

This morning we're going to take a look at one of the most controversial sections of Hebrews.

The debate over this section is whether or not a person can lose his salvation.

I believe the author was addressing believers,

The first section we'll be reading this morning

- is the fourth exhortation we've come to
- in the book of Hebrews.

The first exhortation and warning was in chapter 2:1-4

- people were warned not to drift from the word.

The second exhortation, chapter 3:7-4:13

- believers were beginning to doubt the word.

The third is in chapter 5:11-6:20

- believers are warned
- not to turn dull toward God's word.

The fourth warning in chapter 10

- believers are told
- not to despise the word of God.

Notice the progression starting in chapter 2.

- People drift from the word,
- they stop attending fellowship,
- they stop contacting the brethren
- or they ignore the brethren.

After drifting, people begin doubting God's word.

Gen 3:1

1 "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?'"

People question the authority of God.

- They question the validity of His word.

They start raising questions such as, is the bible historically accurate?

- Has the bible been changed over time,
- and if so, how can we trust it.

The core doctrine has not changed.

- The trinity, the death and resurrection

- and salvation all remain the same.

The bible has been faithfully preserved.

Then people become dull to God's word.

When you read God's word, does it come alive to you?

Questioning God's word eventually leads to people despising the word of God.

They've drifted so far from the word that they despise hearing it.

The warning, I believe now in Hebrews

- is for believers to be careful
- in that they don't drift.

People begin reasoning in their mind, there is no God.

Ps 14:1

1 The fool has said in his heart (seat of emotions),
"There is no God."

Notice the Psalmist didn't speak of the mind but of the heart.

The fool is constantly trying to convince himself that he's alright,

- but his mind knows different.

Ps 19:1-3

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.
2 Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.
3 There is no speech nor language
Where their voice is not heard.

Rom 1:18-22

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

Heb 10:26-29

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.

The willful sin mentioned here is not a momentary failure,

It seems the author is speaking about a deliberate ongoing rejection of Christ

- after understanding who He is
- and what He has done.

The author says of the person that sins willfully

- that there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.

Jesus is the final sacrifice. There is nowhere else to go.

1 Peter 5:2

2 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly;

Some of the Hebrew believers were tempted to go back to their old ways.

King Solomon warns about a person going back to his old ways

- when speaking about a dog returning to its vomit
- and a washed pig returning to the mud.

He was warning against stubborn and repeated folly

Peter issued a similar warning

- when he warned about false teachers inside the church.

2 Peter 2:20-21

20 And when people escape from the wickedness of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and then get tangled up and enslaved by sin again, they are worse off than before. 21 It would be better if they had never known the way to righteousness than to know it and then reject the command they were given to live a holy life.

These were people that were intellectually aware of the truth

- but never allowed it to transform their hearts.

As a result, they were worse off than those

- who had never heard the truth.

2 Peter 2:12

12 But these, like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed, speak evil of the things they do not understand, and will utterly perish in their own corruption,

2 Peter 2:22

22 They prove the truth of this proverb: "A dog returns to its vomit." And another says, "A washed pig returns to the mud."

Dogs eat vomit because they're dogs,

- and pigs love the mud because they're pigs.

You may spray a pig clean,

- but you can't remove the dirty from the pig.

The author of Hebrews as well as Peter are speaking of people

- who were exposed to the gospel message,
- they appeared to have an intimate relationship with Christ,
- but never experienced true regeneration

Matt 13:19

19 When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside.

It's the same principle. Some hear the word, but it doesn't take root.

They were exposed to the word, but they didn't possess it.

In each situation mentioned in 2nd Peter, Matt 13, Hebrews 10 and in Hebrews 6,

- people were enlightened,
- they tasted of the Lord's blessings,
- but had no perseverance.

Satan can't take a person's salvation from him.

- He may influence people,
- he may snatch the word from people,
- but he cannot take anyone from Christ.

Heb 10:28

28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

This verse is not speaking about those today getting away with crime,

- but of those who rejected God's law.

See, under the Mosaic law some sins were punishable by death.

Heb 10:29

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?

The warning in verse 29 is not about a person losing his salvation,

- nor is it about a believer who repents.

Notice three warnings in the verse.

- The first is trampling the Son of God underfoot.

The worst thing a person can do is to reject the Son of God, to turn on Him.

Verse 29 speaks of those who counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing,

The NLT says they treated the blood of the covenant, which made us holy, as if it were common and unholy.

The blood is what restores the relationship between man and God,

- and to count it as common, as no big deal,
- was and is a big deal.

