

# **Christ Is Superior to the Old Covenant**

## **“Ye Have Need of Patience”**

### **Hebrews 10:32-39**

Just as in chapter 6, the serious warning in the previous verses is immediately followed by a word of encouragement – meant to spur the readers on in their faith. While the form of encouragement differs somewhat from that in chapter 6, the underlying principles remain the same. And just as both warnings were directed at the same group of believers, so too is this encouragement. In other words, this is how one avoids becoming the target of God's chastening judgment.

“Patience” is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) as, “The calm, uncomplaining endurance of pain, affliction, inconvenience, etc.; the capacity for such endurance.”

The Greek word used (ὑπομονή) comes from two words that literally translate as “remain under.” As applied to the word “patience,” it means to bear up under the circumstances in which we find ourselves, no matter how heavy or burdensome they may be.

There are many references in Scripture that show us that we will suffer for the cause of Christ - none clearer than 2 Tim. 3:12: “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” The question we need to consider or ourselves is, “What will I do when it comes?” This text will aid us in understanding how to answer that question.

#### **I. PATIENCE IN SUFFERING FOR OUR FAITH - VS. 32-34**

##### **A. They struggled in suffering - “a great fight of afflictions” - vs. 32**

1. "But call to remembrance the former days" - the early days of the Christian life.
2. "In which...ye endured a great fight of afflictions" - upon their acceptance of Jesus as the Messiah and their obedience to them, they were immediately persecuted.

#### Acts 8:1-3

<sup>1</sup> And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles. <sup>2</sup> And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. <sup>3</sup> As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison.

- a) "A great fight" - "great" (πολύς), denotes degree and strengthens or intensifies the idea that follows; "fight" (ἀθλησις), only time in the New Testament, from a word that is used for engaging in a public contest in the games.

#### 2 Timothy 2:5

<sup>5</sup> And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

To be a Christian then, and in many, many places today, it was a very difficult struggle, an outward fight, to maintain one's testimony for Christ.

- b) "Of afflictions" - "the sufferings of a Christian are so called because they are endured for the sake of Christ and in conformity to His suffering" (Zodhiates).
3. "After ye were illuminated" - again, showing

that they were true believers. The word used here is not, as some teach, that they were under the influence of the Gospel but not necessarily changed by it. It shows that they were, in fact, changed from darkness to light, and if that's the case, they could not have lost the light.

Acts 26:18 [Paul's account of his conversion and the mission he was given]

<sup>18</sup> To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

Ephesians 5:8

<sup>8</sup> For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

## **B. They were publicly scorned in their suffering - "ye were made a gazingstock" - vs. 33**

This describes what the suffering looked like for these particular believers.

1. "Ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions"
  - a) "Gazingstock" comes from a word (θεατρίζω) that is transliterated in the English word "theatre." It's the only time it is used in the New Testament and literally means to be an actor on a stage - in this use, to be made a public spectacle, to expose to public scorn. Criminals were sometimes exposed and punished in the theater at the time, and that is probably what was happening to these believers.
  - b) "Both by...and" (τε...καί) - this construction is used to join two closely related ideas, making them two parts of one larger experience.

- c) In this case, "reproaches" (verbal/social shame) and "afflictions" (physical or emotional suffering) are two sides of the same persecution coin. The author of Hebrews is emphasizing how comprehensive the suffering was – not just one kind of hardship, but many, at once.
2. "Ye became companions of them that were so used" - they were not only persecuted for their own conversion to Christianity but also because they became full participants in the suffering of their fellow believers ("companions" - κοινῶν - sharing in the experience of another).

**C. Their goods were spoiled during their suffering - "took joyfully the spoiling of your goods" - vs. 34**

1. The Apostle gives an illustration of what being a "companion of them that were so used" in the previous verse meant in praising these believers for their sacrifice in supporting him when he was in prison (this is another text that may support the author being Paul, although some scholars say the manuscript evidence is weak on this point).
2. "For ye had compassion of me in my bonds" - as these believers struggled outwardly with their sufferings, patiently living their lives in faith, they still showed compassion on others. What a testimony that would have been!
3. "And took joyfully the spoiling of your goods"
  - a) "Took joyfully" - accepted with joy. What an astonishing line. This wasn't just passive endurance, but a joyful acceptance.
  - b) "The spoiling of your goods" - the plundering of

your possessions - the forced seizure of property. It was not uncommon for the early Christians (and for many in other countries today) to be plundered and have all their earthly possessions stolen simply because they were Christians.

4. "Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance" - this is why they could "take joyfully the spoiling of [their] goods" - they knew, without doubt, something far better awaited.

What waited for them, and what waits for us is a "better...substance" - nothing here can compare - "and an enduring substance" - one that will never fade, can never rot or disintegrate, and can never be spoiled (plundered or stolen).

Matthew 6:19-21

<sup>19</sup> Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: <sup>20</sup> But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

## II. PATIENCE IN SERVING IN OUR FAITH - VS. 35-36

### A. Boldness in serving with patience - vs. 35a

"Cast not away therefore your confidence" - the "therefore" points to what was just said about the "better and enduring substance" in heaven. This gives us the "confidence" (boldness, the freedom to speak what needs spoken) to serve in spite of the suffering, and we should never even consider casting our faith aside when things get tough.

## B. Bounty for serving with patience - vs. 35b-36

1. "Which hath great recompence of reward" - the phrase "recompence of reward" is seen as the discharge of wages, being paid for services rendered, so to speak. The "serving" is that of patiently enduring the suffering they were going through, boldly declaring their faith to others, boldly demonstrating their compassion for others as they helped them, and joyfully giving up their possessions because of their faith.
2. "For ye have need of patience" - knowing what they had gone through already and knowing what they would have to endure in the days ahead, the Apostle is pointing out the real need they will have for the grace of patience.

