

SECTION TEN

FIFTH WARNING AGAINST APOSTASY

1. TEXTS

a. **Hebrews 10:23 – 10:39.**

b. **Complementary relevant texts**

- (1) **Acts 2:42-47**—“Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts ...”
- (2) **1Peter 4:12-19**—“For it is time for judgment to begin with God’s household ...”

2. TRANSITION FROM PREVIOUS SECTION TO THIS SECTION

a. **Hebrews 6:16-20**—“We have this hope as an anchor for the soul ... It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain.”

- (1) God’s declaration and oath are the basis for the hope we have as followers of Jesus.
- (2) We follow Jesus, our forerunner, who has entered the heavenly “most holy place” on our behalf.

b. **Hebrews 10:21-22**—“... and since we have a great high priest over the house of God let us draw near to God ...”

- (1) We can “draw near to God” only through the great high priest of the household of God (**Hebrews 3:1-6**).
- (2) To go “backward” to the old covenant is to return to an inferior priesthood and an inferior meeting-place.
- (3) To go “forward” to the goal is to be restored to the Edenic relationship with God as His holy people.

3. A DECISION, WITH THE STARKEST POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES (10:23-31)

a. **We must not be diverted from the direction toward which we started, that for which we hope**

- (1) We must be faithful, because the one on whose promise our hope is founded is Himself always faithful.
- (2) Furthermore, our effort is not intended to be a quest which each of us undertakes alone.
- (3) Consider one another, help to uphold and encourage one another, to stir-up (*paroxysmos*) one another to both love (inward) and good deeds (outward).
- (4) Not giving up meeting together (for the purpose of encouraging one another), but (meeting for) exhorting one another, more earnestly as we see the day (the day of God’s judgment against the enemies of His people, the consummation of the eschaton) coming closer.

b. **The alternative—that which we should fear**

- (1) If we continue to sin ...
 - (a) By turning away from the atonement of Jesus, which offers freedom from the guilt of sin, and the sanctification which can be gained by following Him.
 - (b) By failure to go forward, wavering in resolution, turning back to the older, inferior covenant.
- (2) ... it is not possible that there will be a subsequent sacrifice which is as good as or better than the sacrifice which has already been offered, because the sacrifice which has been offered is complete and perfect.
- (3) In the absence of the benefits of that sacrifice, and for those who turn away from the new covenant and return to the old, there is the expectation of the fate which will befall the *enemies* of God.

c. The dichotomy of decision

(1) The position of believers (see **Hebrews 6:4-5**)

- (a) Have been enlightened.
- (b) Have tasted the heavenly gift.
- (c) Have shared in the Holy Spirit.
- (d) Have tasted the goodness of the word of God.
- (e) Have experienced the powers of the coming age.

(2) The position of the apostate

- (a) Has trampled the Son of God underfoot.
- (b) Has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that once sanctified him.
- (c) Has insulted the Spirit of Grace.

a. Yet another contrast of the old covenant and the new, for those now in the new who are wavering

- (1) The one who rejected the Law of Moses—the basis of the old covenant—died without mercy.
- (2) How much worse will it be for the one who, having once embraced the new covenant of grace, now chooses to reject it in order to return to that old covenant.

b. A final urgent warning

- (1) God has promised vengeance for His foes, and the end-time of that vengeance is upon them.
- (2) To be in the hands of the living God, as one of His enemies, is a prospect which is unfathomably horrible.

4. FOR CONTRAST WITH THOSE WARNINGS, A POSITIVE WORD (10:32-39)

a. Encouragement: do not make for nothing what has already been suffered:

- (1) Public insult and persecution.
- (2) Standing beside others who were suffering in that same way, having fellowship in their suffering.
- (3) Being put into prison, or supporting others who were jailed.
- (4) Joyfully accepting the confiscation of material property, placing greater value on eternal possessions.
- (5) “Do not throw away your confidence/cheerful confidence/assurance (*parresia*); it will be richly rewarded.”

b. Reminder of the promise

- (1) Persevere/endure, so as, having persisted in obedience, to reach the goal, to receive the promise.
- (2) **Habakkuk 2:3**
 - (a) “For the revelation waits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false; though it linger, wait for it; it will certainly come and will not delay.”
 - (b) The act of God which will explain the current distress will come to pass at the right time, and it is working toward the divinely appointed goal; it will not be needlessly withheld.
- (3) **Habakkuk 2:4**
 - (a) “See, the enemy is puffed up; his desires are not upright; but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness.”
 - (b) Or: “The one whose desires are evil will falter, fall back, but he who is righteous by his faith will live.”
- (4) We are among the confident ones, who maintain their faith in the new covenant and are saved, not among those who falter and are destroyed with the enemies of God in the judgment which is immediately impending.