

Hebrews

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[0 : 00] We will briefly read some verses in chapter 6 and actually get into the newer material. You've got both sheets, and I'm going to reserve comment for the most part as we just read these.

And be reminded, if you will, the scripture sheet you are looking at is taken from what is referred to as 26th translation, New Testament. And if you will look at your sheet that is labeled at the top, 6a, you will see that therein is the beginning of Hebrews chapter 6.

And be reminded, if you will, that when you read the bold print, like that which you find in verse 1 of chapter 6 there, the bold print is the King James Version, and that is being used as the base version.

And then there are other translations with a slightly different rendering that are listed beneath that. And sometimes when one doesn't click or shed the light that you're looking for, another translation says it just a little bit differently and enables you to connect in a better way.

And that's our reason for using this 26th translation. It gives us multiple renderings of the same verse, and that can be very helpful at times.

[1 : 19] Be reminded also that we pointed out to you that this particular passage is one of the most controversial in all of the New Testament.

It finds believers who are sincerely committed to the truth and the fidelity of scripture, but on both sides of the issue. And there are those who believe that once you have become a true believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are joined with him and you become complete in Christ, you are sealed in him until the day of redemption.

This is referred to as the eternal security of the believer. And that once you are in Christ, you are safe and secure in him. There are good people on the other side of the ledger who believe that once you are a believer in Christ, you can lose your salvation, you can forfeit your salvation by sinful behavior so that you are no longer a Christian.

And the latter group is referred to generally as Calvinists. And then there are some who are kind of somewhere in between.

I guess maybe that's where I am. You would call them Calvinians. So, at any rate, this verse is one of the central passages around which this controversy exists.

[2 : 52] And when you read beginning with verse 1, where the writer of Hebrews says, Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection.

And what I'm doing, I'm just following the King James, the bold print. So, you'll note that if you follow the bold print, you'll be right with us. He is saying, let us go on unto perfection.

The perfection he is talking about has nothing to do with moral perfection. He's not saying, let us go on to sinless behavior.

That's not what he's saying. He's saying, let us go on to spiritual maturity so that we develop and grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, that will no longer be, as Paul wrote to the Ephesians, like children, infants, tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine.

[3 : 54] The idea is for believers in Christ to become solid, stable, fortified, strong, and able to share their faith.

As opposed to being weak and vacillating and undecided and uncertain. Because after all, if someone is not genuinely certain and secure of their own salvation, can it be said that they really have good news to share with someone else?

Our salvation is in doubt only until Christ is the base of it. And when he is the base of it, then all doubt is removed.

And we are in him. And this does not mean that we are sinless, but it does mean that in him, we are accepted in the same way that Jesus Christ is accepted of the Father.

That is our position in him. It is a wonderful position to have and to hold. One that many believers do not appreciate and do not understand. And because of that, they have no security.

[5 : 04] And they have no real confidence that heaven is their home. And when you try to share your testimony sometimes with people, particularly with unbelievers, and you say something like, I know, I know I'm going to heaven when I die.

It is amazing how completely misinterpreted that tends to be. Because to the average person, it comes across as you are saying, I know that I am so good that I've got it made.

I live such a wonderful life that I am sure God will accept me. And that's the way they often interpret that. But what we are saying, in essence, is, I know I'm going to heaven because I am sure of Jesus Christ, and who he is, and what he did.

He is my rock. He is my assurance. And I am not sure of heaven because of what I have done. I'm sure of heaven because of what Christ has done. And my confidence and faith is in him.

It isn't in my behavior or in my good intentions. It's in the finished work of Christ. So, what we've got here is a passage that some believe lends credence to the idea that you can lose your salvation.

[6 : 22] You can forfeit it. So, he says, Let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation, and turn your seat if you will, of repentance from dead works and the faith toward God.

Now, what's he talking about here? He's talking about not going back to the point where you were when you received Christ. That is, when you repented from dead works, and you exercised faith toward God.

That was the initial reality in your life when you came to faith in Christ. That's behind you. That's history. Don't live there.

Move out from there. That's what this whole passage, in fact, that's what much of the whole testament of this, of the epistles of the Hebrews is all about. It is, let us go on.

Let us go on. Let us develop. Let us mature. It's kind of like, it's kind of like, okay, you pull your automobile up to a gas pump.

[7 : 30] You're on the interstate, and you stop at this gas station, and you get a tank full of gas, and now you're ready to move out.

And all you need to do is find that entry and get on the interstate and go. And you've got a full tank of gas.

