

## Hebrews 10:11-39

In Chapter 10, the writer brings out the superiority of Christ's sacrifice over the Old Testament sacrifices.

Although most of those receiving this epistle were Jewish and were genuinely saved, there had been some in their assembly who had only given an intellectual ascent to Christianity, with no real conversion. Many of these had turned their backs on Christ and returned to the Old Testament sacrifices.

It was too late now for those who had rejected Christ, for they had, by their actions, crucified **"to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."**

However, there were still some in the valley of indecision who were teetering on the edge of apostasy.

It was for these Hebrews that the writer now shows forth the excellency of Christ's sacrifice, and the futility of the Old Testament sacrifices.

They had served their purpose well, but were now set aside.

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Last week we found that the Old Testament sacrifices did not take away sins.

If they had cleansed the sinner, then they would have ceased to be offered.

However, they did not cleanse from sin, nor did they satisfy the righteous demands of God.

But when Christ came, He changed all that.

V 6-10 "In burnt offerings and sacrifices  
for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

7 Then said I, Lo, I come (in the  
volume of the book it is written of  
me,) to do thy will, O God.

8 Above when he said, Sacrifice and  
offering and burnt offerings and  
offering for sin thou wouldest not,  
neither hadst pleasure therein; which  
are offered by the law;

9 Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy  
will, O God. He taketh away the first,  
that he may establish the second.

10 By the which will we are sanctified  
through the offering of the body of  
Jesus Christ once for all."

Verse 9 says "He taketh away the first, that  
he may establish the second."

And, as we will see in today's lesson, the new was infinitely better than the old.

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V 11 **"And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins."**

These offerings could **"never take away sins."** They could only cover sin for the time being.

They were just a reminder that men were sinners, and that the sin question had not yet been settled.

So the priests were continually offering but never quite finishing.

Verse 11 says **"every priest standeth daily ministering."**

If you looked at the furniture in the tabernacle, you would find that there

was one piece of furniture that was entirely absent.

There were no chairs to be found anywhere.

The priests never sat down when they were on duty because the work was never done.

However, that is not the case in the heavenly sanctuary.

V 12-14 **"But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;**

**<sup>13</sup> From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.**

**<sup>14</sup> For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."**

Our Great High Priest offered Himself once for sins, and the great work of redemption was finished.

He now sits on the right hand of God where  
He is waiting for His enemies to be  
made His footstool.

He *offers* no more, because of the eternal  
efficacy of the one sacrifice.

So, if God is satisfied with the sacrifice,  
and if Christ knows there is no more  
that needs to be done, then why should  
we not rest in His finished work?

And, as the next verses shows, the Holy  
Spirit has come forth from the Father  
and the Son to bear testimony in the  
Scriptures of the perfection of that  
finished work.

V 15-17 **"Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a  
witness to us: for after that he had  
said before,**

<sup>16</sup> **This is the covenant that I will  
make with them after those days, saith**

the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

<sup>17</sup> **And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."**

Actually this portion in Hebrews refers to the new covenant that was originally promised to Israel in Jeremiah 31:33-34.

This new covenant, purchased by the blood of Christ, is also the inheritance of the church in this present age, and it will assure the future blessing of Israel when Christ comes to reign as their Messiah.

Verse 17 promises that through this new covenant, **"-- their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."**

For the Church of Jesus Christ, this means  
complete justification from all things.  
Now, no charge can be brought against those  
for whom Christ has settled everything.  
So the Holy Spirit draws this conclusion in  
verse 18--"**Now where remission of these  
is, there is no more offering for sin.**"  
Christ has *completed* the work of salvation.  
So don't be working when Christ is sitting.

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V 19-22 "**Having therefore, brethren,  
boldness to enter into the holiest by  
the blood of Jesus,  
20 By a new and living way, which he  
hath consecrated for us, through the  
veil, that is to say, his flesh;  
21 And having an 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."**

I would like to quote H. A. Ironside's comments on these verses as follows ---

*"This then entitles the **"brethren "** of Christ, the new priestly house, to enter with boldness as purged worshipers into the Holiest, the immediate presence of God, in all the infinite value of the blood of Jesus through that new and living way which He Himself opened for us when, by His death upon the cross, the veil was rent in twain, and God no longer was hidden, nor man in Christ shutout.*

*So intimately are the redeemed and the Redeemer linked together, so truly are*

*the High Priest and priestly house one before God, that we are urged to enter in spirit where He has gone, and to draw near to God with true hearts in the full assurance of that faith that is based upon the knowledge of an accomplished redemption; our hearts having been sprinkled by the blood of Christ from an evil conscience, and like the once-defiled Israelite, "our bodies having been washed with the water of purification.*

*It is to be regretted that so few Christians seem to comprehend all this today.*

*It is safe to say that for thousands who have hope in Christ, the veil might just as well never have been rent.*

*They do not have any comprehension of liberty for access into the Holiest,*

*but think of themselves as a people on probation still, who, if only faithful to their profession, will eventually be fitted for admission into the presence of God.*

*How much is thus lost through failure to understand the true Christian position which has been beautifully expressed in the words of an old hymn:*

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*♪ Now we see in Christ's acceptance  
But the measure of our own;  
He who lay beneath our sentence  
Seated high upon the throne.*

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*God sees every believer in Him, and the feeblest saint has title to immediate access into the Holiest through the atoning blood." End of quote.*

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V 21-22 **"And having an 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."**

We have so much in Christ, however there is a great danger that through lack of knowledge or lack of interest, or just plain busyness, we can *miss* it all.

