

“Impossible to Restore Them and the (In)Visible Church” (Part 1)– Hebrews 6:4-8

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[What follows is the transcript of a sermon. It was originally intended to be heard, not read, so the tone is more conversational than academic. It has only been loosely edited, so forgive any grammatical, syntactical, or spelling errors. If you have questions please contact Southern Oaks Baptist Church through their official website, www.welovethegospel.com]

Grab a Bible and meet me in Hebrews 6...

We are studying the most difficult passage in Hebrews and some have called it the most challenging passage in the New Testament. This is week three of four. So if you are a guest with us, you are joining in on a conversation that has already begun and I apologize for that. You can see what you have missed though online. There's a pretty good chance that some of the questions we don't answer in your mind today will have been answered in those past two sermons.

I want to jump right in. Let's read the text in its entirety once more, though we will be focusing in on the first two verses. So follow along as I read, beginning in verses 4 and 5. This is God's Word...

“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, ⁵ and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, 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. ⁷ For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. ⁸ But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.” (Hebrews 6:4-8)

In case you are just tuning in, what have we looked at so far?

WHAT IF THESE ARE BELIEVERS?

Option 1: The Loss of Salvation View

Option 2: The Hypothetical View

Now let's consider the possibility that verses 4 and 5 do not describe true believers...

WHAT IF THESE ARE NOT BELIEVERS?

If these are not true believers, they are nonetheless people in close proximity to believers and those who, for a season at least, could have been confused for believers. They are people who likely would have sincerely considered themselves Christians at one point, as evidenced by, among other things, a public profession of faith, participation in the sacraments, and various other externals of their life. Yet *profession* of saving faith is not the same as *possession* of saving faith and, as we have already seen in Hebrews, *possession* of saving faith is demonstrated through *perseverance* in the faith. Perseverance is the hallmark of genuine conversion. It doesn't cause it. But it evidences the legitimacy of our past profession of faith (cf. Heb. 3:6, 14).

I believe I have given sufficient evidence over the last two weeks from both the New Testament and the context of the book of Hebrews to demonstrate that all true believers are eternally secure and all true

believers persevere to the end. If that's the case, then the description in verses 4 and 5 could not refer to true believers falling away from the faith (without contradicting the unified teaching of the rest of Scripture). It refers to "individuals who have tasted the things of Christ but have not become genuine Christians."¹ That said, I readily admit that description certainly sounds like it *could* refer to believers.² What remains to be seen then is can the language in those verses, apart from the previous considerations, be understood as anything but believers. I think it can.

In fact, those who have argued that we need not take this description as referring to true Christians have usually taken the language in one of three ways. Before I give a brief overview of these interpretations, it's worth saying that the sheer number of options for the interpretation of these verses shows how inconclusive these verses are in isolation. They don't represent the typical New Testament language for born again believers and they don't at first glance seem to suggest unbelievers. That's why they are understood in so many divergent ways. Thus, as I said from the beginning, my own conclusions on these verses are based as much (or more) on the context of the letter and the broader teachings of Scriptures, which I've outlined over the past two Sundays. Still we should consider the language itself.

As I mentioned, scholars who see these verses as describing those who were never truly converted tend to divide into three different approaches. These three approaches are not incompatible and there is often overlap. For simplicity's sake though I'll divide them out to bring to the surface how some have handled these verses. We will have to be brief, but I'll footnote some resources for you in case you want to explore any of these approaches in greater detail...

Option 1: Allusion to their Predecessors in the Wilderness

Those who go this route argue that each description in verses 4 and 5 has some point of contact with the experience of the wilderness generation in the Old Testament who, for the most part, left Egypt but never entered the Promised Land. I don't have time to go into all of the nuances of this interpretation, but let me give a few examples. They generally argue that when verse 4 describes the ones who fall away as "*those who have once been enlightened*" it is meant to call to mind the pillar of fire that gave light to the Exodus generation (Exod. 13:21; Neh. 9:12; Ps. 105:39). They will also argue that the "heavenly gift" they have tasted is a picture of the heavenly manna that God provided to sustain the Israelites during their wandering. Line by line, there are those who have attempted to tie the language of verses 4 and 5 to the story of the Exodus generation who perished in the desert and failed to enter the Promised Land.

