

Candlelight Christian Fellowship

Hebrews (Chapter 10)

Hebrews 10 (NKJV)

“For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually year by year, make those who approach perfect. 2 For then would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. 3 But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. 4 For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

5 Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: ‘Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. 7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God.’

8 Previously saying, ‘Sacrifice and offering, burnt offerings, and offerings for sin You did not desire, nor had pleasure in them’ (which are offered according to the law), 9 then He said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first that He may establish the second. 10 By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

11 And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. 12 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. 14 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.

19 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, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

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.

32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and

an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 'For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him.' 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul."

The Law and Its Sacrificial System—A Shadow of the Good to Come

The author reminded the Hebrews that the Law was a type or “*shadow*” of “*the good things to come*,” and that Jesus is the very substance casting the “*shadow*.” Paul mentioned this to the Colossians when he wrote that Jesus, “*wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it. So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ*” (Colossians 2:14–17 NKJV). The Law, therefore, being made obsolete, made way for the better, the true, the genuine. It made the “*shadow*” unnecessary.

We have already learned that the Law was insufficient to save. Therefore, the “*good*” that had been promised, being promised, came to its fruition in Jesus, the Messiah. The sacrificial system and its “*year by year*” rituals were no longer required. For the Law could “*never with these same sacrifices, which they offer[ed] continually year by year, make those who approach[ed] perfect*” (v. 1b). Furthermore, if they were sufficient, “*the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins. But in those sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins*” (vss. 2b–4). (See also Chapter 1, Lesson 3, Redeemed – Without our Help.)

Forgetting the Past?

The sacrifices being routine and repeated would not allow for the “*forgetting*” of past sins. By the repeated sacrificial exercise, the sins were constantly remembered “*year by year*.” Moreover, if the sins were forgiven and forgotten, the sacrifices would have “*ceased to be offered*” (vs. 2a), but they weren’t! However, in the “*once-for-all*” (vs. 10) sacrifice of Jesus, sins and lawless deeds could and would be remembered no more. The believer in Jesus would “*once for all*” be forgiven and set free from the guilt and shame of the past.

Jesus, Our Sin Offering

When Jesus came into this world, His foreknown, pre-ordained plan involved vicarious suffering and dying (as typified in the sacrifices offered under the Law). When this previously promised plan was accomplished, the types and “*shadows*” of the Old Covenant sacrificial system were fulfilled. This plan, the plan of redemption, was no “*Plan B*” in the purposes or methods of God. It was fully known, fully planned, fully promised, and fully accomplished in Jesus.

The author recognized this and therefore reminded the Hebrews about Jesus’ own words when writing: “*Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: 'Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. Then I said, "Behold, I have come—In the volume of the book it is written of Me—To do Your will, O God." ' ' "*” (vss. 5–7). (*See note below on the Psalms as related to Jesus’ prayer life.)

Note: A Body?

It is of note that the author recites the Psalmist's prophetic mention of the incarnational work of Jesus the Messiah. The mention, "*a body You have prepared for Me,*" indicated the incarnation and documents the eternal co-existence of Jesus with the Father. Jesus' birth was not His beginning; it was simply the beginning of His incarnation. "*A body*" was "*prepared for*" Him. Moreover, the Scriptures make clear that Jesus "*bore our sins in His own body on the tree*" (1 Peter 2:24 NKJV), thus the special emphasis and reference to His "*body*" and that "*...we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*" (vs. 10).

Redundancy, a Needed Emphasis

By reiterating and restructuring the passage, the author elaborated and put greater force behind the message. His emphasis rested on the fact that those "*sacrifice[s] and offering[s], burnt offerings, and offerings for sin*" (vs. 8a) brought no pleasure to the Lord. He recited, "*You did not desire, nor ha[ve] pleasure in them*" (vs. 8b), then added that those sacrifices and offerings were "*offered according to the law*" (vs. 8c). The redundancy was intended to emphasize (again) that the type and shadows those sacrifices represented were insufficient, but also that they were fulfilled by "*the offering of the body of Jesus*" as the "*once-for-all*" sacrifice for sin (vs. 10). Moreover, the author then added the fact that "*tak[ing] away the first*" He "*establish[ed] the second*" (vs. 9). This was (as stated above) all part of the original plan God purposed in Jesus before the world began. Therefore, when Jesus said, "*Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God*" (vs. 9), He pointed to the fact that His finished work was God's purposed "*will,*" as a part of Jesus' first incarnational work—which was intended to bring into effect the New Covenant "*will*" previously promised (see Jeremiah 31:31).

