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## HEBREWS 6:4-8

### (INTRODUCTION TO THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SECTION OF HEBREWS 6 - VERSES 4-8, WARNING)

#### INTRODUCTION

Hebrews 6:4-8, and verses 4-6 particularly, is considered to be one of the more difficult passages in the Bible to understand. The MEANING and MESSAGE of these verses, both DOCTRINALLY and PRACTICALLY, have from the earliest times in the church been debated and disagreed upon.

There have been THREE GENERAL POSITIONS regarding these verses and their teaching.

1. There were those in the early church who understood the author here to be teaching that a person who committed such heinous sins as adultery, murder, idolatry, or who under threat of death denied the faith, were never again, not even upon repentance, to be admitted into the communion of the Church. They understood the teaching of this passage to be that there was NO REPENTANCE from such sins.
2. As well there have been those throughout the history of the Church who understand these verses to teach that a true believer may lose his or her salvation. The difference between this view and the previous is that this view teaches if one repents of their sin they may be admitted back into the fellowship of the Church.
3. The third general view is that the ones being referred to here were never true believers though GRACIOUSLY and GREATLY acted upon by the Holy Spirit.

In our study of these verses, we will 1) Note the CONNECTION of them to what preceded in the discourse of the author; 2) Determine WHO is being spoken of in them; 3) Consider WHAT is being said concerning them; 4) Draw the appropriate CONCLUSION respecting them.

As we move through our study of this passage, we must seek to not be controlled by the various views concerning it nor interpret it in a manner that is contrary to the clear teaching of Scripture elsewhere.

We begin by noting the CONNECTION of our passage to what has preceded it.

#### I. CONNECTION TO PRECEDING VERSES.

In respect to the connection of what has gone before note the opening word of our present text, **“FOR.”** In the word **“FOR”** which begins verse four the author is CLEARLY CONNECTING WHAT HE HAS JUST SAID to what he is NOW SAYING. And what is the import of this? The author has just said that he is going for the present time leave off the teaching of the FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, and is going to TEACH THOSE DOCTRINES which lead to and produce PERFECTION, MATURITY. He is now, in verses 4-8, going to further explain WHY he is doing this. This is the use of the word **“FOR”** in this place. The word **“FOR”** as used here by the author of Hebrews means ‘BECAUSE.’ He is in effect saying we are going to lay aside the principles of the doctrine of Christ and teach those doctrines which lead to maturity BECAUSE... He now gives added explanation to his stated purpose.

It is important to observe at this point that the author of Hebrews is not declaring that he thinks this is the condition of those to whom he is writing. To the contrary, he later says in verse 9 that he is persuaded of better things regarding them, **“BUT BELOVED, WE ARE PERSUADED BETTER THINGS OF YOU, AND THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION, THOUGH WE THUS SPEAK.”** As we move forward in our text, we will see his further explanation in these verses is for the NECESSARY PURPOSE of WARNING THEM concerning the pattern of those who after making an outward profession of the FAITH later fall away. The PATTERN is that they are such who after their initial profession MAKE NO OR LITTLE PROGRESS IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOSPEL AND OBEDIENCE TO IT. His WARNING to the Hebrews is that they have been slow in making progress in doctrine and obedience and therefore they need to recognize the danger of continuing in their slothful condition. Their condition is the condition of those who GENERALLY LATER FALL AWAY FROM THE FAITH. But, as just pointed out from verse nine he is persuaded better things of them. His warning is NECESSARY TO STIR THEM UP GIVEN THEIR CONDITION.

FIVE QUICK PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS from this.

A1) THERE IS AN OBSERVABLE GENERAL PATTERN CONCERNING THOSE WHOSE PROFESSION OF FAITH IS FOUND TO BE FALSE.

B2) IT WILL MAKE NO DIFFERENCE TO THOSE WHOSE PROFESSION IS FALSE IN THIS PLACE THAT THE FIRST PRINCIPLES SHOULD BE TAUGHT THEM AGAIN. THEREFORE, IT IS BOTH RIGHT AND IMPORTANT FOR THOSE WHOSE PROFESSION IS TRUE TO TEACH THOSE DOCTRINES WHICH LEAD TO PERFECTION, MATURITY.

C3) THE INSPIRATION OF SCRIPTURE HERE TEACHES US THAT THERE ARE WARNINGS WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR THOSE WHOSE PROFESSION IS TRUE BUT WHO ARE BEING SLOTHFUL IN GROWING IN DOCTRINE AND OBEDIENCE IN THE FAITH - AND THAT TO ENABLE THEIR GROWTH AND PERSISTENCE IN THE FAITH.

D4) THE AUTHOR IN WHAT HE IS ABOUT TO SAY IS GIVING AN EXPANDED DESCRIPTION OF THE CONDITION AND REALITY OF THOSE WHO ULTIMATELY LEAVE THE FAITH.

E5) THE AUTHOR IS NOT HERE TEACHING THAT A PERSON CAN LOSE SALVATION RATHER WHAT IS OR CAN BE TRUE OF THOSE WHO MAKE A FALSE PROFESSION OF FAITH.

Let us now consider WHO is being spoken of by the author of Hebrews and exactly WHAT it is he says concerning them.

II. WHO IS BEING SPOKEN OF.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THEM OR WHAT IS BEING SAID CONCERNING THEM.

These two matters we will consider together. And here the author proceeds to TELL US FIVE THINGS OF GOSPEL PRIVILEGE that belong to those whose profession of faith is ultimately found to be false. But before we consider these particularly let us note: 1) that notwithstanding these things, and contrary to their effect upon those who are subject to them, one may still reject the Faith. 2) That the judgement of such persons is *unavoidable and righteous* especially given the privileges they have been subject to.

3) That the things mentioned here are unique to the GOSPEL. The mention of the HOLY SPIRIT in this place and what is connected to it respects Paul's words in Galatians 3:2, **"THIS ONLY WOULD I LEARN OF YOU, RECEIVED YE THE SPIRIT BY THE WORKS OF THE LAW, OR BY THE HEARING OF FAITH."** 4) There is NO MENTION IN THESE VERSES OF FAITH OR OBEDIENCE on the part of those concerning whom the author is writing. Nothing is said here of their JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION or ADOPTION. 5) That when the author later in verse 9 speaks of his persuasion concerning the Hebrews to whom he writes he speaks of the **"THINGS THAT ACCOMPANY SALVATION"** distinguishing those things from what he has just said concerning those who leave the Faith and thus indicating that what he has just ascribed to those who leave the Faith ARE NOT THOSE THINGS WHICH DISTINCTLY ACCOMPANY SALVATION. 6) In speaking of those things which accompany salvation and is evident in the lives of the Hebrews to whom he writes, he refers to the FRUITS OF FAITH. This is what is being referred to in verse 10 in the words, **"YOUR WORK AND LABOUR OF LOVE,"** and this he does not ascribe to those of whom he writes in verses 4-8 who leave the Faith. 7) Finally, he speaks of God's FAITHFULNESS to these Hebrews to whom he writes - IMPLYING GOD HAS A RIGHTEOUS OBLIGATION TO THEM, one which he did not to those previously mentioned. Clearly implied is the idea that God is in COVENANT WITH THESE HEBREWS AND MUST PRESERVE THEM FROM FALLING AND ETERNAL RUIN. Of those afore mentioned no such thing is said.

We will consider in our next lesson PRECISELY WHAT IS BEING SAID in the things mentioned in verses 4-8 concerning those who ultimately reject the Faith and are eternally lost.