Introduction – A summary of Hebrews so far ...

Prior to the Easter week, we’ve been looking at the Book of Hebrews for 6 weeks. A very brief summary. It was written to Jewish believers, who were wavering in their faith. Because of the taunts & jeers of their persecutors, these Jewish believers in Jesus were beginning to think they had lost everything – the alter/priests/sacrifices – by accepting Christ. They were undervaluing their privileges in Christ and having a pity party. They were in danger of giving up their faith. They had started well but had not made any progress.

The writer of Hebrews is trying to lead them from the basics of the faith into a mature grasp of all that their faith means. So he urges them to be loyal to Christ by showing them that He is superior over all they had previously known. The author of Hebrews doesn’t want them drifting back to their ritual ceremonies, so he urges them to let go of everything in order to hold fast to the faith & hope of the Gospel.

Now you might be thinking, ‘So what! What has it got to do with me now?’

The Book of Hebrews is a timely warning & a word of comfort to us, especially in this day when many people don’t know much about the deeper things of Christ, and are ready to be led astray by any fad or new age religion that comes along.
Take, for example, when you drive on a new road that you’ve never taken before. I took the Kilcoy/Beerwah road to get to the QB Convention in Mapleton a week or two ago. Because it was a road I had never travelled and it was raining and very windy, I tended not to take much notice along the way. I was concentrating hard, anticipating where the road might lead and what problems might lie ahead. But at one point, I remember looking out the window to my right, and there it was – the Glasshouse mountains towering over me. Beautiful and majestic – I almost didn’t notice them.

When I returned late Friday evening, I took the same road home, but this time as I came back over the same road, I took time to look around and notice the beauty of the mountains and the countryside. It is simply spectacular up through that area.

It’s a bit like that with the Book of Hebrews. You read it and you miss a lot of things, (you’re concentrating hard) but then when you re-read it, you start to take in more of the details and the wonderful truths that it contains. One thing stands out tough as you read it – Jesus Christ is prominent on every page … and He is greater than prophets, great than angels, great than Moses, greater than Joshua and greater than Aaron. These were the systems and traditions that these Jewish believers were familiar with. These used to have great importance in their lives. But their allegiance has now shifted to Jesus.

The Book of Hebrews has been called the ‘Fifth Gospel’. The four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John) describe Jesus’ ministry on earth, but Hebrews describes His ministry in heaven at God’s right hand.

It also proves that we can never understand the Old Testament without the New … or the New Testament without the Old.

Let’s read Hebrews 6 together and discover with the readers of Hebrews that Jesus is simply the best! Don’t forget, if you missed any of the messages on Hebrews and would like to catch up, you can download the sermon and/or the notes from the Laidley Baptist Church website.

**Grab your Bibles, let’s read Hebrews Chapter 6**

**Let’s pray …**

_Gracious God & our Glorious Heavenly Father, Thank you for our Great High Priest Jesus, who sits at your right hand in heaven. We give thanks that his ministry is for every human being, and that it is eternal and that salvation is available to all, whether Jew or Gentile. We thank you that Jesus is our better covenant, our better Tabernacle, and our perfect sacrifice. Help us to know with certainty that we can approach your throne of grace, because of the shed blood of Jesus, the finished work of Christ on the cross. You allow us the privilege to come into your Holy of Holies in heaven because of Jesus sinlessness & righteousness. May we have the courage to enter in today and ask_
Verses 1-8:

This section contains one of the most debated passages in biblical study. Therefore it is wise to keep certain principles in mind when looking at this passage.

The first principle is that these first 8 verses need to be interpreted in light of the Book of Hebrews as a whole. (That would make sense wouldn’t it?) That’s why it is better to look at these verses after studying the first 5 Chapters. This book is written specifically to a body of believers, specifically believers who have come out of the Jewish system of Law, who were contemplating going back to Judaism in order to escape the persecution they were facing at the time. These Jewish believers felt they could return to Judaism and be saved again later when the persecution was over. Their new salvation, then, would erase their apostasy of going back.

