

# Hebrews 10 - The Accomplishment of our High Priest; Warning #4: The Danger of Willful Sin; Encouragement to Persevere

## I. Doctrinal Section of the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 1:1–10:18)

- (4) Christ is superior to Aaron (Heb 4:14–10:18)
  - (H) Superiority of Christ's sacrifice (Heb 9:12–10:18)
  - (f) Inadequacy of Levitical sacrifices (10:1-4)
  - (g) Christ's volition is better (10:5-10)
  - (h) The effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice is better (10:11-14)
  - (i) Christ's covenant is better (10:15-18)

## II. Application Section of the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 10:19–13:25)

- (1) Exhortation section (10:19-39)
  - (A) Exhortation to approach God (10:19-22)
  - (B) Exhortation to hold fast to the confession (10:23)
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    - (a) Warning (10:26-31)
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## Hebrews 10

(f) Inadequacy of Levitical sacrifices (10:1-4)

**1 For** the Law, since it has *only* a **shadow** of the good things to come *and* not the **form** of those things itself, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually every year, make those who approach **perfect**.

**1** For the Law, since it has *only* a shadow of the good things to come *and* not the very form of things, can never, by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year, make perfect those who draw near.

**1** For the Law, being only a reflection of the blessings to come and not their substance, can never make perfect those who come near by the same sacrifices repeatedly offered year after year.

**1** For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make

the comers thereunto perfect.

- With hardly a chapter break, the writer continues with the subject of the superior sacrifice. The nature of the Law was merely a rough outline—a mere indication—of the reality of what really existed in Heaven, and only a rough outline of the good things to come: the finished work of Jesus the Messiah.
- "For" - with the word *For*, he begins the explanation of what he has been saying in 9:11-28
- "...shadow" - there are two different Greek words for shadow: this one, *skia*, means "a pale shadow" in contrast to a sharp, distinct one
- It is the preliminary outline an artist may make before he gets to his colors, and the *eikon* ("image") is the finished portrait. He is saying that the law was a "preliminary sketch," showing the shape of things to come, but the solid reality is not there.
- Both Paul (Col 2:17) and the author of Hebrews speak of the law as a "shadow"; Paul has in mind the legal restrictions (food laws and regulations on special days), the author of Hebrews is referred more toward the law prescribing matters of priesthood and sacrifice in relation to the tabernacle and later the Jerusalem temple.
- "...form" - *eikon*, a true representation, which it is *not*. The Law was not a true representation; it could not be the true replica of what God was going to do about sin once-and-for-all.
- "...perfect" - does not mean to make sinless, but to make acceptable to (or justified before) God
- This verse also notes that the Law cannot make one perfect, and the next verse points out that if the Law could make one perfect, then the sacrifices would NOT have to be repeated

The Mosaic Law, within its sanctuary, had no real provision for the spiritual wants to which they symbolically pointed; their removal lay outside its sanctuary and beyond its symbols. Spiritual death as a result of the Fall, personal sinfulness, and personal guilt were beyond the reach of the Temple-provision, and pointed directly to Him who was to come.

- 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been **cleansed**, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?
- 2 Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, because the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have had consciousness of sins?
- 2 Otherwise, would they not have stopped offering them, because the worshipers, cleansed once for all, would no longer be aware of any sins?
- 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

- The very repetition of the sacrifices shows their insufficiency: *If the sacrifices had been sufficient, they would have ceased to be offered.*
- The author used a tense that shows the Levitical sacrifices were still continuing at this point. This indicates that this epistle was written before 70 AD at which time these sacrifices were stopped.
- The Israelites never enjoyed the extent of freedom from sin's guilt that we do today. The Day of Atonement reminded them, annually, that their sins needed to be removed so that they could continue to have fellowship with God.
- We do not have an annual reminder since Jesus' sacrifice made us perfectly acceptable to God (Cf. John 13:10; Acts 15:9)
- "...cleansed" - *aphaireo*, a literal taking off; it signifies the complete removal of sin so that it is no longer a factor in the situation

- 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year.
- 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year by year.
- 3 Instead, through those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins year after year,
- 3 But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.
- It emphasizes the *Yom Kippur* yearly sacrifice and they did this continually year after year. Yet they still never accomplished the ultimate.
- There remained something the Law and the sacrifices could never do: *make perfect* , which in the context of the Book of Hebrews means to bring to spiritual maturity.
- But under the New Covenant God would remember their sins no more (8:12)
- 4 For it is impossible for **the blood of bulls and goats to take away** sins.
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- 4 for it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.
- 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.
- "...the blood of bulls and goats" - refers to Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*) sacrifices
- "...take away" - the Levitical sacrifices "covered" (*kafar*) sin, but did not remove sin
- The same word (*kafar*) was used when Noah was told to build his ark; he was told to cover the ark with bitumen. The gopher wood was not taken away; it was only *covered* by the bitumen.

