

EXPLANATION OF 58TH BIBLEBOOK

HEBREWS 10 (A.D. 64)

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Hebrews 10 teaches that *the old order was only a shadow of the new reality*. The endlessly repeated sacrifices can never take away sins or guilt (10:1-4)! God said that he did not desire sacrifices and offerings. So *at his first coming Christ sets aside the ceremonial law in order to establish the second*, namely, the sacrifice of his body once for all as a substitution for all other sacrifices (10:5-10). By this one sacrifice he made perfect forever those who are being made holy (those chosen and set aside). He will no more remember their sins and lawless deeds anymore (10:11-18).

Exhortations about Christian faith: Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart, in full assurance of faith, holding unswervingly to the hope, because He who promised is faithful. Let us consider to spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, but encourage one another to do this (10:19-25). The exhortations are backed-up by a warning: Do not deliberately keep on sinning (10:26-31) and a final exhortation: Persevere doing God's will and receive God's promise (10:32-39).

10:1-4. The old order was a shadow of the new reality.

10:1. For the law //continually having (being) a shadow of the good (things) to come, (being) not itself the very image of the things (matters) that are done (the realities),// can never year by year with the same sacrifices, which they (the Old Testament priests) offer uninterruptedly, *once for all* make perfect those who draw near.¹

'The shadow' (the law) refers to the outline cast by the object which is the reality. Christ, who is the fulfilment of the law, is the real object that casts the shadow. Both Paul and the writer of Hebrews speak of the law as 'a shadow'². Paul has in mind the regulations about 'special times' (sabbath, new moon) and 'special actions' (food laws) and the writer to the Hebrews has in mind the regulations about 'special people' (priests) and 'special actions' (sacrifices). *Both regard the shadow as 'a foreshadowing', 'a pointing forward' to the reality*, and not simply as 'a copy' (Plato). The 'image' is not simply a replica, but *the very thing made visible*. Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God³ (and not a mere appearance or avatar). Christians should become conformed to the real visible image of the Son of God⁴.

'The good things to come' (9:11) are the unrepeatable perfect sacrifice of Christ, his present never-ending High Priestly ministry, the eternal redemption and the uninhibited access to worship the living God, which he effected - the perfection which the old order of the law was incapable of supplying! Because in the old order the sacrifices (on the Day of Atonement) had to be repeated year by year, they show that they did not accomplish what the perfect sacrifice of Christ accomplished!

10:2. Else would they not *once for all* have ceased to be offered *again and again*? Because the worshippers, // having once for all been cleansed (*and remaining cleansed forever thereafter*), // would not once still have had a consciousness/awareness of sins'.⁵

The implication of this question is that the sacrificial ritual was still practised in the temple at Jerusalem at the time the letter was written and that the letter to the Hebrews was written before 70 A.D., when the temple was destroyed.

¹ **10:1.** For (γαρ)(cs=conjunction subordinating) the law (ο νομος)(n-nm-s) //continually having (εχων>εχω)(vppanm-s)(i.e. being) a shadow (foreshadowing) (η σκια)(n-af-s) of the good (things) (αγαθος-α-ον)(ap-gn-p) to come (μελλοντων>μελλω)(vppagn-p), (being) not (ουκ)(ab=adverb) itself (ουτος-η-ο)(npafzs) the very image (likeness)(the image is the real object which casts the shadow) (η εικων)(n-af-s) of the things (matters) that are done (the realities) (το πραγμα)(n-gn-p), // can (δυναται>δυνουμαι)(vipn--zs) never (ουδεποτε)(ab= adjective adverb) year by year (κατα+ο ενιαυτος) with the same (ο αυτος, η αυτη, το αυτο)(a--df-p) sacrifices (η θυσια)(n-df-p), which (ας)(apraf-p= adjective pronominal relative accusative feminine plural) they (the Old Testament priests) offer repeatedly (προσφερουσιν>προσφερω)(vipa--zp) uninterruptedly (εις το διηνεκες) (διηνεκης-ες=continuously, uninterrupted)(ap-an-s), *once for all* make perfect (complete, bring to the goal) (τελειωσαι<τελειωω)(vnaa) those who continually draw near (τους προσερχομενους>προσερχομαι)(vppnam-p). (*The present tense points to the continually repeated sacrifices.*)

² Colossians 2:17

³ 2 Corinthians 4:4; Colossians 1:15

⁴ Romans 8:29; cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18; Colossians 3:10

⁵ **10:2.** Else (for if it were otherwise) (επει)(cs=conjunction subordinating) (the clause is to be read as a question) would they not (ουκ αν) *once for all* have ceased (επαυσαντο<παυομαι)(viam--zp) to be offered *again and again* (προσφερομεναι>προσφερω)(vppnfn-p)? Because (δια+accusative) (expresses cause) the worshippers (τους λατρευοντας>λατρευω)(vpraam-p), //having once for all (απαξ)(ab) been cleansed *and remaining cleansed forever thereafter* (κεκαθαρισμενους<καθαριζω)(vprpam-p perfect tense),// would not once (μηδεμιαν<μηδεις) (a-caf-s cardinal) still (ετι)(ab) have had (εχεν>εχω)(vnpaa) a consciousness/awareness (το συνειδησις)(n-af-s) of sins (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-p).

If the old sacrificial order had possessed true cleansing efficacy (thus really purifying the conscience), then the worshippers would not have repeated the sacrifices and would have enjoyed unrestricted communion with God.

However, *it is the presence of sin in the conscience that hinders entering the presence of God*⁶! The perfect tense in Greek means that Christians in the new order have been cleansed once for all! “A person who has had a bath⁷ needs only to wash his feet⁸; his whole body is clean⁹”. Christ made no distinction between Gentile and Jewish believers when he *once for all* cleansed¹⁰ both their hearts by faith¹¹. After living in gross sin, some Corinthians were *once for all* pardoned (released, washed)¹². *True inward cleansing, as accomplished by Christ’s sacrifice, is permanently effective and therefore unrepeatable. But cleansing, that did not require repetition, was unknown to the Levitical law.*

10:3. But with those a reminder of sins (is made) year by year”.¹³

With people the remembrance of sin may involve repentance from them¹⁴ or it may involve persistence in sin¹⁵. But with God the remembrance of sin always involves appropriate action, sometimes pardoning sin (viewed as ‘not remembering sin anymore’)¹⁶, but usually punishing sin¹⁷.

The pardoning ‘year by year’ under the old covenant on the Day of Atonement cannot convey the same peace of conscience as a pardon ‘once for all’ (8:12). Under the old order there was only an annual removal of sins. *Absolute wiping out of sins from the divine record was unknown to the Levitical law. The completed work of salvation of Christ wiped out the sin of the believer permanently from the divine record!*

10:4. For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and he-goats should *again and again* take away sins.¹⁸

As long as people’s ideas of God and forgiveness were bound up with a sacrificial system, like in Israel and among some Gentile nations, the imperfect spiritual condition would continue! *Spiritual and moral defilement cannot be removed by material means (nor by man doing any kind of penance!)* David already acknowledged this in Psalm 51:10-12,16-17. *After the destruction of the Jerusalem temple in 70 A.D., the Jews continued Judaism without a temple and without sacrifices!* This relative easy adaptation of the Jews in the Palestinian synagogue to the new conditions shows that they too had grasped the principle of the insufficiency of animal sacrifices!

10:5-10. The new order is the reality.

10:5. Therefore, *when* he (Christ) came into the world, he said: Sacrifice and offering you did not *once* desire, but a body you *once for all time* prepared for me¹⁹

10:6. you were not *once* pleased with burnt offerings and (offerings) with respect to sins²⁰

10:7. Then I said: “See, I have come or I am present - in the roll of the book it is written about me - the doing *once for all* your will, O God.”²¹

This biblical statement is found in Psalm 40:6-8. *This prophecy could not refer to David, because David did offer sacrifices. Therefore it must refer to the future King David, the Messiah*²².

