

## **"It Is Impossible To Renew ..."**

*"and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the land which hath drunk the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them for whose sake it is also tilled, receiveth blessing from God: but if it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse; whose end is to be burned"* (Heb. 6:6-8).

How fearful these words! How disturbing, how alarming! Is there no hope for one who begins and then sins or falls away? How many Christians are there who have not sinned (1 Jn. 1:8)? That this warning does not include all who have begun and then stumbled is evident. Peter denied the Lord three times, yet he was restored. Simon the sorcerer sought to buy the gift of God with money and he was told, *"Repent therefore of this thy wickedness and pray the Lord if perhaps the thought of thine heart might be forgiven thee"* (Acts 8:22). In John's first general epistle he said, *"If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* (1 Jn. 1:8f). James wrote, *"Confess therefore your sins one to another and pray one for another. The supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working"* (James 5:16). James then added, *"My brethren, if any among you err from the truth and one convert him; let him know that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death and shall cover a multitude of sins"* (James. 5:19). This latter passage deals with brethren who sin and brethren who seek to restore them. The happy result is that a soul is saved from death and a multitude of sins is covered. Obviously, from these cited passages, not of all who sin or backslide can it be said *"and it is impossible to renew them unto repentance."* Who, then are these of whom the Hebrew writer spoke?

In past articles these of whom the writer speaks had been enlightened; tasted of the heavenly gift; were made partakers of the Holy Spirit; tasted of the good word of God and the powers of the world to come. It appears that these were those who had shared in the miraculous gifts given by the apostles. When these, who had these gifts, then turned away, they in essence denied what they knew to be true and real. The passages does not say it is impossible for God to forgive them; the passage reads, *"it is impossible to restore them again unto repentance."* In the seventh chapter the writer speaks of the effectual value of Christ's blood when he wrote, *"Wherefore also he is able to save to the uttermost them that draw nigh unto God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them"* (Heb. 7:25). Jeremiah spoke of a like condition in his day. *"Stand in the ways and*

*see and ask for the old paths wherein is the good way, and walk therein and ye shall find rest unto your souls. But they said, we will not walk therein"* (Jer. 6:16). In both these passages God's forgiveness is promised to those who will *"draw nigh to him,"* who will *"ask for the old paths and walk therein."* Yet, although forgiveness was extended to God's fallen children (at least in the case of the Jews of Jeremiah's day) that forgiveness hinged upon people coming to God, which, in the case of Jeremiah's day, they would not do so. The passage of Hebrews does not speak of the impossibility of God to forgive; it speaks of the impossibility of man to repent!

When men know their duty and steadfastly refuse to do it; when they refuse to refrain from cursing, fornicating, stealing, neglect of worship and of a true commitment to God, they are treading on dangerous ground. They are hardening their hearts: they are searing their consciences. They are approaching the point of no return. Has it happened unto you, dear brother or sister? Is there no longer tinges of accusation in your heart when you willfully do that you know to be wrong? Turn back now, while you can. God is *"longsuffering to upward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Pet. 3:9). You do not know how long you yet might live, but you do know that God has said, *"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord...It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God"* (Heb. 10:30).

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