

## Hebrews Lesson 7 Articles

Heb 6 Note from the beginning that the issue here is repentance, not salvation: “For it is impossible ... to renew them unto repentance” (vv. 4, 6). If this passage is talking about salvation, then it is teaching that a believer who “loses salvation” cannot regain it. This means that salvation depends partly on our own works and, once we lose salvation, we can never get it back again.

But the subject of the chapter is repentance—the believer’s attitude toward the Word of God. Verses 4–5 describe real Christians (see 10:32 as well as 2:9, 14), and v. 9 indicates that the writer believed they were truly saved. We do not have “almost saved” people here, but real believers.

The two key words in v. 6 are “fall away” and “crucify.” “Fall away” is not the Gk. word *apostasia*, from which we get the English word “apostasy.” It is *parapipto*, which means “to fall beside, to turn aside, to wander.” It is similar to the word for “trespass,” as found in Gal. 6:1 (“if a man be overtaken in a fault [trespass]”). So, v. 6 describes believers who have experienced the spiritual blessings of God but who fall by the side or trespass because of unbelief. Having done this, they are in danger of divine chastening (see Heb. 12:5–13) and of becoming castaways (1 Cor. 9:24–27), which results in loss of reward and divine disapproval, but not loss of salvation. The phrase “seeing they crucify” (v. 6) should be translated “while they are crucifying.” In other words, Heb. 6:4–6 does not teach that sinning saints cannot be brought to repentance, but that they cannot be brought to repentance while they continue to sin and put Christ to shame. Believers who continue in sin prove that they have not repented; Samson and Saul are cases in point. Hebrews 12:14–17 cites the case of Esau as well.<sup>1</sup> Instead of frightening saints into thinking that they are lost, this chapter warns against unbelief and an unrepentant heart. It also assures us that we are anchored in eternity.

The marks of maturity are not found in an encyclopedic knowledge of the Bible, nor even a full grasp of the significance of our shadowy friend Melchizedek, waiting in the wings. Rather, they are seen in an ability to make moral judgments and not to be caught up in the childish wranglings and jealousies of the world. Baby Christians are in constant danger from a devil who delights to distract the people of God (see Eph. 4:14). So let God through his Word and Spirit help us to grow up. The world in this century, as in the first, needs to be confronted by a strong, mature church.<sup>2</sup>

**Dull** comes from the Greek *nōthros*, which is made up of the words for “no” and “push.” Literally, therefore, it means “no push”—slow, sluggish. When used of a person it generally meant intellectually numb or thick. In the context of this passage, however, it primarily indicates spiritual dullness.

These lethargic unbelievers have many counterparts today. People hear the gospel and are stirred and excited. Spiritual understanding appears to begin, but the more they hear it without accepting it, the more spiritually sluggish they become. They neglect to act on the truth they know and become more and more hardened to it, often while claiming to admire and respect it. They become more and more insulated from spiritual truth and understanding, and from spiritual life itself.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). *Wiersbe’s expository outlines on the New Testament* (692). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>2</sup> Hacking, P. H. (2006). *Opening up Hebrews*. Opening Up Commentary (34). Leominster: Day One Publications.

<sup>3</sup> MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1983). *Hebrews*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (130). Chicago: Moody Press.