⁶ Psalm 66:18

⁷ λελουμένος>λουω participle perfect middle/passive dep

⁸ νιψασθαι>νιψομαι infinitive aorist middle. cf. 1 John 1:9

⁹ καθαρο (John 13:10)

¹⁰ καθαριας>καθαριζω participle aorist active

¹¹ Acts 15:9

¹² απελουασθε>απολουω indicative aorist middle 1 Corinthians 6:11

¹³ **10:3.** But (αλλα)(cc=conjunction coordinating) with (εν)(pd=preposition dative) those (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο) (αυταις=plural of αυτη)(npdfz) (sacrifices) a reminder (calling to mind, remembrance) (η αναμνησις)(n-nf-s) of sins (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-p) (is made) year by year (κατα ενιαυτον)”.

¹⁴ Deuteronomy 9:7

¹⁵ Ezekiel 23:19

¹⁶ Psalm 25:7; 10:17

¹⁷ 1 Kings 17:18; Revelation 16:19

¹⁸ **10:4.** For (γαρ)(cs) it is impossible (αδυνατος-ον)(a--nn-s) that the blood (το αιμα)(n-an-s) of bulls (ο ταυρος)(n-gm-p) and he-goats (ο τραγος)(n-gm-p) should *again and again* take away (remove) (αφαιρειν<αφαρειω)(vnpa)(the present tense points to a continual action and emphasizes that which is always true) sins (η αμαρτια) (n-af-p).

¹⁹ **10:5.** Therefore (διο)(ch=conjunction hyper/superordinating), *when* he (Christ) came (εισερχομενος>εισερχομαι)(vppnm-s) into (εις)(pa) the world (ο κοσμος)(n-am-s), he said (λεγει>λεγω)(vipa--zs): “Sacrifice (η θυσια)(a bloody sacrifice)(n-af-s) and offering (η προσφορα) (bringing

offerings, a non-bloody offering, like the meal offering)(n-af-s) you did not *once* desire (ηθελισα<θελω) (viaa--ys), but (δε) a body (το σωμα)(n-an-s) you *once for all time* prepared (κατηριτω>καταρτιζω)(viam--ys) for me (μου)(npd-xs);

²⁰ **10:6.** you were not *once* pleased (ευδοκησας>ευδοκειω)(viaa--ys) with burnt offerings (το ολοκαυτωμα)(n-an-p) and (offerings)(θυσια) with respect to (περ)(pg) sins (n-gf-s)

²¹ **10:7.** Then (τοτε)(ab) I said (ειπον>λεγω)(viaa--xs): “See (ιδου)(qs=particle sentential), I have come or I am present (ηκω)(vipa--xs) - in the roll (η κεφαλαις)(n-df-s) of the book (το βιβλιον)(n-gn-s)(the Book of the Psalms) it is written (γεγραπται<γραφο)(vipr--zs)(the perfect tense signifies the legal binding authority of a document) about (περ)(pg) me (εμου)(npg-xs) – the (του)(dgns) doing *once for all* (ποιησαι>ποιεω)(vnaag) (the infinitive expresses the purpose of his coming) your will (το θελημα), O God (ο θεος) (me doing your will).

²² cf. Psalm 16:10; cf. Acts 2:31

- The Hebrew text says, “My ears you have pierced”²³. The ‘ears’ may have been interpreted by the Greek translator as a symbol of obedience²⁴, because they were the organ of receiving God’s divine will and the ‘body’ was considered to be the organ of fulfilling that divine will.
- The Greek text says. “A body you prepared for me”²⁵. It is not based on a corrupt or variant reading, but is rather *an interpretative paraphrase of the Hebrew text*. The Greek translator regarded the Hebrew words as an instance of ‘a part for the whole’, that is, the digging or hollowing out of the ears is part of the total work of fashioning a human body. *God prepared the body of the speaker and the speaker gave his body back to God as a living sacrifice to be employed in obedient service to him.*
- *Wholehearted obedience is in both explanations the real sacrifice that God desires!* The Old Testament sacrifices had religious worth only in so far as they were the tangible expression of a devoted and obedient heart. *In themselves, these sacrifices had no real value*²⁶.

The writer’s contrast is not between sacrifice and obedience, but between *the involuntary* sacrifice of dumb animals and sacrifice into which *obedience* enters - the sacrifice of a rational and spiritual being, which is not passive in death, but in dying makes the will of God its own. The writer regards the incarnation of the Son of God (“when he comes into the world”) as an act of (willing, obedient) submission to God’s will and as an anticipation of Christ’s supreme (willing, obedient) submission to God’s will in his sacrificial death²⁷.

‘The roll of the book’ is a reference to the written law of God. The speaker (Jesus Christ in his human nature) recognized that God wrote about him in the law²⁸ and that this was God’s prescription for him²⁹. *The life and death of Jesus Christ would be the active counterpart of the written law. The will of God that is written in the law would be equally manifested in his obedience. It was God the Father’s will, but it was also God the Son’s spontaneous choice to obey.* Therefore his undertaking and fulfilling the Father’s will was a sacrifice utterly acceptable to God.

10:8. Higher up he said: “Sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and (offerings) on behalf of sin you did not *once* desire, nor *once* were you pleased (with them) - although they were *continually* brought according to the law.”³⁰

10:9. Then he said: “Look, here (I am) I have come, *once for all* doing your will. He sets aside or abolishes the first in order to establish the second.”³¹

In the words of Psalm 40 the writer sees the announcement of the abrogation of the old sacrificial order and the announcement (prophecy) of the establishment of the new order in Christ. God says that he takes no pleasure in the sacrifices prescribed by the ancient cultic law of Israel and that these will be superseded by a new order, inaugurated by Christ’s perfect obedience to the will of God. The formulation of the new covenant in Hebrews 8 included the provision that God’s law would henceforth be engraved in his people’s hearts, that his people would personally know him and that he would not bring their sins into remembrance.

10:10. And by that will we have been made holy (set apart) through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all³².

By fulfilling God’s will by offering his body as an atonement sacrifice for sins, Jesus Christ sanctified his people, that is, he set them apart from the rest of the world to belong to God and dedicated them to live for God. Their inward cleansing made them fit for the presence of God, so that henceforth they can offer him acceptable worship.

²³ Psalm 40:6

²⁴ cf. Isaiah 50:4-5

²⁵ Psalm 40:6 and Hebrews 10:5

²⁶ 1 Samuel 15:22-23; Psalm 51:16-17; Proverbs 15:8; Proverbs 21:3; Isaiah 1:13-15; Isaiah 66:3; Jeremiah 7:22-23; Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8; Haggai 2:14; Mark 12:33

²⁷ cf. John 10:18

²⁸ cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12

²⁹ cf. Mark 14:49; Luke 24:25-27,44; John 5:39; Acts 13:27-37

³⁰ **10:8.** Higher up (above, earlier, in the former part of the quotation)(ανωτερος-α-ον)(apman-s=adjective pronominal comparative accusative neuter singular / abm=adjective adverb comparative) he said (λεγων>λεγω) (vppanm-s): “Sacrifices (η θυσια)(n-af-p) and offerings (η προσφορα)(n-af-p) and (και) burnt offerings (το ολοκαυτωμα)(n-an-p)(the whole offering is burnt) and (offerings) on behalf of (περι)(pg) sin (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-s) you did not (ουκ)(ab) *once* desire (ηθελισα>θελω)(viaa--ys), nor (ουδε)(cc=conjunction coordinating) *once* were you pleased (ευδοκησα>ευδοκew)(viaa--ys) (with them) - although (αιτινες)(apnrf-p=adjective pronominal relative nominative feminine plural) they were *continually* brought (προσφερονται>προσφερω)(vipr--zp)(required to be made) according to (κατα)(pa) the law (ο νομος)(n-am-s).

