**JUDE**

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**Chapter Four**

**Saved, but Afterward Destroyed**

*But I want to remind you*, *though you once knew this*, *that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt*, *afterward destroyed those who did not believe*.

(**Jude 5**)

(For aditional information on the latter part of this chapter — the type-antitype structure of **Hebrews 6:4-6** — refer to Appendix 1 in this book.)

The beginning of spiritual lessons concerning apostasy in **Jude** is drawn from the experiences of the Israelites under Moses. The Israelites were *saved out of the land of Egypt*. Not only had they *appropriated* the blood of the paschal lambs but they had also been *delivered* from Egypt itself. As a redeemed people under Moses, they had been called into existence and saved out of the land of Egypt for *a purpose* — a purpose to be realized in the land of Canaan.

God’s Firstborn Son

Israel’s standing among the nations was that of *firstborn*.Israel was *God*’*s* *firstborn son* (remaining *God*’*s firstborn son* today).An announcement to this effect was to be proclaimed to the Pharaoh of Egypt before the Exodus, along with the command, “*Let My son go*, *that he may serve Me*” (**Exodus 4:22**, **23**).

This referred to the fact that the purpose surrounding Israel’s removal from Egypt was associated with the nation’s birthright. Israel was called out of Egypt to go into another land, the land of Canaan, and exercise the rights of the firstborn in that land.

The rights of the firstborn, the birthright possessed by Israel, consisted of three things:

1. *Ruler of the household*, *under and for the Father*.
2. *Priest in the family*.
3. *Receiving a double portion of all the Father*’*s goods*.

*The first segment of the birthright* placed the firstborn in the position of “heir” with respect to *a rule of the Father*’*s house*, under and for the Father. “Sonship” implies *rulership* and carries the thought of *supremacy*.In this respect, Israel was to be *the supreme nation and exercise rule*, *as a national power*, *over all the other nations of the earth*.

This earth, a province in the kingdom of God, constitutes the Father’s house when the birthright with respect to nations is in view (cf.**Revelation 2:26**, **27**); and Israel was to bear rule over all the nations in this house, under and for the Father.

Israel occupied this standing as *firstborn* among all nations while still in Egypt, but Israel would not actually realize these rights until after the nation had been removed from Egypt and established in the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, within a theocracy.

*The second segment of the birthright* would place Israel in *a priestly position with respect to both God and the nations*. Israel was to be “*a kingdom of priests*” in the midst of the nations (**Exodus 19:6**), resulting in the nations being blessed through Israel in accord with **Genesis 12:1-3**.

*A first-mention principle* relating to these blessings had previously been established in **Genesis 9:25-27**. “*The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob*” (**Exodus 3:6**) was *first* “*the God of Shem*” (**Genesis 9:26**). Neither Ham nor Japheth had a God, and the only way they could realize spiritual blessings was through Shem and his God.

Or, to state the matter another way, the descendants of Ham and Japheth (the Gentile nations) are “*without God in the world*” (**Ephesians 2:12**; cf. **Psalm 96:5**) and can realize spiritual blessings *only through the descendants of Shem* (the nation of Israel) and their God (**Psalm 33:12**; **72:18**, **19**). Although the lineage of Shem also includes, among others, the descendants of Ishmael, the sons of Keturah, and Esau, spiritual blessings for nations emanating from these lineages are derived through the same means as those for the Gentile nations (**Genesis 17:18-21**; **21:5-12**; **22:2**; **25:1-6**).

*The third segment of the birthright* placed Israel in a position to receive *a double portion of all the Father*’*s goods*. This segment of the birthright, as the first two segments, also had to do with Israel’s position among the nations. There are two spheres of governmental power and authority in a rule over the Gentile nations — *earthly*,and *heavenly —* and the double portion of the birthright pertained to Israel ultimately coming into possession of both (cf.**Genesis 22:17**, **18**).

