

Full Assurance of Faith: Part Two
Remember the Former Days (Hebrews 10:19–11:1)
By Pastor Jeff Alexander (5/7/2017)

Introduction

1. The “*assurance of faith*” is the theme of the rest of Hebrews (v. 22).
 - a. Assurance of faith has to do with *hope* relating to the promise of God (9:28)—Christ’s returning to save the “*many sons*” of 2:10.
 - b. Hebrews 11:1 tells us that “*faith is the assurance [foundation] of things hoped for.*”
 - c. In other words, *how* you live now by faith (10:38) is the *foundation* of what you hope for when Jesus comes.
2. The Hebrew believers were enduring a long stretch of hard providence, and they were growing weary (vv. 24, 25).
 - a. Hard providence is the grace of God to those saints who are easily turned to the world and the flesh.
 - b. The will of God for us is to keep our eyes on Jesus. “*Consider [analogizomai, analyze] him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted*” (Heb. 12:3).
3. Last week, we began to address the last section of Hebrews that runs from Chapter 10 through the end of book.
 - a. This final section deals with faith and the assurance of faith.
 - b. Paul begins with a solemn warning against abandoning God’s will by deliberate sinning (vv. 26–31).

I. Faith and Obedience

1. The warning is addressed to believers tempted to abandon “*assembling,*” a sin that leads to certain judgment (vv. 26, 27).
 - a. Assembling or meeting together (*episunagoge*; from *epi* [with] and *sunagoge* [to assemble]; v. 25) relates to living out Christ’s new commandment (John 13:31–35).
 - b. This *assembling* is defined as *encouraging (parakaleo) by provoking (paroxusmos, “to incite”)* to love and good works.
 - c. This work is what defines the “*church*” (*ekklesia*) Jesus is building to confront “*the gates of hell*” (Matt. 16:18). We are soldiers in the King’s army against hell.
 - d. When we are engaged in this assembling function, we are doing the will of God (v. 36).
 - e. If we deliberately withdraw (*apostasia*; Acts 21:21) from this assembling, we sin against Christ and His body by a rebellion that will be judged (v. 27; Jer. 2:17, 19). We are deserters from the battle.
2. If a sovereign God predestines all things according to His will (Eph. 1:5), then why must Paul warn about the danger of deliberate sinning and apostasy?
 - a. While God orders all things according to His will and purpose, He uses *secondary means* to accomplish His will, including the use of warnings and threats.
 - b. These threats are very real and straightforward: if you sin with a high hand, you will be punished.
 - c. Heeding the warning is the evidence true faith.

d. Observe the following facts:

- 1) True believers are secure by the knowledge that they are kept by the power of God *through faith* (1 Pet. 1:5).
 - 2) However, true believers are cautioned to maintain faith and a good conscience because some have made shipwreck of their faith (1 Tim. 1:19).
 - 3) Obedience to what is commanded is not “works” but faith in action (e.g., Matt. 2:13–15; Rom. 8:13).
3. This warning is in contradistinction to the believer’s “*perfect standing*” (v. 14) or “*confidence*” (v. 19).
- a. *Standing* is one’s legal and prophetic position with respect to God as opposed to his *condition* (“*being sanctified*,” v. 14), which is his real and actual state.
 - b. *Faith* is living in light of one’s standing with the *hope* of realizing this standing in actual experience at Christ’s return.

II. The Need for Endurance

1. In vv. 32–39, the saints are reminded of the time when they first came under gospel grace.
 - a. They were *enlightened*—the supernatural work of the Spirit revealing the true condition of their hearts and the gospel remedy that God provided in Christ (2 Cor. 4:4, 6; Eph. 1:18; 3:9).
 - b. They *endured* the hard struggle with suffering, not flinching or retreating (Matt. 10:22; 2 Tim. 2:10, 12).ying in behavior through deliberately sinning, the purpose of God in giving His Son.
 - c. They *showed compassion* (*sumpatheo*) on their imprisoned brothers (1 Pet. 3:8; Heb. 4:15).
 - d. They joyfully *accepted* the plundering of their property, understanding that they had a better and a permanently abiding hope (Luke 2:25, 38; Jude 21).
 - e. In this, they were doing the will of God.
2. To continue in the will of God, they needed to *endure* by keeping the hope alive, waiting for the promise.
 - a. The Word clearly supports this (Hab. 2:3–6; Isa. 26:20), particularly as found in the statement: “*but my righteous one shall live by faith*” (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11).
 - b. However, again there is a warning: “*If he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.*”
3. “*But*”—the confidence of faith and grace— “*we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls*” (v. 39; 2 Thess. 2:8–12).
 - a. “*Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen*” (Isa. 66:2; 1 Cor. 10:12; 2 Cor. 5:11; Deut. 32:36).
 - b. “*We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance*” (Rom. 5:3).

What This Means for Us

Our English word *tribulation* comes from the Latin *tribulum*, used of the flail that separates the wheat from the chaff.

God is at work in these last days with His flail, His *tribulum*, by which He is separating the true saints from the false.

“*Will not God give justice to his elect, who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long over them? I tell you, he will give justice to them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?*” (Luke 18:7–8; Heb. 12:3)