

Hebrews 10:26-27 Commentary

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CONSIDER JESUS OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST

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[Swindoll's Chart](#), [Interesting Pictorial Chart of Hebrews](#), [Another Chart](#)

**The Epistle
to the Hebrews**

INSTRUCTION Hebrews 1-10:18				EXHORTATION Hebrews 10:19-13:25
Superior Person of Christ Hebrews 1:1-4:13	Superior Priest in Christ Hebrews 4:14-10:18			Superior Life In Christ Hebrews 10:19-13:25
BETTER THAN PERSON Hebrews 1:1-4:13	BETTER PRIESTHOOD Heb 4:14-7:28	BETTER COVENANT Heb 8:1-13	BETTER SACRIFICE Heb 9:1-10:18	BETTER LIFE
MAJESTY OF CHRIST	MINISTRY OF CHRIST			MINISTERS FOR CHRIST
DOCTRINE				DUTY
DATE WRITTEN: ca. 64-68AD				

See [ESV Study Bible "Introduction to Hebrews"](#)
(See also [MacArthur's Introduction to Hebrews](#))

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Hebrews 10:26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [Ekousios gar amartanonton \(PAPMPG\) emon meta to labein \(AAN\) ten epignosin tes aletheias, ouketi peri amartion apoleipetai \(3PPPI\) thusia](#)

Amplified: For if we go on deliberately and willingly sinning after once acquiring the knowledge of the Truth, there is no longer any sacrifice left to atone for [our] sins [no further offering to which to look forward]. ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: For, if we deliberately sin after we have received full knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sin is left. ([Westminster Press](#))

NLT: Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received a full knowledge of the truth, there is no other sacrifice that will cover these sins. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: Now if we sin deliberately after we have known and accepted the truth, there can be no further sacrifice for sin for us ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: For if we go on sinning willfully after having received a full knowledge of the truth, no longer for sins does there remain a sacrifice,

Young's Literal: For we -- wilfully sinning after the receiving the full knowledge of the truth -- no more for sins doth there remain a sacrifice,

**THE FIVE WARNING
PASSAGES
IN HEBREWS**

Heb 2:1-4 (notes)

Heb 3:7-4:13 (notes)

Heb 5:11-6:12 (notes)

Heb 10:19-39 (notes)

Heb 12:14-29 (notes)

- **If we go on sinning willfully** He 6:4, 5, 6; Lev 4:2,13; Nu 15:28, 29, 30, 31; Dt 17:12; Ps 19:12,13; Da 5:22,23; Mt 12:31,32,43, 44, 45; Jn 9:41; 1Ti 1:13; 2Pe 2:20, 21, 22; 1Jn 5:16
- [Hebrews 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

WHAT IS WILLFUL OR DELIBERATE SIN?

John MacArthur comments that "This chapter could be titled, "The Tragedy of Getting over It," because it deals with those who had heard the gospel, had come face-to-face with the claims of Christ, had been associated to some extent with His church, but had gone away. These were people whose hearts had been warmed toward the gospel of Christ, who had made a superficial commitment of faith in Him, and had identified themselves visibly with the true church. But their enthusiasm was cooling and the cost of being a Christian was becoming too high. They were "getting over" the gospel, and were in danger of becoming apostate. **Of the five warnings given in Hebrews, the one in this passage is by far the most serious and sobering. It may be the most serious warning in all of Scripture.** It deals with apostasy." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Hebrews) (Bold added)

Before we get into this terrifying passage, we need to understand the main issue the writer is addressing and that is the issue of **sinning willfully**. Just these words send shivers down our spine! And in one sense they should, but it is important to understand to whom this description of willful sinning applies. So let's first look in the mirror and see how this relates to genuine, born again believers, which is most of you reading this commentary.

Willful describes that which is done intentionally or deliberately. It is doing what one what one wants to do even when he knows it is wrong. The word **deliberate** (as an adjective) means that which is characterized by or results from careful and thorough consideration. It refers to a mental process in which one proceeds to take some action after thoughtfully weighing the options. Spiritually speaking it would describe a "conversation" as it were with one's conscience regarding whether one should take a particular action in a certain direction! I think you can see where this is going! And in the context of sin, especially the sin which so easily entangles a person, it is the idea of even planning out a situation that might place us in the path of temptation to commit that sin. Romans 13:14⁺ commands against such foolish logic (actually more like illogic or overt stupidity - Sin is stupidity!) Paul commanding believer to "**make no provision** (stop making provision - [pronoia](#) - [present imperative with a negative](#)) for the flesh in regard to its lusts." When we make deliberate decisions to dabble with deceptive, destructive sin, we are walking into the snare of the fallen flesh and we will almost certainly commit the sin we are playing games with and it becomes by definition a willful or deliberate sin! James 1:13-16 explains the sequential process that almost invariably follows when we begin to deliberate (verb) over whether to sin or not to sin...

Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed (means to bait a hook, to set a trap with bait, lure into a moral trap by targeting one's innate selfish impulses) by his own lust.
15 Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. 16 Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (James 1:13-16⁺).

So then, in a sense we need to be clear, all of us are guilty of deliberate or "willful sinning" in the sense that there are (many) times when we know the truth of God's Word regarding what would constitute righteous, godly behavior (i.e., obedience) and yet we stubbornly walk down the path of temptation until we are guilty of overt, deliberate disobedience. While this should not be taken lightly for a believer, please note that this is **NOT** what the writer is talking about in this sobering passage. The context is not a person who is a believer and then one day ceases to be a believer (or loses their salvation). So do not let anyone tell you that you can lose your salvation if you willfully or deliberately sin. That is a false teaching which goes against a flood of Bible passages that teach [eternal security](#) (read Jesus' promise in Jn 10:27-29, etc). But on the other hand, just because God's infinite mercy does not strike us down when we commit deliberate sin, his grace and mercy should never be treated as a invitation to live licentiously! While we are not longer under law but under grace (Ro 6:14), grace is not license to sin. We are not at liberty to sin willfully or deliberately. To the contrary we now have the power to enable us to fight against the temptation to deliberately sin. We will fail and fall, but it should always be the exception and never the rule, certainly not the habitual practice of our lives. Before we were saved we chased after sin, but now that we are saved, sin chases after us! If willful sinning is an individual's lifestyle, then that individual needs to be very honest with himself or herself and ask "Is my Christian profession really a possession of Christ?" (They need to soberly ponder Paul's words in 2 Cor 13:5⁺) The incomprehensible truth that Christ in us (Col 1:27) and His Spirit is in us (1 Cor 6:19) should serve to motivate us out of love, enabling us to resist committing willful sins and empower us to fight off those temptations that assault our minds enticing us to commit that willful sin (cf 2 Cor 5:17).

Another Way to find the buried hatchet!

Let me give you an **illustration** of **making provision for sin** - say there is someone who you know that your conscience and the Spirit is leading you to forgive lest a root of bitterness begins to spring up (Heb 12:15⁺). And so you begin well, determining (led by the Spirit - Ro 8:13⁺, Gal 5:18⁺) to **'bury the hatchet'** But our fallen flesh is very clever and will attempt to make provision for stirring up your unforgiveness. And so what do we do? Yes, we bury the hatchet, but we leave the handle exposed (see picture above)! Or in another crafty move, the flesh leads us to write ourselves a note that says something like "I will bury the hatchet but make a map of where I have it buried!" So can you see how subtle and persistent the lust of the flesh is to take us down the path of provision for later willfully or deliberately committing a sin? That is why we need to be continually filled with and controlled by the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18⁺), so that we might be supernaturally enabled to fight the good fight of faith (1 Ti 6:12⁺) against the serpentine snares of sin that continually come from our fallen flesh.

Now all of the preceding is simply background to help you understand what the writer of Hebrews means when he warns against willful or deliberate sin. As you study this difficult and disturbing passage, ask your Teacher the Spirit of Truth to lead you into all the Truth (Jn 14:26, 16:13, 1Jn 2:27, 1Cor 2:12)

R Kent Hughes gives a superb introduction to this difficult passage - It is commonly thought by those who have only a passing recognition of Jonathan Edwards that his famous sermon "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" was preached with sadistic glee to his bewildered congregation. The supposition is that Edwards enjoyed afflicting his people and that the sermon was preached with pulpit-pounding vehemence. Such thinking is wide of the mark. Shouting was not Edwards's style. It is a matter of historical fact that Edwards quietly read his sermons from tiny pieces of paper he held up in front of him. Neither did Edwards enjoy such preaching. Rather, it was necessitated by the famous "halfway" covenant, an earlier Puritan attempt to keep as many people as possible under the influence of the church, though they were not professed believers. The church in Enfield contained baptized unbelievers who were barred from the Lord's Table. Ultimately, Edwards was dismissed as pastor over the question of the admission of the unconverted to the Lord's Supper. Edwards was preaching for their souls, and also against the follies of the "halfway" covenant. Therefore, we must understand that Jonathan Edwards's passionate love for God and his flock was the reason he employed every tool in his considerable stores of logic and metaphor to plead for his people's souls in "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." He was less concerned with God's wrath than with his grace, which was freely extended to sinners who repented. Jonathan Edwards gave his people a whiff of the sulphurs of Hell that they might deeply inhale the fragrances of grace. Edwards's intense concern joins him in heart with the preacher who wrote to the Hebrews some 1,700 years earlier. The stakes were identical—Heaven or Hell. And the symptoms, though not identical, were similar as well—a declining regard for the church's authority, a willfulness to define one's relationship to the church in one's own terms, and, in some cases, quitting the church altogether. To such are addressed the thunderous warnings in verses 26–31, in which the brilliant writer summons his own prodigious logic and literary talents. **(ILLUSTRATION)** To glimpse his passion, we can imagine ourselves as parents raising our children along a boulevard on which huge trucks regularly pass at great speed. Our warnings are couched in the most dramatic terms and lurid illustrations—"Do you know what happens to little children if..."—in the hope that somehow what we say will penetrate the imagination and thinking process of our children, so they will stay out of the deadly street! ([Preaching the Word - Hebrews](#))

Another anecdote about **Edward's** sermon...

Jonathan Edwards started a sermon that he did not finish. Such was the impact of his preaching that the people listening shrieked and cried out, and the crying and weeping became so loud that Edwards was forced to discontinue the sermon. Instead, the pastors went down among the the people and prayed with them in groups. Many came to a saving knowledge of Christ that day.

If we go on sinning - Although the writer includes himself in this warning ("**if we go on sinning**" - just as he did in his first warning in Heb 2:3+ "how will **we** escape") note that he switches pronouns in Hebrews 10:29⁺ to "**he**". And at the end of the chapter (Heb 10:39+), the writer makes it clear that he considers himself a true believer by including himself in the **"we"** who do not "**shrink back to destruction**".

Go on sinning (264) (**hamartano**) means to miss a mark and in this context means to miss God's will. It means to act contrary to the will and law of God. In classic Greek hamartano was used to describe a warrior who threw his spear but failed to strike his adversary or a traveler who missed his way. **Hamartano** emphasizes loss which always results from missing God's mark or target, His **good and acceptable and perfect will** (Ro 12:2). Gary Hill adds that "hamartánō ("choosing sin") asserts the agenda of self, by (for) self, over God's loving plan. Ironically, this insists on bringing self-made condemnation (cf. Titus 3:11 = "and is sinning, being self-condemned."). In sum, hamartánō always results in loss of reward for believers, and everlasting condemnation for unbelievers.

The **present tense** this indicates this is their lifestyle, their habitual practice. It describes an abiding state of willful, deliberate sinning! Saved persons still commit sins (and as noted above, sadly even do so deliberately) but sinning is not their continual practice once they are born again by the Holy Spirit. They become new creations in Christ "the old things passed away (INCLUDING CONTINUALLY LIVING IN SIN); behold, new things (A NEW DIRECTION, NEW POWER, NEW MOTIVATION, NEW LOVE TO NOW LIVE FOR JESUS) have come." (2Cor 5:17+). If such a spiritual transaction has not occurred, then such a person should be very careful to perform a self-examination (cp 2Cor 13:5+) to be absolutely certain there is tangible evidence a person is a possessor of Christ and not simply professor of Christ. Jesus gave a stern, even frightening warning that "**many**" would profess knowing Him, but that their life would indicate otherwise.

"Not everyone who says to Me (THEIR PROFESSION) 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does ([present tense](#) - continually because they are enabled by the indwelling Spirit - NOTE: Jesus is not describing PERFECTION but DIRECTION!) the will of My Father Who is in heaven will enter. **Many** (WOE! cf **Many** in Mt 7:13+) will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' (NOTE CAREFULLY JESUS DOES NOT DENY THEY DID THESE THINGS!) "And then I will declare to them, 'I never (ABSOLUTE NEGATION - NEVER AT ANY POINT IN TIME - IN OTHER WORDS THESE ARE NOT FOLKS WHO WERE SAVED AND THEN LOST THEIR SALVATION! JESUS NEVER, EVER KNEW THEM!) knew (SPEAKS OF INTIMACY, FELLOWSHIP, ONENESS, COMMUNION) you; **DEPART** (command) FROM ME, (THEIR PRACTICE CONDEMNS THEM! see Titus 3:11+) YOU WHO **PRACTICE** ([present tense](#) - willfully, deliberately, continually) LAWLESSNESS.' (Mt 7:21+, Mt 7:22-23+) And Jesus adds " **Depart** (command) from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels." (Mt 25:41)

Beloved, do not confuse what the writer of Hebrews is saying and not saying -- he is NOT teaching sinless perfection, but he is teaching about the "general direction" of your life as indicated by your day to day behavior.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS ABOUT DIRECTION NOT PERFECTION

As an aside one day in glory we will in fact attain sinless perfection forever and ever. Amen. ([Glorification](#)).