Death, Burial—and Resurrection

Returning to chapter 8, we remember that Jesus is the "*Mediator*" of the New Covenant (Testament) and that the New Covenant made the Old obsolete (8:13); the Hebrews were reminded that as "*Mediator,*" Jesus had to die in order to bring the New Covenant into effect. Moreover, since Jesus died in order to bring the New into effect, He also had to rise again in order to serve as the New Covenant "*Mediator.*"

In chapter 9 we read that Jesus "*...is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where there is a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives*" (Hebrews 9:15b–17 NKJV). Therefore, Jesus died in order to bring into effect the New Covenant, but rose from the dead to serve as "*Mediator.*"

Sanctified in Jesus

In verse 10 we were introduced to the fact that believers have been and are being "*sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*" Moreover, the author reminded the Hebrews that when the priests stood "*ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices,*" those sacrifices could "*never take away sins*" (vs. 11), and therefore, the "*sanctification*" provided by those sacrifices needed repetition until Jesus came to fulfill the Law and its foreshadowing typology. However, when Jesus, "*after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God*" (vs. 12), the sanctification provided every believer was forever complete—once for all.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, Jesus having finished the work of redemption “*sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*” (1:3) (see also 8:1 and 12:2). The “*right hand*” pictured the place of honor and authority. Paul underscored this when he wrote the Philippians saying that, “*God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*” (Philippians 2:9–11 NKJV).

Jesus sat down at the right hand of the Father because His work of redemption was complete. Moreover, His work made possible all that was needed for justification, sanctification, and glorification. This was the intended purpose of Jesus’ first incarnational ministry. No Levitical priest could sit down as their work was insufficient and never complete.

The expression “*from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool*” (vs. 13) dovetails the final judgment of all unbelievers (Revelation 20:7–15) and the destruction of the last enemy—death.

Paul mentioned this to the Corinthians when he wrote, “*But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For ‘He has put all things under His feet.’ But when He says ‘all things are put under Him,’ it is evident that He who put all things under Him is excepted. Now when all things are made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all*” (1 Corinthians 15:20–28 NKJV).

Inasmuch as Jesus finished the work of redemption, the fullness of that work will not come to its climactic fruition until the New Heaven and the New Earth (see Revelation 21:1–8).

Being Sanctified

The fact that the author said that believers are “*being sanctified*” (vs. 10) has provided some discussion among scholars.

Sanctification means to make holy. In the Hebrew mind this would directly relate to being “set apart” for the Lord and harkens back to the Sabbath (Genesis 2:3), Israel (Exodus 19:6), the firstborn of Israel (Exodus 13:2), the land of Israel (Exodus 15:13), the Tabernacle or Temple (Exodus 26:33), etc. Therefore, those referenced herein as “*being sanctified*” are those who are “*sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all*” (vs. 10) by faith in Jesus the Messiah (see also Acts 26:18). This sanctification is what is referred to as “Positional Sanctification,” as it relates to the fact that believers have been and are “*being*” “set apart” by faith alone, in Jesus.

The fact that believers are “*being sanctified*” (set apart) has some suggesting that sanctification is progressive or incremental. This is called “Progressive Sanctification.” However, problems arise with this definition.

For those who have come from a Roman Catholic background, “Progressive Sanctification” may be understood as a slow and incremental process of individual persons being “set apart” through faith in Jesus *plus* various and continuing forms of service, work, maturity, etc. This cannot be! Salvation is not of works (see Ephesians 2:8–9). This error has led to the false idea that a person cannot know if they are actually saved. Moreover, those deceived in this way cannot be certain of the degree to which they have been sanctified, and thus, salvation is an incremental process leading only to a “hope for the best” “human performance” faith in God—*plus* self, rather than in total confidence in the completed work of Jesus.

