

## **HEBREWS 10**

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Hebrews chapter 10, as we continue our study through this letter that was written to Christian Jews who were struggling with their faith. And the struggle was a big one.

Since they lived in Jerusalem, and there was the Temple with the priests and the sacrifices being made daily, as well as the persecution from unbelieving Jews to come back to Judaism, you can see how strong the pull was to move away from Christ and go back to the Law, the sacrifices.

Because Paul is writing to Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith, this letter has a very Jewish slant to it as he wants these Jewish believers not to hold onto the shadow or the picture but to lay hold of Jesus, to consider Jesus!

And Paul wants them to have their lives anchored in Christ. He put it like this in Hebrews 6:19-20, **“This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”**

And in this letter Paul is showing them that Jesus is superior to all. He is our Great High Priest who has offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for sin!

We are going to finish up a powerful section that covers Hebrews chapter 5 through chapter 10 as we are looking at the superiority of Jesus over the Levitical priesthood.

Make no mistake about it, for the Jews, this was a big deal.

But, as we have seen, Paul has shown them that Jesus is a better way, a superior way, a better sacrifice as he spoke of Jesus being from,

*A better priestly order* – Hebrews 5-7. Jesus was not from the priestly order of Aaron but of Melchizedek, and thus, He is not only a priest, but also a King, and not just for a limited time, but forever!

*A better covenant* – Hebrews 8. What Paul is speaking of here in regard to this better covenant is that this covenant is built upon better promises. You see, this New Covenant, spoken of in the Old Testament, was based upon the faithfulness of God and not man, better promises!

*A better sanctuary* – Hebrews 9. Paul showed how the Tabernacle was a picture of not only the throne of God but also the work that the Messiah, that Jesus would do. Thus, His sacrifice for sin was complete; He did not have to offer Himself over and over again as was the case with the animal sacrifices. In fact, Paul spoke of this Old Covenant becoming obsolete and growing old, it will vanish away, and in just a few years after writing this letter to the Hebrews, the Temple was destroyed, it vanished away! (Hebrews 9:13)

*A better sacrifice* – Hebrews 10. And that is what we will be focusing on tonight, it is a nail in the coffin for those who want to add the Law to Grace, it just can't be done and Paul makes sure that they understand that, and the Holy Spirit wants us to understand that as well.

Let me share this with you and then we will get to our text this evening. We are told,

A teenage boy, whose mother was away on a visit, found himself with time on his hands. He decided to read a book from the family library. His mother was a devout Christian, so the boy knew there would be a sermon at the beginning and an application at the end of the book, but there would also be some interesting stories in between.

While reading the book, he came across the phrase “*the finished work of Christ.*” It struck him with unusual power. “*The finished work of Christ.*”

“Why does the author use this expression?” he asked himself. “Why not say the atoning or the propitiatory work of Christ?” (You see, he knew all the biblical terms. He just did not know the Saviour!)

Then the words, “*It is finished,*” flashed into his mind, and he realized afresh that the work of salvation was accomplished.

“If the whole work was finished and the whole debt paid, what is there left for me to do?” He knew the answer and fell to his knees to receive the Saviour and full forgiveness of sins. That is how J. Hudson Taylor, founder of the China Inland Mission, was saved.

The tenth chapter of Hebrews emphasizes the perfect sacrifice of Jesus Christ, in contrast with the imperfect sacrifices that were offered under the Old Covenant.

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – NT, p.831

That is what we will be focusing on tonight, Jesus is a superior sacrifice for our sins and thus, no other sacrifices need to be made – ***IT IS FINISHED!***

With that said, let’s begin reading in Hebrews chapter 10, beginning in verse 1, and let’s see what the Lord has for us this evening as we study through His Word.

**HEBREWS 10****VERSES 1-4**

Paul opens up with a bang here. He tells us that the Law was a shadow and a shadow is nothing more than an outline, but the substance is Jesus. And Paul tells us that the Law was pointing to something better, it was pointing to Jesus because the Law could never take away your sins.

Newell put it like this, “For example, you need a load of wood: you go to the wood man, and he takes you to a large oak tree in the far corner of the lot. Pointing to the long shadow it casts, he offers to sell you this *shadow*. Will you take it? Now, if God says that in the Law there was a *shadow*, not even the very image of the things – and of course, not the things themselves, why will you hold to the shadow?”