So, you approach the entry ramp, and you stop. And you sit there, and you idle, and you idle, and you idle, and you idle, and you're slowly burning your fuel.

You're going nowhere. You're making no progress. What you need to do, get on that ramp, and move on down the road. Don't just sit there.

That's what he's saying to the Hebrews. Well, they didn't have entry ramps in that day, but you get the point. The illustration is, we need to move out from square one, and start developing, start maturing, start growing.

[8 : 41] We are to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And when he says, the doctrine of baptisms, this is plural baptisms, and it's rendered immersions, ceremonial washings, cleansing rites, ablutions, and so on.

And all of this had to do with religious ritual that was performed by the Jews in connection with Judaism. And it is part of the ABCs, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment, you've dealt with those things.

Those are behind you. Don't stay there. And this we will do, if God permits. And here is where the sticking point comes. For it is impossible.

For those who were once enlightened, this is talking about spiritual enlightenment. You've heard the old song, praise the Lord, I saw the light.

The light he's talking about is not fluorescent or incandescent. It's spiritual light. It means, I came to the realization of the truth, and the light shined in.

[9 : 57] And that's what he's talking about when he says, for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Spirit.

Listen. The Holy Spirit does not indwell unbelievers. He just doesn't. The Holy Spirit indwells believers.

What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of God? Which you have of God? The temple which you have of God? You're not your own. You're bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Every believer has been cleansed by the Spirit of God in regeneration. Titus 3.5 We become new creations in Christ.

When the Spirit of God comes in, He does something on the inside of us that we still do not understand. But we know we're no longer the same.

[11:01] Something has happened. We are different. And it is a difference that God has made, not one that we have made. We are partakers of the Holy Spirit and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come if they shall fall away.

And some say, with great sincerity and honesty, aha, if they shall fall away. That proves they can fall away.

Because if they couldn't fall away, there wouldn't be any point in saying that. Just hold it just a second. If they couldn't fall away, there wouldn't be any point in saying that. But what we need to keep in mind is that verse 4 establishes the headline for this.

It is impossible for those who were once in life. What is being presented here is a hypothetical. And you need to understand what a hypothetical is.

It simply means in presenting a hypothetical, you say, if thus and so is the case, then thus and so is the result. But the whole point is, thus and so is not the case.

[12:20] That's where this impossibility comes in. And that's going to govern the whole thing. He is presenting here an impossibility, and he is challenging those who are on the receiving end of this to understand that hypothetically, if you could fall away, if such a thing were possible, even though it isn't, but let's just suppose it were, hypothetically, then one thing follows consistently, and that is you can't come back again.

There is no new salvation. There is no new regeneration. In other words, you cannot get saved again. Now, the background of this whole thing has to do with trying to shore up these believers who were Jews into maintaining their faith and their position in Christ in the face of tremendous opposition and persecution they were undergoing.

This is first century stuff, remember. And most of the persecution is from the Jews upon Jews. And the chiefest of those at one time was Saul of Tarsus.

And he was persecuting his own people. And this persecution is going to continue on. And that's what these people are dwelling under. That's what they're living under. That's what they're dealing with. And you know what the temptation is for them?

Scrap it. I mean, I came to faith in Christ. I believed that he was the Messiah. But I'm paying a terrible price for doing that. I've lost my business connections.

[14:10] I've lost members of my family. They think I'm crazy because I see Jesus as the Messiah and they see him as an imposter. And I'm paying a price that I'm no longer willing to pay.

So I'm just going to tell everybody, hey, I made a big mistake. Please forgive me. I'm renouncing my faith in Jesus Christ and I'm coming back to the fold of Judaism.

Well, what the writer is saying is you can't do that. You don't even have that option. That's not available to you. Because you are who you are in him and you cannot walk away from that.

You have but one option. Just one. And that is to go on. to develop, to mature. Let us go on. Now, I told you in our last session that I had some comments from Arnold Fruchtenbaum and I'll be sharing them with you this morning.

Dr. Fruchtenbaum is one of my heroes. He was our tour leader when we went to Israel in 1990. Spent about six weeks there.

[15:20] And he is a man of whom Hal Lindsey many of you know remember Hal Lindsey wrote the late great planet Earth in the 1970s.

Hal Lindsey said of Arnold Fruchtenbaum that there probably isn't a man alive who knows more about ancient and modern Israel than Arnold Fruchtenbaum. And having spent six weeks with him I'm pretty much convinced of that.

That is a true statement. And I'm going to share with you some of his comments because he is able to speak of course from a Jewish perspective to whom these people were to whom this letter is written.

