

Hebrews 10:29

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

Analysis

Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? This rhetorical question amplifies the argument from verse 28. If violating Moses' law brought death, rejecting Christ brings "how much sorer punishment" (posō dokeite cheirosos axiōthēsetai timōrias, πόσω δοκεῖτε χείρονος ἀξιωθήσεται τιμωρίας). Greater privilege brings greater responsibility; greater sin merits greater punishment.

The apostate is described with three devastating phrases. First, he has "trodden under foot the Son of God" (ton hyion tou Theou katapatēsas, τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ καταπατήσας). This is not mere neglect but active desecration, treating the Son of God as worthless refuse to be trampled in the dirt.

Second, he has "counted the blood of the covenant...an unholy thing" (to haima tēs diathēkēs koinon hēgēsamenos, τὸ αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης κοινὸν ἡγησάμενος). To regard Christ's blood as common or profane is to deny its saving efficacy, to treat the most precious sacrifice in history as worthless. The phrase "wherewith he was sanctified" indicates these are people who had been set apart, externally identified

with the covenant community, yet rejected the very blood that sanctified them.

Third, he has "done despite unto the Spirit of grace" (to Pneuma tēs charitos enybrisas, τὸ Πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος ἐνυβρίσας). To insult the Holy Spirit is to reject His gracious work, to spit in the face of divine mercy. This describes the sin against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32).

Historical Context

This verse provides one of Scripture's clearest descriptions of apostasy. The early church fathers recognized three classes: genuine believers, those who professed but weren't truly converted, and outright unbelievers. This passage describes the second category—those who had external connection to the Christian community, professed faith, yet never possessed genuine saving faith.

The reference to being "sanctified" sparked debate. Reformed theology understands "sanctified" here as set apart externally for covenant community, not necessarily regenerated. Just as all Israel was "sanctified" at Sinai, yet many perished in unbelief, so some in the new covenant community are externally sanctified yet never genuinely converted. Judas exemplifies this (John 6:70-71, 13:10-11).

The Reformation debates over perseverance of the saints engaged this text. Arminians argued it proves Christians can lose salvation. Calvinists responded that true believers persevere because God preserves them, and those who apostatize demonstrate their profession was never genuine faith.

Related Passages

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does this description help you distinguish between backsliding believers (who will be restored) and apostates (who never truly believed)?
2. What does it mean to treat Christ's blood as common, and how might subtle forms of this occur even in Christian contexts?
3. How should this warning inform how we present the gospel—avoiding both presumption and works-righteousness?

Interlinear Text

πόσω	δοκεῖτε	χείρονος	ἀξιωθήσεται	τιμωρίας
Of how much	suppose ye	sorer	shall he be thought worthy	punishment
G4214	G1380	G5501	G515	G5098
τῆς τῆς υἱὸν τῆς θεοῦ καταπατήσας καὶ τῆς				
who who the Son who of God hath trodden under foot and who				
G3588 G3588 G5207 G3588 G2316			G2662	G2532 G3588
αἷμα τῆς διαθήκης κοινὸν ἡγησάμενος ἐν				
the blood who of the covenant an unholy thing hath counted				
G129 G3588 G1242 G2839 G2233				G1722
ὧν ἡγιάσθη καὶ τῆς πνεῦμα τῆς χάριτος				
wherewith he was sanctified and who unto the Spirit who of grace				
G3739 G37 G2532 G3588 G4151 G3588 G5485				
ἐνυβρίσας				
hath done despite				
G1796				

Additional Cross-References

Hebrews 6:6 (References God): If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

Ephesians 4:30 (Holy): And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Isaiah 63:10 (Holy): But they rebelled, and vexed his holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them.

Hebrews 2:3 (Parallel theme): How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

1 Corinthians 11:27 (Blood): Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

Luke 12:10 (Holy): And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.

Acts 7:51 (Holy): Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

1 Corinthians 11:29 (Parallel theme): For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Hebrews 12:25 (Parallel theme): See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

Hebrews 9:13 (Blood): For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: