

Anonymous Letter to the Christian Community in Rome – Part 3 (c. 63–64)

Hebrews 10:19–13:25

Hold Fast the Confession of Our Hope

10:19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus,
 20 by the fresh and living way that he inaugurated for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,
 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
 22 let us draw near with a sincere heart in the assurance that faith brings, because we have had our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water.
 23 And let us hold unwaveringly to the hope that we confess, for the one who made the promise is trustworthy.
 24 And let us take thought of how to spur one another on to love and good works,
 25 not abandoning our own meetings, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and even more so because you see the day drawing near.

Fourth Warning—The Danger of Rejecting Christ’s Sacrifice

26 For if we deliberately keep on sinning after receiving the knowledge of the truth, no further sacrifice for sins is left for us,
 27 but only a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume God’s enemies.
 28 Someone who rejected the law of Moses was put to death without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
 29 How much greater punishment do you think that person deserves who has contempt for the Son of God, and profanes the blood of the covenant that made him holy, and insults the Spirit of grace?
 30 For we know the one who said, “*Vengeance is mine, I will repay,*” [[Deut 32:35a](#)] and again, “*The Lord will judge his people.*” [[Deut 32:36a](#) (LXX); cf. [Ps 135:14](#) (LXX 134:14)]
 31 It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
 32 But remember the former days when you endured a harsh conflict of suffering after you were enlightened.
 33 At times you were publicly exposed to abuse and afflictions, and at other times you came to share with others who were treated in that way.
 34 For in fact you shared the sufferings of those in prison, and you accepted the confiscation of your belongings with joy, because you knew that you certainly had a better and lasting possession.
 35 So do not throw away your confidence, because it has great reward.
 36 For you need endurance in order to do God’s will and so receive what is promised.
 37 For *just a little longer* [[Isa 26:20](#) (LXX)] and *he who is coming will arrive and not delay.*
 38 *But my righteous one will live by faith, and if he shrinks back, I take no pleasure in him.* [[Hab 2:3–4](#)]
 39 But we are not among those who shrink back and thus perish, but are among those who have faith and preserve their souls.

Old Testament Examples of People Who Lived “By Faith”

11:1 Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, being convinced of what we do not see.
 2 For by it the people of old received God’s commendation.
 3 By faith we understand that the worlds were set in order at God’s command, so that the visible has its origin in the invisible.
 4 By faith Abel offered God a greater sacrifice than Cain, and through his faith he was commended as righteous, because God commended him for his offerings. And through his faith he still speaks, though he is dead.
 5 By faith Enoch was taken up so that he did not see death, and he was not to be found because God took him up. For before his removal he had been commended as having pleased God.
 6 Now without faith it is impossible to please him, for the one who approaches God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.
 7 By faith Noah, when he was warned about things not yet seen, with reverent regard constructed an ark for the deliverance of his family. Through faith he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith.
 8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place he would later receive as an inheritance, and he went out without understanding where he was going.
 9 By faith he lived as a foreigner in the promised land as though it were a foreign country, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, who were fellow heirs of the same promise.
 10 For he was looking forward to the city with firm foundations, whose architect and builder is God.
 11 By faith, even though Sarah herself was barren and he was too old, he received the ability to procreate, because he regarded the one who had given the promise to be trustworthy.
 12 So in fact children were fathered by one man—and this one as good as dead—*like the number of stars in the sky and like the innumerable grains of sand on the seashore.* [cf. [Gen 22:17](#) (LXX)]
 13 These all died in faith without receiving the things promised, but they saw them in the distance and welcomed them and acknowledged that they were strangers and foreigners on the earth.
 14 For those who speak in such a way make it clear that they are seeking a homeland.
 15 In fact, if they had been thinking of the land that they had left, they would have had opportunity to return.

16 But as it is, they aspire to a better land, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

17 By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. He had received the promises, yet he was ready to offer up his only son.

18 God had told him, *“Through Isaac descendants will carry on your name,”* [[Gen 21:12](#) (LXX)]

19 and he reasoned that God could even raise him from the dead, and in a sense he received him back from there.

20 By faith also Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning the future.

21 By faith Jacob, as he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph and *worshiped as he leaned on his staff.* [[Gen 47:31](#) (LXX)]

22 By faith Joseph, at the end of his life, mentioned the exodus of the sons of Israel and gave instructions about his burial.

23 By faith, when Moses was born, his parents hid him for three months, because they saw the child was beautiful and they were not afraid of the king’s edict.

24 By faith, when he grew up, Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter,

25 choosing rather to be ill-treated with the people of God than to enjoy sin’s fleeting pleasure.

26 He regarded abuse suffered for Christ to be greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for his eyes were fixed on the reward.

27 By faith he left Egypt without fearing the king’s anger, for he persevered as though he could see the one who is invisible.

28 By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of the blood, so that the one who destroyed the firstborn would not touch them.

29 By faith they crossed the Red Sea as if on dry ground, but when the Egyptians tried it, they were swallowed up.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell after the people marched around them for seven days.

31 By faith Rahab the prostitute escaped the destruction of the disobedient, because she welcomed the spies in peace.

32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets.

