

# NEED OF ENDURANCE

## HEBREWS 10



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*A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe*

**The Fellowship of Ailbe**

*Need of Endurance: Hebrews 10*

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## Hebrews 10: Introduction

Jesus has accomplished the final sacrifice, the one which alone is able to take away our sins and usher us into the rest of God. It makes no sense to seek rest anywhere other than in Him.

Therefore, rather than drawing back from Jesus when opposition or persecution arises, we need to remember what He has done for us and redouble our commitment to Him. We need to endure whatever suffering may come our way, encouraging one another and pursuing good works, come what may. This is the true way of salvation and of those who have entered God's rest.

We're pleased to make this resource available for personal or group study at no charge, and we hope you will find this series helpful in realizing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God.

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## 1 Sin Remembered

### *Introduction*

The first part of chapter 10 (vv. 1-18) is the summation of chapters 7-9, culminating in one of the clearest explanations of the work of Christ in the New Testament. Verses 1-4 begin this summation by pointing out that, in the religious system of Judaism, no rest (“perfect,” v. 1) can be found. Instead, Judaism involves a continual resorting to sacrifices and offerings and other forms of devotion which cannot “make those who approach perfect.” The writer is saying to his readers, “If you insist on reverting to Judaism, you will find no rest, but only a constant reminder of your sins and your need for cleansing.”

*Meditate on Psalm 40.1-5.*

*Read Hebrews 10.1-4.*

### *Think it through.*

1. The religious laws of ancient Israel were a *shadow* of “the good things to come.” What were those “good things,” and how did the religious laws of Israel foreshadow them? The writer has used several ideas to express “the good things to come” – rest, promises, hope, salvation. Here he adds *perfect*. What does he mean? Why would being *perfect* be involved in the idea of *rest*? Meditate on 2 Corinthians 1.20 and 2 Peter 1.4. Can you see how everything God has promised and provided for us is bound up in Jesus? Explain. What are the implications for your daily faith?

2. The Jewish sacrifices *reminded* people they were sinners. But they could not *take away* their sins (v. 4). One of the results of entering Christ’s rest is that we have “no more consciousness of sins.” Does this mean we never sin? Or never think about sin? In what sense is our “consciousness of sins” removed by looking to Jesus and holding fast our confession in Him? Why is this an important part of “the good things to come”?

### *Meditate.*

“The law was indeed given through Moses, and there it was determined by a heavenly rule what was to be done and what was to be avoided, but what it commanded was completed only by the grace of Christ. On the one hand, that law was capable of pointing out sin, teaching justice and showing transgressors what they are charged with. On the other hand, the grace of Christ, poured out in the hearts of the faithful through the spirit of charity, brings it about that what the law commanded may be fulfilled.” *The Venerable Bede (672-735 AD)*

*Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.* Romans 3.19, 20

*Lord Jesus, I’m so grateful that You have brought me into God’s rest, and that as far as my sins are concerned, I...*

### *Pray Psalm 40.1-5.*

As you pray, remember back to when you first became a believer in Jesus, and thank God for delivering you from whatever “miry clay” you were experiencing then. Give praise to God and pray that He will give you opportunities to bear witness to Him today.

### **Psalm 40.1-5** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,  
Lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!

*Need of Endurance: Hebrews 10*

New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.  
Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.  
Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

## 2 Sin Borne

### *Introduction*

God has no pleasure in sin. Yet He was pleased for His Son to bear the sins of the world and to establish a New Covenant with all who would believe. And all who do are set apart by Jesus' sacrifice for God's rest.

*Read Psalm 40.6-10.*

*Read Hebrews 10.5-10.*

### *Think it through.*

1. The writer quotes Psalm 40 to summarize Christ's mission to the world (vv. 5-7). How would you summarize that mission? Why was Jesus sent to the world? The Greek for "You had no pleasure" (οὐκ εὐδόκησας) expresses a kind of finality, that is, "You had no once-for-all pleasure." So even as David was writing Psalm 40, God was making it clear that the Old Covenant sacrificial system was not His last word. Explain. It's interesting to note that the writer of Hebrews omits the second part of Psalm 40.6: "My ears You have opened." His readers would undoubtedly have noted that. Do you think he may have left it out on purpose? Why would he do that?