### **Incompetence of the Mosaic Law**

1. The insubstantial (shadowy) character of the Mosaic system
2. The repetitive nature of the old sacrifices
3. The function of the levitical sacrifices as repeated reminders of sin
4. The ineffectiveness of the blood of animals

(g) Christ's volition is better (10:5-10)

- 5 **Therefore**, when He comes into the world, He says, "YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED SACRIFICE AND OFFERING, BUT YOU HAVE PREPARED A BODY FOR ME;
- 5 Therefore, when He comes into the world, He says, "Sacrifice and offering You have not desired, But a body You have prepared for Me;
- 5 For this reason, the Scriptures say, when the Messiah was about to come into the world: "You did not want sacrifices and offerings, but you prepared a body for me.
- 5 Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:*
- Because animals did not offer their blood with perfect obedience and faith, it was necessary for Messiah to come:
  - "Therefore" - it is for that reason the Messiah had to come into the world by way of the Incarnation (Cf. Matt 20:28; Luke 5:32; 19:10; John 3:17; 10:17-18)
  - He quotes Ps 40:6-8 to show that only obedience brings perfection:

Ps 40:6-8:

- 6 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.
- 7 Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me,
- 8 I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.

This passage expresses the Messiah's commitment to offer His body as a sacrifice to God (at His first advent), because animal sacrifices of all types were inadequate ("sacrifice and offering You have not desired"). God's will was the perfection (through cleansing) of believers. Jesus was not some dumb animal that offered its life unthinkingly. He consciously, voluntarily, and deliberately offered His life in obedience to God's will.

### **The Bondslave**

"Mine ears hast thou opened" (Ps 40:6). The word "opened" is actually "digged," which is referring to the concept of becoming a bondslave by choice.

OT procedure: an indentured servant, at the end of his term, could choose to stay with his master as a perpetual servant to the house: a bondslave. To symbolize that commitment, they would take an awl and pierce his ear to the door post of the house. An earring would often symbolize the choice of serving for the rest of his life.

Paul and John talk of being a bondslave of Jesus Christ. This means more than just a servant, rather they are talking of being committed without reservation forever to their

Master. This model is what is being alluded to in this verse and Ps 40: "Mine ears hast thou digged," or "Mine ears hast thou pierced."

"Then said I, Lo, I come." Jesus Christ is talking here (Heb 10:7). How exciting, *He is coming!*

### **Hermeneutical Insights (from LXX)**

- Authors attribute unqualified divine authority to the OT, sometimes basing their argument on a single word (Matt 1:23; 22:43-45; John 10:34; 19:36-37; Rom 4:3, etc)
- LXX usually employed as English is today (Matt 1:23 compared to Is 7:14 in LXX)
- Some variations attempt more accuracy than LXX (1 Cor 14:21 compared to Is 28:11-12 LXX vs MT)
- Some paraphrases to highlight a specific application (Gal 4:30 compared to Gen 21:10)
- Some summarize several passages (Rom 11:26-27 compared to Is 59:20-21; 27:9)
- Some cases are only an allusion and not intended to be an exact quotation (Rom 9:27 compared to Is 10:22-23)
- And sometimes the Holy Spirit rewords a restatement as a human author might (Matt 2:6 compared to Micah 5:2)

### **Sacrifice**

- 1st intimation: coats of skins (Gen 3:21)
- 1st instance: Abel (Gen 4:4; Heb 11:4). His sacrifice, not his character.
- Before the Law: Head of household = family priest.
- After: Priests alone offered sacrifices.

### **Sacrifices as Types of Christ**

- Penal (Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 5:21)
- Substitutional (Lev 1:4; Is 53:5-6; 2 Cor 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24)
- Voluntary (Gen 22:9; John 10:18)
- Redemptive (Gal 3:13; Eph 1:7; 1 Cor 6:20)
- Propitiatory (Rom 3:25)
- Reconciling (2 Cor 5:18-19; Col 1:21-22)
- Efficacious (John 12:32-33; Rom 5:9-10; 2 Cor 5:21; Eph 2:13; Heb 9:11-12,26; 10:10-17; 1 John 1:7; Rev 1:5)
- Revelatory (John 3:16; Rom 3:25-26; 1 John 4:9-10)

This is not the only passage that clearly implies the animal sacrifices were temporary nor is it the only passage that emphasizes the sacrifices are useless without faith (Is 1:11; Jer 6:20; Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21-22). It was God's will to arrange the final sacrifice in this

manner by preparing a *body* with which He could die for man. To go through a sacrifice today is to trod underfoot the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:29).

