

Sunday February 19<sup>th</sup> 2012  
The Letter to the Hebrews  
Part Thirty Three

1). Heb 10:28 *Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. 32 But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. 36 For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: 37 "For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry. 38 Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him." 39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*

a). In our previous two studies on the Book of Hebrews we have looked in great detail at what the scripture calls to 'sin willfully'; and we have seen this continuous action both through the context in which it appears in Hebrews and through its presentation in the type, the OT picture, given to us in Numbers Chapters 13-15.

b). And what we are now absolutely certain of is that this is a very specific sin that is to do with rejecting God's purpose for the 7<sup>th</sup> Day, the Millennial Kingdom, having come into an understanding of that purpose – and this is done by rejecting, or turning away from the very things God has had to say about it at various times and in various ways through the prophets and in these last days by the Son; a sin for which there is no sacrifice. For every other sin however the blood of our High Priest on the mercy seat in the Heavenly Tabernacle provides the atonement necessary that we may be forgiven –

1Jo 1:7 *But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.*

c). Now having given this fourth part of the progressive warning the writer of Hebrews then draws attention to the dire consequences for continuing to 'sin willfully' –29 *Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?*

d). And then in v30 the writer gives a quotation - 30 *For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The LORD will judge His people."*

And this quotation comes from Deuteronomy Chapter 32 - De 32:35 *Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; Their foot shall slip in due time; For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things to come hasten upon them.'* 36 *"For the LORD will judge His people And have compassion on His servants, When He sees that their power is gone, And there is no one remaining, bond or free.*

e). These words of course are said with regards to the nation of Israel and their fall from their high calling, having rejected the word of the Lord with regards to the land and their inheritance and the conclusion drawn from this verse for either a Jew or a Christian is given in Hebrews 10:31 - 31 *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

A conclusion that is echoed for us elsewhere in scripture - Lu 12:4 *"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. 5 "But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!*

f). 2Co 5:11a *Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; ....*

2). Now that which the Lord has to say in Deuteronomy Chapter 32 concerning Israel, from which the quotation in v30 is taken, is very interesting for us. But let's just back up to the end of Chapter 31 in order to see the context in which we find it De 31:28 *"Gather to me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers, that I may speak these words in their hearing and call heaven and earth to witness against them. 29 "For I know that after my death you will become utterly corrupt, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you; and evil will befall you in the latter days, because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD, to provoke Him to anger through the work of your hands." 30 Then Moses spoke in the hearing of all the assembly of Israel the words of this song until they were ended: 32:1 ¶ "Give ear, O heavens, and I will speak; And hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. 2 Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, As raindrops on the*

*tender herb, And as showers on the grass. 3 For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. 4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He. 5 "They have corrupted themselves; They are not His children, Because of their blemish: A perverse and crooked generation. 6 Do you thus deal with the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is He not your Father, who bought you? Has He not made you and established you? 7 ¶ "Remember the days of old, Consider the years of many generations. Ask your father, and he will show you; Your elders, and they will tell you: 8 When the Most High divided their inheritance to the nations, When He separated the sons of Adam, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the children of Israel. 9 For the LORD'S portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance. 10 "He found him in a desert land And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. 11 As an eagle stirs up its nest, Hovers over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings, 12 So the LORD alone led him, And there was no foreign god with him. 13 "He made him ride in the heights of the earth, That he might eat the produce of the fields; He made him draw honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock; 14 Curds from the cattle, and milk of the flock, With fat of lambs; And rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, With the choicest wheat; And you drank wine, the blood of the grapes. 15 ¶ "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; You grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese! Then he forsook God who made him, And scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation.*

a). And that which is most particularly interesting within the context of today's message we see at the beginning of v7 – 'Remember the days of old...'; which is exactly the admonition given by the writer of Hebrews to his readers as they face the prospect of committing the willful sin – *32 But recall the former days*

b). Israel is admonished to remember 'the days of old', when in the days of Peleg the nations of the earth were divided 'according to the number of the children of Israel', the Lord doing this because 'the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the place of His inheritance', Jacob being 'the apple of His eye' – they are then to remember the uniquely special relationship that the Lord has with the nation and the high calling with which they were brought into being and subsequently called out of Egypt – Ex 19:5 *'Now therefore, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.*

c). And when they remember this they will turn from their wicked ways and be blessed, just as was promised in - 2Ch 7:14 *"if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their*

wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

d). All of this of course still awaits that future day at the conclusion of the Great Tribulation, but will of course take place exactly as we see here in 2 Chronicles.

