

# A Patient Persevering Faith

Heb 10:23-36

SS Lesson for 08/15/2021

**Devotional Scripture:** Rom 5:1-5

## OUTLINE

### LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

*Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary*

*Key Verse: Heb 10:23*

*Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary*

### MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

FAITH THAT IS UNWAVERING (HEB 10:23-25)

*Unwavering because God keeps His promises (23)*

Promises that are always "YES" in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20)

Promises made with the Divine power (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Promises that are only being completely satisfied in the present age (Heb 11:13-16)

Promises of an eternal life (1 John 2:24-25)

*Unwavering because God loves us (24)*

God loves us because He is love (1 John 4:8)

God loves us because He is rich in it (Eph 2:4)

God loves us because nothing can separate us from His love (Rom 8:39)

God loves us because He sacrificed His Son (John 3:16)

God loves us because of His grace (2 Thess 2:16)

*Unwavering in our assembling (25)*

Assembling to learn about the Scriptures (Acts 17:1-4)

Assembling in the presence of God (Matt 18:20)

Assembling for fellowship (Acts 2:42-47)

Assembling for prayer (Acts 1:14)

FAITH THAT IS UNCOMPROMISING (HEB 10:26-31)

*Uncompromising because of God's judgment (26-27)*

A judgment that will bring everything to light (1 Cor 4:5)

A judgment of the nations (Matt 25:31-33)

A judgment entrusted to Jesus by God (John 5:21-22)

A judgment that all will stand before (Rom 14:10)

*Uncompromising in not despising God's grace (28-29)*

Despising grace that is a gift from God (Rom 5:15)

Despising grace that increases as sin increases (Rom 5:20)

Despising grace that is sufficient in weakness (2 Cor 12:9)

Despising grace that justifies (Titus 3:4-7)

*Uncompromising because of God's wrath (30-31)*

Wrath because of suppression of truth (Rom 1:18)

Wrath because not knowing God (2 Thess 1:8-9)

Wrath because those who sin will die (Ezek 18:4)

Wrath to weed out sin and evil (Matt 13:41)

FAITH THAT IS UNRELENTING (HEB 10:32-36)

*Unrelenting because of God providing endurance (32-33)*

Endurance that produces perseverance (James 1:2-3)

Endurance because of God's strength working in us (2 Cor 12:10)

Endurance that results in the crown of life (James 1:12)

Endurance that is focused on the eternal goal (2 Cor 4:17-18)

*Unrelenting because of God's compassion (34)*

Compassion because of God's covenant (2 Kings 13:23)

Compassion because of God's unchanging loving heart (Hos 11:8-9)

Compassion because God is gracious and righteous (Ps 116:5)

Compassion because God desires to vindicate His people (Ps 135:14)

*Unrelenting because of confidence in God (35-36)*

Confidence because God is faithful (Heb 3:6)

Confidence because we are partakers in Him (Heb 3:14)

Confidence because of God's armor (Eph 6:10-13)  
Confidence because of Jesus being our High Priest (Heb 4:15-16)

## CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

COMMENTARY THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH

### *The Big Picture*

Sobering Words of Warning (Hebrews 10:26-31)

Words of Encouragement and Exhortation (Hebrews 10:32-39)

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE ECHOES COMMENTARY

## Lesson Background and Key Verse

### Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

Options. Choice. Variety. These are values that culture embraces. We see this clearly in the options that are presented to us in any grocery store. But this also applies to commitments that are much more meaningful than what kind of breakfast cereal we're going to buy. In the realms of values, spirituality, political ideologies, relationships, career paths, and so forth, we are presented with a bewildering array of choices. The culture in which we live encourages experimentation with all of them as well as a hesitancy to commit to any of them. In this way of thinking, the only real mistake is to limit one's options or to give up on some options in favor of others. All of this can make the path of Christian discipleship very difficult. In choosing to follow Christ, we turn our back on many other options, many other choices. We may be surprised to learn that the first-century writer of Hebrews has something to say to twenty-first-century Christians in this regard.

What is often called the letter to the Hebrews has almost none of the usual characteristics of an ancient letter, apart from a couple of brief greetings at the end (see Hebrews 13:24-25). Instead, the letter relies heavily on action verbs that have to do with speaking and listening; this serves to suggest that we are listening in as a preacher speaks to an audience (examples: Hebrews 2:5; 6:9; 9:5). It seems best to understand Hebrews as a first-century sermon. The phrase "word of exhortation" (Hebrews 13:22) is the same used in Acts 13:15: After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak." This further bolsters the theory that Hebrews, like the spoken word in Acts, was primarily an oral address. Indeed, 13 of the New Testament's 19 uses of the underlying Greek word for exhortation occur in Hebrews. It is possible that a listener wrote the sermon down so that it could be passed along as a letter to believers. Arguing for too clean a distinction between written and oral communication would be a mistake, however. There is no reason this document could not have been written as a sermon to be delivered as a letter and then read aloud. In truth, either direction we choose brings us to improved insight into the overall structure of the work. There is broad agreement that the long central section of the letter is devoted to the main arguments that the preacher is trying to make to his audience. Today's text lies at a point of transition from exposition to exhortation. That is the significance of the word therefore in Hebrews 10:19. That verse and the two that follow form a crescendo of the doctrinal exposition that then resolves into practical exhortation beginning in 10:22. Our opening verses (Hebrews 10:23-25) are usually understood to be part of a larger unit inclusive of 10:19-25. In light of that, a brief word about 10:19-22 is in order. This section is part of a larger doctrinal argument about the nature of sacrifice and the superiority of Jesus' sacrifice over the animal sacrifices stipulated under the old covenant (see 7:1-10:25). The doctrinal expositions at the heart of this sermon are each followed by a word of exhortation from the preacher to his audience (example: 7:1-10:25 followed by 10:26-39).

### Key Verse: Heb 10:23

*Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.*

### Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

**10:1.** By virtue of its anticipatory character, **the Law could never... make perfect those who draw near to worship.** By "make perfect" the writer did not mean sinless perfection. As the following discussion shows, he was concerned with that definitive removal of guilt which makes free access to God possible for worshippers who trust in the sufficiency of the Cross.

**10:2-4.** The continuous sacrifices of the old order which are "repeated endlessly year after year" (v. 1) testify to the Law's incapacity to "perfect" its **worshippers.** Far from enabling them to achieve a standing

before God in which they **would no longer have felt guilty for their sins**, the yearly rituals (of the Day of Atonement) served as a kind of **annual reminder of sins**, since animal blood has no power **to take away sins**.

**10:5-7.** It was precisely for this reason that an Old Testament prophecy (Ps. 40:6-8) recorded the words of the One who would do what God really wanted. This psalm prophetically anticipated some of Christ's words at his First Advent. The phrase **a body You prepared for Me** is one Septuagint rendering of the Hebrew expression "You have dug ears for Me." The Greek translator whose version the author of Hebrews used (obviously translating with the help of the Holy Spirit), construed the Hebrew text as a kind of figure of speech (technically called synecdoche) in which a part is put for the whole. If God is to "dig out ears" He must "prepare a body." This interpretation is both valid and correct as its quotation in Hebrews proves. In the "body" which He assumed in Incarnation, Christ could say that He had **come to** achieve what the Old-Covenant sacrifices never achieved, the perfecting of New-Covenant worshippers. In this sense He did God's will.

**10:8-10.** The writer then expounded the text he had just quoted. In the words **He sets aside the first to establish the second** (v. 9), the author referred to the setting aside of the Old-Covenant sacrifices which did not ultimately satisfy God. What was established was God's will, and it was **by that will that we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all** (*ephapax*; cf. 7:27; 9:12). The words rendered "made holy" involve a single Greek word (*hēgiasmenoi*) often rendered "sanctify" (cf. 10:14, 29). Here it occurs in a tense that makes it plain, along with the rest of the statement, that the sanctification is an accomplished fact. Nowhere in Hebrews does the writer refer to the "progressive sanctification" of a believer's life. Instead sanctification is for him a functional equivalent of the Pauline concept of justification. By the sanctification which is accomplished through the death of Christ, New-Covenant worshippers are perfected for guilt-free service to God (cf. 2:11).

**10:11-14.** The truth just stated is reinforced by a contrast with the Levitical priesthood. Levite priests could never sit down on the job since their sacrificial services were never completed. But Christ's sitting **at the right hand of God** (cf. 1:3; 8:1; 12:2) is both a signal that His sacrifice was offered **for all time** and also that He can now confidently await final victory over **His enemies**. The words "for all time" (*eis to diēnekēs*) are translated "forever" in verse 14 (see 7:3). Thus by a single sacrifice (**one sacrifice**, 10:12, 14)—in contrast with the many sacrifices offered by the priests **day after day and again and again... He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy**. The translation "are being made holy" sounds like a continuing process. But this ignores the force of the expression "made holy" in verse 10. A better rendering is, "them who are sanctified" (*tous hagiāzomenous*; cf. v. 29). "The sanctified" have a status in God's presence that is "perfect" (cf. 11:40; 12:23) in the sense that they approach Him with the full acceptance gained through the death of Christ (cf. 10:19-22).

**10:15-18.** Reverting to his basic text on the benefits of the New Covenant (cf. 8:8-12), the author requested a portion of it (in 10:16 he quoted Jer. 31:33; and in Heb. 10:17, Jer. 31:34) to drive home his point. The text is a testimony given by God's **Holy Spirit**, and shows that final forgiveness, such as the New Covenant promised, meant that there was no further need for any **sacrifice for sin**. As the writer will shortly show, a person who turns from the one sufficient sacrifice of Christ has no real sacrifice to which he can turn (cf. Heb. 10:26).

**10:19-22.** The central assertion of these verses is in the words, **Therefore, brothers** (cf. 3:1, 12)... **let us draw near to God**. The intervening material, beginning with the word **since**, gives the basis for the author's call to approach God. The readers are New-Covenant people ("brothers") who should **have confidence** (*parrēsiā*; cf. 3:6; 4:16; 10:35) to come into the very presence of God. This idea is enriched by the use of Old-Covenant imagery. God's presence in **the most holy place** and **the curtain** that once was a barrier to man is now no longer so. It symbolized Christ's **body**, so the writer may have had in mind the rending of the temple curtain at the time of Christ's death (Matt. 27:51). At any rate His death gave believers the needed access and route to God, aptly described as **new** (*prosphaton*, "recent," occurring only here in the NT) **and living**, that is, partaking of the fresh and vitalizing realities of the New Covenant. But in addition, the call to draw near is appropriate **since we have a great Priest over the house of God** with all that this entails in the light of the writer's previous discussion. So the approach of believers should be **with a sincere** (*alēthinēs*, "true, dependable," from *alētheia*, "truth") **heart in full assurance of faith**. There ought to be no wavering in regard to these superlative realities. Rather each New-Covenant worshiper should approach God in the conscious enjoyment of freedom from guilt (**having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience**) and with a sense of the personal holiness that Christ's sacrifice makes possible (**having our bodies washed with pure water**). The writer's words are probably

an exhortation to lay hold consciously of the cleansing benefits of Christ's Cross and to draw near to God in enjoying them, putting away inward guilt and outward impurity. These verses approximate 1 John 1:9.

**10:23-25.** This kind of confident access to God necessarily entails that believers **hold unswervingly to the hope we profess** with full confidence in the reliability of God's promises. The writer revealed in these verses that his concern for fidelity to the faith is not an abstraction, but a confrontation with real danger. There was an urgent need for mutual concern and exhortation (**toward love and good deeds**) within the church he wrote to. His readers were not to abandon **meeting together, as some were doing**. Already there seemed to have been defections from their ranks, though his words might have applied to other churches where such desertions had occurred. In any case their mutual efforts to spur one another on should increase **as they see the Day approaching** (cf. v. 37; a well-known NT trilogy is included in these vv.: faith, v. 22; hope, v. 23; love, v. 24). In referring again to the Second Advent, the writer left the impression he was concerned that genuine believers might cease to hope for the Lord's coming and be tempted to defect from their professions of faith in Christ (cf. 1:13-2:4; and 6:9). They must treat their future expectations as certainties (since **He who promised is faithful**). If they would only lift up their eyes, they could "see the Day approaching."

**10:26-27.** The KJV translation here, "if we sin willfully," is superior to NIV's **if we deliberately keep on sinning**, as the words "keep on" overplay the Greek tense. As the context shows (cf. v. 23), the author was concerned here, as throughout the epistle, with the danger of defection from the faith. Most sin is "deliberate," but the writer was here influenced by the Old Testament's teaching about sins of presumption (cf. Num. 15:29-31) which lay outside the sacrificial provisions of the Law. Apostasy from the faith would be such a "willful" act and for those who commit it **no sacrifice for sins is left** (cf. Heb. 10:18). If the efficacious sacrifice of Christ should be renounced, there remained no other available sacrifice which could shield an apostate from God's **judgment by raging fire**. A Christian who abandons "the confidence [he] had at first" (3:14) puts himself on the side of God's enemies and, as the writer had already said, is in effect "crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace" (6:6). Such reprehensible conduct can scarcely be worthy of anything but God's flaming indignation and retribution. This, however, as stated earlier (cf. 6:8), is not a reference to hell (cf. 10:29).

**10:28-29.** Under the Old Covenant, if an Israelite spurned the Mosaic Law and at least **two or three witnesses** verified his actions, he was put to death. This being true, the author then argued from the lesser to the greater. If defiance of an inferior covenant could bring such retribution, what about defiance of the New Covenant which, as he had made clear, is far superior? The answer can only be that the punishment would be substantially greater in such a case. In order to show that this is so, the writer then placed defection from the faith in the harshest possible light. An apostate from the New Covenant **has trampled the Son of God underfoot and has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant** (cf. "blood of the eternal covenant," 13:20) **that sanctified him**. The words "sanctified him" refer to true Christians. Already the writer to the Hebrews has described them as "made holy (Gr. 'sanctified') through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (10:10) and as "made perfect forever" through this sanctifying work (v. 14). Some seek to evade this conclusion by suggesting that Christ is the One referred to here as "sanctified" or that the person only *claims* to be sanctified. But these efforts are foreign to the writer's thought and are so forced that they carry their own refutation. The author's whole point lies in the seriousness of the act. To treat "the blood of the covenant" (which actually sanctifies believers) as though it were an "unholy" (*koinon*, "common") thing and to renounce its efficacy, is to commit a sin so heinous as to dwarf the fatal infractions of the Old Covenant. To this, an apostate adds the offense of insulting **the Spirit of grace** who originally wooed him to faith in Christ. This kind of spiritual rebellion clearly calls for a much worse punishment than the capital penalty that was inflicted under the Mosaic setup. But again the writer was not thinking of hell. Many forms of divine retribution can fall on a human life which are worse than immediate death. In fact, Jeremiah made just such a complaint about the punishment inflicted on Jerusalem (Lam. 4:6, 9). One might think also of King Saul, whose last days were burdened with such mental and emotional turmoil that death itself was a kind of release.

**10:30-31.** No one should regard such a warning as an idle threat. God Himself has claimed the right to take vengeance and to **judge His people**. In saying this, the author quoted twice from Deuteronomy (32:35-36), a chapter which most vividly evokes the picture of God's people suffering His retributive judgments (cf. esp. Deut. 32:19-27). Those familiar with this text, as well as other descriptions of God's wrath against "His people," agree: **it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God**.

**10:32-34.** An effective way to fortify people against future trials is to remind them of the courage they displayed in past ones. This is precisely what the writer did. His readers knew what it was to stand their

**ground in a great contest in the face of suffering.** (The words “stood your ground” [*hypemeinate*] render the verb usually translated “persevered,” as in, e.g., v. 36). They knew what it was to be publicly shamed and persecuted, and also to support others who had such experiences (v. 33). They had shown sympathy for brethren who had been imprisoned, and they had suffered property loss with joy because they had an assurance of possessing heavenly wealth (v. 34). They would do well to recall now their steadfastness in the past. Whatever they might now be facing—and the writer suggested it might be something similar—they would be helped if they would **remember those earlier days after they had received the light** (cf. “received the knowledge” in v. 26 and “enlightened” in 6:4).