Phil Newton applies the idea of the **present tense** which indicates habitual or continuous action to make the important point that "**Apostasy does not happen overnight**. It is a **process**, a deliberate process, on the part of one who is not satisfied with the revelation of God in Christ and the effectiveness of the redemptive work of Christ. ([Hebrews 10:26-31 The Peril of Playing Christian](#))

Newton goes on to explain that "The '**sinning**' has reference to **rejection** of precisely what this writer has set forth: the person of Christ and his effective work as our great high priest. They are **rejecting** or speaking against the revelation of Jesus Christ as the one in whom God has spoken with finality, Who created and upholds all things in the world, and Who as the Incarnate Son came to make purification for sins (Heb 1:1-3). They **reject** that Christ is more excellent than the angels and Moses and all the Aaronic priesthood (Heb 1:5-2:9; Heb 3:1-6; Heb 5:1-10). They **reject** that Christ mediated a new covenant that totally replaces the old covenant, and that He ratified its excellence by His atoning death (Heb 8:6-13; Heb 9:11-28). Instead of depending upon the atoning death of Christ they cling to the blood of bulls and goats as superior to that of the Son of God offered at Calvary (Heb 10:1-18). It was not a momentary lapse, a struggle because of pressure from family or culture that was the problem. They "**willfully**" sinned, in calculated fashion they picked through the revelation of God in Christ and **rejected** precisely what the gospel reveals. ([Hebrews 10:26-31 The Peril of Playing Christian](#)) (Bolding added)

The **NIV** gives an accurate sense of the **present tense** of the verb rendering it - "If we deliberately **keep on sinning**".

John gives a similar warning explaining that "the one who **practices** (**present tense** again indicating not perfection but "direction" of one's life) sin is of the devil" (1 Jn 3:8+) adding that "no one who is born of God **practices** (**present tense**) sin". Why not? Simply put, they can't habitually, willfully, deliberately, continually sin because God's holy "seed abides in (them)... because (they are) born of God." (1 Jn 3:9+)

Willfully (1596) (**hekousios** from **hekousios** = voluntary) means willing to do something without being forced or pressured. Doing something of one's own free will = voluntarily, deliberately, willfully, intentionally. Willing to do it without being pressured or forced.

Newton observes that "**Willfully** stands at the front of the sentence (**Ed**: In the original Greek text) in an **emphatic position** as a reminder that the ones he addresses are not the weak or immature or ignorant or occasional doubters that are true believers but struggling with their perseverance. It is the deliberate, intentional, voluntary rejection of the sufficiency of Christ that he refers to. ([Hebrews 10:26-31 The Peril of Playing Christian](#))

Wuest - This sin is described as a wilful sin. The word is hekousios, which means, "voluntarily, of one's own accord." It is opposed to sins committed inconsiderately, and from ignorance or weakness. The Greek has it, "If we go on sinning wilfully," stress being placed upon the habitual aspect of the sin. The immediate context defines that sin as one of the continued forsaking of the means of grace at the services of the Christian assemblies, and the habitual commission of the sin defined in Heb 10:29-note. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#))

Hekousios in context conveys the idea of deliberate intention that is habitual without being forced or pressured. In other words, in context this adverb modifies the present tense verb **sinning** indicating that this is a personal choice to deliberately rebel against the truth God has graciously revealed!

The only other NT use of **hekousios** is in a positive context where Peter exhorts the elders to...

shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but **voluntarily**, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness (1Pe 5:2-note)

This description is not referring to "sins of ignorance" (Heb 9:7) or weakness, but to those that are planned out, determined, done with forethought (cp Paul's command in Ro 13:14-note to "**make** no provision [pronoia] for the flesh in regard to its lusts.").

A similar warning against defection from the faith (falling away from the truth about the great High Priest Jesus) is presented in Heb 2:1-note, He 2:3-note where it is described as letting truth slip away, in Heb 3:7, 8-note where it is described as hardening the heart against the Holy Spirit, in He 6:4, 5-note, He 6:6-note where it is described as falling away and crucifying the Son of God and lastly in Heb 12:25-note where it is described as a refusal to hear and heed God's warning from heaven. Clearly, the writer of Hebrews viewed apostasy as a very real and serious possibility for his Jewish audience who had heard the good news about their Messiah, Jesus.

John gives a descriptive "definition" of **apostasy**...

They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us. (1Jn 2:19+).

Henry Morris notes that "There is probably an allusion here to such Old Testament passages as Nu 15:30,31; Dt 17:2-7; etc. The presumptuous sins (Ps 19:13), especially of deliberate apostasy into idolatry and paganism, were punishable by death. In similar fashion, the deliberate rejection of Christ and His sacrifice for one's sins, after one fully understands its significance and may even have made profession of faith therein, is without remedy. This is the only means God has provided, and there is nothing more that can be said or done to save such a person. That person already knows and understands it all and has rejected it (Heb 6:4-6). Such a person, regardless of outward appearances, had never truly committed his faith and life to Christ in the first place (1Jn 2:19+). This verse does not, in context, apply to other sins of a true Christian (He 10:39). The remedy for these is repentance and confession, for the blood of Christ has already paid for them (1Jn 1:7, 8, 9).

Gotquestions has an interesting (if not disturbing) quote related to apostasy -

A recent example of this process is a 2010 study done by prominent atheist Daniel Dennett and Linda LaScola called "Preachers Who Are Not Believers". Dennett and LaScola's work chronicles five different preachers who over time were presented with and accepted heretical teachings about Christianity and now have completely fallen away from the faith and are either pantheists or clandestine atheists. One of the most disturbing truths highlighted in the study is that these preachers maintain their position as pastors of Christian churches with their congregations being unaware of their leader's true spiritual state. ([What is apostasy](#))

JUDAS ISCARIOT IS THE PERFECT PROTOTYPE OF AN APOSTATE! - What do I mean by [prototype](#)? **Prototype** in English means "something that is representative of a category of things." **Webster's Dictionary** says a **prototype** is "an individual that exhibits the essential features of a later type." So if we know about Judas (which almost everyone does – for example, have you ever heard of any parent naming their son "JUDAS"?), we have a good picture of **apostasy** for he is a "prototype!"

John MacArthur amplifies the idea of Judas as the perfect prototype of an apostate and goes on to give us an excellent definition of apostasy...

"Judas Iscariot is, of course, the classic apostate. No other rejecter of Christ ever had the exposure to God's truth, love, and grace as did Judas. He knew the Lord intimately. He was one of the twelve of Jesus' inner circle of disciples. Had he believed, he would have become an apostle. But he rejected the truth and became an apostate. His story is the supreme contradiction to the common excuse, "I would probably believe in Christ if I just had a little more evidence, a little more light." Judas had the perfect evidence, the perfect light, the perfect example. For some three years he lived with Truth incarnate and Life incarnate, yet turned his back on

the One who is truth and life.

Apostasy is an intentional falling away or withdrawal, a defection.... There are people who move toward Christ, right up to the edge of saving belief. They hear of Him and they are drawn to Him. They are perhaps deeply convicted of sin and **even make a profession of faith**. But their interest in the things of God begins to wane, and the pressures and attractions of the world distract them further still, until they have no interest at all. They may turn to another religion or to no religion at all. Apostasy is determined by what you leave, not where you go after you leave. After a person leaves God, it makes little difference where he then goes.

Many years ago I had a friend who often went with me to Pershing Square in Los Angeles to witness. He was raised in the church and was a regular and dependable member, but I always felt that something was missing in his life. Then, suddenly, I did not see him anymore. About three years later, I met a mutual friend and asked if she knew what had happened to him. "oh, he's an atheist now," was the reply. "He doesn't believe in God anymore. He has accepted situation ethics, and sees everything as amoral. He doesn't believe anything is good nor bad in itself." Apparently he had had enough of God, and simply turned away.

Here is possibly the clearest and most concise scriptural definition of apostasy—**receiving knowledge of the truth**, that is, the gospel, but **willfully** remaining in sin. An apostate has seen and heard the truth—he knows it well—but he willfully rejects it. Apostasy has two major characteristics: knowledge of the truth of the gospel and willful rejection of it.

Every apostate is an unbeliever, but not every unbeliever is an apostate Many people have never had the opportunity to hear the gospel, even in part. They are sinful and, of course, do not believe in Christ, because they have never heard of Him or of His claims. An apostate, however, is well acquainted with the gospel. He knows more than enough to be saved. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Hebrews)

Related Resources:

- [What is apostasy and how can I recognize it?](#)
- [If our salvation is eternally secure, why does the Bible warn so strongly against apostasy?](#)

W A Criswell adds that to "Sin willfully" is similar to the rebellion against God that is described in the O.T. as sinning "with a high hand" or "presumptuously" (Nu 15:30, 31; defiantly, literally "with a high hand"). This sin is a sin of premeditation, committed only by those who have had the advantage of great light. In the rejecting of Christ's sacrifice, they discover that there is no other acceptable sacrifice for sin.

Moses records...

"You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the sons of Israel and for the alien who sojourns among them. 30 'But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people. 31 'Because he has despised the word of the LORD and has broken His commandment, that person shall be completely cut off; his guilt shall be on him.'" (Nu 15:29, 30)

Comment: "Defiantly" is a vivid picture in Hebrew as the words "*yad ramah*" literally describe "a hand exalted" or "a high hand". The Septuagint translates it similarly (*en cheiri huperephanias*), this Greek phrase meaning "with a raised fist so to speak". **NET Bible note** adds that "The expression ("a high hand") means that someone would do something with deliberate defiance, with an arrogance in spite of what the LORD said. It is as if the sinner was about to attack God, or at least lifting his hand against God. The implication of the expression is that it was done in full knowledge of the Law (especially since this contrasts throughout with the sins of ignorance). Blatant defiance of the word of the LORD is dealt with differently. For similar expressions, see Ex 14:8, Nu 33:3).

To reiterate, these are **NOT** those willful sins most believers commit, but the immediate **context** defines this sin as one that continually forsakes the only means of grace God provides for salvation.

Steven Cole recognizing that the warning passages in Hebrews do not make for popular pulpit preaching introduces his sermon in Hebrews 10:26-31 with a pithy illustration...

Charles Spurgeon tells about a church that was asked to accept as their minister a man who did not believe in

hell. They said, "You have come to tell us that there is no hell. If your doctrine is true, we certainly do not need you. And if it's not true, we don't want you. So either way, we can do without you" (Spurgeon's Expository Encyclopedia [Baker], 10:149; slightly edited).

To speak about God's terrifying future judgment is not pleasant, but it is necessary, since the Bible clearly teaches that it will happen. Although some prominent evangelical leaders deny the doctrine of hell, we need to remember that Jesus spoke more about the terrors of hell than anyone else in the Bible. We cannot claim to follow Christ and at the same time reject the doctrine of eternal punishment. It is a doctrine with great practical ramifications.

Spurgeon also said (ibid., p. 146), "Think lightly of hell, and you will think lightly of the cross. Think little of the suffering of lost souls, and you will soon think little of the Savior who delivers you from them."

Although Jonathan Edwards based his famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," on a verse from Deuteronomy, he got the title from verse 31 of our text. God used that powerful sermon to convert many to Christ. I have read it many times, but I recently listened to an actor delivering the sermon as Edwards may have given it. He hammers home with frightening force the terrors of impending judgment, but also the refuge of the cross. ([The Only Options: Christ or Judgment?](#))

Phil Newton introduces this difficult teaching harking back to Jonathan Edwards' famous sermon [Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God](#)...

The 18th century was a remarkable time of divine awakenings. Throughout New England the Spirit of God invaded one community after another, bringing the spiritually dead to life, and transforming the worship of churches. During this era awakening appeared to follow the strong doctrinal preaching of the evangelical pastors, often setting forth the righteousness and severity of God in justice before broaching the subject of the gospel of grace. It was not that there were no professing Christians in these villages. Each little community had a village church with many of the townspeople having been baptized into membership. But there was little spiritual reality until the Spirit of God blew in gale force upon the dry, dusty corpses of church members. Like Ezekiel's vision of the valley of dry bones, upon the preaching of the Word, the Spirit of God breathed life.

One such village was the town of Enfield, Connecticut. Though neighboring villages had tasted of the goodness of God in spiritual awakening, they had not. They remained stubborn and defiant, self-satisfied with an outward form of religion; playing Christian we might say, without knowing the peril before them. On July 8, 1741, Jonathan Edwards arose as a substitute preacher to declare before them the word of the Lord, accompanied by his friend and co-laborer, Eleazer Wheelock who was later founder of Dartmouth College. The sermon was not new to Edwards since he had preached it previously in his own church of Northampton, MA. Without any pulpit antics, Edwards carefully followed his manuscript, delivering a picture of divine judgment upon sinful men, particularly upon those who were the baptized members of the Enfield church and yet gave no evidence of regenerate life. It was based upon a text from Deuteronomy 32:35, "**Their foot shall slide in due time.**"

It was this same passage and context that was quoted in Hebrews 10:30 of our text. The last verse of our text provided the basis for Edwards' title, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." [Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God](#) was no delicate, entertaining sermon, but a striking exaltation of God in his righteousness and exposing of man in his sinfulness. The effect of the sermon was immediate. Wheelock reported to a friend that these "thoughtless and vain" people were changed before the sermon ended so that they were "bowed down with an awful conviction of their sin and danger."

