Apostasy

A Christian, to fall away [become an apostate], would have to do two things:

1) He would have to have a mature knowledge and understanding [*epignosis*] of the things pertaining to Christ’s coming reign over the earth.

2) He would then have to apostatize after the same fashion in which the Israelites apostatized (looking away from Moses and the land [an earthly land], back to Egypt; *i.e.*, looking away from Christ and the land [a heavenly land], back to the world).

**They were in *possession* of what could only be looked upon as a mature knowledge of the *whole* of that which was in *view*. They understood their calling and that which lay out *ahead*. And it is at this *point* that they fell away and, within the framework of that which is stated in the antitype in** [**Hebrews 6:4-6**](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-6&t=NKJV)**, found it *impossible* to be renewed “again to repentance.”**

**Apostasy***If They Fall Away*
**By Arlen Chitwood of** [**Lamp Broadcast**](http://lampbroadcast.org/)

**An Apostasy with Far-Reaching Consequences**

[Hebrews 6:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-6&t=NKJV) is looked upon by numerous Christians as possibly the most *difficult* and/or *controversial* passage in all Scripture. And the reason *why* the passage is looked upon after this fashion is because of an *erroneous* interpretative approach. The passage is invariably approached from the standpoint of teachings *pertaining* to the Christians’ *presently* possessed eternal salvation — salvation “by grace through faith.”

The passage though, *doesn’t* deal with this subject. And, not dealing with this subject, it is understandable *why* those who seek to interpret the passage from the standpoint of teachings pertaining to salvation by grace through faith find themselves in *unfamiliar* surroundings. And not only is this the case, but they often, as well, find themselves being *forced* into *erroneous* views concerning salvation.

Then, beyond the preceding, the correct subject matter is *not* even being dealt with. Rather, by and through this *erroneous* interpretative approach, the *correct* subject matter is, instead, completely *obscured*. And such can only *foster* the present work of the enemy as it is outlined in [2 Corinthians 4:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=2Corinthians+4.4&t=NKJV) — *blinding* the minds of Christians relative to “the gospel of the glory of Christ” (NKJV; ASV). Contextually, [Hebrews 6:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-6&t=NKJV) *must* be looked upon as dealing with four basic issues surrounding Christians, from the standpoint of *possibility* (“*If they fall away . . . .*”):

*First*, the Christians referred to in this passage *must* have come into a mature knowledge and understanding of the things *pertaining* to Christ as King-Priest, “*after the order of Melchizedek* [a position that Christ will realize only during the coming Messianic Era]” ([Hebrews 5:6ff](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.6ff&t=NKJV)).

*Second*, these same Christians *must* fall away, apostatize.

*Third*, after these Christians fall away, they can *never* be *restored* to the position from which they *fell*.

*Fourth*, such a falling away would *negatively* reflect on Christ Himself.

These four issues will be dealt with under *two* subsequent headings. The first and second will be dealt with under the *first* heading, and the third and fourth will be dealt with under the *second* heading.

**Once Enlightened…but Fell Away**

Certain descriptive words appearing in verses four and five make it virtually *impossible* to look upon these verses as *describing* unsaved people.

There is the word, “enlightened” ([Hebrews 6:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4&t=NKJV)), which used in [Hebrews 10:32](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+10.32&t=NKJV) is translated "illuminated." And according to [1 Corinthians 2:14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=1Corinthians+2.14&t=NKJV), “the natural man” *cannot* be enlightened or illuminated in spiritual matters. Then, beyond that, the passage is *dealing* with things *other* than the “milk” of the Word; it is *dealing* with the “solid food (KJV: ‘strong meat’ [*epignosis*])” of the Word ([Hebrews 5:12-14 KJV](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5.12-14&t=KJV)).

Then there is the word, “tasted” ([Hebrews 6:4-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-5&t=NKJV)). This is the *same* word used for Christ tasting death “for everyone” in [Hebrews 2:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+2.9&t=NKJV). The experiences entered into by those in [Hebrews 6:4-5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-5&t=NKJV) *must* be looked upon as a tasting to the same extent that Christ tasted “death” at Calvary. The latter *was* full and complete, and the former *must* be as well.