2. The writer carefully explains the portion of Psalm 40 he has quoted (vv. 6-8) in verses 8-10. He points out that the sacrifices prescribed in the Law of God were not what God ultimately intended. Why did the first readers of Hebrews need to be reminded of this? Why was Psalm 40 a good place to turn in reminding them? The Speaker of Psalm 40 is not David, even though David was the writer. Who was the Speaker? In what "book" had His coming to do God's will been "written" (cf. Ps. 139.15, 16). What was the will of God He came to do (v. 10)? If we have been *sanctified* ("set apart") by "the offering of Christ's body," should we ever turn back from that? And if one *does* turn away from that offering, what does that suggest?

### *Meditate.*

"David went on to say, 'But a body you have fitted to me.' By this he meant the Lord's body which became the common sacrifice for the whole world, the sacrifice which cleansed our souls, canceled sin, put down death, opened heaven, gave us many great hopes and made ready all the other things which Paul knew well and spoke of when he exclaimed, 'O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways.'" *John Chrysostom (344-407 AD)*

*But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him.* Romans 5.8, 9

*Thank You, Father, for setting me apart for Yourself in Jesus Christ. Help me to live that sanctified life today as I...*

*Pray Psalm 40.6-10.*

Pray slowly, and meditate on the sufferings of Jesus as He delighted to do God's will on your behalf.

### **Psalm 40.6-10** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Off'rings You do not require – open now my ears, O Lord –  
What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.  
Take my life in ev'ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

Lord, Your truth will I proclaim to Your people gathered 'round,

*Need of Endurance: Hebrews 10*

Nor will I my lips restrain – let Your precious ways resound  
Of Your saving grace and Word I would speak, most loving Lord.

### 3 Sin Remembered No More

#### *Introduction*

The offering of our Lord Jesus Christ has taken away our sins, not merely covered them for a time. We were sick with sin unto death. Now the curative of Christ's sacrifice has been applied to our souls, and we are in permanent remission. This is reason for rejoicing, even in the midst of whatever suffering we may have to endure for our faith in Jesus.

*Read Psalm 40.11-13.*

*Read Hebrews 10.11-18.*

#### *Think it through.*

1. The writer compares the priesthood of Jesus with that of the priests of Judaism, toward which some of his readers were drifting (vv. 11, 12). How did he hope this comparison would instruct them? Jesus is not only High Priest but also reigning King ("Melchizedek"), seated at the right hand of God (cf. Heb. 1.3; Ps. 110). What is He doing there? Who are the "enemies" of Christ? Were some of those first readers in danger of reverting to the enemies' camp? If that were happening to you, what would it look like?

2. Notice verse 14: Those who believe in Jesus have been "perfected" and "are being sanctified." Both of these are accomplished by Jesus' offering of Himself. What does this mean? In what sense are we already "perfected"? What happens in us as we are "being sanctified"? If we are truly "perfected" we will be actively involved in the process of "being sanctified." What does that involve? Does it involve suffering? Explain. Verses 15-18 can help. We are perfected because we have new hearts and minds; and we are being sanctified because the Law of God now guides us in heart and mind (cf. Ezek. 36.26, 27). This is how we know we are "in remission" from sin. Explain.

#### *Meditate.*

"Now, this happened through the new covenant: we receive also in all-holy baptism the forgiveness of sins. In the life to come, when immortality is granted us, we shall live differently from everyone else, sin no longer capable of troubling those who have become immortal. May it be our good fortune to attain this life. We shall attain it if in the present life we embrace with enthusiasm the effort virtue involves and accept the struggles it requires. The Lord himself, who is the source of the future goods, will work with us." *Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD)*

*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. Romans 8.1, 2*

*Lord, You have written Your Law on my heart and in my mind. Help me to make good use of this valuable resource by...*

*Pray Psalm 40.11-13.*

The mercy we seek in prayer is available to us because of Jesus, and the grace we require to live for Him comes only because of His deliverance and help (Heb. 4.16). Use today's verses to focus on the day ahead as you seek mercy and grace to help in your time of need.