## 6 YOU HAVE NOT TAKEN PLEASURE IN WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND OFFERINGS FOR SIN.

6 In whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You have taken no pleasure.

6 In burnt offerings and sin offerings you never took delight.

6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

- The author contrasts what the animal sacrifices could not do to what the blood of Jesus could and did do.

— In v5-7, he points out what God considered the once-and-for-all acceptable sacrifice: The only acceptable sacrifice before God is one that comes through perfect obedience and faith (1 Sam 15:22)

## 7 "THEN I SAID, 'BEHOLD, I HAVE COME (IT IS WRITTEN OF ME IN THE SCROLL OF THE BOOK) TO DO YOUR WILL, O GOD.'"

7 "Then I said, 'Behold, I have come (In the scroll of the book it is written of Me) To do Your will, O God.'"

7 Then I said, 'See, I have come to do your will, O God' In the volume of the scroll this is written about me."

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

- This is quoted from Ps 40:7...

## 8 After saying above, "SACRIFICES AND OFFERINGS AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS AND OFFERINGS FOR SIN YOU HAVE NOT DESIRED, NOR HAVE YOU TAKEN PLEASURE IN THEM" (which are offered according to the Law),

8 After saying above, "Sacrifices and offerings and whole burnt offerings and *sacrifices* for sin You have not desired, nor have You taken pleasure *in them*" (which are offered according to the Law),

8 In this passage he says, "You never wanted or took delight in sacrifices, offerings, burnt offerings, and sin offerings," which are offered according to the Law.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

- Quoted from Ps 40:6...

— One-third of the Torah is spent discussing which types of offerings and sacrifices were to be made!

- God took no delight in "sacrifices" as such, if they were not the product of a proper attitude

### **Contrast with the OT**

In v8-9, he draws a contrast with the OT sacrifices. The sacrifice of Jesus was a voluntary sacrifice, and it came with obedience. The OT sacrifices are contrasted with obedience. The animals did not obey, but Jesus did. Because the animals did not go to their death as an act of personal obedience on their own, these sacrifices did not please God: No obedience was involved on the part of the animals. These were offered on the basis of the Law of Moses. When the Messiah, God the Son, said to God the Father: *Lo I am come to do your will*, He stated that He was coming, willingly and obediently, to be the final sacrifice for sin.

9 then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He **takes away the first** in order to **establish the second**.

9 then He said, "Behold, I have come to do Your will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

9 Then he says, "See, I have come to do your will." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

- "...takes away the first" - the Mosaic Covenant and its sacrifices

- "...establish the second" - the New Covenant

- The greatest division in the Word of God: It is like a Grand Canyon which is placed between the old covenant and the new covenant, the Old Testament and the New Testament.

- Again, quoted from Ps 40:8. By His death, the sacrifices of the Mosaic Covenant were taken away, and *the second* was brought in—the one sacrifice upon which the New Covenant is established. Here again, this is a clear statement that the Law had been done away with.

— Ps 40 announced the abolition of the old sacrificial system. This was God's will, and it satisfied Him.

10 By this will, we have been **sanctified** through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time.

10 By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

10 By God's will we have been sanctified once and for all through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus, the Messiah.

10 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

- "...sanctified" - the writer's view of sanctification here, as elsewhere in this epistle, is positional rather than progressive (Cf. 1 Cor 1:2; 6:11). God sanctifies all believers to Himself at conversion.

— Sanctification in Hebrews is nearly equivalent to justification in Romans, both referring to our position, not our condition. The only difference is that justification deals with position in relation to God the Judge, while sanctification deals with position in relation to our fellowship with God and our approach to Him in fellowship.

— In the Greek text, the author uses a perfect participle with a finite verb that grammatically emphasizes that believers are in a permanent, continuous state of sanctification. They have been permanently made holy in the sight of God. His blood saves them and sanctifies them. Why? Because of *the offering [up] of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

(h) The effectiveness of Christ's sacrifice is better (10:11-14)

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

11 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

11 Day after day every priest stands and repeatedly offers the same sacrifices that can never take away sins.

11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

- This time the focus is not on the *Yom Kippur* ritual but on the daily sacrifices and rituals. The emphasis is on repetition: they stand *day by day*, which is a further emphasis of the unfinished state of their work.

— The same sacrifices, which, no matter how many times they were offered, could never take away sins.

— A priest's work was never done; there were no chairs in the tabernacle.

