

An Exhortation to Endure Hebrews 10:26–39

When you are tempted to quit, what keeps you going?

The story of the Bible is one of salvation and judgment

- What events in redemptive history display salvation and judgment?
 - The Flood
 - The Passover
 - Restoration of the Temple
- **Exodus 34:6–7**
 - Grace and Justice
 - How do we see this worked out?
 - Joel 2:12–13
 - Jonah 4:2
 - Nahum 1:2–3
 - Micah 7:18–20
- The Cross

The Hebrews Warning Passages¹

- 2:1-4 – Lest we drift away and not escape God’s punishment
- 3:1-4:13 – Lest we harden our hearts and fail to enter God’s rest
- 5:11-6:12 – Lest we fall away and not be able to repent
- 10:19-39 – Lest we sin willfully and be consumed by God
- 12:12-29 – Lest we refuse to hear and be punished

¹ Thomas Schreiner and Ardel Caneday, *The Race Set Before Us*, 194.

Points of Application

1. Read the Warning Passages Together

- a. What are they doing in Hebrews?
- b. How do they fit into the message of the New Testament?

2. Determine the Audience

- a. Not believers (Grudem). They are not losing salvation; going back to Calvin, commentators (esp. John Owen) have assumed that Hebrews 6 speaks of unbelievers who have been around the gospel
 - i. This fits a covenantal reading of the text – i.e., the church is a mixed community (believers and unbelievers)
 - ii. The interpretation is strained – better to see the words of Hebrews 6 as truly believers
 - iii. It is inconsistent with the whole of Hebrews: (1) the other warning passages and (2) the efficacy of the new covenant
 - iv. It must be remembered that salvation is future oriented (1:14; 2:3, 10; 5:9; 9:28; 10:25)
- b. Believers who can lose their salvation (Scot McKnight)
 - i. McKnight rightly understand the future orientation of salvation in Hebrews
 - ii. He wrongly understands the conditional nature of warnings; they are not declarative truths, but real-to-life threats intended to course correct. *And in the case of true believers, they do!*
- c. Believers (Schreiner and Caneday) – Warnings Are Joined with Promises a means of salvation (future salvation)
 - i. Promises secure the believer (e.g., Hebrews 4:14–16; 8:8–13)
 - ii. Warnings spur the believer (e.g., Hebrews 10:24–25)
 - iii. Warnings are Followed by Encouragement
 1. Hebrews 3–4
 2. Hebrews 6
 3. Hebrews 10

3. The Warning Passages as Road Signs and a Means to and End

- a. Road signs do not warn of ‘probable’ dangers, but conceivable dangers.
- b. The warnings in Scripture do not speak of probable shipwreck, but real shipwreck.
- c. Acts 27:14, 20-26, 31, 33-41

Hebrews 10:26–39

Three Movements

1. A Comparison of Covenants (vv. 26–31)
2. A Reminder of the Believer’s Faithfulness (vv. 32–34)
3. An Exhortation to Endure (vv. 35–39)

Hebrews 10:26–31

1. The Finality of the New Covenant Does Not Deny a Final Judgment
2. The New Covenant Offers Greater Grace, Which Means Greater Judgment
3. The Judgment of the Lord Remains

[1] The Finality of the New Covenant

²⁶ For

if we go on *sinning*

\ deliberately

\ after receiving the **knowledge** of the truth,

willingly [1 Pet 5:2]

6:4 + 8:11

there no longer **remains**

a sacrifice for sins,

cf. 10:18

²⁷

but a fearful expectation

of judgment,

10:25

and a fury of fire

that will consume the adversaries.

- **What does the NC do to the will?**
 - Jeremiah 31:33 + 32:40 + Ezekiel 36:27
 - Hebrews 8:11
 - Hebrews 10:10, 36
- **So what does the nature of the NC teach us about sinning deliberately (v. 26)?**
 - The person who *goes on* sinning is not walking in the power of the NC
 - The NC believer will hear these words and turn from sin – this is the goal of the warning
- **What do we learn when we read v. 26 (no longer . . .) with v. 18?**
 - This is not a denial of salvation; it is an affirmation of the NC fulness
 - Don’t go back . . . to the old way
 - Whereas the OC had multiple sacrifices . . . this one has one
- The finality of the sacrifice doesn’t deny the forthcoming judgment. In fact, those who seek another sacrifice actually make themselves enemies of God. [Schreiner](#): Apostasy here IS NOT a return to lawlessness; it is a return to the Law.

[2] A Comparison of Covenants and Their Respective Judgments

²⁸ Anyone . . . **dies**
who has *set aside* the law without mercy
of Moses on the evidence of two or three witnesses.