These people received the grace of God then deliberately rejected it.

The heart of man has not changed.

Men want to govern self.

Gen 3:5

1 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

The second warning in verse 29 is to those treating the blood of the covenant which made us holy, as if it were common and unholy.

There is nothing common about the blood of Christ.

The last mention of the blood of the Lamb in the bible is in Rev 12:11.

There it speaks of believers overcoming Satan by the blood of the Lamb. It wasn't thru military force, it was by the blood of the Lamb.

Rev 12:11

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.

In both cases of the Hebrew and Revelation writings,

- the church did and will experience pressure to compromise,
- to withdraw and to turn back.

The differences between Hebrews and Revelation,

- the Hebrews were shrinking back to preserve life
- whereas the believers in Revelation were refusing
- to preserve life at the cost of allegiance.

One may lose his life and still be victorious

- while the other may abandon his testimony
- which leads to defeat.

In Hebrews we're told, "don't shrink back," and in Revelation we're told,

- this is what "not shrinking back looks like."

The third warning in verse 29 is to those who insulted the Spirit of grace.

Insult: to treat with contempt, to shame or to arrogantly reject.

- It's a deliberate act.

To insult the Spirit of grace is to willfully and persistently

- reject the Holy Spirit's testimony
- about Christ after having received it.

The source of the judgement:

Heb 10:30-31

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.

The author is referring to Israel in the OT

- It's also for us Christians today

1 Cor 11:29-30

29 For if you eat the bread or drink the cup without honoring the body of Christ, you are eating and drinking God's judgment upon yourself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and sick and some have even died.

These were Christians who failed to properly discern the Lord's death.

The author of Hebrews is quoting from Deut 32, the song of Moses.

The song recalls Israel's unfaithfulness in worshipping other gods

- thus provoking God to anger,
- and it warns of judgement
- within the covenant.

At the same time, it affirms God's justice and faithfulness.

Here in Hebrews, the author is saying,

- you already know that vengeance belongs to God.

Vengeance speaks of God's right to administer justice.

There are places in scripture which speak of God depriving people of their physical life here on earth.

- In acts 5 we have the account of Ananias and Sapphira.

1 John 5:16

16 If you see a Christian brother or sister sinning in a way that does not lead to death, you should pray, and God will give that person life. But there is a sin that leads to death, and I am not saying you should pray for those who commit it.

One might say, well, no problem, to live is Christ to die is gain!

- The key is, "to live is Christ."

God's tolerance for sin does end at some point, and judgment follows as a result.

Some examples would be the flood in Gen 6. After tolerating violence for many generations, God judged.

Israel's rebellion led to exile, 2 kings, 2 chron.

David sinned with Bathsheba then had her husband Uriah killed. Nathan rebuked David in 2nd Samuel 12.

2 Sam 12:10

10 Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

God didn't end his life, but He did discipline him.

- This didn't mean that he would constantly be at war with others,
- But there would be turmoil within his own family.

David's family:

- Amnon, David's eldest son raped his half-sister Tamar.
- Absalom, Tamar's full brother had Amnon killed.
- Absalom rebelled against his father David.
- Absalom eventually died a violent death.

God's grace does not always cancel the consequences of sin.

Amnon's sin was deliberate, he raped his half-sister.

He had a choice, he could have left but he didn't.

To make matters worse, there was no confession nor was there repentance.

Much like we see here in Hebrews,

- Amnon's act was not weakness,
- it was complete defiance.

Nathan told David "the sword shall never depart from your house."

Verse 30 of Hebrews echoes the same covenant reality,

- "the Lord will judge His people."

In both cases, we see that judgement begins inside of God's people.

We should never have the mindset

- since we are Christians there is no accountability
- because there is.

Twice in proverbs we read, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death."

Both the proverb and the story of Amnon tie into Hebrews 3:12

Heb 3:12

Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

Amnon followed the way that seemed right to him, but its end was death.

- Hebrews warns the believers not to do the same.

1 John 2:19

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.

If you've surrendered your life to Christ, you belong to Him!

Jesus Himself said of His sheep, that no one can snatch them out of His hand.

In Romans 2 Paul warns that God's kindness leads to repentance,

- but stubbornness stores up wrath
- for the day of judgment.

Heb 10:31

31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

If you're a believer,

- sin is disciplined, not condemned (Heb 12:6)

Jesus has already taken our judgement for us. (Rom 8:1)

Don't take advantage of God's patience,

- use it as an opportunity for repentance.
- Don't harden your heart because judgment will come.

God's patience has purpose, and that's repentance.