

Hebrews 10:26-39 – Keep the Faith

In Hebrews 2:1-4, the exhortation was to pay closer attention to the message of Christ to avoid drifting away. In Hebrews 3:12-15, the exhortation was to be on the lookout for an unbelieving heart that leads to falling away. In Hebrews 5:11-6:12, the exhortation was to grow up and don't fall away. In Hebrews 10:19-25, the exhortation was to draw near to God with confidence because of our great priest Jesus Christ and to encourage one another as we regularly meet together. The remainder of chapter 10 continues the exhortation started in verse 19. The last two verses of chapter 10 introduce the great chapter on faith, chapter 11.

Read Hebrews 10:26-31.

In verse 26, what is the difference between sin which is deliberate and sin which is not deliberate? BDAG says that in this context the word means "without compulsion, that is deliberately, intentionally". This word only occurs twice in the New Testament. Based on verses 26-27, what happens when someone continues in deliberate sin after receiving the knowledge of the truth? Who is consumed by the fury of fire? Note the use of "if we" in the beginning of verse 26 instead of "if someone". (10:26-27)

What happened to someone who ignored or rejected the law of Moses? (10:28)

In contrast to rejecting the law of Moses, rejecting the new covenant and its mediator is worthy of a much greater punishment than physical death. What three acts of rejection of the new covenant were described in verse 29? Like Hebrews 6:4-8, we need to ask if a person who commits these acts was ever a true believer of Jesus Christ? For reasons already discussed under 6:4-8, this person was never a true believer in Jesus Christ. This only leaves one question. What does "by which he was sanctified" mean? Some translations have "made holy" for "sanctified". How can someone who is destined for the wrath of God have been truly sanctified in the same way a true believer is? Some try to alleviate the problem by saying that the subject is Christ or the covenant. I don't believe that fits the flow of the context. NIV has "that sanctified them". "Them" or "us" is not supported by the original text which uses a singular pronoun. Although I don't like the translation, the interpretation may not be wrong. Hebrews 9:19 talked about the blood sprinkled on the people when they agreed to obey the Mosaic covenant. Not all who were sprinkled with the blood of that covenant were saved. The people of the local church were baptized, took communion, heard the word of God and witnessed the activity of the Holy Spirit. Is this the sanctification the author was taking about? Not all were true believers. (10:29)

What is the message of verse 30? What two Old Testament passages were quoted in this verse? See Deuteronomy 32:35a, 32:36a and Psalm 135:14a. The Deut. 32:35a quote seems to be a mix of Hebrew and Greek. In Deut. 32:36a and Ps. 135:14a (Ps. 134:14a LXX) the Greek translation of the Old Testament has "judge" for "vindicate". (10:30)

Is verse 31 true for everyone or just some? How would you paraphrase this verse? (10:31)

Read Hebrews 10:32-39.

In verses 32-34 we get insight into why some may have been tempted to “return to Egypt”. In this case, some were tempted to reject the new covenant and return to the Mosaic covenant. What does their being “enlightened” refer to? Based on verses 32-33, what did they experience after they were enlightened? (10:32-33)

In verse 34, what else did they experience? BDAG says that “plundering” in this context means “forcible confiscation of property in a persecution”. How did they respond to these circumstances? What was their better and abiding possession? (10:34)

In verse 35, what were the people exhorted to do? What reason was given for this? BDAG says that “confidence” also has the meanings “courage, boldness, fearlessness”. (10:35)

In verse 36, what did they need? If they had this, what would be the result? BDAG says that “endurance” is “the capacity to hold out or bear up in the face of difficulty, patience, endurance, fortitude, steadfastness, perseverance”. (10:36)

“Yet a little while” may be taken from Isaiah 26:20. Some debate that the phrase was based on this OT verse. The rest of the verse is based on Habakkuk 2:3b-4. The text from Habakkuk mainly follows the LXX with the exception that the order of some of the phrases has been changed. What is the message of these Old Testament verses? (10:37-38)

What is true of those who are not destroyed and who preserve their souls? “My righteous one shall live by faith” is a good introduction to chapter 11. (10:39)