³¹ **10:9.** Then (immediately thereafter)(τοτε)(ab) he said (ειρηκεν>λεγω)(vira--zs): “Look (ιδου)(qs), here (I am) I have come (am present) (ηκω)(vipa--xs), (του)(dgns+=determiner/definite article genitive neuter singular) (verse 7) *once for all* doing (ποιησαι>ποιew)(vnaa) (το + the infinitive expresses the purpose of his coming) your (σου)(npg-ys) will (το θελημα)(n-an-s), (me doing your will). He sets aside or abolishes (αναρει<αναρειω)(vipa--zs) the first (το πρωτον)(apoaan-s ordinal) in order (ινα)(cs) to establish (place) (στηση<στημι)(vsaa--zs) the second (το δευτερον)(apoaan-s ordinal).

³² **10:10.** And by (εν)(pd) that (ω)(a-rdn-s relative) will (το θελημα)(n-dn-s) we have been (εσμεν>ειμι)(+vipa--xp) made holy (sanctified, set apart) (ηγιασμενοι>αγιαζω)(vprpnmxp+)(the perfect tense emphasises the completed state or condition) through (δια)(pg) the sacrifice (η προσφορα) (n-gf-s) of the body (το σωμα)(n-gn-s) of Jesus Christ once for all (εφραξ)(ab).

The atonement explains the incarnation: God took on the human nature in Jesus Christ in order to put away sins. *Whether the writer speaks of the body or the blood of Christ, he means the incarnate life of Christ, yielded to God in obedience that was maintained up to the point of death.* (This is different and much more than evil people that give their lives to an evil cause).

So perfect was his sacrifice that no repetition of it is either necessary or possible: it was offered once for all. And the sanctification is so perfect that it also is as unrepeatable as the sacrifice that effected it.

The apostle Paul teaches that the old sinful nature of Christians has been crucified together with Christ and his new born-again nature has been resurrected together with Christ³³. *Just as the death and resurrection of Christ cannot be separated, likewise the justification and sanctification of Christians cannot be separated³⁴! Justification and sanctification are unrepeatable!*

10:11-18. The new order has an enthroned High Priest³⁵.

10:11. On the one hand every priest stands day after day *again and again* ministering and often again and again offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins.^{36 37}

10:12. But on the other hand this one (High Priest, Christ) having offered once for all time one sacrifice on behalf of sins, *once for all* sat down on the right (hand) of God.³⁸

The 'for all time' is best taken with the preceding clause: his *one sacrifice was for ever effective*.

The writer draws the full significance of Psalm 110:4. *The Old Testament priests never sat down in the sanctuary. They remained standing throughout the whole performance of their sacred duties. This is a token that they were never finished with their sacrifices!* These sacrifices had to be repeated 'year after year' (10:1) and 'day after day' (10:11). Whether these sacrifices were yearly or daily, not one of them could remove the sin or cleanse the conscience with permanent effect.

In contrast, when Christ had completed his one perfect sacrifice, *he sat down. This is a token that no further sacrifice was required, necessary or possible. A seated priest is the guarantee of a finished work and an accepted sacrifice! His continual ministry at the right hand of God is now intercession on the basis of the once for all sacrifice presented to God and accepted by God.*

HEBREWS 1:3 + 10:11-12

**Did Christ once for all complete the purification of sins
or does Christ continue to make purification of sins?**

Here lies the origin of a great difference in theology between the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant churches.

The Greek text (the original text before 64 A.D.). The Greek aorist participle 'having once for all offered' (προσενεγκας>προσφερω)(participle aorist active)(10:12) stands in sharp contrast to the present participle 'continually offering' (προσφερων)(10:11).

The Latin text (a translation commissioned by pope Damasus and made by Jerome between 390-405 A.D.). Latin has no perfect participle active (except in deponent verbs) and therefore used the present participle 'offerens' as the rendering of both these Greek forms. The Latin Vulgate translates Hebrews 10:12: "Christ offers continually his one sacrifice on behalf of sins" instead of "Christ having offered for ever one sacrifice on behalf of sins. This becomes the theological basis for the daily 'mass'/ eucharist.

The Latin Vulgate makes the same mistake in Hebrews 1:3: "He continually makes purification of sins" (purgationem peccatorum faciens)(present participle) instead of the Greek text: "he once for all made purification of sins" (καθαρισμον των αμαρτιων ποιησαμενος)(participle aorist middle). This translation facilitated the Roman Catholic view that during his present heavenly session Christ continues to make purification for sins.

³³ Romans 6:5-6,13,19

³⁴ Romans 8:30

³⁵ who made a perfect sacrifice of atonement for sins for those people who are now continually being sanctified

³⁶ **10:11.** On the one hand (μεν)(cs) every (τας)(a--nm-s) priest (ο ιερεις)(n-nm-s) stands (εστηκεν<ιστημι)(vira--zs)('standing' means he is still rendering service) day after day (καθ ημεραν) *again and again* ministering (performing religious service) (λειτουργων>λειτουργεω)(vppanm-s) and often (frequently)(πολλακις)(ab) *again and again* offering (προσφερων>προσφερω)(vppanm-s *present*) the same (ο αυτος, η αυτη, το αυτο)(a--af-p) sacrifices (η θυσια)(n-af-p), which (ατινες>ος-η-ον)(apnrf-p=adjective pronominal *relative* nominative feminine plural) can (δυνανται>δυνομαι)(vipn--zp) never (ουδεποτε)(ab) take away (περιελειν<περιαιρεω)(vnaa) sins (η αμαρτια)(n-af-p).

³⁷ The implication is that the daily mass/eucharist can never take away sins!

³⁸ **10:12.** But on the other hand (δε)(ch=conjunction hyper/superordinating) this one (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdnm-s *demonstrative*) (High Priest, Christ) *having offered once* (προσενεγκας<προσφερω)(vpaanm-s) for all time (εις το διηνεκες)(ap-an-s)(διηνεκης-εξ=continually, unbroken, perpetually)(effective) one (εις-μια-εν)(a-caf-s *cardinal*) sacrifice (η θυσια)(n-af-s) on behalf of (υπερ)(pg) sins (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-p), *once for all* (at his enthronement) sat down (εκαθισεν>καθιζω)(viaa--zs) on (εν)(pd) the right (hand) (δεξιος-α-ον)(ap-df-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s).

10:13. the remaining time he is waiting for his enemies to be made the footstool for his feet.³⁹

In the light of the solemn warning in Hebrews 10:26-31 this may be an implied warning to his readers not to let themselves be numbered among the enemies of the exalted Christ by falling away from Christ, but to rather “to hold firmly to the end the confidence they had at first” (3:14).

While the writer to the Hebrews connects this to the mediatorial ministry of the High Priest (Christ) in Hebrews 10:12-13 (“when this priest, Christ, had offered (once) for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God ... waiting for his enemies to be made his footstool.”), Paul connects it to the mediatorial ministry of the King (Christ) in 1 Corinthians 15:25-26 (“Christ must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet.”)

10:14. Because by one offering he has made perfect (*and they remain perfect and complete* forever) those being sanctified.⁴⁰

Probably most of the early converts to Christ, whether they were Jews or Gentiles, had been accustomed to a form of worship in which animals were sacrificed again and again. These sacrifices could at best only purify people in a ceremonial sense, but never in a moral or spiritual sense. *These continual sacrifices were rendered obsolete by the one perfect sacrifice of Christ!*

Hebrews 10:10 says that Christians *have been sanctified (perfect participle)* by the one sacrifice of Christ. The emphasis is laid on *the unrepeatable nature of the death of Christ as the sacrifice by which they ‘have been set apart once for all time’ for worship and service of God.* Hebrews 2:11 and 10:14 says that Christians *are being sanctified (present participle)*. The emphasis is laid on *the fact that they are now ‘for ever or continually God’s set apart ones’.* Hebrews 10:10 also says that Christians have been perfected (perfect tense in Greek) for ever. This perfection is expressed in the words of Jeremiah 31:31-34. This means that they are genuinely born again!

