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THE DANGERS OF FALLING INTO THE CARNAL LIFE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF ACTS
HEBREWS 6:4-6
NUMBER 85

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HEBREWS 6:4-6 "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

This message of Hebrews was the last warning that came to the legalistic Jews in Jerusalem before they were destroyed in 70 A.D. They had a great and mighty experience on the day of Pentecost but they faded quickly because they failed to learn doctrine. Their failure was their disorientation to the grace of God and the plan of God. This is why they were destroyed in 70 A.D. and scattered all over the world. This is why the Lord brought in the Church to replace them. They failed to give the gospel to the world and God raised up someone else who would carry out his plan. So the Epistle to the Hebrews was God's warning to the Jews of their coming disaster.

In the last part of Hebrews 5 we discovered that these Jews had gone on negative signals and they refused to learn Bible doctrine. As a result they developed a vacuum in their souls and thereby lost their power. Into this vacuum was drawn legalism and this is what destroyed the Jerusalem Church. They were described as people who were dull of learning. They needed to get back in fellowship, forget their carnality, confess their sins, and begin to learn Bible doctrine. In our last study we saw the list of the six basic doctrines they needed to learn. Leaving the A B C's of Christ they needed to move on and learn how to apply doctrinal truth to their every day living. They needed to learn the doctrine of Repentance Toward Dead Works. They needed to learn that there was no place in the plan of God for dead works, for human works. These people were ignorant of doctrine, therefore, they were capable of only producing human works and human good. These great doctrines they had neglected must be renewed. They had to learn these doctrines before they could become mature believers. In Hebrews 6:4-6, in order to understand the exact meaning of the language we need to make a close study of the construction of these statements. The author is talking about Christians who have gotten out of fellowship with God and are living in carnality. He is not talking about people who have been saved and have slipped back into unbelief. There is no such thing in Scripture. In these three verses there are five aorist participles. Remember that the aorist participle always precedes the action of the main verb. The list of five aorist participles goes like this. For the main verb we have a noun for an infinitive--"IMPOSSIBLE" Remember, verses 4 through 6 all form one sentence. The force of the language is that it is "DEFINITELY IMPOSSIBLE", and this is a noun being used as a verb. "To restore again" and this is an infinitive and makes up the main verb. Now these five aorist participles must come before the main verb. The main verb here is followed by two present, active participles and these show the kind of carnality of which these people in Jerusalem were guilty. You see, in our study we have digressed for several lessons to make a study of the Jerusalem Church to see what was wrong with it and why all this legalism. Why did God have to move the Christian and missionary center from Jerusalem to Antioch? Why did God have to punish Paul so severely for that trip back to Jerusalem where he took a vow in the Temple?

This language we are about to examine in depth shows that they had gotten out of fellowship. They had been tempted to go back to animal sacrifices in order to protect their business and social interests. They left off learning doctrine and reverted to the shadows. They had fallen to the temptation to go back to ritual and animal sacrifices. By going back to animal sacrifices they were saying that the work of Christ was not sufficient. They had moved down to the weakness that comes from carnality,

and they were living under the control of the old sin nature.
 The results were twofold--"They crucified the Son of God afresh"
 "They put him to an open shame"

They were living in carnality, out of fellowship, and were not under the control of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

These first four aorist participles are going to illustrate that these Jews did nothing to get back in fellowship with God.

The writer says it was "Impossible" for them to get back in fellowship. This is a singular neuter noun in the emphatic position. The word is "Adunaton" and means they had no power to get back into fellowship.

Let us look at these participles.

1. HAVING ONCE BEEN ENLIGHTENED.
 This is an aorist--passive--participle. The word "enlightened" here is "Photizo" and means to receive enough enlightenment to be saved. In a point of time they had received enough light in order to believe and be saved.
2. THEY HAD TASTED THE HEAVENLY GIFT.
 This is an aorist--middle--participle. They didn't drink the whole cup, just tasted a little of it. It is used here in this sense--that in order to possess the whole of salvation all you have to do is taste a little bit of it. In this same sense we read, "Christ tasted death for every man". He is not talking about unbelievers here, but born-again believers. They had tasted Christ. The believers were not strong. It was Christ who was strong. But these new baby Christians had tasted of salvation, and the middle voice denotes that they were benefited by being saved.
3. WERE MADE PARTNERS WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.
 This is an aorist--passive--participle. This means that at the moment they were saved God gave them the Holy Spirit and they received this gift from God
4. HAVE TASTED OF THE GOOD WORD OF GOD AND THE POWER OF THE WORLD TO COME
 This is an aorist--middle- participle and this means that once they had learned all these things, and that knowledge of doctrine is the most beneficial thing for the Christian in all the world. Once they learned these things then these things should have formed for them a way of life. The phrase "Good word of God" comes from the word "rema" and this means a technical word for doctrine. So they had learned basic doctrine in the past. They had been filled with the Holy Spirit. But like so many people today, they had one foot in the kingdom and one foot in legalism. The phrase "Power of the world to come" simply refers to the Millennium Age.
 In verse 6 we now have the fifth of these participles.
5. IF THEY SHALL FALL AWAY
 The word is "parapipto" and means to fall away from the immediate source of himself. In other words, a man must say goodbye to the Holy Spirit before he comes under the spell of the old sin nature. The Holy Spirit cannot solicit to sin. You see, this participle is active voice and it means if you fall away, you have to do it yourself. You are in the top circle. You have been saved, and you can't get out. So this is talking about the bottom circle, the place where you have fellowship with God. They fell from the ultimate source of themselves, and this has nothing at all to do with salvation. So these participles all say one thing--These were born-again people, but they had failed to learn doctrine, had failed to rely on the Holy Spirit, and therefore, they had gotten out of fellowship with God.

Now once this happened, the main verb says that it was "Impossible" to renew them again, or to restore them again. The word is "anakainaizo". It is impossible to get back in fellowship again unless they go back and relearn all these doctrines and apply them to their daily living. So this is a rebound passage. This is a passage showing that if people ignore Bible doctrine and take things in their own hands that they will become carnal Christians and there is no way to get them restored again. "To restore them again unto repentance" means a complete change of mental attitude. It means to change their thought pattern about God and life. Repentance here refers to this whole list of doctrines we have studied

Repentance from dead works
 Faith toward God
 The doctrine of baptisms
 The laying on of hands
 The resurrection of the dead
 Eternal judgment

So these people were crucifying the Son of God afresh and they were putting him to an open shame. But Christ was crucified once and was never to be crucified again. But they were going back to the temple and were offering up sacrifices and therefore were saying the cross was not adequate. Therefore, they constantly put Christ to shame with this activity.

Let us read the passage one more time--

HEBREWS 6:4-6 "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

So these verses say that though they were saved, though once they tasted of these doctrines, they had failed to learn them and apply them to their lives. Therefore, they were out of fellowship and in such state, without learning and living by these doctrines, it was impossible to renew them again to fellowship with God. The passage does not refer to salvation at all, it refers to the Christian who fails to learn doctrine and live by doctrine can never be in fellowship with God.