

APOSTATE REVERSIONISM

Request: Recently I was talking to a believer who had been convinced by someone that she could lose salvation based on Heb.10:26-31. Could you teach it so that I could explain it to her?

It is important to begin by explaining four important things about the background of this passage to the Book of Hebrews.

First: “The letter was addressed primarily to Jewish converts who were familiar with the OT and who were being tempted to revert to Judaism or to Judaize the gospel (Gal.2:14).” (NIV, Introduction to Hebrews, pg.1857) “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ.” (Gal.1:6-7; Acts 15:1-2, 5, 11; Eph.2:8-9)

Secondly: the Book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers in danger of apostate reversionism. “Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.” (Heb.3:12).

Thirdly: it is important to understand that Heb.10:26-31 is the **fourth of five warnings** against backsliding or reversionist believers (Heb.2:1-4; 3:7-8; 6:4-8; **10:26-31**; and 12:14-17). “The backslider in heart will have his fill of his own ways, but a good man will be satisfied with his.” (Prov.14:14)

Fourthly: Heb.10:26-31 uses the Greek adjective (phoberos) [terrifying] twice to issue a stern warning that apostate reversionism could lead to the sin unto death (Heb.10:27, 31).

Reversionism is retrogressing from any stage of spiritual growth because of negative volition to revealed truth of God’s word that leads to an obstinate, unbelieving heart.

Now, we will examine our lesson text by the following five homiletical points.

- Sacrifice for sins (10:26) Truth of gospel
- Sin unto death (10:27) Terrifying expectation
- Shadow Christology (10:28) Testament
- Sanctifying blood (10:29b) Trampled underfoot
- Severer punishment (10:29-31) Terrifying experience

This lesson will study FOUR reasons that this passage is warning against Sin unto Death.

1. **The fourth warning begins with the use of the casual conjunction (gar) [for]. It is important because it refers us back to Heb.10:25 and to the indefinite possessive pronoun (tisin / d.pl.m) “as is the habit of some”.**

Some Jewish believers were forsaking Christian assembly because they had gone back to Mosaic Law and Old covenant shadow Christology. “Concerning Him we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.” (Heb.5:11)

The writer of Hebrews has been showing the superiority of historical Christology to shadow Christology since chapter one: “But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.” (Heb.8:6)

2. These reversionistic believers were in danger of progressive divine discipline unto the sin unto death (Heb.12:5-11).

Heb.10:26-27 opens with a genitive absolute acting as a 1cc (hamartano / p.a.ptc gplm) “if we go on sinning willfully” / and it’s true!). The emphasis is on volition or free will of this group (plural) that knows better: “after receiving the knowledge (ten epignosis) of the truth.” (10:26a; **5:11-12**).

As a conditional sentence, Heb.10:26-27 has a protasis (if) and an apodosis (then). A contrast is established in the apodosis: “There no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, **but** (de / adversative conjunction) a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire, which will consume the adversaries.” (10:26b-27)

Three nominative nouns and subjects of apoleipo (wake-up call- terrifying, expectation, and fury) are used to make a big point: “there no longer remains (**ouketi apoleipo/ p.m.ind**) a sacrifice for sins.” The big point is that apostate reversionism will lead to progressive divine discipline and even the sin unto death: “There is a sin unto death (physical).” (1 John 5:16) [a state of Reversionism] (1 Cor.3:15; 2 Tim.2:13; Rom.8:1; John 10:28).

The writer uses a reference from the Mosaic Law to make this point Heb.10:28; Deut.17:2-6; 19:15 (those transgressed the Mosaic Law).

3. The writer identified three sins involved in apostate reversionism (Heb.10:29). One Greek definite article is used with three aorist participles to identify these three sins.

“How much severer (cheiron) punishment (timoria) do you think (dokeo / p.a.ind) he deserve who: “ **More sever than whom?**

- Trampled underfoot (ho katapateo) the Son of God (Heb.10:12-14)
- Has regarded (hegeomai) as unclean the blood of the covenant (Heb.9:13-15) by which he was sanctified and
- Has insulted (enubrizo) the Spirit of grace? “We who are Jews by birth and not Gentiles sinners know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.” (Gal.2:15-16)

4. The writer concludes the fourth warning against apostate reversionism by once again quoting the Mosaic Law (Deut.32:35-36; Heb.10:30-31; 12:29; Ex.24:17).

Deut 32 was part of a famous song written by Moses against Israelite apostate reversionism (Deut.31:19-22; **31:30-32:43**).

Notice how the writer once again personally involves the believers into this warning - “For (gar) [causal conjunction] we know (oida / perf.a.ind.1pl) Him who said.”

The writer makes three concluding points about the danger of apostate reversionism.

- Vengeance is mine, I will repay.
- The Lord will judge His people.
- It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

**How the Lord chooses to deal with an apostate reversionistic believer
Is His business!**