10:15. And also the Holy Spirit *continually* testifies to us (about this), with (when) saying:⁴¹

10:16. “This (is) the covenant which I will *certainly* make with them after those days”, says the Lord: “I will put my laws on their hearts, and I will *certainly* write them on their mind.”⁴²

10:17. And their sins and their iniquities I will *certainly* not bring into remembrance again.⁴³

10:18. Now where (there is) forgiveness of these, (there is) no longer an offering for sin.⁴⁴

The words spoken by the prophets in the Old Testament are the words of the Spirit of Christ⁴⁵. For the writer of Hebrews the truth of one kind of testimony required confirmation by another, in this case, by the testimony of the Scriptures. The testimony of the Scripture is the testimony of God!

The perfection of Christians is expressed in:

- The implanting of God’s laws in the heart and mind, that is, *true knowledge of God’s will and the will/determination and power/ability to carry them out.*
- *The assurance that their sins have been wiped out from God’s record* and that they will never be brought up in evidence against them⁴⁶.

Both these things could never be provided by the old order. It could only remind people again and again that they were sinners in need of permanent atonement. *Repeated remembrance went together with repeated sacrifices.* In contrast, the irrevocable erasing of sins from the divine record implies that no further sin-offering is called for. This confirms the finality of the sacrifice of Christ.

³⁹ **10:13.** the remaining time (left till the end of this present world, henceforth, from now on and in the future) (το +λοιπος-η-ον)(ap-an-s) he is waiting (εκδεχομενος>εκδεχομαι)(vppnm-s) for his enemies (εχθρος -α -ον)(ap-nm-p) to be made (τεθωσιν>τιθημι)(vsap--zp) the footstool (το υποποδιον)(n-nn-s) for his (αυτου)(npgmzs) feet (ο πους -οδος)(n-gm-p).

⁴⁰ **10:14.** Because (γαρ)(cs) by one (εις-μια-εν)(a-cdf-s cardinal) offering (η προσφορα)(n-df-s) he has made perfect (*and they remain perfect and complete*)(τετελειωκεν>τελειωω) (vira--zs perfect tense) forever (εις το διηνεκες)(ap-an-s) those being sanctified (αγιαζομενους>αγιαζομαι) (vppam-p) (*The perfect tense indicates one event in time with a continuing result which is completed in the continual process depicted by the participle.*)

⁴¹ **10:15.** And (δε) also (και) the Holy Spirit (το πνευμα το αγιον) *continually* testifies (μαρτυρει>μαρτυρεω)(vira--zs) to us (υμιν)(npl-dp) (about this), with (when) (μετα)(pa) saying (ειρηκεναι<λεγω)(vnraa=verb infinitive perfect active + accusative):

⁴² **10:16.** “This (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdnf-s=adjective pronominal demonstrative nominative feminine singular) (is) the covenant (η διαθηκη) (n-nf-s) which (ην) (apraf-s relative) I will *certainly* make (διαθησομαι<διατιθημι) (vifm--xs) with (προς)(pa) them (αυτους-η-ο)(nramzr =noun pronoun accusative masculine 3rd person plural) after (μετα)(pa) those (εκαινος-η-ον)(a-daf-p demonstrative) days (η ημερα)(n-af-p)”, says (λεγει>λεγω)(vira--zs) the Lord (ο κυριος)(n-nm-s): “I will put (διδους<διδωμι) (vppanmxs) my (μου)(npg-xs) laws (ο νομος)(n-am-p) on

(επι)(pa) their hearts (η καρδια)(n-af-p), and I will *certainly* write (επιγραψω>επιγραφο)(vifa--xs) them (ουτος-η-ον)(nramzr) on (επι)(pa) their (αυτων)(npgmzr) mind (η διανοια)(n-af-s).

⁴³ **10:17.** And their sins (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-p) and their iniquities (η ανομια)(n-gf-p) I will *certainly* not (ου μη) bring into remembrance (μνησθησομαι<μνησκω) (vifo--xs) again (ετι)(ab)”.

⁴⁴ **10:18.** Now (δε)(cc=conjunction coordinating) where (οπου)(cs=conjunction subordinating) (there is) forgiveness (η αφεσις)(n-nf-s) of these (ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdgf-p=adjective pronominal demonstrative genitive feminine plural), (there is) no longer (ουκετι)(ab) an offering (η προσφορα)(n-nf-s) for sin (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-s)(NIV: any sacrifice for sin).

⁴⁵ 1 Peter 1:10-12; cf. Hebrews 3:7; Hebrews 10:15

⁴⁶ cf. John 5:24

In Hebrews 8, Jeremiah 31:31-34 was quoted to prove the obsolescence (going out of date) of the old order (the era of shadows).

In Hebrews 10, Jeremiah 31:31-34 is quoted to establish the permanence of the new order (the era of perfect realities).

God has spoken in his Son and he has no word to speak beyond Christ!

Section 6. Hebrews 10:19 - 12:29.

The indispensable character of unswerving faith / Understanding what Christian faith is.

10:19-25. Christian faith involves bold confidence towards God and perseverance to meet together.

10:19. Therefore, brothers, *always* having confidence (boldness) for the entrance of the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus.⁴⁷

The 'boldness (confidence)' of New Testament believers is contrasted with the restrictions of the Old Testament high priests to enter the Most Holy Place! This is valid for all Christians and they may enter again and again and whenever they choose, because the curtain has been torn from top to bottom⁴⁸! Christians are exhorted to exercise their right and privilege. In Hebrews 4:16 they may draw near on the bases of knowing that Christ, who experienced all their trials and temptations, is *a merciful High Priest*. In Hebrews 10:19 they may draw near on the basis of knowing that *the entrance remains open* for his people to follow him in.

10:20. (the entrance) which he *once for all* inaugurated for us, a fresh (cannot grow old), new⁴⁹ and living way through the veil - this is his flesh⁵⁰

The blood of Jesus Christ on the cross inaugurated both the new covenant (9:18) and the new temple (10:20). The new way is *affirming John 14:6: "I am the only Way to God the Father"*⁵¹. The shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ on the cross made Jesus Christ 'the new and living way' to cause people to draw near to God.

The veil in the Old Testament temple hid the glory of God on the one side and kept the need of people on the other side. The tearing of the veil when Jesus was crucified⁵² is *a symbolic act that God is now unveiled (revealed) to us and the way to God has been thrown wide open*. Jesus is the Mediator, the umpire, because *he can lay his hands on both: from heaven the unveiling of God and from earth the opening of the way to God, because he shares the nature of both (God and man)*. The writer looked on 'the veil' as symbolising the human life of Jesus, which he presented to God when he suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, in order to bring us to God⁵³.

10:21. And (since we have) a great high priest over the household of God⁵⁴

The household of God is the community of God's people (cf. 3:6).

10:22. *let us again and again* draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having the hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and having the body washed with pure water.⁵⁵

Access to God is no longer fenced off by the conditions of the Old Testament law. Every person may approach God through Jesus Christ and the atonement for sin he procured. They may do this in full assurance, which faith in Christ begets (cf. 11:6). Only those who have experienced the cleansing procured by the blood of Jesus Christ can have such a sincere heart and full assurance to approach God without fear and in complete assurance that they will not be turned away, but welcomed.

⁴⁷ **10:19.** Therefore (οὖν)(ch), brothers (ο ἀδελφός)(n-vm-p *vocative*), *always* having (ἐχόντες>εχω)(vppanmχp) confidence (boldness) (ἡ παρρησία)(n-af-s) for (εἰς+accusative)(expresses purpose) the entrance (ἡ εἰσοδος)(n-af-s) of the sanctuary (τὰ ἁγία)(ap-gn-p)(meaning the

Most Holy Place)(τὰ Ἁγία τῶν ἁγίων) by (ἐν)(pd) the blood (τὸ αἷμα)(n-dn-s) of Jesus.

