

Christ Is Superior to the Levitical Priesthood

“Let Us Go On”

Hebrews 6:1-8

This passage and Heb. 10:26-31 are some of, if not the most difficult passages in the New Testament to truly understand. They seem to teach against something that is clearly taught in other portions of Scripture: the eternal security of the believer. The key words in that sentence are “seem to” as opposed to “clearly.” When there is a seeming contradiction of Scripture, we must anchor ourselves to the truth that there are no contradictions in the Bible and any seeming contradiction must have an answer that fits with the preponderance of evidence found in the Bible. The preponderance of evidence, the clearest testimony of Scripture is that once we are truly born again by the Spirit of God we are sealed “until the redemption of the purchased possession” (Eph. 1:13-14) - that is, until we get to heaven. Since that is the case, this text must mean something other than that we, as a believer, can lose what God has eternally sealed with the indwelling Holy Spirit.

There are four basic views taught on this text, as well as the one in chapter 10 (I believe they are both speaking of the same group of people that would hear or read this letter to the Hebrews). These are summarized from several different sources, but I drew the details from Bible Knowledge Commentary by John Walvoord:

1. That the danger of a Christian losing his salvation is described (a view we’ve already rejected);
2. That the warning is against mere profession of faith short of salvation or tasting but not really partaking of

salvation (a view held by Scofield, MacArthur, and several others). This is the most prevalent view held by most Reformed theologians because they approach it with a preconceived philosophy;

3. That hypothetically *if* a Christian could lose his salvation, there is no provision for repentance. The hypothetical view makes no sense in applying it to a warning since there would be no real danger of it happening. It also goes against the evidence of Scripture that salvation cannot be lost;
4. That a warning is given of the danger of a Christian moving from a position of true faith and life to the extent of becoming disqualified for further service (1 Cor. 9:27) and for inheriting millennial glory.

This last one is the view that I hold to and will develop in this message. I will say at this point that I am not dogmatic about this. Even though I may hold to this view, I find problematic portions that I will admit are very challenging to understand and explain. This is the view that makes the most sense to me and that fits the rest of Scripture. There is a case to be made for the view held by Scofield and others that it is speaking of professors and not true possessors of Christ but if that's the case there is a real problem in Heb. 10:29 where, as stated earlier, I believe this same group is confronted again are said to have been "sanctified" by "the blood of the covenant."

As we delve into this study and start "unpacking it" in some depth, there are two principles I wish for us to remember. One, this text is meant to alarm us - it's a dire warning of what can happen if we don't continue to mature in our spiritual growth. It's meant to cause the reader to consider very seriously their walk with the Lord and their grasp of

biblical knowledge. This is, in part, why I strive so hard to teach as clearly and deeply as God has given me capability to do.

Second, I want us to bear in mind that our God is a God of mercy and grace. He's longsuffering, kind, and good, and wants His children to walk with Him because that is the best place for us to be. He never wants us to get so far from Him that we put our very lives, literally, in jeopardy. If we think we have strayed too far, we haven't. My dad used to say about the "unpardonable sin" or "the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 12:31-32) that if you are worried you have committed it, you haven't. The only ones that might have are those who don't care about it. The same is true of "the sin unto death" in 1 John 5:16.

I. WE NEED TO DO SOMETHING TO "GO ON" - VS. 1-3

THIS IS A CALL TO SPIRITUAL MATURITY - "UNTO PERFECTION"

This context might have been written to the Jews that were learning to leave the trappings of Old Testament sacrifice and worship and follow their newfound faith in Christ, but it is also very much applicable to us today. Remember, by the time Hebrews was written the church epistles were finished and the doctrine of the church had been established and although this was written with the Jews in view, according to Scripture, "there is neither Jew nor Greek...we are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). This is as much for us today as it was for them then.

A. We have to leave something - "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ"

1. This goes back to 5:12 and "the first principles of the oracles of God."

2. To “leave” doesn’t mean an abandonment or ceasing to believe in the core doctrines. It just means that the ones to whom this letter was written had been saved long enough to have grown beyond the need for a continual building of those foundations.

Calvin said this: He commands us to omit such elements, not because the faithful should ever forget them, but because there is nothing to be inherited in them. This is seen from the similitude of the foundation which follows. For in building a house, one must never depart from the foundation: yet it is ridiculous to labor always to lay it.

3. The thing we have to leave, to move on from, are the “principles of the doctrine of Christ” - this word for principles (ἀρχή) is most often translated “beginning” and points to the beginning of something. In this case, it is those first teachings of the Messiah that were received and believed by the Jews to whom this letter was addressed.

