

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

Commitment requires determination and effort. That is why some people prefer risk-free trial membership. They can back out later if they change their mind. Does salvation work that way too? Can you return to become a non-believer if you regret about your decision? If you have been a Christian long enough, you may have heard of the name Joshua Harris. He published a well-known book “I Kissed Dating Goodbye” in 1997. It encouraged young people to stay pure when dating. From 2004 to 2015, Harris served as the senior pastor of a large church. He later announced that he felt sorry about some content in the book. He even apologized to the people who felt hurt by what he wrote. Then in 2019, Harris divorced with his wife. Soon after that, Harris no longer considered himself a Christian. He said: “...I have undergone a massive shift in regard to my faith in Jesus. ... the biblical phrase is “falling away.” By all the measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian...” It is shocking for a person like Harris who grew up in a Christian family and was influential in ministries to forsake his beliefs. But does declaring that he is not a Christian means he is not one? Sometimes we can become lukewarm to spiritual matters. Some people even quit coming to church. What does the Bible say about people who depart from the faith? Will they lose salvation? Will God give up on them?

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

This is perhaps the most difficult section in Hebrews to understand. This is the third of the five warnings in the book. Let us recap a few things. First, most of the recipients of this letter were Jewish Christians. They faced religious persecution from the Romans and the Jews. They could have avoided oppression if they abandoned Jesus and returned to their traditional belief. However, would they lose their salvation if they rejected Jesus? The answer is no, if you believe in the doctrine of “once saved, always saved” like I do. There are clear Biblical supports for that. Salvation is a gift from God and not our effort. Once a person is saved, nothing will change the eternal outcome. With that in mind, let us study the passage by answering a few questions.

### 1. 他們是誰？Who Were Those People?

Were the people addressed in this passage genuine believers? There are five descriptions about them in verses 4 and 5. The author says they “**have once been enlightened.**” God sheds light into their hearts to make them realize their sins. Jesus once said He is the light of the world shining into darkness. He calls people to repent and accept Him. It is like you use a flashlight to check the underside of your bed. You notice quite an amount of dust. Naturally, you will sweep the dirt out with a broom. You look for a solution once a problem is revealed. God expects sinners to come to Him when He enlightens them. Number 2: they “**have tasted the heavenly gift.**” This “gift” can be the salvation gift from God. By tasting, it means a

person has received the gift. Therefore, it is unlike sampling food at a grocery store. I know some people go to Costco to get a free meal by tasting different food. Salvation is not like trying on a new shirt that you may not buy it if it does not fit you. Once God gives salvation to a person, it cannot be returned. In fact, the author uses the same word in 2:9 and says that Jesus tasted death for everyone. Jesus did not only sample death, He did die but He rose again three days later! Number 3: they “**have shared in the Holy Spirit.**” The word for “shared” means a partnership. We see the same word in 3:1, when the author says that he and the readers shared in the same heavenly calling. The Holy Spirit entered their hearts. Their souls were awakened. God gave them a new life in Jesus. Christians know how it feels. Your eyes were opened when the Holy Spirit comes into your heart. You humbly confessed your sins and accepted Christ. Since then, you love the Lord, love His Word and love to attend church meetings. All those are the work of the Holy Spirit. Number 4: they “**have tasted the goodness of the word of God.**” We see the same word “tasted” again. They had received the benefits from God’s Word. That may include all of God’s blessings from His Word. For example, you experience the blessings from God’s promises. God watches over you. He provides for your needs. He response to your prayer when you call on His name. Truths is more than doctrines to you. You can vividly experience God in your life. Lastly, number 5, they have also tasted “**the powers of the age to come.**” “The age to come” and similar phrases in the Bible refer to the time beginning from Jesus’ ascension to heaven. Jesus came and declared that God’s Kingdom is here. People saw Jesus using God’s power to heal the sick and cast out demons. The Father also sent the Holy Spirit to dwell inside believers after Jesus’ departure. Jesus’ disciples performed miracles as they proclaimed the gospel. Every believer can experience God’s power as they receive a new life. God will continue to manifest His power in this end time and call people to salvation. Taking the five characteristics as a whole, the author is talking about the experience of true Christians. Those recipients did not only hear about the gospel or visit a church. They were truly saved.