12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, **SATDOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,**

12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down at the right hand of God,

12 But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, "he sat down at the right hand of God."

12 But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

- Jesus is the opposite: the One in contrast to the many Levitical priests.

— The Greek word here is aorist and emphasizes a one-time offering in contrast to the repeated offerings of the Levitical priest. This shows His work is effective *forever*.

— "...SAT DOWN" - a seated priest is the guarantee of a finished work and an accepted sacrifice (see notes on 1:3)

— Because He has finished His work, Jesus is now seated at *the right hand of God*. He can sit down because His work is finished (Ps 110:1).

13 waiting from that time onward **UNTIL HIS ENEMIES ARE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.**

13 waiting from that time onward until His enemies be made a footstool for His feet.

13 Since that time, he has been waiting for his enemies to be made a footstool for his feet.

13 From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

- "...UNTIL" - *heos*, a contingency

— If Jesus was exercising all authority now, there would be no "until" in this passage because His enemies would be made a footstool for His feet (Cf. Matt 28:18)

— His present position is that He is now in Heaven: *henceforth expecting* [waiting until all] *his enemies* [are] *made the footstool under his feet* in the fulfillment of Ps 110:1. The reason Jesus can sit and wait for His enemies to become His footstool is because His work is finished.

### Seven Contrasts (v11-13)

- The many priests in contrast to the One Priest
- They are standing but He *sat down*
- They have to sacrifice daily but He sacrificed on one single day
- They sacrificed many times but He sacrificed only once
- They had to offer many sacrifices but He had to offer only *one sacrifice*
- They accomplished a temporary atonement but He, a permanent, eternal one
- Their sacrifices only covered sins but His sacrifice actually took them away

14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

14 For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

14 For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.

14 For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

- This is a verse that is good for showing the contrast between position and practice.

Earlier, he dealt with positional sanctification: *justification*.

— They are not perfect because of what they really are but because of what they are *in Christ*. There is a work going on called practical *sanctification*. The Holy Spirit is within believers slowly conforming them more and more to the image of the Son of God.

### **Our "Certificate of Debt"**

There is another model hinted at here, that of the acknowledgment of a debt for sin. The debt is not paid by the sacrifices, as each year on Yom Kippur sacrifices are made for their sins, which only extends the penalty for another year. Paul speaks of "the handwriting of the ordinances was against us," or, "a certificate of debt was against us" (Col 2:14).

In those days a certificate of debt was a penal, legal, or criminal term. Even today, we say that a criminal must "pay his debt to society." In those days, the jailer would keep the certificate of debt and mark off the years the criminal was in jail. If the criminal escaped, the jailer was then responsible for the years left of the certificate of debt!

When a criminal's debt was fully paid (the sentence fully carried out) then they would write *tetelestai* on the certificate of debt, translated "paid in full." The certificate of debt was the proof that the debt had been paid.

Paul talks of our certificate of debt having been paid for us. Our debt cost more than our lives, as the "wages of sin is death." Jesus Christ paid our debt in full! When Jesus was on the cross, his last words were *Tetelestai*, which in the King James is translated "It is finished," but could also be translated "Paid in Full" (John 19:30). Contrast our "paid in full" debt to the debt discussed here where the debt is acknowledged and rolled over each year!

(i) Christ's covenant is better (10:15-18)

15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

15 And the Holy Spirit also testifies to us; for after saying,

15 The Holy Spirit also assures us of this, for he said:

**15** Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said be fore,

- The Holy Spirit testified through Jeremiah (Jer 31:33-34) and continues to testify that final forgiveness at the Cross meant the end of sacrifices for sin. God promised this forgiveness in the New Covenant, thus no more sacrifices for sin are necessary.

16 "THIS IS THE COVENANT WHICH I WILL MAKE WITH THEM AFTER THOSE DAYS, DECLARES THE LORD: I WILL PUT MY LAWS UPON THEIR HEARTS, AND WRITE THEM ON THEIR MIND," He then says,

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them After those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, And on their mind I will write them," *He then says,*  
16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts and will write them on their minds,  
**16** This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

17 "AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL NO LONGER REMEMBER."

17 "And their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more."  
17 and I will never again remember their sins and their lawless deeds."  
17 And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.  
- God will no longer call our sins back to His memory with a view to condemning the sinner  
— God is omniscient and remembers everything, but He does not hold the forgiven sinner's sins against them

18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, an offering for sin is no longer required.  
18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.  
18 Now where there is forgiveness of these sins, there is no longer any offering for sin.  
18 Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.  
- Verse 18 presents the conclusion of the entire discussion: Since Jesus brought perfection and complete forgiveness, sin, as far as God is concerned, cannot even be remembered; what further need is there for Levitical sacrifices? With that statement, the author concludes the first major part of the book.

