

Hebrews 10:29-39 “Faith Fence Riders”

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I. Introduction

As discussed last week the writer issues his fourth of five warnings in this letter: This warning is against the *rejecting the making of a heartfelt decision to trust Jesus in verses 26-31*. In verses 32-39 he will tell his readers what they can do to avoid this danger. We already noted that this warning was issued to someone who was making a *deliberate, habitual attitude of resistance to “the knowledge of the truth”*! By this we learn that the person who was in danger was a “*professors of faith*” but had not become “*possessors of faith*”. We noted that, *True apostasy is determined by WHO you leave not where you go after you have left!* To be an apostate requires two characteristics:

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

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. 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, their problem isn’t ignorance but willful disobedience. *This is a self imposed choice to live a self centered life behind a Christian*

vener, all-the-while refusing the claims of the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

II. Vs. 27-29 Three characteristics of apostasy

Vs. 27-28 Before we look at the three characteristics of apostasy; 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?*

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 is 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”.

III. Vs. 30-31 A fearful reality

Vs. 30-31 The verse quoted her 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. Our you have fallen into “*the hands of the living God*”: That happens when a person professes one thing but consistently and deliberately chooses the opposite of their profession.

IV. Vs. 32-34 Recalling and looking

Vs. 32-34 In the final 8 verses the writer tells his readers how they can avoid becoming an apostate.

1. **Remember your suffering and service**: The writer knew who he was writing too and how they had been involved in their profession of faith. There were two things that stood out that he wants them to remember. These two things don't alone indicate true faith but they indicate that they were willing to take action on what they said they believed.
 - a. Vs. 32-33 **Suffering**: *“But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured great struggle with suffering: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated.”* These “professing believers” had already experienced “suffering” by their confession as they had been identified with true believers. The point the writer is making is that their **“faith fence riding”** had not been discernable to their fellow countrymen who were **level persecution against intellectual agreement the same as spiritual commitment**. And further more to their credit such treatment had driven them away from what they intellectually believed was true. Since this suffering through intellectual “*illumination*” had happened why not make your faith sure by full inviting Jesus to be Lord and Savior? The argument seems to be that stopping at the edge of commitment hasn't gained these “professing believers” any advantage so why settle for it? They needed to put their full trust in Jesus and become one of His instead of settling for being a mere “*pretender*”! Their persecution by their fellow religious Hebrews proved two things at the same time: **Religious works** was **threatened** by **relational commitment** (while that didn't alone prove that **relational commitment** was true it did prove that **Religious works** wasn't.) Second it proved that they gained NO ADVANTAGE by mere profession.
 - b. Vs. 34 **Service**: *“For you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.”* These “professing believers” had already given up worldly opportunity for the hope of heavenly rewards. They had risked: reputation, friends, family and earthly possessions for what they intellectually believed were better things but were now willing to walk away from such an investment instead of seeing it through too true faith and reaping their eternal reward. They had put everything into their service but all they needed to do is ask Jesus into their heart and surrender. **It is a great shame to witness what unbelievers do for ideology and philosophical views that often the true church won't. I'll say right now: Oh Lord give me all those who for religious works maintain commitment and when they embrace You, the Living God by faith in You alone, trusting in Your finished work of grace, with changed motives of serving You not to be right because they are right in You, by Your power we will change the world!**

V. Vs. 35-39 Confident expectation

2. Vs. 35-38 ***Look forward to your rewards***: “*Therefore do not cast away your confidence which has great reward.*” The writer goes on to explain in verse 36 what they lack in order to “*receive the promise*”, “**ENDURANCE**”. To prove his point, the writer quotes Habakkuk 2:3-4. The warning was to not allow their confidence to waver as to miss the rewards. At issue for these “professing believers” was not a lack of trust in the greatness the promises they knew how superior they were compared to anything the world had to offer, neither were they wavering because they doubted the ability of our Lord to fulfill what He promised. Instead the plea for the writer is that of endurance so that they wouldn’t be persuaded to turn but to the “religious works”. They needed to complete their act of faith and not stop short of making Jesus Lord of their life! The suffering that they had already endured would not last forever, but their salvation and rewards in Jesus would! Jesus is returning and will set the world right at His return, and He is not delaying and nothing and no one can delay His soon return. The way to become righteous is by faith in Jesus alone and the way of the righteous is to live by faith in Christ alone. The basis of our spiritual life and spiritual living is by faith! Knowledge of the gospel is essential, suffering for the gospel is possible, serving God’s people in the name of the gospel is what we are privileged to do. ***BUT ONLY FAITH IN JESUS FINISHED WORK UPON THE CROSS WILL BRING SALVATION AND PRESERVE US FOR ETERNITY!***

Vs. 39 The writer closes the 10th chapter with a note of confidence that those he is appealing to will indeed leave religion and trust alone in Jesus. He is so confident that he writes, “*We are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the salvation of the soul.*” Notice that the writer includes those that he is warning with himself as true believers!