

## ~Hebrews~

## Lesson 21 - Apostacy

This next section of Hebrews 10 could be the most misunderstood verse in the Bible.

Hebrews 10:26-31

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- When these verses are read out of context, it makes it seem that if you sin, you are going to hell.
- Is salvation eternally secure?
- Can we lose our salvation?
- The short answers are, yes our eternal salvation is absolutely secure **in Christ**, and no we cannot lose our salvation, John 10:28, 1 Jn 1:9, Heb 13:5.
- Since our salvation is eternally secure **in Christ**, what is the meaning of verse 26?
- We see v.26 begin with "for". So lets back up and read starting with verse 9 to gain this context.

Hebrews 10:9b ... He takes away the first that He may establish the second.

The second is the New Covenant we have **through the blood of Jesus** in which the writer continues to explain.

Hebrews 10:10 By that we have been sanctified **through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ** once for all.

Hebrews 14-18 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified. 15 But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, 16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," 17 then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." 18 Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

The writer in verse 17 tells us that under the new covenant, by which we have access **through Jesus**, God will not remember our sins and lawless deeds.

18...that where there is ἄφεσις (remission, forgiveness, cancellation) of sins and lawless deeds under the new covenant **through Jesus**, there is no longer an offering for sin **by the old covenant**.

- The old covenant has been fulfilled, Heb 8:13.
- The sacrifice for sins is completed, Heb 9:26.
- Jesus paid the price once and for all, Heb 10:10

The writer continues to establish the fact that the new covenant **through Jesus** is the established covenant of God and the old covenant is of no effect and in fact is eternally dangerous to return to the old covenant.

Hebrews 10:19-25 Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest **by the blood of Jesus**, 20 **by a new and living way** which He consecrated for us, **through the veil, that is, His flesh**, 21 and having a High Priest over the house of God, 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. 23 **Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering**, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 **not forsaking** the assembling of ourselves together...

This word, "forsaking" in the Greek is ἐγκαταλείποντες, which is not just someone who decided to stop going to church for a while. This word is the same word Jesus used on the cross when He cried out, "My God, My God, why have you **forsaken** Me?"

- This "forsaking" is a total abandonment of a public profession of Christianity.

- This verb is a present active participle which means it isn't just a one time event, but something that is presently occurring with no plan of stopping.
- The Jews being admonished in this letter were in jeopardy of abandoning the Christian faith, the blood and sacrifice of Jesus, and threatening to go back to Judaism.
- This is why the writer's words in verses 26-31 are so strong because what these Jews were about ready to do would have eternal consequences.

Now having established that the new covenant is better than the old and that **we cannot enter into the new covenant apart from Jesus**, (this is the main thrust of the letter to the Hebrews) we are ready to start reading verse 26 again.

Hebrews 10:26 For if we sin **willfully** ...

Now taking the entire context of chapter 10, we see that the sin the writer is speaking of is not just any sin, but an abandonment of the blood of Jesus and the new covenant.

We saw this in v. 25 and v.29 emphasizes this.

Hebrews 10:29 ... who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

This is the sin being spoken of. And this sin is not done ignorantly or accidentally. It is deliberate and willful.

- This sin is a deliberate abandonment of the blood of Jesus.
- This word "sin" is also a present active participle just like "forsake" in v. 25 meaning it is happening continually with no plan of stopping.

Hebrews 10:26 ... after we have received the knowledge of the truth ...

Some argue that these people were never Christians to begin with, but v.26 makes it very clear that they are believers.

- This letter to the Hebrews is to believing Christians, admonishing them not to go back under the Law, but to press forward with Jesus.
- We saw a similar statement in chapter 6 previously saying, "those who were once enlightened", 6:4.
- The writer, who I think is Paul, is even including himself in this statement saying "we received"

Hebrews 10:26 ... there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

In the new covenant, the blood of Jesus covers, forgives, and cancels out all sin and lawlessness. We saw this in v.18.

We also read this in 1 John

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This ἄφεσις (forgiveness, cancellation) of sins and lawless deeds is only **through the blood of Jesus**.

- But what if one was to reject, abandon, forsake, trample, and insult the very thing that would save him from sin and lawlessness?, v. 29.
- If one rejects the blood of Jesus, he is rejecting the sacrifice Jesus made on the cross and there is no longer a sacrifice for sin for this person.

Again, this is not accidental and not something you can slip into. This sin is an outright rejection of the blood of Jesus and everything He has done for you.

This does not pertain to backsliders or even those living in sin. If someone is living in the world according to the flesh, but still confesses Jesus as the Son of God and their Savior, they are still in Christ and their sin is covered by the blood of Jesus.

- By living in sin they have forfeited all their eternal rewards, 1 Cor 3:12-15, and they may even be left behind at the rapture, Rev 3:3, Matt 25:10, but they will not burn in the lake of fire, 1 Cor 3:15.

This abandonment and rejection of Jesus that the writer is speaking of is something far worse, but it stems from the backsliders heart.

- The seed of sin, if nurtured by sin and lasciviousness. If left unchecked and unguarded it will grow into something so big you can't control it, James 3:6.
- This is why you see the warnings all thru the new testament to separate yourself from sin and live unto righteousness, 2 Cor 7:1, 1 Jn 2:15-17.

This is a daily, conscious, willful act to avoid sin, guard your heart, and choose God. This is what it means to take up your cross daily and follow Jesus, Matt 16:24. Those who are slothful and let the world and their flesh control their life run the risk of being persuaded to evil, 2 Tim 2:21-22, Gal 5:16-26.

- The abandonment and rejection of Jesus is a willful and deliberate way of life. It cannot be accidental.
- This was the decision that the Jews were faced with.
- They were looking to go back under the Law, under Judaism
- But with this decision they would be trampling the sacrifice and blood of Jesus under foot.

### Old Covenant Wrath and Judgment of Sin

The Jews knew the judgement of God under the dispensation of the Law. The writer uses Scripture of Old Covenant to admonish these Jews from rejecting their eternal salvation.

- If they were going to put themselves under the Law, Paul reminds them the of judgement of the Law.

Hebrews 10:27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.

As a Jew, they knew the Old Testament Scriptures, especially in regards to conquering their adversaries.

- But now they potentially could find themselves on the other side fighting against God and rebelling, leading to a wrathful judgement from God in the last Day.

Hebrews 10:28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Quoted from Deut 17:2-6. These Jews knew the Law and the consequences of rejecting the Law.

- Again Paul is making a comparison between the Old and New Covenants.
- A rejection of the Old Covenant meant death without mercy
- And since He had proven the superiority of the New Covenant, he compares the judgement more severe as well.

Hebrews 10:29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

Moreover, if they are found to be naked without Jesus, having been at one time enlightened by the Truth and an heir of salvation, this person will be found worthy of much worse punishment in the Day of Judgement.

We know there are different levels of punishment based on the bad choices and evil deeds a non-believer did while on the earth. We see this from Jesus when he sent the disciples to minister door to door:

Matthew 10:14-15 And whoever will not receive you nor hear your words, when you depart from that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. 15 Assuredly, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city!

Hebrews 10:30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people."

Again, the writer quotes from the Old Testament, Deut 32:35-36 to awaken them to a fear of God.

But this verse was originally intended for the enemies of the children of Israel, not necessarily Israel themselves.

- By rejecting Jesus and going back under the Law, they were making themselves an adversary of God
- Vengeance will come thru Judgement.
- God will judge His people. (3 Judgments- Bema, Sheep/Goat, Great White Throne)
- If we are covered by the blood of Jesus, His wrath will pass over, if not, eternal fire to unbelievers.

Hebrews 10:31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

If you do not know Jesus, or worse, if at one point were enlightened and then reject the blood and sacrifice of Jesus, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of God.

- We see this in the mouth of Jesus Himself

Matthew 10:28b ... fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

### How does this pertain to us as Christians now?

As we learn and study the Scriptures, we find out just how wretched we are without Jesus, there is a fear of God because He is the Almighty, the mighty Judge, the Creator of the universe, and without Jesus there is no hope of salvation.

- But as believers in Christ, we have this confidence of eternal salvation.
- We are no longer servants, but children of God and heirs of God through Christ, Gal 4:7.
- And now as sons of God, we can call God our Father, Rom 8:15.

Because we live in the dispensation of grace, Christians have not known the wrath of God or His judgment. Rather than judgement, we experience chastisement and correction from our heavenly Father, but never wrath and judgement. And if we stay faithful in Christ, we will never know His wrath because it was all placed on Jesus at the cross. (Old Covenant Judgments on sin- Noah's flood, Sodom and Gomorrah)

- 2 Peter tells us that His longsuffering is staving off His judgment until the end of the age.

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Paul and Jesus both said concerning unbelievers, it is a fearful thing to be in the hands of the living God. However, when you live in Jesus, you want to be in His hands. Instead of being fearful to fall into the hands of God, you actually hope for this. This is my passion, my yearning, to be safe in the Father's hands.

For ten chapters, the writer has compared and proven the New Covenant being better than the Old in every aspect with the full intention to keep the Hebrews from departing, forsaking and rejecting Jesus.

Hebrews 3:12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

As believers, we must keep a watchful eye over our heart, Prov 4:23, because it is our heart that the Father wants. He wants us to commit our lives to Him.

- Devote yourself to Him.
- Be attentive to His Word
- Commit your life to Him in everything you do
- Let yourself abide in Him

Because to live in Him is so joyous. Such a delight. It is the opposite of those on the edge of apostasy.

Why live on the edge when you can live in glory. The glory of the Father full of grace and Truth.

Next week we will finish chapter 10 of which is one of my personal favorite verses. One you will absolutely be shocked to learn about.