

# Hebrews - A Letter Addressed to Modern-Day Christians

## Part 16

# Hebrews 10:19-31

**Hebrews 10:19-24** [NIV] *“Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds.”*

Remember when we see the word “*therefore*” in scripture we should want to know what it is there for!

To do this we revise what has been stated before this verse, in this case the love-motivated sacrifice of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

This is the practical application of what we have just learnt in the previous scriptures.

**The sacrifice of Jesus Christ should give us:-**

**Confidence** – to approach God the Father in prayer just as Jesus taught us.

**Matthew 6:9-15** [NIV] *“This, then, is how you should pray: “**Our Father** in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.’ For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”*

This is the humble yet confident way we should approach the throne of God the Father Who is seated on the mercy seat in the real holy of holies.

**We have this confidence because seated at the Father’s right hand is the Son of Man, our High Priest Who knows exactly what it is like to be a human being.**

Entering into the real most Holy place is part of this new way of living that was introduced by Jesus Christ when He was a human being on earth and acted out in the way He died.

**Encouragement** – to take full advantage of what Jesus Christ has done for us. Opening up the way back to God, that the first humans Adam and Eve lost because of their sin of rebellion.

**Sincerity and faith** – how? Because it is our hearts, mind and conscience that have been cleansed by the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Also the whole of our being [not just physical body] is being washed clean by the pure water of the Word of God, the Christian Bible.

**Hope for the future** – as a result of our faith in the many promises Jesus Christ made before His death and now has the authority and power to bring them about.

**Love for other human beings** – that they may also share in these blessings from God and the promises for a better future.

**Hebrews 10:25** [NIV] *“Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.”*

**We share this good news as we meet with other people in our life.**

We do this by our actions as we live this new way of life and by our testimony of words on their request as to why we live the way we do now.

**1 Peter 3:15-16** [NIV] *“But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.”*

**This is not a suggestion but a command from our Saviour through the apostle Peter.**

This command becomes more important than ever as we see events leading up to the return of Jesus Christ, this time to rule and give judgement to all human beings. [Read **Matthew 24:3-14** [NIV] and judge for yourself if it relates to today’s society.]

**Next follows a solemn warning.**

**Hebrews 10:26-27** [NIV] *“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.”*

**Knowledge of the truth makes us doubly accountable.**

When people deliberately reject Jesus Christ’s offer of salvation, they reject God’s most precious gift. They ignore the leading of the Holy Spirit, the One who communicates God’s Will for us, sanctifies us and brings us to maturity.

**This warning applies to anyone who rejects Jesus Christ for another religion or having understood Christ’s atoning work deliberately turns away from it.**

We read of this happening in the churches in Galatia.

**Galatians 1:6-9** [NIV] *“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel, which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!”*

How had these people rejected Jesus Christ?

**Galatians 3:1-5** [NIV] *“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: **Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?** Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Have you suffered so much for nothing, if it really was for nothing? **Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?**”*

**They were trying to earn their salvation by their personal good works.**

In this case seeking to obey the Old Covenant laws of purity to be spiritually pure, under a new covenant.

**Ephesians 2:4-9** [NIV] *“But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions, **it is by grace you have been saved.** And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. **For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith,** and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God, **not by works,** so that no-one can boast.”*

This letter was written as a general letter to all who had put their faith in Jesus Christ [see **Ephesians 1:1**] so the churches in Galatia had heard what it said, yet were still trying to earn forgiveness of sins by good works.

**Some modern-day Christians still act in the same way, and many non-Christians believe they please God by doing good works and “living a good life” whatever they mean by such a phrase.**

The problem is that this is **not** true.

**The only pathway to salvation is through faith in what God has done through Jesus Christ.**

**Hebrews 10:28-29** [NIV] *“Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. **How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?”***

The writer of Hebrews then compares those who rejected the Old Covenant with its limited promises given by Moses to those who reject the New Covenant brought by the very Son of God.

**Those who rejected the Old Covenant died.**

**How much greater are the sins of those who reject the New Covenant.**

Such a rejection was a threefold crime.

1 Trampling the very Son of God under their feet as if He were of no value, this is a crime against love, the very love of God.

2 Treating the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as something common and unholy.

The writer of Hebrews says in effect, *“look at what has been done for you, look at the shed blood and broken body of Jesus Christ, look at what your new relationship to God has cost, can you treat it as if it did not matter?”*

3 Such a rejection is an insult to the Holy Spirit.

**John 16:7-8** [NIV] *“But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, **the Counsellor** will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. **When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment:”***

This is the work of the Holy Spirit, to show us our sins so we can confess them, repent and be cleansed.

To show us where true righteousness is found and received.

To remind us we will all have to stand before Jesus Christ at His return and receive judgement on our lives.

**John 16:13** [NIV] *“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.”*

It is the Holy Spirit who opens up God's Word, the Christian Bible, to show us the truth.

If we reject Jesus Christ's sacrifice we will **not** receive all these blessings from the Holy Spirit at work in our lives.

**Hebrews 10:30-31** [NIV] *"For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."*

This happens because such a person has rejected the only way their sins can be dealt with. Unless they repent there is only one end for such people.

**Hebrews 10:26-27** [NIV] *"If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God."*

They have returned to being enemies of God and will share in the fate of Satan who is an enemy of God.

Only one difference, Satan is a spirit being and scripture indicates that spirit is something that God does **not** destroy.

Humans are made out of physical elements that are found in all of God's creation, with a spirit element that gives us intellect.

**But unless this human spirit is given a body to live in it has no existence.**

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54** [NIV] *"I declare to you, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."*

The "we" in this passage of scripture are Christians, those who have accepted the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

**Ecclesiastes 9:5-6** [NIV] *"For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun."*

This applies to the physical dead, who will in time be resurrected and receive a new physical or spiritual body.

But it also refers to the spiritual dead, those who have **not** passed from spiritual death into spiritual life by accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

**John 5:24** [NIV] *"I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life."*

This is how we pass from spiritual death to life eternal.

**Revelation 20:12-15** [NIV] *"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to*

*what he had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."*

**This lake of fire is the second death of all who have rejected Jesus Christ, having had their chance to accept Him as their Saviour.**

**This is a death for humans without a future resurrection.**

This is the vengeance and wrath of God that the writer of Hebrews is discussing.

This is the dreadful end of all who fall into the hands of an angry Creator God who has given us so much and offered us even more for eternity.

We do well to heed such a warning.