⁴⁸ cf. Matthew 27:51

⁴⁹ cf. 1 Peter 1:4

⁵⁰ **10:20.** (the entrance) which (ἡν)(apraf-s *relative*) he *once for all* inaugurated (dedicated, NIV: opened) (ἐνεκαίνισεν>εγκαινίζω)(viaa--zs) for us (ὑμῖν)(npd-xp), a fresh (freshly slaughtered, that retains its freshness and cannot grow old) or new (προσφάτος -α -ον)(a--af-s) and (καὶ) living (ζῶσαν>ζαω)(vppaaf-s) way (ο ὁδος)(n-af-s) through (διὰ)(pg) the veil (that which falls down) (τὸ καταπετασμάτος)(n-gn-s) - this (οὗτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdn-s *demonstrative*) is (εἰς+accusative)(vīpa--zs)(is symbolic of) his (αὐτοσ-η-ον)(npgmzs) flesh (body)(ἡ σαρκίς)(n-gf-s)

⁵¹ cf. Romans 5:2; Ephesians 2:18; Ephesians 3:12; 1 Peter 2:4f; 1 Peter 3:18

⁵² Matthew 27:51

⁵³ 1 Peter 3:18

⁵⁴ **10:21.** And (καὶ) (since we have) a great (μεγας-μεγαλη-μεγα)(a--am-s) high priest (ο ἱερευς)(n-am-s) over (ἐπι)(pa) the household (ο οἶκος) (n-am-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s)

⁵⁵ **10:22.** *let us again and again* draw near (προσερχομεθα>προσερχομαι)(vspn--xp *cohortative subjunctive*) with (μετα)(pg) a true (ἀληθινος-α-ον)(a--gf-s) heart (ἡ καρδία)(n-gf-s) in (ἐν)(pd) full assurance (fullness) (ἡ πληροφορία)(n-df-s) of faith (ἡ πίστις)(n-gf-s), having the hearts (ἡ καρδία)(n-af-s) sprinkled (περαντισμενοι>ραντιζω)(vprnmχp)(*the perfect tense* indicates a completed state or condition) from (απο)(pg) an evil (πονηρος-α-ον)(a--gf-s) conscience (ἡ συναισθησις)(n-gf-s) and having the body (το σωμα)(n-an-s) washed (λειτουργομενοι>λουω)(vprenmχp *perfect tense*) with pure (καθαρος-α-ον)(a--dn-s) water (το υδωρ)(n-dn-s).

- *The sprinkling of the heart denotes the inward and spiritual cleansing.* The writer has in mind the New Testament counterpart of the Old Testament ritual of sprinkling water for the outward (ceremonial) cleansing, the water prepared with the ashes of the red heifer (cf. 9:13-14). People may and can only enter the presence of God by the blood of Jesus Christ! *The cleansing of the conscience removes the barrier that prevented their free access. Spiritual nearness to God is impossible for a polluted conscience.*
- *The washing of the body denotes the outward application of water as the visible sign and seal of the inward and spiritual cleansing.* Just as in 1 Peter 3:21, the water of baptism is not intended to remove bodily impurity but to express a pledge to God from a clear conscience.
- The ‘heart’ and the ‘body’ together are a symbol of the cleansing (rebirth) of the entire personality. *The sprinkling and the washing are denoted by perfect participles in Greek, which show that they are once-for-all and unrepeatable acts with abiding effects. They indicate a completed state or condition, which is already possessed.*

10:23. *Let us persevere* to hold fast the confession of hope unswervingly, for faithful is he (God) who promised.⁵⁶

God’s promise will never fail. If the confession wavers it is because the confessor wavers. The Christian hope need never waver.

10:24. And *let us again and again* consider the spurring on of one another unto love and good works.⁵⁷

Christian faith and hope and witness will flourish more vigorously in an atmosphere of Christian fellowship.

In 1 Corinthians 13:5, *love is not provoked* in the sense that it does not allow difficult people or difficult circumstances to cause it to become irritated. But in Hebrews 10:24 *love is provoked* in the sense that Christians stimulate one another to loving relationships and good deeds.

10:25. not forsaking meeting together one another, as (is) the custom (habit) with some, but *keep on* exhorting (one another); and so much the more, as you see the day drawing near.⁵⁸

The word ‘meeting together’⁵⁹ is a compound of the word ‘synagogue’ and ‘in addition to’.

- *The writer would like to see these Jewish Christians “go outside the camp and bear the disgrace of Christ’ (13:13) and thus separate themselves from the Jewish synagogue meetings! But if they could not yet do that, to at least attend the special Jewish Christian house fellowship meetings on Sundays in addition to the Jewish synagogue meetings on Saturdays. They are exhorted not to stay away from the specific Christian meetings!*
- *The writer would like to see these Jewish Christians attend the wider Christian meetings together with the Gentile Christians in addition to the Jewish Christian house fellowship meetings. They are exhorted not to detach themselves from the larger body of Gentile Christians in the world!*

The reasons why some people withdrew from the Christian fellowships are:

- Some people imagined that they could secure the holy contents and blessings of Christianity in the same way as in the heathen mystery religions (Isis with Horus and Magna Mater) by attending once and then withdraw. Once they had the ticket to heaven they could withdraw.
- Some people got detached because of laziness and weariness.
- Some people felt superior and thought they could dispense with the spiritual help of others.
- *Some were scared away by the threats of the political or religious authorities and shunned public attendance of worship at specific Christian meetings in order to avoid being recognised as Christians.*
- Some may have been weakened when they realised that the second coming was not going to happen soon.

In Matthew 24:1-3 (A.D. 61) Jesus prophesied the destruction of the temple. Therefore before A.D. 70 those Christians who remembered and took seriously the prophecy of Jesus about the destruction of the temple⁶⁰ were *scarcely in a position to keep the destruction of the temple distinct from the second coming of Christ*. Only after A.D. 70 was it possible to understand the two periods of time to which Jesus referred to in Matthew 24:1-41.

In Matthew 24:3 the disciples asked, “When will the temple be destroyed?” and “What is the sign of the second coming, that is, the end of the age?”

⁵⁶ **10:23.** *Let us persevere* to hold fast (κατεχωμεν>κατεχω)(vspra--xp cohortative subjunctive) the confession (η ομολογια)(n-af-s) of hope (η ελπις)(n- gf-s) unswervingly (without wavering, not leaning) (ακλινης-εξ)(a-af-s), for (γαρ)(cs) faithful (trustworthy) (πιστος-α-ον) (a--nm-s) is he (God) who promised (επαγγελιαμενος>επαγγελλομαι)(vpadnm-s):

⁵⁷ **10:24.** And (και) *let us again and again* consider (κατανοωμεν>κατανοωω)(vspra—xp cohortative subjunctive) the spurring on/provoking (nrmpx) (ο παροξυσμος) of one another (αλληλων, αλληλους)(nrampx) unto love (η αγαπη)(n-gf-s) and (και) good (καλος-η-ον)(a--gn-p) works (το εργον)(n-gn-p).

⁵⁸ **10:25.** not (μη)(ab) forsaking (εγκαταλειποντες<εγκαταλειπω)(vrranmxx) meeting together (η επισυναγωγην)(n-af-s)(the present tense in the word indicates the continued responsibility, the regular meetings) one another (each other)(εαυτου-ης-του)(nrpgrmxx), as (καθως)(cs) (is) the custom (habit) (το εθος)(n-nn-s) with some (τις)(apidm-p indefinite), but (αλλα)(ch=conjunction hyper/superordinating) *keep on* exhorting (παρακαλουντες>παρακαλεω) (vrranmxx) (one another); and (και) so much (τοσουτος-αυτη-ουτων)(apddn-s=adjective pronominal Demonstrative dative neuter singular) the more (greater degree)(μολλον)(comparative adverb of μαλα, much), as (much or so much the more)(οσος-η-ον)(aprdn-s) you see (βλεπετε>βλεπω)(vipa--yp) the day (η ημερα)(n-af-s) drawing near (εγγιζουσιν<εγγιζω)(vrrpaa-f-s).

⁵⁹ η επισυναγωγη = a coming together in addition to

⁶⁰ John 2, Matthew 24

The writer of Hebrews probably wrote the letter to the Hebrews in A.D. 64, thus before A.D. 70, and wrote, “As you see the Day approaching” (10:25). The readers with discernment could already ‘see’ the signs of the impending end of Jerusalem and the temple (the Roman legions were already besieging the city)⁶¹.

Nevertheless, for the writer of this letter, as for the other New Testament writers, the ‘Day’ is primarily the day of the second coming of Christ. *The period between the first coming of Christ and the second coming of Christ is called ‘the end time’, ‘the last days’ and ‘the last hour’*. Christians believed that whatever the duration of this period may be, “the time is near (at hand)”⁶².

How can the tension between the eschatological (faith in the second coming) and historical existence of faith (faith here and now) be retained over a period of time? By walking in the Spirit⁶³, because *the Spirit is the pledge and first fruits of the heritage which Christians will inherit at the second coming*⁶⁴.

10:26-31. Fourth practical warning. Do not commit the wilful sin of apostasy.

(1) The test that proves the wilful/deliberate sin of apostasy.

10:26. For if we *keep on* sinning deliberately after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains *no more* a sacrifice for (the taking away of) sins.⁶⁵

The phrase ‘knowledge of the truth’ occurs in John⁶⁶ and the Pastoral Letters⁶⁷. The knowledge of the truth certainly included ‘faith in Jesus Christ’. Whether this was *historical faith or salvation faith* is not answered.

The fact that this person *continues ‘wilfully’ or ‘deliberately’ to sin* proofs that he has not been born again and therefore does not know Jesus Christ personally⁶⁸! Deliberately/wilfully continuing to sin (10:26) is the same issue as “turning away from the living God” (3:12) and “falling away” (6:4-8).

- In **Hebrews 3:12,14**, this person is ‘an Israelite brother’, one who has a share in the covenant privileges of the people of God. He shared the Old Testament shadowy or imperfect illumination and the New Testament more perfect illumination by Jesus Christ⁶⁹, *which does not necessarily mean that he was born again. His problem is “his evil heart and unbelief” (3:12). The test proofs that “he does not persevere” (3:14)*⁷⁰.
- In **Hebrews 6:4-8**, this person is a Jewish Christian, one who has a share in the covenant privileges of the people of God. He shared in the enlightenment of the gospel and received the baptism with water as a sign that he understood the light of the gospel; he experienced the spiritual blessings, which as a whole are signified and sealed in the Lord’s Supper; he received the laying on of hands as a sign that he experienced the reality, presence and power of the Holy Spirit present in the church (*without necessarily being born again by the Holy Spirit*)(cf. Simon whose heart was not right and therefore had no share in this ministry of the Holy Spirit⁷¹); he experienced the goodness of the Bible message (during preaching in the church) and the power of miracles as a sign that the new age or new order had begun. *His problem is that “he does not produce a crop useful to God, but produces thorns and thistles and is in danger of being cursed” (6:7-8). The test proofs that “he does not bear good fruit” (6:7-8)*⁷².
- In **Hebrews 10:26-31**, this person “received the knowledge of the truth”, but, like some Pharisees, is *not set free*⁷³. *His problem was that “he deliberately continues to sin” (10:26) and thereby proofs that he does not know Christ and is not born again – read 1 John 3:6-9. The test proofs that “he tramples on the Son of God, treats the blood of the covenant that set him apart from other people in this world as common or unholy animal blood and that he insults the Holy Spirit that has shown him so much grace” (10:29).*

Perseverance and bearing good fruit and continuing to confess Christ are NOT the *conditions* for salvation, but ARE the *fruits* of salvation: they proof genuine faith and salvation.

(2) The different convictions about ‘sinning wilfully’ in Christian history.

⁶¹ Luke 19:43

⁶² Revelation 1:3

⁶³ Galatians 5:25

⁶⁴ Romans 8:23; Ephesians 1:13-14

⁶⁵ **10:26.** For (γαρ)(cs) if we *keep on* sinning (αμαρτανωντων>αμαρτανω)(vppagmxp) deliberately (εκουσιως)(ab) after (μετα)(pa) we have received (το λαβειν>λαμβανω)(vnaa) the knowledge (η επιγνωσις)(n-af-s) of the truth (η αλεθεια)(n-gf-s), there remains (απολειπεται>απολειπω)(vipr--zs) *no more* (ουκετι)(ab) a sacrifice (η θυσια)(n-nf-s) for (περι)(concerning, on account of, for the taking away of)(pg) sins (η αμαρτια)(n-gf-p).

⁶⁶ John 8:32; 1 John 2:21; 2 John 1

⁶⁷ 1 Timothy 2:4; 1 Timothy 4:3; 2 Timothy 2:25; 2 Timothy 3:7; Titus 1:1

⁶⁸ 1 John 3:6-9

⁶⁹ John 1:9

⁷⁰ cf. Matthew 10:22; Matthew 24:13; Revelation 2:10; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

⁷¹ Acts 8:9-24

⁷² cf. Matthew 12:33-37; John 15:6-8; James 2:14-23

⁷³ John 8:31-32

- *The Shepherd of Hermas (150 A.D.)*. In the Early Christian Church it was commonly inferred from this passage and other passages that forgiveness of all kinds of sins, whether inadvertent or deliberate, *after a person has been baptised* was ruled out. In about 150 A.D. Hermas wrote a book at Rome, ‘The Shepherd’.
First a woman and then an angel in the form a shepherd appeared to Hermas with revelations and instructions: 5 visions, 12 instructions and 10 parables. The message is mainly that the Church had become worldly and must do penance. *Penance is possible only once!* Hermas was a small businessman and not a theologian and wrote in Greek. He taught that baptism in the name of Christ wiped out all previous sins and that baptised persons who kept the law of Christ consistently need not fear the last judgement. But anyone who sinned once after baptism could, after due repentance, receive forgiveness once more, and be assured of ultimate salvation if he did not fall again!
- *Tertullian (190 A.D.)* condemned even ‘the one concession’ (of committing a sin after baptism) of Hermas.
- *The Roman Catholic Church (3rd century A.D.)* extended the one concession of Hermas and changed it into ‘the institution of penance’ (one of the 7 sacraments). Every baptised person is required periodically (minimum once a year) to seek from a priest, by contrition, confession and doing penance (an act of self-mortification as expression of his penitence especially one imposed by the priest), absolution for sins committed up to date. But most delayed penance till just before their death. (However, such an institution differs little from the Old Testament institution of the Day of Atonement in which remembrance of sins was made once a year⁷⁴.)
- *The Codex Sinaiticus (4th century A.D.)* contains the Shepherd of Hermas.

But the writer of Hebrews (64 A.D.) instead urges Christians to avail themselves continuously of the intercessory offices of their enthroned High Priest, Christ, who appears in God’s presence on their behalf by virtue of his once for all perfect sacrifice and “always intercedes for them”⁷⁵!

(3) The judgement of those who sin wilfully’ in Christian history.

10:27. but a certain fearful expectation of judgement, and a zeal of fire (a fiery zeal)⁷⁶ that is on the point of *continually* consuming those who oppose (God).⁷⁷

10:28. Anyone who *once for all* rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on (the testimony of) two or three witnesses.⁷⁸

10:29. By how much severe (more severely) a punishment, do you think, will he be considered worthy who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, who has treated as common (unclean) the blood of the covenant through which he was *once for all* been sanctified, and who has arrogantly insulted the Spirit of grace?⁷⁹

10:30. For we know him who said: “Revenge is for me; I will *certainly* repay⁸⁰.” And again: “The Lord will *certainly* judge his⁸¹ people⁸²”

10:31. Dreadful (is) the falling into the hands of the *always* Living God.⁸³

These are two quotations from the Song of Moses⁸⁴. This Song furnished the early Christian Church with testimonies regarding the unbelief of the Jews⁸⁵.