The second principle is that this section must be interpreted in light of the immediate context, which begins in Chapter 5 verse 11. The writer is trying to get them to press on to maturity in Christ. Leave the milk/being babes in Christ and press onto meat/maturity. The danger is if they don’t they will make an irrevocable decision that will keep them permanently in a state of immaturity.

The third principle is that the Scriptures don’t contradict themselves, and these verses have to be interpreted in harmony with biblical truths taught elsewhere in the Word. So, if the thrust of the Scriptures is eternal security, then one verse cannot negate the many. The difficult passage (like this one) must be interpreted by using the clear ones.

Two Interpretations

This is one of the Bible’s most difficult passages to interpret, but one thing is clear—it does not teach that we can lose our salvation. There are two valid ways of looking at these verses:

INTERPRETATION 1 ➔ This interpretation holds that this passage is written not about Christians but about unbelievers who are convinced of the basic truths of the gospel but who have not placed their faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. They are intellectually persuaded but spiritually uncommitted.
INTERPRETATION 2 ➔ The other interpretation holds that this passage is written about Christians, and that the phrases “partakers of the Holy Ghost,” “enlightened,” and “tasted of the heavenly gift” are all descriptions of true believers.

According to this interpretation, the key word in the passage is ‘if’ (verse 6). The writer of Hebrews is setting up a hypothetical statement: “IF a Christian were to fall away . . .” The point being made is that it would be impossible (IF a Christian falls away) to renew salvation. That’s because Christ died once for sin (Hebrews 9:28), and if His sacrifice is insufficient, then there’s no hope at all.

The passage, therefore, presents an argument based on a false premise (that a true Christian can fall away) and follows it to its senseless conclusion (that Jesus would have to be sacrificed again and again). The absurdity of the conclusion points up the impossibility of the original assumption. This reasoning is called *reductio ad absurdum*, in which a premise is disproved by showing that it logically leads to an absurdity.

**The BASIC Principles of the Faith (3 pairs)**

In the **first 2 verses**, the writer lists some of the first principles of the ABC’s of the faith. There are 6 things, but they come in 3 sets of two:

- The first pair deals with **conversion**
- The second pair deals with **ceremonial elements**
- The third pair deals with **end times** (or eschatology)

**The first pair (Conversion)**

1. *Not laying again a foundation of repentance* from dead works (the Levitical system). This had come to an end with the death of the Messiah. Even though it was still being practiced, God looked upon it now as ineffectual.

2. *Faith towards God* – referring to their once and for all commitment to the Messiah, which brought them to salvation

**The second pair (Ceremonial elements)**

3. *The teaching of baptisms* (plural – washings by immersion) referring to the cleansings of the Levitical system.

4. *Laying on of hands* – In the Old Testament it was a means of imparting blessings. This was carried over into the New Testament. It also meant the appointment of an
office/work (e.g. priest/elders & deacons). It could've also meant a sense of identification (hands laid on sacrifices identified with the sacrifice of Israel).

The third pair (Eschatology)
5. Resurrection from the dead – this should’ve been settled in their minds, as it is an Old Testament principle (Job 19:25; Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2)


These 6 things are the basics of the faith.

These are milk and they need to be settled once and for all in the believer’s mind early in their spiritual life. These are the things that have to be left behind in order to press on to maturity.

Verse 3 – he mentions the importance of maturity - And God permitting, we will do so. He’s basically saying ‘if God permits this, and He does.’ It is God's will for them to leave behind the ABC's of the faith and go on to maturity. Their lack of pressing on to maturity is not God’s fault, it’s their fault. Their dullness is not yet irreversible – they can still choose to go on to maturity. They haven’t yet made their decision (to go back to Judaism).

Verses 4-6 – the writer deals with the danger of relapse & the impossibility of going back. He lists certain spiritual privileges but a lapse is in danger of taking place. This lapse will not accomplish what they think it will. They think that by lapsing they can be renewed again later. But the writer is going to show them that it is impossible to renew. In the Greek text all of verses 4-6 are comprised of one long sentence.