"The grace or principle of patience comes from God; the use and exercise of that grace is of yourselves. Here ye must be workers together with God. Patience and perseverance are nearly the same" (Clarke).

3. "That, after ye have done the will of God" - the condition to the promise of the bounty for serving with patience is staying in and doing the will of God.
  - a) Within this context, and the overall context of the book of Hebrews, "the will of God" has a more specific meaning than the general sense of the phrase we often attribute to it. It means:
    - (1) Remaining faithful to Christ
    - (2) Obediently enduring suffering and persecution

(3) Vs. 39 - not shrinking back (drawing back), but pressing forward in faith

- b) It's less about individual decisions (like, "Should I take this job?") and more about persevering in faithfulness to Christ – continuing to trust and obey Him despite pressure to abandon the faith.

This aligns with how Hebrews frames faith throughout chapter 11: people who did "the will of God" by trusting His promises, even when they didn't receive them in this life.

4. "Ye might receive the promise" – the promise spoken of here is that of eternal life in heaven with the Saviour. Our eternal salvation is not based on our ability to stay "in the will of God," or "enduring to the end," as some teach. The way this is worded is to be seen as after our time here on earth of patiently enduring the trials of our faith is over, we have the bounty of heaven awaiting. The terminology is similar to a couple of other passages that shed light on how this is to be taken.

Acts 1:8

<sup>8</sup> But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Ephesians 1:13-14

<sup>13</sup> In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

### Romans 8:23

<sup>23</sup> And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, *to wit*, the redemption of our body.

## III. PATIENCE IN NOT SHRINKING AWAY FROM OUR FAITH - vs. 37-39

Verses 37-38 are referring to a quote from Habakkuk 2:3-4. Although not a direct quote, it is very clear it is directly related to that prophecy.

### Habakkuk 2:3-4

<sup>3</sup> For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry. <sup>4</sup> Behold, his soul *which* is lifted up is not upright in him: but the just shall live by his faith.

The "it" in Habakkuk 2:3 is changed to "he" in Hebrews 10, showing what is meant in Habakkuk's prophecy.

### A. Because the Lord will return - vs. 37

The time of His coming was established in the plan of salvation that was set in motion when Adam sinned in the Garden - He "will not tarry." There's nothing in heaven nor earth that will change the time of His coming.

1. "For yet a little while" - in biblical language, "a little while" often functions as an end-time signal.
  - a) It creates urgency and expectation.
  - b) It calls believers to endure with hope, even when the timeline is unclear.

We only have "a little while" to endure the

suffering for our faith here, and whether the Rapture takes us home, or we go home by the way of death, our Saviour will return for us.

Luke 18:8

<sup>8</sup> I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

James 5:7-9

<sup>7</sup> Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. <sup>8</sup> Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. <sup>9</sup> Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

2. "He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" - what a promise!

John 14:1-3

<sup>1</sup> Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also.

## B. Because the Lord requires faithfulness - vs. 38

1. The phrase "the just shall by faith" is found four times in the Bible: the original prophecy in Habakkuk 2:4, and then in Romans 1:17, Galatians 3:11, and in our text.

- a) Romans 1:17 states, "For therein [the gospel] is the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

Paul uses this phrase to emphasize justification by faith - how a person becomes "just" or "righteous" before God.

- b) Galatians 3:11 states, "But that a man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, "The just shall live by faith."

Reiterates the same truth as Romans - but now in contrast to legalism. You *can't* mix faith and law as a basis for being made right with God.

- c) In Hebrews 10:38, the emphasis changes from being saved eternally by faith to how we are to continue to live faithfully until the promise of eternal life is fulfilled.

In other words:

Romans and Galatians = how you're made righteous

Hebrews = how the righteous keep living in faith

2. "But if any draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" - this is the Lord speaking about those believers that "draw back," that shrink away from their faith because of the struggles they are enduring because of their faith. The Lord will "have no pleasure" in them, and displeasing the Lord should be motivation enough for us to stay faithful, considering all He has done for us.

### **C. Because the Lord has redeemed us - vs. 39**

1. "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition"

- a) "We" - a pronoun used with intensive force, contrasting the believers, like the author himself, that remain faithful with those who do not.
- b) "Who draw back" - only time this word is used in the Greek New Testament and is one that means to contract or shrink.
- c) "Unto perdition" - unto complete destruction

Although this word is most often used of the eternal destruction of the soul in hell, it is also seen within the context of a believer turning so far away from the Lord that his end is destruction to himself now and a loss of rewards at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

1 Timothy 6:9-11

<sup>9</sup> But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition [in ruin and utterly destroyed].<sup>10</sup> For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.<sup>11</sup> But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

2. "But of them that believe to the saving of the soul" - we are of them that live like the redeemed should, that live by the faith that saved them.

Conclusion: How are we with the grace of patience? Not

the idea of putting up with people that bother us or putting up with a situation we would like to change but bearing up under the weight of the suffering that comes to all believers that live a godly life in this wicked world.

Do we demonstrate patience in suffering for our faith, or do we tend to either draw back from it or avoid it altogether by keeping our faith to ourselves?

Do we demonstrate patience as we serve the Lord in faith, showing the world around us that we care enough to endure whatever happens to us for the sake of the cause of Christ?

Do we demonstrate patience in remaining faithful to the Lord through it all and not shrinking away from our responsibility?

Powerful questions for all of us.