

WILLFUL SIN AND JUDGEMENT: Hebrews 10: 25-31

"Not forsaking our own assembling together as the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing nigh. For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sin, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of fire which will consume the adversaries. Anyone who set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot 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? For we know Him who said, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' And again, 'The Lord will judge (or vindicate) His people.' It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of a living God."

Now, this is one of those passages that we had rather wished the writer would have left out. We could wish that it wasn't there. It's one of those passages that we won't find many sermons preached upon it because we'd rather not discuss it. We'd rather not discuss it because, for the most part, it's a hard passage and we don't know what it means.

You turn to the commentaries and they all skirt around it, and yet we ask questions, "What does it mean when it says, 'If we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins,' or no other sacrifice." It talks about a horrible judgment coming upon those who sin willfully. So sort of like the 6th chapter, we'd rather read something else than to read this, but you know Harry, if it's there he'll try to preach on it. So I decided we're going to look at it.

In verse 24 he said, "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works." So the beauty of the Christian is to help each other. We are to stimulate one another to love and good works, and this is only possible if we live up to verse 25. So he says, "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together." You can only stimulate one another to love and good works by meeting together, and so verse 25 becomes a classic example of the church assembling together, so that we might be helped and so that we might help one another. We cannot do that unless we do assemble together, and it becomes a very important thing then that Christians assemble together, that we meet together. Let's don't take it lightly.

He says, "As the habit of some is," some people talk about going to church as being a habit. Staying home is a habit. So don't forsake the assembling of yourselves together, you need to meet together. You can't be a lone ranger, you can't make it on your own. But he says, when you meet together, "Encourage one another." One purpose of our meeting together is that we might be encouraged and that we might encourage one another by being here. He said, "All the more as you see the day drawing nigh." The reason they need encouragement, and the reason they need to encourage one another and stimulate one another to love and good works, is because they see the day drawing nigh. The question is, of course, what is that day? Most commentaries will conveniently say, "Well, that day that he is talking about is the second coming of the Lord,"

or, "The end of time." But notice now what he says, "Encourage one another," be faithful in this, give it your attention, "All the more as you see the day drawing nigh."

They actually saw the day drawing nigh. This is not something way out there in the future. You are actually seeing the day drawing nigh. So in my opinion, if they were seeing it draw nigh, and for that reason, because they knew the day is coming, whatever it is, you ought to continue to meet together, to assemble together and encourage one another because that day is drawing near, and it's going to be here before long. What day is he talking about?

I think he's talking about a day of destruction. In fact, he said in verse 39, "But we are not those who draw back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the saving of the soul, or the life." The King James says, "Drawing back to perdition." The word is destruction.

I think the day that he is talking about is the same day that Peter is talking about in the second chapter of the Book of Acts, whenever he quotes from the second chapter of Joel, concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit, he said, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet, Joel," in verse 16. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God," that's the last days of the old covenant, "I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all mankind; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And upon my bond slaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy." That's their prophecy concerning the coming of the Holy Spirit, which was happening right here on the day of Pentecost in the second chapter of Acts.

It goes on and says something else about that. He says, "And I will grant wonders in the sky above, and signs on the earth beneath, blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and glorious day of the Lord shall come. And it shall come to pass, that whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Now, a lot of times we put that in the future, but I think he's using descriptive terms here to show what's going to happen when the judgment of God comes upon the old covenant people, and that's the Day of the Lord that he's talking about here. That's when the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood. That's when there will be blood and fire and vapor of smoke, whenever God comes in judgment upon His old covenant people. I base that upon reading the very passage that Peter is quoting. If you go back to Joel, give me a minute to find Joel chapter 2, Peter begins quoting from Joel 2:28, and he quotes through part of verse 32, but he doesn't quote all of verse 32. But if you read what Joel says about it, then you'll know what he's talking about. Joel says, "It will come about that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be delivered." Peter quotes that much, but Joel goes on and says, "For on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there will be those who escape, as the Lord said, even among the survivors whom the Lord calls."

So Joel is saying that this prophecy concerns Jerusalem, and when it takes place there will be some in Jerusalem who will escape. Jesus said in the 24th chapter of Matthew, "When you see

armies encompassing Jerusalem and you see these things that I'm talking about coming to pass," He said, "Flee and get out of the city and escape the wrath that is coming upon Jerusalem." That's the Day of the Lord and the day that Peter is talking about in the second chapter of Acts, in my opinion, and I think that's the Day of the Lord that is spoken of in Hebrews 10:25. The day which is approaching is the day when God is going to judge the old covenant people by wiping them off the face of the earth, and He did that in 70 A.D., when He destroyed the city of Jerusalem just like Jesus prophesied it would be.

So he is saying here to these people, "Hang on. God is going to judge your enemy because," in verse 26, "If they go on sinning willfully, there remains no more sacrifice for sin. The only thing that's left for them is judgment, and I'm going to bring back judgment upon them," just like Jesus prophesied in Matthew 24. That's the day that is coming.

