

ROMAN CATHOLICISM IN LIGHT OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS
XVII. God's Warning To Hold To Christ's Sacrifice Versus Other Sacrificial Systems
(Hebrews 10:19-39)

I. Introduction

- A. A number of our Church members have come from Roman Catholic backgrounds, and they often seek support in Biblical truths that counter the strong, errant indoctrination they faced in their past.
- B. The epistle to the Hebrews was written to counter the errant traditionalism of first century Judaism that was similar in theological thrust to much of Catholicism, so we study Hebrews for edification in this matter.
- C. The author of Hebrews in Hebrews 10:19-39 warned his Christian readers to hold to Christ's sacrifice versus reverting back to Judaism's imperfect system. This passage thus counters Roman Catholicism's errant sacrificial system of repeat sacrifices of Christ in the Mass, with a practical warning for us today (as follows):

II. God's Warning To Hold To Christ's Sacrifice Versus Other Sacrificial Systems, Hebrews 10:19-39.

- A. We learned in our last lesson that the Roman Catholic Church views Christ's one historical death on the cross as being insufficient to purge the sinner of sin, that Christ's sacrifice must be repeated in a humanly unknown number of Masses with no gauge for determining when any person can escape purgatory and enter heaven.
- B. However, some evangelical leaders have encouraged evangelicals to unite in belief with Roman Catholicism:
 - 1. In the January 1978 issue of McCall's, Billy Graham said, "I've found that my beliefs are essentially the same as those of orthodox Roman Catholics." (Dave Hunt, A Woman Rides The Beast, 1994, p. 388)
 - 2. W. A. Criswell, past president of the Southern Baptist Convention said, "I don't know anyone more dedicated to the great fundamental doctrines of Christianity than the Catholics." (Ibid., citing David Beale, Southern Bap. Conv., House on the Sand? pp. 142-43; Dallas Morning News, August 19, 1978)
 - 3. Robert Schuller in the Los Angeles Herald Examiner, Religion page, September 19, 1987, said, "It's time for Protestants to go to the shepherd [the pope] and say, 'What do we have to do to come home?'" (Ibid.)
- C. In sharp contrast, Hebrews 10:19-39 warned Christians to hold to Christ's finished atonement on the cross:
 - 1. The author of Hebrews directed Hebrew Christians to stick firmly to their profession of Christ's finished work on the cross instead of reverting back to Judaism with its repeat sacrifices, Hebrews 10:19-23:
 - a. The author urged his readers to have full confidence in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross to give them entrance into full fellowship with God the Father in heaven, Hebrews 10:19 with 10:11-14.
 - b. This confidence was based on Christ's having opened access to the Father in heaven for us as typified in the tearing of the temple curtain that represented His body on the cross, Heb. 10:20 with Matt. 27:51.
 - c. The author also noted how our Great High Priest Jesus Christ is over God's house, Hebrews 10:21.
 - d. Based on these confidences, the author of Hebrews admonished his readers to draw near to the Father in fellowship with a true heart in full assurance of faith, their hearts being sprinkled from the evil conscience that would urge them to return to Judaism, that they might hold steadfastly to faith in Christ, Heb. 10:22.
 - e. God Who has promised to bless believers who do this is faithful to fulfill that promise, Hebrews 10:23.
 - 2. The readers were also to provoke each other to love and good works, not to neglect their meeting together as some did, but to encourage each other as they saw the time approaching for the Lord's return, v. 24-25.
 - 3. The author warned his readers that if they continued to sin by returning to Judaism after receiving a knowledge of the truth of the finished work of Christ on the cross, there no longer remained another sacrifice for sins as Christ was the only Sacrifice, Hebrews 10:26. All that awaited a believer who returned to Judaism in spurning Christ and His one sacrifice was God's fearful discipline, Heb. 10:27. If those who willfully sinned under the Law were severely punished (Heb. 10:28), punishment for spurning the Son of God's sacrifice would be more severe since it angered the Holy Spirit, Hebrews 10:29-31 ESV.
 - 4. The author of Hebrews sought to encourage his readers to stay true to Christ by reminding them of the sufferings they had already born for the Lord (Hebrews 10:32-34). They were thus not to throw away their confidence as Christians with its great eventual reward, but to endure for God's blessing, Heb. 10:35-38.
 - 5. The writer encouraged his readers to think of themselves as those who endured and did not shrink back into Judaism only to be destroyed by God's severe physical punishment, Hebrews 10:39.

Lesson: *God wants believers NOT to unite with or to enter groups like Catholicism or Judaism that hold to an incomplete sacrificial system, but firmly to hold to Christ's finished work on the cross or be severely disciplined.*

Application: *May we stay committed to Christ's finished work on the cross and not unite with Roman Catholicism.*