Five Spiritual Privileges of the readers of Hebrews:
The readers have experienced 5 spiritual privileges. He says that there is something impossible for those who have experienced these 5 spiritual privileges to do.

1. Once-and-for-all enlightenment - when the light of Jesus was grasped/understood & believed (regeneration). Understanding to the point of applying it. Note the word ‘once’ – means it is something that is not repeated.

2. Tasted the heavenly gift – tasted means to have had a real experience (Acts 10:10; 1 Peter 2:3; Hebrews 2:9). They didn’t just ‘nibble at it but not swallow’ and therefore not accept salvation. It mentions in Hebrews 2:9 that ‘Jesus, because of the
suffering of death crowned with glory and honour, that by the grace of God he should taste death for every men.’ Jesus didn’t just nibble at death and not experience it! He actually did die. They actually appropriated the heavenly gift of salvation/the Messiah. They had possession of real spiritual life.

3. **Shared in the Holy Spirit** – to have real participation. These are not people who came close to seeing the Holy Spirit work. They were real participants in the Holy Spirit. They had a vital relationship with the indwelt Holy Spirit.

4. **Tasted the goodness of the (spoken) word of God** – these Jewish believers did hear utterances which they realized came from God.

5. **Tasted the powers of the coming age** – they once-and-for-all tasted the power that will be manifested in the Messianic Kingdom/Millennium. The word ‘power’ is the same word used for miracles. They tasted it – meaning they experienced real rebirth in their lives.

So these readers had these 5 spiritual experiences.
They show that they are real believers.

It is impossible for those who have had these 5 spiritual experiences to do something that the author presents in verse 6.

**Verse 6** – fallen away. No time frame is given here. No actual event is suggested in the falling away. It is not even written in the past tense, but aorist tense in the Greek (meaning → after falling away). Some have the word ‘if’ inserted, but the Greek never uses a conditional element.

Whatever the impossibility is mentioned in verse 6, he gives **2 reasons why it is impossible for them to do it.**

1. Because they would have to crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh. Jesus is not coming back to be re-crucified. Impossible!

2. Subjecting Jesus to public disgrace/shame – This is something impossible for them to do.

**THEREFORE IF THIS PASSAGE TEACHES THAT A BELIEVER CAN LOSE HIS/HER SALVATION, THEN IT MEANS THAT HE CAN NEVER REGAIN HIS SALVATION.**
In other words, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.
There are at least 10 different interpretations of this verse (v6). The preferred view is based upon the wider context as well as the immediate context.

The meaning of verse 6 would indicate 2 perspectives on their making a once-and-for-all irrevocable decision. In either case, the text is dealing with actual believers who are in danger of returning to Judaism. If they do, they will be physically destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70. If they go back to Judaism that rejected Jesus as Messiah (on the basis of demon possession), there is something impossible to do.

For a believer who has had the 5 spiritual experiences (already mentioned), it would require re-crucifying Christ, and it would put Christ to shame. It means that the first death of Christ was incomplete & provided an incomplete salvation. It means that Christ’s death does not save to the uttermost as it is supposed to do.

The author is telling them that they do not have the option they thought they had – which his giving up their salvation to be saved again later. There is no new salvation that would erase their apostasy & allow them to restart their spiritual life. Why? Because it implies that Christ’s first death didn’t provide a real salvation. It implies that He did not provide eternal life, but temporary life.

So, since they do not have that option, they must choose another option. They have two alternatives, but giving up their salvation to be saved again later is not one of them.

**The two alternatives:**

1. **Press on to maturity** – this is what the author is encouraging them to do.
2. **Return to Judaism** – it will not mean a loss of salvation, but will mean they put themselves back under the A.D. 70 judgement – the unpardonable sin of the nation of Israel – and they will die physically.

Throughout the previous 5 chapters, all the judgements mentioned have been physical judgements, not spiritual judgements. When we look forward into subsequent chapters, it is the same.