The way was opened at Kadesh-Barnea for Israel to go into the land and realize *the earthly portion* of this inheritance, but *the heavenly portion* of the inheritance was not to be opened to the nation until about fifteen hundred years later.

It was necessary that *both* be extended to Israel at some point in time, for Israel, as the firstborn, was *the appointed heir*.At Kadesh-Barnea, when the earthly portion of the inheritance was in the offing, God Himself dwelt in the midst of the nation; fifteen hundred years later, when the heavenly portion of the inheritance was in the offing, God Himself once again (in the person of His Son) dwelt in the midst of the nation.

From Egypt to Canaan

When Israel left Egypt, the march was not directly to the land of Canaan. Before entering the land and assuming the rights of the firstborn, certain preparatory steps had to be taken first. Thus, the march of the Israelites under Moses, beyond the Red Sea passage, was to a previously designated place in the wilderness — *a Mount* in “*the wilderness of Sinai*” (**Exodus 3:1**, **12**; **19:1**, **2**) — where God would meet and commune with His people through Moses.

Here, before the Mount in the wilderness of Sinai, the people were to be prepared and equipped for the position that they were to occupy in the land of Canaan. During this time the Law was given to Moses, the priestly ministry and tabernacle worship were established, and orderly arrangements of the tribes and families were set forth (**Exodus 19:3**-**Numbers 10:10**).

The Law given to Moses at Mt. Sinai, with all its rules and regulations, was to be Israel’s constitution, given to govern the nation’s affairs in the kingdom. And the tabernacle, with God dwelling in the Holy of Holies in the midst of His people, was to be the central place of worship for “*the kingdom of priests*,” through whom God would bless all the Gentile nations. Israel, God’s firstborn son, was to bear rule after this fashion in a worldwide theocracy with pre-established laws, rules, and regulations.

The tabernacle was “*set up*” in the wilderness of Sinai on the first day of the first month of the second year following the Exodus — a few days short of one year. On that day “*the glory of the Lord*” — the visible presence of God among His people — filled the tabernacle. And at that point in time a theocratic kingdom came into existence on this earth (**Exodus 40:1-38**).

*The kingdom* with its constitution was actually established in the wilderness of Sinai, at Mt. Sinai (“a mountain” in Scripture signifies *a kingdom*). But the actual rule within this kingdom could not begin until God’s firstborn son had been removed from the wilderness and established in the land of Canaan. Thus, the march from the wilderness of Sinai was then to Kadesh-Barnea. In essence, at that juncture in history, everything was ready for God to begin fulfilling His purpose for having saved His people out of the land of Egypt.

Israel at Kadesh-Barnea

*Then Caleb quieted the people before Moses*, *and said*, “*Let us go up at once and take possession*, *for we are well able to overcome it*.”

*But* the men who had gone up with him said, “*We are not able to go up against the people*, *for they are stronger than we*.” (**Numbers 13:30**, **31**)

All things dating back to Abraham and his removal from Ur of the Chaldees came to pass with an end in view, and that end involved the nation springing from the loins of Abraham by Isaac and Jacob realizing the very purpose for their national existence. All the nations of the earth were to be blessed through Abraham and his seed, and this was to be realized by and through the seed of Abraham becoming a “*great nation*” and occupying *a predetermined position and place on the earth with respect to the surrounding nations* (**Genesis 12:1-3**).

National blessings for the nations of the earth were to be realized *through Israel*. God was to bless Israel and, in turn, bless the nations of the earth *through Israel*. The surrounding nations, alienated from God (**Ephesians 2:12**; cf.**Psalm 147:19**, **20**), were to be brought into a proper relationship with God through the “*kingdom of priests*” — the nation in possession of the tabernacle, the dwelling place of God and the only way of approach to God.

