

HEBREWS: REPLACING MAN'S RITUALISM WITH CHRIST
"Part XIII: Call To Buck Conformity To Externalism To Live By Faith"
(Hebrews 10:19-11:1)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

To one degree or another, every believer comes to face the *pressure* of **external** religious conformity when it rubs his conscience:

(1) Dave Hunt, author of Seduction of Christianity has paid quite a price in taking a stand on the Y2K issue that differs from that of even many other Christian leaders. Many believe the problem of computers having only two digits for the year will create much economic and political chaos come January 1, 2000. Thus, they urge believers to store up provisions and get ready for hard times!

Dave Hunt writes we should concentrate on ministry instead of worrying about a Y2K crisis, for Biblical prophecy does not teach such a terrible trial will occur until after the Church is raptured. In response, here is a typical letter Dave receives for his stand (cited in his January, 1999 newsletter): "Dave, it's time you got up to speed on this Y2K thing [letter enclosed from Larry Burkett: 'At midnight on December 31, 1999, the world could face the biggest technological malfunction in history . . .'] We need to panic -- yes, panic now while there's still time to prepare . . ."

(2) Often, at the personal level, we face **pressures** to conform to **externals** because of what others do or believe. Issues like (a) whether or not to have a television in the house or (b) whether we should answer our doorbell on Halloween and give out candy on the loftiest night in witchcraft all often carry **pressures** to conform one way or another to another's urgings! (c) When I was a child my Mother who was a missionary to Africa bought a cake mold with Rudolf the Red-nosed Reindeer's image on its top and baked me a cake with the mold. If I relate that to others I can get judgment calls on whether or not my missionary Mother was being ungodly to bake that cake!

(3) At the national level, pressures to religious conformity exist on what we at the local level believe is errant. (a) Many groups are adopting theistic evolution where we believe the Bible teaches pure creationism. (b) Notable Evangelicals promote such compatibility with Catholicism that they tell us to cease evangelizing Catholics altogether.

What do we do when pressures EXTERNALLY to conform from RELIGIOUS sources mount up on what we believe oppose Scripture? What if these come from other CHRISTIANS?!

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . .)

Need: "I face **PRESSURE** to conform to what 'everybody else is doing or believing' on a **RELIGIOUS** issue, but it runs **OPPOSITE** what I see **SCRIPTURE** condones! I want to get along with others, especially **CHRISTIANS**, but also heed **GOD!** What now?!"

- I. **The author of Hebrews wrote to Jewish Christians who were PRESSURED by associates to RENOUNCE the FAITH and revert back to Judaism's EXTERNALS, Ryrle St. Bib., KJV, p. 1729.**
- II. **So, having described the SUPERIORITY of Christ's heavenly ministry over the Jewish temple system, the author WARNED believers to STOP LEANING on EXTERNALS in Judaism to live by FAITH in the UNSEEN Christ, 10:19-11:1:**
 - A. The writer of Hebrews urged his readers to live by faith, Heb. 10:38.
 - B. What he **meant** by "living by faith" was believing what was **unseen** and yet **said to be REAL** by **Scripture** was indeed **true** so that one **stopped** conforming to unbiblical **externals** to heed God's Word!
 1. Faith is defined as the expectation for what is yet only **hoped**, and thus the conviction that what is **not seen** is yet true, Heb. 11:1:
 - a. The author said "faith" was the **expectation** (*hupostasis*) of what is **hoped**, Moulton & Milligan, Voc. of Grk. N.T., p. 659.
 - b. He also revealed it to be the **conviction** (from *elegchos*, Ibid., p. 202) of what is **not as yet SEEN**, cf. Heb. 11:1 in the NIV.
 2. Thus, he was attempting to get his Jewish readers to **replace** trust in **visible JUDAISM** with trust in the **unseen Christ** in **HEAVEN** simply because God's **WORD** taught as much!
 - C. Hence, the author urged reliance on the **unseen heavenly** access his readers had to God through Christ **instead of** trying to please God by external rituals done in the divinely outdated Jewish temple, 10:19-23.
- III. **This life of FAITH would show up in actual EVIDENCES of a shift in WORKS performed in one's life as follows (Hebrews 10:24-25):**
 - A. Living by faith and leaving externalism would produce in a believer a sense of **urgency** about **loving fellow Christians**, Hebrews 10:24a.
 1. The word "provoke" (KJV) or "spur" (NIV) is a strong word that implies inciting another to an action, Ibid., Ryrle, fn. Heb. 10:24.
 2. Thus, believers living by faith will see the **desperate need** for mutual **love** between others of like precious faith in Christ!
 - B. Living by faith and leaving externalism would thus also produce in a believer an **urgency** about getting others to **live by faith**, Heb. 10:24b.