And that is my question today for those who are going back to the Law, who are holding onto the shadow, which can’t save you, it can’t cleanse you, only Jesus can!

You see, like a shadow, the Law was limited. Think about that. A shadow can’t grab something and pick it up. It can’t move on its own.

And Paul wants to drive that point home regarding the Old Covenant and the animal sacrifices that were made.

Let me show you what I mean.

The word for “**atonement**” in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word KOPHAR and it means “*to cover.*”

Like I have said, these sacrifices could not take away a person’s sins but only cover them for a time, sort of a ceremonial cleansing and not an inward cleansing.

That is what Paul says here in Hebrews 10:2 about the sacrifices that were being made,

**“For then would they not have ceased to be offered? . . .”**

This was a shadow of what was to come and thus it was limited!

If they could take away a person’s sins then those sacrifices would have stopped, the work would have been completed. But that was not the case and the sacrifices continued on, day in and day out!

In fact, during the time of Jesus it has been estimated that over 250,000 sheep were sacrificed during Passover and the blood of these animals would flow from the Temple area through channels and into the Brook Kidron making the brook’s waters red!

It was a vivid reminder that their sin remained.

It is as Paul said in Hebrews 10:4, **“For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.”**

Or as The Amplified Bible puts it, **“Because the blood of bulls and goats is powerless to take sins away.”**

In other words, it had no power to take away, remove sin!

Paul makes that point that the Old Covenant was a shadow of the New Covenant with the perfect sacrifice being Jesus in Colossians 2:16-17 as he wrote, **“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.”**

Thus, the Old Covenant could not perfect us, we were limited in our access to God but Jesus has come as the Mediator of the New Covenant built upon better promises, the promises of God, the faithfulness of God and not man!

Make no mistake about it, the Law is a reminder of our sin, but Jesus has come to take away our sins, to cast them as far as the east is from the west, to be remembered no more!

### VERSES 5-10

Here in Hebrews 10:5-7 we see a quotation of Psalm 40:6-8. And it is a little different than what the Hebrew Bible says. Why is that?

If you remember what I have said, these quotations are taken from the Septuagint version of the Scriptures.

And the Septuagint is the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament that was the most commonly used Bible in the first century.

And what this is showing us, prophetically speaking, is that Jesus declared the insufficient character of Old Covenant sacrifice and declared His willingness to offer a perfect sacrifice under the New Covenant.

And here's the thing. Just because a sacrifice was made did not mean that God accepted it.

You see, it is a matter of the heart, even with these sacrifices.

That is what David said in Psalm 51:16-17, "**For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, A broken and a contrite heart - These, O God, You will not despise.**"

God is not interested in a ritual but in a relationship and sin has separated man from God. And it is only Jesus, the Mediator or bridge-builder between God and man who can restore that relationship by paying in full the penalty for our sins!

Listen to what the Lord said in Isaiah 1:11-18, **“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?’ Says the LORD. ‘I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, Or of lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, Who has required this from your hand, To trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; Incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies - I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; They are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; Even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Put away the evil of your doings from before My eyes. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good; Seek justice, Rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, Plead for the widow. Come now, and let us reason together,’ Says the LORD, ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool.’”**

That could never be accomplished through the Law, through those sacrifices that were being made. And thus, God has given to us the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sins of the world, Jesus!

And with all that love that God has shown us, by sending His Son to die for our sins, people even today mock His finished work by trying to offer for themselves some kind of sacrifice to God.

But Jesus said, **“It is finished!”**

You see, the work was completed, and He sat down at the right hand of the Father having paid in full the penalty for our sins!

God became flesh and He dwelt among us to save us from our sin!

Look at Hebrews 10:7 once again, **“Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come – In the volume of the book it is written of Me – to do Your will, O God.’”**

In other words, when you read the Old Testament Scriptures, from Genesis to Malachi, they are speaking of Jesus.

We see types, shadows, pictures of Him and the work He came to do.

Thus, the coming of the Messiah should have been no surprise to the Jewish people. In fact, they came to see two Messiahs: one a suffering servant or Messiah ben Joseph and the other a reigning King or Messiah ben David.