### **The Practical Application in the Walk of the Believer**

The first major division: the author of Hebrews dealt with the theological issue (Heb 1:1—10:18). He showed the superiority, the preeminence, of the Son to the three pillars of Judaism.

The second part of the book he is going to deal with the practical application of the preeminence of the Son in the walk of the believer (Heb 10:18—13:25).

## II. Application Section of the Letter to the Hebrews (Heb 10:19—13:25)

### (1) Exhortation section (10:19-39)

#### **4th Warning: The Danger of Willful Sin (Heb 10:19-39)**

- The intensity of the 4th warning is greater than all previous: willful sin; fiery judgment; sorer punishment
- Reference to end time events: Judgment Seat of Christ, Kingdom, etc. (subjects at the forefront of the epistle)

- Author includes himself: "We..."

(A) Exhortation to approach God (10:19-22)

**19** Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

**19** Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus,

**19** Therefore, my brothers, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,

**19** Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

- In view of the theological section to this point (Heb 1:1—10:18), showing them to be fellow-believers, they now have the privilege of access into the Holy of Holies in Heaven through the Melchizedekian High Priest

— Believers today are on a similar plane of privilege as that of the OT high priest!

**20** by a **new and living way** which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, through **His flesh**,

**20** by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh,

**20** the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh),

**20** By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

- "...new and living way" - based on the new covenant; *prophatos*, lately slaughtered, freshly killed; recently made; based on a living fellowship with a living Person

- "...His flesh" - we can enter God's presence through (by means of) Jesus' crucified "flesh," as though we are entering the Holy of Holies through the torn temple veil (Matt 27:51)

— This is an example of one thing (the veil) being a type of another thing (Christ's "flesh")

**21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

**21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God,

**21** and since we have a great high priest over the household of God,

**21** And having an high priest over the house of God;

**22** let's **approach** God with a **sincere heart** in **fullassurance** of faith, having our hearts **sprinkled** clean from an evil conscience and our bodies **washed** with pure water.

**22** let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

22 let us continue to come near with sincere hearts in the full assurance that faith provides, because our hearts have been sprinkled clean from a guilty conscience, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

22 Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

- "...approach" - a ritual term that refers to worship; Greek present imperative tense: *continue* drawing near

— We should "draw near" with freedom from any guilt

— "...a sincere heart" - *alethinos*, a real devotion; sincerity without superficiality

— "...full assurance" - we should approach God with the assurance that Jesus' death has removed our guilt for sin and has made us acceptable to God (9:13-14; Num 8:7; Rom 5:1; 8:1)

— We can have full assurance of our faith since our confidence rests in the sufficiency of what Christ has done for us

- "...sprinkled" - *rhantizō*, to sprinkle or cleanse (purify) by sprinkling; Levitical imagery; same Greek word in LXX for the induction of a priest into his office (Ex 29:21; Lev 8:24)

- "...washed" - practical sanctification: *louō*, to bathe; cleansing as a result of having been regenerated (Titus 3:5; Eph 5:26)

— Same word in LXX for the bathing of a priest for consecration purposes in preparation for his priestly work (Cf. Ex 29:4; Lev 8:6)

### **"Let Us"**

Three "let us" phrases in the following three verses:

Having established that Jesus Christ has fulfilled these sacrifices and entered into a whole new covenant, he is suggesting in v19 that we should have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and by a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.

And having a High Priest over the House of God, we then have three "let us" phrases. Now, note that these verses are not just for "those guys" but they are also "for us," the writer is even including himself. Also, note that the Holy Spirit is making it clear that a believer should not be in isolation. We should not forsake the assembling together. "Let us."

- Draw near in faith (toward God)
- Draw near in hope (for ourselves)
- Draw near in love (for others)

(B) Exhortation to hold fast to the confession (10:23)

23 Let's hold firmly to the **confession** of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

23 Let us continue to hold firmly to the hope that we confess without wavering, for the one who made the promise is faithful.

23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

- "...confession" - *homologia*, describes the water baptism of first century Jews, who were baptized to publicly identify themselves as believers in the Messiah and demonstrate their rejection of the stand taken by national Israel against Christ

### **Jewish Baptism**

The reason Peter included "baptism" along with repentance (Acts 2:38) is not to show that water baptism is required for salvation. This is further expanded in 1 Peter 3:21 (see notes there). Just as in 1 Peter, which was written to Jewish believers of the *diaspora*, Peter here is speaking to a Jewish audience, instructing them that there were two requirements (for them): repentance (change their mind about who Jesus is) and water baptism (to save them from coming judgment [the 70 AD destruction of Jerusalem]).

