

**TRINITY WESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**HEBREWS 6:4-6 AND DIVINE REPENTANCE**  
**Is God the object of ἀνακαινίζειν εἰς μετάνοιαν?**

**SUBMITTED AS COMPLETION FOR THESIS REQUIREMENTS**

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## **Abstract**

Historically, the warning passage of Hebrews 6:4-8 has caused interpretive difficulties due both to the equivocal terminology employed by the author as well as the broader theological ramifications of his warning against covenant faithlessness. Historically, biblical scholars have attempted to interpret the passage through the lens of nascent Christian cultic practice, and as a result interpretations of the perceived eschatological consequences of the author's warning have varied tremendously. These differences aside, however, the majority consensus has understood the author's description of "an impossibility of repentance" in v. 6 to warn that in the case of apostasy from the Christian community said apostates are unable to repent from their sin. I present an alternative understanding of repentance in this thesis, suggesting the author draws his semantic and conceptual background from a broad allusion to the Israelite wilderness tradition. Rather than commenting on the inability of apostates to repent, the passage speaks to God's unwillingness to repent from His declarations taken through divine oath-taking. Ultimately, the passage focuses on God's faithfulness over and against human faithlessness, complementing the author's broader purpose of establishing Christ's superiority as that which is itself built on God's promises.