

# Hebrews 6:4-6

These next verses are some of the most disputed verses concerning proper interpretation in the entire NT.

Note:

- 1) in verses 5:11, 12 the author uses “you”
- 2) in 6:1 the author uses “us”
- 3) in 6:3 the author uses “we”
- 4) now in 6:4 the author switches to “those”

“If” clause that introduces verse 6 is important.

1. the conditional is expressed here in the Greek with the participle “parapesontas” or παραπεσοντας . This verb is used only here in the Greek NT.
2. it is aorist active participle and is conditional
3. παραπεσοντας means “to fall beside, to go astray, to miss. And refers to a falling away from an expected standard
4. It came to mean “apostasy” in theology (see παρα – πεσοντας)
5. The aorist tense means a complete falling away that has occurred after the enlightenment and the sharing of verses 6:4,5.

Two extremes:

- 1) These verses are only teaching of a straw man. An impossible situation
- 2) These verses are speaking to any sin committed after baptism (Tertullian)

## 6:4, 5

**“For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come,”**

102 [e]	1063 [e]	3588 [e]	530 [e]	5461 [e]	1089 [e]	5037 [e]	3588 [e]	1431 [e]
Adynaton	gar	tous	hapax	phōtisthentas	geusamenous	te	tēs	dōreas
4 Ἀδύνατον	γὰρ	τοὺς	ἅπαξ	φωτισθέντας	, γευσσαμένους	τε	τῆς	δωρεᾶς
[It is] impossible	for	to those	once	having been enlightened	having tasted	then	of the	gift
Adj-NNS	Conj	Art-AMP	Adv	V-APP-AMP	V-APM-AMP	Conj	Art-GFS	N-GFS

3588 [e]	2032 [e]	2532 [e]	3353 [e]	1096 [e]	4151 [e]	40 [e]
tēs	epouraniou	kai	metochous	genēthentas	Pneumatōs	Hagiou
τῆς	ἐπουρανίου	, καὶ	μετόχους	γενηθέντας	Πνεύματος	Ἁγίου
-	heavenly	and	partakers	having become	of [the] Spirit	Holy
Art-GFS	Adj-GFS	Conj	Adj-AMP	V-APP-AMP	N-GNS	Adj-GNS

2532 [e]	2570 [e]	1089 [e]	2316 [e]	4487 [e]	1411 [e]	5037 [e]	3195 [e]	165 [e]	
kai	kalon	geusamenous	Theou	rhēma	dynameis	te	mellontos	aiōnos	
5 και	καλὸν	γευσάμενους	Θεοῦ	ῥῆμα	, δυνάμεις	τε	μέλλοντος	αἰῶνος	—
and	[the] goodness	having tasted	of God's	word	[the] power	also	[of the] coming	age	
Conj	Adj-ANS	V-APM-AMP	N-GMS	N-ANS	N-AFP	Conj	V-PPA-GMS	N-GMS	

απαξ - *hapax* - means “once for all” (9:7, 26’ 27’ 28; 10:2; 12:26, 27).

1. hapax can govern each of the five participles.
2. This points to something complete. It is not a partial or incomplete work

### The Five Participles describing “those”:

1. “Enlightened” refers to illumination by the Holy Spirit
  - a. 2 Corinthians 4:4 the world is blind
  - b. John 8:12 and 1:9 Jesus is the light
2. “Tasted the heavenly gift”
  - a. Tasting is more than the “knowledge” or “enlightenment” of #1.
  - b. Tasting implies personal experience
  - c. Psalm 34:8
  - d. 1 Peter 2:3
  - e. Knowing about food (looking at it) has a completely different effect on the body than eating and tasting the food.
3. “Shared in the Holy Spirit”
  - a. “sharers” is - *metochoi* and is used in 1:9 (“companions”); 3:1 (“share in the heavenly calling”); 3:14 (“share in Christ”)
  - b. Also used in Luke 5:7 as “partners in the other boat”
4. “Tasted the goodness of the word of God”
  - a. “tasting” is used again
  - b. “goodness” is – *kalon* - indicates both “beauty” and “moral goodness”
  - c. The Word of God is not tasted but the “goodness” of it is tasted.
  - d. “Word of God” is - *theou rhema* - (again in 11:3) not “logos - *tou Theou* - (4:12; 13:7)
  - e. Focus of – *rhema* - is the specific communication from God and not the general message.
  - f. This again refers to not just having heard Bible teaching but having experience the results of the application to one’s life.
5. “Powers of the coming age”
  - a. “tasted” also applies to “powers of the coming age”
  - b. “these last days” 1:1
  - c. Simon Magus saw the goodness of God’s word and the power in Acts 8:5 but it was to no avail
  - d. Matt. 12:28
  - e. The readers of this book had experienced spiritual manifestations just like the Galatians had (see Galatians 3:5)
  - f. Jesus ministry announced that “the kingdom of God is at hand” in Mark 1:14.
  - g. Jesus coming ushered in the “last days”
    - i. Hebrews 1:2
    - ii. Acts 2:16-18
    - iii. 1 John 2:18
    - iv. Jude 18
  - h. This coming of the kingdom comes in two phases and is directly related to his two

comings.

