

"The Better Sacrifice"

Part 11

Hebrews 9:12-10:39

Introduction: Tonight in our study of Hebrews we have again returned to the 4th warning given within this letter. The warning is found in Hebrews 10:26, and it carries through to the end of the chapter.

Notice Hebrews 10:26-29

In our study last week we looked at the writer's concern in this warning. He was concerned that there were Hebrews who would have had knowledge of the Truth of Jesus Christ but they were not saved. They were mixed in with the True believers, and they, too, were feeling the pressure from their fellow Jews. They were an example of the people whom Jesus referred to in the Parable of the Sower.

Luke 8:13

¹³ *They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

With the talk from these believers of turning back to Judaism, the writer was fearful some of these believers would fit the description of Luke 8:13. Luke 8:13 is the description of an apostate, and an apostate is someone who has come to the knowledge of the Gospel but has never accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. He or she then turns away and goes back to a life of sin. That was the danger which the writer of Hebrews was so concerned about and therefore he wrote to warn them about apostasy. He did this by showing them through the first 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ chapters that Jesus Christ is better than anything of the Old Covenant and by showing them that the New Covenant is far superior to the Old Covenant.

So the warning here in this passage is NOT to back sliding believers but it is to the person who has heard the Truth of the Gospel, understood the Truth of the Gospel, but has NEVER accepted Jesus as their Savior. To be more specific, the warning is to the unsaved Hebrew or Hebrews who may have been mixed in with the True believers.

Last week we looked at the first point of Hebrews 10:26.

I. **The Description of Apostasy**

Notice Hebrews 10:26

The "willful sin" spoken of here is the sin of rejecting Jesus Christ. The people who would read this letter would know the Truth for the writer has spelled it out with his pen. To "sin wilfully" as spoken of here is to know the Truth of Jesus Christ and then to turn away from Jesus and return back to Judaism. The words "sin wilfully" are in the present tense, which means it is a continual action. In other words the writer has in mind someone who has heard the Truth and understood the Truth who then turns from Christ and never comes to Him for salvation. As we looked at last week, the saddest example of this would be Judas.

The writer goes on in this verse and he explains that if anyone turns from the offer of eternal life through Jesus Christ, there remains no more sacrifice for sins. If the Hebrews who were not saved made a decision to turn their back on Jesus Christ and return back to Judaism, then there would be no sacrifice for their sin because Jesus Christ was the LAST and FINAL Sacrifice.

Now there is something else here that the writer has in mind which we need to see. Last week we looked at Numbers 15, and within that passage we were able to see that there was no sacrifice under the Old Covenant for willful/presumptuous sins.

Numbers 15:27-31

²⁷ *And if any soul sin through ignorance, then he shall bring a she goat of the first year for a sin offering.*

²⁸ *And the priest shall make an atonement for the soul that sinneth ignorantly, when he sinneth by ignorance before the LORD, to make an atonement for him; and it shall be forgiven him.*

²⁹ *Ye shall have one law for him that sinneth through ignorance, both for him that is born among the children of Israel, and for the stranger that sojourneth among them.*

³⁰ ***But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.***

³¹ *Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.*

We need to understand that the willful/presumptuous sin was a sin that was not repented of. In other words the person who committed the sin did so wilfully and refused to repent of the sin. If there was repentance, then the sin could be atoned for.

This is the very idea here in Hebrews 10:26. The writer is talking about the present tense of sinning wilfully which means it is continual. So he is stating that if his readers turned

away from Jesus Christ and NEVER repented of this, then there was no hope. But if they turned back to Jesus, then His sacrifice would wash away ALL sin.

II. The Cost of Apostasy

Notice Hebrews 10:27

I want to break this verse down so that we can see how far the writer goes here with his warning. He will take his description to the extreme and for a very good reason which we will see in a moment.

"A certain" - Let me show you what J.F.B. say about this statement. *An extraordinary and indescribable judgment. The indefiniteness, as of something peculiar of its kind, makes the description the more terrible.*

It also speaks of the certainty of the judgment. The writer desires for his readers to know that if they are not saved and they turn from Jesus Christ, then they can be sure they will face the judgment of God.

"Fearful looking for of judgment" - If they turn from Jesus Christ, then they will be living under the fearful expectation of the coming judgment of God on their lives. The opposite is true for those of us who know Jesus Christ. We live in expectation of the coming Savior so as to be raptured from this world into His presence forever.

Philippians 1:21

²¹ *For to me to live is Christ, and **to die is gain.***

For the believer death is GAIN, but for the unbeliever death is TERROR and FEAR, for they will stand before the Lord God in their sins.