Repentance saved them spiritually. The believers in Acts had not yet done that (but would shortly); Peter's audience in 1 Peter was already saved. What Peter notes in Acts 2:38 regarding baptism, and clarifies further in 1 Peter 3:21, is that these believers also needed to be water baptized in order to be saved physically from the coming 70 AD judgment. It was baptism that would separate them from "that generation" (v40). This is why Peter states in v40 for these unbelieving Jews to "be saved from this perverse generation." Water baptism in this instance wasn't for their justification, which was solved by their repentance, but rather an outward sign that they were separating themselves from the prophesied judgment that Jesus pronounced on 1st century Israel, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD. Repentance = spiritual justification; baptism = physical deliverance from 70 AD.

### **(C) Exhortation to do good deeds (10:24)**

24 and **let's consider** how to **encourage one another in love and good deeds**,

24 and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

24 And let us continue to consider how to motivate one another to love and good deeds,

24 And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

- "...let's consider" - *kataneo*, to perceive, observe, understand; to consider attentively, to make a very careful investigation or a careful study. The way to show the love of the

brethren is by doing *good works* for them.

- "...encourage one another in love and good deeds" - this is our social obligation, especially to those in danger of abandoning the faith
- We need to stimulate one another to remain faithful to the Lord. This type of love is the product of communal activity; we cannot practice it in isolation from other believers.

(D) Exhortation to regularly assemble (10:25)

- 25 not abandoning our own meeting together, as is the habit of some people, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.
- 25 not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging *one another*; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.
- 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another even more as you see the day of the Lord coming nearer.
- 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.
- It is interesting that the writer is emphasizing that our need for fellowship is going to *increase as the day approaches*. The end times is when we need to stick together, abandoning our divisions over non-essentials.
  - They were approaching the coming 70 AD judgment when Jerusalem and the Temple will be destroyed because of the national rejection of the Messiahship of Jesus.
  - Jesus had warned them of its coming (Luke 19:41-44; 21:20-24)
  - Regular attendance at church facilitates love for one another because there we are reminded to persevere. It is only natural for one who has abandoned or weakened in his faith to remove themselves from the church.
  - The failure of love shows itself in selfish individualism, and specifically here in the habit of some neglecting to meeting together. Such unconcern for one's fellow believers argues an unconcern for Christ himself, and portends the danger of apostasy.
  - The author regarded the removal of a believer from church fellowship as utterly serious. It threatened the corporate life of the congregation and almost certainly was a prelude to apostasy on the part of those separating themselves.
  - The author is urging mutual accountability, since we all must give an account of ourselves to God.
  - It may have been the experience of suffering, abuse, and loss in the world that motivated the desertion of the community acknowledged in v25, and a general tendency to avoid contact with outsiders observed elsewhere in Hebrews (Cf. 5:11-14).

(E) Hebrews are warned against despising the gospel (10:26-39)

(a) Warning (10:26-31)

**26 For** if we go on **sinning** **willfully** after receiving the **knowledge of the truth**, there **no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**,

**26** For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

**26** For if we choose to go on sinning after we have learned the full truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

**26** For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

- "For" - anticipating the apostasy just warned of; a conditional, circumstantial participle in the present tense: a continuing action

— The writer is not dealing with one simple, isolated act of sin but a specific sin habitually committed. It is not a sin committed out of ignorance or weakness but is a sin planned out, determined, and committed with forethought.

— "...sinning willfully" - in the context of Hebrews, deliberate apostasy, turning away from God

— The sin is to willfully and permanently *return to Judaism*. In the Greek text, the word *willfully* comes before *if we sin* and is in the emphatic position.

— If an apostate rejects Jesus' sacrifice, there is nothing else that can protect them from God's judgment

— The judgment in view is the Judgment Seat of Christ, not the Great White Throne, because they are believers

— "...knowledge of the truth" - *epignosis*, precise and correct knowledge; the readers already have the knowledge

— After reading this letter, the readers will have *full knowledge* of the truth, of the issues involved, of the circumstances involved, and of the results of their actions. If they insist upon going back *willfully* after reading this letter, it will show the enormity and severity of their defection. To turn back is a slap in the face of God!

— "...no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" - since Jesus was rejected, they have no other sacrifice for their sins. He was their final sacrifice.

— This result is based on the OT principle that there were no sacrifices for certain sins including adultery, murder, and blasphemy: For these kinds of sins, the people could not offer a sacrifice (Num 15:29-31); instead, they were subject to the penalty of physical death.

— For the NT believer, all sins are forgivable for eternity, but not all sins can be rectified in this life

## **The Cost of Separation**

Comparing v23-25 with v26-29, the sin involves separating themselves from other believers *permanently*. It refers to their return to Judaism, the Temple, and all that entails in order to escape persecution. Even worse, this sin involves a denunciation of the three elements of v29 that includes the work of the Son, the work of the Father, and the work of the Holy Spirit. For this kind of sin, there is no further sacrifice and the individual is therefore subject to judgment.

The judgment is physical not spiritual. The nature of the judgment in this context means three things:

1. It means physical death (v28-29)
2. It means physical death in the 70 AD judgment (v25,27)
3. It means the loss of rewards in the next life (v35-36)

27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and **THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.**

27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.

27 but only a terrifying prospect of judgment and a raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.

27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

- There are no extra sacrifices for willful apostasy. Instead, they will receive the judgment, which is a *fierceness of fire* that will devour the adversaries.

— This will be the physical judgment of 70 AD when the city and the Temple will both be destroyed by fire. Judgment will be the sole result of rejecting the only way.

— "...FURY OF A FIRE" - divine judgment; the same "fire" that will test believers will also consume unbelievers

— "Fire" often indicates His judgment (Mal 3:2; Matt 3:11; Luke 3:16)

28 Anyone who has ignored the Law of Moses is put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of two or three witnesses.*

28 Anyone who violates the Law of Moses dies without mercy "on the testimony of two or three witnesses."

28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

- With what kind of judgment was a man judged at the mouth of two or three witnesses (Deut 19:15)? He was judged with physical death.

— As in the three previous warnings, so also in the fourth warning, the issue is physical death. Now, those who turn their backs on the One greater than Moses will also suffer physical death in 70 AD.

29 How much **more severe punishment** do you think he will deserve who has **trampled underfoot** the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

29 How much more severe a punishment do you think that person deserves who tramples on God's Son, treats as common the blood of the covenant by which it was sanctified, and insults the Spirit of grace?

29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

- "...more severe punishment" - since an Israelite who spurned the Old Covenant suffered a severe penalty, we in the Age of Grace will suffer an even greater penalty if we spurn the superior New Covenant.

- "...trampled underfoot" - apostasy under the New Covenant has the effect of walking roughshod over the Son of God by despising Him

- If these Jewish believers go back to Judaism it would be:

- A rejection of the work of the Trinity
- Flagrant contempt of the Son of God
- Counting the blood of the covenant as unholy
- An assault of insolence against the Holy Spirit

- Verse 29 ends with "the Spirit of grace." It may sound very familiar to you, but it only appears 2x in Scripture: once in the NT here, and once in Zech 12:10.

Verse 29 defines willful sin as an attitude of contempt for the salvation secured through the priestly sacrifice of Christ. Nothing less than a complete rejection of the Christian faith satisfies the descriptive clauses in which the effects of the offense are sketched.

2 Peter 2:21: For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.

30 For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."

30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people."

30 For we know the one who said, "Vengeance belongs to me; I will pay them back," and again, "The Lord will judge his people."

30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

- Quoted from Deut 32:35-36,40-41...

- In Deut 32, Moses warned the Israelites against apostatizing. This is the writer's point here as well.

— It is a terrifying ("fearful", v31) prospect for a believer who has renounced their faith, "to fall" under God's hand of chastisement.

31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- In context, this warning is addressed to believers, though many interpreters have applied it to unbelievers

- This verse is a summary of the Deuteronomy quotes in v30.

- God's character is at issue:

1. Vengeance is His sole prerogative (Deut 32:35)

2. He will judge His people (Deut 32:36)

Heb 10:30-31 (and the preceding verses, v26-29) are parallel to 2 Cor 5:10-11 in that they provide additional information concerning the Judgment Seat of Christ associated with the "terror of the Lord."

### **Fingerprints of Paul?**

Verses 30-31 use two quotes from Deuteronomy: Deut 32:35 and 32:36. Verse 36 is quoted exactly from the Hebrew Bible. However, v35 is not quoted exactly from the Hebrew, *nor* from the Greek Septuagint. This particular quote happens to be from *neither*. The author is using his own rendering of the text. This is really not a big deal, except that this occurs only in one other place: the exact same phrase occurs in Rom 12:19. The author of Romans quotes it the same way as the writer to Hebrews.

(b) Encouragement (10:32-39)

**32** But **remember** the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

32 But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

32 But you must continue to remember those earlier days, how after you were enlightened you endured a hard and painful struggle.

32 But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

- "...remember" - the first deterrent to apostasy is to remember one's earlier days in the faith

— The original readers had proved faithful in severe trials of their faith. They had stood their ground ("ye endured") when others had encouraged them to abandon it, and withstood public shame and persecution ("reproaches and afflictions," v33) for their faith.