- i. Jews of Jesus day had this confused.
- ii. Christians today (Dominion Theology, and others) have this confused today.

- i. The “powers of the coming age” refer to works of the Spirit but even the New Birth is from the coming age.

## 6:6

**“and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.”**

2532 [e]	3895 [e]	3825 [e]	340 [e]	1519 [e]	3341 [e]	388 [e]			
kai	parapesontas	palin	anakainizein	eis	metanoian	anastaurountas			
6	καὶ	παραπεσόντας	—	πάλιν	ἀνακαίνιζειν	εἰς	μετάνοιαν	,	ἀνασταυροῦντας
	and then	having fallen away		again	to restore [them]	to	repentance		crucifying
	Conj	V-APA-AMP		Adv	V-PNA	Prep	N-AFS		V-PPA-AMP

1438 [e]	3588 [e]	5207 [e]	3588 [e]	2316 [e]	2532 [e]	3856 [e]	
heautois	ton	Huion	tu	Theou	kai	paradeigmatizontas	
ἑαυτοῖς	τὸν	Υἱὸν	τοῦ	Θεοῦ	καὶ	παραδειγματίζοντας	.
in themselves	the	Son	-	of God	and	subjecting [Him] to open shame	
RefPro-DM3P	Art-AMS	N-AMS	Art-GMS	N-GMS	Conj	V-PPA-AMP	

### παραδειγματίζοντας

putting to open shame, to expose public, to make a public example of, to expose to disgrace”.

“for themselves” from ἑαυτοῖς is the dative of advantage for themselves. This word indicates these individuals would be taking full responsibility for the disgrace.

Linguistic Key says:

“If the readers were to return again to Judaism, no possibility existed for them to begin their spiritual life anew. This would require a recrucifixion of Christ, putting Him to open shame. For this reason they must continue toward maturity despite the difficulties, problems, and persecutions that attend their walk.”

Basically Acts 3:12, “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

In 6:5 this sentence begins with “**impossible**” which in the Greek is ἀδύνατον or *adunaton*.

This word comes from:

- 1) a- or α which is the negative particle. When used at the beginning of the word it means no or nullifies the following word. The English example would be “non-” or in the case of this translation “im-”
- 2) *dunatos* or δυνατός from dunamai which means powerful, capable, possible, power, strong, able.

So 6:5, 6 begin by saying it is “non-able” or “im-capable” or “no-strong” or “im-possible” for the events in verse 6:6 to occur.

“**falling away**” is παραπεσόντας is from two words:

- 1) *para-* a preposition with a wide variety of meaning and application: above, against, among, at, before, by, contrary to, from.
- 2) *pipto* means to fall, to fail, to land on.

“Renew” or [ανακατανίξειν](#) is the word that connects to the word “impossible in 6:5.

- 1) This word means “to renew again, to make new again
- 2) It is impossible to “renew” or “redo” the “repentance”
- 3) THIS HAS NOT SAID A PERSON LOSES THEIR SALVATION. It says it impossible to redo repentance.
  - a. Clearly from John 1:9 a believer can confess their sin.
  - b. Jesus tells Ephesus of the seven churches in Revelation 2:5: “Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent (μετανοησον) and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”

“Repentance” or [μετανοιαν](#) “metanoian” is from two words:

- 1) *meta* is a primary preposition denoting accompaniment. Here it means “after” implying change
- 2) *noieo* means “to exercise the mind” and “to comprehend, consider, perceive, think, understand”. It is from the word “nous” which means mind and is the seat of moral thought.
- 3) (EXAMPLE: *pronoieo* from *pro-* (means “before”) and *noieo* (“mind”) means “to perceive beforehand”)
- 4) *metanoian* means “to perceive or consider after”
- 5) This does not mean it impossible to “repent” of your actions after you have been saved already.
- 6) This “repentance” refers to turning from sin and accepting Christ for salvation. It is used this way throughout the New Testament:
  - a. Acts 5:31
  - b. Acts 11:18
  - c. Romans 2:4
  - d. 2 Timothy 2:25
- 7) It is used of turning from sin after salvation (new birth, baptism, etc.) in:
  - a. 2 Corinthian 12:21
  - b. Revelation 2:5
  - c. Revelation 2:16
  - d. Revelation 2:21
  - e. Revelation 3:3
  - f. Revelation 3:19
 (“Repent” is used in reference to 5 of the 7 churches in Rev. 2,3. It is not spoken to Smyrna and Philadelphia.)
7. What we see here is two things:
  - a. “repent” is used in reference to coming to Christ for salvation.
  - b. “repent” is used as a command to believers to consider their thoughts (ways) and change.
8. Scripturally it is possible for a believer to “sin” and “repent” (1 John 1:9)
9. The context here is to say it is “impossible” to “repent” (or, get saved again!)

