

# HEBREWS

(Primary textbook: Holy Scriptures. Primary translation: NIV.)

## VI. JESUS' SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF IS SUPERIOR TO THE SACRIFICES OF THE OLD COVENANT AND SETS US FREE FROM SIN (9:1-10:39)

- A. The Tabernacle and Its Tools (9:1-5)
- B. The Day of Atonement (9:6-10)
- C. Jesus' Sacrifice Cleanses Our Conscience (9:11-14)
- D. Jesus' Death Inaugurates the New Covenant (9:15-22)
- E. Jesus' Sacrifice Was Once for All (9:23-28)
- F. Old Covenant Sacrifices Could Not Take Away Sin (10:1-4)
- G. Christ Offered His Body to Make Us Holy (10:5-10)
- H. Our High Priest Now Reigns (10:11-14)
- I. Witness of the Holy Spirit through Jeremiah (10:15-18)
- J. Let Us Draw Near to God and Spur One Another On (10:19-25)
- K. The Judgment of God on Those Who Keep Sinning (10:26-31)
- L. Reminder of Earlier Suffering (10:32-34)
- M. The Need to Persevere (10:35-39)

(This lesson will cover Section L and Section M.)

### **L. Reminder of Earlier Suffering (10:32-34)**

1. Remember those what? After you received what? (v.32)

“Remember those earlier days” – Sometimes memories are painful, but necessary. In the case of the first readers of this book, though their Christian past had not always been pleasant, it had been marked by continued adherence to Christ. This same life-style needed to be maintained. Especially in view of the habits of some (verse 25) or the tendency of others (5:11-14), they needed to press on (6:1).

“the light” – It probably refers to “instruction” or an “intellectual illumination that removes ignorance through the preaching of the Gospel.” (Note 6:4; 10:26)

2. When you did what? In what? In the face of what? (v.32)

“great contest” – Note 2 Timothy 2:5.

The readers of Hebrews, just as all who endure suffering for the sake of Christ until His return, compete in the cosmic struggle which has already been decided. Whether we receive the victor's crown is conditioned only upon our ability to persevere in the struggle.

3. Sometimes you were exposed how? Exposed to what two? (v.33)

“publicly exposed” – Just what this means is open to question, but evidently it was not to be desired. Paul remarked in 1 Corinthians 4:9ff. that the apostles had been treated thusly. Jesus was so displayed, John 19:1-5. Others had been abused and reviled, ill-treated and afflicted, and they had not deserted those so treated, but rather had acted as partners with all who had gone through such.

Note John 15:18-20; Hebrews 12:2-3.

Tacitus writes in his Annals, “Their death...was made 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 failed.”

4. At other times you stood how? With whom? (v.33)

“stood side by side” – The Greek term is “koinonia” which is the common word for “fellowship,” which is “to share together.”

5. You sympathized with what group? And joyfully accepted what? (v.34)

As was/is common in times of persecution, not only were Christians physically and personally persecuted, but they also had their property confiscated and/or destroyed, etc. Plainly the recipients of this letter had received such treatment, cheerfully accepting it because they knew that one’s life “does not consist in the abundance of things possessed,” Luke 12:15, but rather consists of having Jesus, in Whom are hidden all of God’s riches, Colossians 2:3. Recall 1 John 2:17.

6. Because you knew that you yourselves had what? (v.34)

The cause of their joy was that they knew they had “better and lasting possessions.” Their true, eternal inheritance which God had promised them (9:15) yet awaited them. No earthly power or authority could take it away from them. They had learned not to “be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul” and remained faithful to “the One who can destroy both soul and body in Hell” (Matthew 10:28). Their treasure was in Heaven, not on earth “where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal” (Matthew 6:19-20).

**M. The Need to Persevere (10:35-39)**

7. So do not throw away what? It will be what? (v.35)

“so” – Some translations use the stronger connective “therefore.” On the basis of these great facts out of their past life, they have no reason to give up. As 12:4 shows, none had been killed yet, and as chapter 11 details, all must keep on believing. Moreover, God had not changed. All of which provided plenty of reasons for them to “hang in there.”