Another eyewitness recorded in his diary, "There was a great moaning and crying out through ye whole House- "What Shall I do to be saved"- "Oh I am going to Hell"- "Oh what shall I do for Christ" etc. So yet ye minister was obliged to desist-ye shrieks and cries were piercing and amazing... "

After referring to Edwards and Wheelock praying and then speaking with one after another of the people under conviction, the diarist continues, "Some in one place and Some in another-and Amazing and Astonishing ye power God was seen--and Several Souls were hopefully wrought upon [that] night, & oh ye cheerfulness and pleasantness of their countenances [that] received comfort" [quoted by Iain Murray, Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography, 167-169].

Edwards' sermon made ten doctrinal points regarding the certainty of divine judgment for all who reject the gospel of Jesus Christ, and among them I would identify the following:

There is no want of power in God to cast men into hell at any moment... They deserve to be cast into hell;

so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them... They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell... They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell... There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell-fire, if it were not for God's restraints... It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand... All wicked men's pains and contrivance which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment... God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell one moment [Jonathan Edwards, The Works of Jonathan Edwards, vol. 2, pp. 7-9].

Though he used the text in Deuteronomy as his base, Edwards had to have considered our text in this sermon. It breathes of the same air that we find in the clear warning before us.

I can think of no text that offers a more sobering look at the final reality of playing Christian than the one before us.

Its details are clear, and warning is alarming. After layering one truth on top of another in explaining the supremacy of Jesus Christ in his person and sufficiency in his redemptive work, our writer gives a series of summarizing applications. In the first he exhorts on the basis of the work of Christ to draw near to God, hold fast the confession of hope, and consider how to stimulate the church to love and good deeds (Heb 10:19-25). In the second, that of our text, he warns of the consequence of apostasy, the deliberate turning away from faith in Christ and association with the church (Heb 10:26-31). And in the third application he encourages them to endure their present persecution in light of how God has worked in them formerly and what he has promised for their future (Heb 10:32-39). ([Hebrews 10:26-31 The Peril of Playing Christian](#))

Related Resources:

- [What is the "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" sermon?](#)
- Take about 45 minutes and listen to Max Maclean's reading of the sermon with about 4 minute introduction by R C Sproul - if you dare, give it a listen - ["Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"](#).

Calvin - He shows how severe a vengeance of God awaits all those who fall away from the grace of Christ; for being without that one true salvation, they are now as it were given up to an inevitable destruction.

For - The writer now elaborates on the exhortation of Hebrews 10:25 to not forsake the assembly of the church and return to Judaism.

This passage recalls John's warning in 1 Jn 2:19 concerning those who **went out** (active voice = expresses a decision of one's will, a volitional choice) **from us** where their departure (compare "apostasy") was clear indication that they were not genuine believers. They had known about **the way** of life, but they had not chosen to "receive" (Jn 1:11, 12) the truth. An unmistakable sign of apostasy is an unwillingness to continue association with true believers.

Matthew Henry commenting on the related passage in 1 Jn 2:19 writes that "They were not inwardly such as we are: But they were not of us; they had not from the heart obeyed the form of sound doctrine delivered to them; they were not of our union with Christ the head. Then here is, the reason upon which it is concluded that they were not of us, were not what they pretended, or what we are, and that is **their actual defection**: "For, if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us" (1Jn 2:19); had the sacred truth been rooted in their hearts it would have held them with us (**Ed**: cp "rocky soil" Mk 4:5, 6, 17); had they had the anointing from above, by which they had been made true and real Christians, they would not have turned antichrists. Those that **apostatize** from religion sufficiently indicate that, before, they were **hypocrites** in religion: those who have imbibed the spirit of gospel truth have a good preservative against destructive error.

Such persons, regardless of their outward appearance which might otherwise suggest they were believers never actually believed in Christ. (**See related studies on** - The verb to **believe** = **pisteuo**; the noun **faith** = **pistis**)

Other NT passages have a similar warning about the danger of those who profess to be believers, but who fail to continue in the faith and thereby demonstrate that they are not truly born again. Here are a few examples to ponder...

1Cor 5:11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any **so-called brother** if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

1Cor 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God (cp Jn 3:3, 4, 5, 3:36)? Do not be deceived (suggesting some were being deceived - the teaching that you can be saved and live any

way you please is not the true gospel of grace! Do not be deceived by those who teach this deadly doctrine!); neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God (unbelievers).¹¹ And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

Col 1:21-23-note And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds, ²² yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach--²³ **if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel** that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Comment: One's perseverance does not earn their salvation but it does show that person is saved because only a born again person (enabled by the indwelling Spirit) could persevere to the end. O Lord, how this message needs to be sounded forth boldly from the pulpits across America as so many I fear are deceived by their profession as indicated by their absence of a changed life.

Wuest - The word "if" in Col 1:23 is not ean, an unfulfilled, hypothetical condition used with the subjunctive mode, presenting the possibility of a future realization, but ei with the indicative, having here the idea of "assuming that you continue in the faith." That is, continuance in the gospel as it was preached by Paul would show that the person was saved and thus would be presented holy, without blemish, and unchargeable before God. That is, Paul was here addressing truly born-again Colossians, not unsaved professors of Christianity who would follow the Colossian heresy. Heretics would not so be presented, only true believers. It is not the retention of salvation that is in the apostle's mind, but the possession of it that would be shown by their continuance in the gospel.

Titus 1:16-note They profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny (**deny is present tense** = this speaks of one's lifestyle, the habitual practices of one's life - their lips lie, but their actions tell the truth about their unregenerate heart) Him, being detestable (bdeluktos from bdelusso = to emit a foul odor in turn from bdeo = to stink!) and disobedient (apeithes), and worthless (adokimos) for any good deed.

James 2:14 What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? ¹⁵ If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, ¹⁶ and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and be filled," and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? ¹⁷ Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. ¹⁸ But someone may well say, "You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works." ¹⁹ You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless? ²¹ Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar? ²² You see that faith was working with his works, and as a result of the works, faith was perfected; ²³ and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, "AND ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS RECKONED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS," and he was called the friend of God. ²⁴ You see that a man is justified by works, and not by faith alone. ²⁵ And in the same way was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works, when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? ²⁶ For just as the body without the spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead. (Jas 2:14, 15, 16, 17-note, Jas 2:18, 19, 20-note, Jas 2:21, 22, 23-note, Jas 2:24, 25, 26-note).

As alluded to at the beginning of the comment on this passage most believers either commit willful sins or can even lapse into a season of sin and will experience broken fellowship and intimacy with the Lord and with His people, but **they are not be guilty of the sin which this passage is describing**. Believers who commit such willful sins, will return to the Lord, for they are under too great a conviction to stay away permanently. In the meanwhile, they will be robbed of the Spirit given joy and peace, spiritual power, intimacy, etc. And of course if they persist in sin and do not confess and repent, they will likely experience the discipline of God (see Hebrews 12:5-11). For a believer who commits willful sin the price of unconfessed sin is "steep". Ponder these passages...

Proverbs 28:13 ([in depth commentary](#)) He who conceals (intentionally, actively covering over sin so as to keep secret, cp Adam and Eve in Ge 3:7, 8, 10+) his transgressions will not prosper (Be profitable, succeed. Root word means to accomplish satisfactorily what is intended), but (O, the mercy of God) **he who confesses and forsakes** (leaves it in a lurch = not only giving it up but also actually "forgetting" it, so there is no longer desire for it) *them* will find compassion.

Comment by J Vernon McGee - This is a great proverb. It seems a common practice today for Christians to try to cover their sins. You will find in the average church that there is a Band-Aid of silence

wrapped over the cancer of sin. People don't like to talk about it; in fact, they don't admit its existence. They like to think they are very good.

There are two kinds of forgiveness, judicial and parental. When we trust Christ as Lord and Savior, we receive forgiveness from the penalty of sins; that is judicial forgiveness. When we, as believers, confess our sins, we receive parental forgiveness (1Jn 1:9); this maintains fellowship with God our Father. Anyone who confesses and forsakes his sins has the assurance that God not only forgives but forgets (Heb 10:17).

Illustration: In a conservative southern church, the pastor's wife found pornography on her husband's computer. After confronting him with the evidence, he admitted downloading the images off the internet, even using the computer in his study which was located in the church itself. Somehow he had separated his ongoing sexual sin from his responsibilities and duties as a man of God. **He who covers his sin will not prosper...**

Illustration: In an August 2000 poll conducted by Christianity Today on internet pornography, 33% of active ministers admitted having visited porn sites. Over half of those ministers said that they had visited those sites more than once. A total of 18 percent of clergy said they visit sexually explicit Web sites between a couple of times a month and more than once a week. This poll includes many liberal and 'mainstream' ministers, but it would be naive to think that porn was not a problem for some Bible-believing ministers. **He who covers his sin will not prosper...**

Illustration: A nice Christian family joined the church by letter from another city. Brad and Susan had four wonderful little boys ranging in age from two years up to ten years. Susan had a beautiful voice and sang specials in the church. Brad was a bible teacher and had taught Sunday school at their former church. But Brad and Susan had a terrible secret. He had a terrible temper that caused him to abuse Susan both physically and emotionally. No one in the church had any idea until she took her boys and left to return to her hometown. Brad followed her back and tried to reconcile with her. But his secret was now public and there was no turning back. **He who covers his sin will not prosper...**

Spurgeon "You say that you can handle your secret sins, that there is no one hurt by them. But you may as well ask the lion to let you put your head into his mouth. You cannot regulate his jaws: neither can you regulate sin. **Once done, you cannot tell when you will be destroyed. You may put your head in and out a great many times; but one of these days it will be a costly venture.** "

Christian friend, do not continue to hide your sin.

Don't harbor that sin, buried deep in the tent floor of your heart. It will affect your family, your home, your spiritual inheritance, and your purpose in life.

There is no sin worthy of separating us from our Father. It is not necessary to confess your secret sins to everyone, for it is none of their business. Do business with God. Repent and let God restore you to fellowship.

Don't sweep sin under the rug.

Instead put it under the blood!

Psalm 32:3-5 (David when he sinned with Bathsheba) When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. **Selah.** I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"; and Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin. **Selah.**

C H Spurgeon on Psalm 32:3-5 - When I kept silent. When through neglect I failed to confess, or through despair dared not do so, my bones, those solid pillars of my frame, the stronger portions of my bodily constitution, waxed old, began to decay with weakness, for my grief was so intense as to sap my health and destroy my vital energy.

What a killing thing is sin!

It is a pestilent disease!

A fire in the bones!

While we smother our sin it rages within, and like a gathering wound swells horribly and torments terribly.

Through my groaning all the day long. He was silent as to confession, but not as to sorrow. Horror at

his great guilt, drove David to incessant laments, until his voice was no longer like the articulate speech of man, but so full of sighing and groaning, that it resembled to hoarse roaring of a wounded beast.

None knows the pangs of conviction
but those who have endured them.

The rack, the wheel, the flaming fagot are ease compared with the Tophet which a guilty conscience kindles within the breast: better suffer all the diseases which flesh is heir to, than lie under the crushing sense of the wrath of almighty God. The Spanish **inquisition** with all its tortures was nothing to the **inquest** which **conscience** holds within the heart.

For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me. God's finger can crush us -- what must His hand be, and that pressing heavily and continuously! Under terrors of conscience, men have little rest by night, for the grim thoughts of the day dog them to their chambers and haunt their dreams, or else they lie awake in a cold sweat of dread. God's hand is very helpful when it uplifts, but it is awful when it presses down: better a world on the shoulder, like Atlas, than God's hand on the heart, like David.

My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. The sap of his soul was dried, and the body through sympathy appeared to be bereft of its needful fluids. The oil was almost gone from the lamp of life, and the flame flickered as though it would soon expire. Unconfessed transgression, like a fierce poison, dried up the fountain of the man's strength and made him like a tree blasted by the lightning, or a plant withered by the scorching heat of a tropical sun.

Alas! for a poor soul when it has learned its sin
but forgets its Saviour, it goes hard with it indeed.

Selah. It was time to change the tune, for the notes are very low in the scale, and with such hard usage, the strings of the harp are out of order: the next verse will surely be set to another key, or will rehearse a more joyful subject.

I acknowledged my sin unto Thee. After long lingering, the broken heart bethought itself of what it ought to have done at the first, and laid bare its bosom before the Lord. The lancet must be let into the gathering ulcer before relief can be afforded. The least thing we can do, if we would be pardoned, is to acknowledge our fault; if we are too proud for this we double deserve punishment.

And my iniquity have I not hid. We must confess the guilt as well as the fact of sin. It is useless to conceal it, for it is well known to God; it is beneficial to us to own it, for a full confession softens and humbles the heart. We must as far as possible unveil the secrets of the soul, dig up the hidden treasure of Achan (Josh 7:20, 21), and by weight and measure bring out our sins.