Herein lies the reason that the people of God since time immemorial have been commanded, “*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem* . . . .” (**Psalm 122:6a**). When Jerusalem is at peace, the nations will be at peace; when Israel is at rest, the nations will be at rest; when Israel has been established in the land as a blessing, the nations will be blessed in their respective lands through Israel (**Isaiah 2:1-5**; **14:1**, **2**; **40:3-5**; **52:9**, **10**; **62:1-7**; **Jeremiah 3:17**, **18**; **Zechariah 2:4-11**; **8:20-23**; **9:10**; cf. **Deuteronomy 32:8**; **Ezekiel 5:5**; **Acts 17:26**, **27**).

Spiritual blessings are derived through God’s firstborn Sons. This was the pattern established in history, this pattern remains true today, and this pattern will remain true throughout time and eternity. **Genesis 12:3** remains in force today, as does **Galatians 3:14**.

However, during the present dispensation, God’s firstborn Sons (Israel, and Jesus) are not occupying their God-ordained places with respect to their *Firstborn* status; and *the fullness of blessings* awaiting mankind must be deferred to that future time, to the coming age, when present conditions will be changed.

The prospect lying before the people of Israel upon their departure from the wilderness of Sinai was to enter into the land of Canaan and to ultimately be established in that land, not only as *ruler* over the nations of the earth, but also as *a kingdom of priests* through whom God would bless the nations. The prospect lying before the Gentile nations at this point was, accordingly, that of entering into *a position of subjection to Israel*, which would ultimately result in their being recipients of *the blessings of God*.

1)The Twelve Spies and Their Report

Several months beyond Israel’s departure from the wilderness of Sinai, about one and one-half years beyond the nation’s departure from Egypt, the newly established nation, God’s firstborn son, arrived at the borders of the land of Canaan. The end of an era was at hand. Heretofore the descendants of Abraham had been considered “*strangers*” in relation to the land of Canaan (**Genesis 15:13**; **37:1**; **47:9**; **Exodus 6:3**, **4**). But the sojourn of the seed of Abraham had ended (**Exodus 12:40**, **41**), and the descendants of Abraham were now at the very borders of the land — *an established nation under God* (the only nation that has ever been or will ever be so placed) — ready to enter in and take possession of the land covenanted to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

At Kadesh-Barnea, God instructed Moses to send spies into the land of Canaan, one man from each of the twelve tribes. These spies were to traverse the land, obtaining a complete report concerning the land and its inhabitants prior to the nation’s entrance into and conquest of the land.

The twelve men chosen searched the land “*from the wilderness of Zin as far as Rehob*” for forty days. They observed the cities and inhabitants of the land, and obtained samples of the fruits of the land to carry back with them (“*grapes*,” “*pomegranates*,” and “*figs*”). And among the inhabitants of the land were “*the giants* [‘*the nephilim*’],the sons of Anak, which came from the giants [‘*the nephilim*’].”

(The word *nephilim*,a transliterated Hebrew word meaning “fallen ones,” refers to the offspring resulting from a cohabitation of the “*sons of God* [angels]” with the “*daughters of men* [female descendants of Adam].” This subject is covered in Chapters 5 and 6 in this book.)

Upon their return, the spies possessed a complete report concerning the land and its inhabitants. Their findings were then presented before Moses, Aaron, and all the congregation of Israel (**Numbers 13:1-33**).

Ten of the twelve spies presented a “*bad report*” concerning the land and its inhabitants. They stated that the land was truly a land flowing with “*milk and honey*,” but *the people* that dwelt in the land were “*strong*,” *the cities* were “*fortified and very large*,” and it was *a land* that “*devours its inhabitants*.” According to their report, the Israelites would not be “*able to go up against the people*,” for these people dwelling in the land were “*stronger*” than the Israelites.

In essence, the ten spies bringing this report were saying that *God would be unable to complete His dealings with Israel by and through bringing the people of this nation into the realization of their calling* (**Numbers 13:26-29**, **31-33**), resulting in **Genesis 12:2**, **3** remaining unfulfilled.