And I think you will find them. And in verse six he says if they shall fall away that's again the hypothetical to renew them again unto repentance.

What would it take? What would it take if it were possible for you to through sin unbelief rejection anything else if it were possible for you to renounce your faith in Christ forfeit your salvation and go back to your old way what would it take in order for you to come back again?

[16 : 41] That's part of the hypothetical. Here's what it would take. it would be necessary to crucify the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame.

That's what would be involved. And Dr. Fruchtenbaum's remarks regarding that I'll share with you now and I think you will appreciate them. He says it is impossible for those who have experienced these five spiritual privileges to lose their salvation and be saved again later.

And those five privileges were those listed at the beginning of chapter 6 that we've already read and those are five things that are true of every believer tasted the world to come and recipients of the spirit of God and so on the other things that he mentioned.

It is impossible for those who have experienced these five spiritual privileges to lose their salvation and be saved again later. The reason first it would require a re-crucifixion of the Messiah and that's what is meant by seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh.

Well that's an impossible concept. That's even crazy to think that way. The re-crucifixion of Christ and doing so would put him to an open shame because first it would mean his first death did not provide a complete salvation and secondly his first death did not save to the uttermost and later in chapter 7 and verse 25 the writer of Hebrews is going to refer to Christ as having saved us and extended our salvation to the uttermost that means to the nth degree that means when Christ saved you you became as saved as you can be and you cannot be more saved no one is more saved than someone else you're either saved or lost and if you are saved you are just as saved as anyone else is because

[18 : 58] Jesus Christ did a complete work he didn't do most of it and leave part of it even a little bit for you to finish Jesus paid it all and if you could fall away and then at some later time you could be saved again alright let's say the heat's on and you have been put upon to renounce your faith in Christ after all it's cost you money and your business it's cost you friends and family and why don't you just turn your back on Jesus Christ apologize to all these people and they will receive you back with open arms and then later on when the heat's off and everything dies down you can get saved again no you can't that is not an option in the first place you cannot get saved again because when you are saved you are saved to the uttermost and if we could fall away and at some later time you could be saved again thus a new salvation would erase the responsibility and judgment of the lamps in other words that would cover your betrayal that would be included in your new salvation you're having turned your back on

Christ you'd be forgiven for that but since you cannot fall away and be saved again you must go on to maturity and be bearing fruit in other words look it would be a really terrible thing and a serious thing for me to apostatize to apostate walk away from the Christian faith turn my back on Jesus Christ but when the heat's off and things get back to normal I can get saved again and that's exactly the argument that some are using but what he is saying is such would indicate that his first death did not save to the uttermost you must go on to maturity and be bearing fruit this gives a natural force to the word for in verse four why we must go on and secondly it is in keeping with the context speaking about babyhood and wasted years the only thing they could do is go on so the idea of what he's thinking of and he's posing this as a hypothetical if you could walk away from Christ betray him turn your back on him apostatize that would be a great sin right but then you could get saved again and that sin would be forgiven and that's not the way it works and that's the point that he's making here so what is the bottom line and what is your only choice move out stop sitting there idling your engine move out grow mature get on down the road that's what he's talking about speaking of babyhood and wasted years the only thing they could do was to go on if it were possible to fall away and then be saved again which it is not then you could start all over and remove your past mistakes but since it is not then you must be warned about how you are now living and you must go on consequences of neglect will be dealt with at the judgment seat of the Messiah all of us have varying degrees of faithfulness and unfaithfulness to our Lord and in our Christian life and I am sure that every one of us just because we are human beings we have areas of weakness moral weakness in our lives because none of us has arrived and we all have the sin that doth so easily be set and I am sure that they are very varied but the point that is being made

here is that as we grow and mature in Christ the whole point and objective of this development is more and more Christ-like practice if you are not more like Jesus Christ this year than you were last year you're not growing you're not developing now nobody is worrying about having arrived I've been in this thing called the Christian life for a little over 60 years and no one has ever mistaken me for Jesus yet I don't expect to be either but I tell you what I would like to think that there has been some progress some growth some development over those years and you know what you never outgrow your need for growth we've all got room for improvement we've all got room for more development we've all got room for more change we've all got room for becoming more like the master after all one of the very driving forces of our salvation is that we might be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ that's what it's all about someone has said that God loves his son so much that he's going to populate people heaven with people like him and then we will be the finished product that we are not now alright

