

The Book of

Hebrews

מֵאַנֶשׁ מִנֵּמ דַּא מִנֵּ ת אֶקְלֵא
צִמְאֵל לֵל נִתְאַתְצֵרְחָ דִּרְתִּסְנֵ סְק
אֵ ת פִּקְלֵא תִּסְנֵ סֶרְבֵּאֵל
רֵר תֵּא סֶרְ תֵּאקְסֵנֵצֵ דִּמְמֵצֵ
תֵּאֲתִפְלֵשׁ נֵ תֵרְדֵנָה רִפְרֵ נֵ רֵלֵד
תֵּאֲנֵשׁ רֵלֵד מֵלֵלֵצֵ סֵס תֵּלֵשׁ



Outline of Hebrews

“Jesus is Better”

- I. Jesus Is Better Than the OT Prophets (1:1-4)
- II. Jesus Is Better Than the Angels (1:5-2:18)
- III. Jesus Is Better Than Moses (3:1-4:13)
- IV. Jesus' Priesthood Is Better Than the Levitical Priesthood (4:14-10:18)
- V. Concluding Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-12:29)**
- VI. Epilogue: Final Exhortations (13:1-25)

Outline of Hebrews

V. Concluding Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-12:29)

- A. Exhortation to Draw Near, Hold Fast, and Encourage One Another (10:19-25)
- B. Warning: No Hope of Forgiveness for Those Who Turn from Christ (10:26-31)
- C. Call to Persevere in Faith (10:32-12:3)
- D. Exhortations to Readers to Endure (12:4-29)

Warning: No Hope of Forgiveness for Those Who Turn from Christ (10:26-31)

²⁶ For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. ²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know him who said [in Deut 32:35], “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again [in Deut 32:36], “The Lord will judge his people.” ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

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

- The word “*for*” here indicates that the author is providing a **reason** or ground for the exhortations given in the **previous** section (verses 19-25).
- As you may recall, the three main admonitions in that previous section were
 - Draw Near
 - Hold Fast
 - Help Others Hold Fast
- In **this** section the author explains why these admonitions are **so important**.
- If, after having **outwardly** embraced the gospel, they **turn away** from it, there will be **no forgiveness** for them.

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

- When it says “***sinning deliberately***” here, it is not referring to ***any*** and ***every*** sin that a believer might commit.
- The author has the sin of ***apostasy*** in mind: a “believer” who ***professes*** to embrace the Christian faith, and then, after a period of time, ***utterly rejects*** it.
- A believer who commits a sin and then repents, demonstrates that they are ***not*** guilty of the apostasy being warned against ***here***.

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

- The author draws here on OT teaching where it repeatedly warns that **defiant** sin leads to destruction: “*But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people.*” (Num 15:30 NAS – cf. Deut 1:43; 17:12-13; Ps 19:13)
- “*Receiving the knowledge of the truth*” here refers to conversion – embracing the Christian faith when one is saved (cf. 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25; 3:7; Tit 1:1).
- If one defiantly turns away from Christ after having embraced the gospel, “*there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.*”
- In other words, there will be no forgiveness for them.

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

- They, of course, can't receive forgiveness through the Levitical sacrifices, because, as the author has already **clearly** demonstrated, the blood of animals can't take away sins (10:4, 11) or perfect the conscience of worshippers (9:9).
- Those sacrifices only serve to **remind** people of their sins – **repeatedly** (10:3).
- And they can't receive forgiveness through the once-for-all offering of Jesus if they have defiantly rejected him.
- Forgiveness **only** belongs to those who **continue** to trust in Jesus.

²⁷ ...*but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.*

- Those who renounce Christ after having outwardly embraced the gospel, have nothing but “*a fearful expectation of judgment*” from that eternal “*fire that will consume the adversaries*” of God.
- This obviously refers to the **final judgment** – the day when God’s enemies will be completely destroyed in the “*lake of fire*” (Rev 19:20; 20:10, 14, 16; 21:8).
- The language that the author uses here is language that is used in the OT:
 - For instance, Zeph 3:8 says, “*For my decision is to gather nations, to assemble kingdoms, to pour out upon them my indignation, all my burning anger; for in the fire of my jealousy all the earth shall be consumed.*” (see also Zeph 1:18)
 - And Isaiah 26:11 declares, “*Let the fire for your adversaries consume them.*” (see also Isa 64:2)

²⁷ ...but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the **adversaries**.