I said. This was his fixed resolution. I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord.

Not to my fellow men or to the high priest, but unto Jehovah!

Even in those days of symbol the faithful looked to God alone for deliverance from sin's intolerable load, much more now, when types and shadows have vanished at the appearance of the dawn. When the soul determines to lay low and plead guilty, absolution is near at hand; hence we read,

And Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin. Not only was the sin itself pardoned, but the iniquity of it; the virus of its guilt was put away, and that at once, so soon as the acknowledgment was made. God's pardons are deep and thorough:

the knife of mercy
cuts at the roots of the ill weed of sin.

Selah. Another pause is needed, for the matter is not such as may be hurried over.

The sins that would entangle us
Must never be ignored;
For if we try to cover them
They'll pierce us like a sword.

SIN MAKES US STUPID!

failed morally. As we grieved together over this fallen comrade, now out of ministry, I wondered aloud, "I know anyone can be tempted and anyone can stumble, but he's a smart guy. How could he think he could get away with it?" Without blinking, my friend responded, "**Sin makes us stupid.**" It was an abrupt statement intended to get my attention, and it worked. I have often thought of that statement in the ensuing years, and I continue to affirm the wisdom of those words. How else can you explain the actions of King David, the man after God's own heart turned adulterer and murderer? Or the reckless choices of Samson? Or the public denials of Christ by Peter, the most public of Jesus' disciples? We are flawed people who are vulnerable to temptation and to the foolishness of mind that can rationalize and justify almost any course of action if we try hard enough. If we are to have a measure of victory over the power of sin, it will come only as we lean on the strength and wisdom of Christ (Ro 7:24, 25+; **ED: AND I WOULD ADD EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IS TO LEARN TO PUT SIN TO DEATH BY THE SPIRIT!** - Ro 8:13+). As His grace (ED: cf Spirit of grace - Heb 10:29+) strengthens our hearts and minds (2 Ti 2:1+), we can overcome our own worst inclination to make foolish choices. — Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The price of sin is very high
Though now it may seem low;
And if we let it go unchecked,
Its crippling power will grow.
—Fitzhugh

God's Spirit is your power Source—
Don't let sin break the connection.

("for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die;
but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.")
Romans 8:13+

Sin Is Like An Insect! - It was reported recently that an enormous pine tree in the mountains of Colorado had fallen victim to a pine beetle and died. According to locals, up to that point the tree was thought to be indestructible. It had survived fourteen lightning strikes and many years of Colorado winters, including avalanches and fires. But it was eventually brought down from within by a tiny insect that did its work silently. That's the way it is with sin in a person's life, be they a Christian or a non-Christian. Watch over your heart with all diligence.

Rousseau's "Self-Ruse" - The deceitfulness of sin is vividly seen in the life of the French philosopher Rousseau. He declared, "No man can come to the throne of God and say, 'I'm a better man than Rousseau.'" When he knew death was close at hand, he boasted, "Ah, how happy a thing it is to die, when one has no reason for remorse or self-reproach." Then he prayed, "Eternal Being, the soul that I am going to give Thee back is as pure at this moment as it was when it proceeded from Thee; render it a partaker of Thy felicity!"

This is an amazing statement when we realize that Rousseau didn't profess to be born again. In his writings he advocated adultery and suicide, and for more than 20 years he lived in licentiousness. Most of his children were born out of wedlock and sent to a foundling home. He was mean, treacherous, hypocritical, and blasphemous. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

SIN IS LIKE A BOA CONSTRICTOR! - Are you being deceived by sin and tolerating it like a **pet**? If you are, then you need to remember the fate of the man with the **pet boa constrictor** (Do a Google search - use the following three words in your search keeping the quotation marks as written >> "pet boa" killed). After 15 years of living with his owner, one day the "pet boa" would not let its "owner" out of its grip resulting in the owner's tragic death. Wild animals remain wild and so does **Sin**. Do not be deceived (Stop being deceived)!

No Small Deviations in God's Economy! - In St. Louis there is a railroad switchyard. One particular switch begins with just the thinnest piece of steel to direct a train away from one main track to another. If you were to follow those two tracks, however, you would find that one ends in San Francisco, the other in New York. Sin is like that. Just a small deviation from God's standards can place us far afield from our intended destination. Don't be deceived by the world, flesh or devil who say "It's no big deal!" Wrong!

Entanglement by the Cords of one's own Sin - Not long after a wealthy contractor had finished building the Tombs prison in New York, he was found guilty of forgery and sentenced to several years in the prison he had built! As he was escorted into a cell of his own making, the contractor said, "I never dreamed when I built this prison that I would be an inmate one day." (cp Nu 32:23, Pr 5:22-note)

TWENTY REASONS NOT TO SIN! - Just for "fun" take a moment to review the following list of **20 reasons not to commit sins** (hamartano)...

1. A little sin leads to more sin. (2 Pe 2:18-19, Pr 5:22)
2. Sin invites the discipline of God. (Heb 12:5-11)
3. The time spent in my sin is forever wasted. (Eph 5:16)
4. My sin never pleases but always grieves the God Who loves me. (Ge 39:9, Ezek 6:9, Eph 4:30)
5. My sin places a greater burden on my spiritual leaders. (Heb 13:17)
6. In time, sin always brings heaviness to my heart. (Ps 32:4)
7. Others, including my family, suffer consequences due to my sin. (2 Sa 12:10)
8. My sin makes the enemies of God rejoice. (Jdg 16:25-27, Ps 35:15, Ps 69:12)
9. Sin deceives me into believing I have gained when in reality I have lost. (Heb 3:13, Heb 11:25)
10. Sin may keep me from qualifying for spiritual leadership. (1 Ti 3:2, 10)
11. The supposed benefits of sin will never outweigh the consequences of disobedience. (Heb 11:25)
12. Repenting of sin is a painful process. (2 Cor 7:9-11)
13. My sin may influence others to sin. (cf 1 Cor 5:9-13)
14. My sin may keep others from knowing Christ. (cf 2 Pe 2:18)
15. Sin makes light of the Cross, upon which Christ died for the very purpose of taking away my sin. (Heb 10:29)
16. It is impossible to sin and follow the Spirit at the same time. (1 Th 5:19, Eph 4:30, Jdg 16:19,20)
17. Others more earnest than I have been destroyed by just such sins. (Jdg 16:28-31)
18. God chooses not to hear the prayers of those who cherish their sin (Ps 66:18, Pr 15:8, 29, Pr 21:13, Pr 28:9, Isa 1:15, Jn 9:31, Jas 4:3).
19. My unwillingness to reject this sin now grants it authority over me greater than I understand. (Pr 5:22, Eccl 7:26)
20. I promised God He would be the Lord of my life. (Ro 10:9-10) (Source unknown)

Sin will take you farther than you ever thought you'd stray
Sin will leave you so lost, you think you'll never find your way
Sin will keep you longer than you ever thought you'd stay
Sin will cost you more than you ever thought you'd pay

AFTER RECEIVING THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH: meta to labein (AAN) ten epignosin tes aletheias ouketi peri hamartion apoleipetai (3PPPI) thusia:

- **After receiving the knowledge of the truth** - Luke 12:47; John 13:17; 15:22, 23, 24; 2Th 2:10; James 4:17
- [Hebrews 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

FULL KNOWLEDGE CONVEYS FULL RESPONSIBILITY!

Spiritual light brings personal responsibility. How will I respond to the light I have been given?

The knowledge the truth - This is not "gnosis" but "epignosis" (full knowledge - see below)! The "full" knowledge of the truth about Jesus the Great High Priest and His better covenant promises. **In short, these individuals have not been "short changed"**. They cannot claim ignorance and say that God is being unjust in "His austere dealing with them." They have not been given a "watered down" version of the good news. They have received the unadulterated truth! They clearly understood the truth they had heard about Jesus. It was their overt rejection of that truth which defined their apostasy which in turn warranted such a severe "judicial

sentence" by God. Exposure to such great light, makes them guilty of even greater condemnation! (cp Jesus' teaching of "degrees" of punishment proportional to the amount of light - Mt 11:21, 22, 23, 24)

Spurgeon - It would have been better for you never to have had any **knowledge of the truth**, than to have known it, and then sinned willfully against it, and so, after all, to be a castaway. **If you are a true child of God, though a wanderer from His ways, you will be brought back to Him, and I pray that you may be brought back to Him this very hour. But if you are an apostate, a backslider in heart, you will be filled with your own ways.** Having filled up the measure of your iniquity, you will be driven from God's presence into the place of woe where hope and mercy never can come. How foolish you are who are looking for signs and wonders or else you will not believe. May the Spirit of God show you that Jesus is now able and willing to save you, and that all you have to do is to take what He has done, and simply trust Him, and you shall be saved, completely saved, perfected through His one sacrifice. There remains no more to be done by the Redeemer. He sits down, and He will not rise for any further sacrifice.

The same phrase (the **knowledge of the truth**) appears in the pastoral epistles...

1 Timothy 2:4 who desires all men to be saved and to come to **the knowledge of the truth.**

2 Timothy 2:25-note with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to **the knowledge of the truth,**

2 Timothy 3:7-note always learning and never able to come to **the knowledge of the truth**

Titus 1:1-note Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and **the knowledge of the truth** which is according to godliness,

Note above that in Titus **Paul** links the phrase **knowledge the truth** and to **godliness**, which is what knowledge of the truth can and should produce. The failure of the knowledge of the truth to produce godliness in the present context does not denigrate the efficacy of truth but does disclose the evil of the hearer's heart!

Knowledge (1922) (**epignosis** from verb **epiginosko** from **epí** = upon + **ginosko** = to know) is a strengthened or intensified form of "**gnosis**" and conveys the thought of a more full, larger and thorough knowledge. It also conveys the idea of an intimate and personal relationship than the simple term. Vine says the verb form **epiginosko** suggests generally a directive, a more special, recognition of the object known than **ginosko**.

There are a few resources that suggest there is very little difference between **gnósis** and **epignosis**. This discussion holds the opinion that **epignosis** does have subtle but real differences. **Epígnosis** refers to exact, complete, thorough, accurate, experiential knowledge, not just abstract, intellectual, head knowledge of God or even facts about Him. **Epígnosis** always describes moral and religious knowledge in the NT and especially refers to full and comprehensive knowledge of God's will that rests on the knowledge of God and of Christ found today in His Word.

Wuest - The word "**knowledge**" is not the simple word **gnosis**, but the stronger word **epignosis**. Alford quotes Delitzsch as saying: "When **epignosis** is used, there is the assumption of an actual direction of the spirit to a definite object and of a real grasping of the same: so that we may speak of a false **gnosis**, but not of a false **epignosis**. And the Writer, by the use of this word, gives us to understand that he means by it not only a shallow historical notion about the Truth, but a living believing knowledge of it, which has laid hold of a man and fused him into union with itself." Thus it is clear that the Jew who committed this sin, was fully informed by the Holy Spirit of the issues involved between the First Testament and the New Testament, and also of the meaning and the implications of the New Testament, (cp Heb 6:4-note, "who were once enlightened") and therefore, he sinned with his eyes wide open. Should he commit this sin, there would remain no more sacrifice for sin. Expositor's quotes Delitzsch as follows: "The meaning is not merely that the Jewish sacrifices to which the apostate has returned have in themselves no sin-destroying power, nor even that there is no second sacrifice additional to that of Christ, but further that for a sinner of this kind the very sacrifice of Christ itself has no more atoning or reconciling power." Alford, commenting upon this same thing says: "There is but One true sacrifice for sins: if a man, having availed himself of that One, then deliberately casts it behind him, there is no second left for him. It will be observed that one thing is not, and need not be, specified in the text. That he has exhausted the virtue of the one sacrifice, is not said: but in proportion to his willing rejection of it, has ceased to operate for him. He has in fact, as Delitzsch observes, shut the door of repentance behind him, by the very fact of his being in an abiding state of willing sin." All of which means that this abandonment of the New Testament sacrifice, the Messiah, and the return to the abrogated sacrifices of the First Testament, was not a snap judgment on the part of this first century Jew, but a confirmed state of heart. ([Hebrews Commentary online](#)) (Bolding added)

Spurgeon asks "Have you ever considered how much you insult God the Father by rejecting Christ? If you were invited to a feast and you should come to the table and dash down every dish, and throw them on the ground, and trample on them, would not this be an insult? If you were a poor beggar at the door, and a rich man had bidden you into his feast out of pure charity, what would you deserve if you had treated his provisions in this way? And yet this is just your case. You were not deserving of God, you were a poor

sinner without any claim upon Him, and yet He has been pleased to prepare a table. His oxen and His fattened cattle have been killed, and now you will not come. You do worse: you raise objections to the feast; you despise the pleasant land and the goodly provision of God. Just think at what an expense the provision of salvation has been made."

HAVE YOU HEARD THE NAME CHARLES TEMPLETON?

ILLUSTRATION OF MODERN DAY APOSTATE – The picture above is from 1946 – do you recognize the man on the right? That's young Billy Graham! The man on the left is Charles Templeton. But first let's back up! In 1936 at age of 19 Templeton after a night of partying experienced what he called a "profound change!" He said his life seemed "empty, wasted and sordid. It was though a black blanket had been draped over me. A sense of enormous guilt descended and invaded every part of me. I felt unclean." As he was kneeling at his bedside pleading "Lord come down. Come down." Then he said a weight was lifted off and "an ineffable warmth began to suffuse every corpuscle of his body." That was 1936. Then in 1941 Templeton founded a church in Toronto, Canada which grew quickly. In 1945 at Winona Lake, Templeton met with other your fundamentalist leaders including a young Billy Graham to found what we now call Youth For Christ International. It was Templeton who recommended that Graham become the organization's first evangelist. And together they toured the US and Europe (photo below is before their European trip). During the 1950's Templeton preached in 14 countries including to some crowds as large as 70,000. One Easter sunrise he preached to 50,000 in the Rose Bowl. It has been said had Templeton continued as an evangelist, we would be asking ourselves "Billy who?" Such was his power and influence. The National Association of Evangelicals in 1946 named Templeton one of the "best used of God." So what happened? Where is he today? Templeton said that the many years that he preached the Gospel he always doubted the Genesis account of Creation and he secretly rejected the Biblical teaching on divine judgment and hell. In 1957 after a long time of introspection he publicly declared himself to be an agnostic, someone who believes there is a God but cannot really know Him. In 1986 he published his spiritual memoir entitled "Farewell to God – My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith." In this book he described his pilgrimage from Christian faith to agnosticism to atheism. How does this happen to one of the world's greatest evangelist, who had dedicated himself to preaching the Gospel and founded organizations to promote the Gospel and even to be an encourager to the man we see as the "poster boy" of evangelism, Billy Graham?

Here is a quote from **Templeton** spoken to Edward Babinski -

"When I finally shook free of Christianity, it was like being born again. I began to see all of life differently. The things that had once seemed important now seemed trivial. And things I'd never seen the meaning of or the essence of I began to appreciate for the first time." ([Leaving the Fold: Testimonies of Former Fundamentalists](#) by Edward Babinski who has a blog "debunking Christianity" - and so clearly I am not recommended his work but only linking to document the quote)

MORE ON CHARLES TEMPLETON FOLLOWING MAY HAVE SOME REPETITION

One of the most significant problems churches face is the problem of false converts or apostates. There are 4 categories of people in every church – genuine believers and who are confident in Christ for their salvation, genuine believers who have doubts and lack assurance of their salvation, those who think they are Christians but they are not, and those who know they are not believers. It is the third group that the writer of Hebrews is addressing in this section.

You may never have heard the name Charles Templeton, but you surely have heard the name Billy Graham. Charles Templeton (1915-2001) first professed faith in 1936 when he "got religion" as he put it, and everything changed. Lured by the news that the Cleveland Colored Quartet would be performing at Toronto's Parkdale Church of the Nazarene, he attended the service and experienced an emotional "conversion." For the next twenty years, he devoted himself to bringing about the same experience in the lives of others. Along with Oswald J. Smith, as well as several American evangelists and church leaders, he formed **Youth for Christ International** and led some of the largest weekly Youth for Christ gatherings in North America. From 1944 to 1948, Templeton's evangelistic rallies packed 2,800 young people into the auditorium of Toronto's Massey Hall. Each Saturday evening, the audience heard what one reporter referred to as "old-fashioned repent-and-be-saved gospel preaching." Drawing on traditional evangelical Protestantism, Templeton urged young men and women to confess their sins, accept Christ as their Savior, and, with the Holy Spirit's help, live a life pleasing to God. Living for Jesus was the ultimate "thrill," Templeton informed his audiences. He told

young men and women that Christ was “the most exciting man who’s ever lived ... the most extraordinary man who’s ever lived,” and not just a man, but God Himself.

In 1945 Templeton met Billy Graham and the two became friends, rooming and ministering together during a 1946 YFC evangelistic tour in Europe ([Click to see the photographs and go to the bottom of the page to see how large the gatherings were](#)). Despite these experiences one of the two men wrote the following about himself..

The particular intellectual problem I was wrestling with, for the first time since my conversion as a teenager, was the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. Seeming contradictions and problems with interpretation defied intellectual solutions, or so I thought. Could the Bible be trusted completely?...

You are probably thinking that was Charles Templeton, but you would be wrong, for it was Billy Graham. And yet within two years after the European tour, in about 1948 Templeton’s life and worldview was beginning to go in a different direction than Graham’s (who obviously had resolved his doubts about the authority of the Scriptures). So instead of Graham, it was Templeton who began to have serious doubts about the Christian faith as he was planning to enter Princeton Theological Seminary. And even after he began to drift from Biblical truth, during the 1950s and ’60s, Templeton preached to crowds of 10,000 to 30,000 nightly. He packed stadiums and thrilled audiences with his proclamation of “the gospel of Christ,” as he believed it to be. And then we “fast forward” to about 1957, when Templeton would publicly declare that he had become an agnostic!

In his 1996 memoir, **Farewell to God: My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith**, Templeton recounted a conversation with Graham in Montreat prior to entering seminary...

All our differences came to a head in a discussion which, better than anything I know, “explains” Billy Graham and his phenomenal success as an evangelist. In the course of our conversation I said, “But, Billy, it’s simply not possible any longer to believe, for instance, the biblical account of creation. The world was not created over a period of days a few thousand years ago; it has evolved over millions of years. It’s not a matter of speculation; it’s a demonstrable fact.”

“I don’t accept that,” Billy said. “And there are reputable scholars who don’t.”

“Who are these scholars?” I said. “Men in conservative Christian colleges?”

“Most of them, yes,” he said. “But that is not the point. I believe the Genesis account of creation because it’s in the Bible. I’ve discovered something in my ministry: When I take the Bible literally, when I proclaim it as the word of God, my preaching has power. When I stand on the platform and say, ‘God says,’ or ‘The Bible says,’ the Holy Spirit uses me. There are results. Wiser men than you or I have been arguing questions like this for centuries. I don’t have the time or the intellect to examine all sides of the theological dispute, so I’ve decided once for all to stop questioning and accept the Bible as God’s word.”

“But Billy,” I protested, “You cannot do that. You don’t dare stop thinking about the most important question in life. Do it and you begin to die. It’s intellectual suicide.”

“I don’t know about anybody else,” he said, “but I’ve decided that that’s the path for me.”

(Another quote from **Farewell to God - My Reasons for Rejecting the Christian Faith** - page 232) - “I believe that there is no supreme being with human attributes--no God in the Biblical sense --but that life is the result of timeless evolutionary forces, having reached its present transient state over millions of years....How can one believe the Biblical account of the creation of the world in six days when every eminent physicist agrees that all living species have evolved over millions of years from primitive beginnings. (ED: BUT WHO BEGAN THOSE "PRIMITIVE BEGINNINGS?")....‘I believe that, in common with all living creatures, we die and cease to exist as an entity.’ (page 233).”

And so we have in the life of Charles Templeton, a man who surely experienced all of the attributes described in [Hebrews 6:4-5](#) and yet he fell away from all he had experienced from 1936 to 1948, over 20 years of evangelizing for Christ! And as the writer of Hebrews warns, it is impossible to renew such a one again to repentance.

Some 50 years after Templeton had begun to reject Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life, investigative reporter Lee Strobel interviewed him for his best selling book **The Case for Christ** (the writing of which led Strobel to become a believer in Jesus Christ!) published in 2000 and here is Strobel's record of the interchange as Strobel ask Templeton ([see picture of the aged Templeton](#))...

“And how do you assess this Jesus?” It seemed like the next logical question—but I wasn’t ready for the

response it would evoke.

Templeton's body language softened. It was as if he suddenly felt relaxed and comfortable in talking about an old and dear friend. His voice, which at times had displayed such a sharp and insistent edge, now took on a melancholy and reflective tone. His guard seemingly down, he spoke in an unhurried pace, almost nostalgically, carefully choosing his words as he talked about Jesus.

"He was," Templeton began, "the greatest human being who has ever lived. He was a moral genius. His ethical sense was unique. He was the intrinsically wisest person that I've ever encountered in my life or in my readings. His commitment was total and led to his own death, much to the detriment of the world. What could one say about him except that this was a form of greatness?"

I was taken aback. "You sound like you really care about him," I said.

"Well, yes, he is the most important thing in my life," came his reply. "I . . . I . . . I . . .," he stuttered, searching for the right word, 'I know it may sound strange, but I have to say . . . I adore him!' . . .

". . . Everything good I know, everything decent I know, everything pure I know, I learned from Jesus. Yes . . . yes. And tough! Just look at Jesus. He castigated people. He was angry. People don't think of him that way, but they don't read the Bible. He had a righteous anger. He cared for the oppressed and exploited. There's no question that he had the highest moral standard, the least duplicity, the greatest compassion, of any human being in history. There have been many other wonderful people, but Jesus is Jesus....'

"Uh . . . but . . . no,' he said slowly, 'he's the most . . .' He stopped, then started again. "In my view," he declared, "he is the most important human being who has ever existed."

That's when Templeton uttered the words I never expected to hear from him. "And if I may put it this way," he said as his voice began to crack, 'I . . . miss . . . him!"

With that tears flooded his eyes. He turned his head and looked downward, raising his left hand to shield his face from me. His shoulders bobbed as he wept. . . .

Templeton fought to compose himself. I could tell it wasn't like him to lose control in front of a stranger. He sighed deeply and wiped away a tear. After a few more awkward moments, he waved his hand dismissively. Finally, quietly but adamantly, he insisted: "Enough of that."

And so we see a living example of Hebrews 6:4-6! A man who professed Jesus and even spoke of Him affectionately, but not as the sinless Son of God, not as the One Who bore Templeton's sins on Calvary. This has to be one of the saddest, most tragic stories of falling away in the twentieth century!

Related Resources:

- Counterfeit New Births - What the New Birth is Not!
- [What is apostasy and how can I recognize it?](#)
- [If our salvation is eternally secure, why does the Bible warn so strongly against apostasy?](#)
- [How can I have assurance of my salvation?](#)
- [Eternal security - is it biblical?](#)
- [Is eternal security a "license" to sin?](#)
- [The slippery slide to unbelief](#)
- [Death of an apostate](#)
- [19th century minister to colleague: Darwin will drag you down](#)

Hard Sayings of the Bible: No Forgiveness for Deliberate Sin?

All who examine their lives according to Jesus' standards discover sin; it may not be a frequent event or a flagrant sin, but none of us has lived up to what Jesus has revealed of the Father's character. We are also forced to admit that some of our sin is deliberate. That is, we do not deliberately set out to sin, but we know in ourselves that some deed or activity is wrong (at least for us, if not for everyone), yet we stifle our consciences and do it anyway. At times we may even recognize that we planned our sin quite carefully, or at least planned to walk into temptation, knowing full well (in our hearts, if not in our minds) that we would give in. If this is an accurate description of the human condition, then Hebrews 10:26 is very disturbing. Is this verse making the distinction that the Old

Testament does between deliberate and accidental sins? Is it saying that there is forgiveness for accidental or unknowing sins, but not for the other type? And if this is the case, are all of us who have knowingly sinned after our conversion lost? If that is in fact the meaning, this verse should cause terror and despair rather than mere concern.

The Old Testament makes a clear distinction between willful or deliberate sin and inadvertent sins. After discussing the procedure for obtaining forgiveness for inadvertent sins in Numbers 15:22–29, the author adds, “But anyone who sins defiantly, ... that person must be cut off from his people” (Num 15:30). The example that follows this passage tells of a person who gathered wood on the sabbath, presumably because his fire was going out and he had neglected to gather enough wood the previous day. Surely this was a small act, unlike murder or even theft. But it was also clear that he had consciously gone out to do work on the sabbath and was not ignorant of the law against work on that day. It was a deliberate sin. He was stoned to death at the command of the Lord. A deliberate sin is not to be taken lightly.

Although the Old Testament makes a distinction between deliberate and accidental sin, that does not appear to be the point being made in Hebrews, which looks at life from a perspective of Jesus’ already having come and died for sin. If Jesus understands human weakness and helps those who are tempted (Heb 2:17–18; 4:15), he is hardly going to fail to understand our failure. Similarly, Paul’s response to failure was to restore the person (Gal 6:1), even when the sin was quite serious (2 Cor 2:5–11). Hebrews is not a Pauline writing, but it comes out of the same circle of acquaintances (Heb 13:23). We would therefore expect similar attitudes toward forgiveness of sin.

The point Hebrews is making can best be seen by following the author’s progression of thought. Having noted the adequacy of Christ’s sacrifice in Hebrews 10:1–18, he urges the readers to draw near to God with confidence (Heb 10:19–22). This is expressed in (1) holding on to the hope that we have in Christ, (2) encouraging each other to live the faith in practice and (3) gathering together (Heb 10:23–25). The opposite of these would be to withdraw from the Christian gatherings, to stop doing public expressions of faith, and to give up commitment to Christ and hope in him. In other words, the opposite would be apostasy.

That this is the point of the passage is clearly seen in Hebrews 10:29, where the “deliberate” sinners are described as those who have “trampled the Son of God under foot,” treated the “blood of the covenant” as something common (in other words, looked upon Jesus’ death as just any common criminal’s death) and “insulted the Spirit of grace.” This is deliberate sin, but deliberate in the sense that a person willfully is renouncing Christianity and rejecting Jesus, his death and the personal experience of the Spirit (which is the slander against the Holy Spirit condemned in Mk 3:28–29).