However, two of the spies, Caleb and Joshua, believed God could and would do exactly what He had promised. Caleb “*quieted the people before Moses*, *and said*, ‘*Let us go up at once*, *and take possession*, *for we are well able to overcome it*’” (**Numbers 13:30**). Caleb and Joshua recognized that the battle belonged to the Lord (**2 Chronicles 20:15**), and circumstances were not to be looked upon from a naturalistic standpoint, but from a divine viewpoint. They knew that the Israelites within their own strength could not overcome the inhabitants of the land (cf.**Numbers 14:42-45**); but they also knew that with *God dwelling in their midst*, *no one*, *inside or outside the land*, *could overcome them*.

In essence, their report stated that *God was well able to complete His dealings with Israel by and through bringing the people of this nation into a realization of their calling* (cf.**Numbers 14:8**), ultimately effecting the fulfillment of **Genesis 12:2**, **3**.

2)Israel’s Reaction

The nation of Israel at this point stood on the very threshold of entering into the land and ruling within a theocracy in the position for which the people had previously been saved out of the land of Egypt. They were in possession of all things pertaining to the kingdom (constitution, center of worship, presence of God Himself), they had heard the report concerning the land from those who had been there, and they had even tasted the actual fruits of the land. They were at the end of one era and the beginning of another.

Everything was now in readiness for them to move ahead. They had been brought from the brickyards of Egypt to the borders of the land of Canaan. They had been brought from a place of subjection to the most powerful Gentile nation of that day to a position where they could enter into a land that belonged to them alone and ultimately rule over, resulting in a blessing to, the same Gentile nation that had previously held them in bondage. This is the prospect that lay before the people of Israel at Kadesh-Barnea.

If ever a people could be looked upon as having moved from a state of *gnosis* (“knowledge”) to a state of *epignosis* (“mature knowledge” [particularly as it related to things pertaining to the purpose for their calling]) it would be the Israelites under Moses. They moved from *a simple knowledge* (*gnosis*)of the rudimentary things concerning the death of the firstborn in Egypt to *an extensive knowledge* (*epignosis*)concerning the purpose of their calling at Kadesh-Barnea (**Exodus 12**-**Numbers 13**).

(Comparing *gnosis* and *epignosis*, the preposition *epi* prefixed to *gnosis* [*epignosis*] intensifies the word. Note Paul’s use of the verb form of *gnosis* [*ginosko*] without, and then with, the preposition *epi* in **1 Corinthians 13:12**: “*For now we see in a mirror*, *dimly*, *but then face to face*. *Now I know* [*ginosko*] *in part*, *but then I shall know* [*epiginosko*] *just as I also am known* [*epiginosko*].”)

And at Kadesh-Barnea the children of Israel, in possession of this knowledge, were in a position to move in one of two directions: they could either *believe the true report* proclaimed by Caleb and Joshua and go into the land, or they could *believe the false report* proclaimed by the other ten spies and refuse to enter the land.

Israel chose the latter; and, by this move, *the nation fell away* (**Numbers 14:1ff**).  *The nation of Israel stood away from* “*the faith*.” They refused to believe that they could go into the land and, under God, be victorious in conquest. Israel, not only to her own detriment but to the detriment of the nations of the earth, committed *national apostasy* at Kadesh-Barnea. Israel turned away from their God-appointed position in the land of Canaan and looked back toward the things in the land of Egypt (cf.**Luke 9:62**).

The people rejected God’s appointed leader, Moses, and sought to appoint a new leader who would lead them back to Egypt. They even sought to stone Caleb and Joshua because of their positive report concerning the land. They refused to believe that God was able to victoriously lead His people into this land, and they wanted no part of it (cf.**Hebrews 3:19**). This is the point in Scripture where one finds *a national apostasy resulting in a national overthrow*.

Caleb and Joshua alone, of the entire accountable generation, twenty years old and above, would ultimately be allowed to enter into the land and realize the purpose for their salvation. The remaining individuals were to be overthrown in the wilderness and fall short of the goal of their calling (**Numbers 14:29ff**).