God will execute judgement on behalf of believers, vindicating their just cause against their enemies. But God will also execute judgement against his people when they forsake his covenant. The privileges which Israel enjoyed as God’s

⁷⁴ Hebrews 10:3

⁷⁵ Hebrews 7:25

⁷⁶ cf. Isaiah 26:11

⁷⁷ **10:27.** but (δε)(ch) a certain (some) (τις)(a-inf-s *indefinite*) fearful (causing fear)(φοβερος-α-ονα)(a--nf-s) expectation (η εκδοχη)(n-nf-s) of judgement (η κτισις)(n-gf-s), and a zeal (το ζηλος)(n-nm-s) of fire (το πυρ)(n-gn-s) (a fiery zeal) that is on the point of (about to) (μελλωντος>μελλω)(+vppagn-s) *continually* consuming (that will ‘consume’ or ‘eat’) (εσθειν<εσθιω)(vnpa+)(the infinitive is used with the following to express the future) those who oppose (enemies, adversaries) (υπεναντιος-α-ον)(ap-am-p) (God).

⁷⁸ **10:28.** Anyone (τις)(apinm-s *indefinite*) who *once for all* rejected (set aside) (αθετησας<αθετεω)(vpaanm-s) the law (ο νομος)(n-am-s) of Moses died (αποθνησκει>αποθνησκω)(vipa--zs) without (χωρις)(pg) mercy (ο οικτιρμος)(n-gm-p) on (επι)(pg) (the testimony of) two (δυο, δυοιν) (a-cdm-p *cardinal*) or three (τρις, τρισιν)(a-cdm-p) witnesses (ο μαρτυς)(n-dm-p).

⁷⁹ **10:29.** By ‘how much (ποσω)(aptdn-s *interrogative*) severe (worse) (χειρων-ονος)(amgf-s *comparative*) (more severely) a punishment (η τιμωριας)(n-gf-s), do you think (δοκειτε>δοκεω)(vipa--yp), will he be considered worthy (deserve) (αξιωθησεται>αξιοω)(vifp--zs) (punishment) who (ο)(dnms / nprnms) has ‘trampled underfoot (stomped upon) (καταπατησας>καταπατεω)(vpaanm-s) the Son (ο υιος) (n-am-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s), who has treated as (considered) (ηγησαμενος>ηγεομαι)(vpadnm-s) common (unclean) (κοινος-η-ον) (a---an-s) the blood (το αιμα)(n-an-s) of the covenant (η διαθηκη)(n-gf-s) through (εν)(pd) which (ω)(aprdn-s *relative*) he was *once for all* been sanctified (set apart for divine use)(ηγιασθη<αγιαζω)(viap--zs), and (και) who has arrogantly insulted (treated with utter contempt) (ενυβρισας>ενυβριζω)(vpaanm-s) the Spirit (το πνευμα)(n-an-s) of grace (η χαρις)(n-gf-s)?

⁸⁰ Deuteronomy 32:35

⁸¹ Deuteronomy 32:36

⁸² **10:30.** For (γαρ)(cs) we know (οιδαμεν>οιδα)(the perfect of the stem ειδ-(Latin: video) but used as a presence)(indicative perfect active 1st plural) him who said (ειποντα>λεγω)(vpraam-s) (ειπον=2nd aorist, ερω=future, ερηκα =perfectum): Revenge (η εκδικησις)(n-nf-s) is for me

(εμοι)(nprd-xs); I (εγω)(nprn-xs) will *certainly* repay (ανταποδωσω>ανταποδιδωμι)(vifa--xs).” And (και) again (παλιν)(ab): The Lord (ο κυριος)(n-nm-s) will *certainly* judge (κρινει>κρινω)(vifa--zs) his (αυτος-η-ο)(nprgmzs) people (ο λαος)(n-am-s).

⁸³ **10:31.** Dreadful (φοβερος-α-ον)(a--nn-s) (is) the falling (εμπεσειν<εμιπτω)(vnaan) into (εις)(pa) the hands (η χειρ)(n-af-p) of the *always* Living (ζωντος>ζωω)(vppagm-s) God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s).

⁸⁴ Deuteronomy 32:35-36

⁸⁵ cf. Romans 10:19 (Deuteronomy 32:19), 1 Corinthians 10:20 (Deuteronomy 32:22), Philippians 2:15 (Deuteronomy 32:5)

covenant people meant that their responsibilities were the greater and the retribution would be the more severe in their case if they gave themselves up to unrighteousness⁸⁶.

The writer of Hebrews is deeply aware of God's awesome holiness and majesty. The primary application of verse 31 is to the covenant people of God. Isaiah 33:14-15 says, "The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless: "Who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning? He who walks righteously and speaks what is right, who rejects gain from extortion and keeps his hand from accepting bribes, who stops his ears against plots of murder and shuts his eyes against contemplating evil."

10:32-39 Christian faith involves the call to perseverance in doing God's will and in not withdrawing.

10:32. You *must always* remember those earlier days in which you *once for all* had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest of sufferings.⁸⁷

10:33. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to⁸⁸ insults and also afflictions. At other times you became sharers with those who were so treated.⁸⁹

10:34. For also you sympathised with prisoners, and accepted with joy the confiscation of your property knowing that you *always* have yourselves a better and more lasting possession.⁹⁰

Like *the solemn warning* in Hebrews 6:4-8 is *immediately followed by words of reassurance and encouragement* (6:9-12), so the solemn warning in Hebrews 10:26-31 is immediately followed by words of reassurance and encouragement (10:32-34). The writer does not wish to discourage his readers, but to spur them on so that they will emerge victoriously from the present growing test of their faith.

The Hebrews had undergone persecution, but none of them had thus far suffered martyrdom, like Stephen in A.D. 33 under the Greek speaking Jews⁹¹ or like James in A.D. 44 under Herod Agrippa I⁹² or like James the Just in A.D. 62 under the instigation of the high priest Annas II⁹³ or like the Roman Christians in A.D. 64 under Nero's persecutions. Tacitus wrote, "Their death was a matter of sport: they were covered in wild beasts' skins and torn to pieces by dogs; or were fastened to crosses and set on fire in order to serve as torches by night when daylight failed⁹⁴ or like Roman Christians after A.D. 64 that were martyred to death (cf. 12:4). After the outbreak of the Jewish revolt against Rome in A.D. 66, the Jewish communities of many cities throughout Syria and Palestine were the victims of riot and massacre⁹⁵ and Jewish Christians would in no way be exempt from such assaults.

But in A.D. 41 emperor Claudius imposed certain restrictions on the Jewish colony in Rome. They were not banished but forbidden to gather in accordance with their ancestral way of life⁹⁶. They were later expelled because "they were constantly indulging in riots at the instigation of Chrestus"⁹⁷. Christianity had recently been introduced to Rome, probably via the Jewish colony⁹⁸. A Jewish couple, Priscilla and Aquila, had left Rome and settled in Corinth, where Paul met them in A.D. 50⁹⁹. A large scale eviction of this nature would inevitably have been attended by widespread looting by the city proletariat, together with many other kinds of insults and indignities. The Jews who had become Christians suffered the additional indignities at the hands of the synagogue authorities. We believe that the events in Rome in A.D. 49 could probably be referred to here. Those who had not been personally exposed to suffering showed their solidarity with those who were directly attacked, and so shared the public scorn. Throughout the whole period of

⁸⁶ Amos 3:2

⁸⁷ **10:32.** You *must always* remember (αυμιμνησκεσθεαυμιμνησκω)(vmp--yp) those earlier (former)(προτερος-α-ον)(a-man-s / a-maf-p)(comparative of προ) days (η ημερα)(n-af-p) in (εν)(pd) which (αυς)(apdf-p relative) you *once for all* had received the light (had been enlightened) (φωτισθεντες>φωτιζω)(vrapnmp), when you stood your ground (endured) (υπεμεινατε<υπομενω)(viaa--yp) in a great (πολυς-πολλη-πολυ)(a--af-s) contest (conflict, struggle) (η αθλησις)(n-af-s) of sufferings (το παθημα)(n-gn-p).