The writer is urging them to press on, because it is impossible to go back to an unsaved state. They either stay where they are (and regress – stay in permanent babyhood) or they press on to maturity. Nothing can be done about the wasted years that brought forth thorns (v8). They must quit producing thorns and begin producing good crops.
Repentance in verse 6 means changing of the mind. As was true of the Exodus generation in Kadesh-Barnea, so these believers are in danger of making an irrevocable decision. This will render them permanently spiritually immature. – they will not be able to change their mind later and press on to spiritual maturity. The return to Judaism is the irrevocable decision. Once done, they cannot change their mind and become subject to death physical death as a divine judgement.

Though the Israelites tried to change their minds and tried to enter the land the next day (Numbers 14:39-45) they were not permitted to repent of their decision to return to Egypt. Similarly here with these readers in Hebrews, there is a question of whether God would permit them to go on to maturity. (‘This we will do, if God permits’ v3).

Just as the wilderness generation was denied the right to the blessings of rest in Canaan, these Jewish Christians, if they turn away and return to Judaism, would forfeit the blessing of God’s rest and experience God’s temporal discipline. These Jewish believers were at their Kadesh. They are faced with a decision. If they choose not to go on in maturity, severe judgment will fall on them (v7-8).

**HOWEVER, THE AUTHOR ALSO KNEW THAT THE READERS HAD NOT YET MADE THAT DECISION.**

**A PARAPHRASE ...**

Here’s a paraphrase of what’s occurring here:

*Leaving babyhood behind, let them go on to maturity. It is impossible for them to fall away and then be saved again and start with a new record by means of initial repentance through salvation. This would necessitate Jesus’ dying again and making His first death of no avail and, therefore, a mockery to those looking on.*

They didn’t have the option they thought they had. They didn’t have the option of giving up their salvation, going back to Judaism, and being saved again later because that requires Jesus’ re-crucifixion. Moreover, Jesus will not be coming back to be re-crucified because He has already saved to the uttermost. He has already saved completely. Going back to Judaism doesn’t mean they will lose their salvation, but it will mean a loss of their physical lives through judgement in A.D. 70.

They needed to make the break from Judaism once-and-for-all.
The rest of Chapter 6:
The rest of Chapter 6 the writer is trying to encourage them to do just that → to press on to maturity.

Verses 7-8 – Like the land, some believers produce fruit and some do not. Judgment will be the result of not going on to fruitfulness and maturity, because the result for fruitfulness will be blessings. The result for fruitlessness will be rejection/disapproval.

The timing for this approval or rewarding will come at the Judgment Seat of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:10-15). Believers who press on to maturity will receive God’s blessing of rewards for the Messianic Kingdom because they have lived a useful life for the Lord. Examples of this are listed in verse 10.

The result of fruitlessness is characterized by the thorns and thistles. In the case of a believer, these are the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21. These are the fruits of carnality, not spirituality.

These hearers have become dull of hearing (Hebrews 5:11) and they are living a useless life for the Lord. The result is to be disapproved. Or ... near to being cursed. It means nearness of judgment – it’s about to fall (but it hasn't yet). If they go back to the sacrificial system of the Law, they place themselves under the curse of the Law once again (Galatians 3:10-13) – the end product is that it will be burned.

This is the consequence of disapproval at the Judgment Seat of Christ – there will be works that will be burned. The fruitless land is not burned, but the fruit of that fruitless land (thorns & thistles) will be burned. At the Judgement Seat of Christ (Bema Seat), the believer is not burned, but his fruitless works are burned (John 15:6).

If these Jewish believers remain in an immature state and fail to press on to maturity, they will be fruitless, and their works will be burned, and they will be disapproved. It doesn’t mean they will lose their salvation, only their reward. In other words, discipline in this life and loss of reward in the next!

On the other hand, if they press on to maturity, they will produce fruit. Have good works, and they will be rewarded.
The Certainty of Salvation (verses 9-20):

The rest of Chapter 6 spells out these believers’ spiritual action and obligations. Verses 9-12 the writer points out that the fact of danger does not exclude the presence of hope. He points out their responsibility to do the works that ACCOMPANY salvation.