33 partly by being made a public spectacle through insults and **distress**, and partly by becoming companions with those who were so treated.

33 partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

33 At times you were made a public spectacle by means of insults and persecutions, while at other times you associated with people who were treated this way.

33 Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

- "...distress" - implies persecutions and loss of property

- They had unashamedly supported other believers who had undergone persecution in the same way

34 For you showed **sympathy** to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the **seizure of your property**, knowing that you have for yourselves a better and lasting possession.

34 For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

34 For you sympathized with the prisoners and cheerfully submitted to the violent seizure of your property, because you know that you have a better and more permanent possession.

34 For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

- "...sympathy" - *sumpatheo*, inner agony

- "...seizure of your property" - they had also been willing to suffer material loss because they looked forwards to a better inheritance ("better and an enduring substance") in the future

- The eternal inheritance laid up for them was so real in their eyes that they could lightheartedly bid farewell to material possessions which were short-lived in any case.
- Moreover, they had done this “joyfully,” not grudgingly

35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great **reward**.

35 Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

35 So don’t lose your confidence, since it holds a great reward for you.

35 Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.

- “...reward” - much of what the writer is talking about here has to do with rewards, *not* salvation. Finishing well is the name of the game!

— He stresses that now was not the time to throw away (“cast away”) their confidence in a better reward (Cf. 3:6; 4:16; 10:19)

36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

36 For you need endurance, so that after you have done God’s will you can receive what he has promised.

36 For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

- They needed endurance (“patience”) to persevere. By doing this, they would be doing God’s will, and eventually receive what He promised...namely, and eternal reward (1:14; 3:14; 9:15; Matt 6:19).

— This exhortation is a good summary of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

What they had endured for Christ’s sake entitled them to a reward. Let them not throw it away. The NT does not reject the notion that Christians will receive rewards, though that is never the prime motive for service.

The safeguard against degeneration, isolation, and consequent failure is to make progress in the Christian life, and to proceed from the point to point from an elementary to the richest, fullest, deepest experience.

If the writer’s concern had been the salvation of the original readers, this would’ve been an opportune time for him to exhort them to believe in Christ. However, instead of exhorting them to regeneration, he encouraged them to endure instead of apostatize.

37 FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

37 For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay.  
37 For "in a very little while the one who is coming will return— he will not delay;  
37 For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.  
- It is quite conceivable that the writer also was confronting the problem of the delay in the Second Coming, which Paul himself had also already encountered at Thessalonica.

38 BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE WILL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE **SHRINKSBACK**, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.

38 But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.  
38 but my righteous one will live by faith, and if he turns back, my soul will take no pleasure in him."

38 Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

- "...SHRINKS BACK" - refers to apostasy  
- The Lord's return is near ("a little while," v37); in the meantime, we need to keep walking "by faith." If we abandon that purpose ("draw back"), we will not please God.

Perseverance is one of the great unromantic virtues. Most people can start well; almost everyone can be fine in spasms. Most people have their good days. Most men have their great moments. To everyone it is sometimes given to mount up with wings as eagles; in the moment of the great effort everyone can run and not be weary; but the greatest gift of all is to walk and not to faint.

39 But we are not among those who **shrink back to destruction**, but of those who have faith for the safekeeping of the soul.

39 But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

39 Now, we do not belong to those who turn back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

39 But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

- "...shrink back to destruction" - refers to temporal punishment (Cf. Matt 26:8; Mark 14:4; Acts 25:16)  
— The writer did not want his readers to be the objects of God's discipline  
— Another viable translation of "destruction" is "waste" [Wiersbe]. It is used this way 2x in the KJV (Matt 26:8; Mark 14:4).  
— A believer who does not walk by faith goes back into the old ways and wastes his life

- Patient endurance so as not to lose their crowns at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Again, there is nothing in these warnings that talks about losing their salvation. They would lose their physical lives and their rewards, but not their salvation.

Luke 9:62: But Jesus said to him, **"No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."**

- When you come to Christ, don't look back, keep going forward!

John 17:12: **While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name, which You have given Me; and I guarded them, and not one of them perished except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled.**

John 10:28-29:

28 **and I give them eternal life, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.**

29 **My Father, who has given *them* to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch *them* out of the Father's hand.**

This is the most direct and severe of all the warnings in Hebrews. In view of the Son's priestly ministry (5:1—10:18), apostasy is a sin that will draw terrible consequences for the believer. It will not result in the loss of eternal salvation, but the loss of some, or possibly a major portion of, one's eternal reward.