But, as we know, not two Messiah’s, one Messiah with two comings!

In Acts chapter 7 Stephen gives his testimony, his defense before the Sanhedrin and he makes several interesting points.

First of all, Stephen spoke of how they missed Joseph as the deliverer the first time and it was not until his brothers saw him again did they recognize him as their deliverer.

Once again Stephen shows them how the Hebrews rejected Moses the first time he came to them, they did not see him as a deliverer until he came again!

Thus, just as they missed Joseph and Moses as being deliverer’s, so too they have missed Jesus the first time He came as the Deliverer, and it won’t be until He comes again that the Jews will recognize Him as the Messiah, their Deliverer.

You see, they looked to their fathers as shining examples of godly men and yet they persecuted the prophets of God and how they are no different than their fathers. The reality is, they have made an even greater mistake than their fathers by rejecting Jesus Christ!



Remember what Jesus said in John 5:39-40, **“You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.”**

May we not miss Jesus by going back to the Law, to rituals to save us. Only Jesus saves.

Paul also speaks that Jesus has come to do the Father’s will and that is exactly what see as we read through the Gospels.

In Luke 22:39-46 we are told, **“Coming out, He went to the Mount of Olives, as He was accustomed, and His disciples also followed Him. When He came to the place, He said to them, ‘Pray that you may not enter into temptation.’ And He was withdrawn from them about a stone’s throw, and He knelt down and prayed, saying, ‘Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.’ Then an angel appeared to Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. When He rose up from prayer, and had come to His disciples, He found them sleeping from sorrow. Then He said to them, ‘Why do you sleep? Rise and pray, lest you enter into temptation.’”**

May we have a heart like that. He may have gone into the Garden in agony but as He prayed, as He submitted to do the Father’s will, He left the Garden at peace.

You see, it is a heart that says no matter what, we are willing to do the Father’s will, no matter what it may cost us!

I think many times we can be so self-centered that if it infringes on us in any way, we ignore what the Father is calling us to do, using spiritual jargon to justify our ungodly behavior!

Thus, as God became flesh and dwelt among us, as He fulfilled the Father's will, as He gave His life as a sacrifice for our sins, the Old Covenant was replaced by the New Covenant and in that our sins are paid in full, paid completely as He has sanctified us or set us apart by the shedding of His blood!

Now that word "**sanctified**" or "**made holy**" in Hebrews 10:10 is the Greek word, HEGIASMENOI, and it speaks of an accomplished fact, not a progressive sanctification in a practical sense where God is still working in us. But in a positional sense that as God looks at us, He sees us as perfect, He sees the finished product! That is what Paul is saying here. Positionally in Christ we are seen as perfect now!

And I do need to touch on this here in Hebrews 10:10, where we are told, "**By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**"

Did you see that – *ONCE FOR ALL!*

There are no other sacrifices that need to be made. The work has been completed by Jesus and now we can receive that finished work or reject it, it is our choice!

Look at the religions of the world that have a works based relationship with God or try to, and they can never attain a relationship with God like that because their sins are not atoned for by good works, but by the finished work of Christ on the cross of Calvary!

I grew up in the Roman Catholic Church and they believe that during the Mass the bread and wine are miraculously transformed into the body and blood of Christ, they are no longer bread and wine.

This process is referred to as *Transubstantiation* meaning "*change of substance.*"

Not only that, but after this takes place, you can't see it, but during the Mass the bread and wine or really, what they believe, the body and blood of Christ are offered up to God as a new sacrifice. And this happens over and over again!

So, in Roman Catholic theology, the priests literally handle Christ's body and that the mass is a literal reenactment of Christ's sacrifice.

These transformed elements are then placed in a little chamber called a *monstrance* and can then be worshipped as if worshipping Jesus Himself.

In Roman Catholic theology, the sacrament of Holy Eucharist is efficacious, meaning it has the power to produce a desired effect.

In the case of the Catholic Mass it has the power to earn installments of "grace" (along with keeping the sacraments) which accrue [accumulate or grow] and someday will be sufficient for the purchasing of salvation for the faithful Catholic who remains in good standing with the church.

In Roman Catholicism salvation becomes *sacramental* (participation in a ritual) as opposed to what the Bible actually says about salvation, that it is a free gift that we receive through our faith in Christ alone.