The severe description of what they are in danger of has not yet happened to them. The author is persuaded that they will produce better things (better than thorns or thistles).

The proof of their saved state is in their previous works. It’s not that these are not appreciated by God. God is not unjust to forget these things. He lists 5 things that God will not forget:

- He will not forget their good works
- He will not forget their labour of love
- He will not forget those things they have shown toward his name
- He will not forget their past ministry to the saints
- He will not forget their present ministry to the saints.

They have produced good works and they will continue to produce good works.

In verse 11 he reaffirms his original desire for them to press on to maturity; to persevere. They are not saved by persevering, but they will receive the full reward by persevering. Their life needs to reflect what they believe. Walking with God leads to assurance.

There are 3 desires he expresses for them to reach:

- Maturity
- Not to remain sluggish/lazy
- Become imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

Verses 13-20, the writer points out that God’s promises can never fail. God is steadfast in his position. God’s promises were realized in the future. Abraham exercised patient endurance – because of God’s promises to him. He quotes Genesis 22:16-17 to show God’s promises can be trusted because of who He is.

Verse 15 – summarizes the long wait for Isaac. Between when God made the promise to Abraham and the birth of Isaac twenty-five years passed. 25 years of patient endurance by Abraham to obtain the promise. Abraham is a good example
to be patient. While God’s promises are not always immediate, they are always certain.

**Verses 16-18** – the writer points to the unfulfilled promises given to them that need to be waited for in confidence. There are certain promises made to believers and we need to follow Abraham’s example of being patient.

When God makes a promise it stops all contradiction and controversy and establishes trust. Men swear by something greater (e.g. Temple/Alter) as a pledge that he will fulfill his promise. But God is the highest authority, so His Word settles it. God makes the same affirmation that men make, but could not appeal to anything higher. There is nothing higher or greater than God, and His Word confirms that.

That which He promises He will fulfill. His promises are unconditional and eternal.

There are 2 unchanging things in verse 18.
- The promise given to Abraham in Genesis 12 (covenant)
- The promise with an oath in Genesis 17 (guarantee of the covenant)

Abraham patiently endured and the promise was fulfilled. Believers have a promise made by God that they can obtain spiritual maturity. They must gain it like Abraham did – by faith & patient endurance.

**Verses 19-20** – concerns the entrance of Jesus into heaven.

How can a believer be certain that God’s promise of obtaining spiritual maturity is going to come to pass?

They can be certain because the Messiah (who is their city of refuge) has already entered into Heaven. Hope goes right into the presence of God, because Jesus is there. Jesus is in the inner veil of the Holy of Holies in the heavenly Tabernacle.

What is needed now is patient endurance. Since they have fled to Him for refuge they should remain there. Their hope is as certain as the return of Jesus the Messiah.

4 facts are given about this hope in God:
- It is an anchor for the soul (keeps us from drifting)
- Their hope is sure (indestructible)
- It is steadfast (provides inner strength)
- It is in the very presence of God (behind the veil in the Holy of Holies in the Heavenly Tabernacle)
In verse 20, the Messiah himself is the guarantee that they will ultimately be there bodily. Believers not only have the guarantee of spiritual maturity in this life, but they also have the guarantee of heaven in the next life because Jesus is the forerunner – the first with more to come later. Jesus went to Heaven bodily and so will they. Jesus is there as their High Priest ... forever. Not Aaron – he is not the forerunner – Christ is. He is their Priest in the Order of Melchizedek. We will look at this next week in Chapter 7.

**CONCLUSION:**

This is one of the hardest passages in the Bible to understand. I hope that God has shed some light on your understanding of it through this message. Please feel free to download the notes – there is more information contained in them.

Next Sunday - **Hebrews Chapter 7 – ‘Jesus – our Holy Priest forever’**

So, your homework for the next week is to read Hebrews 7 – only 20 verses!

