

Making sense of Hebrews 6 and 10 (part two of a five part series)

This study will seek to confirm the distinction proposed previously. Namely, that the “loss” the Hebrews were in danger of suffering was not that of salvation but opportunity. Let’s first consider the opportunity still available to those within this group, if there were any at all, who were guilty of a false profession of faith. The warning contained in Hebrews 6:4-6 is severe –

“For in the case of those who have been once enlightened and have tasted the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.”

This describes an exposure to the gospel designed to bring about conversion through the proclamation of salvation, under the conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 15:26-27; 16:8-11). But instead of conversion, there is a rejection, described in v6 as a “falling away.” This rejection, if prolonged to the point of becoming permanent, carries with it the potential loss of any further opportunity for experiencing a conversion to Christ.

The word “impossible” in v6 is non-negotiable. It is the Greek word “adunatos” and is used in Hebrews 6:18 in regard to the impossibility of God being a liar, in 10:4 regarding the impossibility of the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin, and in 11:6 of the impossibility of being able to please God without faith. So the warning to those who were in the process of manifesting the falsehood of their profession, in falling away from their brief attachment to the Christian community is clear: **the door of opportunity for salvation is about to be closed shut, never to be opened again. So repent and believe before it is too late! The time is now. Today is the day of salvation! (2 Corinthians 6:1-2)**

Does this rule out a death bed conversion experience? Not at all. But it does indicate the following: the one converted on that death bed was never previously guilty of the “falling away” described in Hebrews 6:6. On the other hand, if the author of this epistle designed the warning of Hebrews 6:4-6 with a dual purpose in mind, then the loss of salvation needs to be added to the list of impossibilities mentioned above. Why? You can’t lose something you never had, no matter how close you may have come to acquiring it. If their disingenuous and temporary adherence to Christianity did not bring them into the possession of salvation, then the abandoning of their charade did not cause them to lose it.