



## Move Forward or Fall Away

Lesson Thirty-Seven • Hebrews 10:26-31

To Keep Moving Forward to God's Final Rest and Our Future Salvation...

Let Us **DRAW NEAR** Without **FEAR**  
by **FAITH!**

Hebrews 10:19-22 / Ch 11

Let Us **HOLD FAST** to the **LAST**  
with **HOPE!**

Hebrews 10:23 / Ch 12

Let Us **STIR UP** to **KEEP UP**  
in **LOVE!**

Hebrews 10:24-25 / Ch 13

➤ Where are we in the context of Chapter 10:19-31?

➤ What's the *purpose* of 10:26-31? One of five **WARNING** passages in the Book of Hebrews!

See **Overview of the Five Gospel Warnings in the Book of Hebrews** Handout.

The FIVE WARNINGS ARE...	WHO IS BEING ADDRESSED?	WHAT IS the SIN WARNED AGAINST?	WHAT IS the JUDGMENT ADMINISTERED?
<b>MEANS of SALVATION</b> <i>I'm Saved to Persevere! Look Upward for Assurance and Forward to Persevere!</i>	<b>True Believers with Persevering Faith</b> <i>Mixed Audience Is Recognized, but Warnings Are to Motivate True Christians!</i>	<b>Apostasy</b> <i>Falling Away from the Salvation the Author Believes They Actually Possess, Which Provides the Divine Preservation and Enables the Diligent Perseverance Required to Finish the Race to Final Salvation!</i>	<b>Prove to Be Believers Who Profess and Possess</b> <i>Eternal Life Rather Than the Eternal Judgment in the Warnings!</i>

**What's the Big Idea? Keep Moving Forward or Fall Away into Fiery Judgment!**

Anyone who **FALLS AWAY** from the faith will certainly **FALL INTO** the fiery judgment of the living God!

The person who **falls away** from Jesus as their great High Priest (10:19-21), **forsaking** His assembled people (10:22-25), will certainly **fall into** the hands of the living God, who is a consuming fire with terrifying judgment for His enemies (10:26-31).

**Warning: Keep Moving Forward or Fall Away into Fiery Judgment!**

### 1. The Willful Sin of Falling Away **RESULTS** in the Fearful Judgment of God's Fiery Wrath. (vv. 26-27)

➤ The warning is for **TRUE** believers not to commit this willful sin of falling away.

**What is the sin?**

- Generally: The rebellion of **APOSTASY** as in all the other warnings.
- Specifically: The refusal to **PERSEVERE** as exhorted in vv. 19-25.

**How is this sin committed?**

- PERSISTENTLY**. "go on sinning," "keep on sinning," "persist in"
- DELIBERATELY**. "willfully," "persist in"

**Who is being warned about committing this sin?**

True believers **INCLUDING** the pastor-teacher himself!

"we," vv. 19-21; "let us," vv. 22-25; "we who know Him," v. 30)

### Wake-Up Warning for True Believers Including the Pastor-Teacher:

Don't commit this willful, persistent sin of apostasy by **REFUSING** to obey the calls to "let us" draw near, hold fast, and stir up in order to persevere to the Day that is drawing near!

- The warning is about the **FEARFUL** judgment by God's fiery wrath. (vv. 26a-27)
- 1. **SALVATION** is definitely being rejected. *"there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins"; cf. 10:18.*
- 2. **JUDGMENT** will certainly be received. *"but a terrifying expectation of judgment..."*
  - The **frightening certainty** of judgment. *"but a terrifying certainty...of judgment"*
  - The **fiery consumption** of judgement. *"and the fury of fire which will consume"*
  - The **future condemnation** of judgment. *"the adversaries [of God]." Isaiah 26:11*

### The Five Warning Passages Warn of Divine Judgment...

where there is **"no escape"** (2:2; 12:25) from **God's wrath** (3:10, 17) for **falling short of His eternal rest** (3:11, 18–19; 4:1, 6, 11). **A condition where there no sacrifice remains or possibility of repentance for someone** (6:4-6; 10:26; 12:16-17) but only **a fearful expectation of fierce, frightening, fiery judgment** (10:27; 12:29), **a death that utterly destroys without mercy** (10:28, 39), and the **terror of failing into the hands of the living God who is a consuming fire** (10:27, 30–31; 12:29),

Therefore, we must conclude that **eternal damnation** (6:2) is the consequence for those who ignore God's warnings and refuse His exhortations to persevere.

### Wake-Up Warning for True Believers Including the Pastor-Teacher:

Don't commit this sin of apostasy and suffer **ETERNAL**, conscious torment in the Lake of Fire.