**Let’s pray ...**

*Loving and Mighty Father God,*

*Thank you for your Word this morning and our rich understanding of Hebrews and the principles we have learned. But place in our hearts an ever greater importance of the task you have given to each of us. It is one that requires spiritual maturity. To bring others towards Christ. We have the answer through Jesus. Doesn’t everyone deserve this answer in their life? Father God, help us to see with spiritual eyes those who you notice. This is not just about us – you are building a kingdom.*

*Help us to press on to spiritual maturity as we follow Jesus each day, as we you’re your Word and discover Jesus is there, as we go into the world and discover that Jesus is there. When we stand in front of you in judgement, may our good works that accompany our salvation not burn away as wood, hay & stubble, but be the fruit we are able to present to you. We thank you for Jesus who loved us enough to die for our salvation. May we respond with thankful and obedient hearts to you.*

*Amen*

**Closing Song ~ Salvation belongs to our God**
Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.

It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age and who have fallen away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.

Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are convinced of better things in your case—the things that have to do with salvation. God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, so that what you hope for may be fully realized. We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.

The Certainty of God’s Promise

When God made his promise to Abraham, since there was no one greater for him to swear by, he swore by himself, saying, “I will surely bless you and give you many descendants.” And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

People swear by someone greater than themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this
so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. 19 We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.
Everyone comes to this passage with a sense of inadequacy. However, rather than avoid this passage (which many Pastors do), I have found these notes/interpretations helpful in understanding this passage in Hebrews 6, when asked if a believer can lose their salvation:

**Interpretation #1** – probably the most unsatisfactory interpretation. This interpretation suggests that the Christians mentioned in this passage are Christians who have lost their salvation (*i.e. they were once saved & now they have lost their salvation*). Many hold to this position, but in holding this position they are as uncomfortable as I am in making a trip by plane. I know I am safe as anyone on that plane there. But I don’t enjoy it as the Captain of the plane does. There are many folk today who are not sure of their salvation and that no enjoying it. Nevertheless, they are saved if they fix their trust in Christ. It’s not the amount of faith, but the One in whom it is directed.

Those taking this position would deny that we have a sure salvation which cannot be lost, and that the believer is safe in Christ. (They turn to this passage often).

I want to make it abundantly clear that we have a sure salvation & I think Scripture is abundantly clear on that point. Paul says in Romans 8:1 that there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. And He expands that great truth to the triumphant climax of such a bold statement in Romans 8 verse 33 -

33 *Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.*

In other words he puts the throne back of the weakest & humblest man who has come to trust Christ, and today there’s not a created intelligence in God’s universe that can bring a charge against one of these who is justified through faith in the blood of Christ.
34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

“For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Drink in these words – a great foundation for assurance. This takes in the whole kit & caboodle – everything. Here we are given the guarantee that nothing can separate us from the love of God. Nothing that is seen, nothing that is unseen, nothing that is natural, nothing that is supernatural can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Lord Jesus makes this statement of our absolute security. The Word of God is quick and powerful. My sheep hear my voice and I know them. They follow me. I give to them eternal life (not temporary life; now if you could lose, it’s not eternal.) And they shall not perish and no one shall pluck them out of my hand. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

It’s not our ability to hold onto him, but of his ability to hold onto you. He can hold us and them that trust Him shall never perish. Is your trust fixed on a God who is all powerful, or a God who can suffer defeat?

If we are born into the family of God, we become sons/daughters of God through faith in Christ.
**Interpretation #2** – This interpretation contends that you have a hypothetical case and that the IF (i.e. IF they shall fall away) is just a possibility. That is, the writer here doesn’t say that it happens … but if it were possible. This would have to be the biggest ‘IF’ in the Bible. If it were true, then this position may be acceptable.

**Interpretation #3** – There really is no ‘IF’ there in the Greek. It is a participle and can be translated ‘having fallen away’ and therefore those who accept this position suggest that the audience in Hebrews are only ‘profess-ers’ – that is, they only profess to be Christians (viewpoint of Matthew Henry). Problem is that these Hebrew Christians are genuine believers.

The Bible does talk about apostates in the Church (e.g. 2 Peter 2:22), but the readers of Hebrews are not ‘profess-ers’. The language is too strong – they ought to be teachers/needed to have milk. Unsaved people don’t need milk! He needs life, he needs to be born again, because he is dead in sin. Once he is born again, then a little milk will be helpful.