Verse 26. "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sin." That troubles a lot of people because we say we have sinned willfully. So this passage gives us a lot of trouble. But the sinning willfully here is the sin of rejecting the sacrifice of Christ. That's what he has been talking about. He began in chapter 9, verse 11, and through verse 18 of chapter 10, what he has been talking about is the sacrifice of Christ in contrast to the sacrifices of the Old Testament. Now, if you reject the sacrifice of Christ, you're sinning willfully. The Jews had received the knowledge of this truth and they rejected it. They were, therefore, sinning willfully, and if they rejected His sacrifice, there was no other sacrifice. This was the only one, it was the one and only sacrifice. So if they go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, and they had received the knowledge of the truth of the sacrifice that Christ made, if they go on rejecting that, as the Jews did, they had no other place to go. They had no other sacrifice because he has said, in 10:12, "He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, sat down on the right hand of the Father."

So sinning willfully was refusing to accept the sacrifice that Christ had made. The only thing that was left was verse 27, "But a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of fire which will consume the adversaries." That's taken from the 24th chapter of Isaiah and I think, there, he's talking about the same day that Paul is talking about in 2nd Thessalonians, One. Let's look at that passage. 2 Thessalonians 1, beginning in verse 6. Now notice this, "For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you." Now, this is something that is personal to these people. This is not something that's going to happen 2,000 or 3,000 years from now. He said, "It is right, it is just for God to repay those who afflict you and to give relief to you who are afflicted." He will give relief to you who are afflicted, and to us.

Now when's that relief going to come? "When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," and that fits the Jewish nation. They didn't know God and they didn't obey the gospel. He said, "These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." That's exactly what happened to the Jews who did not know God and who did not obey the gospel.

They suffered the penalty of eternal destruction. Not only was their temple destroyed, not only was their nation destroyed, but they suffer destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, and they're still suffering that. Now, I'm sorry, but I can't read into that something 2,000, 3,000, 5,000 years from there.

So, verse 27, the only thing that is left for them if they reject willfully, if they go on sinning willfully by continuing to reject the sacrifice that Christ made, which they did, the only thing that is left is, "The fury of fire which will consume the adversaries," or the enemies, and that's exactly what He did in 70 A.D. when He destroyed the Jewish system and wiped it off the earth.

Now verses 28 and 29, "Anyone who set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses." Going back to Deuteronomy when Moses is reminding them of the fact that they're keeping the law, he says, if that were true, back then, "How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God." Now, this is what they've done, they've trampled underfoot 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." He says there's three things here: 1) They've trampled underfoot the Son of God, 2) they have regarded the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified as unclean, and 3) they have insulted the Holy Spirit. How much sorer punishment, how much more punishment, how much more severe punishment are people going to receive who do that, than those who died without mercy at the mouth of two or three witnesses in the time of Moses? Let's look at it.

"Those who trample underfoot the Son of God." That's an interesting way to put it. In Matthew 7:6, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus says, "Do not give what is holy to dogs. Do not throw your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you to pieces." They trample them under their feet. In Isaiah 63:3, God is speaking of judgment. He said, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and of the peoples there was no man with Me; I also trod them in My anger, I trampled them in My wrath; and their lifeblood is sprinkled on My garments, and I stained all My raiment." He says, "Judgment was a trampling of the people." So the trampling has to do with judgment. **The Jews judged Christ and rejected Him, and when they did that, they trampled Him under their feet.**

They regarded the blood of the covenant by which He was sanctified as being unclean. Regarded the blood of the covenant by which Christ was sanctified . . . It was the blood of the covenant that sanctified Christ and set Him apart as the Son of God, and for that reason, 13:20, God raised Him from the dead. So when he talks about the One who is sanctified, he's referring to Christ. It was the blood of the covenant that sanctified Christ and set Him apart as the Redeemer, and they counted it as being unclean. The Jew could not be touched by anything unclean and they could not touch anything unclean. Anything unclean to the Jew was rejected. They rejected Christ. And when they rejected Christ they counted the blood of the covenant that sanctified Him as their Messiah as being unclean. They would not let His blood touch them, they would not touch His blood. So they counted the blood of the covenant as being unclean.

Then he said, "They have also insulted the Spirit of Grace." They have insulted the Holy Spirit. Stephen, when he stood before the Jews in the book of Acts, he said, "You do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do you." But you have rejected and you have resisted the Holy Spirit and you have insulted the Holy Spirit. Let's get a little more light on that. Luke chapter 12, beginning in verse 8, "And I say unto you, anyone who confesses me before men, the Son of Man shall confess him before the angels of God, but he who denies me before men shall be denied before the angels of God." Now listen to verse 10, another scary passage that we'd like to skirt around. "And anyone who will speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven him." I wonder how Trinitarians handle that passage. "Anyone who speaks a word ..." Now, if anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it'll be forgiven. "Anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him." This is what he says in the next verse, get all this together, "When they bring you before the synagogues, and the rulers, and authorities, do not become anxious about what you will say or should speak in your defense, or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that hour what you ought to say." That didn't happen until after Christ died. After the day of Pentecost they were brought before synagogues and rulers, and they didn't have to think ahead of time what to say because the Holy Spirit told them in that hour what to say.

