Heb. 6:7, 8. Both fields described there receive the same rain from heaven, but one brings forth herbs and the other one only weeds. What is the difference? One field, being prepared by the farmer, **received** the **good seed** -- the

¹ All believers are born of the Spirit, and the Spirit indwells all believers after Pentecost. The sealing and baptizing into the Body of Christ are characteristic of this Age of Grace.

other did not. The second field is not one that produced herbs, and later **reverted back** to weeds, but one which **produced weeds in the first place**, even though it had been watered from heaven.

HEBREWS CHAPTER TEN

--- A quick answer:

THE KEY to this chapter is found in verses 38 and 39. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, My soul shall have no pleasure in him.' But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." This drawing back is the willful sin referred to in verse 26. It is not a case of those who draw back **after** believing, but **in contrast** to it. There are two groups -- those who draw back (called "adversaries" in v. 27) and those who believe.

--- A detailed answer:

Let us consider the context of this passage. In verses one to eighteen of chapter ten the writer expounds the theme that Christ's death is a once for all sacrifice -- in contrast to the repeated offerings under the Law. His point is -- if the sacrifices under the Old Covenant really solved the sin problem, they would not need to be offered over and over (v. 1, 2). Christ's one sacrifice not only sanctified the believer (set him apart forever from the unbeliever -- v. 10), but also **perfected** him forever (v. 14). In light of this, "there is no more offering for sin" (v. 18); that is, when one receives Christ there is no need for any **additional** sacrifice, for He finished the work and sat down (v. 12).

The rest of the chapter looks at the Jew who, though he knows the truth about Christ as set forth in the first part of the chapter, draws back to Judaism and the temple sacrifices. Verse 26 **seems** to say the same thing as verse 18, but the context indicates an important difference. In verse 18 the one who **accepts** the sacrifice has no need for **additional** sacrifices, while in verse 26 the one who **rejects** the sacrifice of Christ has no **other** (or alternate) sacrifice to which he can turn. He cannot go back to the animal sacrifices if he rejects their fulfillment in Christ. Verse 18 points out that Christ is a **sufficient** offering; verse 26 that He is the **only** offering God will accept today.

Now let us study the passage itself more closely. What seems to indicate that those described here may be true believers?

First of all, the writer says, "If **we** sin willfully" -- and the writer was a believer. But the writer was also a **Jew**, and writing to Jews. He is not saying, "If we **believers** sin willfully," but "If we **Jews** sin willfully." The reference to the Law of Moses in 10:28 substantiates this.

Then, again, these people had received knowledge of the truth. This is so. But, as noted before in chapter six, knowledge is not faith. It is his knowledge of the truth that makes

his sin willful -- he sins knowingly.

Also, it is said that he was sanctified by the blood of the covenant (v. 29). Remember that "sanctified" basically means "set apart." With this in mind, even if the pronoun "he" refers to the man who sinned willfully, it does not mean he had come to personal faith in Christ. The blood of the Old Covenant had set Israel apart as a nation, even though many individuals in Israel never became a part of the true Israel by personal faith. So the blood of the New Covenant (Christ's own blood) is the basis for the future salvation of "all Israel" (Rom. 11:26) -- even though many individual Jews of Paul's day never became a part of the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16). Every Jew is set apart to the salvation spoken of in the New Covenant, but each must experience a new birth before he can realize it personally and enjoy it. Can one be spoken of as "sanctified" even though he is not saved? Yes. See 1 Cor. 7:14. "For the **unbelieving** husband **is sanctified** by the wife, and the **unbelieving** wife **is sanctified** by the husband."

However, there is a real possibility "**he** was sanctified" in verse 29 refers to **Christ**. It is His blood that forever sets Him apart from all other leaders. To turn one's back on Moses is not as serious as spurning Christ -- for Moses did not shed his blood for our sins. Christ did. The man in view here is counting the very blood which sets Christ Himself apart from all religious leaders, as "an unholy thing" and "has insulted the Spirit of Grace" (NASB).

Verse 30 is also said to indicate this man is a believer. "For we know Him that saith, 'The Lord shall judge **His people**.'" Does this not show that this man -- one of "His people" -- is a true believer? The entire nation of Israel (including the unbelieving Jews) is referred to in many places as "His people," so this does not prove the man was saved.

Moreover, when the Old Testament wording of the prophecy quoted here is examined, it sheds a lot of light on the verse. The quotation is from Deut. 32:35, 36. In Deut. 32:35 unbelievers are in view and vengeance is to be meted out to them. "Vengeance is mine, and retribution, in due time their foot will slip; for the day of their calamity is near, and the impending things are hastening upon them." But in verse 36, where "His people" are in view, it says (both quotations from the NASB), "For the Lord will **vindicate** His people and will **have compassion** on His servants." So in Heb. 10:30 there is a contrast drawn (as there is also in verses 38, 39) between the one who draws back and receives vengeance, and the true believer who will be vindicated (avenged or defended). It is not "**His people**" who "fall into the hands of the living God" (v. 31), but the "**adversaries**" (v. 27).

SUMMARY

Both of these passages in Hebrews are looking back to the sin of Israel as a nation when they willfully rejected the risen Christ in early Acts. They had come to a second "Kadesh Barnea" and, like their forefathers, turned back in rebellious unbelief. Like their ancestors, they had seen God's power at work and had tasted of the fruit of the land. But when that generation of Jews who were contemporary with Christ turned back they found there would be no "second chance" for them (compare Num. 14:39 - 45). As a nation they had committed the unpardonable sin (Matt. 12:31, 32). Rejecting the testimony to the risen and ascended Christ given by the Spirit filled apostles, they had sinned against the Holy Spirit.

In Hebrews six and ten individual Jews, who have come a long way in profession, are urged to **possess** the thing they have been **professing**. They are warned that if they stop short of true saving faith they will make the same mistake personally that their leaders have made nationally. If they turn back, they cannot return to the godly Judaism of the remnant before Calvary, for that remnant has gone on to faith in Christ. They can only turn back to join the apostate leaders who rejected Christ and stoned Stephen -- and they will share their fate!

No one today fits the situation of those referred to in Hebrews six and ten. No one today is facing such a dispensational change as took place then. No one today has experienced the powers of the millennial age, or is tempted to go back to the temple worship and animal sacrifices once given by God (which will no longer avail because God has replaced them all with the one sacrifice of His Son). So, too, no one today has committed the unpardonable sin -- so that he cannot be renewed to repentance, facing only a fearful looking for of fiery indignation.

However the passages do have a vital message for us. Today, as then, a man may go far in his profession without being a true believer. He may deceive others, and even himself, by his conformity to what is expected of a believer, without ever possessing eternal life. Peter recognized this. This is why he urged those to whom he wrote to make their calling and election sure (2 Pet. 1:10). Paul also tells the believers in Corinth, "Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith; prove yourselves. Know ye not yourselves how Jesus Christ is in you unless you are discredited?" (2 Cor. 13:5 -- NASB). The **Lord** knows if we are His or not, but it behooves us to depart from iniquity so that **others** will know it also (2 Tim. 2:19).