That was also true of the Gentiles in the church at the time and is still true of Jew and Gentile believers in the body of Christ today.

[Mark 1:1](#)

¹ The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God;

[John 1:1-3](#)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² The same was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing

made that was made.

1 Timothy 3:16

¹⁶ And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

B. We have to move toward something - "let us go on unto perfection"

1. The "us" of this verse is clearly both the author of the letter and the readers/hearers to whom it was sent. An interesting point to make, as in verse 11 of the previous chapter and the word "we." This most likely also included the shepherd/pastors of the churches that would have received the letter - it was their responsibility to build on the foundation that was already laid in Christ, and they were to do that with the spiritual maturity of the believers in mind.

1 Corinthians 3:9-12

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. ¹⁰ According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. ¹¹ For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹² Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

"He invites his readers to advance with him to doctrines which lie beyond the range of rudimentary Christian teaching. They must

come with him out of the limits of this Jewish-Christian Catechism.” (Cambridge Bible notes)

2. The words “let us go on” are all one word in Greek and mean to be borne along as by the current of a stream. Our spiritual growth is never to be stagnant, as seen already in our study of Hebrews, but is to be ever moving forward toward a goal.
3. The goal is “perfection” - τελειότης – a word that means one who reaches a goal.
 - a) It stresses the state achieved when a goal has been accomplished. One Greek scholar defines it as “ripeness of knowledge or practice” (Mounce).
 - b) It’s only used in this form twice in the New Testament - in this verse and in Col. 3:14, where it is connected with “charity,” making charity (sacrificial love) the thing that binds all other graces together and “renders the whole system complete” (Barnes).

Colossians 3:12-14

¹² Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies [heart of compassions], kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³ Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. ¹⁴ And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

C. We have to build on something, not stay stagnate - vs. 1c-2

Much debate and discussion has been devoted to

this portion of the text and there are basically two different views, and those views correspond to the view one holds for verses four through eight.

For those that hold to the view the text is dealing with professors and not possessors - those almost saved but not quite - these several phrases are dealing only with the Jews to whom the letter was addressed, and they all deal with some trappings of Old Testament Judaism. While I agree that there is certainly that measure within at least some of these points, I believe it's interpreting them to fit a theological viewpoint rather than the overall evidence of Scripture, especially of those portions that are given to the church.

Going back to 5:12 and the phrase, "the first principles of the oracles of God," these phrases point to what those were. The word for "principles" (στοιχεῖον) in 5:12 is a different word than the one in 6:1. The one in 5:12 means an element or rudiment of any intellectual or religious system. What's before us in 6:1 are those first lessons that are taught so we can go on "unto perfection."

There is something of note to be found here: if these are the "first principles, if these are the foundation upon which we build our doctrine and faith, like the foundation of a house, what does that say about the state of believers today in their spiritual growth? How many true believers in the average church today would know how to explain these truths?

1. "Repentance from dead works"

[Acts 20:21](#)

²¹ Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward

our Lord Jesus Christ.

- a) To the point made previously, there is a measure of Judaism in this topic found in the term "dead works," but we need not make too much of it since the doctrine of repentance is a core teaching of salvation for all - Jew and Gentile alike.
- b) The issue is more on "repentance" in the entire text than on "dead works."
- c) The word "repent," in some form, is used over 100 times in the Bible. When dealing with salvation, the word used means simply to "change one's mind." In the usage of those words, the thought of regret, and the thought of change of purpose and action, are both found; but the emphasis is upon the change of purpose and action.

1 Thessalonians 1:9

⁹ For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; [definition of repentance]

A study on the doctrine of repentance is necessary and we will come back to that at some point.

- d) "From dead works" - "Not sinful works in the ordinary sense of the term but works without the element of life which comes through faith in the living God. There is a sharp opposition, therefore, between dead works and faith. They are contraries. This truth must be one of the very first things expounded to a Jew embracing Christianity." (Vincent)

This phrase is only used one other time in the Bible and it's also in Hebrews - 9:14. That text will help us understand its use here. This is a term that the Jews would have understood because it relates to the works they were doing that they thought would bring redemption.