“confidence” – It conveys the idea of “courage,” “boldness,” or even “fearlessness” in the face of the threats against them.

“richly rewarded” – Sometimes, like those in chapter 11, the reward was not received in this life but in the next life. Abraham received many promises from God, even including a promised land; yet he died without possessing much of what was promised, for God had other and better things in mind.

This “confidence” is the key to receiving the “rich reward” that has been promised.

Whether the believer remains faithful or not, he will in either case receive his “just reward.” It will be punishment for some and salvation for others.

8. You need to do what? So that when you have done what? (v.36)



9. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, what will happen? (v.36)

“Perseverance” is needed to obtain the rich reward and this is what the confidence enables.

“done the will of God” – suggests a completion of this act – i.e., when one has persevered to the end in their obedience to the will of God.

Patience and diligence = receiving what He has promised.

10. For in what time frame? (v.37)

11. He who is doing what? Will do what? And will not do what? (v.37)

Perhaps the greatest promise ever given was that of a Deliverer from sins. All through the Old Testament, the people of trust looked for the fulfillment of God’s promise. Jesus did come, as promised, and those who so trusted God were vindicated. Jesus ascended to Heaven with a promise of return, Acts 1:11. All through the New Testament Scriptures, His second coming is kept before the believers, such as in Hebrews 9:27-28. Since the first promise was kept, and faith rewarded, just so will this promise be kept and faith rewarded. On this solid foundation, then, the author urges continued trust.

12. But My whom? Will live how? (v.38)

13. And if he does what? “I” will not be what? (v.38)

One commentator writes: “Only those whose theology is such that they do not believe that a Christian can be lost have trouble with this verse (or 6:1-6; 10:26). It is clear that one can put a hand to the plow but decide to look back.”

“not be pleased with him” – See again 3:7ff. As in the days of Habakkuk, those who trusted God were rewarded, but all who refused to continue trusting fell into the hands of destroyers.

14. But we are not of those who do what? And are what? (v.39)

15. But of those who do what? And are what? (v.39)

The thrust of the citation is that (1) His (second) coming is certain and (2) two alternatives are available to those who wait. One can “live by faith” or “shrink back” (and be destroyed).

It is evident that the original readers were Christians, but yet they needed as a group to do better (reference verse 26).

The author had been denouncing apostasy as the sin for which “no sacrifice for sin is left.” Then he exhorted his readers to confidence and hope in the Christian faith by a reminder of their past history of persecutions and faithfulness. Difficulties were not new to them. Not long after they became Christians, some of them had suffered the affliction of public ridicule and derision because of their lives of faith. They had also patiently endured the plundering and spoiling of their property. They were convinced that their abiding possessions in Heaven were higher than temporary ones on earth. Others of their number had taken the side of those who had suffered such mistreatment and ministered unto them, visiting and helping them even when they were imprisoned. In all of this, however, none had suffered martyrdom (12:4).

The Hebrews had begun the Christian race of life very well by doing the will of God. Such a beginning should have encouraged them to patient endurance until they had received the reward. The Hebrews writer's quotations from Isaiah 26:20 and Habakkuk 2:3-4 suggest that such endurance is only for a little while in the light of the certain return of the Lord, Who will end all afflictions and bring His promised blessing. The blessing, however, will not be received by those who fall back, but by those who maintain their faith in Him. The writer was confident that his readers were numbered among the faithful rather than among those who fell back.

The brief reference to faith in the prophecy of Habakkuk introduces the great discussion of faith that follows in the next chapter. At a point in their history when the people were suffering under oppression and corruption on every hand, Habakkuk had cried out to God for an answer. The Lord responded, "The righteous will live by his faith." The Christian life does not find its support in what transpires around it. Faith is not the result of circumstances. Through faith one rises above circumstances and draws his strength from above. Thus, faith was the quality most needed by the Hebrew Christians in order to persevere in the temptations that faced them.

***"Making Disciples for the Master"***