

58-06-01.wpd --Things That Accompany Salvation  
salvation, apostasy, perdition, repentance, faith, love, works  
Heb 6:4-12  
God wants salvation to produce in us a lived-out love.

### **INTRODUCTION:** [text read as Scripture reading]

--**Text** was written in *plain* Greek, translated into *plain* English, and means what it *plainly says* in **v.4-6**: "*It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.*

--**Some say** this refers to *saved people who got lost again*, but that **it's still possible** for them to repent and get right with God. **Others say** this refers to *people who only claimed to be saved and later denied the faith they pretended to have, without ever experiencing real salvation*. These two viewpoints neglect what's *plainly* written. The word "impossible" means impossible, and if people can't be "brought back" to something, they at least must have once been where they can't be brought back to.

--[Even the early church fathers tried to get around what was written by assuming "repentance" meant **baptism**: "*It's impossible*," they said, *to repeat baptism, but there's always the hope of repentance.*"] No one wants to admit what these verses plainly say, because, if there's a point of falling away with no hope of return, that's **frightening!** Well, let me tell you...

### **I. A Scary Story** [it's taken from the chapter called "A Tale of Two Evangelists" in Dr. Ruth A. Tucker's book, *Walking Away From Faith*]

- A. [Chuck Templeton, at 19, left a job as a sports cartoonist for the Toronto Globe to enter the ministry in the Nazarene Church and become an itinerant evangelist throughout North America. He returned to Toronto to plant a church that started with 12 people and quickly grew to over 1200. He partnered with Billy Graham to start Youth For Christ. Later he went to Princeton Theological Seminary and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church. While there he debated the captain of the Yale debating team on the merits of Christianity, and won!] To me, this sounds like someone who has "*been enlightened, who [has] tasted the heavenly gift, who [has] shared in the Holy Spirit, who [has] tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age*" Even to Billy Graham, Chuck Templeton fit the description of a Christian.
- B. [YET, despite this testimony, after 19 years of ministry, Chuck Templeton

denied his faith and left Christ.] Can a Christian really do that, fall away from the faith? **Yes**, according to the clear wording of this passage in Hebrews. [Chuck not only fell away but began to oppose Christianity. We were in Canada when he published his novel, *Act of God*, which denied Christ's divinity and resurrection. In 1996 he wrote his last book, *Farewell to God: My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith*. 5 years later, in June of 2001, Chuck Templeton died with Alzheimer's, **and** with no sign of repentance.]

**TRANS: v.7-8**, Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned. 2 evangelists, like those two lands, drank in *salvation: one fell* from it; the other *fulfilled it*. That's both *scary* and *hopeful*, because it says in **v.9**, *Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case--things that accompany salvation*. What is *salvation*?

### **II. Salvation Is a Journey That Begins and Needs to Be Completed**

- A. We begin to be *enlightened*-- *Enlightenment* can become *guidance*, or the seeds of a *proud heart*. [Childish: "*I know something you don't!*"]
- B. We begin to taste *the heavenly gift*-- What is that *gift*? Rom 6:23b, ...the gift of God is eternal life **in** Christ Jesus our Lord.
  1. Eternal life isn't a *thing we possess* but a *relationship we have with Christ*-- If our tie with Christ is dissolved, so is our *eternal life* which exists only in our relationship with Him.)
  2. [Holy Communion is not a meal just to taste but to feed on all our lives. If we wander away in sin, our repentance brings us back, not to the initiating waters of baptism, but to the Lord's Table. For those who *fall away* entirely from faith in Christ, any time they spent at Communion was only a *taste*.]
- C. We begin to share *in the Holy Spirit*-- The Holy Spirit helps us live for God, but we are still free to say either "*yes*" or "*no*" to Him.
- D. We begin to taste *the goodness of the word of God*-- God's Word is an invitation to faith. Salvation starts as a taste, but if unbelief cuts us off from our food supply, we *starve* to death-- "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Mat 4:4)
- E. We begin to taste *the powers of the coming age*-- Resurrection power is what the future is all about, but we get a taste of it now, when we die to our old life, and are raised to a new life in Christ [symbolism of baptism]. To *fall away* from that *new life* would be (v.6) *crucifying the Son of God all over again*, which impossible.

**TRANS:** God saved us for a *new life*, not to "*take it or leave it*," but to *live it out* from start to finish. It's a life made of the *things that accompany salvation*. What are these *things*? What must *salvation* produce to assure us that we, as this passage puts it, "*inherit what has been promised*"?

### III. God Wants Salvation to Produce a Lived-out Love

- A. **Salvation** is by faith, but faith must be **accompanied** by works-- James 2:15-17, Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, **faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead**. (This is love in action, not just in *words* or *feelings*, but practically demonstrated.)
- B. Love, as the work of faith, is top priority for Christians, because:
1. It identifies us with God-- 1 John 4:8, Whoever does not love does not know God, because **God is love**. (Salvation's goal is to make just like the loving God who is saving us.)
  2. Love is what really matters in the Christian life-- Gal 5:6, For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.
- C. Love is a cooperative effort of our faith and God's power:
1. God's salvation provides the fuel, our faith ignites it-- Rom 5:5b, ...God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us. (Faith says "yes" to the Spirit, unbelief says "no.")
  2. God wants us to take the cooperative arrangement seriously-- Phil 2:12b-13, ...continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

### CONCLUSION:

--The writer of Hebrews didn't suspect any Chuck Templetons among his readers. He says in **v.10-12**, God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. **He was reminding them, and us, what our salvation is for: to produce a lived-out love.**

That *love*, God's love, "poured out...into our hearts by the Holy Spirit," is salvation's work of faith, and for every believer, it's an ongoing challenge that's met only by keeping it as life's top priority.

Heb 6:4-12 (NIV) It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, {5} who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, {6} if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. {7} Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. {8} But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned. {9} Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case--things that accompany salvation. {10} God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. {11} We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. {12} We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.