

**"Our Great High Priest"**

**Part 12**

**Hebrews 4:14-8:5**

**Introduction:** Tonight as we continue to study the book of Hebrews we return again to Hebrews 6:1-8 which is probably the most difficult passage in the Bible as well as the most controversial passage of the Bible. There are many different views of this passage and if we were to read 10 different commentaries we would probably find 10 different interpretations of the passage.

Tonight as we work our way through this passage you will have a good understand of the text when we get to the end to night.

Now let me walk you through a quick review of the **CONTEXT** of the passage and then we will get to the meat of the text tonight.

This passage started in **Hebrews 5:11-14** and in these verses we looked at the consequences of the divided allegiance of the Hebrew believers. They were divided between Christianity and Judaism. This divided allegiance caused major problems within their lives. There were 4 consequences which we looked at in these verses.

1. **They had become dull of hearing.**
2. **They went backward in their spiritual growth.**
3. **They were unskilled in the Word of God.**
4. **They were unable to discern between good and evil.**

The writer then takes his readers into Hebrews 6:1-2 and in these verses we were able to see the remedy for their stunted growth.

**Notice Hebrews 6:1a**

Here the writer calls on the Hebrew believers to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and press forward onto maturity. Now we looked at this verse the last 2 weeks and we consider what the writer meant when he exhorted them to leave these principles. He was calling on them **NOT** to abandon them but to build upon them for they were the foundation of their new life in Jesus Christ.

Now let me remind you here that we must think with Jewish minds as we work our way through this book. With that said we must remember that the writer has in his mind the experience of Israel in the wilderness. God had called Israel out of Egypt and He called Moses to lead them. It was God's desire for Israel to walk by faith and enter into the land of Canaan which was a picture of blessing and victory. In Canaan Israel would represent God to the entire world. But Israel failed to trust God and when they arrived at Kadesh Barnea they chose not to enter the land. Therefore, the generation that refused to enter would wander through the wilderness for the next 38 years and all of their numbered men would die.

This is what the writer fears will happen to these Hebrew believers he is writing to. They were facing the persecution and they were not trusting God. For that reason they were like Israel at Kadesh Barnea. They were contemplating going back to the sacrificial system of the Old Covenant just as Israel desired to return to Egypt. These Hebrew Christians were called to represent God to the lost and dying world around them. To press forward in the face of the persecution would bring great blessing but to turn back would have dire consequences. So the writer is trying to pull them along in their faith. He has told them to build upon the foundation which has been laid and press on to spiritual maturity.

The writer then goes on to point to 4 pairs of doctrines they were to move on from.

#### Notice Hebrews 6:1-2

1. **Repentance and faith toward God.** - These were the basic doctrines of salvation.
2. **Baptisms and laying on of hands.** - These most likely referred to practices of Judaism in which there was ceremonial washings and laying on of hands on the sacrifices.
3. **Resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment.** - These were the doctrines which pertained to the future.

These were all great principles but they were foundational and the new life in Christ was to be built upon these. Now we come to the verses for tonight.

#### I. The Danger of Going Back to the Old Sacrificial System.

#### Notice Hebrews 6:4-5

Now the first thing we need to do as we enter into these verses is to decide who the writer is addressing here. I mention this because there are many who say that in this

warning the writer is addressing those who were NOT saved. They teach these people were almost to the point of trusting in Jesus Christ.

But if we look at how the writer describes these people I believe it leaves no doubt they were saved people. Let me show you some quotes made by Bible scholars on these verses.

**W. H. Griffith Thomas** - *"These 4 statements clearly imply a real and a definite spiritual experience."* He goes on and says, *"There seems to be no doubt that this section of the Bible is not concerned with mere PROFESSORS but true POSSESSORS of Christianity"*

**M. R. DeHaan** - *"If that is not a description of true born again believers then language means nothing and we cannot understand anything in the Word of God anymore."*

Let us look closely at the description of these people which the writer gives here.

1. **They were once enlightened.**

Let me show you the meaning of the word "**enlightened**" according to Vines.

1. *to give light, to shine*
2. *to enlighten, light up, illumine*
3. *to bring to light, render evident*
  - a. *to cause something to exist and thus come to light and become clear to all*
4. *to enlighten, spiritually, imbue with saving knowledge*

When the Bible tells us they were once enlightened it means that God opened their eyes to the cross and salvation and therefore they were saved. Let me show you how the word is used in another verse by the writer of Hebrews.

