

Backslider Worse than Unbeliever

Hebrews 6:1-12 (vv. 4-8)

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I. Historical Context and Biblical Background

A. Historical Background

One *persistent* and *recurring* behavior of the Israelites throughout their history was going back to their old ways! They had a peculiar way of **looking back** and **yearning** for the old life they had under Pharaoh. What is so striking about that is this: *they were **yearning** for the harsh treatment and degrading life under the yoke of slavery!* They keep forgetting how the Lord delivered them from Pharaoh with His Glorious Ways and Mighty Hand! What is *disturbing* about that was this: *they were **yearning** to go back to Pharaoh's cruelty, oppression and exploitation even as God was leading them to the Promised Land!* They **complained** and **grumbled** when they faced few challenges choosing to forget the Mighty God who delivered them out of Egypt was Present with them! If God allowed them to go back, Pharaoh would have treated them worse than what they had experienced before! The terrible thing about this *persistent and recurring behavior* is this: ***the Israelites were yearning to go back after they have heard, seen and tasted the Mercy, Grace and Goodness of God!*** Because they were **backsliders**, the Israelites who witnessed the many miraculous things that God performed and how God destroyed Pharaoh did not make it to the Promised Land!

B. Biblical Context

Concerning False Prophets/Teachers who once believed in Christ and then decided to *betray* Him and *falsify* His Word, the Bible says the following in 2 Peter chapter 2.

“... If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known

the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: “A dog returns to its vomit,” and “A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud” **2 Peter 2:17-22**. “It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness” because the way of redemption will not be available to them a second time!

II. The Lesson: Backslider Worse than Unbeliever

Last week, Rev. Rhyne did a marvelous job in highlighting how the Hebrews were still needing Baby Food instead of Meat after many years of being in the Faith. We all know that as the baby begins to *physically grow*, he/she needs to be fed *solid nutritious food regularly*. If the child doesn't get solid food proportionate to the need of his/her physical growth, it leads to **malnutrition**, i.e., not growing physically in proportion to the age; weaker mental/intellectual ability; thin body frame; weakened immune system; loss of smell, taste and sight; life threatening condition unless situation changes drastically. The same is true in the development of our Faith: **we cannot afford spiritual malnutrition!** The Bible indicates in chapter 5, verses 11 through 14 that the Hebrews were “**slow to learn**” and still needing someone to teach them “**the elementary truths of God's Word all over again.**” *They lacked Spiritual Maturity because they stopped growing in the Knowledge of Christ! They became spiritually malnourished! They were in danger of relapse! Regression!* For the Believer to grow in Christ, he or she has to feed on the Word of God regularly!

There is something good to be said of those who regularly attend Sunday Morning Bible Study and Wednesday Bible Study: that is their willingness to learn and eagerness to grow in the Knowledge of Christ! **All of us in here understand that Learning and growing in the Know of God is a Life-Time process.** *That is why we are here every week! We cannot have enough of the Word of God! That is why we keep on coming back for more!*

Let us now examine the 12 verses and receive what God has to say to us today for our own benefit.

1. vv. 1-3. **Transition from Basic to Advanced Principles of our Faith.**

The disciples of Christ must develop from the **basic** to **advanced** principles of our faith, *progressively*. When we first came to Christ, we were *babes in the Faith* needing to be fed “milk” as opposed to “meat” as appropriate. The Bible says, *as babes in the faith*, we need to be fed **the basic principles of our faith** such as:

- a) the “foundation for repentance from acts that lead to death,”
- b) “faith in God,”
- c) “instruction about Baptism,”
- d) “laying of hands,”
- e) “the resurrection of the dead,” and
- f) “eternal judgement.”

In time, we must progress to learning more **advanced principles/doctrines of our Faith** such as the ones gloriously stated, for example, in Romans, Colossians, Ephesians, Hebrews and Revelations! I am so glad that we have been studying the Scriptures book by book and chapter by chapter in Sunday Morning Bible Study! I am so glad that we have Wednesday Bible Study and various classes during the week where the faithful can be fed the **Advanced Doctrines of our Faith**. Those of us who have been feeding on the Word of God regularly have been *maturing* in our Knowledge of Christ year after year! *Consequently, we have been sinning less and less and took on the likeness of Christ more and more! Prayerfully, we will make fewer mistakes in our relationship with others and become good examples to them!* Growing Spiritually will cause us to **love** God *deeply*, **praise/worship** our Lord *genuinely*, **serve** *faithfully* and **advance His Kingdom** with *wisdom, understanding and knowledge*.