- If the readers revert to OT Judaism and turn away from Jesus, they will identify themselves as “**adversaries**” (=enemies) of the Lord.
- They will **not** enter the heavenly city but will be **destroyed** forever, for God’s “**adversaries**” are **unbelievers** (Gen 22:17; 24:60; Ex 15:7; 32:25; Lev 26:16; Num 10:9; Deut 32:27; Josh 5:3; 2 Chr 1:11; 20:29; 26:13; Esth 8:13; Nah 1:2; Isa 1:24; 59:18; 63:18).

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

- Here the writer of Hebrews makes an “argument from lesser to greater,” much like that found in Heb 2:1-4 and 9:13-14.
- In such an argument the author first presents an assertion the hearers will recognize as undeniably valid: “*Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses*”, probably alluding here to Deut 17:2-7.
- This passage from the Pentateuch proclaims that those who violate the covenant by turning away from the Lord’s commands and worshiping other gods must be put to death.

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

- That punishment is to be carried out “*without mercy*” – an expression used in Deut 13:8.
- The author presents this **extreme penalty** for the rejection of God’s revealed will under the old covenant as the **lesser** of two situations.
- In the next verse (Heb 10:29) he will go on to explain the **greater** situation.

²⁹ *How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?*

- That greater situation, of course, is the rejection of the ***new covenant*** high priest and his offering— notice the words “*How much worse*” at the beginning of the verse.
- Those who have turned away from the work of grace accomplished in God’s Son are faced with a ***more serious*** situation than the apostates of the old covenant era.

²⁹ *How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?*

- As the author has already clearly demonstrated earlier in this letter:
 - The **new covenant** itself is **better** than the old covenant (8:3-13)
 - The new covenant **priest** is **greater** than the priests of the old covenant (7:1-28)
 - The new covenant **sacrifice** is **superior** in every way to old covenant sacrifices (9:11-10:18).
- Therefore, it is obvious that those who reject the **superior** workings of God through his Son deserve even **greater** punishment than those who rebelled under the old covenant revelation.

²⁹ *How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has **spurned the Son of God**, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?*

- Inherent in this argument is the assumption that those who have heard the message of the gospel have had a greater opportunity and greater resources for a response of obedience (2:3-4).
- The rebellion of those who have turned away from the gospel is depicted in terms of **three** actions that are graphically expressed in this verse.
- **First**, they have “*spurned the Son of God.*”
- Those who have rejected the gospel have shown the lowest form of contempt not only for a set of teachings but for the **very person** of God’s Son.

²⁹ *How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has **profaned the blood of the covenant** by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?*

- **Secondly**, the rebels have “*profaned the blood of the covenant.*”
- The Greek phrase translated “*profaned*” here can mean to treat something as “common, defiled, or unclean.”
- In the context of the Levitical purity laws it especially referred to something that was “unfit or ceremonially impure” (e.g., Mark 7:2, 5; Acts 10:28).

²⁹ *How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has **profaned the blood of the covenant** by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?*

- Under the old covenant **great** emphasis was placed on the **fitness** of the sacrifices used to atone for sins, and the author of Hebrews has gone to great lengths to demonstrate that Christ's own blood was **superior** to the blood of animals used in the old covenant sacrifices (Heb. 9:13-14, 23-25).
- Therefore, for the apostates to **reject Christ's** sacrifice in effect says that they believe Christ's own blood is **unfit** as a sacrifice for their sins!

²⁹ *How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant **by which he was sanctified**, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?*

- There is a difficulty with the way the ESV has translated the phrase “*by which he was sanctified.*”
- The difficulty is this: translated this way, makes it sound like the apostate who is being spoken of here has been “*sanctified*” (set apart, made holy) by the blood of Christ which inaugurated the new covenant!
- Yet we know that an apostate such as the ones described here, have **not** in any way been set apart or made holy by the blood of Christ:
 - Their conscience has **not** been purified from dead works to serve the living God by the blood of Christ (Heb 9:14)
 - They do **not** have confidence to enter the very presence of God by the blood of Jesus (Heb 10:19)

²⁹ *How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has **profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified**, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?*

- The commentaries have sought to resolve this difficulty in a number of ways.
- I think the best way to resolve it is to recognize that the Greek grammar here allows for this phrase to be translated as a statement of a **general principle**: “*by which one is sanctified*” rather than a statement **about** the apostates.
- Indeed these apostates have “**profaned the blood of the covenant**” and therefore have **not** been “*sanctified*” by it.
- Instead, despite their previous profession of faith, they are under the judgment of God as this passage will go on to make clear.

²⁹ *How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has **outraged the Spirit of grace?***

- Finally, the author tells us that those rejecting Christ and his sacrifice have “*outraged the Spirit of grace.*”
- During Jesus’ earthly ministry those who rejected his work and words suggested that his power originated with Satan rather than the Holy Spirit of God (Mark 3:22-30).
- In the same way, these apostates who have turned away from the gospel which is brought to man by the Spirit’s “*grace*”, have **blasphemed**, denying the gospel’s true origin and importance.
- They have committed an **unforgivable sin** with eternal consequences.

³⁰ *For we know him who said [in Deut 32:35], “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again [in Deut 32:36], “The Lord will judge his people.”*

- Here the author reinforces his assertion concerning the seriousness of the situation by quoting two brief portions of the Song of Moses in Deut 32.
- This song, sung by Moses at the end of his life, eloquently delivered a warning to the people of Israel by depicting God’s judgment toward a faithless people who had turned their backs on his covenant.
- In spite of all he had done for them, they had abandoned him. God’s response to them was scathing judgment.
- The relevance for the audience of Hebrews could not be more striking.

³⁰ For we know him who said [in Deut 32:35], “Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” And again [in Deut 32:36], “The Lord will judge his people.”

- Deut 32:35-36 in full reads:
 - ***Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly. For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone and there is none remaining, bond or free.***
- Both portions quoted by Hebrews—“*Vengeance is mine; I will repay,*” and “*The Lord will judge his people*”—emphasize that God himself takes responsibility for judging those who have spurned the gospel and deserted the community of faith.

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

- The author tersely concludes with, “*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*”
- The word translated “*fearful*” communicates the idea of terror and, for emphasis, is placed first in the Greek sentence.
- To “*fall into the hands*” of God speaks both of God’s awesome power and of the helplessness of the recipients of judgment.
- There exists no means of escape for those who have rejected the grace of the Living One (Heb 4:12-13).

Summary of Hebrews 10:26-31

- If, after embracing the gospel we intentionally turn away it, then there will be no forgiveness for us (v. 26)
- Instead we will face the final judgment of God (v. 27)
- If those who rejected the law of Moses received an earthly punishment, then those who trample on God's Son, consider the covenant blood unclean, and insult the Holy Spirit will face a more severe judgment (vv. 28-29)
- As the OT says, they will experience God's vengeance and judgment and fall into the hands of the living God (vv. 30-31; Deut 32:35-36)

Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- Arminians believe that Christ paid for **all** sins – even the sins of those who suffer in hell forever for those very sins.
- Because most translations of Heb 10:29 almost make it sound as if the clearly hell-bound apostates who have rejected the gospel have been “*sanctified*” by the “*blood*” of Christ, Arminians will claim that this verse supports their view. Does it? Why or why not?
- Scripture teaches that as long as we repent and confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us. Yet today’s passage describes a sin for which there is no forgiveness. How do we square these two ideas?
- The concluding verse of today’s passage tells us “*it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*” Should we **fear** God? Should we **be afraid** of God? Is there a difference? Explain your answer.