And the *last* descriptive word is “partakers” ([Hebrews 6:4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4&t=NKJV)). This is the *same* word translated “companions (KJV: ‘fellows’)” in [Hebrews 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1.9&t=NKJV) and “partakers” in [Hebrews 3:1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3.1&t=NKJV), [14](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3.14&t=NKJV). These are *translations* of the Greek word *metochoi*, which could be *better* rendered, “companions.” It is used in [Hebrews 1](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+1&t=NKJV); [3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3&t=NKJV) *describing* Christ’s co-heirs, His companions, in the coming day of His power.

Being “enlightened,” tasting “of the heavenly gift,” *being made* “partakers of the Holy Spirit,” *tasting* “the good Word of God,” and *tasting* “the powers of the world [‘age’] to come” *form* a description of Christians *progressively* coming into a mature knowledge and understanding of the things *pertaining* to Christ as the great King-Priest “after the order of Melchizedek” from [Hebrews 5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5&t=NKJV). It, thus, has to do *with* Christians *coming* into a mature knowledge and understanding of Christ and His companions’ coming reign over the earth.

Then, spiritual lessons pertaining to the possibility of Christians falling away *after* coming into this mature state is drawn from the type dealt with *prior* to the introduction of Melchizedek in [Hebrews 5](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+5&t=NKJV) — the account of the Israelites *under* Moses ([Hebrews 3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+3&t=NKJV); [4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+4&t=NKJV)).

The Israelites *under* Moses passed through *similar* experiences within the framework of their earthly calling, climaxed by their *hearing* the report of the twelve spies and *tasting* the actual fruits of the land which they had brought back with them. And that which *happened* to the Israelites at this point (in the type) is where one *must* go in order to understand the falling away and accompanying statements (in the antitype) in [Hebrews 6:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.6&t=NKJV).

The Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea were in *possession* of the Word of God (received at Sinai), God *dwelled* in their midst (in the Holy of Holies of the tabernacle, built and erected at Sinai), they had *heard* the report of the spies, and they had *tasted* the actual fruits of the land (brought back by the spies). And *occupying* this position, they were then ready to *enter* the land, conquer and possess the land, and subsequently *realize* their calling in the land as God’s firstborn son.

They, at this point, were in *possession* of what could only be looked upon as a mature knowledge of the *whole* of that which was in *view*. They understood their calling and that which lay out *ahead*. And it is at this *point* that they fell away and, within the framework of that which is stated in the antitype in [Hebrews 6:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-6&t=NKJV), found it *impossible* to be renewed “again to repentance.”

**Impossible to Renew Again…Because…**

The report that the spies brought back *concerning* the land was *both* positive and negative. It was a good land, flowing with “milk and honey”; but the inhabitants, infiltrated by the Nephilim, were *strong* and lived in *fortified* (KJV: walled) cities ([Numbers 13:26-29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13.26-29&t=NKJV), [32-33](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13.32-33&t=NKJV)).

Caleb and Joshua, exhorting the people, said,

*Let us go up at once and take possession, for we are well able to overcome it.* ([Numbers 13:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13.30&t=NKJV))

But the remaining ten spies said,

*We are not able to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we.* ([Numbers 13:31](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+13.31&t=NKJV))

The people of Israel *heard* the report and *both* exhortations, but they believed the *bad* (KJV: evil) report of the ten spies *rather* than the *true* report of Caleb and Joshua. And their resulting actions said it *all*. They wept, began to murmur against Moses and Aaron, and then looked *back* to Egypt, wishing that they had *never* left. Then, to climax matters, they sought to appoint *another* leader and return to Egypt ([Numbers 14:1-4](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+14.1-4&t=NKJV)).

They, in the words of the antitype, *fell away*. They had *turned* their backs upon God; and God, correspondingly, *turned* His back on them. Because of that which had transpired, the *most* severe judgment possible was pronounced upon the *entire* accountable generation. Every single individual comprising that generation, twenty years old and above, save Caleb and Joshua, was to be *overthrown* in the wilderness.