For others, “Progressive Sanctification” is understood as slowly being “set apart” from the “world” and things of the “world.” This is viewed as a maturing of the believer based upon the renewing of the mind, behaviors, etc., and being brought more and more into the image and nature of Jesus. However, while this form of maturing may be occurring, to call it “Progressive Sanctification” is confusing to those deceived by the definition above. Therefore, I suggest we see the growth process as “maturity” and call it such. Believers are set apart/sanctified/made holy at the moment of salvation. Therefore, no misunderstandings about what should be tolerated. A soft approach to this may encourage many false teachings, a false Gospel, and certainly a performance-driven faith.

The expression “*those who are being sanctified*” (vs. 14) may be something to consider. The King James renders it, “*them that are sanctified.*” Greek scholars debate the translations. I would suggest we consider the fact that “*them that are sanctified*” points to the complete work of sanctification each individual experiences at the point of faith, and that “*those who are being sanctified*” refers to the processes of time related to individuals coming to faith. Either rendering will work. Every believer is sanctified at the point of salvation. This we know! (See 1 Corinthians 6:11.) Moreover, individual persons throughout history have come to faith at various times and in various places. Therefore, as those persons come to faith, in their progressive order, they are being sanctified—by faith alone—at the point they believe.

Perfected Forever

In relation to “*the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,*” and the sanctification provided as a result, please don’t miss the huge and radical statement considered by some to be a gross exaggeration. The author states clearly and succinctly that the believer is “*perfected forever.*” This alone should answer all necessary questions regarding the sanctification of the believer mentioned above.

Our present condition reminds us of our shortcomings and weaknesses—but we are nonetheless perfected. Moreover, and of note, our perfection is not based upon our good intentions, our works, the Law, etc. Our perfection is based upon the complete and perfect work of Jesus, the Messiah. He Himself is, as the author stated, perfect! “*For the law appoint[ed] as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever*” (Hebrews 7:28 NKJV), and therefore, “*by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified*” (Hebrews 10:14 NKJV). All who are in Jesus are “positionally” perfect, forgiven, cleansed, righteous.

This is the promise given in the New Covenant. Therefore, and again, the author recites the promise. “*But the Holy Spirit also witnesses to us; for after He had said before, ‘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,' then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' ” (vss. 15–17).

It has already been mentioned (in the addendum on chapter 4) that there are things related to the New Covenant (and all its blessings) that have yet to come to fruition. They include the complete restoration of Israel, a full occupation of the Promised Land, Jesus reigning as King from Jerusalem, all the earth being filled with the knowledge of the Lord, etc. However, the blessings and total forgiveness of sins has been accomplished. *“Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin”* (vs. 18), and thus no more sacrificial system.

It is difficult for many to accept the fact that the believer is perfected forever, apart from any human work, intention, etc. The believer’s position in Jesus is secured by faith alone.

A Needed but Brief Digression—On *the* Faith

The faith of Abraham is *the* faith. It is faith in God, His word, and His work. And, just as the Jews were never saved by the Law given to Moses, by any religious activity, by any measure of good works, human action, or good intentions, the same is true for all men today. All men, Jew and Gentile alike, are saved by faith—*the* faith. Therefore, we know that there is no distinction to be made between *the* faith embraced by the Jews who have come to trust Jesus for salvation and that of the Gentile. This should be understood, *“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus”* (Galatians 3:27–28 NKJV).

On Grace—The Continuing Digression

Salvation is given to all men—Jew and Gentile alike, by grace alone, through faith alone, in *the* faith alone (Jesus). *The* faith is *the* faith described throughout the Bible concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. The salvation granted through *the* faith alone is granted *by* grace alone. It could not be obtained any other way. If God had not chosen to save us, no one could or would be saved.