It is not that such deliberate sinners (or apostates) did not know the truth. The author is clear on that point. Only “after we have received the knowledge of the truth” is such an action so serious. Like those mentioned in Hebrews 6:4–8, they have been fully initiated into Christianity, for the phrase “knowledge of the truth” is common in the later New Testament writings for having come to full Christian conversion (Jn 8:32; 1 Tim 2:4; 4:3; 2 Tim 2:25; Tit 1:1; 1 Jn 2:21; 2 Jn 1). But they have chosen to reject their experience of Christ. Had they received a distorted picture of Christianity there might have been hope, for one could correct the distortion. But they have developed a “sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God” (Heb 3:12). For such people there is no sacrifice for sin remaining; they have rejected the only one that exists. What remains is the judgment of God.

This does not mean that the early church took sin lightly, deliberate or accidental. Any sin called for rebuke and restoration or, if unrepented of, discipline (see Mt 18:15–20; 1 Cor 5:1–5). And sinning could lead to sickness (Jas 5:15) or death (1 Cor 11:30). Furthermore, deliberately hardening one’s conscience and disobeying God could start one on the way to this outright rejection of the faith. It might also indicate that the person remains outside the faith, for Jesus is not yet Lord to the one who disobeys him (1 Cor 6:9–10; Gal 5:19–21). Yet serious as their condition is, the possibility remains that all such people can be brought to repentance in one way or another. There are still arguments to be put forward and evidence to be shown. For the people the author is talking about, however, nothing of the kind is possible. They knew the truth fully, but have deliberately renounced what they once embraced. There is no new evidence or arguments to present. We can only tremble at the thought of the judgment awaiting them and take care that we stay far away from the slope that leads down into that pit. ([Hard Sayings of the Bible: Walter C. Kaiser Jr](#))

THERE NO LONGER REMAINS A SACRIFICE FOR SINS: ouketi peri hamartion apoleipetai (3PPPI) thusia

- **There no longer remains** - Heb 10:3-10
- [Hebrews 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**REJECTION OF CHRIST'S SACRIFICE
LEAVES NO ALTERNATIVE SACRIFICE**

There no longer remains a sacrifice for sins - Rejection of the sacrifice of Christ leaves no alternative. God has no plan B! **Marvin Vincent** answers "Of course not. For the Levitical sacrifices are abolished. It is Christ's sacrifice or none."

No (ouketi) means absolutely no longer. In other words when one **knows** the truth about Jesus and **rejects** Jesus, the **"time is up!"** so to speak. This is a serious and hopefully sobering warning. There are no second chances!

A T Robertson "**No longer is there left behind**" (**present passive** indicative as in Heb 4:9), for one has renounced the one and only sacrifice for sin that does or can remove sin.

Spurgeon on **no longer remains a sacrifice** - How can there be? Do you think when you are in hell that Christ will come a second time to die for you? Will He pour out His blood again to bring you from the place of torment? Have you so vain an imagination as to dream that there will be a second ransom offered for those who have not escaped the wrath to come, and that God the Holy Ghost will again come and strive with sinners who willfully rejected Him? All the atonement that could save me in ten years' time is here now. All that I can ever rely upon if I postpone all thoughts of faith—all is here already. There will be no improvement in Christ. He has perfected His work. Oh, poor troubled soul, rest on Him now.

Remains (620) (**apoleipo** from **apo** = from + **leipo** = lack, leave, forsake) means literally to leave behind. Paul uses it in the active voice to describe leaving behind of his cloak (2Ti 4:13-note cp the two other uses of the **active** voice - 2Ti 4:20-note; Titus 1:5-note). The passive voice as used here in Hebrews means to be reserved or to remain, to be left over.

Apoleipo - 7x in 7v - 2Ti 4:13, 20; Titus 1:5; Heb 4:6, 9; 10:26; Jude 1:6

Just like Heb 6:6 (impossible to renew then again to repentance) warns of the critical danger of turning from Christ's once-for-all, perfect sacrifice back to the shadows which could never make the worshiper perfect in conscience.

If we sin willfully reveals that this act is deliberate. It parallels the sin of Nu 15:30,31. When one willingly or defiantly disobeyed God, there was no sacrifice for such apostasy. He had to die (Nu 15:35,36). This OT teaching gives us a picture of the definition of "WILLFUL SINNING".

Hebrews 10:28 seems to allude to Dt 17:2-7 which records that upon testimony of 2 or 3 witnesses, death by stoning was punishment for apostasy—going after and serving false gods (Dt 17:2). Now in v29, the one who would despise the person of Jesus and His ministry as High Priest is worthy of even greater judgment. V29 (due to the verb and participles used) should not be understood as judgment that has happened because of such apostasy, but as judgment that would happen should such apostasy occur. The author places his recipients and himself ("we" go on sinning) under this warning just as he did in the earlier warnings. By so doing he demonstrates that the warnings are intended for the saved as well as for the unsaved. Yet, here, as in Heb6, the author does not say that anyone has committed this sin. He describes what would happen, not what has happened. He is describing a hypothetical situation. The severe admonition of this warning, and all others in Scripture, is God's means to ensure our perseverance.

SOME TRUE BELIEVERS MIGHT WORRY THEY HAD COMMITTED THIS SIN

Matthew Henry has some comforting remarks writing that "This text has been the occasion of great distress to some gracious souls; they have been ready to conclude that every willful sin, after conviction and against knowledge, is the unpardonable sin: but this has been their infirmity and error. The sin here mentioned is a total and final apostasy, when men with a full and fixed will and resolution despise and reject Christ, the only Saviour, -- despise and resist the Spirit, the only Sanctifier, -- and despise and renounce the gospel, the only way of salvation, and the words of eternal life; and all this after they have known, owned, and professed, the Christian religion, and continue to do so obstinately and maliciously."

Dennis De Haan adds that since this **"text speaks of trampling underfoot the precious Son of God... this warning, along with Hebrews 6:1-8, has caused untold agony to many sensitive Christians**. It's as if Satan uses Hebrews 6:4 and Hebrews 10:26 to create hopelessness and despair. But what do these passages teach? **F. F. Bruce** points out that they refer to people who have deliberately abandoned reliance on the perfect sacrifice of Christ. **Raymond Brown** said that theirs is not a single act of falling away, but a state of willful, determined renunciation of all dependence on Christ's atoning work. God has no other plan for saving those who regard Christ's sacrifice as useless.

Steven Cole in his sermon on Hebrews 10:26-31 emphasizes that...

If we reject Christ as God's sacrifice for our sins, we will face His certain, terrifying judgment.

This is the second difficult warning passage in Hebrews (Heb 6:4, 5, 6, 7, 8 was the other). It is difficult not only because of the subject, but also because some of it is difficult to interpret. Before we work through the text, I will give you the major options, beginning with the least likely, as I understand things.

(1) The least likely view is the Arminian view, that our text describes true believers who sin and lose their salvation. The problem with this view is that they have to explain away the many passages that clearly teach that salvation is God's free gift, not based on anything in us, but only on the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Even this very chapter (Heb 10:1-18) strongly makes the point that Christ's sacrifice **once for all perfected us** and took away all of our guilt (**Ed note**: cp Heb 10:1-note and Heb 10:14-note - notice that the verb **"perfect"** is in the **perfect tense** which defines a past completed action with ongoing effect or result; thus even the tense used in this verse speaks of the permanence of Christ's perfection of the believer!). Some early church fathers, however, mistakenly inferred from this and other passages in Hebrews that there was no forgiveness for sins committed after baptism. This judgment was usually reserved for "big" sins, such as denial of the faith under persecution, murder, idolatry, and sexual sins. But, the problem was, baptized Christians did sometimes commit such sins and later repent. Could they not be forgiven? Some, following The Shepherd of Hermas (ca., A.D. 140), argued that forgiveness could be obtained once after baptism, but no more. Tertullian, who was more strict, condemned Hermas for this concession, which he saw as the thin edge of a dangerous wedge. Others who were more tolerant extended Hermas' concession indefinitely, but demanded penance. F. F. Bruce, who discusses this (Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews [Eerdmans], pp. 260-262), points out the irony, that this strong warning in Hebrews could give rise to a system that was quite similar to the Jewish sacrificial system that Hebrews dismisses as forever superseded! **Any system that teaches the loss of salvation or penance to restore it is contrary to God's free grace in Christ.**

(2) A second view is that the author is talking about genuine believers who renounce the faith, but the punishment he describes is not hell, but some awful temporal judgment (Zane Hodges, The Bible Knowledge Commentary, ed. by John Walvoord & Roy Zuck [Victor Books], 2:805). This view is in line with Mr. Hodges' non-lordship salvation view, that a person can believe in Christ, subsequently deny and strongly oppose the faith, and yet he will be saved, although he will lose his rewards (1Cor 3:15). Apart from the many problems with non-lordship salvation, in our text the judgment is described as **"the fury of a fire that will consume the adversaries"** (Heb 10:27-note). Limiting this to temporal judgment, no matter how severe, does not do justice to the severity of the warnings.

(3) A third view is that the author is warning true believers, who cannot possibly lose their salvation, about what would happen to them if they did apostatize (which true believers cannot do). So, it is a hypothetical warning used to frighten believers away from leaving the faith (Homer Kent, The Epistle to the Hebrews [Baker], pp. 206-207). But, as I argued when we studied Hebrews 6, a hypothetical warning is really pointless. If these people were truly regenerate, how could God hypothetically cast them into hell if they hypothetically apostatized, none of which is possible? This entire line of thinking makes no sense to me. (**Ed comment**: I agree!)

(4) The correct explanation, as I understand it, is that the passage is warning those who have made a profession of faith and have associated themselves with the church, of the danger of God's eternal judgment if they turn back to Judaism. These people outwardly seem to be regenerate, but they are not truly so. To abandon Christ's sacrifice and to return to Judaism would show that they had never truly trusted Christ in the first place.

The main difficulty for this view is the phrase **'by which he was sanctified'** (Heb 10:29). There are several ways that those who take this view explain the phrase.

(a) John Owen (An Exposition of Hebrews [The National Foundation for Christian Education], 4:545) **argues that it does not refer to the apostate, but to Christ Himself**, "who was sanctified and dedicated unto God to be an eternal high priest, by the blood of the covenant which he offered unto God..." This is possible grammatically, although it seems to force into the context something that is specifically taught in John 17:19, but only alluded to in Hebrews (Hebrews 2:10; 5:7, 9; 9:11, 12).

(b) A second way to understand "sanctified" is that it refers to outward sanctification in the sense of being identified with God's people, but not to the person's true heart condition before God. This outward sanctification may have been through baptism or communion. The person is "set apart" from the world in the sense that he has joined with the church and its ordinances. He sits under the preaching of the Word and even agrees with it intellectually (Hebrews 10:26, he has received **"the knowledge of the truth"**). But his heart has not been transformed by God's saving grace (Ed: Jn 3:3, 5). When pressure comes to turn away from Christ due to persecution or temptation to sin (Ed: Mk 4:7, 18, 19), he shows his true colors by repudiating his faith in Christ.

This terrible sin (further described in Hebrews 10:29) puts the apostate on the path toward certain, terrifying judgment.

This view is in line with the interpretation that I took of Hebrews 6:4-8 (See sermon [Hebrews 6:4-8 When Repentance Becomes Impossible](#)). The difficulty of the view, I admit, is that you must take the word “**sanctified**” in an outward sense (contrary to its use in Hebrews 10:10-note & Hebrews 10:14-note, but in line with Hebrews 9:13-note). But in spite of this difficulty, I think that it best fits the context of Hebrews. It also lines up with Hebrews 10:39-note, which contrasts those who **shrink back to destruction** with those who **have faith to the preserving of the soul**.

With that as an overview, let’s work through the text, which falls into three sections.

1. To reject Christ willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth is to reject God’s only sacrifice for sins and to fall under His certain, terrifying judgment (Hebrews 10:26, 27).

When the author says, “**if we go on sinning willfully,**” he is not talking about the “normal” sins that every believer commits. If he were, then who could be saved (?), because no one has ever lived without sin after salvation!

While we do sometimes sin inadvertently,
most of our sins are willful!
We sin because we choose to sin!

But the Bible is clear that if we sin, God graciously forgives and cleanses us when we confess our sins (1Jn 1:7, 8, 9).

“**Sinning willfully**” refers to what Numbers 15:30 calls **sins of defiance**, for which there was no sacrifice available. Commentators compare such sins to the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, representing an unpardonable sin of “high treason and revolt against God” (Walter Kaiser, *Toward Rediscovering the Old Testament*, p. 132, cited by Ronald Allen, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, ed. by Frank Gaebelein [Zondervan], 2:830). To **go on sinning willfully** means deliberately and knowingly to renounce the faith by repudiating Christ’s sacrifice for sins.

It is a total defection
from the faith in Christ as Savior.

The only ones who can commit this sin are those who have received **the knowledge of the truth**” These people had come into the church and had heard teaching on the meaning and significance of the death of Christ, such as the author has just given (Heb 10:1-18). These apostates knew that Christ is God’s only, once-for-all sacrifice, who fulfilled and thus abolished the Old Testament sacrificial system. They knew the truth about the person of Christ and His exalted role as High Priest.