e). Then just as Israel is admonished to remember the days of old, their high calling, so is the church admonished after a similar fashion in - Re 2:5 *"Remember therefore from where you have fallen [from your heavenly calling]; repent and do the first works,*

f). And again here we see a remembrance of 'the former days', a remembrance of the enormity of our heavenly calling, so as to remember and 'do the first works'.

g). And remembering 'the former days' and doing 'the first works' is exactly where the writer of Hebrews takes us - 32 *But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven.*

h). The former days here take us to the time 'after' the recipients of this letter 'were illuminated' – in other words to a time immediately following their coming into a mature understanding of the gospel of the glory of Christ.

i). The word translated 'illuminated' here is the same Greek word translated 'enlightened' [photizo] that we find in Ephesians Chapter 1. And if we look at that very familiar prayer in Ephesians Chapter 1 it will lay out for us just what these Christians had come into the mature understanding of - Eph 1:17 *that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened [photizo]; that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.*

j). So we see then that because of what they knew that had been revealed to them through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, they 'endured a great struggle with sufferings' as they were themselves persecuted and also had compassion on others who were persecuted in a like manner; they accepted 'joyfully' the plundering of

their goods; and they did this because having been enlightened, having seen with the eyes of faith, they knew they had *a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven*. Not because they could see it, but because they believed it.

k). Their focus then was on the enduring possession ‘in heaven’ that they knew to be theirs by faith, therefore the things of this world were of no consequence to them. This is exactly what we see laid out for us in –  
1Pe 1:3 ¶ *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, 5 who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 ¶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, 8 whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, 9 receiving the end of your faith--the salvation of your souls.*

l). And again what can we conclude from what we see here? Where we look will determine how we live now and where we are going following our appearance at the Judgment Seat.

3). So with this in mind let’s look at 2 OT accounts that will help us to see this so very clearly –

a). Ge 13:10 ¶ *And Lot lifted his eyes and saw all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere (before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah) like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt as you go toward Zoar. 11 Then Lot chose for himself all the plain of Jordan, and Lot journeyed east. And they separated from each other. 12 Abram dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Lot dwelt in the cities of the plain and pitched his tent toward Sodom. 13 But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the LORD.*

b). Da 6:6 ¶ *So these governors and satraps thronged before the king, and said thus to him: "King Darius, live forever! 7 "All the governors of the kingdom, the administrators and satraps, the counselors and advisors, have consulted together to establish a royal statute and to make a firm decree, that whoever petitions any god or man for thirty days, except you, O king, shall be cast into the den of lions. 8 "Now, O king, establish the decree and sign the writing, so that it cannot be changed, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which does not alter." 9 Therefore King Darius signed the written decree. 10 Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room,*

*with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.[former days]*

c). Now Lot was not ignorant of the promises that had been given to his uncle Abram and he could have chosen to participate in the blessings that would ultimately be Abraham's, [the land of Canaan as big enough for both] but when the opportunity came for him to look to God's blessing for the future, he instead looked with his natural eye, and what he saw was pleasing to his sight. The plain of Jordan looked like 'the garden of the Lord' and so Lot 'pitched his tent', he organized his life going in the direction of, having his focus set on, even as far as Sodom itself – 'But the men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord'.

d). Lot made a choice, that to the natural eye would appear to be the logical choice to make as the plain of Jordan was well watered, but this choice caused him to turn away from the promises of God and align himself with the exceedingly wicked men of Sodom, within the province of the ruler of this age – he literally came down off the mountain to live in the plain. He didn't see from where he was falling.

e). He had failed to realize that, that in which he had put his trust was only temporal, was in a condition of chaos and corruption because of sin and was in the process of passing away and was about to be under God's judgment - 1Jo 2:17 *And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.*

f). In the account of Lot, not only do we see the world on which he set his sights destroyed, but we also find him on the same mountain as Abram but hidden in a cave, in a place of darkness and shame - Ge 19:28 *Then he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain; and he saw, and behold, the smoke of the land which went up like the smoke of a furnace. 29 And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when He overthrew the cities in which Lot had dwelt. 30 ¶ Then Lot went up out of Zoar and dwelt in the mountains, and his two daughters were with him; for he was afraid to dwell in Zoar. And he and his two daughters dwelt in a cave.*

g). Daniel on the other hand, had he looked only with the natural eye as Lot did would have had every reason to be fearful, but rather than be intimidated by the actions of the world in which he lived which were deliberately lined up against him, he believed God and trusted only in the eyes of faith.