That being said, it is understood that grace is unmerited favor—and that is certainly true. However, I would suggest an elaboration is in order.

In the Christian expression, grace is embodied in the Godhead and manifested in Jesus Himself. This is grace personified! Grace is the power of God which enables men to believe, to live, and to love. Grace is the unmerited favor of God granting forgiveness of sins (redemption and justification), the granting of divine selection (election), separation from this fallen world (sanctification), and exaltation to the heavenly places in Christ (glorification). Grace cannot be earned or it is no longer unmerited. For this reason, Paul wrote, *“Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt”* (Romans 4:4 NKJV).

On Front-loading—Coming Short of Grace

He who believes he must “work” (or does work) in order to earn grace is, in effect, front-loading the Gospel, and thus suggests therein that God owes him the salvation promised. Therefore, he has, in effect, *“come short”* of grace, and thus maintains “debt” through limitation and unbelief. This is what the author emphasized when he wrote, *“Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it”* (Hebrews 4:1 NKJV).

On Back-loading—Falling from Grace

He who believes he must “work,” (or does work), in order to remunerate grace is, in effect, back-loading the Gospel, and by doing so suggests that he owes God for the salvation granted. Therefore, he is, in effect, “*fallen from grace*” and thus maintains “debt” through limitation and unbelief. For this reason, Paul wrote, “*You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace*” (Galatians 5:4 NKJV). This too is emphasized in Paul’s words as cited above, “*Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt*” (Romans 4:4 NKJV).

The recipient of grace cannot be indebted to God for it, otherwise it would be merited in reparation—as if God has been harmed, damaged, suffered loss, or diminished by the dispensing of grace. Reimbursement is payment, and thus grace is no longer grace. Paul explained thus: “*And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work*” (Romans 11:6 NKJV).

Why it’s Important

Grace cannot be diminished. It is the all-encompassing manifestation of God and His work. Grace cannot be enhanced as that would indicate some deficit in grace itself—in God Himself. If grace is capable of or in any way in need of enhancement, we would be forced to conclude that God has need and that His work was, may be, or is imperfect. Therefore, any human act designed to merit grace, maintain grace, or enhance grace is an assault on both the person and work of God. Moreover, seeking meritorious favor is to blaspheme God Himself. For this reason, Paul wrote, “*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. 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*” (Galatians 1:8–9 NKJV).

Enter Boldly – Don’t Miss Out!

Returning to the text (from the digression above), we read, “*Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, 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*” (vss. 19–22).

The Hebrews, like all of us, are exhorted to enter into the presence of God far beyond the man-made Temple veil, apart from the Law, without the need for the blood of bulls and goats, without a human mediatorial priest, in the full assurance that we enter by faith alone, through grace alone, as the result of the perfect and complete priesthood of Jesus. We are called to enter in full assurance—not as the result of our human work, good intentions, etc. We enter in without sin, as “*sprinkled*” by the blood of Jesus, without guilt or fear, without “*an evil conscience,*” and in total “*sanctification*” (vss. 10 and 14), having been “*perfected forever*” (vs. 14).

It is certain that the author is not suggesting a literal or physical “sprinkling” or a literal or physical “washing,” but is borrowing the terms from the ceremonial Law and applying it to the full and complete work of Jesus, the Messiah.

The Veil

The author, in continuing his illustrative interconnection between the literal Temple, ceremonial Law, the sprinklings, washings, etc., noted that Jesus' body was pictured by the "Veil" in that Temple. Moreover, he indicated that the rending of Jesus' body resulted in the rending of the Temple Veil, and thus, the sacrificial sufferings of Jesus provided full, completely guilt-free, and sanctified access to the presence beyond the veil where the "Mercy Seat" is found. (Please see notes on Chapter 4 under "Throne of Grace," "Day of Atonement," and "The Day Jesus Atoned for Sin.")

The insight given here in this reference to the "Veil" further suggests that the Tabernacle/Temple and its furnishings are all a picture of Christ. Much can be said here. For a primer, I will offer this much: gold represents the eternal and unchanging deity of Jesus; silver, His righteousness; bronze, His redemptive judgment; acacia wood, His humanity; incense, His High Priestly prayers; fine linen, His purity; etc.

