

Eternal Security I

HEBREWS 5:2- 6:12

A Little History

- **Jakob Hermanszoon (1560-1609)**
- **Luther's 95 Theses 1517**
- **Jacobus Arminius**
 - **Theologian at the University of Leiden (Netherlands)**
 - **Many books and treatises on theology**
- **Challenged the teaching of the reformers, in particular John Calvin**
- **The five articles of Remonstrance (1610)**
- **Synod of Dort (1618-1619)**
- **Five Points of Calvinism to counter the five points of the Remonstrants**

The 5 Points of Calvinism

- T – Total Depravity (Radical Corruption) (RCS)
- U – Unconditional Election (Sovereign Election)
- L – Limited Atonement
- I – Irresistible Grace (Effectual Grace)
- P - Perseverance of the saints (Preservation of the Saints)

#5 Perseverance of the Saints

- “Because of these remnants of sin dwelling in them and also because of the temptations of the world and Satan, those who have been converted could not remain standing in this grace if left to their own resources. But God is faithful, mercifully strengthening them in the grace once conferred on them and powerfully preserving them in it to the end.” (Article 3 Canons of Dort)
- Or “Preservation of the Saints”
- Or “Eternal Security”

Can You Lose Your Salvation?

- Issue: Does Hebrews 6 state clearly that a person who has truly experienced salvation through Jesus Christ can lose his or her salvation?
- Arminianism v. Calvinism
- Pelagius v. Augustine

Hebrews 6:4-6

- 4 "For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and *then* have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame."

Hebrews 5:12-14

- ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.¹³ For everyone who partakes *only* of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is an infant. ¹⁴ But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.

Hebrews 6:1-3

- **6** Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do, if God permits.

Hebrews 6:4-8

- 4 “For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 and *then* have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. 7 For ground that drinks the rain which often falls on it and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is also tilled, receives a blessing from God; 8 but if it yields thorns and thistles, it is worthless and close to being cursed, and it ends up being burned.”

Progression of Thought

- 1. The problem of Immaturity and teaching of advanced doctrine
- 2. Progressing to perfection
- 3. The danger of “Falling away” and what this means
- 4. Does this passage in Hebrews 6 say that a person may lose salvation after he or she has once possessed salvation? (The heart of Soteriology)
- 5. The larger debate between Arminianism and Calvinism regarding the doctrine of Eternal Security

The Possibility of Apostasy

- Frame the debate
- What do you think when you know of someone who outwardly seems to all observers to no longer have faith in God?
- Hebrews 3: 12 “Beware brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing,”
- The word that is used there is ***aphistēmai***, which in Greek means, essentially, literally, to “stand off from.”

Explanations

- The Person from outward appearances seems to no longer have any interest in the things of faith have become “dull” or “sluggish.”
- 1. Are they Christians whose lives are a wreck, and no evidence of the fruit of salvation (“their senses are dulled”). Paul in I Cor. 3 would call them “carnal Christians. I Cor. 3:1-4

I Cor. 3:1-4

- “And I, brethren (brothers in Christ), could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. ² I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able *to receive it*. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, ³ for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men? ⁴ For when one says, “I am of Paul,” and another, “I am of Apollos,” are you not *mere men* (are you not carnal - NKJ)?”
- They are in a “carnal state.”

Possible Explanations

- 2. OR – have these believers “lost their faith” and are no longer saved?
- 3. OR – the believers who are being referred to here were never believers to begin with. (the mere professors, professing faith but not regenerated by the Holy Spirit)

Preceding Topic – The Nature of Christ’s Priesthood

- The author of Hebrews was starting to teach about the priesthood of Christ
- ⁹ “And having been made perfect, He [Christ] became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation, ¹⁰ being designated by God as a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek.” (5:9-10)

Spiritual Immaturity

- ¹² For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. ¹³ For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. ¹⁴ But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil. (See also I Cor. 3:1-4)

Spiritual Immaturity – The Block to Older Saints

- There is a real issue with older individuals becoming new in the faith
 - They have difficulties realizing that they are new-borns. They have difficulty that they come to the Lord as a child
 - They are uncomfortable with having to be a listener, a learner, someone who does not understand and needs to learn.
 - It can keep people from growing in the faith due to the worldly habits they have become used to worldly rewards of:
 - Respect, admiration, confidence, leadership, authority in worldly matters

Hebrews 6:1-3

- 6 “Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do if God permits.”

Press On to Maturity

- Stop going over again the fundamentals (re-laying the foundations of our faith)
- “Let us press on to maturity” (the Gk. Word can be translated “perfection.”)
- Comment about seeker services and the problem of the “mixed body”

The Elementary Principles

- The list from 6:1-3
- The list comes in correlated pairs. Each pair has closely associated concepts that work together:
 - 1. Repentance from dead works
 - 2. Faith toward God
 - 3. Doctrine of washings
 - 4. Laying on of hands
 - 5. Resurrection of the dead
 - 6. Eternal judgment

Elementary Principles

- All of these fundamentals do not have origins in the Christian church
- They are from orthodox Judaism, they are all teachings of a Pharisaic Jew
- 1. Repentance from dead works - (not works of the law (legalism) but from sins, vices, corruption (Romans 6:27))
- 2. Faith in God – the way of repentance from dead works (Gen. 15:6 faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness)

Elementary Principles

- 3. Teaching about washings (ablutions) translations here say “baptism” but this probably does not reference Christian baptism. The word is plural (“*baptismoī*”). This is references to Jewish ceremonial washings (Ezek. 36:25) These washings became the foundation upon which the baptism of the Holy Spirit was based -- an act of cleansing.
- 4. Laying on of hands. (Acts 6:6; 8:17; 9:12, 17, 19:6) an early Christian practice associated with the impartation of the Holy Spirit but the origin was an O.T ceremony used to commission someone for service

Elementary Principles

- 5. Resurrection of the dead - special and fundamental to our faith in Christ, and is taught in the Old Testament (Isaiah 16:19, Daniel 12:2)
- “Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.”
- 6. Eternal Judgment – tightly coupled with the Resurrection of the dead. In the Old Testament (Gen. 18:25; Isaiah 33:22; and Daniel 7:9-14)

Now In Christ These Elementary Principles Have New Meaning

- All of these fundamentals have to these Jews who are the recipients of this letter, a new, fresh meaning in Christ.
- The Old Testament again is seen as foreshadowing Christ is it teachings