

The Flip Side of Grace

Hebrews 10:26-27

Notes in our Bibles are not inspired; neither are chapter or verse divisions; nor are our interpretations. However, all these things are helpful. In the NASB pew Bible there is a heading above the text that is about as inspired of a heading that I have ever seen: **'Christ or judgment'** Either/or and not both/and. God unconditionally loves only those who are in Christ. We now begin to examine the flip side of grace.

I. God makes a distinction between willful defiance and struggling compliance.

"For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth ..." (v. 26). Some believers have carried all kinds of fear and guilt because of a misunderstanding of this verse. There are three key words which should clarify the intent of the writer of Hebrews in regards to future judgment.

A. Sinning willfully – which means *"a resolute and persistent disposition to defy God."* Now there was always an understanding in the Hebrew mind that God made a distinction between sins.

"But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is a Hebrew or a foreigner, that one is blaspheming the Lord, and that person shall be cut off from His people" (Numbers 15:30).

B. After receiving the knowledge of the truth – notice the definite articles "the" before the nouns.

Jesus said, "I am THE way, THE truth" The early Christians were all Hebrews. They received THE Truth about Jesus. He was the Son of God who came to take away the sins of His people.

However, some began to turn away from the truth out of fear of persecution and suffering. And, what is more, they continued to persistently deny Christ is the Messiah, the Savior of the world.

This willful sin of denying Jesus Christ is called *"blasphemy of the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 12:31-32).

C. There remains no more sacrifice for sins – no matter how religious one may be, no forgiveness.

II. Those who sin willfully cover their terrifying fear with some tantalizing fun.

I remember watching a television show where college kids were getting wasted. Drinking themselves sick, they awoke the next day to the horror of all they had done the night before. I asked the question, "Why do people do this?" The answer: Because they want to have some fun!

"There no longer remains a sacrifice ... (but there does remain) a terrifying expectation of judgment."

III. The one who rejects Christ will meet God as an all-consuming fire, not an un-assuming friend.

The judgment of God is a subject not widely discussed by many. We want our God soft and cuddly.

The cross is brutal and bloody. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry" (Psalm 2:12) is God's call to all sinners.

Some call God "My big buddy in the sky!" or "The Big Dog" or "The Man Upstairs" as if He is a friend.

*"It is only just for God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted and to us as well when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those **who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus**. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, when He comes"* (II Thessalonians 1:6-10).

A. Obedience of the gospel is faith in Christ. The obedience of the faith is used in Romans 1:5; 16:26 and refers specifically to the obedience of believing the good news about Jesus Christ.

Deliverance comes to all those who believe.

B. Willful denial of the truth is a serious matter. Always know, however, that there is a terrifying fear in your loved one who has turned away from the knowledge of the truth. Pray for him/her.

C. The good news of Christ is life itself, so don't ever be ashamed of Him. In this multi-cultural and pluralistic society, be bold! Be bold in your proclamation of Christ and be bold in your faith!