Another Stern Warning

As mentioned in the introduction, stern warnings are provided within this letter. By showing the value *and necessity* of moving from the administration of the Old Covenant to the New, the author points out the certain and dire consequences suffered by those who are tempted to turn back and/or refuse to "go on to perfection," knowing that "the law made nothing perfect." (See Hebrews 6:1 and 7:19). He said, "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God" (Hebrews 3:12 NKJV). In reiteration, he says, "Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful" (vs. 23). His injunction was that they continue in the faith and embrace the hope of His calling—for there is no other salvation offered, and "there no longer remains a [Old Covenant] sacrifice for sins" (vs. 26).

The "hope" was what they had been "promised" centuries earlier. Now they must move forward in *that* faith—the faith earlier promised. If the Hebrews refuse to move forward in *the* faith, there will be no "hope," for there is salvation in no other.

Encouragement in Fellowship

The author encouraged the Hebrews to hold fast and help one another. He wrote, "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching" (vss. 24–25).

"The Day" in this context is the day when salvation comes to its final and complete fruition. The Day will be a Day of rejoicing for those who believe and a Day of great disappointment to those who rebel. The "Day" referred to in relation to the believer is the day when Jesus will return for His Bride (at the Rapture) (see 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18) and would likewise include the Day when He comes back to rescue Israel from the impending annihilation via the armies who will surround Israel in order to destroy them (at the Second Coming) (see Ezekiel 39, Zechariah 12–14, Romans 11, and Revelation 19:11–21).

Knowing that the Lord will remove/Rapture believers at the end of the Church Age, and rescue Israel from annihilation, will bring "comfort" to all who believe. Therefore, "comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18 NKJV).

A Call to Assemble

The Hebrews needed encouragement to stay in fellowship, worship, prayer, the study of the Scriptures, and in the breaking of bread together (Acts 2:42)—all the more as they waited on the Day of the Lord. Discouragements and/or lack of discipline led many to lose focus and thus their hope in Jesus. The Hebrews were called to and encouraged to maintain fellowship in order to enhance “love” and “good works” (vs. 24)—to disobey the simply wrong.

Many believing people today (approximately 25%) have forsaken the assembling of themselves together, and thus the whole of the believing body suffers. When we are in fellowship with one another, we (like the Hebrews) “*consider one another in order to stir up love and good works*” (vs. 24). Many people come/go to church for what they can get out of it. However, the focus should be on how we can serve, give, support, and encourage others. Those who come to serve find great fulfillment and are thus encouraged as they do. Good works befit every believer. Those who give in support of ministry find a greater joy in service and greater commitment for the overall health of the ministry, for “*where your treasure is, there your heart will be also*” (Matthew 6:21 NKJV). All believers are benefited by involvement and corporate assembly.

Today many in the Church are consumer driven. The culture has encouraged this mentality. However, this is not the focus of Biblical Christianity. We must do our part to remedy this problem.

Willful Sinning

A terrifying warning is provided here in chapter 10 where the author simply states, “*For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 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?*” (Hebrews 10:26–29 NKJV). Therefore, rejection of the New Covenant is an insult to the spirit of grace—the Holy Spirit. Rejection of Moses’ Law was punishable by physical death. Trampling underfoot the Son of God will result in both physical and spiritual death—a result from which there is no cure. Turning away from and staying within the so-called comforts of the Old Covenant was not, and is not, an option.

Severe persecution had come upon the Hebrews who moved forward in *the* faith. The unbelieving Hebrews were accusing the “Christians” of denying that salvation was promised (and accessible) through the Old Covenant sacrificial system—and they were right. Salvation has always been and will always be by faith. The Law was a tutor to bring the Hebrews to Jesus (see Galatians 3:24–25). Now that Jesus has come, the only way of salvation is in placing faith in Him.

The persecution provided the Hebrew people a temptation to maintain the “status quo” of the Old Covenant and its administration. However, the author warned, “*...it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away [fail to continue in the faith now manifested in Jesus], to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame*” (Hebrews 6:4–6).

During the Old Covenant Dispensation, the Jews were enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, were partakers of the Holy Spirit, and likewise tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come. However, they were now in need of embracing the finished work of the Messiah and moving forward so they might *“continue in the grace of God”* (Acts 13:43 NKJV).

As mentioned earlier, the Parable of the 10 Virgins aptly illustrates this. All 10 virgins (Israel) were enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, were partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come during the Old Covenant Dispensation. However, the 5 foolish virgins illustrate those who refused to obtain the additional “oil” of the New Covenant—therefore forfeiting its blessings. (For the Parable of the 10 Virgins, see Matthew 25:1-13.)

The only repentance required for salvation is a change of mind regarding Jesus—from unbelief to faith. Therefore, the Hebrews who deny Jesus could not be, and cannot be, saved. However, one must recognize that genuine repentance from unbelief can and will be met with grace and forgiveness of sins. This is aptly illustrated by Paul the Apostle who was once a blasphemer and changed (or had his mind changed) about Jesus (see Acts 9:1–30).

Therefore, with this in mind, to “sin willfully” in this context was not a matter of sinning by missing the mark of Godly living in some way or another. It was the sin of rejecting Jesus as Messiah—and therefore forfeiting the blessings of salvation.

Many Christian read this passage as suggesting that if a born again believer sins (as we all do) there is no more sacrifice for sins and thus they forfeit their salvation. However, this is not the case—otherwise, no one would be saved. The situation described above is, however, the critical warning these Hebrews needed. They could not rely on the “sacrifices” of the Old Covenant—*“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins”* (vs. 4). Only the once-for-all sacrifice of Jesus could—and would.

Renew to Repentance?

When a person trusts in the Law—desiring to be justified via the sacrificial system—and “places their faith in God,” while rejecting Jesus, there is no method by which that person can show or act on repentance. (See 1 John 2:23; 2 John 9) For example, if a man stole something from his neighbor during the Old Covenant Dispensation, under the law there must be remuneration of that which was stolen. As a part of that process, there was an added percentage to that which was restored, and an accompanying ceremonial washing, the offering of a sacrifice, etc. (See Leviticus 6:1–7). This was the way of repentance for the penitent. However, in the now New Covenant methodology, there is no more sacrifice for sins. Jesus has and is the once-for-all sacrifice. Therefore, if a person rejects Jesus, there is no way *“to renew them again unto repentance”* via the Old Covenant standard. Even attempting to do so was to *“crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame”* by their willful rejection/willful sin. Therefore, once again, the one who desires to be under the Law should be reminded to *“go on to perfection,” “for the law made nothing perfect...”* (Hebrews 6:1; 7:19 NKJV). Moreover, he should heed what was earlier communicated: *“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God”* (Hebrews 3:12 NKJV).

Fair Warning

There can be no doubt that God is not the “old man in the sky” who dispenses “Cokes and Kitties” to all men—for *“our God is a consuming fire”* (Hebrews 12:29 NKJV). Moreover, it is no idle

threat that the Hebrews (and all of us) be reminded that *“we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The LORD will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (vss. 30–31 [Citations from Deuteronomy 32]).

The fair warning has been repeated three times earlier in Hebrews and will be brought up again. This occasion (related to willful sin/willful rejection of Jesus) clearly shows that rejection of Jesus will be met with *“vengeance.”*

The Universalist should take note. Not all people will end up in heaven—but only those who genuinely trust the Lord. Too many people have the misconception that because *“God is love”* (1 John 4:8,16), He loves all people (John 3:16), and because He desires *“all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Timothy 2:3-4), He will not damn anyone to eternal torment—but He will. In fact, the author here could not make it any clearer—*“vengeance is mine,”* says the Lord. God will vindicate His name. He will vindicate the life of His only begotten Son. Those who reject the salvation freely and graciously offered will face *“a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 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?”* (Hebrews 10:27–29 NKJV).

