

## 23. Understanding the Warning to Those Who Reject the Sacrifice of Christ

In our last topic, we saw that we want to help our physical and spiritual children understand the boldness that we have in Christ. We saw that we can have this boldness because Christ created a new and living way to come to the Father. Christ made that way through His blood and He now sits at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. In our topic today, we are going to see that the writer of Hebrews gave a warning to those who reject the sacrifice of Christ that paid for our sins.

The writer of Hebrews knew that many of the Jews living at that time had seen Christ, had heard Him teach and knew what He taught and still chose to reject Christ. As a result, Hebrews 10:26-29 says, “For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 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 Jews who had seen and heard Christ had direct knowledge of the teachings of Christ. However, we see that some chose to reject that knowledge and continue to live in their sins.

The writer of Hebrews pointed out the fact that those who rejected the sacrifice that Christ had made for their sins did not have any other sacrifice that could take away their sins. John 6:68-71 illustrates this thought clearly. Those verses say, “But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?’ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.” Peter, Judas and the other disciples all received the same knowledge about Christ. They all walked with Him and heard Him teach. Peter, and the others, heard Christ and believed. Judas received the same knowledge and chose to reject.

For Judas, and all others who choose to reject, they are in bondage because of the fear of judgment. Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” Those who reject are promised fiery indignation. Revelation 20:15 says, “And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.” This fiery indignation is eternal judgment.

In the Old Testament, those who rejected the law of Moses were judged and no mercy was shown. Deuteronomy 17:2-6 says, “If there is found among you, within any of your gates which the Lord your God gives you, a man or a woman who has been wicked in the sight of the Lord your God, in transgressing His covenant, who has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, either the sun or moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded, and it is told you, and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently. And if it is indeed true and certain that such an

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abomination has been committed in Israel, then you shall bring out to your gates that man or woman who has committed that wicked thing, and shall stone to death that man or woman with stones. Whoever is deserving of death shall be put to death on the testimony of two or three witnesses; he shall not be put to death on the testimony of one witness.” There was no mercy shown to those who chose to break the commandment of God and serve idols instead.

The Jews all knew what was taught in the book of Deuteronomy. As a result, the writer of Hebrews warned that those who trample the Son of God under foot deserved an even greater judgment. Such individuals treat the blood of Christ like His blood was just ordinary blood. Such rejection was an insult to the Spirit of grace. That is why Hebrews 10:30-31 goes on to say, “For we know Him who said, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. And again, ‘The Lord will judge His people.’ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” God promises that He will repay all those who reject the blood of Christ as the payment for their sin. Just as God gave instructions to judge those who rejected in the Old Testament, God will judge those Jews who choose to reject the blood of Christ as the payment for their sins. In fact, that judgment will come to both the Jews and the Gentiles who reject the payment that Christ made for our sins.

This is why the writer of Hebrews gave the warning that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. God poured out His anger against sin when He placed our sins on Christ as Christ hung on the cross. Matthew 27:46 says, “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’” Christ was forsaken by the Father because all of the sins of every person in the world were placed on Him. There is no other payment for those who reject the payment that Christ made. Those who reject the payment that Christ made are choosing to have God pour out His judgment of sin on them throughout eternity. This is why the fear of death is such a fearful thing.

After warning those Jews who were choosing to reject the payment Christ made, the writer of Hebrews began to speak to weak Jewish Christians to encourage them in their faith. Hebrews 10:32-35 says, “But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 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. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.” The writer of Hebrews reminded the Jewish Christians of the way that they had served the Lord in the past.

The word that is translated “after you were illuminated” means *to give light or to make the message of salvation clear*. The Jewish believers had received that light and had experienced much suffering for their faith from those who rejected Christ. Acts 8:1 says, “Now Saul was consenting to his death. At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles.” The early Jewish Christians had been scattered by persecution. Acts 8:4 tells what they did as they were scattered when that verse says, “Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word.” The persecution only caused the message of Christ to spread.

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First, the apostles suffered persecution. Then, all of the Jewish Christians began to suffer persecution. Later the Gentile Christians were included in that persecution. As a result, the Christians experienced sufferings, reproaches and tribulations in their lives. They also saw others who were experiencing the same things. In spite of what they were suffering, the Jewish Christians took time to show compassion to the writer of Hebrews even when he was in chains for proclaiming Christ. The Jewish Christians even suffered joyfully when their possessions were taken by those who were persecuting them.

The Jewish Christians had experienced these things in the past, and the writer now reminded them of the fact that they had a greater and an eternal possession waiting for them in heaven. Christ had said in Matthew 6:19-21, “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” The writer of Hebrews wanted to remind the Christians that they could look forward to this eternal reward.

The writer did not want them to cast away their confidence. The word translated “confidence” means *freedom or boldness in speaking*. The writer reminded them that this boldness to speak for Christ will result in great eternal rewards. As a result, he did not want to see the Jewish Christians become so discouraged that they would lose their boldness to share the Gospel.

As a result, Hebrews 10:36-39 says, “For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: ‘For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith; but if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.’ But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.” Here, we see that the writer of Hebrews urged the Jewish Christians to have endurance even in the middle of suffering. He urged them to continue to carry out the will of God. He wanted them to know that they would receive the promised reward.

He reminded these Christians of the promises given in Habakkuk 2:3-4 that the Lord is coming and the just shall live by faith. It is those who do not show faith but draw back that showed that they never had true faith but were only professing Christians. The writer reminded the Christians enduring affliction that they were not those who were drawing back but that they were among those who believe. As a result, they could look forward to the saving of the soul. In the same way, we want to encourage our physical and spiritual children when they go through times of rejection or suffering. We want them to remember that they can look forward to great reward. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children understand this warning to those who reject the sacrifice of Christ.