**Psalm 40.11-13** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Keep Your mercy not from me; let Your love and truth prevail.  
Evil and iniquity make my trembling heart to fail.

*Need of Endurance: Hebrews 10*

Lord, be pleased to rescue me! Let my shelter with You be.

## 4 Let Us

### *Introduction*

Christians need each other when the going gets rough. Alone, we may seek rest from trouble or opposition in places where no rest can be found. Together, we can look to our High Priest, draw near to Him in prayer, recall and hold fast to our confession, encourage one another to press on toward good works of love, and enjoy the fellowship, worship, and growth which are ours in the *rest* of God. This is how the first Christians persevered through trials, and it's a formula we must follow as well.

*Read Acts 4.18-37.*

*Read Hebrews 10.19-25.*

### *Think it through.*

1. The writer reminds us that the *rest* we seek is only to be found in the “Holiest” place (v. 19). What place is that? Why are we able to enter that place? What does it mean to “draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith”? Is this a kind of precondition for fruitful prayer? When is your heart “sprinkled from an evil conscience”? When is your body “washed with pure water”? Are these also preconditions for fruitful prayer? Explain.

2. The writer uses a string of verbs which he expresses in the *cobortative* sense (“Let us...”). Explain each of these verbs: “hold fast,” “consider,” “stir up,” “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together,” and “exhorting.” What do these suggest about the importance of life together in the Body of Christ? In what sense do we “see the Day approaching”? Why should that motivate us with respect to these verbs?

### *Meditate.*

“It is not separation but assiduous effort at unity that is the work of love.” *Theodoret of Cyr (393-466 AD)*

Let *nothing* be done *through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.* Philippians 2.3, 4

*Grant me grace, Lord, to serve You this day by reaching out to my fellow believers to...*

### *Pray Psalm 40.14-17.*

Pray for your fellow believers, using these verses to hold them up to the Lord. Ask the Lord for someone to encourage in Him today.

### **Psalm 40.14-17** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Bring to shame my ev'ry foe, all who would my life destroy;  
Bring them down to scorn and woe who at my hurt sing for joy.  
Let them come to grief and shame who heap scorn upon my name.

Let them shout for joy and sing who in saving grace delight!  
Let them praise to Jesus bring, though affliction be their plight.  
Christ, our help, our Savior He! Of us ever mindful be!

## 5 Sin and Judgment

### *Introduction*

In this passage the writer leads his readers to consider the harsh reality and undeniable meaning of what they are contemplating. Their drift from Christ is a betrayal of the faith and puts them in danger of the judgment of God. His language is deliberately frank and confrontational, because he wants his readers to realize how serious their lapse of faith can become. Words of comfort and encouragement will follow, but for now, the writer of Hebrews is unsparing in his frankness.

*Read Psalm 40.14-17.*

*Read Hebrews 10.26-31.*

### *Think it through.*

1. Verse 26 is deliberately provocative. Do you ever sin willfully? When the writer says, “there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,” does he mean that willfully sinning, after we have come to the truth of Jesus, causes us to lose the benefits of Jesus’ sacrifice? If we sin after becoming a Christian, are we then lost again? The key lies in verse 27, which probes the *subjective* experience of one who, knowing the truth, willfully sins against it. Is it a good thing that, when we sin, we begin to dread God’s indignation and judgment? Explain. How does verse 27 lead us to understand the writer’s meaning in verse 26? If we *do* dread God’s indignation and judgment, what does that suggest about the nature of our relationship with Him?

