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Hebrews 6:4-8

4. “For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,
5. and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,
6. 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.
7. For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God;
8. but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.”

Today we will examine two very important truths that are brought out in this passage. First, it is possible for a Christian to fall away from the Lord Jesus Christ, and to be lost forever. And secondly, this passage gives God’s definition of the state and condition of one who is so lost.

Verse 4 states, “For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit.”

Now these parameters certainly define someone who has become a Christian. And as a partaker of the Holy Spirit, they were at one time Christians in the strictest Biblical sense.

Verse 5 continues describing these Christians as “having tasted the good word of God and powers of the age to come.” Then verse 6 says of these Christians, “And then have fallen away.” In the most clearest of terms then, this passage of Scripture points out that Christians can, and some do, fall away from Christ.

Verse 6 then goes on to describe the state of those who fall away: quote: “It is impossible to renew them again to repentance.” These people who once were Christians, find themselves in a position where they are unable to repent and return to the Lord Jesus. The Bible speaks of the deceitfulness of sin, and how a person, and even Christians, who willfully practice sin, become hardened in their hearts. The end result is that a person reaches a point where he cannot repent even if he wants to.

Such was the case of Esau, who is discussed later in the book of Hebrews, Chapter 12. Speaking to Christians, the Hebrew writer states in Chapter 12, verses 16 and 17, “That there be no immoral or Godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears.” Though he

sought for repentance, he could not find it within himself to repent and therefore he was rejected. So it is for the Christian who falls away from Christ.

Note here that according to God's own definition of "having fallen away" in Hebrews 6:6, if a Christian can and does repent--then he has not completely fallen away, and therefore is able to return to Christ. The call to Christians to repent is sounded clearly in II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow about His promise, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

God's message here is very straightforward; even Christians must repent--that is confess and forsake their sins--or perish! True, on-going Biblical repentance must be a way of life for all Christians if we are to grow together to the fullness of the stature that belongs to Christ .

The writer of Hebrews then goes on to give his readers hope and encouragement to never fall away from Christ: "But, beloved, we are convinced of better things concerning you, and the things that accompany salvation, though we are speaking in this way. And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence so as to realize the full assurance of hope until the end." Hebrews 6:9-11