

What kind of people are these verses addressed to?

- Believers - solid, established believers, whose very lives testified to their commitment to the faith & to the active presence of the Spirit of God - strengthening them, comforting them, motivating them, and encouraging them. These people were Xians!
- (:32a) They had "seen the light" / (:26) received the knowledge of the truth
≠ hear about the truth / agree w/the truth, = experienced the truth
- (:32b) They had stood their ground in the face of suffering for that truth.
 - Satan will only contest the faith of those who are a danger to him.
- (:33) They had been publicly humiliated or stood by others who were so treated.
 - IOW: They had hunk in there during some very rough times.
- (:34a) They were compassionate toward those in prison (Paul?).
- (:34b) They joyfully accepted the confiscation of their property.
 - Why? Because they knew that they had better and lasting possessions - eternal possessions
 - Their priorities were in line with God's priorities.
- The people to whom this warning is written are the kind of people I admire
 - If someone described my life this way I'd be pleased.
 - And maybe that's why this warning is so disturbing

(:26) If we keep on sinning, no sacrifice for sin is left.

(Remember the preacher on Waltons ? - using scripture as weapon - that's awful.)

- This verse has been used to beat people over the head.
 - It has been incorrectly applied to inflict guilt on people God's word says should be clean from a guilty conscience.
 - The misapplication of this one verse has caused more people to give up their faith than any other single verse of scripture.
 - Well meaning saints have been used by the enemy to actually drive people away from God.
 - So let's understand the true message of what the Spirit of God is saying to us through the writer of the book of Hebrews.
- The verse says "If we sin willfully" (NIV "deliberately keep on sinning")
 - Willful, continuous defiance of God's will is a symptom of a much greater, deeper problem, described three ways in (:29)
 - To trample the Son of God underfoot,
 - To count the blood of the covenant that sanctified us as common,
 - To insult the Spirit of grace
 - This is precisely what Jesus meant when He warned the religious leaders about blasphemy of the Holy Spirit in (Matt. 12:22-32).
 - They accused Jesus of being under Satan's power = they failed to recognize Him as God
 - They trampled the Son of God underfoot
 - They treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them (would have)
 - They insulted the Spirit of grace
 - Every sin will be forgiven men, w/one exception. Refusing to acknowledge Jesus for who He is; God in the flesh.
 - That's why you can't be neutral - "He who is not with me is against me."
 - And for those who are against Him....)
- No sacrifice for sin is left - If we ignore, reject, or otherwise turn away from Jesus as the way to have peace with God, there is no other way left.

It's really not that easy to end up in hell.

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(You can choose to go to hell, but in order to get there, you have to step over Jesus.)

- You have to ignore all the historical, legal, and scientific evidence concerning Jesus.
- You have to turn a blind eye to the effect He's had on literally millions of people - like me.
- You have to turn a deaf ear to the cry of your own heart.
- And you have to trample Him under foot - step over Him.
 - You have to be careful not to trip over Him!
- This verse doesn't say that if you still struggle sin then Christ's sacrifice is all used up - it says that if you are able to deliberately, intentionally, continue in a life of sin where there is no struggle, no remorse, no conviction, then you have not recognized Jesus for who He really is; the only One who can restore you to the right relationship w/God that you've always known, deep in your heart, was there for you.

(:35) Confidence is what this whole chapter has been about.

- Confidence to come before God by the blood of Jesus
- Confidence to draw near [v. 22]
- Confidence that will be richly rewarded by the One who is faithful
- Confidence to keep on keeping on.