⁸⁸ 1 Corinthians 4:9

⁸⁹ **10:33.** Sometimes (τουτο μεν)(ουτος-αυτη-τουτο)(apdan-s=adjective pronominal/pronoun demonstrative accusative neuter Singular. 'this' =comparatively near at hand as contrasted with εκαινος, demonstrative pronoun 'that') (with μεν ... δε... = particles of contrast)

you were publicly exposed to (brought upon the stage or held up to)(θεατριζομενοι>θεατριζω)(vppnmp) (cf. to θεατρον) insults (derisions) (ο ονειδισμος) (n-dm-p) and also (τε και) afflictions (persecutions, pressures) (η θλιψις)(n-df-p). At other times (τουτο δε) you became (γενηθεντες>γινομαι)(vrapnmp) sharers (partakers)(ο κοινωνος)(n-nm-p) with those who were so (ουτως)(ab) treated (αναστρεφομενων>αναστρεφω)(vpprgm-p).

⁹⁰ **10:34.** For (γαρ)(cs) also (και) you sympathised (συνεπαθησατε>συνπαθεω)(viaa--yp) with prisoners (ο δεσμιος)(n-dm-p), and accepted (προσεδεξασθε<προδεχομαι)(viad--yp) with (μετα)(pg) joy (η χαρα)(n-gf-s) the confiscation (snatching, plundering, seizing) (η αρπαγη) (n-af-s) of your property (των υπαρχοντων>υπαρχω)(to exist, to be at your disposal)(vppagn-p), (because) knowing (γινωσκοντες>γινωσκω) (vppanmp) that you *always* have (εχειν>εχω)(vnpa) yourselves (εαυτος-ης-ου)(npamyp) a better (κρειτων-ον)(functions as comparative of αχθος)(a-maf-s comparative) and (και) more lasting (μενουςαν>μενω)(vppaaf-s) possession' (η υπαρξις)(n-af-s).

⁹¹ Act 8:1ff

⁹² Acts 12:2

⁹³ Josephus 'Antiquities'. 20:200

⁹⁴ Tacitus, Annals 15:44

⁹⁵ Josephus, War 2:457ff

⁹⁶ Dio Cassius, Histories 60:6

⁹⁷ Suetonius, Claudius 25:4. (A.D. 121)

⁹⁸ cf. Acts 2:10

⁹⁹ Act 18:1-4

Christian persecution by the Roman authorities, prisoners had to be fed and cared for by other Christians or they would die. Thus, visiting Christian prisoners and feeding them was a regular, but dangerous Christian charity¹⁰⁰. But these Jewish Christians could say farewell to their earthly possessions, because they kept their eyes on the eternal inheritance.

¹⁰⁰ cf. Matthew 25:36

- 10:35.** Therefore you *must* not throw away your confidence (boldness) which will have a great reward.¹⁰¹
- 10:36.** You have need of patient endurance so that *when* you have done the will of God, you may receive what he has promised.¹⁰²
- 10:37.** For still a little time, he who is coming (the coming One, the Messiah) will *certainly* come and will *certainly* not delay.¹⁰³
- 10:38.** But “my righteous one (the believer) will *certainly* live by faith”¹⁰⁴. And if he shrinks back (withdraws), my soul (=I, God) will *never* be pleased with him.¹⁰⁵
- 10:39.** But we are not of those who withdraw resulting in the destruction (of their soul), but of those who believe resulting in salvation (possession) of their soul.¹⁰⁶

‘Confidence or boldness’ is the forthrightness of their language and actions that spring from an inner conviction and confidence in their heart and life. ‘Perseverance’ or ‘patience’ is to remain loyal and not give up doing what is right in God’s eyes.

- The Hebrew text of Habakkuk 2:3-4 says, “Behold, his soul (of the Chaldeans) is puffed up, it is not upright in him, but the righteous (the believer) shall live by his faith”. Let the righteous one wait in faith, because the oppressor (the Chaldeans) with his devious plans shall be judged at God’s appointed time. Only the afflictions and sufferings of the godly will show their faith.
- The Greek text (LXX) of Habakkuk 2:3-4 says, “If he (the expected deliverer) draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him; but my righteous one (the expected deliverer) will live by faith”. If the deliverer (the righteous one, Messiah) shrinks back, he is not God’s chosen agent. But at God’s appointed time he will surely come and not delay. He will vindicate the righteousness of God and put the oppressor down.
- The writer to the Hebrews applies the prophecy to the second coming of Christ. “The Messiah is the Coming One. Therefore the righteous Christian lives by faith, even when he is tempted to wonder whether Christ would ever return. This is a warning that God’s displeasure would rest on anyone who draws back and yields to the temptation to *relapse from his Christian faith into Judaism*. If he perseveres in his Christian faith he will gain his life. But if he shrinks back into Judaism he will prove himself reprobate.

By the words: “the righteous shall live by faith” the apostle Paul emphasises justification by faith, while the writer to the Hebrews includes in this the forward-looking character of faith, which Paul more often expresses with the word ‘hope’.

The writer is confident that he himself and the Hebrew believers are not among those who shrink back and are lost, but are people who are justified by faith (fact in the past) and keep looking forward to the second coming (fact in the future).

¹⁰¹ **10:35.** Therefore (οὐν)(ch) you *must* not throw away (αποβαλιητε>αποβαλλω)(vsaa--yp / ymaa--yp *imperative*) your (υμων)(npgyp) confidence (boldness) (η παρρησια)(n-af-s); which (οστις-ητις-οτι)(aprnf-s *relative*) will have (εχει>εχω)(vifa--zs) a great (large) (μεγας-μεγαλη-μεγα)(a--af-s) reward (η μισθαποδοσια)(n-af-s).

¹⁰² **10:36.** You have (εχετε>εχω)(vifa--yp) need of (η χρεια)(n-af-s) patient endurance (η υπομονη)(n-gf-s) so that (ινα)(cs) *when* you have done (ποιησαντες>ποιεω)(vpaanmyp) the will (το θελημα)(n-an-s) of God (ο θεος)(n-gm-s), you may receive (κομισησθε>κομιζομαι)(vsam--yp) what he has promised (η επαγγελια)(n-af-s).

¹⁰³ **10:37.** For (γαρ)(cs) still (ετι)(ab) a little (small) (μικρος-α-ον)(ap-am-s) (as long of) time (οσοσ-ον)(apram-s *relative*) (= only in a very little while), he (ο)(dnms=determiner/definite article, nominative masculine singular / nprnmzs) who is coming (ο ερχομενος>ερχομαι)(vppnm-s n=mid/pas dep)(the Coming One) will *certainly* come (ηξει<ηκω) (vifa--zs) and will *certainly* not (ου)(ab) delay (χρονισει<χρονιζω)(vifa--zs).

¹⁰⁴ Galatians 3:11; Romans 1:17; Hebrews 10:37.

¹⁰⁵ **10:38.** But (δε)(ch) my (μου)(pronoun genitive 1st singular) righteous one (δικαιος-α-ον)(ap-nm-s)(the believer) will *certainly* live (ζησεται>ζωω)(vifm--zs) by (εκ)(pg) faith (η πιστις)(n-gf-s). And (και) if (εαν)(cs) he shrinks back (withdraws) (υποστειληται>υποστειλομαι)(vsam--zs), my (μου)(npg-xs) soul (=I) (η ψυχη)(n-nf-s) will *never* be pleased (delighted)(ευδοκει>ευδοκεω)(vifa--zs) with (εν)(pd) him (αυτω)(nprdmzs).

¹⁰⁶ **10:39.** But (δε)(cs) we (ημεις)(nprn-xp) are (εσμεν>ειμι)(vifa--xp) not (ουκ)(ab) of those who withdraw (η υποστολη) resulting in (εις)(pa) the destruction (perdition) (η απωλεια)(n-af-s) (of their soul), but (αλλα)(ch) of those who believes (η πιστις)(n-nf-s) resulting in (εις)(pa) the salvation (possession) (η περιποιησις)(n-af-s) of (their) soul (η ψυχη)(n-gf-s).