Hebrews 9:13-14

¹³ For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: ¹⁴ How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

2. "Faith toward God"

- a) Those that believe this is purely, or at least primarily, a Judaic term, use the name "God" as an Old Testament view of Jehovah to the exclusion of the oneness of the Trinity. Whether it's "faith toward God," or "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ," is of little consequence - it's the same thing, especially in the New Testament.
- b) A foundational doctrine of salvation is faith: faith in God the Father for sending His Son, and faith in the Son for being "obedient unto death."

Scripturally, faith is a childlike trust in God which accepts the record God has given to us of His Son.

1 John 5:10-11

¹⁰ He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. ¹¹ And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal

life, and this life is in his Son.

Hebrews 11:1

¹ Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:6

⁶ But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

3. "Doctrine of baptisms"

- a) This is another one of these principles that has a Judaic aspect to it, found in the Greek word that is used and how it is used in other portions of the New Testament.
- b) The word for "baptisms" (βαπτισμός) is a word, in this form, used only four times in the New Testament: twice in the same text in Mark 7 (vs. 4 and 8) and twice in Hebrews - in this verse and in Heb. 9:10. In each of the other cases, it's dealing with ceremonial washing to which the Jewish community had grown accustomed.

Considering the connection with "doctrine" here, it seems most likely that he is referring to the various baptisms that are found earlier in the New Testament: John's baptism (Luke 3:16), Christian baptism proper (Matt. 28:19-20; Rom. 6:3-4), or even Spirit baptism (Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 11:16).

Baptism is very clearly a foundational principle of faith and one from which they should have already moved on.

4. "Laying on of hands"

This one may be the most puzzling as to why it is considered a foundational teaching, but we have to consider the early church and what they saw as foundational.

- a) This is found both in the Old and New Testaments and has the same purpose in both. I believe that the New Testament use is what is referenced here.

That said, there is an important use of the laying on of the hands in the Levitical Law that every Jew would have recognized as it is critically connected to the Day of Atonement: the laying on of the hands of the high priest upon the head of the scapegoat as recorded in Lev. 16:21, and send it into the wilderness symbolically carrying away the sins of the people.

- b) There are several ways to organize the usage of laying on of hands in the Bible, so these are not all-inclusive - just one way of looking at them.

(1) They were used for blessing or commissioning. Examples include Jacob laying hands on his grandsons Ephraim and Manasseh to bless them (Gen. 48:14-16) in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the apostles laying hands on individuals to appoint them for ministry roles, such as the selection of the first seven deacons in Acts 6:6.

[Acts 6:3-7](#)

³ Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. ⁴ But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. ⁵ And the saying

pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: ⁶ Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. ⁷ And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

- (2) They were used in the impartation of the Holy Spirit in the early days of the church. Examples include Peter and John laying hands on the Samaritans who had believed to receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:17). Another example is Paul laying hands on the disciples in Ephesus, leading to their receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 19:6).
- (3) The laying on of hands was used in the Gospels relating to healing the sick. Jesus laid hands on people to heal them (Luke 4:40) and believers were instructed to lay hands on the sick so they might recover (Mark 16:18).
- (4) The laying on of hands was used to recognize and affirm spiritual gifts or leadership roles, often accompanied by prayer.

[1 Timothy 4:14](#)

¹⁴ Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.

[2 Timothy 1:6](#)

⁶ Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

All that said, I believe this reference to laying on of the hands is directly connected, as it most often is in the New Testament, with the ministry of the Holy Spirit in indwelling the believer and in bestowing the spiritual gifts that each believer has. That's what makes it a foundational doctrine: it is the critical importance of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer that is in view.

5. "Resurrection of the dead" - this one is straightforward and doesn't need much explanation. It is a core, fundamental doctrine (1 Corinthians 15).
6. "Eternal judgment" - The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, teaches that there is eternal judgment for those who don't accept Christ as their Saviour.

Below is a summary of the doctrine of eternal judgment as found in Dr. Earl White's commentary on Hebrews.

- a) Eternal damnation - Mark 5:29
- b) Eternal fire - Matt. 18:8; 25:41
- c) Everlasting burnings - Is. 33:14
- d) Everlasting confusion - Jer. 20:11
- e) Everlasting reproach - Jer. 23:40
- f) Everlasting contempt - Dan. 12:2

- g) Everlasting punishment - Matt. 25:40
- h) Everlasting destruction - 1 Thess. 1:9
- i) Everlasting chains - Jude 1:6

D. Or we could lose something - vs. 3

With the mention of the eschatological issue of "eternal judgment," the author suddenly stops his enumeration of what he considers "elementary teaching." The thought of judgment is a sober reminder of the potential danger his readers face. If their present situation is not corrected, they may be in store for a negative judgment experience. Furthermore, God Himself may not permit them to "go on unto perfection." The phrase "if God permits" in 6:3 raises a note of alarm. While there is still the possibility of "going on," they must be made aware that they are dangerously close to complete spiritual disaster. Hence, in 6:4-6 the author will now confront them with the situation whereby God might cut off the opportunity, thus leaving them to face the severe judgment of God.