Christians at Kadesh-Barnea

(The material that follows, to the end of the chapter, has been written in a type-antitype framework, showing parallels between that which occurred in the camp of Israel under Moses [the actions of two types of Israelites] and that which would occur among Christians under Christ [the actions of two types of Christians]. And the matter was/is with a view to entrance into a land [the Israelites entering *an earthly land under Mose*s, Christians entering *a heavenly land under Christ*], with both realizing *an inheritance therein and exercising regality in relation to the nations of the earth*, *within a theocracy*.

However, the leaven that the woman placed in the three measures of meal in **Matthew 13:33**, which could only have been very early in the dispensation, has, after almost 2,000 years, resulted in such a corruption of biblical doctrine in relation to the kingdom in Christendom that it is next to impossible today to find Christians who can form *a true antitype of the Israelites under Moses*. That is to say, it is next to impossible today to find Christians in the churches of the land who, in their knowledge of Scripture, have moved from *gnosis* to *epignosis* in things particularly related to the coming kingdom of Christ. The churches are filled with Christians who, in the preceding respect, are wandering aimlessly about, either still back in Egypt or someplace in the wilderness, knowing little to nothing about the goal of their calling — *regality with Christ*, *within a theocracy*, *in a land set before them*.

Thus, except in rare instances, a true antitype in keeping with the type *cannot be seen in Christendom today*. This could easily have been seen in first century Christianity; but, because of the working of the leaven since that time, the matter is completely different today.)

*For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened*, *and have tasted the heavenly gift*, *and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit*,

*and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come*,

*if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance* . . . . (**Hebrews 6:4-6**)

This passage in **Hebrews** has been an enigma to Bible students over the years, and it is possibly the most misunderstood section of Scripture in the New Testament. But the passage is not nearly as difficult as the multiplicity of interpretations would lead one to believe. The numerous interpretations advanced by various expositors have resulted basically from two exegetical errors:

1. A failure to take into account *the central message of the book of* ***Hebrews***.
2. A failure to take into account *the context of* ***Hebrews 6:4-6***.

*The message of the book of* ***Hebrews*** centers on “*the salvation of the soul*” (e.g., **6:13-20**; **10:35-39**; **13:17**), and *the context leading into* ***Hebrews 6:4-6*** has to do with “the experiences of the Israelites under Moses” (chapters 3, 4), which is why maturity in the faith — moving from *gnosis* to *epignosis* — is in view immediately preceding **Hebrews 6:4-6** (**5:5-6:3**). The summation of the matter is contained in chapter **six**; but the thought begins in chapter **three**, and the entire passage must be so understood.

(Note that the preceding material would explain why **Hebrews 6:4-6** is seldom correctly understood today, resulting in the multiplicity of interpretations.  *A true type-antitype status of the passage is all but absent in Christendom today*, *with the whole of the matter*, *for all practical purposes*, *not understood*. Thus, there is really no present-day base to work from.)

Israelites under Moses — Christians under Christ

As the Israelites under Moses (in their knowledge of God’s plans and purposes) moved from a state of *gnosis* to a state of *epignosis* in the type, Christians under Christ (in their knowledge of God’s plans and purposes) are moving from a state of *gnosis* to a state of *epignosis* in the antitype; as the Israelites under Moses moved from Egypt toward the land of Canaan with an earthly inheritance in view, Christians under Christ are moving from the things of this world toward a land separate from this world with a heavenly inheritance in view.

As the Israelites under Moses were being prepared during the wilderness journey for entrance into the land, Christians under Christ are being prepared during the wilderness journey for entrance into the land; as the Israelites under Moses were to go in, conquer the inhabitants of the land, and rule as God’s firstborn son here on earth at the head of the nations, Christians under Christ are to go in, be victorious over the inhabitants of the land (cf.**Ephesians 6:10-17**), and, in that coming day (following the adoption [**Romans 8:14-23**]), rule as God’s firstborn son from the heavens over the nations.

But,as the Israelites refused to go into the land, conquer the inhabitants, and take possession of the land (with a view to a future rule), so can Christians refuse to go into the land, be victorious over the inhabitants, and take possession of the land (with a view to a future rule); and, just as the Israelites at this point fell away, with no possibility of being renewed again unto repentance, so can Christians at this point fall away, with no possibility of being renewed again unto repentance; and, just as the Israelites who fell away were overthrown in the wilderness and failed to realize the goal of their calling, so will Christians who fall away after this fashion be overthrown in the wilderness and fail to realize the goal of their calling.

The words, “*once* *enlightened*, *and* *have tasted the heavenly gift*, *and* *have become partakers of the Holy Spirit*, *and have tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the age to come*” (**Hebrews 6:4**, **5**), refer to a progression in growth from milk to meat to strong meat. This is a progression from the rudimentary things concerning the antitype of the death of the paschal lambs in Egypt to the strong meat associated with things surrounding the antitype of Israel’s experiences at Kadesh-Barnea (chapters **3**, **4**).

In the immediate context (chapter **5**), “*strong meat*” is associated with things surrounding the Melchizedek priesthood. This priesthood refers to things beyond Kadesh-Barnea, in the land itself. Melchizedek was a king-priest, setting forth in type the office that Christ will occupy in the coming age when He, as the great King-Priest, with His “*kings and priests*” (**Revelation 5:10**), takes the kingdom.

The entire thought in **Hebrews 6:4-6** is a progression from *gnosis* to *epignosis*,followed by a “*falling away*” from *the faith*. “Eternal salvation,” which, more often than not, is read into this text, is *not* in view at all. Viewing eternal salvation as the issue under discussion is completely unnatural and will serve only to obscure the correct interpretation. If the Scriptures alone are allowed to interpret **Hebrews 6:4-6**, the entire matter will become clear.

(Note the words, “*enlightened*,” “*partakers*,” and “*have tasted*” [vv. **4**, **5**]. These words are used elsewhere in the book of **Hebrews** referring to individuals [Christians] entering into certain experiences [cf.**2:9**; **3:1**; **10:32**]. The usage of these words in **Hebrews 6:4-6** is within the same framework. The unsaved simply cannot enter into experiences seen by the manner in which these words are used in the text.)

Impossibility of Renewal

The thought that *it is impossible* “*to renew*” certain apostate Christians “*to repentance*” is one of *the most solemn warnings* to be found in all Scripture.  *The finality* of the matter for those who apostatize in this manner is set forth by the word “*impossible*.” This is *a particular apostasy*, and once a Christian *has fallen away from the faith* in the manner set forth in **Hebrews 3-6**, *he can never again* be brought back into the position that he occupied prior to his departure from the faith. (The Greek word translated “*renew*” refers to being *brought back into exactly the same position previously occupied*.) In the type, Israel could not be brought back into this position; and in the antitype, neither can Christians.

The entire thought is very similar to the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in **Matthew 12:22-32**. This was a national sin committed by the religious leaders of Israel — not something that man, saved or unsaved, can commit today. Once the religious leaders had committed this sin, their actions brought the nation into a state from which a restoration to the previously occupied position could never occur.

At Kadesh-Barnea, however, the prohibition applied only to the present generation, twenty years old and above (this would allow the nation of Israel, at a future time, to realize the position for which the generation under Moses had been called — *an earthly calling*). In **Matthew** chapter **twelve**, anticipating **Matthew 21:43**, this prohibition not only applied to the present generation but to future generations as well (this would prevent the nation of Israel from ever realizing the position unto which the generation during the days of Christ and the apostles had been called — *a heavenly calling*).

One thing that must not be overlooked when considering the impossibility of renewing an apostate to repentance, who has fallen away in the manner specified, is the fact that in the type surrounding the experiences of the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea the nation did repent. The word “repentance” (Greek: *metanoia*) means *a change of mind*.This change of mind will lead to other things that are often mistaken for repentance (or part of repentance), but the simple, restrictive meaning of the word itself does not include these things.