Yet even so, some were forsaking the assembly of the church and returning to Judaism (Hebrews 10:25). The author is saying that to make such a choice is to trample on the Son of God and to treat His shed blood as worthless. It is to turn from the only way of salvation to an obsolete system that never could remove the guilt of sins (Heb 10:4-note). It is to place oneself on the side of God’s adversaries. All that awaits them is not salvation, but a “terrifying expectation of judgment and the fury of a fire that will consume the adversaries.” The word “terrifying” is emphatic in the Greek. He repeats it in Heb 10:31-note (the only other NT occurrence is in Heb 12:21-note). He wants to hit us with the frightening consequences of turning away from Christ!

2. If the Law of Moses had stiff penalties for disregarding it, the penalty will be much greater for spurning the Son of God who fulfilled the Law (Heb 10:28-29-note).

In Heb 10:28, the author states what every Jew knew well: If a person brazenly defied the Law of Moses, he or she was to be stoned to death on the evidence of two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:2-6). There was no place for mercy or a second chance (Deut. 13:8). The Law was to be applied to all (see Lev. 24:10-23; Num. 15:32-36). The author has just shown how that Jesus is greater than Moses (Heb. 3:1-6). He is a superior priest to the Levitical priests (Heb 5:1-10; Heb 7:1-28). He inaugurated the new covenant, which is better than the old (Heb 8:6-13). He is the better sacrifice (Heb 9:23). So the author is saying, in effect, “In light of the superiority of Jesus to Moses, and in light of the severity of punishment under Moses, go figure what will happen to the person who deliberately rejects Christ!”

He describes such apostates by three phrases.

(1) First, he “has trampled under foot the Son of God.” To trample something under foot is to treat it as completely worthless. The use of the title, “Son of God,” seems “to indicate that the form of apostasy in view involves a scornful denial of the deity of Christ” (Philip Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* [Eerdmans], p. 422). It means repudiating all that the author has argued for ten chapters on the supremacy and superiority of Jesus Christ, who is God’s final word to us. He is the radiance of God’s glory, the exact representation of His nature, and He upholds all things by the word of His power (Heb 1:1-3). To treat this exalted Son of God like a bug under one’s foot is an indescribably horrific sin!

(2) Second, such an apostate “has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified.” The first charge trashed the person of Christ. This one despises His work on the cross. I have already explained that the best way to understand “sanctified” is in an outward sense, of being set apart with God’s people through public worship and outward confession of Christ. “To regard as unclean” means, literally, “to treat as common.” It may refer to partaking of communion even though his faith was not genuine, and so profaning the cup representing the blood of the covenant (Hughes, p. 423). Or, it could mean viewing the death of Jesus as a common death. The apostates shrugged off any vicarious, substitutionary significance to Christ’s death. Maybe they viewed His death as a noble tragedy, but nothing more. By so doing, they treated the blood of the new covenant as commonplace.

(3) The third charge was that the apostates had “insulted the Spirit of grace.” (This is the only time this phrase is applied to the Holy Spirit; but see Zech. 12:10.) He imparts God’s undeserved favor to us through the sacrifice of God’s own Son. The phrase shows that the author viewed the Holy Spirit as a person, not as just an influence, since He could be insulted. “Insulted” has a nuance of arrogance or insolence (“hubris” comes from the Greek word). This is similar to the unpardonable blasphemy against the Spirit of which Jesus spoke. (Matt. 12:31, 32). For a guilty sinner to spit in God’s face when His Spirit offers a free pardon made possible through the death of God’s Son is simply outrageous.

Picture a man lying in the gutter in rags, covered with sores, hungry and homeless. He is there because of his own sinful choices. A kind, generous man offers to take this man to the hospital, pay all of his bills, and then to bequeath on him all that he would ever need in life. He would have a comfortable home, all the food he could eat, and every comfort he could dream of. But the ungrateful wretch in the gutter spits in the man’s face, curses at him, and then tells others that the man’s offer was worthless. That would not be as bad as insulting the Spirit of grace by turning your back on the free pardon that He offers through the blood of Jesus Christ! The person who spurns God’s grace in Christ deserves far greater punishment than physical death by stoning. He will suffer justly throughout eternity.

3. We know that God’s judgment is as certain as His Word, and it will be terrifying(Heb 10:30-31).

Even though he has been issuing this strong warning, the author has all along included himself with his readers by using the first person plural (“Let us,” Heb 10:22, 23, 24; “we,” 10:26, 30). Here he says, “For we know Him who said,” and then he cites two references from the Song of Moses (Dt. 32:35, 36). As we have seen before (Heb 3:7; 8:8; 10:15), for this author what Scripture says, God says. The first quote establishes God’s sole right to take vengeance, but here the emphasis is on the fact that those who wrong such a Being as God have no chance of escape. You may wrong another person and somehow manage to escape his vengeance. But God will repay!

The second quote in its original context has the nuance of God vindicating His people by judging their enemies. Although the apostates had formerly been associated with God’s people, their rebellion has put them on the side of God’s adversaries (Heb 10:27). They will not escape. Leaving the fellowship and repudiating the sacrifice of Christ does not remove them from judgment, but rather, places them squarely in line for judgment! As Hughes says (p. 426), “So far from escaping from God, the apostate falls into the hands of the living God: he abandons God as his Savior only to meet him as his Judge.” So the author concludes, “It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” He is trying, quite literally, to scare the hell out of them!

The Apostle John (Rev. 6:12-17) describes the terror of God’s judgment as it overtakes kings and commanders, the rich and the poor. After a great earthquake, the sun turns black and the moon turns blood red. The stars fall to earth and the sky splits apart. Mountains and islands move out of their places. Hiding themselves in caves and among the rocks of the mountains, everyone cries out to the mountains and to the rocks,

“Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”

Conclusion -

Sometimes people will say, "I don't believe in a God of judgment. My God is a God of love." If you subscribe to that view, then your "god" is not the living God who reveals Himself through His Word! In one of the earliest records of God's revelation of Himself, He said to Moses,

"The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who for-gives iniquity, transgression and sin." [So far, we all cheer, "Yeah! That's my kind of God!"] But keep going: "yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations" (Ex 34:6-7).

You may protest, "But that's the God of the Old Testament. I believe in Jesus, who was always gentle and kind."

Really? I again remind you that Jesus spoke more often about the terrors of hell than anyone else in the Bible. He called it a place "where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark 9:48, citing Isa. 66:24). He said that the punishment for one who causes one of His little ones to stumble would be far worse than if he had a mill-stone hung around his neck and was cast into the sea (Mark 9:42). He described hell as a place of outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (Mt 8:12; 24:5 1). He said that it's better to pluck out your eye or cut off your hand than for your whole body to go to hell (Mt 5:29, 30). He described the rich man in hell as being in agony in the flames (Luke 16:24). He further described those flames as "eternal fire," which is the same word used for "eternal life" (Mt 25:41, 46).

Also, our text is in the New Testament, and its very argument is that judgment will be more severe for rejecting the Son of God than it was for the one in the Old Testament who disregarded the Law. The God of both Testaments is the same God, who is rich in mercy and love towards all who repent of their sins and trust in Christ. But He is terrifying in His judgment against those who reject His Son, who is the only sacrifice for sin.

Note carefully who is most in danger of committing this terrible sin of turning away from Christ: it is those who knew the truth and who had associated with God's people! It is not those who are notorious sinners. It is those who think,

"I'm a child of Abraham! I'm not a sinner like the Gentiles! I keep the Law. I offer my sacrifices. That's good enough! I don't need a crucified Savior and His blood to atone for my sins!"

In other words, it's the church-going religious person who does not see his need for the blood of Christ!

I once conducted a funeral where I got to the service and read the little bulletin that the mortuary prints up. It quoted John 3:16 as follows: "**For God so loved the world that He gave His only be-gotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life.**" It omitted **'shall not perish!** I don't know whether the mortuary or the family of the deceased man was responsible, but I didn't let them get away with it! I called attention to this glaring omission and made the point: If you do not put your trust in Christ, you will perish!

The only options are: Christ or judgment. If you reject Christ after hearing the gospel and being associated with God's people, you will fall into the hands of the living God, and it will be an eternally terrifying ordeal! You don't want to go there! But if you entrust yourself into the hands of Christ, which were pierced for you, you will find God's abundant mercy and grace to cover all your sins!

Discussion Questions

Some evangelicals have denied the doctrine of hell as being "morally repugnant" and not worthy of God. How would you answer this charge?

Why should it send off warning signals when someone pits the "Old Testament God" against the "New Testament God"?

Is it biblically correct to tell sinners, "God loves you" or should we (with Edwards) say, "God is angry with you"?

List as many practical benefits as you can from the doctrine of hell. ([The Only Options: Christ or Judgment?](#))

Hebrews 10:26-27

Andrew Murray

IN mentioning those who forsake the assembling together of God's people, the writer has touched one of those sore places which, to him, are the symptom of imminent danger. This neglect of Christian fellowship is at once the indication of that indifference which is so dangerous, and the cause of further backsliding. All this leads him once again to sound the alarm, and to point out how neglect of outward, apparently secondary duties, opens the way to positive sin and eternal loss. He has scarcely finished his wondrous exposition of the glory of the heavenly Priest and the heavenly sanctuary and the way into it, he has only just begun to speak of the life and walk to which that opened sanctuary calls us, when, thinking of the state of the Hebrews, he sounds a trumpet-blast of warning more terrible than any we have heard yet. In the three previous warnings he had spoken first of neglect (Hebrews 2:1-4), then of unbelief and disobedience (Hebrews 3:1; 4:13), then of sloth, leading to hopeless falling away (Hebrews 5:3; 6:9): here he now speaks of wilful sinning, with the awful rejection of God's mercy it implies, and the sore and certain punishment it will inevitably bring. John Bunyan, in his dream, saw a way leading from the very gate of heaven down to the pit. It is not only the Holiest of All that is set wide open for us; the gate of hell is opened wide, too, to receive all who neglect or refuse to enter the gate of mercy and of heaven. Let all who believe that it is indeed God who, by His Spirit speaks in this word, listen with holy fear.

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins. As we had in Hebrews 10:26. mention of those who were once enlightened, and tasted the heavenly gift and the good word of God, and who yet fell away, so here he speaks of those who, after having received the knowledge of the truth, yet sin wilfully. The expressions used show us that in the case of these the enlightening and the acceptance of the truth had been more with the mind than with the heart. Their judgment had been convinced, through the mind their desire and will had been affected and wrought upon; and yet, the heart, the whole inner life, had never been truly regenerate, had never received that eternal life, which cannot be taken away. And so there was a possibility of their still sinning wilfully and being shut out for ever from the one sacrifice for sin. As we saw before, the true assurance of salvation, the assuring of our hearts before God, can only be enjoyed in a life under the teaching of the Spirit, and a walk in obedience to God's will (1 John 3:19-24.) True assurance of faith is the witness of the Holy Spirit that is given in living fellowship with and obedience to Christ as Leader.

If we sin wilfully. The question will be asked, But what is wilful sin? How are we to know when we are guilty of it? No answer can be given; no one on earth can draw the line between what is and what is not wilful sin. Only He who sits on the throne, and who knows the heart, can judge. But how will this warning profit, if we cannot see what wilful sin is? The warning will just thus profit us most--it will make us fearful of committing any sin, lest it might be, or lead us into wilful sin. He that would know what wilful sin is, with the thought that he is safe, as long as he keeps from that extreme, deceives himself. The only sure way of being kept from wilful sin is to keep far from all sin.

A captain of a ship, sailing between two harbours on a rocky coast, was once asked by an anxious passenger if the coast was not very dangerous. The answer was, Very. And was he not afraid? No; our way is perfectly safe; you can be at ease. But how, if the rocks are so dangerous? Oh, very simply! I put out to sea, and keep far from the rocks. O Christian! here is thy only safety: launch out into the deep of full obedience to all the will of God; keep far from all sin, and thou shalt be kept from wilful sinning.

For if we sin wilfully, there remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins. What a terrible contrast to the same expression as we had it before (Hebrews 10:18): No more offering for sin. There it was the blessed secret of the glory of the gospel and redemption, the joy of Christian faith and life no more offering for sin: salvation finished and perfected for ever. Here it is the awful revelation of the highest sin and its terrible doom: the one sacrifice rejected, and now no more a sacrifice for sins ever to be found, How awful to sin wilfully.

There remaineth no more a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and a fierceness of fire, which shall devour the adversaries. Fearful judgment, fierceness of fire, devouring the adversaries,--these words are in God's gospel; they follow close on its highest teaching; they are words He speaks to us in His Son. In the religion of the world, alas, in a great deal of the Christian teaching and the religious literature of our day, professing to honour the God of love whom the Bible reveals--these words are set aside and rejected. And yet there they stand, and behind them stand the divine realities they express. God help us to believe them with our whole heart, and to exhort one another, if so be we may save some, snatching them out of the fire!

1. Let all who have entered the Holiest of All turn round and look to the hole of the pit--the horrible pit--whence they have been drawn up. And as they see the multitudes going down to the pit, oh let them remember that the highest glory of life in the Holiest is, even as it is of Him who opened it with His blood and sits on the throne, to go out and bring others in.

2. Even though thou knewest, through grace, that thou hadst escaped the judgment and the fire, take time to gaze upon them. Take upon thee the burden of those who are asleep, and plead with Christ to use thee to warn and to save them. Andrew Murray.

