

Hebrews 6:1-8

Let's first read the passage together:

Heb 6:1-8

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do, if God permits. 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.

What are your **first impressions**?

What things need to be **further explained** before we can draw conclusions about how this passage relates to our subject of eternal security?

OK so let's begin our assessment of the passage.

WHO?

Let me submit to you that Paul is dealing with two distinct (completely different) groups of people in Hebrews 6:1-8.

Hint: he directly addresses one group, while he talks about the second group.

To help us with this, let's now read the rest of chapter 6 together:

Heb 6:9-20

There is a very simple way to distinguish between the two groups. Pay attention to the pronouns!

What pronouns are used in verses 1-3? By the way, you will also find these pronouns in verses 9-20.

What pronouns are used in verses 4-6?

What does this tell us? (Which group would you rather belong to?)

Paul speaks directly to the "us/we/you" crowd.

He talks about the "those/them/they" crowd.

Verses 7 & 8 give an illustration (metaphor) . What is it?

A metaphor teaches something about the main subject in terms of something familiar to the audience.

The metaphor is used to distinguish between the first and the second group.

Ground that brings forth useful vegetation equates to which group

The “us/we/you” group.

Ground that yields thorns and thistles is equated to....

the “those/them/they” group.

What things tell us that these groups are fundamentally different from one another?

Which group is described in a way that leads one to think that they will not be saved?

What are the severe consequences awaiting this group?

Verse 6. Right?

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.

And what does this equate to in the metaphor about the ground?

it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

So...

What is **the first question** we need to answer about this group?

1. **Were they at one time saved? Had they been believers in Christ?**

What would the second question be?

2. Are verses 4-6 (and 8 by way of illustration) dealing with **eternal salvation**?

Finally, the third question would be:

3. Does this passage teach that a believer can **lose the blessings of salvation**?

Let's examine the **evidence**.

1. **Were they at one time saved? Had they been believers in Christ?**

This group is described in five (5) ways:

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,

So the bottom line is: do any of these things guarantee - without a doubt - that a person is saved?

They had once been enlightened.

Does this mean they once were saved?

The Greek word for enlightened here is *photizo*. The literal meaning is to shine a light on something. TO bring something to light. To make someone see or understand something.

This word is used in **John 1:9 – 11**

They had been enlightened that Jesus was their Messiah.

Does being enlightened about these things mean that they once were saved?

What is NOT said about them?

That they BELIEVED in CHRIST.

They have tasted of the heavenly gift.

Tasting something is not the same thing as receiving something permanently. It means to experience something. It certainly does not mean believing.

There is no information in this section of Hebrews that tells us what this heavenly gift was. However, we see in Romans 6:23 what the gift of God is: **eternal** life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

They tasted this gift but did not drink it! John 4:10,14

They were made partakers (companions) of the Holy Spirit.

They were companions of the Spirit for a time.

This could refer to the convicting ministry of the Spirit: John 16:7-11.

Notice what this passage does NOT say about them and the Spirit.

They were not regenerated by the Spirit.

They were not indwelt by the Spirit

They were not sealed with the Spirit.

They were not baptized by the Spirit into Christ's body.

They were companions of the Spirit for a time. They were aware of Him and His work. But finally they fell away and were rejected by God.

Just like king Saul was.

Or like Judas was.

They had tasted the good word of God

They heard it. They enjoyed some things about what the word of God said.

But again, no belief. Just tasting.

5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,

They had tasted the powers of the age to come.

This means that they experienced some of the miracles that were associated with the Messiah and will be in evidence when He sets up His kingdom.

See Hebrews 2:1-4; Isaiah 35

Great miracles were also performed by the apostles, particularly Peter and Paul.

There were Jews who tasted – experienced, witnessed – these miracles but then hardened their heart against the message, against the Lord Jesus, and against the messengers.

8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.

I want you to see who Jesus said yielded thorns and thistles:

Matt 7:15-20

False prophets. Unbelievers. They professed to know God but their “fruit” – thorns and thistles – revealed that they were detestable and worthless.

They professed to be sent by Christ, but the Lord never knew them.

These were Jews who professed to believe in Christ. They said they did. They hung around the saints for a while. They experienced the miracles and the power of the Holy Spirit. (See Heb 2:1-4)

They were even convicted by the Spirit (John 16:7-11)

They were brought all the way to the point of believing before they walked away from Christ.

They permanently cut themselves off from Christ. He was dead to them.

Once again they took their stand with those Jews who cried for His blood and mocked Him at Calvary.

And the Bible does teach that Jews will have their opportunity to believe and if they reject Christ they will be hardened.

Acts 13:16, 40-52

Acts 18:6

Acts 28:17-28

They remained unbelievers!

Like the Jews Jesus spoke of in Matthew 7:21-29:

Matt 7:21-29

They had a taste of what Christ offered but ultimately backed away without believing in Him or receiving from God any of the blessings of salvation.

They had been enlightened

They had tasted the heavenly gift

They had been a companion of the Spirit

They had tasted the good word of God

They had even tasted the powers of the age to come

God exhausted every means to bring them to believe in Christ, and they rejected each and every one of them.

What is NOT said about them?

That they believed in Christ

That their sins were forgiven

That they were born again

That they received eternal life

That they were justified (Declared righteous by God)

That they were indwelt by the Holy Spirit

That they were sealed with the Holy Spirit

That they were saved or sanctified