

# CHURCH OF THE REDEEMER

717 North Stapley Drive, Mesa, AZ 85203 Phone: (480) 833-7500

Website: [www.churchredeemeraz.org](http://www.churchredeemeraz.org)

Series: **STUDIES IN HEBREWS**

Pastor/Teacher

Number: 4

Text: **Heb. 10:19-25**

Gary L. W. Johnson

Date: **February 5, 2012 a.m.**

## THE ADMONITION TO PERSEVERE (PART I)

This section of the epistle (10:19-39) constitutes the fourth warning. Note the prominent place the epistle places on the little word *IF* through these five warnings (2:3; 3:14; 6:3; 10:26; 12:25) Spurgeon had this to say about the way to understand the *IF* in these texts. "If God has put it in, he has put it in for wise reasons and for excellent purposes. Let me show you why. First, O Christian, it is put in to keep thee from falling away. God preserves his children from falling away; but he keeps them by the use of means...There is a deep precipice: What is the best way to keep anyone from going down there? Why, to tell him that if he did, he would inevitably be dashed to pieces. In some old castle there is a deep cellar where there is a vast amount of fixed air and gas, which would kill anybody who went down. What does the guide say? "If you go down, you will never come up alive." Who thinks of going down? The very fact of the guide telling us what the consequences would be keeps us from it. Our friend puts away from us a cup of arsenic; he does not want us to drink it, but he says, "If you drink it, it will kill you." Does he suppose for a moment that we should drink it? No; he tells us the consequences and he is sure we will not do it. So God says, "My child, if you fall over this precipice, you will be dashed to pieces." What does the child do? He says, "Father, keep me; hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." It leads the believer to greater dependence on God, to a holy fear and caution, because he knows that if he were to fall away, he could not be renewed, and he stands far away from that great gulf, because he knows that if he were to fall into it, there would be no salvation for him."<sup>1</sup> The *Therefore* in 10:19 points back to the previous section that serves to summarize the doctrinal portion of the epistle which runs from 1:1 through to 10:18. There are, as Phillips has pointed out, two things we have, the writer says, because of Christ's person and work. The first of these possessions has to do with access to God through Jesus Christ: "Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh" (vv. 19-20). The key concept here is "confidence to enter by the blood of Jesus." This confidence is something believers have and must know that they have in order to lead productive, godly lives. People who trust in Jesus Christ stand before an open door, with free and open access to God, and with their sins atoned for by his blood. It is by his blood that we come, or as verse 20 puts it, by his body, which refers to the whole of his earthly achievement in life and in death on the cross. Surely that access to God makes a most important impact on how we should think and live. Francis Schaeffer writes, "The central message of biblical Christianity is the possibility of men and women approaching God through the work of Christ."<sup>2</sup> This is our possession, and it is, verse 20 tells us, something new. It is a new way Jesus has opened. We possess what the Old

Testament saints did not; namely, the right to enter through the holy place and into the presence of God. Jesus has opened it by his life and by his death, so that we have free access to God through him. Furthermore, it is a living way because Jesus lives forever to secure this access. He is, in this sense, the veil through which we are invited to pass in order to draw near to God by his life and death. Christ's work as priest and as sacrifice has produced a new situation that did not exist before, but it will exist forever as he reigns eternally in heaven. Our second great possession is directly linked to the first: "We have a great priest over the house of God" (Heb. 10:21). We have two things: Confidence to enter and a great high priest. The point is that the one who opened and secured the way for us into God's presence is there himself. He is there as our priest, representing us and pleading effectually for our acceptance, securing and sending to us the Holy Spirit so that we are fitted and empowered to be worshipers and priests before his throne. Because our high priest is there, we can know that we belong there, too, and can thus approach with confidence.<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur points out that three statements beginning with "*Let us,*" one having to do with faith, one having to do with hope and one having to do with love. And they really kind of separate into three features the experience of salvation. Salvation is drawing near, holding fast and loving each other. That's the fullness of salvation.<sup>4</sup>

### **I. LET US DRAW NEAR** How?

A. With True Heart (Isa. 38:3)

Comp. with Heb. 8:2

B. In Full Assurance of Faith

Col. 2:2; 4:12; Rom 4:21 & I Thess. 1:5

C. Hearts Sprinkled – Ex 24:8; 29:21; 40:29-32

Bodies washed- Eph. 5:26 and Ezk. 36:25 (The passage speaks of the blessings of The New Cov.) Titus 3:5f – regeneration

### **II. LET US HOLD FAST THE PROFESSION**

The KJV reads *Faith* but most recent translations like the ESV have *Hope* The Greek word is *ELPIDOS* which means hope is, as Calvin observed "The child of faith."<sup>5</sup> Notice how this is to be done *without wavering*. The word *AKLINE* is used only here in the New Testament. It literally means to stay the course. "In the preceding passage he introduces the concepts of baptism and remission of sin. Now, he speaks of confession of hope as a natural consequence of baptism. We assume that in the early church a basic confession existed either in the form of "Jesus is Lord" (I Cor. 12:3) or as a trustworthy saying (I Tim 3:16; II Tim. 2:11-13). Whether the writer of Hebrews has a particular confession in mind is not certain, but he makes it clear that his readers hold to a confession (3:1; 4:14; 10:23; 13:15). The content of this confession is the expectation that Christ will fulfill all the promises he has made and that all those who profess the name of Christ possess these promises. The author states that we profess hope, a virtue he has emphasized throughout his epistle (3:6; 6:11, 19; 7:19; 10:23). Hope relies on faith and looks to the future"<sup>6</sup>