“Crucifying again” or [ανασταυρουντας](#), is from

- 1) *ana-* which means here “repetition”
- 2) “stauroo” which is the word for impaling on a cross or to crucify.
- 3) This word means “re-crucify”

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Kittel’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (vol.7):

“In the NT the word ([ἀνασταυρουντας](#)) occurs only at Hb. 6:6. The author is arguing that willful apostasy from faith rules out any fresh repentance. Those guilty of such apostasy are called “ἀνασταυπουντες εαυτοις τον υιον του θεου. Since *avastauroun* usually means “to crucify,” one should strictly translate: “they personally crucify the Son of God,” aligning themselves with those who brought Christ to the cross and thus committing the same sin as these did.”

“**for themselves**” from [εαυτοις](#) is the dative of advantage for themselves. This word indicates these individuals would be taking full responsibility for the disgrace.

[παραδειγματιζοντας](#) “to expose public, to make a public example of, to expose to disgrace”.

Basically Acts 3:12:

“Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Views:

- 1) The [Shepherd of Hermes](#) and [Clement of Alexandria](#) write of a view of the early second century (100-150 AD): Baptism was equivalent to the blood of Christ and it washed away your sins committed up to that point. Sins after baptism (or, salvation) would not be covered. Some then taught that the blood of your own martyrdom would cover the sins after baptism (or, the blood of Christ.)
    - a. False application #1: Postpone baptism until death bed
    - b. False application #2: Seek martyrdom
  - 2) [Ambrose](#), [Aquinas](#), [Wordsworth](#) said the “impossible” referred to man but “with God all things are possible” (mark 10:27) If this were true the qualification should have been in the text here in Hebrews. The text here says “impossible” and it means “impossible.”
  - 3) [Erasmus](#) said “impossible” means “difficult”. This is a clear case of isogesis.
  - 4) Others say it means that as long as those who have fallen away continue in their current state they cannot repent. It would be like saying it is impossible to repent until you repent. This is true but hardly worth writing. [FF. Bruce](#) says concerning this view: “to say that they cannot be brought to repentance so long as they persist in their renunciation of Christ would be a truism hardly worth putting into words.”
  - 5) [Calvin](#) believed God kept the elect understood the tasting here as a partial experience and that the people of Hebrews did not respond to it. But nowhere are these verses talking about partial enlightenment.
  - 6) This may speak of the [unpardonable sin of Matthew 12](#). Many people would be concerned with having committed this “unforgivable sin”. If they sense guilt and desire to repent would not God accept them?
  - 7) Others say the writer does not indicate here or anywhere that his readers were in this position.
    - i. This then is a warning of potential
    - ii. This warning only views salvation from the human side
    - iii. Other places in the scripture indicate the divine involvement
1. Romans 8:35-39

- 8) The passage is stating the impossibility of the condition of repentance that is first referred to in verse 6:1. This is the initial state of entry into salvation. Once phase one is initiated it cannot be redone. Once you are saved you cannot go back and get saved again. You must simply continue the Christian walk and face the challenges and the hardships.
- a. If baptism represents the new birth the believer cannot return to baptism and repent since they would be saying that they needed Jesus to die (re-crucify) for them again. They would be bring public disgrace on Jesus by saying with their actions that the power of Christ death had worn off or they had committed a sin greater than Christ's sacrifice.
  - b. Romans 6:4
  - c. Ephesians 4:22-24
  - d. Romans 6:3, 6
  - e. Colossians 2:14
  - f. Jesus' was crucified once for all and died for sins once. So, there is in practice one baptism which cannot be repeated without violating the principle of Christ's once for all sacrifice.
  - g. The association of "renew", "repentance" and "re-crucifying" indicate the topic here is the impossibility of being "re-baptized", or "re-born again ("born again-again")
  - h. The way is always open for those who are ready to repent, confess, etc.
  - i. If someone did pass through verses 6:1,2 and then renounced their baptism and Christ (6:4-6) then two situations are possible:
    1. The person indicated by the rejection that they never really "experienced" ("tasted") salvation and are still on the side of the heathen that crucified Christ
      - a. John 15:1 – "The True Vine – "If a man remains in me . . ."
      - b. 1 John 2:19 – "They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us."
      - c. Examples of apparent confessors who never were saved:
        - a. Simon Magus was baptized (Acts 8:13, "Simon himself believed and was baptized."
        - b. Demas was involved in Christian work (2 Tim. 4:10, "Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica.")
        - c. Judas was involved with healing, casting out demons (Mark 6:12; Matt. 10:5)
        - d. Matthew 7:21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, . . . many will say. . .did we not prophesy, . . .drive out demons, . . .perform many miracles?"
    2. The person is still a believer and God will continue to work in their lives.
      - a. Romans 8:31-39 – "I am convinced that . . . nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God."
      - b. Philippians 1:6 – "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion"