

## IT IS CHRIST JESUS, OR JUDGMENT

Hebrews 10:26–31 — *"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 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? 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. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

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We have now arrived at one of the most frightening, or at least one of the most serious of “warning passages” in Hebrews, and in reality, in all of the New Testament. In doing this passage justice, we need to not sugarcoat it, and we also need to not separate it from all that has gone before in our study of this epistle.

The last passage that we had under consideration ended with the call to not forsake assembling together but to exhort one another more “as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). This has a direct bearing on what we are going to discuss as we move forward.

We would always want to consider the possibility that there might be some among us that while they would go along with the group, and love to be counted among the group, and probably really in their own reckoning would think that they really belong, they have not grabbed on to the one essential thing that would make them truly in Christ. That one essential is faith in Christ Jesus, not in any Christ, or in another Christ who will someday come, or in faith in the Christian community. It is faith in Jesus Christ and in the finished work of complete putting away of sin by the sacrifice of Himself (Hebrews 9:26; 10:10, 12, 14, 17-18).

Recall back in verse 18, we read that *“where remission of [sins and iniquities] is, there is no more offering for sin.”* There can be no more offering for sin, because no more offering is needed, and also, no more will be allowed. The veil that separated the holy place from the most holy place, or the holy of holies, was torn as Christ died as recorded in Matthew 27:51. As this was a sign, it was not yet a sign explained or even understood as far as we can understand by the Scripture. But in the epistle to the Hebrews we do have this explained, and after the visit and reception that Paul received from the Jews in Jerusalem that did believe, and were “all zealous of the law” (Acts 21:20), we can see how much this epistle was needed.

So we have come this far, and we should have it acknowledged and understood, imbedded deep in our very souls that no further sacrifice for sins is *needed*. Now we, and all people everywhere, need to come to grips and have it further imbedded in our souls that there is no more sacrifice for sins *available*.

The one who would refuse the once-for-all, atoning (propitiating), sanctifying, and perfecting sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, an offering to God to put away sin forever for all that come to God by Him would have none other available.

That is where we are at in verse 26. There are those in the congregation that may be happy to attach to the congregation, but they are not fully on board with this. That would be part of the exhorting that is spoken of in verse 25. It would be a tragedy if one would come this far in walking among the redeemed, but yet not be redeemed because he was not really “all-in” with the truth of the finished and only sacrifice for sins that Christ Jesus accomplished at Calvary.

With the Old Covenant being done, as having served its purpose and now being made obsolete by the bringing in of a new and better covenant that made it obsolete, there is no more sacrifice for sins. The sign from God that the Old Covenant was done was by the rending of the veil (Matthew 27:51). The Old Covenant was made old by the bringing in of the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus Christ, which we have explained in Hebrews 9:15-16. The death of Jesus Christ as the testator of the New Covenant brought the New into effect and rendered the Old obsolete. That all this was not yet understood in the immediate aftermath of the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord is understandable, but now we have it in writing.

Acts 13:38–42 — *"Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware therefore, lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets; Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you. And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath."*

In the above passage we read of it spoken, and recorded as Luke wrote in Acts. We read that the word of the Lord was published throughout all the region, but now we see a direct word to all the house of Israel — IT IS FINISHED.

So verse 26 picks up *"For if we sin wiffully after that we received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins..."*

That should serve as a sobering wakeup call to all reading, both at that time and now. As I have said several times in this study, it is the finished work of redemption from Jesus Christ on the cross, or it is nothing. There remains no more sacrifice for sins. All that is necessary has been accomplished, BUT DO KNOW THAT THE ACCOMPLISHED SACRIFICE IS ALL THAT IS AVAILABLE. It is Jesus Christ or nothing. Do let that sink in. The Old Testament sacrificial religion that was ordained by God has been finished and made obsolete. What should that say about every single other invention of man to try to make himself right with God by religion or his own good deeds?

The willful sinning here really should be understood as willfully rejecting Jesus Christ and His all-sufficient sacrifice. That is contextually consistent, as that is what the previous parts of the chapter are about, and it is consistent with the rest of the epistle. For instance, going all the way back to chapter 2, we have the warning against neglecting so great salvation (2:1-4), and in chapter 3 we have alternations of sinning and believing not speaking of those Israelites in the time of Moses who went against God in unbelief when they were to enter the promised land. Remember as you hear this — it is Christ or nothing. In Christ you have everything. It really is an all or nothing proposition.

Verse 27 reminds what we can look forward to if we refuse God's provision. We can only look forward to judgment and fiery indignation that will devour God's enemies. If we refuse Christ, we are God's

enemies. He is reconciling the world to Himself and dealing with His enemies in longsuffering, but it is not forever suffering. The ultimate fulfillment of this will be at the Great White Throne judgment where those not found written in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire. This is real and a real warning to those that would refuse Christ. That is all that we have to look forward to without Him.

This is again compared to God's treatment of the despisers under the law. They were met with swift judgment. Remember in chapter 3 we saw the comparison of Moses the servant with Christ Jesus the Son. If rejection of the servant is serious high crimes, what should we consider rejection of the Son?

It is interesting here that we see two or three witnesses being enough to deal with the one against Moses. In the next chapter we will read about a "great cloud of witnesses" (Hebrews 12:1). There are none with any excuse to refuse the Son of God. Doing so is counted as walking on Him in disdain ("trodden under foot"), and counting the blood of the covenant (*"the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"*, 1 Peter 1:19) as common and unholy. This is also doing despite to the Spirit of grace. Should this be the ultimate expression of what the Lord spoke of as blasphemy against the Holy Ghost in Matthew 12:31-32, Mark 3:28-29, and Luke 12:10? It certainly brings those warning to my mind. The warning here is no joke. There is an eternal cost to rejecting the Son of God.

Verses 30 and 31 remind us of how God will one day set things right and judge His people. *"Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompence, saith the Lord"*. Paul quoted Deuteronomy 32:35 in Romans 12:19 to teach that Christians should allow God to take care of their adversaries and not to do it themselves, allowing God to have the final say in that matter. We can trust God to take care of it. We also can know that the way that God takes care of our enemies might be to save them just as He saved us, and to make our enemies our friends. The great expression of Christian forgiveness is in forgiving our enemies even as God reconciled us to Himself while we were His enemies and yet sinners (Romans 5:6-11). See also how we are to deal with each other in Ephesians 4:32.

But here in Hebrews we have the same expression quoted, but with a different emphasis. It is one of warning that we do not want to be counted as those that are on the receiving end of God's vengeance.

In Amos chapters 1 and 2, we have the word of the LORD to and through the prophet, and I envision the Israelite hearers of this prophecy as he began. We read of coming punishment against Damascus (1:3), Gaza (1:6), Tyrus (1:9), Edom (1:11), Ammon (1:13), and Moab (2:1). This was likely music to the ears of the Israelites who dealt with all of these as enemies. But look what happens in verses 2:4 and 6: We have the same happening with Judah and Israel. The LORD will judge His people.

Verse 31 reminds us that it truly is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The next reminder that we need is that we need not fall into His hands in judgment, because we can right now fall into His hands in mercy, and in the grace and the kindness that He showed unto us in sending His own Son to take our sins on Himself at the cross. Rejection of this once-for-all act of mercy and grace will result in falling into His hands in judgment. Receiving it and laying hold on it in faith will result in life everlasting — saved by grace through faith, Ephesians 2:8-9. There is no middle ground in this. Remember, and let it really sink in. It is Christ Jesus or Nothing!