

Hebrews 10:26-31
“The spiritual cancer of non-commitment”

- I. Introduction**
- II. Vs. 26-28 Rejecting Jesus**
- III. Vs. 29 Three characteristics of apostasy**
- IV. Vs. 30-31 A fearful reality**

I. Introduction

The writer issues his fourth of five warnings in this letter as he warns against the *rejecting the making of a heartfelt decision to trust Jesus in verses 26-31*. And next week in verses 32-39 he tells his readers what they can do to avoid this danger. It is clear from the reading of this fourth warning that the danger is not one that someone can suddenly fall into. The Greek verb tense for “*willfully*” in verse 26 is followed by the phrase “*after we have received the knowledge of the truth*”, indicates that this is not an immediate or sudden act of weakness that has led to the outcome of “*no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.*” This warning was not issued to someone who was about to “*stumble*” nor was it issued to a follower of Jesus who was occasionally falling as they were still learning how to walk with Jesus. Instead the Greek verb tense for the phrase “*sin willfully*” means a **deliberate, habitual attitude of resistance to “the knowledge of the truth”**! This alone indicates to whom this warning was being issued: **A person who had made an intellectual profession of faith with out ever being spiritually committed.** It is the same group that had received all 5 warnings, (three of which we have already examined and the fourth we are about too and the 5th we do so later):

- 1. 2:1-4 Rejection salvation alone through Jesus
- 2. 3:7-4:13 Rejecting Jesus as the only mediator

3. 5:11-6:20 Rejecting Growing in grace
4. 10:26-39 Rejecting making a heartfelt decision to trust Jesus

Apostasy is an intentional falling away or defection and means to “***forsake***”! The writer is addressing this again as there were Jews in the Hebrew speaking church that had moved towards Jesus, right to the edge of trusting Him alone for their salvation. They heard the teaching about Him gladly, they were drawn to His words, works and wonders, they may have even had a deep conviction of their personal sin and had perhaps made a “profession of faith”! But because of several things these “***professors of faith***” had not become “***possessors of faith***”. And over time they had begun to wonder and lose interest in Jesus choosing instead religious works. ***True apostasy is determined by WHO you leave not where you go after you have left!*** You can not be an apostate if you leave religion be it true; as was the case of these Hebrews as God had ordained the law and the sacrifices, and especially if it is FALSE. You can only be an apostate if you chose to leave the truth about Jesus and entering into a relationship with Him! Every apostate is an unbeliever, but not every unbeliever is an apostate! An apostate knows the truth where as an unbeliever doesn’t, both are lost but the apostate has chosen to be lost! The two major characteristics of an apostate is:

1. Enough of the truth of the knowledge of the gospel to be saved
2. A willful and habitual refusal to come to Jesus by faith to be saved

There are six situations that may aid a person in being an apostate:

1. **Persecution**: This can often drive a person closer to the Lord but can and has drawn people away from Him. A strong verbal commitment may not endure under adversity, words are easier to say but harder to keep when persecution and adversity arises. A commitment to a church will never last but a surrendered heart to the Lover of our Souls always will. Some apostates that have left because of persecution don’t just turn away from Jesus but turn against Him as well.
2. **False teachers**: Jesus warned as much in Matt. 24:11 where He said, “*Many false prophets will arise, and will deceive many.*” Persecution will frighten unbelievers away from the truth, where false teachers entice them away. Paul warned Timothy in 2 Timothy 4:3 that, “*The time will come when they will not endure sound*

- doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers.”*
3. **Temptation**: The things of the world become more attractive and important than the truth about Jesus and their need for Him. The temporary pleasures of this world and the glittering beads of this life become more valuable than eternity with the living God.
 4. **Neglect**: By far the greatest and saddest reason for apostasy is simple neglect. All a person who has knowledge of the truth has to do to deny the Lord is to do nothing, put making a decision off. **A person can do this until they lose the opportunity, to not make a decision for Jesus is to make a decision against Him.**
 5. **Clinging to the old**: Holding on to your religion, or old life style. These Hebrews were clinging to their religion and were in grave danger of apostasy. **A person’s religion is so dangerous because not only can it not save them it often become a barrier to their salvation!**
 6. **Forsaking Christian fellowship**: Forsaking true Christian fellowship, where you can grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus. Most people when looking for a church to attend don’t ever mention the need for strong exhortational teaching where every believer is challenged to go deeper into their relationship with him. They prefer entertainment, fun and positive messages and social interaction.

II. Vs. 26-28 Rejecting Jesus

Vs. 26 The warning in this section requires an explanation of a definition on the word “**apostasy**”! **When the truth of Jesus is presented to a person there can only be one of two responses**: *They either trust Him alone and are saved or they reject the truth and remain committed to religious works as a means to salvation.* The term “*apostasy*” belongs to the person who has chosen the 2nd response. To understand this, we must realize that an “*apostate*” **can never be a person who has never heard or understood the truth concerning Jesus.** It can only be a person who has clearly understood the truth but has chosen to reject it. At issue isn’t that they disagree with the truth or lack understanding concerning the truth. Instead they agree that what they have heard is the ONLY TRUTH, but simply choose not to trust Jesus! A person who has never heard or understood the truth about Jesus is still an unbeliever, bound to sin and lost but their condition is based upon ignorance not willful disobedience. The apostle John identified it

this way in 1 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.”* The fact is that they were for a while among believers and may have even made a profession of faith, but proved they were not spiritually committed when they left. **What this section reveals to the reader is that knowledge of the truth doesn’t guarantee right decision but it does increase responsibility to make the right decision.** Judas is a prim example of an “*apostate*” as he had “**perfect evidence, perfect truth, perfect example**” for three years as he lived with Jesus, (truth and life incarnate) yet chose to turn his back upon the only One who was truth and life! It is “*The spiritual cancer of non-commitment.*” The refusal to cease from ones own religious works and the refusal of the cross of Jesus and because of this the there remains no further work of the Holy Spirit for the apostate as their problem isn’t ignorance but willful disobedience. **This is a self imposed choice to live a self centered life behind a Christian veneer, all-the-while refusing the claims of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.**