2. The writer uses “rejected Moses’ law” as a substitute for “sin willfully.” What does this suggest about the role of God’s Law in the life of faith? In verse 29, the writer describes sinning willfully in three shocking ways. Explain each one. Do you think it would be helpful to keep these in mind whenever you think about sinning willfully? Explain. Verses 30 and 31 remind us that in God’s covenant we are motivated and led by *promises*, which we obtain through *steadfast obedience*. When we do not obey, *divine sanctions* of judgment await us. How does the Lord “judge His people”? Why is this a “fearful thing”? We must always remember that, even in the New Covenant, with its better hope and better promises, judgment plays an important role. Why?

### *Meditate.*

“But if you sin again, the old reproaches return again against you and all the more so, since it is a much greater crime ‘to spurn the Son of God and to profane the blood of the covenant’ than to neglect the law of Moses.” *Origen of Alexandria (185-254 AD)*

*“Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’ you shall forgive him.”* Luke 17.3, 4

*Thank You, Father, that You love me enough to discipline me when I begin to drift from Jesus and the rest I have in Him. Help me never to drift, but ever to hold fast my confession and to...*

*Pray Psalm 40.14-17.*

How are you “poor and needy” before the Lord today? Call upon Him for help and deliverance of anything that might separate you from Him, and magnify His Name accordingly.

### **Psalm 40.14-17** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Bring to shame my ev’ry foe, all who would my life destroy;  
Bring them down to scorn and woe who at my hurt sing for joy.  
Let them come to grief and shame who heap scorn upon my name.

*Need of Endurance: Hebrews 10*

Let them shout for joy and sing who in saving grace delight!  
Let them praise to Jesus bring, though affliction be their plight.  
Christ, our help, our Savior He! Of us ever mindful be!

## 6 In Need of Endurance

### *Introduction*

The writer returns to encouragement and exhortation, building on his readers' good beginnings in the faith to arrest their drift and set them back on the path of promise, hope, and rest. Sure, they've had some troubles, but bearing up under these is part of God's will on the path of knowing and resting in Him. They must not become distracted from that destination, so that they draw back from holding fast their confidence firm to the end. He urges them to endure through their trials to continue realizing more of their great salvation.

*Meditate on Psalm 84.*

*Read Hebrews 10.32-39.*

*Think it through.*

1. Psalm 84 nicely summarizes the life of faith as a journey of sacrifice and perseverance on the road to our eternal dwelling place in God and His rest. Which parts of this psalm might have been most relevant for the situation of the first readers of Hebrews? Which are most relevant for you? In the case of the first readers of Hebrews, suffering – their Valley of Baca – came right away. What did their suffering entail (v. 33)? He mentions two reasons for their suffering. What were they, and how might we expect to know these today (vv. 32, 33)? He recalls their response to these sufferings in verse 34. They gave up something even as they held on to something else. Explain. What should we learn from their example about how to journey through our own Valley of Tears?

2. The writer mentions a “reward” for holding fast our confidence firm to the end. What does he have in mind (recall Psalm 84)? What “promise” (v. 36) is the writer thinking about? How is that promise indicated in verses 37 and 38, and when ultimately should we expect to know that promise? In what sense is the writer using the phrase “believe to the saving of the soul” in verse 39? That by enduring we *earn* salvation? Or something else. Explain. Summarize: When “reproaches and tribulations” come upon us because of our faith, what should we do?

*Meditate.*

“Do not throw away your confidence, your boldness based on your works, based on your faith, based on your periods of testing, based on your endurance. For these things bestow great confidence on us, that we will obtain the promise.” *Photius (820-891 AD)*

*For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe. For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God which are in Judea in Christ Jesus. For you also suffered the same things from your own countrymen, just as they did from the Judeans... 1 Thessalonians 2.13, 14*

*Grant me endurance, O Lord, so that I will...*

*Pray Psalm 40.1-10.*

Use these verses to recall and give thanks for God's mercy to you in the early days of your journey with Him, and to declare your determination to endure with Him, come what may.

**Psalm 40.1-10** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,  
Lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!