And once this apostasy had occurred (with its corresponding pronounced judgment), there could be *no* renewal “*again to repentance*” (as in the antitype). And the reason, drawing *again* from the antitype (“*crucify to themselves the Son of God*”), is because they had brought shame and reproach upon the One (God) dwelling in their midst, who was to have *led* them victoriously into the land.

(“Repentance” simply means a change of mind. And in both the type and antitype, the *change* of mind is on the *part of God*, *not* on the part of the Israelites [type] *or on* the part of Christians [antitype].)

The Israelites, the very next day, repented (*changed* their minds). They “rose up early” and sought to “go up to the place” that the Lord had promised. But the Lord *didn’t* repent (He *didn’t* change His mind). He was *no longer* with them relative to their entering the land and victoriously combating the enemy; and, consequently, the Israelites, trying to enter the land *apart* from the Lord’s leadership, were *smitten* and *driven back* ([Numbers 14:40-45](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Numbers+14.40-45&t=NKJV)).

And that’s what [Hebrews 6:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-6&t=NKJV) is about. If God *allows* a Christian to come into a mature knowledge of His Son’s *coming* reign as the great King-Priest “*after* the order of Melchizedek,” and *that* Christian apostatizes, the same thing will *occur* as that which *occurred* with the Israelites *under* Moses (it would have to, for the antitype *must follow* the type in *exact* detail).

That Christian would be *cut off* insofar as those things surrounding his calling were concerned. He would *not* be allowed to subsequently enter that heavenly land *to which* he had been called and victoriously combat the enemy therein. He could *never* be brought back to the position that he had *previously* occupied, which is to say, he could *not* be renewed “again to repentance.”

Though the Christian (in the antitype) may *later* change his mind about the matter (as did the Israelites in the type), God will *not* change His mind about the matter. The Christian, like the Israelites, will be overthrown on the *right* side of the blood but on the *wrong* side of the goal of his calling.

And the reason for such *severe* judgment on God’s part *results* from the fact that, *through* this act, such a Christian could *only bring shame* and *reproach* upon the name of Christ.

Note the entire expression,

*. . . crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.* ([Hebrews 6:6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.6&t=NKJV))

The thought has to do with the shame and reproach *surrounding* Calvary, *not* with subjecting the Son to a second crucifixion, for such an act is *impossible* ([Hebrews 7:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+7.27&t=NKJV)).

But subjecting the Son to this *same* type shame and reproach at the hands of the world is *very* possible today; and such shame and reproach can *result* from the act of any Christian falling away in the antitype of the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea.

A Christian though, to fall away after this fashion, would have to do *two* things:

1) He would *first* have to come into a mature knowledge and understanding of the things *pertaining* to Christ’s coming reign over the *earth*.

2) He would *then* have to apostatize after the *same* fashion in which the Israelites apostatized (looking *away* from Moses and the land [an *earthly* land], *back* to Egypt; *i.e.*, looking *away* from Christ and the land [a *heavenly* land], *back* to the world).

And doing this, a Christian would be *subjecting* God’s Son to the *same* type of humiliation and shame that He *experienced* at Calvary. The expression, “crucify again for themselves,” is actually explained by the *remainder* of the verse — “put [expose] Him to an open shame.” It is *subjecting* the world’s coming Ruler to humiliation and shame *through* the one “in Christ” *turning* from that which lies out ahead and *focusing* his attention back on the *present* world system under the incumbent ruler, Satan.

And this is something that God *will not allow*. Thus, the verse introducing [Hebrews 6:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-6&t=NKJV):

*“And this we will do* [we will go on to maturity in the things surrounding Christ’s coming reign over the earth], *if God permit* [if God permits us to go on]” ([Hebrews 6:3](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.3&t=NKJV)).

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(For additional information on [Hebrews 6:4-6](https://www.blueletterbible.org/search/preSearch.cfm?Criteria=Hebrews+6.4-6&t=NKJV), from the perspective of the fourth major warning in the book of Hebrews, in chapter ten, refer to [Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Jude, Appendix II](http://bibleone.net/J_A2.htm).)

[Jude by Arlen Chitwood](http://www.lampbroadcast.org/Books/Jude.pdf), Appendix I or [Bible One - Arlen Chitwood's Jude, Appendix I](http://bibleone.net/J_A1.htm)