

Apostasy, But Better Things to Come!

Hebrews 6:4-12

Our Context

We heard last week the importance of advancement to spiritual maturity. Today, two reasons are given for this necessity.

- 1. Negative: a warning against apostasy (vv.4-6), and;**
- 2. Positive: the hope of still better things (vv.9-12)**

Hebrews 6:4-12

Our Context

The first part of this pericope is the Negative! It's a warning against apostasy (vv.4-6). You will notice that these three verses is a single sentence!

Contained in this sentence are five past tense clauses that describes those who cannot be renewed, which we will study. Following these clauses are two present tense clauses that give the reason why they cannot be renewed.

Hebrews 6:4-12

Our Context

Between the negative and positive reasons for advancement to spiritual maturity is, for the lack of a better term, The Hebrews Parable (vv. 7-8)

It compares the congregation with well-watered land and it, too, is a single sentence.

Hebrews 6:4-12

Our Context

Lastly, is the positive necessity to advance to spiritual maturity. As the preacher has done before, he joins with the congregation by the use of an exclusive ministerial “we” as he addresses them quite warmly as “beloved ones!”

There are two very important rhetorical devices found in this section (vv. 9-12). He uses five participles that describe the process for initiation of disciples. And then he reminds them not to be “sluggish” (νωθροὶ) from last week.

Hebrews 6:4-12

Our Outline

I. The Consequences of Apostasy (4-6)

A. Impossibility of renewal (4-6a)

B. Implications of Apostasy (6b)

II. The Hebrews Parable (7-8)

A. Blessing of the earth (7)

B. Burning of the earth (8)

III. The Teachers Conviction and Desire (9-12)

A. Conviction about their reception of better things to come from God (9-10)

B. Desire for their eagerness to receive full inheritance from God (11-12)

A Dire Warning!

⁴For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put *Him* to an open shame.

Hebrews 6:4-6

But First...A Dire Warning!

⁴For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit...,

What does
this mean?



Hebrews 6:4

But First...A Dire Warning!

⁴For *it is* impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit...,

Two Possible Meanings:

- 1. It's impossible for any human minister to restore an apostate disciple by the minister's power or by even God's power!**
- 2. More likely though, it is not possible for God to do so, not because He lacks the power, but because that would be inconsistent with His character (cf. 6:18) and contrary to what He has already accomplished by the sin offering of His Son, Jesus (10:26-29)!**

But First...A Dire Warning!

You Must Remember:

- 1. There is NO second baptism! Apart from Jesus Christ and union with Him in baptism there's no new way of renewal, no other basis for repentance! A baptized person who ultimately rejects Jesus...rejects salvation!**
- 2. God is just and true; He cannot and will not lie! So God will only offer to the apostate what they reject: The Holy Spirit, His Word, and His Sacrament!**

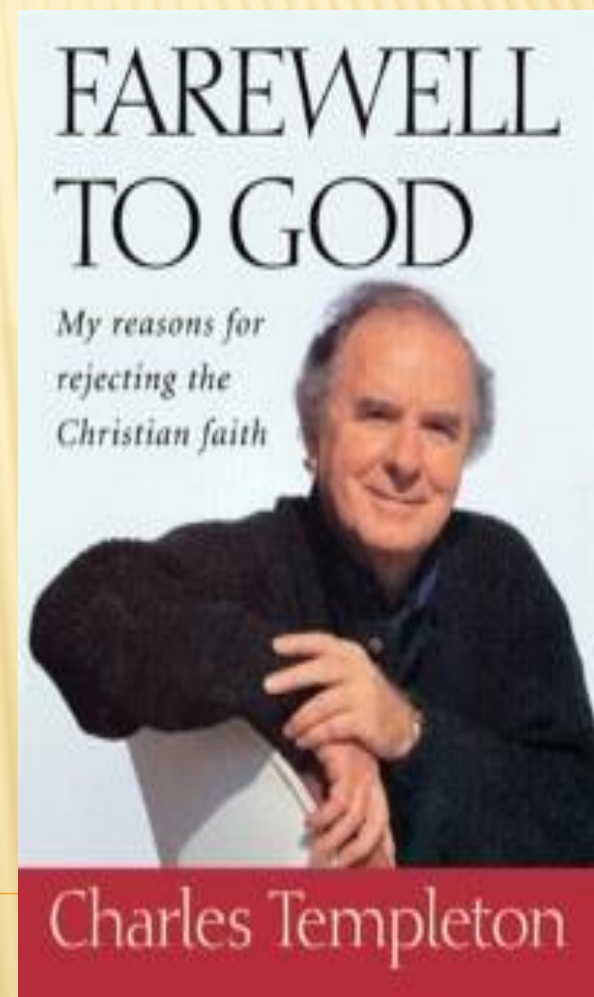
Hebrews 6:4

But First...A Dire Warning!

The State of the Apostate

...having been enlightened, ...having tasted then of the heavenly gift... having become partakers of the Holy Spirit...having tasted the goodness of God's word, also the power of the coming age...having fallen away...

Five Clauses for those who cannot be renewed!