What we are talking about here is ‘babes’. He calls them that, and urges them to go on. They were once enlightened and they tasted of the heavenly gift, made partakers of the Holy Spirit. Clearly, this language is of those who are born again. Yet, there are those who take the position the ones those spoken of here are just the Jewish people. For instance if they were enlightened and tasted, fell away, it would be impossible to renew them. That it was those who were living at the time of the Temple as it still remained.

There is still another group who stress the word ‘impossible’. They say it is impossible to renew them but it’s impossible for a man to, but it’s not impossible for God, because after all, he says it’s easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a person to enter into the kingdom. We can’t enter on our own. We have to have someone who is our Saviour and redeemer.
Interpretation 4 (most accepted by Magee of the 4 interpretations) – originally sourced from an article from Pastor Dr. J. B. Rowell of Central Baptist Church, Victoria British Columbia.

We are not discussing the question of salvation at all in this passage!! We are talking about saved people. We believe that they are saved people – e.g. once enlightened, tasted of the heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Spirit etc.

We are talking about believers and we are not talking about salvation. We are talking about rewards, and he says here that to renew them again not to salvation, but to repentance. Repentance is something God’s asked believers to do. 7 letters to the Churches in Asia in Rev. 2-3 – asking believers to repent. It’s a message for believers. We’re talking therefore what believers are to do for rewards. We’re talking about the fruit of salvation, not the root of salvation. Verse 9 – things that ACCOMPANY salvation. He hasn’t been discussing salvation, just the things that accompany salvation. He’s speaking of the fruit of the Christian’s life and the reward that comes as a result and he discusses the possibility that because of their life there’s the danger of them losing their reward. That is the whole point of this passage and there is a danger actually of their entire works as Paul says in first Corinthians that every man’s work is to be tested by fire (burns). Your work that you are doing today for Christ is going to be tested by fire. Is our work just wood, hay & stubble? It will be tested by fire. The writer mentions this here.

We’re not talking about salvation. When you & I stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ it’s not going to be a sweet experience (e.g. Jesus patting us on the back for not missing a day at Sunday School or Church). Jesus will go deeper than that. He’s going to test you, whether you’ve got any fruit in your life. Have you grown in grace and knowledge of Him? Have you been a witness for Him? Has your life counted for Him? Have you been a blessing to other people?

Are we looking forward to the Judgment Seat of Christ, because he is going to ‘take us apart’. Not for salvation, but because I am saved! He’s going to find out whether I am to get a reward or not.

There is a place for good works, because He is going to judge us at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Speaking of the fruit of the Christian’s life here in Verse 7. Note several passages here – when Paul wrote to Titus (young
preacher) in Titus 3:5 – ‘it’s not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves, but according to His mercy He saved us’. From this we might think that Paul doesn’t have much regard for good works. But when you go down to verse 8 of Titus 3 – ‘they that have believed God may be careful to maintain good works’.

Good works do not enter into the matter of salvation but when one becomes a child of God through faith in Christ works assume supreme importance. It’s important (essential) that if you are a Christian that you live the Christian life.

Which is more important – heredity or environment? Before you are born, heredity is more important, but after you’re born environment is the major consideration.

Before you become a child of God (before you are born again) works do not enter in. You cannot bring them to God because He won’t accept them. The righteousness of man is filthy rags in His sight. He accepts sinners but He accepts them on the basis of the redemption we have in Christ and if we have accepted Him we become a Child of God. We are born now. Peter says – ‘but you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you might show forth the excellences of Him who called you out of darkness into His glorious light’ (1 Peter 2:9).

If you’ve been saved, you are to show forth by your good works before the world that you’re redeemed to God. The Christian has something to show for it. This is the thing that he is going to be judged on. Now if he’s going to continue to be a baby and nothing but a trouble maker and turn people from Christ, instead of to Christ, then you can be sure there will be no reward. In fact, you can be ashamed at His appearing.