Hebrews 10:27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: [phobera de tis ekdoche kriseos kai puros zelos esthiein \(PAN\)](#) [mellontos \(PAPNSG\)](#) [tous upenantious.](#)

Amplified: [There is nothing left for us then] but a kind of awful and fearful prospect and expectation of divine judgment and the fury of burning wrath and indignation which will consume those who put themselves in opposition [to God]. [Isa. 26:11.] ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: All that we can expect is to wait in terror for judgment and for that flaming wrath which will consume the adversaries of God. ([Westminster Press](#))

NLT: There will be nothing to look forward to but the terrible expectation of God's judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: but only a terrifying expectation of judgment and the fire of God's indignation, which will one day consume all that sets itself against him. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and fiery indignation which is about to be devouring the adversaries.

Young's Literal: but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery zeal, about to devour the opposers;

BUT A CERTAIN TERRIFYING EXPECTATION OF JUDGMENT AND THE FURY OF A FIRE: phobera de tis ekdoche kriseos kai puros zelos:

- **A certain terrifying expectation** - He 2:3; 12:25; 1Sa 28:19,20; Isaiah 33:14; Da 5:6; Hosea 10:8; Matthew 8:29; Luke 21:26; 23:30; Rev 6:15, 16, 17
- **The fury of a fire** - Heb 12:29; Nu 16:35; Ps 21:9; Jer 4:4; Ezekiel 36:5; 38:19; Joel 2:30; Nahum 1:5,6; Zeph 1:18; 3:8; Mal 4:1; Mt 3:10,12; 13:42,50; 25:41; Mark 9:43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49; Luke 16:24; 2Th 1:8; James 5:3; Rev 20:15
- [Hebrews 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

But - Stark contrast! This "**but**" introduces the inevitable, inestimably terrifying alternative to every person who has ever received and rejected the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Hebrews 2:3-note the writer asks his wavering readers "**how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?**" and here in Hebrews 10:27 essentially answers that question stating emphatically "If we neglect God's great salvation, we can't escape God's great fire!"

In Hebrews 12:25-note we see another allusion to "**no escape**"...

See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven.

A certain terrifying expectation - Plainly stated the judgment of God is inevitable and unavoidable and naturally this truth engenders fear for those who have a reason to fear.

Wuest - Instead of a sacrifice for sin awaiting this apostate, there awaits him a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. The Greek could be rendered, "a kind of fearful expectation."[\(Hebrews Commentary online\)](#)

Saul was an example of "willful sinning" in OT = see his terrifying expectation =

(Samuel who had died is supernaturally present and declares to Saul) Moreover the Lord will also give over Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines, therefore tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Indeed the Lord will give over the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines!" Then Saul immediately fell full length upon the ground and was very afraid because of the words of Samuel; also there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day and all night. (1Sa 28:19, 20)

Belshazzar the king upon defiling the Lord's holy vessels suddenly saw a hand appear with handwriting on the palace wall and...

Then the king's face grew pale, and his thoughts alarmed him; and his hip joints went slack, and his knees began knocking together... 30 That same night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain. (Da 5:6-note, Da 5:30-note)

At the breaking of the fourth seal we see the **God rejecting world's** fearful reaction...

And the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man, hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; 16 and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; 17 for the great day of their wrath has come; and who is able to stand?" (Rev 6:15-note, Rev 6:16-note, Rev 6:17-note)

We see the certain expectation of the **demons** when confronted by Jesus...

And behold, they cried out, saying, "What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" (Mt 8:29)

Jesus describes the reaction of the **Christ rejecting world** when the events of the Great Tribulation begin to unfold...

"And there will be signs in sun and moon and stars, and upon the earth dismay among nations, in perplexity at the roaring of the sea and the waves, 26 men fainting from fear and the expectation of the things which are coming upon the world; for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (Luke 21:25,26)

Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD and the terrifying expectation...

But Jesus turning to them said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. "For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' "Then they will begin TO SAY TO THE MOUNTAINS, 'FALL ON US,' AND TO THE HILLS, 'COVER US.' (Luke 23:18, 29, 30)

You cannot have the Jesus of the Scriptures without the doctrines of judgment and Hell. As Spurgeon said "Think lightly of hell, and you will think lightly of the cross".

Fury of a fire - Literally = "zeal of fire" = a fiery passion. This phrase describes an anger (zeal, jealousy) marked by fire. The emotional picture is that His wrath is "the fury of a fire." God is not just a little bit angry, but passionate with fury!

Vincent says this phrase conveys "the radical idea of... *ferment of spirit*". Vincent adds that this phrase is an adaptation from Isaiah 26:11

O Lord, Your hand is lifted up yet they do not see it. They see Your zeal for the people and are put to shame; Indeed, fire will devour Your enemies. (Is 26:11).

God's "**burning anger**" is frequently pictured in the Old Testament and here are a few examples - 250 men who rebelled w/ Korah = Nu 16:35; Against Judah = Jer 4:4; Nineveh = Na 1:5, 6; Zeph 1:18 (the fire of His jealousy); Zeph 3:8; Mal 4:1; Ps 79:5.

Paul records a NT account of the "certain terrifying expectation"...

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, 7 and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, 8 dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed-- for our testimony to you was believed. (2Th 1:8, 9, 10)

Peter observes that

the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men (2Pe 3:7-note).

Jude cites the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah "as example of those who suffer punishment of eternal fire" (Jude 1:7) and encourages his readers to "snatch others from the fire and save them" (Jude 1:23).

In Revelation, those who worship the beast "will be tormented with burning sulfur" (Re 14:10-note) while the beast, the devil, death,

and Hades are all thrown into “the lake of burning sulfur” (Re 19:20-[note](#); 20:9-[note](#), 10-[note](#), 14-[note](#), 15-[note](#)) which is the “second death” (Rev 21:8-[note](#)). Such will be the inescapable fate of all of those who are found to be “the enemies of God.” And such will be the case for any of us should we persist in a purposeful choice of deliberate and continual sin and persistent rejection of Jesus.

Phil Newton asks a pragmatic question...

Does this (apostasy) happen today? It might be seen in young people that grew up in the church with Christian parents, hearing the gospel on a regular basis. They professed to be Christians at some point in their early years and gave outward appearance of being serious. But the day came when they were challenged about the gospel and rather than believing God, they embraced a lie. Not repenting of such sin they continued to grow cold toward any thought of divine truth. They gave themselves to sin, indulging their desires without restraint, maybe even laughing at the thought of the law of God. The years pass and they care nothing of the church of Jesus Christ, easily forsaking the church because they have forsaken the gospel of Christ. They shunned warnings with ease. Their heart gets harder. They can still rattle off the basic elements of biblical truth but it means nothing to them. In willful defiance they turn away from Christ, the gospel, and the church. They are apostates, the sow (female pig) after the outward washing returning to the wallowing in the mire of their own sinful, unregenerate nature. Are you playing loosely with this perilous process of deliberately turning from the gospel of Christ? ([Hebrews 10:26-31 The Peril of Playing Christian](#))

WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES: *esthio* (PAN) *mellontos* (PAPNSG) *tous hupenantious*:

- **Which will consume** - Dt 32:43; Ps 68:1,2; Nah 1:2,8, 9, 10; Lk 19:27; 1Th 2:15,16
- [Hebrews 10 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Consume ([2068](#))(*esthio*) literally means to consume as when one eats or drinks but here is used figuratively meaning to destroy or devour with the implication of doing away with all traces of an object, in this case the adversary. These are surely words that should cause any enemy of God great woe.

Esthio - 158x in 139v - **NAS** = ate(21), consume(2), diet(1), dine(1), does so(1), eat(96), eaten(2), eating(19), eats(11), feed(2), use(1).

Matt 6:25, 31; 9:11; 11:18f; 12:1, 4; 14:16, 20f; 15:2, 20, 27, 32, 37f; 24:49; 25:35, 42; 26:17, 21, 26; Mark 1:6; 2:16, 26; 3:20; 5:43; 6:31, 36f, 42, 44; 7:2ff, 28; 8:1f, 8; 11:14; 14:12, 14, 18, 22; Luke 4:2; 5:30, 33; 6:1, 4; 7:33f, 36; 8:55; 9:13, 17; 10:7f; 12:19, 22, 29, 45; 13:26; 14:1, 15; 15:16, 23; 17:8, 27f; 22:8, 11, 15f, 30; 24:43; John 4:31ff; 6:5, 23, 26, 31, 49ff, 58; 18:28; Acts 9:9; 10:13f; 11:7; 23:12, 21; 27:35; Rom 14:2f, 6, 20f, 23; 1 Cor 8:7f, 10, 13; 9:4, 7, 13; 10:3, 7, 18, 25, 27f, 31; 11:20ff, 26ff, 33f; 15:32; 2 Thess 3:8, 10, 12; Heb 10:27; 13:10; Jas 5:3; Rev 2:7, 14, 20; 10:10; 17:16; 19:18.

The Septuagint uses **esthio** in a passage that is related to Hebrews 10:27...

Isaiah 26:11 O LORD, Your hand is lifted up yet they do not see it. They see Your zeal for the people and are put to shame; Indeed, fire **will devour** (**Lxx = esthio**) Your enemies. (compare similar use of *esthio* in Isa 10:17)

Compare a similar sense of **esthio** in...

Isaiah 30:27 Behold, the name of the LORD comes from a remote place; Burning is His anger and dense is His smoke; His lips are filled with indignation And His tongue is like a **consuming** (**Lxx = esthio**) fire;

The truth about God in Hebrews 10:27 is an extension of similar truths recorded in the OT in such passages as...

A jealous and avenging God is the LORD; The LORD is avenging and wrathful. The LORD takes vengeance on His adversaries, and He reserves wrath for His enemies. The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, and clouds are the dust beneath His feet. (Nah 1:2,3)

In Numbers **Moses** records that...

Fire also came forth from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering the incense. (Nu 16:35)

As noted above, Paul associates the second appearance of Jesus with **"blazing fire"** and the punishment of those who do not know God or obey the gospel (2Th 1:8).

James addresses those rich with material goods in this present world warning them that...

Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! (Jas 5:3)

Adversaries (5227) (**hupenantios** from **hupo** = intensifies + **enantios** = contrary > cp wind as contrary = Mt14:24 or people as hostile toward = 1Th 2:15) literally means set over against or opposite and thus an apt description of those who are opposed or contrary, those who are hostile toward another. Webster adds that the English word adversary describes one that contends with, opposes, or resists.

To what/who are they opposed? Obviously to God and to His Son and the new covenant He puts into effect in His blood, a better covenant than the old system of law and/or works based salvation which can never satisfy God's demands for perfection. In context these are those men and women who have heard the good news clearly presented but who have clearly rejected that news and now are in effect enemies of the Most High God. They have become apostates, those who have abandoned what they previously professed. They have deserted Jesus and His promise of a better covenant and departed only to return to the obsolete covenant of the law practices by Judaism.

A TERRIFYING JUDGMENT IS A PROMISED CERTAINTY!

God haters include depraved men like **Voltaire** who said of Christ the frightening words "Curse the wretch!... In twenty years Christianity will be no more. My single hand shall destroy the edifice it took twelve apostles to rear."

Ironically, shortly after his death the very house in which **Voltaire** printed his foul anti-Christ literature became the depot of the **Geneva Bible Society**! Does God have a "sense of humor"! But His judgment is real and it is no joke!

The nurse who attended **Voltaire** in his last days said "For all the wealth in Europe I would not see another infidel (an opponent of Christianity who disbelieves the inspiration of the Scriptures, and the divine origin of Christianity) die."

Voltaire's physician **Trochim**, waiting with Voltaire at his death, said he cried out most desperately "I am abandoned by God and man! I will give you half of what I am worth if you will give me six months' life. Then I shall go to hell and you will go with me."

Ed comment: In fact then, Voltaire did in one sense, like the demons, seem to believe and yet he rejected the life transforming heart reception of that belief, just as did some of the readers of the epistle of Hebrews! And just as so many modern men still do, for men's depraved, wicked hearts have not changed! In fact instead of evolving man has if anything devolved!

Consider **Thomas Paine**, the enemy of Christianity whose last hour came in 1809, finding him a disillusioned and unfulfilled individual who in his final moments declared...

I would give worlds, if I had them, that **Age of Reason** had not been published. O Lord, help me! Christ, help me! O God what have I done to suffer so much? But there is no God! But if there should be, what will become of me hereafter? Stay with me, for God's sake! Send even a child to stay with me, for it is hell to be alone. If ever the devil had an agent, I have been that one.

Here is another quote of **Thomas Paine** on religion confessing that he was one who in essence **trampled under foot the Son of God** (Heb 10:29)...

The opinions I have advanced ... are the effect of the most clear and long-established conviction that the Bible and the Testament are impositions upon the world, **that the fall of man, the account of Jesus Christ being the Son of God, and of his dying to appease the wrath of God, and of salvation, by that strange means, are all fabulous inventions, dishonorable to the wisdom and power of the Almighty;** that the only true religion is **Deism**, by which I then meant, and mean now, the belief of one God, and an imitation of his moral character, or the practice of what are called moral virtues – and that it was upon this only (so far as religion is concerned) that **I rested all my hopes of happiness hereafter. So say I now – and so help me God.** ([Wikipedia - Paine's Religious Views](#))