But, as Paul tells us, "**By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.**" Hebrews 10:10.

The sacrifice has been made, there is no other sacrifice needed for our salvation! I hope that is clear.

And if you are still struggling with this, listen to what Paul says next, it should clear it up.

VERSES 11-18

I like what Paul does here to prove his point that Jesus is superior to all. To do this Paul moves from the lesser - the animal sacrifices, to the greater – Jesus Christ.

These Jewish believers understood the ministry of the priests as they offered their sacrifices for sins.

These sacrifices were offered daily and repeatedly because they could not take away a person's sins.

And as they read this letter from Paul, I'm sure they pictured this continual work of the priests in the Temple.

And from these priests and the sacrifices that were being made, Paul moves to Jesus, the greater sacrifice, who not only shed His blood as the Lamb of God who took away the sins of the world but He then sat down showing the work was completed, it was finished once and for all!

And Paul has made that point three times in this letter. We saw it in Hebrews 1:3, here in Hebrews 10:12 and we will see it in Hebrews 12:2.

Why is this so important?

Because the priests never sat down because their work was never finished.

But Jesus has sat down because the work was finished. And yes, Jesus still ministers in heaven for us as our intercessor, but it is this ministry that flows out of His completed work. Thus, He sat down at the right hand of the Father!

Now, let me ask you this question. ***“How long are you perfected in Christ?”***

Paul tells us forever which tells me we are secure in our salvation.

John makes that point in I John 5:13, **“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.”**

And Jesus tells us in John 5:24, **“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.”**

Yes, positionally we are sanctified, practically, on a day-to-day basis we are being sanctified or growing in the Lord as Paul said in I Thessalonians 5:23-24, **“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.”**

Now here in Hebrews 10:16-17 Paul quotes out of Jeremiah 31:33-34 from the Septuagint translation of the Scriptures or the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Let me ask you this. These words that Paul quotes from Jeremiah, who spoke them?

Jeremiah tells us that the **LORD**, Yahweh spoke them.

That is interesting to me because Paul is telling us that it is the Holy Spirit that spoke these words to Jeremiah which tells me that the Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Holy Trinity and not some kind of force!

And again, this New Covenant that was to come was spoken of in the Old Testament, while the Old Covenant was still around.

Thus, as the New Covenant was established in Christ the Old Covenant passed away and that means there is no longer any need for animal sacrifices for the payment for man’s sins, for it was paid in full by Jesus!

You see, **“Now where there is remission [forgiveness] of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.”** Hebrews 10:18.

#### VERSES 19-22

Paul opens up with the word **“Therefore”** and the thought is this. Because of what Christ has done, what Paul has just said, the sacrifice He made, the finished work He accomplished, we can boldly come before God, enter into the Holy of Holies or the presence of God.

For the High Priest, as he entered the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement, he did so with much fear but we can approach with boldness because our sins have been forgiven!

This is a stark contrast from how the High Priest entered into the presence of God, and only once a year, on the Day of Atonement, to how we can approach God.

Clarke put it like this, *“He went with fear and trembling, because, if he had neglected the smallest item prescribed by the law, he could expect nothing but death. Genuine believers can come even to the throne of God with confidence, as they carry into the Divine presence the infinitely meritorious blood of the great atonement; and, being justified through that blood, they have a right to all the blessings of the eternal kingdom.”*

To illustrate this Paul gives us a picture of the veil that separated the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies, man from God and Paul says that this veil is symbolic of the body of Christ, His flesh.

In Matthew 27:51 we are told, **“Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split.”**

As Jesus gave up His spirit, the veil in the Temple was torn from top to bottom opening the way to God through Christ!

The way to God the Father is open and Jesus has torn down that barrier of sin so that we can boldly approach His throne of grace!

You see, our hearts have been sprinkled from an evil conscience or the inner man has been cleansed.

And that inward cleansing affects our outward actions, the things we do, the things we say.

And as we read God's Word, we will receive that daily cleansing in our lives to remove some of the dirt we have picked-up through the day in this world.

And the encouragement to these Jewish believers was to "**hold fast**" don't let go, don't lose hope because God is faithful and what He has promised He is more than able to bring to pass!