## 2. 他們犯了什麼罪？ What Sin Had They Committed?

The second question we need to ask is: what sin had they committed? The author continues to say that it is impossible to “restore them again to repentance” if those genuine believers have fallen away. By “fallen away” it means deviation from the truth. It is a deliberate rejection of faith a believer once professed. The technical term for the condition is apostasy. It is like breaching a contract after a person signed it. The promise is broken. A typical example is the wilderness generation of Israelites. They witnessed God’s mighty power. But they hardened their hearts and disobeyed God. The spies saw the abundance of Canaan. They even brought back some fruits as evidence. However, ten of the spies still did not believe in God. They spread fear about the enemies to the rest of the Israelites. They even proposed to elect another leader to replace Moses and went back to Egypt. Then God told Moses that He was ready to wipe His people out. Moses pleaded for God’s mercy. Numbers 14:20 records: **Then the Lord said, “I have pardoned, according to your word.”** God forgave the Israelites. However, in this case, God disciplined them for their sins. He would not allow them to enter the Promised Land. They confessed their sin to Moses the next day. Were they truly remorseful? Subsequent history shows that they had not learned their lesson. They grumbled

again when there was no food and water. A Levite named Korah even stirred up people to accuse Moses and Aaron for seizing leadership power. God judged the rebellious people over and over again. The author warns his readers not to commit the same rebellion. He describes the situation as “**crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.**” If they departed from their faith, it would be like siding with the crowd that hailed: “Nail Him! Nail Him!” They treated Jesus like a criminal by hanging Him on the cross to shame Him once again. It was a serious sin! Denying Jesus could avoid persecution. They did not have to face rejection and humiliation from their families and Jewish peers. They would not be taken to a court where admitting Jesus would mean sentencing and even death. The author says it is impossible to bring them back to repentance. Of course, God can change the mind of wicked criminals and grant them salvation grace. Those who fall away from the faith would not be forgiven not because God could not, but it is because they are unwilling to repent. Minor sins can easily become habitual sins if we allow them to grow. Perhaps you can dodge the responsibility of your mistakes by lying. You shift the blame to others. You earn extra money by changing a few numbers on your work report or tax return. Gradually, you feel that that being dishonest is actually a good thing. After all, many people tell bigger lies. The same principle applies to other sins such as hatred, gossip, pride, etc. God cares about His relationship with you. He wants you to reflect His holiness and righteousness in what you do. Do not harden your heart when the Holy Spirit convicts you of your sins. Confess to the Lord and ask Him for forgiveness. During the past two years many Christians in a lot of churches stop attending meetings. Of course that is not a sin. Online ministries seem to be a good alternative. It is not ideal because there is no face-to-face interaction with believers. Gradually, some believers even get tired of joining virtual meetings. We need to give extra encouragement to them. Pray that they will come back soon.

### 3. 他們會有何損失？ What Would They Lose?

The final question we need to ask is what will those genuine Christians lose when they deny Jesus? The author uses a metaphor in verse 7 to 8 to answer that: **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.** The contrast is obvious. A useful crop versus worthless thorns and thistles, as well as blessing versus curse. A farmer expects blessing of food from God when he cultivated his land. However, his effort is in vain if he gets thorns and thistles instead. Plants that are not fit for food will be burned. Here “burned” is the consequence of “being cursed.” That reminds us of a few parables Jesus told where He used “fiery furnace” to describe eternal judgment. Worthless weeds that are burned will not have a second chance. The readers were also familiar with the language of blessing and curse in God’s covenant. Obedience brings life and disobedience will end in death. While sin may bring short-term benefits to us, it is always an abomination to God. Does it mean that those believers will be condemned eternally? If so, how does that reconcile with the “once saved, always saved” doctrine? One helpful reference is in 1 Corinthians chapter 3 where Paul uses an analogy of building to illustrate our efforts in life. Jesus Christ is the foundation of our faith. Some believers use precious stones and gems to build their life on that foundation.

