

Sometimes I'm asked which commentaries I use. Just days after I wrote this, someone sent me a text asking that very question. I hesitate to say which ones because there are some things I disagree with in every one I've used. We all have our personal convictions on peripheral doctrines (Romans 14:5). I don't know if any two believers agree on them all. It's a sad thing when we end our fellowship with someone over a minor issue when we agree on the major doctrines of Christ and what He has done for us. But there is one commentary I can recommend without hesitation. I've never found it to err on any point. It's the Bible (Proverbs 30:5). The Bible is its own best commentary (2 Timothy 2:15). That is why you'll find between twenty to fifty cross-references in every sermon.

I expect you to disagree with me on the non-essential issues at some point. Just make sure you base your conviction on the Word of God, not a commentary, or a feeling, or even your own logic. We can disagree with gentleness, humility, and respect for one another, but most of all respect for God's Word (2 Timothy 2:24-25).

Our passage today begins by touching on one of those controversial doctrines. The author is writing to people who he has called "holy brothers" (Hebrews 3:1). The language he uses shows that he considers them to be born-again. Yet, in chapter six he has warned them against falling away and the impossibility of being saved again if they do (Hebrews 6:4-6). He addresses the issue again in this passage. <sup>26</sup> *For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins*, Hebrews 10:26 We reviewed both sides of the issue in the sermon on Hebrews 6. You can make a case from Scripture that it is not possible to lose your salvation. You can also make a case that you can, especially from this letter. Rather than denying the other side has Scriptures to stand on, would it not be better to just take this passage as it reads and be warned not to fall into habitual and deliberate sin? If we are born-again, regardless if we think you can or can't lose your salvation, we can agree that the warning is good for us. Amen?

Verse 26 tells us that if we keep on deliberately rebelling against God after we received the truth of what Jesus has done for us, we have rejected God's only sacrifice and there is no other. Let me be clear. This is referring to an intentional continuation of living without regard for God's will or the conviction of the Holy Spirit. We are not talking about failing to be perfect, or unintentional sin, or even a deliberate sin that we regret and ask for forgiveness (1 John 1:8). This is living in an habitual and intentionally sinful lifestyle as if you were never redeemed. Sadly, we have all probably observed people who prayed a prayer asking for salvation and then have gone right back to their sinful lives as if nothing changed.

For those who do so, there is no longer a sacrifice for sin, <sup>27</sup> *but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries*. Hebrews 10:27 If someone is acting as a slave of sin, living in rebellion toward their Creator, why would they expect heaven, and why would heaven want them? A few verses earlier we read,

**Commented [PW1]: Romans 14:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

**Commented [PW2]: Proverbs 30:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.

**Commented [PW3]: 2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

**Commented [PW4]: 2 Timothy 2:24-25 (ESV)**

<sup>24</sup> And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, <sup>25</sup> correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth,

**Commented [PW5]: Hebrews 3:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,

**Commented [PW6]: Hebrews 6:4-6 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> For it is impossible, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, <sup>5</sup> and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, <sup>6</sup> and then have fallen away, to restore them again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

**Commented [PW7]: 1 John 1:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

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

Hebrews 10:14 Those who have received Christ are being sanctified, not continuing to live as they did before they came to Christ. It can be a slow process, but it is a sure and continual process (Romans 6:19). But what if there is no change? What if they live just as rebellious toward God as before they made a profession of their faith? The author is saying they should have a fearful expectation that they will meet the same fate as all the adversaries of God. What a warning to the Hebrews who were thinking of going back into Judaism! What a warning to anyone who has no gratitude for God's grace!

Fire is used by Jesus to describe judgment of the wicked (Matthew 18:9). In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warned that whatever draws us into sin must be radically removed from our life lest we end up in that fire (Matthew 5:29-30). Fire falls on those at the end of the Millennium who attack Jerusalem (Revelation 20:9). The final place of hell is referred to as the lake of fire (Revelation 20:14,15). Whether it is literal or figurative, it's not where anyone would want to be.

The author then turns to an illustration these Hebrew believers would be familiar with.

<sup>28</sup> Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. Hebrews 10:28 If an Israelite worshiped another god, and two or three discovered it was so, the people were to stone that person (Deuteronomy 17:2-6). The nation rarely carried out this law. If it had, it would have saved itself from consequences of idolatry, which were much more severe. If execution was justice for forsaking God under the old covenant, which was a mere shadow of what was to come,

<sup>29</sup> How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? Hebrews 10:29 What then is the punishment of rejecting the reality to which the old covenant pointed? What punishment does one deserve if they take God's forgiveness and intentionally keep on doing the very things for which they were forgiven?

Once again in the wording we have evidence that the author is referring to believers. He writes, "profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified." The author is not referring to a seeker, but rather to someone who has entered the new covenant and was sanctified. To deliberately go on continuing in sin is to trample underfoot the Son of God and profane His blood that was shed for them, an outrage to the Spirit of grace! The old covenant required the death penalty of the physical life of the rebel, what then of the spiritual consequences to the one who outrages the Spirit of grace and tramples underfoot the Son of God? What would be equitable justice for that?

<sup>30</sup> For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." Hebrews 10:30 Meek and mild Jesus is coming back as the Lion of the tribe of Judah to repay everyone for what they have done (Matthew 16:27). The sword that comes from His mouth will slay those who have gathered to fight Him at Armageddon (Revelation 19:15). Then they will face the White Throne Judgment and be judged according to what they have done (Revelation 20:11,12). <sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Hebrews 10:31

**Commented [PW8]: Romans 6:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

**Commented [PW9]: Matthew 18:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.

**Commented [PW10]: Matthew 5:29-30 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

<sup>30</sup> And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

**Commented [PW11]: Revelation 20:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And they marched up over the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them,

**Commented [PW12]: Revelation 20:14-15 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

**Commented [PW13]: Matthew 16:27 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

**Commented [PW14]: Revelation 19:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

**Commented [PW15]: Revelation 20:11-12 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.

<sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.

As we've seen several times in the letter, the author's severe warnings are now followed by words of encouragement. He is practicing what he preached a few verses before our text of encouraging one another all the more as we see the Day approach (Hebrews 10:25) <sup>32</sup> *But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings*, Hebrews 10:32 The author is reminding them of the days after they were enlightened, in other words, born-again. We rarely use that term, "enlightened" for salvation, perhaps because other faiths have appropriated it. It is more true of Christianity than any other faith. Paul writes, <sup>8</sup> *for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light*. Ephesians 5:8 We were all in darkness before we came to Christ. We thought our sins were no big deal, even sometimes boasting in them (James 4:16). But when the light of the Holy Spirit showed us what those sins were in the eyes of God, we stepped into the light and repented (John 3:21). Everything was then seen in the light of the Spirit, and the things we once took pleasure in we now abhor. We were enlightened by the light of Christ, the light of truth. Oh happy day! Our guilt was lifted and the weight of sin was gone! Our convictions and values changed. These Hebrews had once realized that standing for the truth in the face of persecution was worth the price (Romans 8:18).

They suffered for their faith then. <sup>33</sup> *sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated*. Hebrews 10:33 Public humiliation is painful, but when it is received on Christ's behalf it is an honor (Matthew 5:11-12). We don't know what the affliction was, but it could have included being beaten or caned. Being partners with those who were so treated may mean that they stood by them as they were abused and so were abused to some extent with them.

I remember defending our faith before a liberal congregation. While others mocked our faith one of the attendees stood with me verbally. What an encouragement that was! Are we willing to stand up and be counted like the Hebrews were for one another even if we will be scorned? The author is reminding them how strong their faith once was.

<sup>34</sup> *For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one*. Hebrews 10:34 Prisoners of Rome depended on the gifts of food from loved ones to survive. This put the giver in jeopardy as they might be asked if Jesus or Caesar was lord. They could end up imprisoned as well. Can you imagine the courage it took to walk into a dungeon and ask if you could give food to a Christian who was there for declaring Jesus is Lord? Especially after seeing their condition, would you have the faith to return to comfort them?

They even allowed their property to be plundered. We don't know the details, but I imagine that it was similar to what happens today in Muslim countries. Christians return to find their home being ransacked for valuables and feel grateful they can escape with their lives. They knew their treasures were inaccessible to those who plundered their homes (1 Peter 1:4; Matthew 6:19-21). Are yours? Could it be that these believers had grown wealthier since their first persecution and were now less willing to see their

**Commented [PW16]: Hebrews 10:25 (ESV)**

<sup>25</sup> not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

**Commented [PW17]: James 4:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

**Commented [PW18]: John 3:21 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

**Commented [PW19]: Romans 8:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

**Commented [PW20]: Matthew 5:11-12 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account.

<sup>12</sup> Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

**Commented [PW21]: 1 Peter 1:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you,

**Commented [PW22]: Matthew 6:19-21 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,

<sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

<sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

goods plundered? Was the place of their wealth shifting from heaven to earth (Matthew 6:20)? It can happen to any of us.

I was speaking with some out of town guests about the persecution our brothers in North Africa and Iran experience. One of them commented on how we have grown so used to our comforts that those kind of changes would be really difficult for us. I think that is very true, but I also know the grace of God would see us through (1 Corinthians 10:13). Believers in the USA are being fined because of their belief that marriage is sacred. They are joyfully accepting the plundering of their goods. Randy Alcorn was a pastor for many years in Oregon. When he decided the Lord wanted him to quietly protest the abortion of innocent unborn lives, he was imprisoned for second degree trespass. He was sued by the clinic and the judge awarded millions of dollars in damages. He resigned as pastor so the church funds would not go to an abortion clinic. All profits from his books go to missions. You don't have to go abroad to have your goods plundered or find yourself in prison (2 Timothy 3:12).

These Hebrew Christians had faced major sacrifices shortly after they were converted, but life must have grown comfortable. They weren't sure they wanted to go through it again. That would be difficult for anyone to face. But the author is reminding them of why they did it before. The only thing that had changed was their zeal for Christ had waned (Revelation 2:4). He's reminding their former zeal. They had forgotten their better possessions were in heaven, possessions that endure. It's a call to return to their first love and to remember how temporal our earthly treasures are.

*<sup>35</sup> Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.* Hebrews 10:35 The next chapter will give us a list of men and women who lost their earthly treasures because they had much better treasures in heaven. These Hebrew believers once had confidence in their eternal rewards. The author is pleading with them not to throw away that confidence now, for it has a great reward. In fact, no eye has seen or ear heard the things that God has prepared for those who love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9). But if you want a few insights, you can read Randy Alcorn's book, *Heaven*.

I don't know what you are going through right now, but this verse is a good one to keep in mind when we are tempted to anything less than God's will. Don't throw away your confidence in Jesus! There is a great reward for those who endure.

*<sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.* Hebrews 10:36 We do the will of God when we receive Jesus as our Savior, but the will of God is also our sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3). If we want to receive the promise of a heavenly reward, we must endure, going on to sanctification. Endurance is not easy. We are made with a hunger for the fullness of God, so when we are not meeting that need in us through prayer and the Word, we start to look for other things to fill the void. Endurance keeps on keeping on. We may have times when we aren't as thrilled with our prayer time or don't see new revelations in the Word. But we endure because we know Jesus is the only one who is God's will for filling that void in us. When we don't look to Jesus and expect God to meet us, our

**Commented [PW23]: Matthew 6:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

**Commented [PW24R23]:**

**Commented [PW25]: 1 Corinthians 10:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.

**Commented [PW26]: 2 Timothy 3:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

**Commented [PW27]: Revelation 2:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

**Commented [PW28]: 1 Corinthians 2:9 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> But, as it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"—

**Commented [PW29]: 1 Thessalonians 4:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from sexual immorality;

mind and our eyes can begin to wander (Colossians 3:1-2). That is when we are in danger like these Hebrews were. We are tempted to find excitement in something else or live for another goal. Temptations lie to us! Endure and you'll find that Jesus is more than enough to fill your heart and mind. Don't rely on yesterday's testimonies and insights. Keep getting fresh ones.

<sup>37</sup> For, "Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay;" Hebrews 10:37 How long do you have to endure? "A little while!" Life is short (2 Corinthians 4:17). The older you get the shorter it seems. Before we know it we'll be seeing Jesus face to face, either by His return or by our death. For God, it has just been a couple days since this was written (2 Peter 3:8; Psalm 90:4). He will come! Jesus promised it (Matthew 24:30-31). Theodore L. Cuyler wrote, "This school of our Heavenly Father will soon close for us; the term time is shortening every day. Let us not shrink from a hard lesson or wince under any rod of chastisement. The richer will be the crown, and the sweeter will be Heaven, if we endure cheerfully to the end and graduate in glory."

<sup>38</sup> but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him." Hebrews 10:38 The righteous shall live by faith is found four times in Scripture (Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11). The original expression came from the prophet Habakkuk who was warning that his vision from God would surely come in God's time and not delay. Meanwhile, the just will go on living by their faith. They trust in what they cannot see and believe God will be true to His Word. God rewards faith for it pleases Him when we trust in His character (Hebrews 11:6). But if we doubt God, or shrink back from Him, He isn't pleased with us. Why should He be? He gives us life and breath and everything we have, and we can turn around and act in rebellion towards Him. He gave His only Son for us. How can we doubt Him? Why would we shrink back from such love?

<sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10:39 Let's read that together! That is the voice of faith. We know He will keep us if we do not shrink back. We trust our good Shepherd to help us endure. He committed His Son to us, the least we can do is endure to the end in faith, obedient to His will for us regardless of the difficulties we face (Romans 8:32). Class is almost over. Endure cheerfully to the end and graduate in glory! Amen?

#### Questions

- 1 What's the best commentary?
- 2 Describe the sin in verse 26.
- 3 What should rebels against God expect?
- 4 What was the Old Covenant example?
- 5 What is the description of rebellion in verse 29.
- 6 To whom does vengeance belong and why?
- 7 What is true enlightenment? Are you enlightened?
- 8 Where was their treasure? Yours?
- 9 Why should we endure?
- 10 What is the will of God for us?
- 11 How do the just live each day?

#### Commented [PW30]: Colossians 3:1-2 (ESV)

- <sup>1</sup> If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
- <sup>2</sup> Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

#### Commented [PW31]: 2 Corinthians 4:17 (ESV)

- <sup>17</sup> For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison,

#### Commented [PW32]: 2 Peter 3:8 (ESV)

- <sup>8</sup> But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

#### Commented [PW33]: Psalm 90:4 (ESV)

- <sup>4</sup> For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.

#### Commented [PW34]: Matthew 24:30-31 (ESV)

- <sup>30</sup> Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.
- <sup>31</sup> And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

#### Commented [PW35]: Habakkuk 2:4 (ESV)

- <sup>4</sup> "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

#### Commented [PW36]: Romans 1:17 (ESV)

- <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

#### Commented [PW37]: Galatians 3:11 (ESV)

- <sup>11</sup> Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."

#### Commented [PW38]: Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)

- <sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

#### Commented [PW39]: Romans 8:32 (ESV)

- <sup>32</sup> He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?