**10:35-36.** This was no time for them, then, to **throw away their confidence** (*parrēsia*, cf. 3:6; 4:16; 10:19). As the author’s exposition of the eternal inheritance—the glory of the many sons—had sought to show, that confidence, if retained, **will be richly rewarded**. What the readers needed, therefore, was just what the writer had often said and implied: **to persevere** (lit., “you had need of perseverance,” *hypomonēs echete chreian*) so that by thus doing God’s **will** (cf. v. 9) they would **receive what God had promised**. As much as anything, these words express the central exhortation of the Book of Hebrews.

**10:37-38.** If their concern was about the delay of the Second Advent, they should rest assured that **in just a very little while, He who is coming will come and will not delay**. These words and those that follow were adapted by the author from the Septuagint of Isaiah 26:21 and Habakkuk 2:3-4. But they were used freely and were not intended as a precise quotation, since no words such as “He says” introduced them. In the phrase **My** (or “the”) **righteous one** (only a handful of Gr. mss. read “My”), the author employed Paul’s description of a person who is justified by faith. It is likely that the writer of Hebrews understood it similarly. A justified person ought to **live by faith**, which is what the writer had been urging his readers to do. But, **if he shrinks back**, that is, if the “righteous one” commits apostasy, denouncing his Christian profession, God’s favor cannot rest on his life. By understating the serious consequences, the writer softened his words so that he would not distract from his predominant note of encouragement.

**10:39.** Then he affirmed, **But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed**. Here the original text has an emphatic “we,” which the writer might have intended as an “editorial we,” of which he was quite fond (cf. 2:5; 5:11; 8:1; etc.). Then he would mean: “As far as I am concerned, I am determined not to shrink back and experience the ruin which divine retribution would bring.” The words “are destroyed” reflect the Greek *apōleia*, which can refer either to temporal or eternal ruin. In this context the former is correct. Instead of the ruin which an apostate invites, the writer intended to be among **those who believe and are saved**. The NIV rendering should not be misread as a reference to conversion. Though the author’s own normal word for salvation does not occur here, the expression “and are saved” somewhat freely translates *eis peripoiēsēsin psychēs*. A viable rendering of the last half of verse 39 would be: “but [we are] of faith leading to the preservation of the soul” (cf. 1 Peter 2:9). But “soul” here should be understood in the Hebraic sense of the person himself, or his life, and refers in this context to the way in which persistence in the faith preserves an individual from the calamities that overtake those who “shrink back.” Even if the writer was speaking primarily of his own purpose of heart, he clearly intended that to be shared by his readers. Thus the concluding statement of his warning passage (10:19-39) amounts to a call for determination and perseverance.

## Major Theme Analysis

(Scriptural Text from the New King James Version; cross-references from the NIV)

### **Faith that is Unwavering (Heb 10:23-25)**

23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works,

25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

## **Unwavering because God keeps His promises (23)**

*Promises that are always "YES" in Jesus (2 Cor 1:20)*

20 For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

*Promises made with the Divine power (2 Peter 1:3-4)*

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 4 Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

*Promises that are only being completely satisfied in the present age (Heb 11:13-16)*

13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country — a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

*Promises of an eternal life (1 John 2:24-25)*

24 See that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us — even eternal life.

## **Unwavering because God loves us (24)**

*God loves us because He is love (1 John 4:8)*

8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

*God loves us because He is rich in it (Eph 2:4)*

4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,

*God loves us because nothing can separate us from His love (Rom 8:39)*

39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*God loves us because He sacrificed His Son (John 3:16)*

16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

*God loves us because of His grace (2 Thess 2:16)*

16 May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope,

## **Unwavering in our assembling (25)**

*Assembling to learn about the Scriptures (Acts 17:1-4)*

1 When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

*Assembling in the presence of God (Matt 18:20)*

20 For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

*Assembling for fellowship (Acts 2:42-47)*

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

*Assembling for prayer (Acts 1:14)*

14 They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

***Faith that is Uncompromising (Heb 10:26-31)***

26 For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,  
27 but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.  
28 Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.  
29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?  
30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people."  
31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

***Uncompromising because of God's judgment (26-27)***

*A judgment that will bring everything to light (1 Cor 4:5)*

5 Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men's hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.

*A judgment of the nations (Matt 25:31-33)*

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory. 32 All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

*A judgment entrusted to Jesus by God (John 5:21-22)*

21 For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son,

*A judgment that all will stand before (Rom 14:10)*

10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

***Uncompromising in not despising God's grace (28-29)***

*Despising grace that is a gift from God (Rom 5:15)*

15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

*Despising grace that increases as sin increases (Rom 5:20)*

20 The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more,

*Despising grace that is sufficient in weakness (2 Cor 12:9)*

9 But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

*Despising grace that justifies (Titus 3:4-7)*

4 But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

### **Uncompromising because of God's wrath (30-31)**

*Wrath because of suppression of truth (Rom 1:18)*

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness,

*Wrath because not knowing God (2 Thess 1:8-9)*

8 He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9 They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power

*Wrath because those who sin will die (Ezek 18:4)*

4 For every living soul belongs to me, the father as well as the son — both alike belong to me. The soul who sins is the one who will die.

