

Hebrews 10:26

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

Analysis

For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, This verse begins one of Scripture's most solemn warning passages (10:26-31). The "if" (hekousios gar hamartanontōn hēmōn, ἐκουσίως γὰρ ἁμαρτανόντων ἡμῶν—literally "for us sinning willfully") introduces a conditional describing deliberate, intentional sin. This is not accidental failure or struggling with ongoing temptation, but conscious, calculated rejection of known truth.

"After that we have received the knowledge of the truth" (meta to labein tēn epignōsin tēs alētheias, μετὰ τὸ λαβεῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας) specifies the gravity—this concerns those who have come to full knowledge (epignōsis, ἐπίγνωσις) of the gospel. Epignōsis denotes complete, accurate knowledge, not mere intellectual awareness but experiential understanding of gospel truth. The warning addresses those within the covenant community who have heard and comprehended the gospel.

"There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin" (ouketi peri hamartiōn apoleipetai thysia, οὐκέτι περὶ ἁμαρτιῶν ἀπολείπεται θυσία) presents the terrifying reality: if one rejects Christ's sacrifice, no alternative exists. The old covenant sacrifices have been superseded; Christ's sacrifice is final. To reject it leaves no other means of atonement.

Reformed theology understands this as describing apostasy, not the stumbling of genuine believers. True believers may fall into serious sin but will be brought to repentance (1 John 1:8-9). This passage warns against the unpardonable sin of permanent, willful rejection of Christ after full knowledge.

Historical Context

The original readers faced intense pressure to renounce Christianity and return to Judaism to escape persecution. Some were contemplating rejecting Christ and reverting to the old covenant sacrificial system. This passage warns that such apostasy is irreversible and fatal. If they reject Christ's sacrifice and return to animal sacrifices, they will find no atonement—the old system has been superseded and cannot save.

Throughout church history, this passage has confronted those contemplating apostasy. The Reformed position distinguishes between apostasy (permanent rejection proving false profession) and backsliding (temporary falling of true believers who are restored).

This text refutes presumption—the idea that one can treat grace casually, sin deliberately, and expect forgiveness without repentance.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does this warning shape your understanding of the seriousness of rejecting Christ or treating His sacrifice casually?
2. What is the difference between struggling with ongoing sin (which all believers experience) and willful, deliberate rejection of Christ?

3. How can you help fellow believers who are wavering in faith without inducing paralyzing fear or false security?

Interlinear Text

Ἐκουσίως	γὰρ	ἁμαρτανόντων	ἡμῶν	μετὰ	τὸ	
wilfully G1596	For G1063	sin G264	if we G2257	after G3326	G3588	
λαβεῖν	τὴν	ἐπίγνωσιν	τῆς	ἀληθείας	οὐκέτι	περὶ
that we have received G2983	G3588	the knowledge G1922	G3588	of the truth G225	no more G3765	for G4012
ἁμαρτιῶν	ἀπολείπεται	θυσία				
sins G266	there remaineth G620	sacrifice G2378				

Additional Cross-References

John 9:41 (Sin): Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.

Luke 12:47 (Parallel theme): And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

James 4:17 (Sin): Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

1 John 5:16 (Sin): If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

1 Timothy 1:13 (Parallel theme): Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief.

John 13:17 (Parallel theme): If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

2 Thessalonians 2:10 (Truth): And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

Deuteronomy 17:12 (Parallel theme): And the man that will do presumptuously, and will not hearken unto the priest that standeth to minister there before the LORD thy God, or unto the judge, even that man shall die: and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel.

Leviticus 4:2 (Sin): Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, If a soul shall sin through ignorance against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which ought not to be done, and shall do against any of them:

Leviticus 4:13 (Sin): And if the whole congregation of Israel sin through ignorance, and the thing be hid from the eyes of the assembly, and they have done somewhat against any of the commandments of the LORD concerning things which should not be done, and are guilty;

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