(quote by J. Paul Tanner as found at <https://faithalone.org/journal-articles/but-if-it-yields-thorns-and-thistles/>)

Let me say, in addition to that quote, that the text in Hebrews 12 on the chastening of God could be, and most likely is, related to this text here and to those that put themselves at risk of falling away from following Christ and going back to the sin of their past.

Conclusion to this point: Where do you stand in your spiritual growth? The goal in this text was to get the

hearers or readers to consider that point.

As the New Year approaches and we consider where we were a year ago and where we are now in our growth, what has changed? Are we moving forward, stagnant, or going backwards?

II. THERE IS DANGER IF WE DON'T "GO ON" - VS. 4-6

WARNING AGAINST FALLING AWAY

Chapter three uses similar terms as in our text for those that were considered to be in unbelief - those that are stated as having not believed unto salvation, using the wilderness wanderings of the Israelites as an example. The phrase in Heb. 3:12, "in departing from the living God," has in it the word that is found in the English word "apostate." In verses six and fourteen of that same chapter, the writer uses terminology relating to holding one's faith firm or fast until the end. We spent some time on that text to show that the ones that didn't believe in Christ for salvation were those that wouldn't hold fast but would become apostate and turn back from Christ.

Wuest says this of the term "apostasy": "Apostasy is defined as the act of someone who has previously subscribed to a certain belief, and who now renounces his former professed belief in favor of some other which is diametrically opposed to what he believed before. In other words, his new belief is not merely a new system of faith, but one which at every point negates his former belief.

This text in chapter six is not speaking of those that were in unbelief, but as will be seen as connected with the previous text in chapter five, as well as what follows in chapter six, is speaking of and to believers. Some are referred to as those that "shall fall away" - that is,

they will “fall away” in relation to their outward expression of their faith, but they cannot lose their salvation. They did not “fall away” from the grace they had received.

I gave this quote as it related to the context of chapter three (and chapter four) and those clearly stated as in unbelief that didn't hold fast to what they were being taught about Christ as a better high priest: “Apostasy is defined as the act of someone who has previously subscribed to a certain belief, and who now renounces his former professed belief in favor of some other which is diametrically opposed to what he believed before. In other words, his new belief is not merely a new system of faith, but one which at every point negates his former belief” (MacArthur).

When we come to chapter six, the view changes to those that walked away from following the Lord and were back living in sin - saved but practically apostate. This is what is warned against in Heb. 3:13, when the author encourages the readers/hearers of this letter to “exhort one another daily...lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”

Let me make a note here: the use of the personal pronouns change in these verses. The first-person plural personal pronouns are used in the previous verses: “us” and “we.” The same is true in the verses that follow, beginning with verse nine, where it is the first and second plural pronouns: “we” and “you,” etc. In these three verses, the pronouns are third person: “those” and “they” and “themselves” “and “them,” showing that the author of Hebrews didn't regard any of the readers of his letter to have reached that point yet but there were some that were very close to falling away - they were at the door.

A. The emphatic warning - vs. 4a, 6b

“For it is impossible...to renew them again unto repentance”

This is one of the more challenging parts of this text, especially when the temporal judgment view is held (the view that this text speaks of true believers who have walked away from their faith and are in jeopardy of the severe chastening of the Lord).

1. This is the primary sentence - everything between “impossible” and “to renew” are secondary supporting phrases.
2. There are a number of ways this can be considered. I will only mention two.
 - a) One, it is impossible for a believer to get to the point where they could lose their salvation, so it is considered a hypothetical situation.
 - b) Another view, and the one that I believe is more in line with the overall text, is that once a believer has gotten to the point where they walk away from the faith, they will be under that chastening hand (judgment, if you would) of God and there will be nothing more the church or other believers can do for them - they are entirely in the Lord’s hands. This is referenced in verse three.

“In other words, it is impossible for continuous effort on the part of anyone in the Christian community to restore an apostate back to fellowship with God...Continuing Christian immaturity is dangerous.” (Nelson’s Study Bible)

3. Although the word used for “impossible” (ἀδύνατος) can mean, and often does mean, something that cannot be accomplished or achieved, it can also suggest a situational or conditional impossibility, which the context of Hebrews 6 shows.

The impossibility described I believe refers to human inability rather than God's inability. From a human perspective, it is impossible to restore someone entrenched in apostasy. However, God's grace remains available, and restoration depends on His intervention.

This is clearly demonstrated in Matthew 19 when Jesus told the disciples that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven. The disciples reaction was, “Who then can be saved?” Jesus answered in a way that fits our understanding of Hebrew 6:4, 6:

[Matthew 19:26](#)

²⁶ But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, **With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.**

4. “To renew them again unto repentance” – not repentance for salvation (we’ve already covered that – they can’t lose their salvation), but repentance that brings them back into fellowship.

The church at Corinth (1 Cor. 5) faced this issue and they were instructed to turn the man taken in sin over to “Satan for the destruction of the flesh.” They were told to “put away from among

yourselves that wicked person” (vs. 13). This was a believer referred to – not a lost church member.

Matthew Henry said this: “It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance. It is extremely hazardous. Very few instances can be given of those who have gone so far and fallen away, and yet ever have been brought to true repentance, such a repentance as is indeed a renovation of the soul. Some have thought this is the sin against the Holy Ghost, but without ground. The sin here mentioned is plainly apostasy both from the truth and the ways of Christ. God can renew them to repentance, but he seldom does it; and with men themselves it is impossible.”

B. The experienced believers - vs. 4b-5

1. “Were once enlightened”
 - a) This is referring to those that had received the “light of the glorious gospel.” They were believers.
 - b) The fact that they were believers is found in two places here:
 - (1) The word for “once” (ἀπαξ) carries the idea of once for all time.
 - (2) This word is used again in chapter ten, I believe referring to the same individuals as dealt with in chapter six, where it is translated “illuminated” and is clearly speaking of believers.

[Hebrews 10:32](#)

³² But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

2. "Tasted of the heavenly gift"

- a) The heavenly gift spoken of here is that of eternal life as well as the gifts given with the indwelling of the Spirit.

Romans 6:23

²³ For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Ephesians 2:8

⁸ For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

Ephesians 4:7

⁷ But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

- b) The term "tasted" is not, as some say, just tasting but not fulling "eating," justifying the position that these are non-believers. It can be used for tasting as we understand it (Jesus tasted the vinegar on the cross and rejected it), but the term is also used elsewhere in Scripture for fully partaking in its entirety. The clearest of these is earlier in the book of Hebrews (2:9). The context indicates the interpretation.

Hebrews 2:9

⁹ But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

3. "Made partakers of the Holy Ghost" - this speaks of the gift of the Holy Spirit that came with salvation.

a) We saw the term "partakers" in chapter one (verse nine) where it is translated "fellows."

Hebrews 1:9

⁹ Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

b) Here is what I gave on it when we studied that text: The word used here (μέτοχος) is one that is only found one other time outside the book of Hebrews where it is translated "partners." Four of the five times it is found in Hebrews it is translated "partakers" and each of those times it is referring to Christians. So, being anointed "above [his] fellows" points to the truth that He was exalted in position above all others as man.

4. "Tasted the good word of God" - the idea here is speaking of those that have not only seen and heard the beauty and wonder and power of the word of God, but have partaken of it - they have applied its truths to their lives.

Acts 2:41

⁴¹ Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Acts 4:4

⁴ Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand.

1 Peter 1:23

²³ Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

5. Tasted “the powers of the world to come” – this phrase points back to Hebrews 2:4, and the phrase “diverse miracles” (same Greek word as “powers” here). Again, seems to be speaking of believers.

Hebrews 2:4

⁴ God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

6. “If they shall fall away”
 - a) Many, if not most, scholars say this should be considered in the same form as the four participles that are stated in the previous two verses, and that the King James translators simply translated it incorrectly. I disagree with the basis of their argument, as do others more gifted than I am.
 - b) As found in “The KJV Bible Commentary,” edited by Hindson and Kroll: This is a legitimate usage and even a common practice by our author as witnessed in Heb 2:3 and Heb 10:26... The context does allow a difference between the fifth participle and the first four, in that the first four refer to blessings which they have experienced, whereas this one and the following two do not. The very last two [‘seeing they crucify’ and ‘put him to open shame’] are commonly treated as circumstantial with a causal idea.”

The circumstantial clause "seeing they crucify" provides the reason why renewal is impossible

within the context of this passage.

- c) The word for “fall away” (παραπίπτω) is only used this one time in the Greek New Testament. It is a compound word that literally means to fall aside or away; to err, stray, or lapse. This is seen as a deliberate act of someone who knows better, so to speak. If a believer chooses to do this, the consequences are grave.

C. The extreme consequences - vs. 6b

This is the other challenging part of this text (the most challenging for me).

1. I believe this is a hyperbole: a rhetorical device used for emphasis or dramatic effect by exaggerating a statement of situation.
 - a) Theologically, Christ's crucifixion is a once-for-all event (Hebrews 7:27, 9:12). This supports the idea that the phrase is not literal but symbolic or hyperbolic.
 - b) The author of Hebrews frequently uses vivid and forceful language (e.g., Hebrews 10:26-31, where rejecting the Son of God is described in terms of trampling Him underfoot).
 - c) The intention is not to describe a literal event but to emphasize the profound spiritual implications and potential eternal consequences of falling away.
2. “Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh” - someone who chooses to “fall away” from following the Lord demonstrate by that very action the same disregard and disgust for the Lord as those that nailed Him to the cross.

Understanding the phrase as hyperbole emphasizes the dramatic consequences of apostasy but does not imply that Christ is literally being crucified again or publicly shamed anew. Instead, it is saying:

- a) Those who fall away after embracing the faith are acting as if they are siding with Christ's original rejecters, aligning themselves with His crucifiers metaphorically.
 - b) The dramatic wording is intended to drive home the seriousness of such an act. It amplifies the emotional weight of falling away to dissuade readers from taking faith lightly.
3. "And put him to an open shame" - this should be cause enough for the believer to never get to the point where they walk away from their faith. Causing such shame to Christ should make us shudder in dread and fear.

When a person that not only has testified to salvation but has lived as a believer should and then, through whatever circumstances they have endured, walk away from that faith and live like the world around them, they bring shame to the One who hung on the cross for their sins.

III. THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES IF WE DO AND IF WE DON'T "GO ON" - VS. 7-8

ILLUSTRATION OF CONSEQUENCES

- A. Illustration of fruitful land corresponds to the first three verses and those that go on unto perfection - vs. 7.**

1. The terminology in this verse indicates that there is going to be much effort needed to produce the fruit - it takes much effort to grow in the believer's walk with the Lord. It's oft referred to as "labor" because there's always a battle against the flesh and the forces of the enemy to stop us from growing.
2. Although this text overall is a warning to not fall away from our walk with the Lord, this shows the blessing if we remain in Him.

B. Illustration of unfruitful land that corresponds to those that fall away - vs. 8.

1. "But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected"
 - a) This points back to the fall in the Garden of Eden and the curse upon the ground because of it.

[Genesis 3:17-19](#)

¹⁷ And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; ¹⁸ Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; ¹⁹ In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

- b) In this metaphor, the ground that doesn't produce fruit represents the one that has fallen away - here, that one is referred to as being "rejected." This word is translated "castaway" in

1 Cor. 9:27 and means not approved, disqualified, or unfit. It often refers to something that fails to meet a standard or fulfills its intended purpose.

"Rejected" signifies that the field (representing believers who fall away) is deemed unproductive and no longer useful in its current state.

This rejection is not eternal condemnation but a temporal judgment—a recognition that the person or group is currently unsuitable for God's purposes.

2. "And is nigh unto cursing" - notice that the Bible doesn't say is cursed, but is close to it, near to being cursed, perhaps showing that until a person is in heaven, there's always hope.
3. "Whose end is to be burned"
 - a) Not eternally burned in the lake of fire as some teach - that doesn't fit grammatically with the text.
 - b) It's speaking of the unfruitful ground being burned to purge it so that it can be productive, again, perhaps pointing to the opportunity for those that have fallen away to be restored after the chastening.

Conclusion: As stated earlier, although I believe this whole context speaks of believers who have quenched the Holy Spirit and have walked away from their faith back into the worldly living they had come out of, there are good people that believe otherwise. Judas Iscariot is an example of someone who could fit this text but was

probably not saved, so there are exceptions to this rule, but I believe this is the rule.

I believe there are two parts to the perceived judgment that a believer faces that walk away, falls away, from their faith. First, while here on earth, there will be chastisement and loss of peace and fellowship with the Lord. In the future, during the Millennial Reign of Christ, there will be a loss of rewards for service in position during that time. Those who fall away or live unproductive Christian lives may forfeit positions of honor or responsibility then.