²⁹ How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

- **What is verse 28 recalling?**

- The Old Covenant Principle of Testimony
 - Numbers 35:30
 - Deut. 17:6; 19:15
- This principle continues into the New Testament
 - Matt. 18:16
 - John 8:17
 - 2 Cor. 13:1
 - 1 Tim. 5:19
- This verse affirms the principle – wages of sin is death – and the New Covenant does not change that

- **What is the punishment under the New Covenant? Same / Different?**

- It will be greater. Why? . . . Other passages?
 - Matthew 11:20–24
 - Luke 12:47–48
- Big Picture: If you turn away from the NC . . . there is no way of salvation.
 - Can someone in the NC turn away?
 - Is this a real threat?

- **Trampled under foot . . . profaned blood of the covenant . . . outraged spirit of grace?**

- How does the cultic context of Hebrews inform our reading?
- **Trampling** the Son . . . denies the final revelation of God; “trampling” may picture the Gentiles trampling the courts of the temple as in Macabees (Schreiner, *Hebrews*, 326)
- **Profaning** the Blood of the Covenant . . . treats the blood of Christ like that of any sacrifice in the OT; profane is a word that speaks of making Christ’s blood unclean; the testimony of Hebrews centers on the cleansing work of Christ; to identify Christ’s sacrifice as no better than the OC makes it unclean
- **Outraging** the Spirit of Grace . . . picks up language from Zechariah 12:10; it must be similar to blaspheming against the Holy Spirit (Matt 12:21–32; Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10)

[3] The Lord's Judgment

³⁰ For we know him who said,

“Vengeance is mine; I will repay.”

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 again grounds his argument in the Old Testament.**
 - He shows how the OT proves the finished work of Christ
 - The unity of OT and NT is also evidence – judgment is spoken of in both Testaments
 - This judgment is also a fulfillment of the OT

- **Where does he quote?**
 - Deuteronomy 32:35
 - Deuteronomy 32:36

- **What do we know about Deuteronomy 32?**
 - It was given to speak a word of judgment to Israel – READ vv. 15–49
 - It was given to point people to a New Covenant – see 30:6
 - So these words not only focus on judgment; they speak specifically to Israel

- **This is the strongest word of warning so far, but it also relates to Hebrews 12:29**
 - This word focuses on the people
 - Hebrews 12 focuses on the place

A Reminder of God's Faithfulness and Theirs (vv. 32–34)

³² BUT recall the former days when,
after you were enlightened,
you endured a hard struggle
with sufferings,

³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and
affliction,
and sometimes being partners with those so treated.

³⁴For
you had compassion
on those in prison,
and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property,
\ since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one.

- **How do these verses balance verses 26–31?**

- “But” – the contrast is KEY; it explains who he’s addressing and it provides assurance for the believers
- “Enlightened” picks up Hebrews 6:4 – “Enlightened” is a word for believers
- Their faith was proven before and now he’s encouraging them to abide

- **How do they help us understand the letter?**

- The problem facing the audience is turning away from the faith and no longer gathering
- The people have suffered and are tempted to protect themselves

- **Practically, what do we learn from these verses?**

- One strategy for godliness, endurance . . . is to remind people where they’ve been faithful
- Joy comes from the better possession – notice the word “better” (1:4; 7:19, 22; 8:6; 9:23; 11:16, **35**)
- What is going to sustain you in times of suffering?
 - The better possession
 - The promise of resurrection

- **How does the resurrection inform your living?**

Final Exhortation (vv. 35–39)

³⁵ Therefore

do not throw away your confidence,
which has a **great reward**.

³⁶ For you have need of endurance,
so that when you have done the will of God
you may **receive what is promised**.

³⁷ For,

“Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay;

Isaiah 26:20
Hab. 2:3–4

³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith,
and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”

Hab 2:4

³⁹ BUT we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed,
but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

What do these verses tell us?

A Word to the Church

- Exhortation – do not throw away confidence
- Motivation – reward, promises, resurrection are our hope

A Word about God

- He will come in judgment
 - Isaiah 26:20 – God is going to come and bring judgment
 - Habakkuk 2:3–4 – God is going to come and bring salvation – salvation comes (by justification) by faith
- God’s judgment is actually a word of comfort to those in Christ

What is the final note?

- Great confidence and encouragement
- He identifies who the people are

Application

1. What do you learn about God’s salvation and judgment?
2. What do you learn about abiding in faith?
3. What role do warnings and promises play?
4. How do you preach the gospel to your self?
5. How do you help others?