**Hebrews 10:32**

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

Here the word is translated "**illuminated**" and it refers directly to the salvation experience. So I believe there is no doubt to be enlightened is a reference to salvation.

2. **They had tasted of the heavenly gift.**

The heavenly gift no doubt refers to eternal life. Let me show you how we can know this.

**Romans 6:23**

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

Now some would say that they only **TASTED** of the heavenly gift and so they were not really saved. My reply to that would be another verse in Hebrews.

**Hebrews 2:9**

<sup>9</sup> *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.*

The question is, "When Jesus tasted death did He really die?" The answer is, "YES!" So when the Bible tells us these people tasted of the heavenly gift then we must conclude they were completely saved.

**3. They were partakers of the Holy Ghost.**

We can safely say that there are no unbelievers that have partaken of the Holy Spirit.

**Romans 8:9**

<sup>9</sup> *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*

Let me show you some other verses where the word "partakers" is used.

**Hebrews 3:1**

*Wherefore, holy brethren, **partakers** of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus:*

**Hebrews 3:14**

<sup>14</sup> *For we are made **partakers** of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;*

Both of these verses are clear that to be a "partaker" is to be born again.

**4. They tasted of the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come.**

Again the word "tasted" confirms that these people truly saved people. They had fed upon the Word of God and they had seen the power of God in their lives. These experiences are not found in the life of an unbeliever.

#### Notice Hebrews 6:4-6

The writer tells us here that it is impossible for those who were saved and who then fell away, to renew them again unto repentance. Let me explain what the writer is saying here. We need to remember several points to grasp this. First we must understand the CONTEXT. These people were contemplating going back to the old sacrificial system. That would be the "falling away". We also must understand that the writer has in his mind experiences of the Old Testament. I will show you these in a moment.

Here is the point the writer is making: he is telling them that if they turn back to Judaism then they may miss out on blessings and even if they later change their minds their decision may be irreversible. Let me give you 3 examples from the Old Testament.

1. **When Israel came to Kadesh Barnea they refuse to trust in God and enter into the land. It was then impossible to go back and reverse their decision.**

#### Numbers 14:29-34, 39-45

<sup>29</sup> *Your carcasses shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward which have murmured against me.*

<sup>30</sup> *Doubtless ye shall not come into the land, concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun.*

<sup>31</sup> *But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised.*

<sup>32</sup> *But as for you, your carcasses, they shall fall in this wilderness.*

<sup>33</sup> *And your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms, until your carcasses be wasted in the wilderness.*

<sup>34</sup> *After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of*

<sup>39</sup> *And Moses told these sayings unto all the children of Israel: and the people mourned greatly.*

<sup>40</sup> *And they rose up early in the morning, and gat them up into the top of the mountain, saying, Lo, we be here, and will go up unto the place which the LORD hath promised: for we have sinned.*

<sup>41</sup> *And Moses said, Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the LORD? but it shall not prosper.*

<sup>42</sup> **Go not up, for the LORD is not among you;** *that ye be not smitten before your enemies.*

<sup>43</sup> *For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD, therefore the LORD will not be with you.*

<sup>44</sup> *But they presumed to go up unto the hill top: nevertheless the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and Moses, departed not out of the camp.*

<sup>45</sup> *Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah.*

2. **Esau sold his birth right and it was impossible to reverse his decision.**

### Hebrews 12:16-17

<sup>16</sup> *Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

<sup>17</sup> *For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: **for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.***

3. **Moses made a decision to strike the Rock the second time and his decision was impossible to reverse.**

### Numbers 20:11-12

<sup>11</sup> *And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts also.*

<sup>12</sup> *And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.*

### Deuteronomy 3:23-26

<sup>23</sup> *And I besought the LORD at that time, saying,*

<sup>24</sup> *O Lord GOD, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness, and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?*

<sup>25</sup> *I pray thee, let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon.*

<sup>26</sup> *But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.*

**Application/conclusion:**

If these Hebrew believers turned back and God closed the door they would miss out on the blessings of God. There was an opportunity for them to experience great blessings from God but if they turned back to Judaism and God shut the door no amount of repentance would be able to reverse their decision.

God places opportunities before us also and when we do not walk by faith through the open door we may lose the opportunity to experience the blessings of God. Even if we later repent it may be too late for God may close the door completely on our opportunity. This is why it is so important to get involved in the church and serve when you have the opportunity. If you continue to allow opportunities to pass you by God may just place you on a "shelf" and you will miss the blessings which God has for you here.