33 Through faith they conquered kingdoms, administered justice, gained what was promised, shut the mouths of lions,

34 quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, gained strength in weakness, became mighty in battle, put foreign armies to flight,

35 and women received back their dead raised to life. But others were tortured, not accepting release, to obtain resurrection to a better life.

36 And others experienced mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment.

37 They were stoned, sawed apart, murdered with the sword; they went about in sheepskins and goatskins; they were destitute, afflicted, ill-treated

38 (the world was not worthy of them); they wandered in deserts and mountains and caves and openings in the earth.

39 And these all were commended for their faith, yet they did not receive what was promised.

40 For God had provided something better for us, so that they would be made perfect together with us.

Running to Win

12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, we must get rid of every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and run with endurance the race set out for us,

2 keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith. For the joy set out for him he endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

3 Think of him who endured such opposition against himself by sinners, so that you may not grow weary in your souls and give up.

The Lord’s Discipline/Training

4 You have not yet resisted to the point of bloodshed in your struggle against sin.

5 And have you forgotten the exhortation addressed to you as sons?

*“My son, do not scorn the Lord’s discipline
or give up when he corrects you.*

6 *“For the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son he accepts.”* [[Prov 3:11–12](#) (LXX^A)]

7 Endure your suffering as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is there that a father does not discipline?

8 But if you do not experience discipline, something all sons have shared in, then you are illegitimate and are not sons.

9 Besides, we have experienced discipline from our earthly fathers and we respected them; shall we not submit ourselves all the more to the Father of spirits and receive life?

10 For they disciplined us for a little while as seemed good to them, but he does so for our benefit, that we may share his holiness.

11 Now all discipline seems painful at the time, not joyful. But later it produces the fruit of peace and righteousness for those trained by it.

12 Therefore, *strengthen your listless hands and your weak knees,* [[Isa 35:3](#)]

13 and *make straight paths for your feet,* [[Prov 4:26](#) (LXX)] so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but be healed.

Dos and Don'ts of the Race

14 Pursue peace with everyone, and holiness, for without it no one will see the Lord.

15 See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God, that no one be like a bitter root springing up and causing trouble, and through him many become defiled.

16 And see to it that no one becomes an immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal.

17 For you know that later when he wanted to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no opportunity for repentance, although he sought the blessing with tears.

Fifth Warning—Do Not Refuse God's Son

18 For you have not come to something that can be touched, to a burning fire and darkness and gloom and a whirlwind

19 and the blast of a trumpet and a voice uttering words such that those who heard begged to hear no more.

20 For they could not bear what was commanded: *"If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned."* [[Exod 19:12–13](#)]

21 In fact, the scene was so terrifying that Moses said, *"I shudder with fear."* [cf. [Deut 9:19a](#) (LXX)]

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the assembly
23 and congregation of the firstborn, who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous, who have been made perfect,

24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks of something better than Abel's does.

25 Take care not to refuse the one who is speaking! For if they did not escape when they refused the one who warned them on earth, how much less shall we, if we reject the one who warns from heaven?

26 Then his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, *"I will once more shake not only the earth but heaven too."* [[Hag 2:6](#) (LXX)]

27 Now this phrase *"once more"* indicates the removal of what is shaken, that is, of created things, so that what is unshaken may remain.

28 So since we are receiving an unshakable kingdom, let us give thanks, and through this let us offer worship pleasing to God in devotion and awe.

29 For our *God is indeed a devouring fire.* [[Deut 9:3](#) (LXX)]

Well-pleasing Service to God

13:1 Brotherly love must continue.

2 Do not neglect hospitality, because through it some have entertained angels without knowing it.

3 Remember those in prison as though you were in prison with them, and those ill-treated as though you too felt their torment.

4 Marriage must be honored among all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers.

5 Your conduct must be free from the love of money and you must be content with what you have, for he has said, *"I will never leave you and I will never abandon you."* [cf. [Gen 28:15](#); [Deut 31:6, 8](#); [Josh 1:5](#)]

6 So we can say with confidence, *"The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"* [[Ps 118:6](#) (LXX 117:6)]

Shepherds and Sheep

7 Remember your leaders, who spoke God's message to you; reflect on the outcome of their lives and imitate their faith.

8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever!

9 Do not be carried away by all sorts of strange teachings. For it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not ritual meals, which have never benefited those who participated in them.

10 We have an altar that those who serve in the tabernacle have no right to eat from.

11 For the bodies of those animals whose blood the high priest brings into the sanctuary as an offering for sin are burned outside the camp.

12 Therefore, to sanctify the people by his own blood, Jesus also suffered outside the camp.

13 We must go out to him, then, outside the camp, bearing the abuse he experienced.

14 For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.

15 Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, acknowledging his name.

16 And do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for God is pleased with such sacrifices.

17 Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they keep watch over your souls and will give an account for their work. Let them do this with joy and not with complaints, for this would be no advantage for you.

Closing

18 Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to conduct ourselves rightly in every respect.

19 I especially ask you to pray that I may be restored to you very soon.

20 Now may the God of peace who by the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus Christ,

21 equip you with every good thing to do his will, working in us what is pleasing before him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

22 Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, bear with my message of exhortation, for in fact I have written to you briefly.

23 You should know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he comes soon, he will be with me when I see you.

24 Greetings to all your leaders and all the saints. Those from Italy send you greetings.

25 Grace be with you all.

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