Comfort in the Storm

The author shifts gears and brings comfort to the Hebrews by reminding them that they had been through many struggles, conflicts and persecutions. He wrote, *“But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated”* (vss. 32–33). Through these things the Lord faithfully brought the Jews. As a result, they could be additionally assured that the present distresses (and those in their future) would be met the same way. Even in times of great discipline, God maintained His covenant with the Hebrew people and will never leave them—nor forsake them. Jeremiah mentioned this when he wrote, *“Thus says the LORD, Who gives the sun for a light by day, the ordinances of the moon and the stars for a light by night, Who disturbs the sea, and its waves roar (The LORD of hosts is His name): If those ordinances depart from before Me, says the LORD, then the seed of Israel shall also cease from being a nation before Me forever”* (Jeremiah 31:35–36 NKJV).

Satan has since the beginning desired to destroy Israel and the Hebrew people. His tactics have included troubles from within and troubles from without. However, God in His faithfulness will keep them (see Psalm 121) and, for His own name, will rescue, purify and sustain them (see Isaiah 48:1–11; Ezekiel 39:21–29; Revelation 12).

In this case we must remember that the persecution and trials suffered by Israel were then and now also being suffered by the believing Hebrews who trust Jesus for salvation. As mentioned, the Hebrew Christians suffered severe persecution as the result of their moving on in *the* faith. Therefore, inasmuch as God kept His own throughout in the earliest days of Israel, and in the first century with those in the author’s audience, He will keep all believers. We can be confident that going forward God will protect and sustain Israel, and He will be faithful to protect, keep, and sustain those who trust Jesus for salvation. He will never leave us, will never forsake us, will finish all He has begun in us, and will faithfully deliver us into His Kingdom and to everlasting life—in His presence forever.

Comfort upon “Others”

The Hebrew believers demonstrated “good works” even and especially during times of difficulty. The author himself was a recipient of their good will. He said, *“you became companions of those who were so treated for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven”* (vss. 33b–34). The Hebrew Christians had “Kingdom Glasses” and saw things through the lens of the eternal. They were not addicted to this world—nor time—but looked ahead to those things heavenly. This should be the goal of all believers. Hold nothing earthly in a closed hand; but with open hands allow the Lord to bless you, and use you, as you serve others and seek the heavenly eternal country” (see Hebrews 11:13–16).

A Call to Patience

The Hebrews had long looked for the coming of the Messiah. The faith they embraced in “confidence” had finally come to its fruition. Jesus, the Messiah, had come! However, as was true of the disciples/apostles who continually questioned Jesus about the coming Kingdom, these Hebrews, like the others, needed encouragement as the result of the persecution and confusion they were experiencing. They had anticipated the restoration and exaltation of Israel as part and parcel with the coming of the Messiah. They had longed and prayed for the Kingdom to come, but were still waiting (see Isaiah 9:6–7; Matthew 6:9–13; Luke 19:11; Acts 1:6–7). Therefore, they were instructed: *“do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise”* (vss. 35–36).

“The Promise”

The promise referred to at the end of verse 36 is described with quotations and developed from Isaiah 26:20–21 and Habakkuk 2:2–4. However, the author loosely formulated the thoughts and developed the citation with the help of the Septuagint: a Greek rendering of the Old Testament. He said, *“For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”* (vss. 37–38).

It is quite clear that the author intended his readers to understand that *“He who is coming”* referred to Jesus, and that *“the just shall live by faith”* was an exhortation to faithfulness and patient perseverance. For this reason, he emphatically declared, *“But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul”* (vs. 39).

As he has done throughout the entire epistle, the author looks for continuing faith in the Hebrews. He knows that faith in Jesus is literally insures the saving of one’s eternal soul. That being said, the Hebrew concept of “soul” may have also been in the author’s mind—where the saving of one’s soul could and would include their life altogether—temporal and eternal.

Many believers have suffered great disaster when wandering from the path set before them by the Lord. Even those who have been born again and have the promise of eternal life can suffer great losses when losing hope and getting their eyes off the Lord. Discouragement and independent thinking can be devastating. We all must be encouraged in *the* faith—keeping our eyes fixed upon the author and finisher of our faith (see Hebrews 12:1–4).

Noted from “**Jesus, Our Sin Offering**” above.

* These words were cited from Psalm 40 and document the fact that many of the Psalms are the prayers of Jesus, written by inspiration, from outside of time, earlier in time, before the incarnation. However, they were offered in real time, by Jesus, during His first coming incarnational ministry. Moreover, the fact that there is an adaption of the passage by the author is a point of discussion among scholars. This is an occasional occurrence in Scripture and should in no way prove to diminish the inspiration of the New Testament letters. For example, at times, the New Testament writers would group and/or combine Old Testament passages into one continuous thought (for an example see Romans 3:10–18). On other occasions, a passage may be given new emphasis, change in tenses, or assigned new and fuller meaning/application through divine inspiration. Certain variations are often brought out as the result of fuller revelation obtained later in history. This is known by some Theologians as “progressive revelation.”

The passages cited herein were taken from the Septuagint (a Greek translation of the Old Testament). It is translated, “*a body you have prepared for me*” (vs. 5), in contrast to “*my ears you have opened*” when translated from the Hebrew.

From David, the passage makes more sense as it would relate to him in the first person. However, as a prophetic passage and prayer, offered by Jesus, it relates to the fact that He has been given a body—thus ears.

Questions:

- 1) **True or False:** Jesus’ birth was not His beginning; it was simply the beginning of His incarnation.
- 2) **True or False:** Jesus finished the work of redemption, but the fullness of that work will not come to its climactic fruition until the New Heaven and the New Earth.
- 3) **True or False:** Sanctification is progressive and incremental.
- 4) **True or False:** It is difficult for many to accept the fact that believers are perfected forever, apart from any human work.
- 5) **True or False:** The recipient of grace cannot be indebted to God for it, otherwise it would be merited in reparation—as if God has been harmed, damaged, suffered loss, or diminished by the dispensing of grace.
- 6) **True or False:** Rejection of the New Covenant is an insult to the spirit of grace—the Holy Spirit.
- 7) **True or False:** During the Old Covenant Dispensation, the Jews were enlightened, tasted the heavenly gift, were partakers of the Holy Spirit, and likewise tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come.
- 8) **True or False:** If a Christian sins, there is no more sacrifice for sins, and thus they forfeit their salvation.
- 9) **True or False:** Rejection of Jesus will be met with “*vengeance.*”

- 10) **True or False:** Many people correctly believe that because “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8,16), He loves all people (John 3:16), and because He desires “*all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:3-4), He will not damn anyone to eternal torment.
- 11) **True or False:** Satan has since the beginning desired to destroy Israel and the Hebrew people.
- 12) **True or False:** Christians should hold their earthly lives and possessions tightly, but still try to allow the Lord to bless us, and use us, as we serve others.
- 13) **True or False:** The Jews anticipated the restoration and exaltation of Israel as part and parcel with the coming of the Messiah. Since Jesus did not usher in the Kingdom when He came, many Hebrews have rejected Jesus and abandoned *the* faith altogether.
- 14) **True or False:** Jesus came as predicted in the Old Testament but did not fulfill all that was spoken of Him. Therefore, we know that He is coming again to bring to its fullness all that was said of Him.
- 15) **True or False:** As a believer, it is ok to wander from the path the Lord has set before us and to disobey His instruction.
- 16) **True or False:** If I disobey the Lord, there will be no consequences because I am saved and forgiven.
- 17) **True or False:** Even if there are no eternal consequences for my sins—because I am forgiven—there are still temporal consequences. I can make a mess of my life and hurt others around me.
- 18) **True or False:** On occasion, an Old Testament passage of Scripture may be cited in the New Testament and given new emphasis, change in tenses, or assigned new and fuller meaning/application through divine inspiration. Certain variations are often brought out as the result of fuller revelation obtained later in history. This is known by some Theologians as “progressive revelation.”

Notes: