Will God Take Revenge on the Wicked?

**Hebrews 10:26-31**

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**Introduction:** The purpose ofHebrews is to exalt (put on display) Jesus Christ as superior to all other things in creation. In fact Christ the Son is the creator.

**Colossians 1:16**  16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created through Him and for Him.

Until God the Son entered into the womb of Mary and was born a sinless human, lived a sinless life and died a sinners death, mankind had no direct way to know who God was. Jesus had a foot in both worlds, but it was more than that. He was never half man and half God! He did not go back and forth between the two! He was God the Eternal Son becoming fully human. He was both God and man.

Everything God had done since the fall of man had been telegraphing the coming of His Son into the world. Hebrews shows again and again how Jesus Christ was greater than angels, Moses, He was greater than the promises of God because He was what was promised. He was greater than the sacrifices because He was the ultimate sacrifice to whom they pointed. He was greater than the priests because He was the only priest who could perfectly stand in the presence of God and man at the same time.

When Christ came to earth, God stopped revealing Himself (speaking) through all these other things and began to reveal Himself through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Hebrews 1:1-2**  God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

**John 1:14-18**  14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

Chapter ten recounts how Christ was the real person who cast the shadows of the Old Testament. God was never satisfied with the blood of animals. They could not pay for the sins of humans. God’s Word sums it up saying…

**Hebrews 10:11-12**  1 Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; 12 but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,

Trust in Christ’s sacrificial death on your behalf is THE ONLY WAY to be forgiven. If you reject this there is no use looking for something else. Nothing else exists. The pursuit of salvation through morality, religion, good works or Christless Christianity are all futile. Jesus offered a single sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins and He offered it one time. So says God’s perfect holy Word.

**Hebrews 10:18**  18 Now where there is forgiveness of these things, there is no longer *any* offering for sin.

This brings us to one of the most if not THE MOST solemn warning in Scripture. It is always so tempting for a preacher to skip these 6 verses, but you would surely notice if I did. I hope you would come up to me and say, “Why did you skip this passage?” I have encouraged you for years to be like that so I would have to give you an account. Well I am not going to skip it so let me read it for you:

**Hebrews 10:26-31**  26 For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES. 28 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses. 29 How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him 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.

Coming right after an exhortation to encourage one another and regularly go to church to be together this passage seems strangely out of place. But let’s try to remember the theme of the book of Hebrews. From the very first verses of this book God is offering Jesus Christ to you as the one and only solution to every need of your life and your only hope of forgiveness and heaven. Nothing else exists. Jesus is not simply “better!” He is the only solution for your sin and salvation.

Because the death of Christ is God’s only solution for the sin, God warns us that if we reject Christ there is no other place to go. God is making one offer only. If you believe in God then you should be able to see the logic here. Man was lost and spiritually dead because of sin. God in kindness sent His Only Son to take your punishment for sin. That is the only provision He made for your sin. It is totally sufficient. It shows His love for you. He has made it known to all men through the Bible and the preaching of the Gospel.

**For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins [26]:** This is the clearest definition of apostasy in the Bible. I want to say something very important here. This is not describing believers who struggle with sin. God’s children are still sinners. We are still broken and plagued by weakness, but we do not willfully reject Christ and His love for us on the Cross.

**1 John 2:1** My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;

**1 John 1:8-9**  8 If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

The word “willfully” is vital to understanding this verse. It describes someone who chooses to reject everything God has revealed about the person and work of Jesus. They know He is the creator who became a sinless human sacrifice for them. They know God gave the Patriarchs, The Prophets and the Priests to point men to His One and Only Son. “The knowledge of the truth” is a phrase describing a deep and thorough knowledge of this truth. They understand what God is saying! They understand the Gospel call! They willfully reject it!

Now…a question. Is that you? Do you understand what Jesus did on the cross for you, but you reject that and repudiate God’s great love for you? Have you decided to look for another way to get to heaven? Some other religion or perhaps just your own morality and good character? Then this verse and these verses are speaking to you.

Or…does this describe you: You do believe that Jesus is God’s sinless, holy Son and that He loved you and gave Himself to pay for your sins. You do believe that “no man can come to the Father accept through me!” Just like Jesus said. But you still sin. You still get mad, are tempted to lie and sometimes do. You are afraid at times! You try to be strong in faith but find yourself doubting. These verses are not describing you. God’s Word has great value, but God is not talking to His own children who are still stuck in a sinful body in a sinful world but do trust Him and love Him nevertheless.

“There no longer remains a sacrifice for sins!” This is an absolute statement. If you reject Christ’s sacrifice you will look in vain for another that will take away your sins and open the door to heaven for you.

**But a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES [27]:** What does remain…what you will eventually find is judgment. Without Christ your only (this is not a maybe) expectation is a zealous judgment. Fury means purposeful and not reluctantly. It is a condemnation (judgment) by fire and it will consume the adversaries of God.

But I hear people say all the time, “But I am not an enemy of God, I just don’t want to have anything to do with Him. I certainly don’t want to submit to Him, but I don’t wish Him evil.” Well, that may be the opinion and thoughts of much of mankind, but God considers them enemies. In his work “Men Naturally are God’s Enemies,” Jonathan Edwards wrote:

Men’s enmity appears in their judgments, their natural pleasures, their wills, affections, and practice. They have a very *low regard* *for* God. Men are ready to entertain a good *thoughts* of those with whom they are friends. They are apt to think highly of their qualities, to give them their due praises; and if there be defects, to cover them. But of those to whom they are enemies, they are disposed to have *nasty and malicious* thoughts. They are apt to entertain a dishonorable opinion of them. They will be ready to look contemptibly upon anything that is praiseworthy in them.

So it is with natural men towards God. They entertain very low and contemptible thoughts of God. Whatever honor and respect they may pretend, and make a show of towards God, if their practice be examined, it will show, that they certainly look upon him as a Being that is but little to be regarded. The language of their hearts is, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice?” Exo. 5:2. “What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?” Job 21:15.

They count him worthy neither to be loved nor feared. They would never dare not behave with such disregard towards one of their fellow-creatures, one a little above them in power and authority, as they dare, and do, towards God. They value one of their equals much more than God, and are ten times more afraid of offending them, than of displeasing the God that made them. They have so much contempt for God, as to prefer every vile lust before him. And every worldly enjoyment is set higher in their esteem than God. A morsel of meat, or a few pence of worldly gain, is preferred before him. God is set last and lowest in the esteem of natural men.

**Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of* two or three witnesses [28]:** This is a classic argument from the lesser to the greater. It goes like this. If a man breaks the Law of Moses and murders, rapes, blasphemes, kidnaps, strikes or curses a parent, lies in court and others…If those lesser transgressions will get you executed then….

**How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? [29]:** If breaking the Law can get you killed what about scorning and showing contempt for God’s dear Son whom He gave to save you? The mental picture is this. You are walking down the street and you see a gold coin but you have no interest in stopping to examine it. You either step over it or kick it to the gutter and continue. As far as you are concerned it has no value whatsoever.

The blood of the covenant sanctified Jesus and not the enemy of God in this verse. The blood of Jesus confirmed the covenant God made to save us. Sanctified means “set apart for a special purpose.” God ordained that Jesus would be the only sacrifice for sin and the only way back to God. He was “set apart” from eternity past to shed His blood, wash away our sins and make us children of The Living God.

**John 17:19**  19 "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

Such an willing enemy of God also insults the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is in the world glorifying Christ. He is convicting the hearts of men. Convincing them that Jesus is the only Savior. Men who know the truth and reject it are “trampling on our Savior.” They are showing contempt for The Father’s covenant that He made to save men and they are insulting the Holy Spirit who is testifying to Christ’s worthiness to be loved, worshiped and obeyed.

Apostates, men and women who have full knowledge of who Christ is and what He did on the cross, and reject Him anyway, insult the entire Godhead.

**John 10:30**  30 "I and the Father are one."

**John 5:22-23**  For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

**For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." [30]:** In His book “The gagging of God” D.A. Carson quotes the evangelical theologian Clark Pinnock who said,

“I consider the concept of hell as endless torment in body and mind an outrageous doctrine, a theological and moral enormity, a bad doctrine of the tradition which needs to be changed…”

Not long ago I was traveling with Didier to speak in a church when we spent the night with a man who over breakfast said to me… “How could you ever enjoy heaven knowing that there were men who were in hell for eternity? Wouldn’t you rather think there was no hell and that no one would go there?” “I would like to think,” I replied, “that no one would go to hell, but Our Sovereign God says in His Word that there is a hell.” To think otherwise is to show contempt for God when He speaks.

The existence and revelation in Scripture of hell is a warning shot across the bow of every human being. It is fair warning and yes it is God’s vengeance on men. Men do unspeakable things to one another. We do not know the half of it. We live in America. There will be a reckoning in court…a day of judgment and there will be justice.

But Hell? Isn’t that extreme? Reason with me then. How do you feel about murderers that go unpunished? Child and adult sex traffickers who prosper and live in luxury? Leaders who withhold food from tribes they do not like and starve millions to death? Genocide? In Congo over 6 million have died in the ongoing civil war. Do you think they will get away with this before the judge of the universe. They will not.

There are consequences when we hurt people. If I hurt a little orphan on the street in Congo, who is going to care? If I hurt my wife there could be legal consequences and I could lose my home and marriage. If I hurt my boss I could lose my job and income. The consequences get greater with the standing of the person I sin against. Ultimately there is the living God. The creator of all life. Who offered His wonderful, loving Son to save me and men step over Him on the street like He was a piece of garbage. Christ is of infinite worth because He is the infinite and holy God coming to save you. But what if that orphan is an image bearer of God? Your wife or husband too? What if God cares how you treat them and wants revenge for it? Well, all that is true. God has the right to take revenge on behalf of others and He will do so justly. He says eternal hell is a just punishment for infinitely wicked sins.

**It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God [31]:**

**Revelation 20:11-15**  11 Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life; and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one *of them* according to their deeds. 14 Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

**CONCLUSION:** From time to time people will ask me what is the unpardonable sin because they worry that they might have done something that God is unwilling to forgive. I tell them plainly, “the willful and informed rejection of Jesus Christ’s suffering sacrifice on the Cross cannot be overlooked by God because it is the only provision for the sin of men.

There is one other compelling reason why this is such an ominous warning. The rejection of Christ Work on the Cross is like sticking your finger in the eye of God. It is like telling the father of a fallen soldier that his son was a fool and died for nothing. Nothing in all the universe will incur the wrath of God the way the deliberate despising of His Pure and Loving Son will.

Jesus was once asked what the greatest commandment of God was. He responded by saying:

**Mark 12:30**  30 AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.'

Now if this is the greatest commandment it is surely true that the greatest offense is to despise and spurn Him.

Now I do not want to stop there. I know the passage is over and it had a purpose for being in the Scripture and God orchestrated that I should preach it today. Nevertheless I want to finish on a different note.

Jesus left the joy of heaven to become a man. He did this for you. Jesus said He came for sinners. Do not let your brokenness, weakness or sin scare you. Jesus came for sinners.

**Luke 5:31-32**  31 And Jesus answered and said to them, "*It is* not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. 32 "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

And He is still calling today. The Spirit of God, through the Word of God preached is calling and wooing all who have not yet come. The door to heaven is standing open. Through it are the arms of the one who loved you and gave His life for you. He has already known your every sin. He has paid for it already on the cross. He came to save not to judge. He came to give life and not death. Jesus Himself is calling….

**Matthew 11:28-30**  28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."