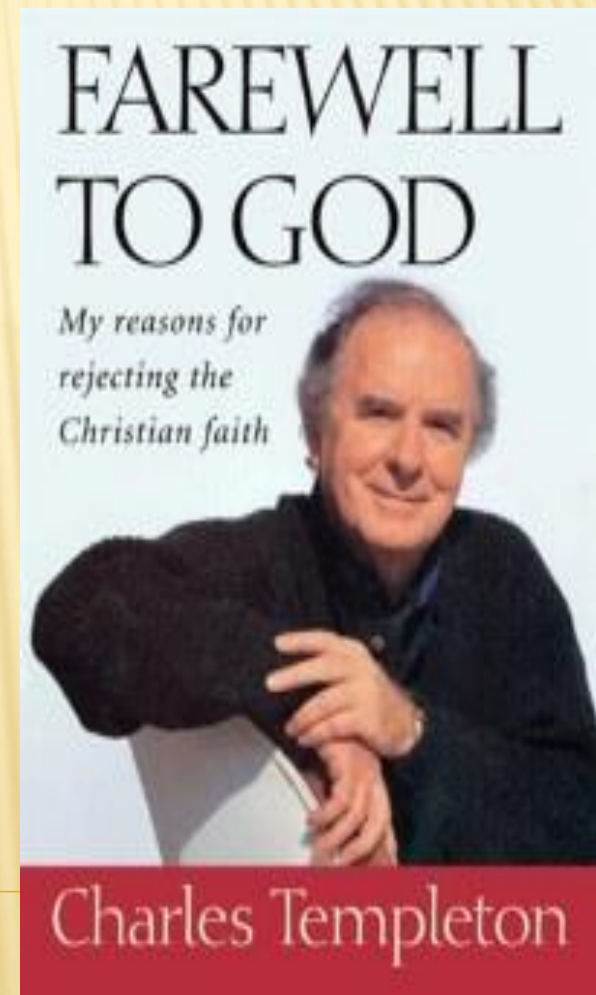


But First...A Dire Warning!

The State of the Apostate

...having been enlightened, ...having
tasted then of the heavenly gift... having
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**Five Clauses for those
who cannot be renewed!**



But First...A Dire Warning!



So the preacher in Hebrews is warning the congregation that the one who renounces their faith, deliberately, by cursing Jesus & worshipping another god, whether it be for advancement before the world or to escape persecution will not be renewed!

The Gravity of Apostasy

is depicted by two graphic Greek present tense Participles:

ἀνασταυροῦτας = crucifying – They don't physically crucify our Lord, but side with those who did! They, therefore, approve of those who did by rejecting His claim as the Christ. They can never leave the deed behind...they are stuck with it for eternity!

παρδειγματίζοντας = putting Him to public shame – Out of fear that they would be exposed to public shame, if they confess Jesus as their Lord, they pour contempt on...they curse Jesus!

The Gravity of Apostasy



The Gravity of Apostasy

In reality, dearly beloved, an apostate is committing ...

**Spiritual
Suicide**

The Hebrews Parable!

⁷For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; ⁸but if it bears thorns and briers, *it is* rejected and near to being cursed, whose end *is* to be burned.

Hebrews 6:7-8

A Hebrews Parable!

The Comparison of Two Kinds of Soils:

- 1. Both “drink” that being the live-giving water of the Holy Spirit.***
- 2. Both receive the very same water...
...but the results are different!***

Hebrews 6:7-8

A Hebrews Parable!

One bears
“fruit” that is
useful. They
receive a
blessing
from God!
They are
doubly
blessed:
with
salvation
and with
good things
that come
from
salvation!



Useless
vegetation
that is
harmful.
Their fruit is
worthless,
rejected,
destined for
burning!
Thus they
are unfit
and will be
consumed
by fire!

By a person's “fruit” are they known

	Hebrews 6:4-8	Hebrews 10:26-31
Privileged status of those who are warned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Those once enlightened... + who have tasted the heavenly gift... + who have received the Holy Spirit... + who have tasted God's Word and the powers of the age to come. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Those receiving the knowledge of the Truth
The Nature of Apostasy	<p><u>Reject God:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + By crucifying God's Son! + By putting Jesus to public shame 	<p><u>Sinning willfully by:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> + Trampling on God's Son + Desecrating the Blood of the Covenant + Outraging the Spirit of grace
The State of Apostates	No restoration or repentance	No further sacrifice for sins
The Penalty of Apostasy	<i>Cursed by burning with fire rather than God's blessing</i>	God's judgment by fire against them as His enemies; rather than vindication by Him!

The Preachers Desire for the Congregation

**His conviction about their
reception of still better things
from God & His just reward for
their labor (vv.9-10).**

Hebrews 6:9-12

The Preachers Desire for the Congregation

His desire for their eagerness to
receive their full inheritance
from God by imitating their
faithful ancestors (vv.11-12).

Hebrews 6:9-12

Our Conclusion

Two Thoughts

First, we must be careful not to use this text out of context! Yet, the Church must hear this stern warning. It is sad that this text isn't included in our liturgical order, since it is very helpful in warning complacent Christians about the gravity of disowning their Lord Jesus Christ.

This warning needs also to be heard by the greater Church, which has become ambivalent to the gravity of apostasy and the enormity of gross idolatry!

Our Conclusion

Secondly, SSLC has much to gain by way of encouragement from this text. It reminds us of the heavenly riches that are offered in Holy Baptism and received in Divine Service. You are, indeed, blessed saints who continue to share in God's holiness! Thanks be to God!