If indeed the author is doing this, we might wonder why. Simply put, he sees something similar happening in his own day. There are those, like the wilderness generation, who have experienced God's power and presence in some way, yet fall away from God through unbelief and therefore fail to enter the ultimate, eternal rest that Christ provides His people (which the Promised Land was but a shadow of). In the strongest possible terms then he would be warning his audience that if they fall away they will perish like that generation. They will fall short of the promises of God.³ The author would be using wilderness generation language as a way of saying, "don't be like them!" They were the picture of apostasy. And they are reminder for the reader that it is possible for people to "experience the benefits of God's blessing in the church without ever personally committing themselves to faith in Christ."⁴

The classic case for this approach was made by a guy named Dave Mathewson.⁵ The view has some weaknesses, but the strength of this position is that it does take seriously the context of Hebrews.

"The Book of Hebrews contains five major exhortations, of which this is part of the third. Each of the other four makes explicit reference to an Old Testament situation. The lengthy exhortation in

chapters 3 and 4 draws out the exodus as a basic counter-model for the Christian life, and it is extremely likely that this remains on the writer's mind in chapter 6."⁶

Therefore, this is one way of reading verses 4 and 5 that would not necessitate the one's described were truly believers. Regardless of whether that wilderness generation was truly "saved," they are used in Hebrews as a picture of falling away and falling short of the eternal rest to be enjoyed by all true Christians.

That said, here's another way that the language could be understood...

Option 2: Allusion to their Participation in the Sacraments

There are those (e.g., F. F. Bruce)⁷ who take the description in verses 4 and 5 as referring to unconverted people who nonetheless participate in the sacraments. According to this view, "*once enlightened*" would be a reference to baptism, which, believe it or not, there is some evidence for. In the second century, Justin Martyr⁸ and other church Fathers used the same language of "enlightenment" as a metaphor for baptism. Tasting "*the heavenly gift*" could signify participation in the Lord's Supper. Similarly, sharing in the Holy Spirit may be language associated with the laying on of hands in the early church. The other descriptions could likewise be tied to common early church practices, all of which were intended for true believers but could be shared by those who, despite appearances, may not have possessed true saving faith. This is certainly possible. And the third option is related in that it too involves a person's close proximity of the church community before falling away...

Option 3: Allusion to their Proximity to the New Covenant Blessings

While none of the options are mutually exclusive, my own view fits most comfortably under this heading. The scholar who has given the most detailed and helpful articulation of this position is Wayne Grudem.⁹ He argues that the word translated "*have...been enlightened*" does not mean, as some have claimed, "believed the gospel" or "been converted" or "come to faith" or anything like that. This word, which is used 11 times in the New Testament, is never used as some technical term for conversion. Instead, after surveying the evidence, he concludes that it here...

"...refers to learning and understanding, and therefore the most that can confidently be claimed for it in Hebrews 6:4 is that it speaks of 'those who have heard and understood the gospel.' Certainly such intellectual understanding of the facts of the gospel is an important step toward saving faith, but it does not itself constitute the element of personal trust in Christ that is essential to faith."¹⁰

Enlightened simply means that they were exposed to Gospel light through the preaching of Gospel truth.¹¹ Knowledge of the truth of the Gospel is needed for salvation. But knowledge of the truth alone doesn't save. That knowledge must be accompanied by faith. And nothing is said about faith here, nor is any of the other usual language of salvation from the New Testament present.

Similarly, those who fall away are said to have "*tasted*" both "*the heavenly gift*" and "*the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come.*" This doesn't have to mean that they had fully embraced and experienced such things in a saving way. Some push back at this point and say that in Hebrews 2:9 the same "tasting" verb is used for Jesus tasting death. We would never say that Jesus merely sampled death. He fully experienced death. So, it is argued, surely those who "tasted" the blessing described in Hebrews 6 must have been "all in" with the Christian faith, not merely those who had sampled the blessings but not swallowed them to the core. But I think this misses the point of the word. To taste something metaphorically

just means to have some experience with something. How full that experience is depends on what is “tasted.” So if you taste death, you obviously are fully dead because we can have no experience of death without actually being dead (cf. partially pregnant). But tasting the teachings or blessings or activities associated with a community doesn’t have to be such an “all in” kind of experience. It could be that they were sampled, experienced in some smaller measure, tasted but not swallowed.

Let me give you an example of this. Some of you have probably heard of the first century, Jewish historian by the name of Josephus. In one of his writings he speaks about the theological views of a group called the Essenes “whereby they irresistibly attract all who *have once tasted* their philosophy.”¹² This is strikingly similar language. The same words are used.

“Here Josephus makes it clear that those who have ‘once tasted’ have not yet made the Essene philosophy their own, but are simply very attracted to it. By analogy, in Hebrews 6 those who have ‘tasted’ the heavenly gift and the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come may be strongly attracted to these things, or they may not be, but mere tasting does not mean that they have made these things their own possession.”¹³

I suppose, if someone could show that the “*heavenly gift*” in verse 4 stood for “salvation in Christ,” then it would be difficult to argue against these people having a true experience of salvation since tasting salvation is a lot like tasting death—you are either saved or you’re not, just like you’re either dead or you’re not. There is no partial saving any more than there is partial dying. To taste either would imply a full experience. But “*the heavenly gift*” is never used in the Bible for salvation. The word here for “*gift*” is used on several occasions for the Holy Spirit,¹⁴ who the Bible also describes as having been sent from heaven.¹⁵ Many people have “tasted” (or experienced) aspects of His ministry on earth. Believers are not the only ones who witness miracles and “*the powers of the age to come*” that the Holy Spirit has wrought. Many have experienced His work (e.g., His conviction, power, or teaching) and, indeed, have “resisted” His work (e.g., Acts 7:51) and such experience will testify against them on the last day.

While I do think that is the point of the reference to sharers/partners in the Holy Spirit,¹⁶ I’m not sure that is what the author has in mind with the “heavenly gift” actually. Given the parallelism of these verses, I think it’s more likely a reference to the Word of God. Consider the following:

- (A) *Having tasted* the heavenly gift
- (B) Having become partners/partakers of the *Holy Spirit*
- (A’) *Having tasted* the goodness of the Word of God
- (B’) and the *powers/miracles* of the age to come¹⁷

Given the parallelism, the “heavenly gift” is likely “the Word of God.”¹⁸ Likewise, the reference to the “Holy Spirit” probably parallels the “powers” (a word that could be translated “miracles”; 2:4) of the coming age. Taken together the idea seems to be that these folks have been exposed to the Apostles teaching and the activity of the Holy Spirit. Such exposure could take various forms, but it most certainly means they were within the local congregation. They were considered part of the Christian community, part of the local church. But that doesn’t mean they were true Christians.

Can one taste “*the goodness of the word of God*” without being a believer? Absolutely. Think about how many non-Christians refer to the Bible as a book of good ethics and helpful wisdom. They may draw comfort from a verse that they read on social media or hear at a funeral service. They know something of the goodness of the Word of God without knowing the God of the Word. “To taste ‘the goodness of the word of God’ is to come to know and even feel something of its truthfulness and power”, writes Grudem. “But this is not the same as believing it for eternal life.”¹⁹

The hardest expression though is “*shared in the Holy Spirit*” because the similar language is used for believers in chapter 3, when they are described as those who “*share in Christ*.” The “share” word is the very tricky. Entire dissertations have been written on that matter. There is no way I want to get into all of that with you this morning (you’re welcome). Suffice it to say that the word has a fairly wide range of meanings (share in, companion, participation, partnership, etc.) and can imply both a close and inextricable association or a fairly weak one depending on the context. If you are curious about this, I would encourage you to check out Grudem’s article (which I’ll put a link to in the footnotes).²⁰

After surveying the possibilities, he concludes, that “the people spoken of in Hebrews 6 had been associated with the church and as such had been associated with the work of the Holy Spirit, and no doubt influenced by him in some ways (whether weak or strong) in their lives, but we cannot with confidence say more than that.”²¹ The point is association with the Holy Spirit does not always imply possession of the Holy Spirit. Similarly, Al Mohler comments on this difficult phrase:

“This means they have demonstrated some of the new life attributed to the work of the Holy Spirit. They show signs of regeneration and even a commitment to identify with Christ and with his people. In other words, they look like believers.”²²

Regardless of what you may feel about these conclusions (and others like them), everyone should at least admit this isn’t the typical language used in the New Testament for someone indwelt by the Holy Spirit. At the very most, the expression is inconclusive on the matter of if these people have experienced the Spirit’s activity in a saving way. Let’s not forget that the New Testament elsewhere speaks of people casting out demons and doing miracles in a way that could easily have marked them out as those who have “shared in the Holy Spirit,” yet in time they proved to have not been true Christians (Matt. 7:21-23). This could be said, for example, of Judas (Matt. 10:1-8).

So what can we say in light of this overview? Does this prove that the language of verses 4 and 5 could not be used of true believers? No. What it shows is that there are alternative explanations. It shows that “the terms in verses 4-6 are inconclusive, for they speak of events that are experienced both by genuine Christians and by some people who participate in the fellowship of a church but are never really saved.”²³ The analogy that the author gives in verses 7 and 8 speaks to this...

“For land that has drunk the rain that often falls on it, and produces a crop useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. ⁸ But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed, and its end is to be burned.” (Hebrews 6:7-8)

The rain here is a picture of the blessings described in verses 4 and 5. It is the exposure to the truth of the Gospel, the goodness of the Word of God, the power and activity of Spirit of God, and so on. This rain falls on two different kinds of land. One land received the “rain” and produced fruit, resulting in God’s blessing. The other land receives the same rain but does not produce the same crop. Instead, “thorns and thistles” emerge, things that are associated with mankind’s fall into sin. Indeed the land is said to be “*worthless*” and “*cursed*” and in the end “*burned*.” The crop-filled land is a picture of believers. The crop-less land is unbelievers and in this context unbelievers who have received the “rain” of verses 4 and 5.

So I am left to conclude that the things stated in those verses could be true of both believers and non-believers and the apostasy described occurs only with the latter. The true church—sometimes called the “invisible church” since only God can see her with perfect clarity—does not fall away. But many in the “visible church”—which includes those who externally look like Christians, identify as Christians, and hang out among Christians, yet are not true Christians—will indeed fall away. And when they do, it will be a fall

to destruction. Why? Because *“it is impossible...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”* (Heb. 6:4, 6).

What on earth does that mean? Verse 6 introduces new questions, does it not? In what sense did the people repent in the past? Why is their repentance impossible? How could anyone recrucify Christ? All good questions and all of which we will have to consider next week. In addition to that, I will give you a handful of examples of this falling away that we read about in the Scripture and a handful of applications of this difficult passage in light of them.

But, today, I don't want you to miss that while this apostasy, this falling away, doesn't occur with real believers, it does occur with people who look like real believers and who live within the context of Gospel blessing and presupposes a nearness to the things of Christ and a proximity to the Savior. “In other words, it is a condition to which churchgoers are particularly susceptible.”²⁴ It's not rank pagans who “fall away.” It's people that look an awful lot alike you and me. Church people. And not just church people, but people who are part of solid churches that preach the true Gospel and experience the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord doesn't want us to live in fear and without assurance. But we must remember the source of our assurance. If what this passage is saying is true, then it is hard to derive a sense of assurance from the fact that you used to be a certain way with Jesus. It would be hard to build your assurance on a certificate that says you are a member in a church somewhere or have been baptized at some point. It would be hard to gain assurance from the fact that you walked an aisle or prayed a prayer. None of those things are bad. They may be proof that you have experienced the “rain” of God's grace and Gospel. But the true test is the crop of your life. Is there perseverance? That's the crop that proves the rain has had a saving effect.

So perhaps better questions would be those related to the present tense of your life: Am I presently resting in the finished work of Christ? That's where our assurance comes from. Not how strong our grip is on Him, but how strong His grip is on us. The perseverance in faith is evidence of His grip on us. Are you presently resting all your hope in the truth of the Gospel? Do you believe that Christ died for your sins and that His death alone can cleanse you of sin? Do you believe that Christ was raised bodily from the dead, signifying His victory over death and sin in our place? More than just affirming these truths, are you trusting fully in Christ's work alone as the basis for your salvation? Do you presently trust in His work alone to make you right with God and not your works? Do you renounce your sins and trust in Christ to deliver you from their consequence? Are you walking with Jesus and desiring to follow where He leads? The answers to all those questions should be “yes and amen!” Andrew Murray once wrote:

“My assurance of salvation is not something I can carry with me as a railway ticket or a bank note, to be used, as occasion calls....My assurance of salvation is alone to be found in the living fellowship with the living Jesus in love and obedience.”²⁵

That's exactly right. If your answers to those questions are not “yes”, then why not? Every day you linger in indecision and put off following Christ is one step closer to the kind of apostasy that is described in this text. The consequences are devastating and final. Why would you linger? Trust in Christ as your only hope in life and death. He is your only hope.

But if you can say “yes” to all of those questions, this text is not meant to throw you into doubt and morbid introspection. If you can say “yes” to all those questions and yet you are feeling a bit disoriented by doubt and fear in light of this text, perhaps you will find these words from a seventeenth-century saint by the name of Samuel Rutherford as encouraging as I did this past week:

“Sinners are anchor-fast and made stable in God. So that if God do not change (which is impossible), then my hope shall not fluctuate... Oh God be thanked that our salvation is coasted, and landed, and shored upon Christ, who is Master of winds and storms!”²⁶

Isn't that good? I thought so. If that doesn't do it for you, let me close with the more contemporary words of Richard Phillips:

“Where, then, do you look for assurance? You can and should look to the unchanging character of God and the certainty of his promises. You can and should look to the once-for-all work of Jesus Christ which is sufficient for all your need. Do not look to yourself, to the strength of your faith, to the protection of various spiritual disciplines or methodologies, however useful they may be. It is not yourself or any regimen that depends on human strength that assures your salvation, but God, who said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.” That is the writer's own conclusion in 13:5–6. In assurance, as in all else, ‘Salvation belongs to the LORD’ (Jonah 2:9).

Assurance is something that comes from the knowledge of God and of his promises, and is thus the result of the exercise of faith. The same is true of security; it is through faith alone that we are ever secure. Security comes from trusting in Jesus Christ, from persevering to the end in the power of the Lord. Perhaps the best statement of this is found in Philippians 3:12, where Paul writes, ‘I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me’ (NIV).

Therefore... Press onward in faith, which is the way of perseverance and the route to hope and joy in the Lord. If you stumble or fall, call out to the Lord who is rich in mercy; he will lift you up. This is the best way to give thanks to God for his great gift of salvation, the way to honor him before the eyes of this world and to make your life worthwhile as you bear fruit—real fruit that will last forever and be a blessing to many.”²⁷

That seems like a good note to close on. We will finish up this warning passage next week. You'll want to be here for that. We have some important things to see about the visible and invisible church and how this warning ought to be applied in our lives. So join us next week. Bring a friend.

Let's pray...

¹ R. Albert Mohler Jr., *Exalting Jesus in Hebrews* (CCE; Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2017), 90.

² In fact, as Buist Fanning has pointed out, it may be the case “that the writer is portraying the *phenomena* of their conversion, what their Christian experience looks like outwardly. He portrays them in distinctly Christian terms to emphasize how close they have been to the faith and what they are rejecting if they depart... The author picks up the terms that those who might fall away would use to describe themselves—their self-profession—in order to show how shocking and worthy of judgment such a departure would be. From all that anyone could tell (and from how they viewed themselves), they would be among those who would hold on and show the genuineness of their confession, and this is what the writer expects (6:9-12; 10:39)... This approach requires an adjustment to the straightforward reading of Hebrews 6:4-8 and 10:26-29 (and similar texts; these are the most problematic) based on the implications from other texts in Hebrews (3:6, 14; 6:9-20; 7:20-25; 8:10-11; 9:11-14; 10:11-18, 32-34, 39). But as shown above, every interpreter must adjust the straightforward reading of one of the elements from these warnings. I have argued that this adjustment is one that the author himself has signaled early in his exhortations. This adjustment has clear warrant in the linguistic and theological evidence of Hebrews itself.” Buist M. Fanning, “A Classical Reformed View,” in *Four Views on the Warning Passages in Hebrews*, ed. Herbert W. Bateman IV (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2007), 217-218.

³ Richard Phillips adopts this approach. He writes, “As we saw back in chapters 3 and 4, the great majority of those who left Egypt with Moses did not enter the Promised Land but rebelled against the Lord, providing as great and terrible a portrait of apostasy as appears in all of Scripture. The warning, therefore, is that, like those who left Egypt as part of Israel, we may have a very real experience of the phenomena of God’s saving power through our participation in the church. By virtue of our affiliation with the people of God, by being in their midst, we can have the very great privileges described in our text and yet not actually enter into salvation. We will be enlightened with knowledge, we will encounter and perhaps benefit from real spiritual power, and we may be influenced and blessed in many ways. That was the very situation with those who left Egypt in the exodus, but who fell away under hardship into rebellion and were judged by God so that they died in the desert. As we saw earlier in our studies, this is as stark a portrait of eternal despair as appears in all the Scripture. How could this happen? It can happen to us if our hearts are hard toward God, despite our great privileges.” Richard D. Phillips, *Hebrews* (REC; Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2006), 190.

⁴ Ibid., 191.

⁵ Dave Mathewson, “Reading Hebrews 6:4–6 in Light of the Old Testament,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 61, 2 (Fall 1999): 209–26.

⁶ Phillips, 189–190.

⁷ See F. F. Bruce, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Rev. Ed. (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 146ff.

⁸ *First Apology* 61:12f; 65:1.

⁹ Grudem’s article can be accessed online for free here: <http://www.waynegrudem.com/perseverance-of-the-saints-a-case-study-from-hebrews-6-4-6-and-the-other-warning-passages-in-hebrews/>.

¹⁰ Ibid., 13, 15. “It is true that the word *photizo* is used in Hebrews 10:32 to speak of an event that happened near the beginning of the Christian lives of the hearers, but that does not prove that it means ‘heard and believed the gospel,’ for the sense, ‘learned about the gospel’ would fit just as well... In fact, the term *photizo* does not carry a sense of ‘believed the gospel’ or ‘came to faith’ in any of its other New Testament uses.” Ibid., 12–13.

¹¹ Dennis E. Johnson, “Hebrews” in *Hebrews-Revelation* (ESVEC; Wheaton: Crossway, 2018), 86.

¹² *The Jewish War*, 2.158.

¹³ Grudem, 19.

¹⁴ Acts 2:38; 8:20; 10:45; 11:17.

¹⁵ Acts 2:33; 1 Peter 1:12.

¹⁶ See Grudem’s examination of the “have shared in the Holy Spirit” in Grudem, 21ff. He writes, “to become a ‘partaker; of the Holy Spirit means to be associated in some way with the world of the Holy Spirit and to share in some of the benefits that the Holy Spirit gives. Sometimes interpreters assume that the phrase means ‘to receive the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit,’ and such a sense is possible. But on the other hand there is nothing in the text that would require that meaning. The phrase may mean simply that these people had come into the church and there had experienced some of the benefits of the Holy Spirit in answers to prayer or even in using some spiritual gifts. To put the matter simply, there were partakers of some of the benefits which the Holy Spirit gives.... Therefore the people spoken of in Hebrews 6 had been associated with the church and as such had been associated with the work of the Holy Spirit, and no doubt influenced by him in some ways (whether weak or strong) in their lives, but we cannot with confidence say more than that.” Grudem, 22–23.

¹⁷ Johnson, 86.

¹⁸ “In Hebrews 12:25, God’s voice speaking to Israel *on earth* (at Sinai) will be contrasted to his addressing the new covenant church now *from heaven*. So the good word of God is a gift that now comes from heaven through Christ’s messengers.” Johnson, 86.

¹⁹ Grudem, 20.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 23.

²² Mohler, 90.

²³ Grudem, 10.

²⁴ Arturo Azurdia III, “The Fatality of Apostasy, Part 1,” a sermon accessed online at: http://media.thirdmill.org/mp3-16/art_azurdia.Heb13.mp3.

²⁵ Murray, *Holiest of All*, 209 (cited in Phillips, 195).

²⁶ Letter to John Stuart, Provost of Ayr (1637), in A. Bonar, *Letters of Samuel Rutherford* (Edinburgh, 1891), 372.

²⁷ Phillips, 196.