We can miss the privilege that is ours of drawing nigh to God, and we can also miss the fellowship of the brethren.

V 23-25 **"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)**

**24 And let us consider one another to**

provoke unto love and to good works:

<sup>25</sup> Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

In V 23, we are encouraged to hold fast our "**profession**," or another translation renders it *confession*.

We are to hold fast on the basis that God "**is faithful that promised.**"

Now, this admonition is written to believers.

So because they are saved, then they have already experienced God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promise to them by sending a Redeemer.

But there is still one more great promise that remains to be confirmed, and that is the Lord's return for His church. We should be looking expectantly, longing for His return.

Our personal attitude will not accelerate or delay His coming, but it will affect the quality of His coming.

Will He find His bride expectantly waiting for her Bridegroom?

As we all know, there is much to distract the church in this world.

There is much to cause our zeal to burn low.

So, not only should we **"hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering,"** but we should encourage and be encouraged by our fellow believers. And this is what verses 24-25 are all about.

V 24-25 **"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:**

**<sup>25</sup> Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."**

You might have noticed that the words "**let us**" occur three times in verses 22 to 24.

First in verse 22 we read, "**Let us draw near.**" Then again in verse 23, "**Let us hold fast,**" and finally in verse 24, "**let us consider one another.**"

The believer does not exist in isolation. He is linked with other believers both by nature and by grace, and he is called upon to seek to stir up his brethren unto love and to good works.

There seems to be some believers who think  
it is their job to simply stir up their  
brethren, but that is not the idea.

They are to stir up their brethren unto love  
and to good works, and they are to  
assemble with their fellow saints for  
worship, prayer, and testimony.

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Eleanor and I put a wood-burning fireplace  
in our home a couple of years ago.

At first, we had to experiment to find the  
proper way to get the fire going, and  
then how to keep it going.

Do you know how to keep a fire going when it  
is burning low?

You just push the logs closer together, and  
in a few minutes, a fire, which was  
going to burn out, will be blazing away  
merrily.



So don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together, "-- **exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.**"

Let's keep looking for His coming, and let's look for it *together*.

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In these next few verses, there is a change of subject.

Again, as in Chapter 6, the problem of apostasy is being addressed.

V 26-31 **"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,**

<sup>27</sup> **But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.**

<sup>28</sup> **He that despised Moses' law died**

without mercy under two or three witnesses:

<sup>29</sup> 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?

<sup>30</sup> 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.

<sup>31</sup> It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

The writer gives a very good description of apostasy in verse 26.

It is sinning "wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth."

The warning here is based on the perfect sacrifice of Christ, which has been so fully described in this chapter.

Back in Chapter 6, it was not the sacrifice that was despised, but the person of Christ Himself.

Yes, it was the perfect person of Christ that had been so wonderfully manifested by the Holy Spirit in the Christian assembly.

So, to apostatize from the truth concerning either His person or His finished work could only bring down God's judgment upon their heads.

In fact, 2 Peter 2:21 says, **"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."**

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Many Christians have been troubled by this passage in Hebrews 10:26-31.

They think it refers to Christians who have backslidden, and then later, when they tried to return to their Lord, were unable to do so.

However, this passage is not about erring Christians at all, but is about those who have turned their backs on Christ.

You will remember that in Chapter 6, the writer dealt with the case of certain Hebrews who had professed Christ and understood the Gospel intellectually, and had even joined the church.

Then they drifted back into Judaism, and ended up despising the truth of the Gospel.

I believe these verses in Chapter 10 refer to that same situation.

In verse 26, where it says, "**if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth,**" the original translation gives the sense of a continual rejection of the truth, not a temporary sinning against Christ.

This passage is not talking about a Christian that has fallen into sin, but rather the continued despising of the Gospel message after its claims in the Old and New Testament had been fully understood and then rejected.

Under such circumstances, "**there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.**"

Such a person is sinning against his last resort, indeed, against his only hope.

There is now no other remedy that God can offer.

There is no other Saviour to take away his sin.

If he rejects Christ, "**there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.**" All is lost, and only judgment is ahead.

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So the local situation being addressed here concerns those Hebrews who had rejected Christianity and gone back to the temple.

Once again they are offering the old sacrifices in the vain hope that these offerings will cleanse their sins.

They have rejected the only true sacrifice that has power to save, and are offering a sacrifice that will not work.

Even when God had commanded these sacrifices, they only had the power to cover sin, never to put it away. So to reject Christ and turn back to the Old Testament sacrifices was a fatal mistake, for in them there remained **"no more sacrifice for sins."**

V 26-27 **"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,**

<sup>27</sup> **But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."**

And, actually, turning their backs on Christ was a far more serious sin than simply disobeying God's Old Testament Law.