### **III. LET US NOT FORSAKE THE CHURCH**

The expression *ME EKGATALEIPONTES* literally means "not leaving behind or in a lurch (cf. II Tim 4:10)<sup>7</sup> Why is this so important? It is immediately connective with holding fast the profession. How so? Listen to Robert Traill "The outward attending on the means of grace is a profession of faith. Whoever they be that give but their bodily presence unto prayer and preaching of the word of God, and other institutions of Christ's appointment, they profess their faith of the gospel"<sup>8</sup> Hughes underscores this as well. "The implication is that there are signs of a weakening of the bonds of Christian fellowship, resulting from a deficiency of that love which should unite them in Christ, and resulting in a falling off of those compassionate deeds by which Christian love expresses itself. Unconcern for the well-being of the body, of which they are members, is symptomatic of self-concern and egocentricity. Selfishness and divisiveness go hand in hand; for self-love breeds the

spirit of isolationism. He who does not love his fellow Christians fervently from the heart (1Pet. 1:22) feels no compelling need to associate himself with them. Indeed, the genuineness of the Christian profession of a man in this state must be seriously suspect, for those who are one in Christ cannot help loving one another. The logic of the love of the brethren derives from God, who is love and whose love has been freely manifested in the sending of his Son to be the propitiation for our sins: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 Jn. 4:7-12)."<sup>9</sup>

**CONCLUSION:** William Gouge, one of the great puritan pastors and a member of the Westminster assembly had written these words of wisdom on God's appointed means of preventing apostasy. "

1. Be well informed in a right assembling together, that thou mayest be able to know the true church, and to justify the same. Otherwise, many doubts may be put into thine head, and every seducer draw thee aside, Eph. iv. 14.
2. Take an invincible resolution to abide in that assembling which thou knowest to be the true church of Christ, 2 Tim. i. 8. Thou shalt be exposed to many trials. If therefore fear or shame possess thy soul, thou wilt hardly hold out.
3. Maintain a holy jealousy over thyself. 'Be not high minded,' Rom xi 20. Self-conceit oft moves God to leave men to themselves, Mat. xxvi. 35. There were two ministers of the gospel that came up to London in the beginning of Queen Mary's days; namely, Dr. Pembleton and Mr. Sanders. This latter manifested a great jealousy concerning his own weakness, and desired the other to pray for him, that his faith might be strengthened against all persecution. The other, being a fat man, too confidently replied, Thou shalt see this flesh fry in the fire, before I yield to them. Yet when the time trial came, Sanders, as a faithful soldier of Christ, yielded his body to be burned; but Pembleton so revolted, as he preached in the justification of popery at Paul's cross.
4. Set thine heart on the communion of saints. Men hardly forsake what they love. Will loving parents forget their children? Or husbands their wives? Or entire friends their friends?
5. Frequent the congregation of saints; it will be a means to settle thine heart thereon. Divine ordinances have an efficacious virtue in them.
6. Take heed of seducers, Mat. vii. 15
7. Nourish not itching ears, 2 Tim. iv. 3
8. Let not the reins loose to thy lusts. Faith and good conscience are like to suffer wreck together, 1 Tim. i. 19.
9. Retain a good opinion of saints; do not hate them, as Ahab hated Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 8.
10. Pray that God by his good Spirit would ever abide in thee, to hold thee steady to the church."<sup>10</sup>

### Endnotes

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Charles Spurgeon's sermon on Heb 6:4-6 ("Final Perseverance," In *The New Park Street Pulpit*, posted on The Spurgeon Archives [2000] [www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0075.htm](http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/0075.htm)).
  - <sup>2</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Revell, 1976) p. 245
  - <sup>3</sup> Richard Phillips, *Hebrews: Reformed Expository Commentary* (P & R 2006) p. 358
  - <sup>4</sup> <http://www.gty.org/resources/Sermons/1623>
  - <sup>5</sup> As cited by P. Hughes, *Commentary on The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eerdmans, 1974) p. 414.
  - <sup>6</sup> A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures In The New Testament V* (Broadman, 1936) p. 412
  - <sup>7</sup> S.J. Kistemaker, *New Testament Commentary on Hebrews* (Baker, 1985) p. 289
  - <sup>8</sup> *The Works of Robert Traill III* (rpt. Banner of Truth, 1979) p. 10
  - <sup>9</sup> Hughes, op.cit. p. 415
  - <sup>10</sup> Wm. Gouge, *Commentary on Hebrews* (rpt. Kregel, 1980) p. 718