## 2. The Fearful Judgment Will Be **GREATER** Under the New Covenant. (vv. 28-29)

**The Book of Hebrews:** *Continuity with Discontinuity and the Superiority of Fulfillment with Escalation!*

### The Judgment for Apostasy Under the Old Covenant

- **PHYSICAL DEATH** without mercy on the testimony two or three witness. (v. 28; Deuteronomy 29:14-21; Hebrews 12:15-17)

### The Judgment for Apostasy Under the New Covenant

- **SPIRITUAL DEATH** without mercy on the testimony of the Triune God. (v. 29)  
*"How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve...?"*

### The Apostasy and the Witnesses Are Three Times Greater

1. **TRAMPLING** underfoot God the Son with contempt.
2. **TREATING** the blood of God the Father's New Covenant as common. (cf. 2:11; 9:13; 10:10, 14, 29; 12:14; 13:12)
3. **TAUNTING** God the Spirit who is the Gift of grace and the Giver of grace to apply the covenant.

## 3. The Fearful **FACT** of Falling Away into the Hands of the Living God for Judgment. (vv. 30-31)

*"For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 10:30-31; Deuteronomy 32:35-36*

### Don't Forget This Fearful Fact: Keep Moving Forward to Our Final Salvation or Fall Away into Fiery Judgment!

Anyone who *willfully falls away* from the faith will *certainly fall into* the *fiery judgment* of the living God!

# Overview of the Five Gospel Warnings in the Book of Hebrews

## 1. The POTENTIAL Views Are MOSTLY INCOMPATIBLE.

BASIC VIEW	WHO IS BEING ADDRESSED?	WHAT IS the SIN WARNED AGAINST?	WHAT IS the JUDGMENT ADMINISTERED?
<b>LOSS of SALVATION</b> <i>I can lose it, so am I losing it?</i>	True Believers	<b>Apostasy</b> <i>Falling Away from the Salvation They Once Possessed!</i>	<b>Loss of the Salvation They Once Possessed</b> <i>Eternal Judgment</i>
<b>LOSS of REWARDS</b> <i>I had faith in the past, so I'm good no matter what I believe or how I live!</i>	True Believers	<b>Immaturity Even Unto "Apostasy"</b> <i>Falling Away from Fruitfulness &amp; Even the Faith Yet Still Saved</i> <i>Allows for...</i> <i>Followers Who Don't Follow and Forsake the Faith, Believers Who Don't Believe and Blaspheme the Lord, Disciples Who Defy Their Master and Deny the Gospel ...Yet Are Still Saved</i>	<b>Loss of Temporal Blessings</b> <i>They Could Have Enjoyed</i> <b>Loss of Eternal Rewards</b> <i>They Could Have Earned</i> <b>Suffer Parental Discipline</b> <i>in This Life and/or Millennial Kingdom</i>
<b>TEST of GENUINENESS</b> <i>Am I really saved? Look backward or inward for assurance!</i>	<b>False Believers with Temporary Faith</b> <i>Mixed Audience Is Emphasized, so Warnings Address "Almost" Christians</i>	<b>Apostasy</b> <i>Falling Away from the Salvation They Professed but Never Actually Possessed as Proven by Their Falling Away</i>	<b>Prove to Be Unbelievers Who Only Professed</b> <i>Eternal Judgment</i>
<b>MEANS of SALVATION</b> <i>I'm saved to persevere! Look upward for assurance and forward to persevere!</i>	<b>True Believers with Persevering Faith</b> <i>Mixed Audience Is Recognized, but Warnings Motivate True Christians</i>	<b>Apostasy</b> <i>Falling Away from the Salvation the Author Believes They Actually Possess, Which Provides the Divine Preservation and Enables the Diligent Perseverance Required to Finish the Race to Final Salvation</i>	<b>Prove to Be Believers Who Profess and Possess</b> <i>Eternal Life Rather Than the Eternal Judgment in the Warnings</i>

I believe the **"Means of Salvation"** view is the most consistent with the Book of Hebrews and the rest of the Bible.

## 2. The PARALLELISM Is INTERESTING. (These are abbreviated to show a chiastic structure and understand them as a whole.)

### WARNING #1 | 2:2-3

*"For this reason we must **pay much closer attention** to what **we heard**, so we don't **drift away** from it. For how will we escape if we **neglect** so great salvation? After it was first spoken...**how will we escape if we neglect** so great a salvation"*

### WARNING #2 | 3:7-8, 12

*"Today if you hear His voice, **do not harden your hearts**...Take care, brethren, that there not be **in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart that falls away** from the living God."*

### WARNING #3 | 6:4-6

*"Concerning [Melchizedek] we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since **you have become dull of hearing**. For though **by this time you ought to be teachers**, you have need for someone to teach you...milk not solid food...For in the case of **those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have made been made partakers of the Holy Spirit**, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and **[if they fall] away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance...**"*

### WARNING #4 | 10:26-29, 31

*"For if **we go on sinning willfully** after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a **terrifying expectation of judgment** and the **fury of fire which will consume** he adversaries...Anyone who sets aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy...How much more severe punishment do you think he will deserve who **trampled underfoot the Son of God**...It is a **terrifying thing fall into the hands of the living God**."*

### WARNING #5 | 12:25, 28-29

*"See to it that **you do not refuse** [the God with the Unshakeable Kingdom] who is **speaking**. For if those [OT Rebels] did not escape when they refused [God] who warned them on earth, **much less will we escape who turn away from** [God] who warns from heaven...let us show gratitude, by which we offer to God an acceptable service [as believer-priests] with reverence and awe; for **our God is a consuming fire**."*