Where are you at this evening? Do you feel close to God right now? And if you don't feel close to God right now, why not?

Is it because of persecution, tough times you are going through, illness, finances or maybe you are trying to approach God through a legalistic works relationship and that will never work!

What can you do?

Draw near to God not on the basis of what you have done, but on the basis of what Jesus has done for you!

James said, "**Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** . . ." James 4:8a.

And then believe it by faith, don't let the enemy rob you of that joy, that intimate relationship we can have with God through Jesus Christ!

Remember what Paul wrote in Hebrews 13:5-6, **“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’ So we may boldly say: ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?’”**

In other words, if God is always with us, He will never leave us, never, then don't fear what man may try to do to you. God is by your side; He will see you through. Perspective is everything!

### VERSE 23

Make no mistake about it, difficult situations caused them to waver some in their faith and Paul is admonishing them to stand strong, not upon their own faithfulness but the faithfulness of Jesus!

Spurgeon put it like this, *“That exhortation, ‘Let us hold fast,’ might well be written on the cover of every Christian’s Bible. We live in such a changeful age, that we need all to be exhorted to be rooted and grounded, confirmed and established, in the truth.”*

How true that is because we need to be reminded of that truth. We can't be firm one moment and then shaky.

I know, it can be difficult, and I think it is difficult because we place our hope in ourselves. But notice what Paul says here, **“... for He who promised is faithful.”** Hebrews 10:23.

May we learn to trust in His faithfulness instead of ours!

If our Lord has saved us, don't you think He is able to sustain us? Absolutely, we just need to not waver but hold strong to that truth!



VERSES 24-25

These words here are so important for us today and yet, many just don't take them to heart. Fellowship, the gathering together as a body of believers to worship the Lord, to hear from God as His Word is spoken is so important for our spiritual well-being!

Look at this closely.

The word "**consider**" speaks of "*attentive, continuous care.*"

The Greek word translated "**to stir up**" means to "*provoke or incite.*"

Now that can be used in a negative way, but that is not what Paul is speaking about here, obviously.

He is speaking of stirring or stimulating believers to share the love of Christ, to have loving acts of kindness towards others.

Why was this a problem for them? Why were some of them not gathering together?

Maybe it was because of some of the persecution they were facing as they did. Maybe it was discouragement. Maybe it was just that they were lazy, and they did not think it was important for them to gather together.

Again, why is that important?

First of all, we are part of the body of Christ and we are to stir each other up in the work of God, encourage them to take those steps of faith.

I first got started in a ministry that I was in charge of by the encouragement of a brother in the Lord, and I thank God he stirred my heart!

May we have that kind of heart that stirs people up for service, for walking in holiness!

Also, being a loafer sets you up for the enemy to get at.

But as we gather together, we are strong in the Lord.

I don't know if you have had anyone say something like this to you, but I have on several occasions.

***“I don't need to go to church, we have church in our house, or on the golf course, or in the woods, or whatever!”***

The problem with that kind of thinking is it is wrong.

Paul is admonishing us to gather together as a local body of believers to worship God, to stir each other up for good works and-so-on.

So if you are not doing that, then you are negating what the Scriptures are saying here!

Also, he closes Hebrews 10:25 with these words, “**. . . and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.**”

What day?

I believe Paul is speaking of the Rapture of the church.

If that is true, then why do we need each other even more as that Day approaches?

Because, as we have seen, persecution, discouragement, all kinds of upheaval will take place and we are seeing that in our day. We are seeing those Braxton Hicks contractions that are preparing the world for the true labor that is coming, the ***TRIBULATION PERIOD!***

So don't negate the assembling together of the brethren, especially as this Day approaches!

#### VERSES 26-27

This is a difficult portion of Scripture and I will give you both views, because they do seem to apply. I do lean on the first view, but again, I will give them both to you.

First of all, since Paul is writing to Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith, being drawn back into the legalism of Judaism with all the sacrifices that went with it, he wants them to think about what they are doing.

You see, they knew the truth, they received the truth and now they were turning from the truth.

I don't believe that you can lose your salvation, I think the Scriptures are clear on that. Then what is Paul's point.

First of all, these believers had the full knowledge of the truth in Christ. That going back to the Law, the sacrifices for salvation would be a sin because they knew the truth, that the only sacrifice that could take away their sin was the sacrifice that Jesus made for them.

And the idea with what Paul wrote, "**there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins**" is the idea that there is no other sacrifice for sin. If you reject Jesus, then there is nothing else.

That is the bottom-line folks. Paul said in Hebrews 10:18, "**Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.**"

Thus, apart from Christ there is no sacrifice for sins! And so, the Old Covenant only had a fearful expectation of judgment!

Now, can this be speaking of those who know the truth, know about Jesus, but never came to that saving faith and thus, there is nothing else for them apart from Christ? It could be, and some do believe that this is speaking of false Christians who heard the truth and yet did not come to saving faith and thus, because of that they will face the judgment of God!

We would call them apostates, not backslidden Christians.

VERSES 28-29

Why is Paul going back to the Law to prove his point?

Because there was no mercy in the Law. In other words, you received what you deserved and death many times was the punishment.

But now Christ has come, and we are saved by Grace through Faith and not by the Law through Works, it is a free gift of God to us.

Thus, in knowing the truth and rejecting it you are accountable. Is Paul speaking to a Christian or someone who knows the truth and just rejected it?

Again, I believe Paul is writing to Jewish believers because he speaks of them being **“sanctified.”**

Then is Paul saying that they will lose their salvation, they will be judged or punished for their actions?

I know, we keep going over this, but it is important. Many lose their hope, they are anxious and worried because they have not put on the helmet of salvation and the Devil has convinced them that they are not worthy to be saved!

Guess what, you are not worthy to be saved, none of us are. We are not saved because we are worthy but because God loves us and apart from Him, we were in a hopeless condition!

And then, to think that I have to maintain some level of spirituality, of righteousness to keep my salvation, like I have said, foolishness! I don't see the Scriptures teaching that a believer can lose his salvation once he is truly saved because then God did not complete the work He started in that person. (Philippians 1:6)

Think about that for a minute. That would mean that God is not able to save us to the uttermost even though Hebrews 7:25 says, **“Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.”**

Remember what I have said in previous studies, don’t take a portion of Scripture and isolate it from the rest of the Scriptures, or you can come to a faulty conclusion.

But what about those who say they have received Jesus, served Jesus, did many good works for the Kingdom of God and then one day they just walked away, didn’t they lose their salvation? No, not at all, they never had it.

Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 7:21-23, **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”**

Notice that Jesus says, **“I never knew you . . .”** He didn’t say, *“I once knew you but now you have walked away!”*

Also, John tells us in I John 2:19, **“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.”**

You see, they were tares among the wheat and when things got tough, when things were more important to them than the Lord, they walked away because they never had a relationship with the Lord!

Then what is this **“punishment”** all about? Isn’t that speaking of going to Hell and thus, they must have either lost their salvation or never had it in the first place!

First of all, the word that Paul uses here for “**punishment**” is the Greek word TIMORIA, (tee-mo-ree’-ah) and it speaks of a penalty.

And I believe that this has to do with our rewards that we can lose, not our salvation!

In I Corinthians 3:11-15, in speaking of Christians appearing before the Judgment Seat of Christ Paul wrote, “**For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one’s work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is. If anyone’s work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone’s work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.**”

We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and thus, this is not a judgment for salvation but for rewards. You see, our works, the things that we do in this life will be tested through the fire to see what the motives of our heart were in serving the Lord. What were we building with!

Don’t make the mistake and think this is a judgment for salvation, it is not. This is a judgment, like I have said, for rewards or crowns. And I believe as the Lord rewards us with these crowns, we will present them right back to Him for it is the Lord who has given us the ability to do these things.

Now what Paul is saying here in Hebrews may be another hypothetical situation, that if you can reject the truth of salvation in Christ it would be worse than rejecting the Law of Moses! Maybe this was a “*What are you nuts?*” warning by Paul to these Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith. Where else were they going to go when Jesus alone has the words to eternal life!

But I tend to lean on this being Jewish Christians who were not going to lose their salvation but their rewards because of their actions.

Listen to what Paul goes on to say.

### VERSES 30-31

Does this fit the picture of an unbeliever or an apostate? Absolutely it does!

