

Hebrews 10:26-31

(The following is taken from William MacDonald's commentary on.)

"10:26. Now the writer introduces his fourth grim warning. As in the previous cases, it is a warning against apostasy, here described as a deliberate sin.

"As has been indicated, there is considerable disagreement among Christians as to the real nature of this sin. The problem, in brief, is whether it refers to:

1. True Christians who subsequently turn away from Christ and are lost.
2. True Christians who backslide but who are still saved.
3. Those who profess to be Christians for awhile, who identify themselves with a local church, but who then deliberately turn away from Christ. They were never truly born again, and now they never can be.

"No matter which view we hold, there are admitted difficulties. We believe that the third view is the correct one because it is most consistent with the over-all teaching of the Epistle and of the New Testament.

"Here in verse 26 apostasy is defined as sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth. Like Judas, the person has heard the gospel. He knows the way of salvation; he has even pretended to receive it; but then he deliberately repudiates it.

"For such a person, there is no more sacrifice for sins. He has decisively and conclusively rejected the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. Therefore God has no other way of salvation to offer to him.

"10:27. Nothing remains but a fearful prospect of judgment; there is no hope of escape. It is impossible to renew the apostate to repentance (6:4). He has knowingly and willfully cut himself off from God's grace in Christ. His fate is a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries.

"Note that God classes apostates as adversaries. This indicates positive opposition to Christ, not a mild neutrality.

"10:28. The doom of the lawbreaker in the Old Testament is now introduced to form a backdrop against which to contrast the greater doom of the apostate.

"A man who broke Moses' law by becoming an idolater died without mercy when his guilt was proven by the testimony of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:2-6).

"10:29. The apostate will be counted worthy of much sorer judgment because his privilege has been much greater. The enormity of his sin is seen in the three charges that are leveled against

him:

1. 'He has spurned the Son of God.' After professing to be a follower of Jesus, he now brazenly asserts that he wants nothing more to do with Him. He denies any need for Christ as Saviour and positively rejects Him as Lord.
2. 'He has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified.' He counts as useless and unholy the blood of Christ which ratified the new covenant. He had been set apart by this blood in a place of external privilege. Through his association with Christian people, he had been sanctified, just as an unbelieving husband is sanctified by his believing wife (1 Corinthians 7:14). But that does not mean that he was saved.
3. 'He has outraged the Spirit of grace.' The Spirit of God has illuminated him concerning the good news, had convicted him of sin, and had pointed him to Christ as the only Refuge of the soul. But he had insulted the gracious Spirit by utterly despising Him and the salvation He offered.

10:30. Willful repudiation of God's beloved Son is a sin of immense magnitude. God will sit in judgment on all who are guilty of it. He has said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay" (see Deuteronomy 32:35). Vengeance in this sense means full justice. When used of God it has no thought of vindictiveness or of getting even. It is simply the meting out of what a person actually deserves. Knowing the character of God, we know that He will do as He has said by repaying the apostate in just measure.

"And again, 'The Lord will judge His people.'" In Deuteronomy 32:36, from which this is quoted, it is translated, "The Lord will vindicate His people." This is true, of course; the Lord will avenge and vindicate those who truly belong to Him. But here in verse 30, the obvious reference is to judgment of evil people.

If it causes difficulty to think of apostates being spoken of as His people, we should remember that they are His by creation and also for a while by profession. He is their Creator though not their Redeemer, and they once professed to be His people, even though they never knew Him personally.

10:31. The abiding lesson for all is this: do not be among those who fall into His hands for judgment because it is a fearful thing.

Nothing in this passage of Scripture was ever intended to disturb and unsettle the minds of those who truly belong to Christ. The passage was purposely written in its sharp, piercing, searching, challenging style so that all who profess the Name of Christ might be warned as to the terrible consequences of turning away from Him.

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