## 3. The PROGRESSION INCREASES.

The Five Warning Passages and the Progression of a "Slow Fade" into Apostasy				
<b>① NEGLECTING</b> <i>Danger of DRIFTING</i> 2:1-4	<b>② HARDENING</b> <i>Danger of DISTRUSTING</i> 3:7-19 / 4:1-13	<b>③ STAGNATING</b> <i>Danger of DELAYING</i> 5:11-6:12 / 6:13-20	<b>④ FORSAKING</b> <i>Danger of DEPARTING</i> 10:26-31 / 39	<b>⑤ REFUSING</b> <i>Danger of DEFYING</i> 12:14-24 / 12:25-29
<b>APOSTATIZING: The Danger of Denying Faith in the Triune God</b>				

*Apostasy is a slow fade that is fueled by a variety of obstacles (temptations, trials, testings) in the race to the finish line!*

4. The PUNISHMENT INTENSIFIES.

- Warning #1 A **just penalty** that is inescapable like in the Old Testament only greater. (2:2-3)
- Warning #2 **Not entering** God’s rest like those who died in the wilderness. (3:12; 4:1-3, 11)
- Warning #3 Cursed with **being burned** without the possibility of repentance. (6:4-8)
- Warning #4 The judgment is **more fierce, forceful, frightening, and fiery** than under the Old Covenant (10:26-31)
- Warning #5 Compared to Esau who **never repents** and **faces God who is a consuming fire**. (12:17, 25, 28-29)

5. The PATTERN Is INSTRUCTIVE.

Each Warning Passage Follows a Pattern of Pastoral Exhortation for True Believers and Potential Apostates				
<b>1 DESCRIPTION</b> of Those Who Fall Away  <i>True Apostates Though the Warnings Are Addressed to True Believers</i>	<b>2 NATURE</b> of This Falling Away  <i>Apostasy as Falling Away from the triune God</i>	<b>3 CONSEQUENCES</b> of This Falling Away  <i>God’s Fiery Judgment on the Apostates and Their Apostasy</i>	<b>4 EXHORTATIONS</b> to Persevering Faith  <i>The Response of Persevering Faith in Christ’s Supremacy and Refusal to Apostatize</i>	<b>5 REASSURANCE</b> of Their Persevering Faith and God’s Faithfulness  <i>True Believers Will Respond with Persevering Faith in God’s Faithful Preservation in Christ</i>

6. The PURPOSE Is INSPIRED: *Sovereign Means for Sovereign Ends!*

- Warnings are one of God’s **sovereign means** to ensure true believers will persevere to the end!  
  
“It is evident from [Hebrews] 6:4-6 that the writer addresses Christians, that he warns believers about what will happen if they fall away. His purpose in the warning isn’t to pause and to say, ‘Some of those I am addressing are not truly believers.’ Believers are addressed in the admonitions...the warnings were a means used to preserve them in the faith until the end. Another way to put it is this: the author doesn’t attend to a question that often holds our attention. He doesn’t consider whether some of those addressed aren’t truly believers, for to do so would be to distract him from his main purpose and would blunt the force of the warning.” – Tom Schreiner
- There’s **no middle ground** for spiritual sluggards and those who willfully refuse to move forward by drawing near without fear by faith, holding fast to the last in hope, and stirring up to keep up in love with one another as the Day of our final rest and future salvation draws near!

Who Has **ALREADY** Fallen Away Among These Believers?

No one yet...but some have *already* made it a habit of forsaking assembling together as a local church! (10:24-25)

Who **WON’T FALL AWAY** but Are **WARNED** to Not Fall Away Among These Believers?

The elect whom God securely keeps by grace through persevering faith in heeding the warnings to stay fixated on Christ’s greater glory, hold fast to their confession of the Son as their High Priest, and who move forward together with confidence to enter God’s final rest.

Who **MIGHT VISIBLY FALL AWAY** Among These Believers?

Those who profess Christ but have not united by faith in the gospel with those who are persevering to the end.

7. The PRACTICE Is INDISPENSABLE: *Stay Fixated on These Five Gospel Warnings!*

*They are God’s gospel-centered means for finishing faithful as true believers and not falling away from Christ!*

- God wants us to take these warnings seriously as a means of grace for preserving as believer priests.
- God wants us to stay fixated on the exalted Christ and the gospel by looking upward with confidence instead of inward with doubts.
- God wants us to be secure in our salvation and sure of our salvation by showing the “*better things...that accompany salvation*” and “*not throwing away our confidence which has great reward*” nor “*shrinking back to destruction, but being those who have faith to the preserving of the soul*” (6:9; 10:35, 39).

5 Messages on the Meaning of the 5 Warning Passages

Gospel Warnings Part 1    Gospel Warnings Part 2    Gospel Warnings Part 3    Gospel Warnings Part 4    Gospel Warnings Part 5



**Stay Fixated on, Hold Fast to, and Move Forward with These Gospel Warnings as True Believers!**