"Fiery indignation" - The word "indignation" means "fierceness". It comes from a root word which means "to boil". The idea is that the fires of judgment which await the unbeliever are painful and grievous. They will be far greater than we as sinners can ever begin to imagine.

"Devour the adversaries" - The word "devour" here is very frightening, for it is in the present tense. **It has the idea of never stopping. It will go on continually.** The word "adversaries" means "those who are opposed to God".

Now there is more to see here and I want to take some time to point out what the writer is referring to. Let me first of all ask a question, "Why didn't the writer just state that

any who are not saved will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire?" Let me tell you exactly why he went to this extreme. He is not addressing ordinary people who are unsaved, but this is a warning against APOSTASY. This warning is not for the heathen who has never heard the Gospel, but this warning is for people who are joined with believers who have heard the Truth of the Gospel and have not acted upon it. This needs to be made clear to those who knew the Truth and were not saved and were contemplating walking away. So the writer has gone to this extreme because these people were accountable for the Truth they had been exposed to. You see the writer understood that in the Lake of Fire there are different degrees of punishment just as there are different degrees of rewards in heaven.

Luke 12:42-48

⁴² *And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?*

⁴³ *Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.*

⁴⁴ *Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.*

⁴⁵ *But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken;*

⁴⁶ *The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*

⁴⁷ *And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.*

⁴⁸ *But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.*

Here we see the Words of Jesus, and He makes it very clear that the one who KNEW his lord's will shall be beaten with MANY stripes but the one who knew NOT his lord's will shall be beaten with FEW stripes. The point is, the amount of Truth which the unbeliever has been exposed to will determine their degree of punishment in the Lake of Fire. Let me show you another passage.

Revelation 20:11-15

¹¹ *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

¹² *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.*

¹³ *And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.*

¹⁴ *And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.*

¹⁵ *And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.*

This is the account of the Great White Throne Judgment. I want you to notice that there are at least 3 books at this judgment. We know for sure that one of them is the book of life and this will be to answer the pleas of the unsaved in that day. I believe one of the other books contains a list of the sins of each unbeliever. I also believe that there is a book which contains the Truth which each unbeliever was exposed to and it will be what is recorded in this book which will determine the degree of punishment for the unbelievers as they are cast into the Lake of Fire.

Some people would disagree with this but let me give you something to consider. If there were not different degrees of punishment in the Lake of Fire then what is the purpose of the Great White Throne? Why would God not just sentence each unbeliever to the Lake of Fire and cast them all in at one time? This Great White Throne is where the degrees of punishment will be handed out. Those who have KNOWN that Jesus died for them and have KNOWN that His death on the cross was the demonstration of God's love and yet they wilfully turn away from that, they will receive the most severe degree of punishment at the Great White Throne Judgment.

So let me get back to Hebrews 10:27 again. The writer goes into this detail here because these people knew the Truth and for them to walk away and not be saved would mean they would place themselves on a path headed directly into God's judgment to a degree of punishment far more severe than they could even imagine.

III. The Example

Notice Hebrews 10:28

Here the writer points to how the people of the Old Testament were judged when they despised the Law of God. The word "despised" means "to count as nothing". There is an example given to us in the book of Numbers.

Numbers 15:30-36

³⁰ *But the soul that doeth ought presumptuously, whether he be born in the land, or a stranger, the same reproacheth the LORD; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people.*

³¹ *Because he hath despised the word of the LORD, and hath broken his commandment, that soul shall utterly be cut off; his iniquity shall be upon him.*

³² *And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day.*

³³ *And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation.*

³⁴ *And they put him in ward, because it was not declared what should be done to him.*

³⁵ *And the LORD said unto Moses, The man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp.*

³⁶ *And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the LORD commanded Moses.*

Here was a man who deliberately ignored the Word of God. He knew what God's Law said concerning the Sabbath for he was of the nation of Israel. When he was found violating the Sabbath he was taken outside the camp and he was stoned to death. Now this was the judgment for despising the Old Covenant.

IV. The Reasoning

Notice Hebrews 10:29a

Now the writer asks his readers a question to cause them to see the seriousness of apostasy. If the people of the Old Covenant died without mercy because they counted the Word of God to be as nothing how much SORER punishment will be handed out to those who trample underfoot the Son of God? The title "Son of God" points to the deity of Jesus Christ. So to trample underfoot the Son of God is to despise God Himself. This is exactly what an apostate does. Their degree of punishment will be far more severe than everyone else who dies unsaved because apostasy is the most serious sin of all for it is the sin of the rejection of God's Son.

Conclusion:

Next week we shall look closer at this verse and those to follow but for now let me just remind you of the importance of looking deep within your heart to be sure you are saved.