But let's get what He's talking about. Sinning against the Holy Spirit, people wonder, "Have I committed that sin? And what is it?" Now notice, I want you to understand this, so all of you who've been asleep this far, wake up. "Anyone who will speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven; but if you speak against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven." At that time, Christ was among them. If they rejected Him or spoke against Him at that time, they could be forgiven. It wasn't final, they still had a chance, Pentecost is coming. It's Friday, but Sunday's coming. They're going to put Him to death, but He's going to be raised. So if they reject him now, they can be forgiven. But, after Pentecost, when the Spirit comes and gives the final message, if they reject the Spirit, then they cannot be forgiven. They're blaspheming the Spirit and they can't be forgiven. You understand what he is saying? When they bring you into synagogues, the Holy Spirit will give you what you ought to speak. Now the Son of Man is speaking. He's giving a partial revelation. He has not died yet, He has not been resurrected yet. The gospel has not been preached yet. You can be forgiven if you reject Him or if you speak against Him now, but when the Holy Spirit comes and the gospel goes out and the Spirit is speaking the truth of the death, burial, and resurrection, and you resist and speak against the Spirit, then there is no forgiveness then, because a full revelation has been given. You understand what I'm saying (You are looking at me like a dog in a new house).

But you have done despite the Spirit of God ... And that's exactly what the Jews did. They blasphemed the Holy Spirit. Stephen said they did. Peter said to Ananias [inaudible 00:27:56], "You lied to the Holy Spirit. You resist the Holy Spirit." They did not accept the message of the Holy Spirit, and there was no forgiveness for them. They rejected the message of the Son of God before He died, there was forgiveness then, they could have been forgiven, but not after the Holy Spirit speaks and proclaims the gospel of the resurrection, and they reject that, there's nothing

more. There is no forgiveness for that.

So, verses 30 and 31, the certainty of judgment. "For we know Him who said 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay.' And again, 'the Lord will judge His people.'" I think the word vindicate there is better. In other words, God is going, He says, to take vengeance, "I will repay." That's exactly what Jesus preached to the Jews. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that kill the prophets, and stone them that were sent unto thee, how often I wanted to gather thee unto me as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you would not. So your house is left unto you desolate; and you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.'" (Matt 23:37). Judgment is coming upon this generation.

In Matthew 23 he puts it this way, just before that passage I read or quoted to you, He says, "Therefore, I am sending you prophets and wise men and scribes; and some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city, that upon you may fall the guilt of the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to Zechariah, the son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. **Truly I say unto you, all these things will come upon this generation.**" **God is going to judge His people. "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," and God repaid them strike for strike, lick for lick, and the Lord vindicated His people. So, he closes this part by saying, "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The Jews found it out when their temple and their city was destroyed. And Jesus, looking upon that event, He said, "There has never been anything like it from the beginning of creation, and there will never be anything like it again."** And that's true.

Let's see if we can learn a few lessons from this: **Number one, we need to encourage one another to avail ourselves of what is ours,** "Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together." "Encourage one another." It's not enough that you assemble together, you need to encourage others to assemble with you. How long has it been since you asked someone to come to church with you? How long has it been since you called up someone who wasn't there to find out why they weren't there? How long has it been since you encouraged someone to meet together with you?

Number two, All the more needful as we enter into times of tribulation. There has never been time, in my opinion, in our lifetime that we need the Lord more than we need Him today. Our fathers and our mothers went through some horrifying times, politically, economically and socially. We are facing terrible times in our lifetime, for us and for our children and our grandchildren. We can't even imagine what it's going to be like, and it isn't going to be settled politically either. It's all the more needful that we assemble ourselves together and encourage one another to love and do good works and **to get a good foundation for what we're going to have to face. For the most part, what the religious world is offering the people is not going to cut it because it's too much like what they already had.**

Number three, do not reject the sacrifice. That's what the Jews did. By neglect, by our won works, by our own self-sufficiency, that's exactly what the Jews did. Let's don't make the same mistake. **His sacrifice was adequate, let's don't reject it by adding to it, or by not accept it.**

The last thing we ought to learn is the destruction of the Jews should be a warning to us. God will judge His people. Once we stand before the world and we take Jesus as our Christ, as our Lord and Savior, we better make sure that we know what we're doing. It is no trifling thing. It is not something to play with, to be a Christian. God doesn't make us become Christians, but He holds us responsible whenever we do. Once we stand before the world and we say, "I believe that Jesus is the Christ," He puts upon us the obligation to live that out in our life, and it's a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The destruction of the Jews should be a warning. This is not something that we play with. It is the most important thing in our life. If He's saying to them, "Let's get with it," that's what He's saying to us too.

We're going to stand and sing hymn number