

Hebrews 6.4-9

Of Shame and Honor

What is it about this issue of apostasy which makes it so that God is not willing to restore them? Why is it impossible? Is it not true that nothing is impossible for God? The matter is not about God's ability, but about His willingness. The one who is apostate has partaken of much spiritual blessing and spurned them all, most damningly, he has spurned the Christ who died for sinners.

I. WHAT IS IMPOSSIBLE

a. Things inconsistent with God's very nature

- i. God cannot lie
- ii. God cannot sin
- iii. God cannot do evil

b. Things which God has absolutely decreed shall not happen

- i. For instance, **1Samuel 15.28-29** states that Saul nor his posterity would not be preserved in the Kingdom of Israel. For God had decreed that it should not be.
- ii. WE cannot know any more about what is impossible with God in this regard except where it is accord with His essential nature. For God does not tell us who is and who is not elect except as they respond to the call of the Gospel.
- iii. Indeed, no one but God knows what He will do and what He has planned.

Isaiah 40:13–14 (NKJV) ¹³ Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, Or *as* His counselor has taught Him? ¹⁴ With whom did He take counsel, and *who* instructed Him, And taught Him in the path of justice? Who taught Him knowledge, And showed Him the way of understanding?

Romans 11:34–35 (NKJV) ³⁴ *“For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has become His counselor?”* ³⁵ *“Or who has*

first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?”

- iv. Therefore things are either possible or impossible depending upon whether God has decreed them to be. And the only way that we can know what that decree has been is to look back at it, for the only way that we can know the future is when it is our past.

II. APOSTATE

- a. Someone who is apostate has abandoned Christ so fully that the church is instructed by God that He is leaving them to their own means... essentially damning them to hell, for no one can come unless they are called of God.
- b. When I say “called of God” I am not speaking of the general call of the gospel which goes out to all men, but rather the effectual calling of God. Remember that

effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel.

- c. Therefore, by definition someone who apostatizes is NOT effectually called, for they are not repentant and will not embrace Christ as prophet, priest and king. The church must guard against this evil, with sound doctrine, birthed from the Word of God, with spiritually powerful preaching empowered by the Spirit of God, and with brotherly love which is willing to bring others back from the edge when they are in danger. We must be on guard for our own souls and for the souls of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

- d. So, when someone who belonged to the church, professing Christ and attesting to their salvation, reverses and denies Christ. This person is apostate.

- i. Declaring through word and deed that they affirm no faith in Christ, truly rather they deny it entirely.
 - ii. Sets themselves against the Kingdom and its work
 - iii. Attacks and seeks to tear down the work of the church
 - iv. Refutes the Scripture and refuses its truth
- e. This person has separated themselves from the church and from the visible kingdom of God, and has, so far we might know, completely separated themselves from any hope of salvation.
- f. It is important to note that this is someone who was a part of the church, not a pagan who has decided to actively hate God. This is someone who professed faith with enough conviction that the church was satisfied with their conversion and accepted them as a part of the body.
- g. This was someone we called brother or sister. This was someone who was one of us, and

part of us and now has openly decided that they have no part in Christ and, in fact, hate Him. They are proving by that action that they were never saved.

1 John 2.18-19

- h. It is also important to note that this not about a particular sin, as much as it is an entire abandoning of what they professed to believe.
- i. This person has set themselves against the truth of God in every manner possible and has no desire to repent or to be restored...
- j. And most importantly, this person will find that God is not willing to give them any gracious, effectual calling. They have had more than enough natural light, more than enough spiritual light. They have enjoyed even a measure of spiritual enlightenment, not complete, not total but more than average.

k. They are cast off, and the church is not to seek after them. We must passingly note that this is a separate matter than church discipline.

- i. In church discipline, behavior is generally being corrected. Occasionally orthodoxy is questioned, almost always the one being disciplined is still an active and participating member who is removed by the action of the church for the purpose of correction
 - ii. An apostate removes themselves because they no longer believe.
 - iii. A church can and should remove from its membership rolls someone who has apostatized
 - iv. But discipline is, by nature, aimed at restoration, healing and re-integration... (following repentance) the church removes them for a season and seeks after them with warning love to see them restored. This is healthy and honoring...
- l. But an apostate is cast off and left... it is impossible that they should be restored.

III. WHY IMPOSSIBLE? –

What makes is to heinous that God says it is impossible?

a. They crucify Jesus again for themselves

- i. Attempt to make Jesus ridiculous by exposing Him to the shame of the cross again for their own pleasure
- ii. Exactly the opposite of how we are to consider the cross of Christ

Hebrews 10.29

Zechariah 12.10

b. Put him to an open shame

- i. Jesus endured shame in His incarnation
- ii. God put Him to shame on the cross momentarily, but in so doing gave Him the greatest of honor.
- iii. Jesus shamed the shame

Hebrews 12.1-2

iv. Now no shame can touch Him. For He has been raised with all glory

c. Shame is exactly the opposite of how we are to treat Him

Hebrews 2.5-9

Revelation 5.1-14

d. It is exactly the opposite of how God sees and honors Him

John 8.49-51

e. It is exactly the opposite of the truth of who Jesus is

John 17.5

f. But shame and disdain is exactly the same pattern we have always adopted with God in our sin

Matthew 15.7-9

John 5.39-47

IV. THE WARNING

a. How we think about Jesus matters more than anything we do

i. Regeneration produces a change in us

1. We begin to think like God

2. We begin to love what God loves

3. We begin to hate what God hates

4. We begin to desire to live out true righteousness

ii. God loves and honors the Son above all else

iii. IF we do not love and honor the Son we are not saved.

b. He deserves honor and glory from us

i. He is first of all God

- ii. He is the Word of creation
- iii. He is the One who died to ransom His people
- iv. He is the One who bore the sin and endured the wrath on our behalf
- v. He is the One who loved us, and who loves us still
- vi. He is the firstborn over all creation
- vii. And He is WORTHY of praise!

c. The matters of the heart that drive us are the real issue of our lives

d. To play around with dishonoring Jesus runs a terrible risk, for our affections are what motivate us.

- i. To allow disdain to creep into our hearts for Him shows something is wrong in our souls
- ii. If that disdain grows and spreads, it could be indicating that you are NOT saved
- iii. If that disdain becomes the flavor of your life and heart it is showing that you are probably not saved

- iv. If that disdain becomes so bad that you move from your (now proven false) confession of Christ and deny the faith and the blood of the lamb that you claimed bought you... you run the dire risk of apostasy, and from that darkness there is no return...

- e. To harden your heart against the glory of Jesus is to run the risk of being cast off forever.

- f. The more you know of who He is the accountability and responsibility you bear.

- g. But the more you know of who He is in truth, the sweeter He becomes to you! This is the surest evidence that you cannot fall away, for you DO belong to Jesus! Those who love Him are His, for no one can love Him unless he is taught by God and made new in his spirit!

- h. So cultivate honor, glory and love for Jesus

- i. Guard your heart and mind against all that would despise and dishonor Him
- j. Be mindful of the pressure of the world around you and the flesh within you to make less of Jesus than He deserves.
- k. Be always watchful of one another! This creeps in, unnoticed and unchecked until it erupts destructively in our midst. God commands that we bear one another's burdens, that we actively love one another and that we be willing to risk angering someone for the sake of truth as long as we speak and conduct ourselves in love.
- l. A brother **MUST** be willing to inject himself in the life of another brother, and so help him when he is struggling with faith or flesh.

James 5.19-20