[25 : 06] Joe you have something to offer yeah I still have problems okay the way he uses you have taste that's just a taste they didn't take it in and nourish it and digest it you know completely okay so I think we're talking about people here that you know they just seem like they didn't really you aren't using that light for their lives they know there's a light there and they've got a taste of this it's like you said you're going to say grow that they're very beginning and they can maybe fall away at this state in other words they're not really believers yet I guess that's what I'm saying they are not really believers yet and if you go on in scripture it talks about the wheat thorns and so forth how some of them and that ties in with the parable of the sowing of the seeds remember the sowing of the seeds on rock or unfertile soil and it sprung up for just a little bit it looked good but then boom it fitted away but that was in good soil so there's some kind of point being made here that you can almost be a little faith and not make it and yet have you need that deep faith

I might quite understand that okay I see where you're coming from but what I would suggest is some of the alternate readings here and I I would I would inject this word taste with with an alternative and what I think is being communicated is not merely the idea that you have tasted in other words you're thinking in terms of sampled yeah sampled like tasted even partakers I go to a wine thing and I'm not a drinker at all and I don't but they have I was on this bus round and they gave us a little so I was a partaker of a little of that wine but am I a drinker of wine no I never got into wine don't drink it I don't do anything with it but I did partake of it when I had this little wine tasting so I'm not a believer in drinking wine never doing it I appreciate that I think he's talking about these people on the edge I think I think what he's talking about is that these individuals have experienced these five realities that are common to all believers and that having tasted of the heavenly gift literally means in fact

Williams renders it this way and have experienced the gift of heaven and the 20th century New Testament says and learn to appreciate the gift from heaven Amplified says who have consciously tasted the heavenly gift so I would say in reference to what you're saying that this taste was an experience and the experience was a salvation experience these are true believers and they are in Christ and I guess that's where I would differ with you Joe I think that the tasting of this heavenly gift means they have experienced the heavenly gift and in other words that has become a part of them and even if you are sampling and if you are tasting you are still imbibing it it still becomes part of you maybe it's a very small part but it is something that begins the process and I think that's the point that's being made here so yeah yeah well that's that's a possibility

I could probably do that briefly you've got your breakfast delivered get cold go right ahead and eat thank you ladies for the terrific service you always provide for us and they can eat while I'm talking okay the Latin the Latin language expresses belief on three different levels and I don't have an overhead to put these on but you can just mentally make your way through them if you will but the first level of belief is referred to as noticia in the Latin N O T I C I A and if you see a similarity between the word noticia and the word the English word notice is because there is one and that means in order for someone to believe and become the faith they have to be notified that's another word that's related to noticia they have to be notified that is they have to be informed about the reality of

Jesus Christ who he is and what he did and why it matters so they are put on notice they haven't made any kind of a decision at all they have just heard that Jesus is the Christ the son of God second word is ascension a-s-s-e-n-t-i-a from that word we get the English word assent which means to agree with it means to hear what you have been notified of and you agree with it you give

assent to it but that is still not the necessary level of belief all it means is you have heard that Jesus Christ died for your sin and you agree with that you say I agree with that I believe that but the third word is the one that seals the deal and it is the Latin word fiducia f-i-d-u-c-i-a fiducia and it is the word from which we get the English word fidelity it's a term that a lot of banking institutions use in their name it is savings and fidelity company that simply means that they want you to trust them with your money they are saying we have fidelity and it's the word from which faithful comes you've seen pictures of a dog house with the name

[31 : 53] Fido over the top of it well that's where Fido got his name dogs are known to be faithful and when you call a dog Fido you're calling him faithful we had a had a dictator 90 miles from Florida who passed away not too long ago his name was Fidel and comes from the same word fiducia as does the word fidelity and by the way if one is an infidel that is the opposite of faith he has no faith that's how Muslims regard us as infidels because we do not embrace Islam so anyone that does not embrace Islam is an infidel so when you look at that third word fiducia it requires a commitment you have been notified you believe that it is true what have you done about it that's the sticking point it isn't until you do something about what you have been notified and what you agree with by way of making a commitment to it that's the response of faith that is the faith that is the belief that saves up until that time one is not regenerated it isn't until the commitment is made based on what you understand and believe so there are a whole lot of people probably running around with two thirds of belief but they've never made the commitment and you make the commitment as an act of your will it is a deliberate volitional decision and

I want to close with this illustration when you stood at the altar with your intended and the vows were repeated and you were asked will you or do you take this woman to be your lawful wedded wife if you fail to respond there's no commitment there's no marriage it may have been a wonderful engagement and a wonderful planning for the wedding but until those words are uttered I do as an act of your will no marriage takes place it is the same way in coming to faith in Jesus Christ it is an expression of your will it is a volitional intentional decision and it makes all the difference in this world and in the world to come