We need only to look at Israel's history to realize the seriousness of despising God's law.

Those who despised Moses' Law died upon the testimony of two or three witnesses.

However, that was only physical death.

This is not to be compared to the eternal punishment of those who despised God's offer of mercy and the sacrifice of His own Son.

It was the ultimate affront to God, and can only incur His wrath.

V 28-29 **"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:**

<sup>29</sup> **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?"**

The degree of punishment may be judged by  
the greatness of the sin committed by  
the apostate.

By his actions, he has **"trodden under foot  
the Son of God."**

To trample upon an ordinary man shows  
intolerable insolence. To treat a  
person of honour in such a manner is  
not to be thought of, but to deal so  
with the Son of God, Who actually is  
God in the flesh, must be the highest  
provocation.

To trample upon His person, denying His  
claim to be the Messiah, to trample  
upon His authority, and undermine His  
kingdom, and to trample upon His

church, which is His own body, will bring a punishment that is unthinkable. This is assuredly the actions of the apostate.

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But what about the words, "**the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified**"?

How can these words refer to one who was never saved?

Surely what is meant here is positional sanctification.

As an example, consider the fact that all Israel was sanctified, or set apart in a special way to God.

They are His *chosen* people.

However, as is pointed out in 1 Corinthians 10, many of these sanctified Israelites ended up in graves in the wilderness.

1 Corinthians 10:1-5 "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea;

2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea;

3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat;

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness."

All Israel was set apart by the blood of the old covenant instituted at Sinai, and yet many Israelites, lacking faith,

turned from all the privileges that were theirs by virtue of that blood. Likewise, under the new covenant of grace, there are those who have shared in *positional* sanctification.

These Hebrew apostates had confessed Christ, and no doubt they had been baptized and included in the Lord's Supper, and yet at a later time they rejected the Son of God and His Sacrifice.

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So the writer of Hebrews closes this word of warning with the solemn declaration in V 31--- **"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."**

Those that despised Moses' Law were punished by God's agents.

They died at the hands of other men set up by God to punish the guilty.

But the apostate will be punished by God  
Himself.

He will fall into God's hands, and will be  
punished from the eternal presence of  
the Almighty.

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From verse 32 to the end of this chapter,  
the writer is seeking to assure the  
true believers that his words on  
apostasy do not apply to them.

V 32-34 **"But call to remembrance the former  
days, in which, after ye were  
illuminated, ye endured a great fight  
of afflictions;**

<sup>33</sup> **Partly, whilst ye were made a  
gazingstock both by reproaches and  
afflictions; and partly, whilst ye  
became companions of them that were so  
used.**

34     **For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."**

Apparently these Christians had suffered loss and endured afflictions for Christ's sake.

In the early days of the Gospel, there was great persecution against Christians, and the believing Hebrews no doubt had their share of it.

In the former days, "**after ye were illuminated,**" that is, as soon as they had been saved, and God had caused the light to spring up in their minds, and had taken them into His favour and covenant, then earth and hell had combined all their forces against them.

Indeed, 2 Timothy 3:12 says--"**Yea, and all who will live a godly life in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**"

And not only were they afflicted themselves, but they took upon themselves further persecution as they stood with other Christians.

**"And partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.**

<sup>34</sup> **For ye had compassion of me in my bonds."**

They even lost their material possessions, but they **"took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance."**

They had indeed learned **"hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."**

Their faith had remained strong, but now a more dangerous time was ahead.

No, it was not increased persecution.

Often, bad times, for the right reasons, are actually *good times* spiritually.

Perhaps things would be a little easier for them now, but with these better times, there was always the danger of letting slip that which was most important.

So the writer exhorts them to hold fast.

V 35-36 **"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward.**

<sup>36</sup> **For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."**

There is a difference between rewards and salvation.



Salvation is altogether by grace, and it is ours from the moment we trust Christ. On the other hand, we receive our rewards at Christ's second coming.

Revelation 22:12 **"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."**

You see, *pay day* does not always come on Thursdays!

We must work patiently for our Lord, and trust that someday we will be rewarded.

V 37 **"For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry."**

There are many reasons for the Christian to look forward to Christ's coming.

When He comes, we will receive what we do not deserve, a home in heaven.

But also, when He comes, He will delight in giving us our rewards.

And if it was "**a little while**" then, how much closer must it be now?

V 38 **"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."**

So we are saved by faith, and we look for His second coming by faith.

That is the mark of a Christian.

**"But if any man draw back"**---A lot of the concerns of this book have been about drawing back, haven't they?---knowing the truth, and for one reason or another, drawing back.

That is the mark an apostate, not the mark of the child of God.

Verse 39 makes that truth very clear.

V 39 "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul."

There is mere intellectual belief, but that saves no one.

However, faith in Christ brings eternal redemption.

And we have His word on that -- "**those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost.**" John 17:12

"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)"