Others use wood, hay and straw. God will examine the value of our work using fire. Paul says in verse 14-15: **14 If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. 15 If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.** Flammable materials will surely be burned away. When we see God, He will not ask about the sizes of our salary, retirement fund and house. He will not question what titles we have on our business cards or where we get our degrees. But He will definitely check how we invest the time, resources, gifts and talents He has given us to proclaim His name. The fire will destroy properties that God sees as worthless. For Christians who live for themselves but not for God, only themselves will remain. They will be saved, but their possessions will be gone. If we use Paul's metaphor to understand the Hebrews passage, then those apostate Christians will still be saved. But their thorns and thistles will be burned away. If they turned back to the Jewish beliefs, all those worthless religious practices and their false piety will be destroyed in the fire. I have seen some Christians who were serious about their faith at first. They were confident about their commitment to follow Jesus the rest of their lives. You may also have seen Christians who were very zealous for a season. They served in various ministries. They taught Sunday school and they invited friends to the church. Suddenly, they turned cold. They even left the church eventually. They lack interest to return when you contact them. We should not judge if their past conversion was genuine. All we can do is pray for them and show care to them. Hopefully, God will change their hearts. We need to be careful, lest that the same thing may happen to us. People who slip away may eventually fall away. We need to be mindful about how we conduct our lives if we say we are followers of Jesus. How we spend our time, money and possessions all reflect our core value. One day we will settle our account with God. Do we live for ourselves or do we live for God's glory? Are we striving for fame and fortune in this life or do we hope for God's eternal rewards? Do we try to build reputation for ourselves or do we long for God's approval?

## 結論 CONCLUSION

I hope this message will help you clarify some doubts about the passage. Your interpretation may be different from mine. That is quite alright, as long as your understanding is based on the Bible. I do not want to scare you either. My prayer is that all of us will continue to strengthen our relationship with the Lord. Christian life has both a communal and personal aspects. We should always encourage one another in our spiritual growth. But ultimately, God looks at each of our personal relationship with Him. Godly parents cannot make decisions for their children. One spouse may come to know Jesus first before the other. Following the Lord takes determination and effort. We choose to obey Him even if we may suffer loss. We also need to work hard in order to grow. When we see the Lord, He does not only ask if we know Him and believe in Him, He will check how much we commit ourselves to Him.

## 引言 INTRODUCTION

承諾需要決心和努力。因此有些人喜歡試用會員資格。如果他們改變主意，他們可以稍後取消。救恩也是這樣嗎？如果你後悔自己的決定，你可以回頭成為非信徒嗎？在 1997 年，約書亞·哈里斯出版了《不再約會》這本書，鼓勵年輕人在約會時保持貞潔。從 2004 年到 2015 年，哈里斯在一家大型教會做主任牧師。他後來宣布，他對書中的一些內容感到後悔，他甚至為此公開道歉。然後在 2019 年，哈里斯與妻子離婚。不久之後，哈里斯不再認為自己是基督徒。他說：「…我對耶穌的信心發生了巨大的轉變。…聖經中形容是離棄信仰。按照我對基督徒的定義，我已經不是基督徒了…。」哈里斯在基督徒家庭長大，並在事奉中有影響力。他放棄了信仰，實在是令人震驚的。但是，宣布自己不是基督徒是否就等於不再是基督徒？有時我們會對屬靈的事情冷淡，有些人甚至不去聚會了。聖經對離棄信仰的人有什麼看法？他們會失去救恩嗎？神會放棄他們嗎？

## 解釋 EXPLANATION

這一段可能是希伯來書最難理解的部分。這是在書中五個警告中的第三個。讓我們最溫一些事情。首先，這封信的大部分讀者是猶太基督徒。他們面對來自羅馬人和猶太人的宗教迫害。如果他們放棄信仰並回到他們的傳統信仰中，他們可以避免迫害。但如果他們拒絕耶穌，他們會失去救恩嗎？答案是否定的，如果你像我一樣相信「一次得救，永遠得救」的教義。這個概念有明確的聖經根據。救恩是神的禮物，而不是我們的努力。一個人一旦得救，沒有任何因素會改變他的永恆結局。接下來，讓我們用幾個問題來看這段經文。

### 1. 他們是誰？Who Were Those People?

這段經文中提到的人是真正的信徒嗎？第 4 節和第 5 節對他們有五個形容。作者說他們「已經蒙了光照」。神光照他們的心，使他們知道自己的罪。耶穌曾經說過，祂是世界的光，照入黑暗。祂呼召人們悔改並接受祂。這就像你用手電筒檢查床底一樣。你注意到下面有很多灰塵。很自然，你會用掃帚把它掃乾淨。一旦發現問題，你就會尋找解決辦法。神光照罪人，吸引他們

到祂面前。第二：他們「嘗過天恩的滋味」。這個「天恩」可以是指神的救恩。嘗過的意思是一個人已經接受救恩。因此，它不是像在超市試吃食品。我知道有些人去 Costco 試吃不同的東西當作免費午餐。救恩不像試穿衣服，如果不適合你，你便不會去買它。神一旦給了一個人救恩，就不能退貨。事實上，作者在 2:9 中使用了同樣的用詞，說耶穌為人嘗了死味。耶穌不僅體驗過死亡，祂的確曾經死去，但是祂三天後復活了！第三：他們「於聖靈有分」。「有分」這個字的意思是夥伴關係。我們在 3:1 節看到同一個字，作者說他和讀者們是「同蒙天召」的人。聖靈進入他們的心，甦醒他們的靈魂。神賜給他們新的生命。基督徒知道那是什麼感覺。當聖靈進入你的心時，你的眼睛就被打開。你謙卑地認罪並接受耶穌。從那時起，你愛主，愛祂的話語，愛參加教會的聚會。這些都是聖靈的工作。第 4 點：他們「嘗過神善道的滋味」。我們再次看到「嘗過」這個字。他們從神的話語中得到益處。這可能包括神從祂的話語所賜的祝福。例如，你感受到神應許的美善。神看顧你。祂滿足你的需要。當你呼求祂的名之時，祂會回應你的禱告。真理對你來說不僅僅是教義，你可以在生活中真實地經歷神。最後，第五，他們也「覺悟來世權能」。聖經中「來世」和類似的字眼是指從耶穌升天之後開始的時間。耶穌來到世界，宣布神的國就在這裡。人們看到耶穌用神的能力醫病趕鬼。耶穌離開後，天父差遣聖靈住在信徒裡面。耶穌的門徒在傳福音時行神蹟。每個信徒在得救時都能體驗到神的大能。神會繼續彰顯祂的能力，呼召罪人悔改。作者用這五個特徵來形容基督徒的經歷。那些收信人不僅聽到了福音或去過教會。他們是真的得救了。

## 2. 他們犯了什麼罪？What Sin Had They Committed?

我們需要問的第二個問題是：他們犯了什麼罪？作者繼續說，如果那些信徒離棄道理，「就不能叫他們重新懊悔」。「離棄」是指他們偏離真理。那些信徒故意拒絕他們曾經持守的信仰。我們可以稱他們是叛徒。這就像一個人簽署合同後毀約一樣，他違背了承諾。一個典型的例子是在曠野的那一代以色列人。他們見證了神的大能，但他們仍然心裡剛硬，不肯順服神。探子看見了迦南的豐富。他們甚至帶回了一些水果作為證據。然而，十個探子仍然不相信神。他們向其餘的以色列人散佈對敵人的恐懼。他們甚至提議選舉另一位領袖代替摩西，然後回到埃及。神告訴摩西，祂已經準備好把他們全部消滅。摩西懇求神的憐憫。民數記 14:20 記載：耶和華說：「我照着你的話赦免了他們。」神赦免了他們。然而，在那次事件中，神懲罰他們的罪。祂不讓他們進入應許之地。第二天，他們向摩西承認自己的罪。他們真的後悔

了嗎？後來的歷史證明，他們沒有汲取教訓。當沒有食物和水時，他們又發怨言。一個名叫可拉的利未人甚至煽動人們指責摩西和亞倫奪取領導權。神一次又一次地審判悖逆的人。作者警告他的讀者不要犯同樣的罪。他將這種情況描述為「把神的兒子重釘十字架，明明地羞辱他」如果他們背離信仰，就像和群眾一起呼喊：「釘他十字架！釘他十字架！」。他們把耶穌當作罪犯一樣看待，把祂掛在十字架上，再次羞辱祂。這是非常嚴重的罪！他們否認耶穌可以避免迫害。他們不必面對家人和猶太同胞的拒絕和羞辱。他們也不會被帶到法庭，承認耶穌就會坐牢甚至判死刑。作者說不可能讓他們重新懊悔。當然，神可以改變罪犯的心並給予他們赦罪的恩典。那些背離信仰的人不會被饒恕，不是因為神不能，而是因為他們不願意悔改。不去處理的小罪很容易變成習慣性的罪。也許你可以通過說謊來逃避你犯錯的責任。或是你把責任推給別人。你藉著更改工作報告或報稅表上的一些數字可以賺取額外的收入。漸漸地，你覺得不誠實其實是件好事。畢竟，很多人會說更大的謊言。同樣的原則也適用於其他罪，例如仇恨、說閒話、驕傲等。神關心祂和你的關係。祂希望你在你凡事上反映出祂的聖潔和公義。當聖靈使你知罪時，不要硬著心。向主認罪並請求祂的饒恕。在過去的兩年裡，許多教會的一些基督徒停止參加聚會。當然，這不是罪。網路的事工似乎是一個選擇。但是它並不理想，因為缺乏與信徒面對面的互動。漸漸地，一些信徒甚至厭倦了參加網上的聚會。我們需要給他們更多的鼓勵，期望他們早日回來。

### 3. 他們會有何損失？What Would They Lose?

我們需要問的最後一個問題是，當那些基督徒否認耶穌時，他們會失去什麼？作者在第 7 至 8 節中用一個比喻來回答：7 就如一塊田地，吃過屢次下的雨水，生長菜蔬，合乎耕種的人用，就從神得福；8 若長荊棘和蒺藜，必被廢棄，近於咒詛，結局就是焚燒。這裡的對比很明顯。有用的農產品對比毫無價值的荊棘和蒺藜，以及祝福對比咒詛。一個農夫在耕種田地時期待神賜予食物。然而，如果他得到的是荊棘和蒺藜，他的努力便是白費。不能食用的植物將被燒毀。這裡的「焚燒」是被咒詛的結果。這讓我們想起耶穌所說的幾個比喻，祂用火來描述永恆的審判。被燒毀毫無價值的雜草不會有第二次機會。讀者也熟悉神的盟約中祝福和咒詛的語句。順服帶來生命，悖逆將導致死亡。雖然罪可能帶給我們短暫的好處，但它始終是被神厭惡的。這是否意味著那些信徒將永遠被定罪？如果是這樣的話，這如何與「一次得救，永遠得救」的教義互相協調？哥林多前書第 3 章中有一段經文可以作參考。保羅用建築工程比喻我們一生的成果。耶穌基督是我們信仰的根基。一

些信徒使用金銀和寶石在這個基礎上建造。其他人則使用木頭和稻草。神會用火來檢驗我們工作的價值。保羅在第 14-15 節中說：**14 人在那根基上所建造的工程若存得住，他就要得賞賜。15 人的工程若被燒了，他就要受虧損，自己卻要得救；雖然得救，乃像從火裏經過的一樣。**一些易燃的材料肯定會被燒掉。當我們看到神時，祂不會問我們的收入、退休金和房子的大小。祂不會問我們的名片上有什麼頭銜或我們從哪一家學校畢業。但祂一定會檢查我們如何投資祂賜給我們的時間、資源、恩賜和才幹來宣揚祂的名。火將摧毀神認為毫無價值的東西。因此只為自己而活而不為神而活的基督徒，他們會存留下來。他們仍然會得救，但他們會失去財產。如果我們用保羅的比喻來理解希伯來書，那麼那些背道的基督徒還是會得救的，但他們的荊棘和蒺藜會被燒掉。如果他們回歸猶太人的信仰，那些毫無價值的宗教行為和他們虛假的虔誠都會被燒毀。我見過一些基督徒起初對信仰很認真，他們決心一生跟隨耶穌。你可能也見過類似的熱心基督徒。他們參與不同的事奉，他們教主日學，並邀請朋友到教會。突然，他們冷淡了。他們甚至最終離開教會。當你與他們聯繫時，他們沒有興趣回來。我們不應該判斷他們過去的信主是否真實。我們所能做的就是為他們禱告並關心他們，希望神改變他們的心。我們也需要提高警覺，以免同樣的事情發生在我們身上。偶然跌倒的人最終可能會離棄信仰。如果我們說自己是耶穌的跟隨者，我們需要注意自己生活。我們如何花時間、金錢和財產都反映出我們的核心價值。有一天，我們要向主交帳。我們是為自己而活，還是為神的榮耀而活？我們是在今生追求名利，還是盼望神永遠的賞賜？我們是努力為自己建立名聲，還是渴望得到神的認可？

## 結論 CONCLUSION

我希望這篇信息能幫助你澄清對這段經文的一些疑問。你的理解可能與我的不同。沒關係，只要你的認識是基於聖經。我也不希望嚇到你。我的禱告是我們每一位都繼續加強與主的關係。基督徒的生活有群體和個人兩個層面。我們必須經常互相鼓勵，使我們的靈命不斷成長。但最終，神要看我們每一個人與祂的關係。敬虔的父母不能為孩子做決定。一位配偶可能比另一半先信主。跟隨主需要決心和努力。即使我們可能遭受損失，我們也應該選擇順服神。我們也要花工夫才能成長。當我們見主面時，祂不僅會問我們是否認識祂並相信祂，祂還會檢查我們對祂的委身程度。