*Wrath to weed out sin and evil (Matt 13:41)*

41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.

### **Faith that is Unrelenting (Heb 10:32-36)**

32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings:

33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated;

34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.

35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.

36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

### **Unrelenting because of God providing endurance (32-33)**

*Endurance that produces perseverance (James 1:2-3)*

2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

*Endurance because of God's strength working in us (2 Cor 12:10)*

10 That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

*Endurance that results in the crown of life (James 1:12)*

12 Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him.

*Endurance that is focused on the eternal goal (2 Cor 4:17-18)*

17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.  
18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

### **Unrelenting because of God's compassion (34)**

*Compassion because of God's covenant (2 Kings 13:23)*

23 But the Lord was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence.

*Compassion because of God's unchanging loving heart (Hos 11:8-9)*

8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, Israel? How can I treat you like Admah? How can I make you like Zeboiim? My heart is changed within me; all my compassion is aroused. 9 I will not carry out my fierce anger, nor will I turn and devastate Ephraim. For I am God, and not man — the Holy One among you. I will not come in wrath.

*Compassion because God is gracious and righteous (Ps 116:5)*

5 The Lord is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

*Compassion because God desires to vindicate His people (Ps 135:14)*

14 For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants.

### **Unrelenting because of confidence in God (35-36)**

*Confidence because God is faithful (Heb 3:6)*

6 But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house. And we are his house, if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

*Confidence because we are partakers in Him (Heb 3:14)*

14 We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

*Confidence because of God's armor (Eph 6:10-13)*

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

*Confidence because of Jesus being our High Priest (Heb 4:15-16)*

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are — yet was without sin. 16 Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

# Conclusion and Other Thoughts

## Commentary Thoughts from Bob Deffinbaugh

### The Big Picture

Up to this point, the author has been establishing the superiority of Christ and the New Covenant to the Old Covenant and its priesthood. There are several aspects of superiority. These are:

1. Christ is a better High Priest (after the order of Melchizedek) than that of Aaron and the many who made up the Levitical priesthood.
2. Through Christ, there is a better place of worship (in the heavens, at the right hand of the Father) than that which was possible in the tabernacle.
3. Through Christ, we have a better covenant (the New Covenant, inaugurated by Christ's sacrificial death) with better promises than the Old Covenant.
4. Through Christ, we have an infinitely better sacrifice, the once-for-all sacrifice of a man (God-man) who was without sin, rather than the continual offering of animal sacrifices.

The result of this superior person and work of Messiah is that our sins can be forgiven once for all. As a part of this cleansing from sin, the believer also is granted a cleansed conscience, so that he or she may boldly approach God without fear (the fear of judgment which comes from guilt) or hesitation. In Hebrews 10:19-21, the work of Christ is summarized as the basis for the exhortation which is to follow:

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, **since** we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the fresh and living way that he inaugurated for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and **since** we have a great priest over the house of God, . . . (Hebrews 10:19-21, emphasis mine).

On the basis of Christ's blood, shed on the cross of Calvary, we have the confidence to enter into God's presence, where we find Him seated at the Father's right hand as our Great High Priest. And so it is that the author can exhort us to take action in three areas:

22 **let us draw near** with a sincere heart in the assurance that faith brings, because we have had our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water. 23 And **let us hold unwaveringly to the hope that we confess**, for the one who made the promise is trustworthy. 24 And **let us take thought of how to spur one another on to love and good works**, 25 not abandoning our own meetings, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and even more so because you see the day drawing near (Hebrews 10:22-25, emphasis mine).

### Sobering Words of Warning (Hebrews 10:26-31)

26 For if we deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, no further sacrifice for sins is left for us, 27 but only a certain fearful expectation of judgment and *a fury of fire that will consume God's enemies*. 28 Someone who rejected the law of Moses was put to death without mercy *on the testimony of two or three witnesses*. 29 How much greater punishment do you think that person deserves who has contempt for the Son of God, and profanes the blood of the covenant that made him holy, and insults the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know the one who said, "*Vengeance is mine, I will repay*," and again, "*The Lord will judge his people*." 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God (Hebrews 10:26-31).

"**For**" at the beginning of verse 26 indicates to us that the warnings of verses 26-31 are closely related to the exhortations of those verses which precede them. If the work of Christ is full and final, so that "**there is no longer any [other] offering for sin**" (10:18), then to reject the supreme and ultimate sacrifice of Christ is to leave oneself with no other means of forgiveness.

Think of Abraham and his two sons, Ishmael (born to him by Hagar) and Isaac (born to him by Sarah). God had clearly indicated to Abraham that the covenant which He had made with him was going to be fulfilled through Isaac, and not through Ishmael.<sup>11</sup> Thus, we are not surprised to find that God instructed Abraham to send Ishmael away, so that Isaac became his only heir, and his only hope. There was nothing else for Abraham to fall back on, other than God's promise to bless Abraham through his son, Isaac. This set the stage for his supreme test in Genesis 22, where God instructed him to offer his son, Isaac, as a sacrifice. So, too, when God sent His only Son to become the ultimate offering for sin, there could be no other sacrifice, no other way of salvation. To reject the Son and His sacrifice, then, would be the ultimate sin, and we would expect that the consequences would correspond in terms of gravity and severity – which I believe they do.

Allow me to call attention to the pronouns “we” and “us” which the author employs as he commences his warning in verse 26: “For if **we** deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, no further sacrifice for sins is left for **us**.” The author includes himself – and I presume other believers – in his warning, which makes it difficult for me to see this as a warning only to unbelievers who have fallen short of coming to genuine faith. It appears to me to be a warning to believers in general. This would be consistent with the exhortations and warnings found elsewhere in the book.

The author warns of a specific kind of sin, rather than of sin in some more general sense. This specific sin is described for us in verse 26 as that which is conscious, deliberate, and persistent. This sin is committed in spite of the fact that the sinner had received the knowledge of the truth. Not only is this sin willful, it is also persistent and ongoing. In verse 29 we are given three more characteristics of this particular sin:

- It expresses contempt for the Son of God
- It profanes the blood of the covenant, the very blood that sanctified<sup>12</sup> him
- It insults the Spirit of grace

Deliberate sin is not new to the readers of Hebrews. It was something for which the Old Testament sacrifices had no solution:

27 “If any person sins **unintentionally**, then he must bring a yearling female goat for a purification offering. 28 And the priest must make atonement for the person who sins unintentionally – when he sins **unintentionally** before the Lord – to make atonement for him, and he will be forgiven. 29 You must have one law for the person who sins **unintentionally**, both for the native-born among the Israelites and for the resident foreigner who lives among them. 30 “But the person who acts **defiantly**, whether native-born or a resident foreigner, insults the Lord. That person must be cut off from among his people. 31 **Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken his commandment**, that person must be completely cut off. His iniquity will be on him” (Numbers 15:27-31).

I’ve always agonized over the difference between “unintentional” sins and “defiant” sins, though I believe that the distinction is very important. It surely was for an Old Testament Israelite! It spelled the difference between forgivable and unforgivable sins. So what is that difference? If “unintentional” meant “you didn’t mean to do it,” that would cover a very few sins, and would leave most of my sins without an offering.

I believe that a defiant sin was one that not only showed a disregard for the law, but also a disdain for the covenant, of which the law was an extension. A defiant sin would be one which was committed in deliberate disregard for God, for His covenant with Israel, and for His laws. It was an “in your face” sin against God.

As an aside, parents really need to distinguish between defiant disobedience and, let’s say, childish disobedience. Defiant disobedience is usually pretty obvious. After you have given the child a clear command (for example, “Don’t touch the electrical wall outlet.”), he or she looks you in the eye and puts their hand on the outlet. Such times need to be dealt with decisively, for the real issue is the child’s respect for parental authority.

Given the description of deliberate sin in verses 26 and 29 of our text, I would say that it is a disregard for Jesus Christ, for the blood which He shed at Calvary, and for the New Covenant which He inaugurated by His atoning sacrifice. Consequently, it insults the Spirit of grace – the Holy Spirit – who manifests Christ (and thus grace) to us in a way that brings glory to the Son.

Thus, deliberate or defiant sin could happen in several ways. First, it could happen when a person turned away from Christ, His church, and the New Covenant, to identify with unbelieving Judaism by looking to the Old Covenant and priestly sacrifices for right standing before God. If the New Covenant is perfect through the atoning work of Christ, making the Old Covenant and its sacrifices unacceptable to God, then what does it say of the Son of God and of the Holy Spirit when the provision of salvation by grace has been set aside in order to follow the ineffective rituals of unbelieving Judaism?

There is yet another way in which this deliberate and defiant kind of sin could occur, such that a Gentile could commit it. We find this sin addressed in Romans 6 and in 1 Peter 2:

Live as free people, not using your freedom as a pretext for evil, but as God’s slaves (1 Peter 2:16).

This is a deliberate sin that despises the person and work of Christ in another way. It does not deny the sufficiency of Christ’s atoning work; it assumes it, and applies it in a way that deliberately and directly defies its intent. Christ died on the cross of Calvary to forgive us of our sins and to give us the power to live a new kind of life, so that we can have victory over sin:

1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. 3 For God achieved what the law could not do because it was weakened through the flesh. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 so that the righteous requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Romans 8:1-4).<sup>13</sup>

Some could show contempt for the Lord Jesus, profane the blood of Christ, and insult the Spirit of grace by defiantly persisting in sin, presuming that the shed blood of Jesus must cleanse us in such a way that Christ's work does not defeat sin, but facilitates it.

The consequences of such defiance are spelled out in a way that should give the defiant sinner pause for thought. I believe that the author's basis for the warnings he issues in verses 26-31 is set forth in verses 28 and 29:

28 Someone who rejected the law of Moses was put to death without *mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses*. 29 How much greater punishment do you think that person deserves who has contempt for the Son of God, and profanes the blood of the covenant that made him holy, and insults the Spirit of grace? (Hebrews 10:28-29)

The author draws upon this text in Deuteronomy 17:

2 "Suppose a man or woman is discovered among you – in one of your villages that the Lord your God is giving you – who sins before the Lord your God and breaks his covenant 3 by serving other gods and worshiping them – the sun, moon, or any other heavenly bodies which I have not permitted you to worship. 4 When it is reported to you and you hear about it, you must investigate carefully. If it is indeed true that such a disgraceful thing is being done in Israel, 5 you must bring to your city gates that man or woman who has done this wicked thing – that very man or woman – and you must stone that person to death. 6 At the testimony of two or three witnesses they must be executed. They cannot be put to death on the testimony of only one witness. 7 The witnesses must be first to begin the execution, and then all the people are to join in afterward. In this way you will purge evil from among you" (Deuteronomy 17:2-7).

The sin committed here is that of idolatry – worshipping other gods. It is a sin by which the guilty one breaks his covenant with God and therefore the penalty is death. The author then argues this way: The Old Covenant was an inferior, ineffective covenant. It had its purpose in foreshadowing the New (and better) Covenant, and it served as an interim provision for the people of God. If defiant disregard for the Old Covenant warranted the death penalty, then how much greater must the penalty be for defiance with regard to Christ and the New Covenant? This is but another reason why I am inclined to understand the "judgments" spelled out in our text as those of eternal condemnation (or, more bluntly put, *hell*). So what are these judgments? We can see that they are spelled out in Old Testament terms, using the words of Old Testament texts, so that each indication of divine judgment is linked to the Old Testament. Are these folks tempted to think that "the old is better than the new"? Then let them listen to the words of the Old Testament, and see how they help to demonstrate that just as the New is better, so the judgments for rejecting the New are greater than those of the Old Covenant.

(1) "***A fury of fire that will consume God's enemies***" (Hebrews 10:27; Isaiah 26:11). This text in Isaiah contrasts the gracious deliverance God gives to His people with the judgment God will bring upon His enemies. George H Guthrie, citing Paul Ellingworth,<sup>14</sup> speaks of this as "God's reckoning with the sinners' defiant rebellion against his grace."<sup>15</sup> Guthrie goes on to state,

The context of that Old Testament passage is suggestive since it depicts a contrast between the righteous, who walk in the ways of God and long for his presence, and the wicked, who go on doing evil in spite of God's grace toward them. The former look forward to the judgments of God on the earth; the latter belong to the ranks of God's enemies, for whom the fire is reserved.<sup>16</sup>

(2) "***Vengeance is mine, I will repay,***" and "***The Lord will judge his people***" (Hebrews 10:30; Deuteronomy 32:35-36). These words speak of God's wrath that He will pour out upon His people for experiencing His grace and yet turning to worship other gods.<sup>17</sup> It could be, then, that these words initially spoke of the coming defeat of Israel and Judah, and of the cruel treatment they will receive at the hands of their enemies for their sin. Some (whom I greatly respect) would see it this way. But we must remember that in the immediately preceding verses in Hebrews (10:28-29), the author has argued from the lesser to the greater: "If the sins of rejecting the Old Covenant merited such fearful (earthly?) judgment, then how much greater (eternal?) judgment will those receive who reject the New Covenant? I must confess that while I have the greatest regard for those who think the judgment here is God's severe temporal judgment on true, but willfully wayward, believers, I can't shake the sense that the judgment described is eternal (damnation).

(3) **“It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God”** (Hebrews 10:31). This is not really an Old Testament citation or allusion, but it certainly does summarize the essence of what the Old Testament citations have indicated. Those who willfully reject God’s New Covenant in Christ and persist in their sin, knowing the dangers and threatened outcome, will fall into the hands of the living God when He brings judgment on His enemies.

*Words of Encouragement and Exhortation (Hebrews 10:32-39)*

32 But remember the former days when you endured a harsh conflict of suffering after you were enlightened. 33 At times you were publicly exposed to abuse and afflictions, and at other times you came to share with others who were treated in that way. 34 For in fact you shared the sufferings of those in prison, and you accepted the confiscation of your belongings with joy, because you knew that you certainly had a better and lasting possession. 35 So do not throw away your confidence, because it has great reward. 36 For you need endurance in order to do God’s will and so receive what is promised. 37 For ***just a little longer and he who is coming will arrive and not delay.*** 38 ***But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he shrinks back,*** I take no pleasure in him. 39 But we are not among those who shrink back and thus perish, but are among those who have faith and preserve their souls (Hebrews 10:32-39).

Suddenly and unexpectedly (very much like I experienced when I sat as a student under Mr. Riddell), the author ceases his stern warning and speaks words of encouragement. The author ceases to employ the “we”/“our” pronouns and the less direct references to willful sinners, and addresses his readers directly (“you”). He did not have to hold before his readers the example set by others; all he needed to do was to remind them of their own faithfulness in the midst of substantial persecution in the past.<sup>18</sup>

The persecution they endured was intense, as we can well see, but there was more severe persecution coming as the author indicates in chapter 12:

*You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed in your struggle against sin (Hebrews 12:4).*

They may not have shed any blood in the past, but it seems as though that will come before long. But their suffering was sufficient to reveal their faithfulness.

I am reminded of a conversation a friend of mine had with a persecuted saint from another part of the world. He asked this lovely believer how much persecution the church was enduring where he lived. The man replied, “Just enough.” What he meant by this was that it was just enough persecution to cause the uncommitted to abandon the church. The true believers now stood out, because the rest were not willing to endure persecution.

I think we could say that the persecution of these Hebrew saints was “just enough” to prove the sincerity of their faith and their perseverance in the midst of their suffering. “After they were enlightened”<sup>19</sup> – that is, after they came to faith in Jesus – they began to experience persecution, though we are not certain of the exact nature of their suffering. The nature of their suffering and of their response is surely encouraging. They suffered public ridicule and because they did not shrink back from associating with other believers;<sup>20</sup> they suffered on account of this identification.

I have a good friend in a foreign country who has chosen to visit a fellow-believer who is on death row. All appearances are that this is the result of a conspiracy, police corruption, and prejudice. The very fact that he continues to visit this condemned man means that he could suffer for doing so. Isn’t the fear of suffering because of their association with an alleged enemy of the state the reason why the disciples scattered<sup>21</sup> and Peter denied knowing Jesus?

The result of their identification with fellow believers was that they suffered not only public ridicule but the loss of their property. They willingly suffered the loss of their worldly goods, assured that true riches awaited them in heaven. This truth reminds me of Peter’s words in his first epistle:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he gave us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 that is, into an inheritance imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. It is reserved in heaven for you, 5 who by God’s power are protected through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 This brings you great joy, although you may have to suffer for a short time in various trials. 7 Such trials show the proven character of your faith, which is much more valuable than gold – gold that is tested by fire, even though it is passing away – and will bring praise and glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 You have not seen him, but you love him. You do not see him now but you believe in him, and so you rejoice with an indescribable and glorious joy, 9 because you are attaining the goal of your faith – the salvation of your souls (1 Peter 1:3-9).

This brings us to verse 35, where the author begins to exhort his readers once again. They are strongly urged not to throw away their confidence, which has great reward (a truth that sustained them in their previous persecution – see verse 34). As they persevered in the past, so they now need to endure so that they will do God’s will and receive the blessings He has promised to those who remain faithful. The statement in verse 36 is buttressed by these words from Habakkuk that are cited in verses 37 and 38:

*37 For just a little longer and he who is coming will arrive and not delay. 38 But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he shrinks back, I take no pleasure in him* (Hebrews 10:37-38; Habakkuk 2:3-4).

The prophet Habakkuk called to God to judge the wicked in Judah, for it appeared as though they were getting away with their sin (Habakkuk 1:1-4). God answers the prophet’s prayer for judgment by indicating that judgment is coming soon, as He employs the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to overcome His people (1:5-11). Habakkuk is horrified to think that God would use those who are more wicked than his own people to judge them. He reminds God of their cruelty. The prophet will wait, with his hands on his hips (so to speak), to hear God’s response – one which he fully intends to challenge (1:12—2:1). God instructs Habakkuk to write down His answer so that others can easily read it. This vision of judgment is future, but it is certain. It is true that the enemy is wicked and arrogant; and thus the righteous are those who must live by faith, enduring the difficult days of divine discipline, and looking for the days when God will restore His people to their land and to His blessings. The righteous must persevere, for God finds no pleasure in those who shrink back in times of adversity.

Days of great judgment are once again soon to come upon the Jewish people. These are days when God will once again use a wicked Gentile nation (Rome) to judge His people for their sins (rejecting their Messiah). The righteous are to persevere in these difficult days, assured that God will take pleasure in their faithfulness, and thus they will receive an eternal reward. Shrinking back is not an option, for it brings with it God’s displeasure.

This chapter ends with these final words of encouragement:

But we are not among those who shrink back and thus perish, but are among those who have faith and preserve their souls (Hebrews 10:39).

The author once again includes his Hebrew readers with himself and others (“**we**”), assuring them that they are not among those who shrink back to judgment, but are those who persevere by faith, and in so doing, preserve their souls. Whatever warning has been issued, the author has confidence that his readers, like himself, will endure, to the preservation of their souls. He is not dangling his readers over the pit, seeking to produce fear, but is seeking to strengthen their faith.

These last words which speak of having faith that leads to endurance are the perfect segue to the next chapter, which provides the readers with ample definition and examples of what this faith is to look like in the hard times.

(Adapted from URL:<https://bible.org/seriespage/24-should-there-be-second-class-saints-hebrews-1026-39>)

### **Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

The story of the audience of the letter to the Hebrews is the story of God’s people throughout history. From the days after Pharaoh released the Hebrews from bondage onward, we see the fickleness in God’s people in remaining faithful. In many ways, it was no different for the first century church. And it is no different for us today. Cultural pressures may vary from place to place and across the centuries, but the challenge of faithfulness remains. By keeping our eyes trained on God’s promises in hope, we can remain faithful to the very end and receive everything God desires for us. “Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us” (Hebrews 12:1).

## ***Concluding Thoughts from the Echoes Commentary***

Don't Go Back - The author of Hebrews encouraged God's children to hold fast to their beliefs. Some were going backward, starting to regress into old covenant thinking and behaviors. It's essential when believers meet together to encourage fellow Christians to keep their eyes on Christ. Focusing on Him will prevent you from wobbly and unstable thinking. The Bible urges Christians to look out for one another; the Body of Christ is designed that way. The illustration of one match is told repeatedly, but it's true. One lonely burning matchstick can easily be blown out. If you place several together and make a bonfire, that can't be blown out at all. Christians who isolate themselves, claiming they don't need the rest of the Body and the other gifts, are only fooling themselves. It's only a matter of time before their thinking and their Christian walk become unstable.

Bad Choices - Don't practice sin or, in other words, repeatedly disobey. Mistakes are made. Bad choices are decided. David is a perfect example in his sin with Bathsheba and murdering her husband. However, Psalm 51 allows us to listen in as David was deeply sorrowful over his actions and pleaded with God for forgiveness and total restoration. His only sacrifice to bring before the Lord was a broken heart. If the believer refuses to repent and turn back to God, what can they expect? Chastening. The children of Israel who left Egypt are an example. Only two of the original group made it into the promised land. Why? They refused to take God at His Word. When you become casual when it comes to believing God's Word, take a suggestion from David. Fall into the hands of a merciful God, and let Him deal with you.