

Hebrews 10

Verses 26-31

For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 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? ³⁰ For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY " And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." ³¹ It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

- I Verse 26-27 are very troubling for most believers. We must ask ourselves what does it mean to “go on sinning willfully”?
- A Let us begin with what it CANNOT mean. For if it means that those who purposely sin will not be forgiven, then we are all destined for hell, for every believer in history has sinned willfully as ALL SIN IS WILFULL.
- B Or, if it means that if for every sin we purposely commit after we are saved, we will face the “terrifying expectation of judgment” and “the fury of a fire which will consume” and the “vengeance” and “repayment” of God, and if we will therefore be terrified in the hands of a living God...then heaven would be more like hell. There would be no “hope” in the hope of His coming, and our promise of freedom from condemnation would be a lie.

“For if we sin willfully.” “The word sin here is plainly used in a somewhat peculiar sense. It is descriptive not of sin generally, but of a particular kind of sin,—apostasy from the faith and profession of the truth, once known and professed. ‘The angels that sinned’ are the apostate angels. The apostasy described is not so much an act of apostasy as a state of apostasy. It is not, ‘If we have sinned, if we have apostatized’; but ‘If we sin, if we apostatize, if we continue in apostasy’”
A.W. Pink

- C External Evidence: What evidence is there apart from Hebrews to substantiate being assured of salvation?
- 1 Those who BELIEVE on Him will not come into judgment.
- a The witness of Jesus
John 5:24 “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son; that whoever **BELIEVES** in Him shall **NOT** perish, but have **EVERLASTING** life.”

2 God has not appointed us for His wrath but unto salvation.

a The witness of the Holy Spirit through Paul

1 Thessalonians 5:9

For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

3 We have continual forgiveness.

a The witness of the Holy Spirit through John.

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

D Internal Evidence: What has the author of Hebrews said thus far about the surety of salvation and the completeness of forgiveness to those who believe?

1 He purified our sins and sat down (it was finished).

1:3 *And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

2 Jesus is the mercy seat for our sins.

2:17 *Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

3 Sin in Hebrews is clearly defined as UNBELIEF.

3:12-13 *Take care, brethren, that there not be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God. ¹³But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is still called "Today," so that none of you will be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

3:17 *And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?*

3:19 *So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.*

4 We are to come with confidence (instead of in fear) to obtain mercy and find grace in time of need.

4:16 *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

5 Our salvation is eternal.

5:9 *And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation,*

6 God promised and swore by Himself that our salvation is certain.

6:16 *For men swear by one greater than themselves, and with them an oath given as confirmation is an end of every dispute. ¹⁷In the same way God, desiring even more to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath, ¹⁸so that by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.*

7 We have a better covenant because we are saved forever.

7:22 *So much the more also Jesus has become the guarantee of a better covenant.*

8 He always lives to make intercession for us.

7:25 *Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

9 We have a better covenant and better promises because Jesus is alive to enforce them.

8:6 *But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.*

10 We have eternal redemption because of His perfect sacrifice through His blood.

9:12 *He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*

11 Our inheritance is eternal.

9:15 *this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant, those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.*

12 He put away sin once for all by His own perfect sacrifice.

9:26 *He has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.*

13 We have been sanctified through Jesus Christ once for all time.

10:9 *Then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO YOUR WILL." He takes away the first in order to establish the second.¹⁰By this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

14 We have been perfected for all time because of HIS offering for sin.

10:14 *For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.*

15 God is not holding our sins against us. His offering covered it all.

10:17 *"AND THEIR SINS AND THEIR LAWLESS DEEDS I WILL REMEMBER NO MORE."¹⁸Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer any offering for sin.*

E **It would be completely ridiculous for the author of Hebrews to have spent so much time proving the completeness and perfection of our forgiveness only to then tell us if we sin on purpose, we will face fearful judgment.**

F Verses 28-29 give us the answer to our question. The writer is talking about the sin of UNBELIEF IN JESUS. Specifically in this case, he is referring to someone who has been born again, WILLFULLY sinning by forsaking faith in Jesus. In context, this is in reference to the Hebrews to which the letter is addressed who might seriously consider forsaking the perfect sacrifice and covenant to return to the old.

"10:26 The sin which the book warns against is that of a Jew of the first century who left the temple sacrifices, identified himself with the visible Church and made a profession of Messiah as High Priest, renouncing that profession and returning to the temple sacrifices," (Wuest).

"There is but One true sacrifice for sins: if a man, having availed himself of that One, then deliberately casts it behind him, there is no second left for him." -Wuest


G We have been washed and sanctified by the blood of God's Son.

H If setting aside the Law of Moses resulted in death and it was only a shadow, how much more guilty is someone who reject God's offer of eternal life?

- 1 “Set aside” *atheteō*- From a compound of G1 (as a negative particle) and a derivative of G5087; to set aside, that is, (by implication) to disesteem, neutralize or violate: - cast off, despise, disannul, frustrate, bring to naught, reject.

“Alfred says... ‘The reference is especially to Deuteronomy 17:2-7, where the punishment of death is attached to the same sin as here in question, namely, apostasy,’” (Wuest).

“The word ‘counted’ in the Greek text refers to a conscious judgment resting on deliberate weighing of the facts. Here it implies a deliberate, contemptuous rejection of the Messianic sacrifice of the Son of God,” (Wuest)

“The word ‘unholy’ is the translation of *koinos*, the fundamental idea of which is ‘shared by all, public’. From this comes the idea of ‘not sacred’ that is, ‘not set apart for God’s use’. The idea here is that the apostate regarded Messiah’s blood as common, having no more sacred character or specific worth than the blood of any ordinary person,” (Wuest). 


- I To insult the Spirit of grace is to insult God who by grace gave His Son to redeem us.

- 1 “Trampled under foot”-*katapateō*

Thayer Definition:

- 1) to tread down, trample under foot, to trample on
- 2) metaphorically to treat with rudeness and insult
- 2a) to spurn, treat with insulting neglect

“(10:30) The certainty of the punishment is assured by the word of God. Vincent says that the word ‘vengeance’ is ‘an unfortunate translation, since it conveys the idea of vindictiveness which does not reside in the Greek word. It is the full meting out of justice to all parties. The quotation is an adaptation of the LXX of Deut. 32:35. The second citation is literally from LXX of Deut. 32:36.”

“(10:31) This verse must be understood in its context. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God when one is an apostate.” -Wuest 

- J These verses use very strong language. The author is warning them again, not to return to the temple worship but to fully embrace the New Covenant.

John 3:16-19

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. ¹⁷ For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. ¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

- 1 The reason the lost will be condemned is for not believing in the Son.
- 2 People won’t go to hell because they sin, for their sins are covered. They will be condemned for rejecting Jesus.

To have received the knowledge of the truth and then reject it is to give up the only way of salvation. "No further sacrifice for sins is left" which can avail for those who have deliberately abandoned reliance on the perfect sacrifice of Christ. F.F. Bruce

- K** The warning to the Hebrews who were tempted to return to temple worship and thus reject Christ is equally as strong as Paul's warning to the Galatians who were tempted to add law to grace.

Galatians 1:8-9

But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. 9 As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

What he urges his readers to do is to avail themselves continuously of the intercessory offices of their enthroned high priest, who appears in God's presence on their behalf by virtue of his perfect self-offering presented and accepted once for all. He would probably have thought it preposterous that his stern words of warning should in due course give rise to a penitential procedure so similar to that which he dismisses as forever superseded. F.F. Bruce

- L** A good question at this point is, "Can a believer reject Jesus and be lost?"

- 1 There are two main schools of thought among grace ministers at this time.
 - a #1: No one who is born again can ever lose his/her salvation, even if they reject Jesus.
 - b #2: Our salvation is based on faith. If we no longer believe in Jesus, we are willfully sinning and thus forfeiting our salvation. This view branches into two others:
 - 1) Even though it is *possible* that a believer could walk away from his/her salvation, it is so unlikely as to be purely hypothetical.
 - 2) It is possible, but unlikely a true believer would stop believing in Jesus, but if one willfully chose to not believe in Him, that person would be an apostate. Only by believing in Jesus can one be eternally saved (our view).

Verses 32-34

But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings, ³³ partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated. 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.

"Remember": *"(10:32) The words "call to remembrance" are the translation of anamimesko which Alford says is stronger than the simple verb, and means 'call*

over in your minds, one by one,' the present tense implying constant habit," (Wuest).

The Hebrews believers had suffered greatly for their confession of Jesus as the Lord and Messiah. The author of Hebrews is trying to encourage them to continue in the faith amidst intense persecutions; to remember what they had already suffered as believers...that this suffering would not have been wasted.

Verses 35-39

Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

³⁷ FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE,

HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY.

³⁸ BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;

AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS NO PLEASURE IN HIM.

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

"(10:35) The word 'confidence' is the translation of *parresia* which is a compound of *pan* (all) and *resis* (speech). The word means 'freedom in speaking, unreservedness in speech, free and fearless confidence, cheerful courage, boldness, assurance.'" -Wuest

"(10:37) The exhortation to patience is strengthened by the promise of the soon coming of Messiah. The expression is very much stronger in the Greek text. Expositor's translates it: "For yet a little—a very little—while and He that cometh will come and will not delay.' Another translates it: 'For yet a little—ever so little—while.'" -Wuest

II Verse 38 seems to sum it up. The righteous live and stand by FAITH alone, but He will not be pleased with anyone who shrinks back. Faith is the means by which we stand, and to stop believing is to gain His displeasure.

A *hupostelloō*: to withhold under (out of sight), that is, (reflexively) to cower or shrink, (keep) back, shun, withdraw

The clause "the righteous shall live by [his] faith" is twice quoted by Paul (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11) in a context which suggests that he gave it the meaning: "it is the one who is righteous by faith that will live." F.F. Bruce

III Verse 39 strengthens the view that anyone turning back will face destruction, and yet within the verse is the expressed certainty that the writer did not expect this from the reader, but rather that he/she will indeed continue. This echoes the same tone of comfort found in Hebrews 6:9.

But, beloved, we are confident of better things concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.