

No Halfway Covenants  
Heb 10:26-32

Today's passage is a message to the Church (Heb 10:26-32)

- History helps us understand
  - The First Great Awakening went from 1734-1745, why is this important?
  - The Puritans began to settle in New England in the 1620's-1630's
    - They were intensely and rightly focused on true salvation and building a society in Covenant with God
    - By 1650 there was an issue, Believing members of the church had their children baptized into the church in a covenantal manner, looking towards the child's right stewardship unto salvation by their parents and the covenant community at large
    - By 1650 however, the church had adult members looking to baptize their children, who themselves had been baptized as children but never offered a testimony of their own acceptance of salvation by the Christ
    - This led to the Halfway Covenant, which was called Large Congregationalism by its supporters, it seems renaming things in more palatable terms has always been a key marketing strategy
  - The Halfway Covenant was adopted by a large number coming into a majority of Puritan Congregational churches across New England
    - By 1700, roughly 4 out of 5 congregational churches had adopted the Halfway covenant, and not only towards baptism, some extended it all the way to Communion as well
    - This meant that people that did not profess personal salvation could perpetuate their connection to the church by having their children baptized and be themselves included in the Lord's Table
    - Why? How could these Biblical stalwarts as their prayers and writings clearly teach, lead to such a sacrifice of Biblical Doctrine? (In my opinion this also led to the Salem Witch Trials, that's optional for Community Group though)
    - Because there was influence from "important" members (also donors) to have their grandchildren baptized, as well as the desire to extend the influence of the church by maintaining its numbers as they sought to achieve one of their primary goals, to build a society in Covenant with God
  - And so the Great Awakening began by calling people to repentance, people that knew the Word, but hadn't seriously been confronted with their need for salvation
  - They were churched, but had always been included in the church without being truly, spiritually saved, they had been tacitly taught that sin was acceptable or at least not very serious
  - The church had allowed the grace of God to grow unbiblically large by comparison as the Justice of God unbiblically small
  - Think Lightly of Hell, and you will think Lightly of the Cross. -Spurgeon
- Sinners In the Hands of an Angry God (Heb 10:26-32)
- Jonathan Edwards sermon (1741) centered not on Hebrews, it came first as the main text, from Deut 32:35

- The text was concerned with the slipping away from the True Word of God, in Deut 32:27-28 the people had forgotten who the Rock was and who had given them salvation
- We slip away when God's people forget to acknowledge the Holiness of God, He is Just and Gracious, to neglect either is to preach a Halfway Covenant

The readers of Hebrews were in danger of living a Halfway Covenant

- Believers that found it easier to run back to a old comfortable Covenant that had been already fulfilled
- A church that found it easier and more beneficial to be included in the Law, instead of living in the grace of the Exalted King and Perfect High Priest
- A church that offered a Halfway Covenant on the alter each week in the form of the sacrificial system of Israel, instead of finding grace and mercy in a time of need at the altar of God in His very presence

The Text (Heb 10:26-32)

- Deliberate, continual sin (v.26)
- To do this moves you into the enemies army (Isa 16:11, v.27)
  - "The apostle describes as sinners not those who fall in any kind of sin, but those who forsake the Church and separate themselves from Christ.... There is a great difference between individual lapses and universal desertion of the kind which makes for a total falling away from the grace of Christ." -Calvin
- This verse is speaking of proven blasphemy against God by those numbered among His people (Deut 17:2-7, v.28)
- How much greater is the covenant of Christs blood than the covenant of the Law...infintely
- The thing that causes the true weight of Justice is not that God is angry, it is that He is Alive!
  - God's not dead, He is living, His state of being is life from everlasting to everlasting
  - There is no escaping a God that is Living
  - You cannot find a hiding place if you have defied the Living God
- How can have Hope in the face of a Living, Just, and Holy God?
  - Remember Deut 32:35? David quotes it in Ps 94
  - Ps 94:18 tells us exactly where our Hope comes from: God's Love
  - It is God's Longsuffering Kindness, His unconditional Love that leads us to repentance and provides forgiveness
  - The church must stand ten toes down against lies that lead people towards a fluffy Grace that neglects the Holiness of God, the Cross is not trivial, Hell is not a joke, Repentance is essential, Truth is immutable, Christ is King and High Priest