*Need of Endurance: Hebrews 10*

New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.  
Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.  
Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

Offrings You do not require – open now my ears, O Lord –  
What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.  
Take my life in ev'ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

Lord, Your truth will I proclaim to Your people gathered 'round,  
Nor will I my lips restrain – let Your precious ways resound!  
Of Your saving grace and Word I would speak, most loving Lord.

## 7 Endure!

### *Introduction*

By His death, Jesus has made a way for us into the eternal resting-place of God. No other way is available to us besides this, so it is pointless and unwise to look to any source other than Jesus for the rest we desire. Instead, keeping our eyes on Jesus and the “enduring possession” that awaits us in heaven, we must press on, encouraging and helping one another to hold fast our confidence, even in the face of persecution. Jesus is coming, and when He does, He will receive to Himself those who do not draw back from Him when troubles come in this life.

*Read and meditate on Psalm 40.*

*Read and meditate on Hebrews 10.*

### *Think it through.*

1. What kinds of persecution were the first readers of the book of Hebrews undergoing? Why was it tempting to “draw back” from their firm confidence in the face of such persecution? How did the writer of Hebrews try to refocus them on Christ? In doing so, he was both confrontational and encouraging. Explain.
2. Paul said that suffering is a “given” for believers (Phil. 1.29). John said the same (Rev. 1.9), and so did Peter (1 Pet. 1.6, 7; 4.1, 2). In this the apostles were only echoing what Jesus had promised (Jn. 16.33). Do Christians today expect to suffer for their faith in Jesus? Do you? In what ways? We must not allow suffering – or the threat of it – to cause us to “draw back” from Jesus. How can we avoid this happening, that is, what are you learning from Hebrews about how to endure suffering and persevere in faith when trials come? What must we remember? What must we do?

### *Meditate.*

“So, my brothers and sisters, we must not be double-minded. Rather must we patiently hold out in hope so that we may also gain our reward. For ‘he can be trusted who promised’ to pay each one the wages due for his work. If, then, we have done what is right in God’s eyes, we shall enter his kingdom and receive the promises ‘what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived.’” *Clement of Rome (fl. 92-101 AD)*

*But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 1 Timothy 6.11, 12*

*Thank You, Father, for the gift and calling of suffering with Jesus. Let me not fear to bear reproaches for His sake, but let me prepare daily, and each moment, to...*

*Pray Psalm 40.1-17.*

Pray through this psalm, remembering God’s grace to you and seeking His mercy and grace to give you endurance for the day ahead.

### **Psalm 40.1-17** (*Dix: For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,  
Lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!  
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

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Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.  
Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

Offerings You do not require – open now my ears, O Lord –  
What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.  
Take my life in ev'ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

Lord, Your truth will I proclaim to Your people gathered 'round,  
Nor will I my lips restrain – let Your precious ways resound!  
Of Your saving grace and Word I would speak, most loving Lord.

Keep Your mercy not from me; let Your love and truth prevail.  
Evil and iniquity make my trembling heart to fail.  
Lord, be pleased to rescue me! Let my shelter with You be.

Bring to shame my ev'ry foe, all who would my life destroy;  
Bring them down to scorn and woe who at my hurt sing for joy.  
Let them come to grief and shame who heap scorn upon my name.

Let them shout for joy and sing who in saving grace delight!  
Let them praise to Jesus bring, though affliction be their plight.  
Christ, our help, our Savior He! Of us ever mindful be!

*Questions for Reflection or Discussion*

1. Compare the sacrifice of Jesus with the sacrifices that were practiced under Judaism. Why is His better?
2. Why must we not draw back from our confession of faith in Jesus when we are confronted by mocking, harassment, or threats?
3. Explain the difference between our being “perfected” in Jesus and our “being sanctified” in Him.
4. How would you counsel a new believer to respond to mocking or harassment from his non-Christian friends?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from this study? How are you putting that lesson to work in your life?

*For prayer:*

## The Fellowship of Ailbe

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Thank you.