If you try to approach God outside of His grace it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

But God is longsuffering, He is patient, He is filled with love and He has done everything possible to save us to a point, but He won't force us into the kingdom of God, we have a free will to make the choice.

Peter tells us in II Peter 3:9, "**The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.**"

That is the love of God, the living God for sinful man! Not death, but life and abundant life that is found only in Him!

So, yes, this does fit the picture of the unbeliever but like I have said, Paul is speaking to Jewish believers who were struggling with their faith and we should fear the Lord if we are not walking as He desires.

You see, there is the chastening of the Lord as Paul says in Hebrews 12:5-11, **“And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: ‘My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; For whom the Lord loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives.’ If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”**

Because we are children of God, He will correct us not because He hates us but because He loves us! And again, we will deal more with this when we get to Hebrews chapter 12.

#### VERSES 32-34

Paul wants them to remember, to think back on all they have endured for Jesus up to this point, the suffering they went through and all because they put their faith in Jesus. They had endured a great struggle with sufferings. They were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations. They were companions of those who were also suffering, were mistreated for their faith in Christ including Paul. They faced economic persecution as Paul spoke of the plundering of their goods.



But they endured them all and Paul wants them to look back, to remember their past endurance so they could be encouraged in the present situations they were facing and stand strong in the faith.

Look at your own life. Some of you have faced many difficult things in your life as a Christian and maybe you are wondering if it is all worth it. You bet it is worth it!

Don't give up, because as Christians this is the worst it is going to be.

But for those who are not Christians, who reject Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, this life is as good as it is going to get!

You see, our citizenship is in heaven and because of that heavenly perspective, it will help you to go through these difficult times.

That is Paul's point here, you have made it through those past difficult times, thus, you can make it through this present time of discouragement as well by keeping your eyes focused on Heaven as you consider Jesus in every situation!

Be anchored in Christ and you won't drift away!

Remember what Paul said as he was encouraging the Corinthians, "**Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**" I Corinthians 15:58.

Be faithful in the work because that is where the reward is found, in our faithfulness and God will take care of the fruit of ministry!

#### VERSES 35-39

These discouraged Jewish believers were in danger of casting away their confidence in Jesus, they were drifting back into an Old Covenant relationship with God.

And Paul wants them to endure, to continue on.

They knew the promises of God, they knew God is faithful to those promises and thus, now is not the time to waver but to forge ahead!

Make no mistake about it, it is tough when trials come, when the work we are called to do seems empty, you don't see the fruit, nothing is happening, and God's promises to us may seem so far away.

But that is when we need to continue on, be faithful because our obedience to God shows our maturity!

It is easy to walk with God when everything is perfect, but what happens when things get tough?

And think about what Paul is saying here. He is telling them and us, that this endurance is built through trials, as we go through them, we are growing in the Lord, maturing in the Lord if we allow them to work in us that way.

Or we can complain and be mad and not grow and have to go through the trial again!

It is as James tells us in James 1:2-4, **“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.”**

We see trials as being bad in our lives, and yet God uses them to grow us by so we should not run away from them but be driven to God through them! To learn to rest our weight, our whole being on Him for He is not only able to hold us up, but to see us through these times!

And think about this as well. Why are we not to draw back?

Paul reminds us that the Lord is coming back, don't lose sight of that fact and walk by faith, live by faith.

In fact, our faith will bring us to glory not to perdition because our faith is in Christ and His promises.

We are not those who shrink back to destruction!

We believe to the saving of the soul Paul reminds us.

In other words, our faith is real, it will stand the test of time and because of that God will not only save us by His grace, He will not only sustain us by His grace in this life, but by His grace we will be taken up to glory!

Next time, in Hebrews chapter 11, we will see Paul remind these Jewish believers of men and women of faith who endured all kinds of hardships and yet, did not waver in unbelief, but stood strong in the Lord.

He is giving them examples of faith, what faith is all about, so that they would not drift away. So that they would be encouraged to forge ahead in the Lord!

These are some powerful examples for us, and I pray that we are encouraged just as much as these Jewish believers were when they read these words.

Make no mistake about it, Jesus is a better sacrifice and the work was completed as He sat down at the right hand of the Father! Thus, rest in Him and praise Him for what He has done in your life!