(*Metanoia,* translated “repentance” in the New Testament, is a compound word comprised of *meta* [“with”] and *noeo* [“to know,” or “to perceive (with the mind)”], derived from *nous* [“mind”]. *Metanoia* points to doing something with one’s mind, and that which is understood in the Greek language by the use of this word is “a change of mind.”)

Once the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea had fallen away and had realized the consequences of their actions, they changed their minds (repented) concerning the land of Canaan. They sought to occupy their former position, entering into and taking possession of the land, with a view to subsequently ruling over the nations.

Thus, bringing this over into the antitype, it is possible for Christians who have apostatized in this manner to also change their minds about the land set before them and seek to occupy their former position, looking ahead to the coming inheritance of the saints. However, God did not change His mind concerning that which He stated would befall apostate Israelites in the type; nor will God change His mind concerning that which He has stated will befall apostate Christians in the antitype.

After the Israelites had repented (changed their minds) at Kadesh-Barnea, the nation *failed* to regain the position that it had previously occupied. The Lord was no longer among His people to lead them victoriously into the land; and when they tried to enter, the Amalekites and Canaanites “*attacked them*, *and drove them back*” (**Numbers 14:40-45**).

Nor will the Lord be among like-minded apostate Christians today who repent (change their minds) and seek to occupy their former, forfeited position. They can no longer move victoriously into the land and overcome the inhabitants. If they try, as in the type, they will be overcome. The only thing awaiting Christians who have apostatized in the antitype of Israel’s Kadesh-Barnea experience is the same thing that awaited Israel — *an overthrow in the wilderness*, *on the right side of the blood but on the wrong side of the goal of their calling*.

The word “repentance” is only used three times in the book of **Hebrews** (**6:1**, **6**; **12:17**), and two of these three times the word is used in the heart of major warnings given to Christians. **Hebrews 6:4-6** is the heart of the third major warning, and **Hebrews 12:14-17** is the heart of the fifth major warning.

Interestingly enough, in the fifth major warning in chapter **twelve**, Esau did repent. He changed his mind concerning the birthright after it had been forfeited. His repentance led to a great show of emotion. The words, “*he found no place of repentance*,” refer to the fact that “*he found no place for a change of mind in his father”* (v. **17b**, ASV). Esau sought to effect a change of mind on the part of his father, resulting in a reversal of that which had transpired. However, such did not, it could not, occur. Isaac could not change his mind. The birthright, once forfeited, was beyond Esau’s grasp forever.

The situation in **Hebrews 6:4-6** is identical. The apostates in this passage cannot occupy a previously forfeited position. It is not possible, as in Esau’s case, to renew them again to repentance. In the types — the Israelites at Kadesh-Barnea, and Esau in the presence of his father — both the Israelites and Esau repented; but, though they repented, they still found no place of repentance. That would be to say, though the Israelites changed their minds at Kadesh-Barnea, God did not change His mind (God did not repent); and, though Esau changed his mind when he appeared in Isaac’s presence, Isaac did not change his mind (Isaac did not repent).

Repentance in the fifth major warning is not on the part of the one who forfeited his birthright, for he did repent. And repentance in the third major warning, as well, cannot be on the part of the ones who fall away. In the type, the Israelites did repent, necessitating that the antitype be viewed after the same fashion. Also in the type, Israel’s repentance wrought no change in that which God had decreed; nor will a Christian’s repentance in the antitype bring about such a change.

Man turning his back upon that which is associated with the greatest thing God has ever designed for redeemed man — that of ascending the throne with God’s Son during the coming age — is *a serious matter*. In fact, it is *a very serious matter*; and God will deal with this matter in *an equally serious fashion*.

This is what **Hebrews 6:4-6**, drawn from the type as is seen in chapters **three** and **four**, is about. *God overthrew the Israelites who fell away in the type*, *and He will also overthrow Christians who fall away in the antitype*.