- C. Living by faith and leaving externalism would produce in a believer an **urgency** about **attending worship services** with others to build up one another in **living by faith** in God's *not-yet-seen truths*, 10:25.
- IV. **FAILURE to SHIFT from religious EXTERNALISM to thus live by FAITH in Scripture would result in God's discipline, 10:26-31:**
- A. In Hebrews 10:26f, the author **repeated** his first warning in 3:17; 4:1, 11 of God's disciplining believers with death for failing to live by faith!
 - B. Further, the writer revealed that since the **new** arrangement under **Christ superseded** Moses' law, and that people in Moses' day **died** for disobedience, Christians who refuse to live by faith **today** can expect only **WORSE** divine discipline than in the O.T., Hebrews 10:29-30!
 - C. **Thus we should FEAR God's discipline and live by faith instead of conforming to unbiblical religious externalism, Hebrews 10:31!**
- V. **Accordingly, the author of Hebrews urged his readers to keep shouldering persecution they faced for living by faith in Christ:**
- A. He urged them to shoulder the initial stands they had once gladly taken at great personal cost as new believers in Christ, Hebrews 10:32-34.
 - B. He urged them to keep their former confidence of being patient in doing good to see God's **expected** blessing finally **arrive**, 10:35-37!

Application: *To escape hell and gain heaven, (1) we believe in Christ for salvation from sin, John 3:16. (2) THEN, to escape God's SEVERE DISCIPLINE on the EARTH and gain His rich BLESSING today, we (a) must RESIST PRESSURES that come from even other believers to conform in belief or action to what counters Scripture, and (b) LIVE by faith in what God's WORD teaches! (c) That life of faith will show up in the following ways -- in our love for the brethren, our spurring others on to living by faith, our attending worship services to edify that FAITH lifestyle and our being patient for God's rewards for doing so in the face of suffering persecutions for such a life of faith.*

Lesson: *In spite of PRESSURES we face from even fellow BELIEVERS to conform to unbiblical EXTERNALS, God calls us to live in accord with what His WORD says. Our truly living by faith will evidence itself by (1) our EARNESTLY loving fellow believers, (2) our spurring others to live by faith, (3) our attending worship services to edify others on in living by faith and (4) our shouldering persecution for living this way by faith.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

During World War II, a number of Bible teachers in America heard of Adolf Hitler's march across Europe and concluded he was the antichrist Biblically predicted to head up the revived Roman Empire. After all, the "Third Reich" term fit the third attempt to revive that old empire. The first "reich" was held by the Nazis to be the institution of the Holy Roman Empire in the 12th century under the Hohenstaufens, and Barbarossa called that empire under Germany and Italy the empire established by God! The second "reich" was considered to be the rise of German power under the eighteenth century Prussian Kaisers (cf. Edward McNall Burns, Western Civilizations, p. 889, 334).

One Bible teacher clearly though almost alone refused to believe that Hitler was the antichrist. Lewis Sperry Chafer in Dallas, Texas believed the Bible taught the pretribulation rapture of the Church. Since the antichrist is to be revealed as the Man of Sin in judgment on a world that had **rejected** Christ as part of the Tribulation that came after the Church was raptured (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11, 12-17), Chafer felt that as long as the Church that had **accepted** Christ remained on the earth, the antichrist could **not** be revealed as that Man of Sin. Well, the Church was still not raptured, so Dr. Chafer **dared** to **publish** his conviction that the antichrist was **not** in power just because Adolf Hitler had conquered much of Europe. He **urged believers to keep living for Christ and discipling men with the Gospel as the Bible revealed we were still in the CHURCH era.**

In time, Chafer was proved to be right! He lived until 1947 to see his stand regarding Hitler be upheld by the fall of the Third Reich in 1945! By then, regardless of what criticism he had received regarding his initial stand during World War II on the issue, Chafer would have told us that it was worthwhile having sided with the minority in faith in Biblical prophecy instead of joining the crowd that had felt Hitler was the Man of Sin!

It is rewarding before the Lord to stand for what the Bible says is true even if doing so means standing against the external pressures of other religious parties to the contrary! Let us go on and make our stands on God's Word in spite of pressures to the contrary and live by faith in the unseen Christ and His Word!