2. vv. 4-6. **Warning! Those Who Fall Away Cannot be Brought Back!**

To Fall Away from the Faith is to reject the Son of God who died on the Cross to make a way for the Redemption of sinners by faith. The Bible says, “**it is impossible**” for those who reject the Faith and go back to their old ways “**to be brought back to repentance**” once again! **This is a stern warning to Backsliders!** The position of a **Backslider** is totally different from the Unbeliever because the **Backslider** *had*

experienced the Love, Mercy, Grace and Glory of God through Jesus Christ. In verses 4 and 5, the Bible says the **Backslider** has:

- a) “been **enlightened** of the Truth of God; **translation**, once you know the Truth, you cannot say ‘I don’t know how bad, dangerous and destructive lies, lying, and deception are!’ Once you have been *enlightened* about the beauty, purity, benefits and power of the Truth, you cannot claim ignorance! Rejecting the God of Truth is choosing to align oneself to Satan, the Father of all lies. **The Unbeliever didn’t know the difference**; therefore, God will give him/her the opportunity to repent by accepting Jesus Christ as his/her Savior and Lord.
- b) “**tasted** and shared the heavenly Gift – **The Holy Spirit**; for the Backslider who “tasted” the Presence of the Holy Spirit and His Fruit (Love, Joy, Peace, Goodness, etc.) and shared the Fellowship of the Believers, **rejecting Him is unforgivable!** In Matthew 12, verse 31-32, Jesus said, “And so I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ...” The **Unbeliever** didn’t experience the Presence, Power and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. He or she neither knows nor experience the **radical transformation** believing in Christ and the Fruit of the Spirit brings! Therefore, the **Unbeliever** has the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ and be redeemed!
- c) “**tasted** the goodness of the Word of God; again the Backslider has *experienced* the Power of the Word of God and the benefits it already brought to his or her life. The Backslider by rejecting all of that only to go back to his or her old ways risks going past the line of No Return! The Bible says, “It is impossible to be brought back to repentance!”
- d) “**tasted** the Powers of the coming age.” This is in reference to the New Testament Era where the Redeeming Power of Christ and God’s Plan of Salvation has been declared and demonstrated in abundance!
- e) **Verse 6**. States that “it is impossible” for the Backslider “to be brought back to repentance because to their loss, they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subject Him to public disgrace.”
Translation: Jesus Christ is not coming back to be crucified again

for the Backsliders! He has done it once and for all! The Backslider, by rejecting Him and going back to his or her “vomit” has already *disgraced* the Blood of Christ which redeemed him or her! Asking for Repentance again after sliding back is like asking for Christ to be crucified “all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace!” Asking for Repentance again is like saying the Blood of Christ didn’t have the Power to redeem him or her the first time! Asking for Repentance again is like saying the Word of God doesn’t have the Power to transform the lives of sinner! This is a stern warning to those who are in the process of “falling away” from the Faith!

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3. vv. 7-8. The Soil which Bears Thorns and Thistles is Worthless!

God Redeemed us in Jesus Christ so that we can be fruitful for the His Kingdom! God saved us and blessed us so that we can be a blessing to others! The Bible makes it abundantly clear that the Believers who don’t bear fruit for God’s Kingdom risk being cut off and burned since they are worthless. Verse 6 says, “**But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end, it will be burned.**” In John chapter 15, verses 1 through 17, the Bible gives us the clearest understanding of this truth. **All of us must heed such warnings in Scripture!**

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III. Conclusion

4. vv. 9-12. Persevere in Your Faith, Diligence and Patience

The Good News is that God is Just and will not forget our good deeds. Even though we may falter sometimes, yet we shall remain faithful to Christ! Even though being fruitful for the Kingdom of God can be difficult, we shall be diligent in doing good as we serve! Even though the fulfillment of God’s Promises take time sometimes, we shall practice patience!

Psalm 40:1-5