Vs. 27-28 What the writer is saying is that once that choice has been made (*and by the grace of God this may take years*), there is no way back. It is exactly the same situation faced in Hebrews 6:4. There is certain judgment ahead, “*a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fiery indignation which will consume the adversaries.*” **Notice the writer makes his point from stating the less to the greater here:** *Since this was true under the shadows of the law, when a person violated even shadows of the substance of Christ and his work, they would suffer death at the mouth of two or three witnesses; how much more shall a person be culpable if he knowingly and deliberately violates the reality which is*

Jesus Christ?

III. Vs. 29 Three characteristics of apostasy

Vs. 29 This sin of “apostasy” involves three things which is a complete offence against all of the Godhead, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit:

1. “Trampling the Son of God underfoot”: First, there is a spurning of the Son of God. This is a sin against God the Father who sent His only begotten Son to be the once for all sin-offering. Notice that the writer deliberately chooses a title that the Jew’s understood for Jesus which emphasized His right to be Lord over their life. There are many today, that readily recognize Jesus’ ability to save them from all the messes they get themselves into and they are quite willing to call Him Savior when they need to be saved. But that is not the same as recognizing His right to be Lord over all our life. This “apostasy” was a consistent and continual refusal to submit all of their life to His rule and right to govern their life.
2. “Counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing”: This is a sin against Jesus and His sacrifice upon the cross. The word “counted” in the Greek is an accounting term that refers to a “conscious judgment resting upon a deliberate weighing of facts.” What this said to the original readers is that an apostate was one that had a deliberately and conscious rejected Jesus’ atoning sacrifice as the Messiah. The words “common thing” in the Greek is a word that means “not set apart for God’s use”. The idea here by the writer is that the apostate considered the blood of Jesus’ sacrifice as having no more specific worth than the blood of any ordinary person. The difficulty of this passage lies between these two things in the phrase, “by which he was sanctified”. First you will notice that the “HE” in this section is not capitalized as it is NOT a reference to Jesus but rather to the apostate who will experience “worse punishment” for rejecting Jesus. Second the word “was” has caused some confusion. To unravel this, we need to understand that this warning is being issued, to all who make up the Hebrew “professing” church which was made up of saved and unsaved. As this is the context, the writer is saying that “by which he was PROFESSED TO BE sanctified”. The rejection is the refusal to ACCEPT Jesus sacrifice for which they had made a profession that they had. Instead of receiving Jesus sacrifice for their sins, which they had professed they insisted upon their religious works and efforts saying that those would be will be accepted by God.
3. “And insulted the Spirit of grace”: Some of these professing Hebrews had allowed the Holy Spirit to move them into the acceptance of the truth with regards to Jesus and were intellectually convinced of this truth but had not turned from their sin and away from their religious works and because of this hadn’t come into the surrender of faith and instead were going back to religious works, specifically the Levitical sacrifices. This act is treating the work of the Holy Spirit with “grave indifference” the pleading and wooing of the Holy Spirit. This, is what Jesus was talking about in Mark 3:28-29 where He said, “Assuredly, I say to you, all sins

will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation” This is the dread “blasphemy against the Holy Spirit,” for which Jesus said there is no forgiveness, neither in this age nor in the world to come. Many people want to know if a Christian commit the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit? The answer to that question lies in two conditions both found in the church today: ***Professing*** and ***Possessing***! It is possible, as clearly the writer of Hebrews is warning ***Professing*** Christians, that if they reject the sacrifice of Jesus by their religious works than they can commit the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Why else would he and Jesus warn them? But it is not possible for a believer who is “*possessed by the Holy Spirit*” even if they fall into sin occasionally to commit the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. The Christian that can never commit the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is the person who is “born of God”.

IV. Vs. 30-31 A fearful reality

Vs. 30-31 The verse quoted here is out of Deut 32:35-36 and the word rendered “vengeance” is an unfortunate translation as in English it carries the idea of “vindictiveness” which does not reside in the Greek word or in the heart of God. Instead the word means “the full measurement of justice will be carried out by the Lord.” The context of verse 31 is from the perspective of the apostate who has professed Jesus but in truth has trusted in religious works. There are two possibilities:

- A. You have put your whole life into the hands of the living Christ
 - B. Or you have fallen into “*the hands of the living God*”: That happens when a person professes one thing but consistently and deliberately refuses to obey it.
- These are great self-evaluating words to all in Christ’s Church. There is a cursed doctrine today that indirectly denies the need for surrender and commitment to Jesus alone. It elevates church attendance and works instead of a relationship and in so doing denies Jesus’ sacrifice upon the cross while professing it. We can not make up the terms of our relationship with Him, He does all we can do is receive it! Our relationship is not seen in words but actions!