h). He went to the upper room of his house and opened his windows 'toward Jerusalem', but Jerusalem could not be seen from Babylon, nor did the Jerusalem of the Temple worship of God exist anymore. However, he believed God for the

restoration of the city and the restoration of the Temple and the healing of the land, and it was this faith that drove his actions, not his position or his circumstances.

i). And because of his faith he was kept by the power of God for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time - Da 6:22 *"My God sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they have not hurt me, because I was found innocent before Him; and also, O king, I have done no wrong before you."* 23 *Then the king was exceedingly glad for him, and commanded that they should take Daniel up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no injury whatever was found on him, because he believed in his God. 24 And the king gave the command, and they brought those men who had accused Daniel, and they cast them into the den of lions-them, their children, and their wives; and the lions overpowered them, and broke all their bones in pieces before they ever came to the bottom of the den. 25 ¶ Then King Darius wrote: To all peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you. 26 I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men must tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. For He is the living God, And steadfast forever; His kingdom is the one which shall not be destroyed, And His dominion shall endure to the end. 27 He delivers and rescues, And He works signs and wonders In heaven and on earth, Who has delivered Daniel from the power of the lions. 28 So this Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian.*

j). Now both these men lived in the world just as we do and both functioned in the minutiae of everyday life pictured in Lot pitching his tent and Daniel opening his window just as we do. Daniel was even instrumental in the governance of the greatest and most powerful Gentile nation on the earth at that time, but he had been placed in this position by the providence of God, not his personal ambition. And in both these men we see that where they had their focus was really the only thing that mattered – Lot looked to have his best life now whereas Daniel was prepared to lose everything, even his life if necessary, because he knew that God was to be trusted over and above anything this world could offer or bring against him.

k). Ps 56:11 *In God I have put my trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?*

l). Heb 13:6 *So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"*

4). And it is this very perspective that the recipients of this letter to the Hebrews are admonished to have by ‘recalling the former days’ – in those former days they had faith as Daniel, but clearly, given the content of this letter, they had begun to pitch their tent toward Sodom just as Lot did – it was now time to pull up the tent pegs and head back up the mountain.

a). And this is exactly what we need to do now we have woken up –  
2Co 4:15 *For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God. 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal. 5:1 ¶ For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven, 3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked. 4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life. 5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. 6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight.*

b). Now our scripture in Hebrews Chapter 10 admonishes us to continually recall the former days. This is not then just to bring this to mind and then let it go, but rather to continue to remember, not ever letting go of that memory.

c). So why do we need to continually remember those former days of persecution and faith? Well I would suggest that it is because of what the scriptures have to say about them, just as we saw in 2 Corinthians 4:17 so as to give perspective to our persecutions and trials in the present.

d). *17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,*

e). *Lu 6:22 Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake.*

*23 Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

f). *Mt 5:11 "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. 12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

g). *1Pe 4:14 If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.*

h). *2Th 1:3 We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, 4 so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and*

tribulations that you endure, 5 ¶ which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer;

i). Therefore, according to the scripture - Heb 10:35 *Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.*

j). Don't let go of the boldness we are to have in the promises of the Lord, do not let go of the surety we are to have in the fulfillment of those promises, don't be intimidated, don't be fearful; don't judge with the natural eye, don't let go of the faith we are to have to the saving of the soul. And why? Because it has great reward – Heb 3:14 *For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end,*

1Jo 2:28 ¶ *And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*

Heb 6:7 *Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, 18 that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.*

k). But even so we still have to live in the everyday, day in, day out, which is why we are told - Heb 10:36 *For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:*

l). But take courage, be encouraged - Heb 10:37 *"For yet a little while, And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.*

m). Despite how long we think it is, from God's perspective, it is just a little while, the smallest portion of time, and He who is coming will come – and between our now and His coming –

Heb 10:38a *Now the just shall live by faith;*

n). We shall live our lives now, 'by faith', by believing God to the saving of our soul and if we live our lives now by faith in this way then in that Day we shall have life because of our faith, the salvation of our soul will be realized.

o). But remember - Heb 10:38b..... *But if anyone draws back, [from having faith to the saving of the soul] My soul has no pleasure in him."*

p). And so to close for today let this be us - Heb 10:39 *But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul.*