

# Hebrews 10:35-39

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*We can be confident in our hope in Christ, which will be rewarded. We need to endure in our faith, which is the will of God and comes with a reward.*

The Pauline Author reminded his readers how they have already overcome trials in the past (vv 32–34). They know by experience that they are capable of enduring through suffering, so this is a compelling reason to continue to endure.

The Pauline Author is urging them not to lose their confidence in future reward: *Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised* (vv 35–36). This exhortation to endure is seen throughout Hebrews, with the end result of endurance being rewarded by inheriting God’s promises.

The Pauline Author referenced this earlier in Hebrews 6:12, that his readers should be imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. The Hebrews are being encouraged to not give up on their faith, but instead to hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering (v 23). The “wavering” or “drifting” is the threat that the Pauline Author is concerned with (Hebrews 2:1). Here he urges these believers not to give up. What they need is endurance, and if they endure, they will have done the will of God and will be rewarded with God’s promises.

The end goal of Christ’s redemptive work was stated in Hebrews 2:10—Jesus is at work “bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.” He wants to share His glory with those who follow His example, those who live a life of diligence and faithful obedience in spite of suffering.

Those who endure will be promoted from being children of God to being called “sons,” as a reward for their endurance. We saw this in Hebrews 1:5, where Jesus received the name of “Son” for His faithful obedience living on this earth as a man. Through living a life of faith, we can inherit Christ’s glory, we can *receive what was promised* (v 36).

In verses 37 and 38, the Pauline Author quotes Habakkuk 2:3–4, expressing that Jesus will return and *will not delay*, so we should live in a way that we are ready and expecting His return: *For yet in a very little while, He who is coming will come, and will not delay. But My righteous one shall live by faith; And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him. The righteous one shall live by faith*, which simply means that living by faith is the correct way to live.

Faith pleases God. But if this righteous person shrinks back, or drifts from or neglects faith, God is displeased, His *soul has no pleasure in him*. Paul uses Habakkuk 2:3–4 as the theme verse in his letter to the Romans (1:16–17). He also uses this quote in Galatians (Galatians 3:11). God’s goal for those who believe in Him has not varied from the Old Testament to the New. God desires us to follow Him with obedience from the heart, by believing that trusting God leads to our best.

There is loss for those who *shrink back to destruction*, but this does not mean eternal separation from God: *But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul* (v 39). The word "apōleian" is translated here as *destruction*, but in the sense of "waste" or "ruin." It is the loss of inheriting God's promise, the loss of receiving the *great reward* mentioned in verse 35. This loss is seen also in 1 Corinthians 3:14–15, where Paul discusses how our works as believers will be judged by God,

"If any man's work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."

The phrase *preserving of the soul* could be translated "possessing of life." It is the "peripoiēsin" (preserving, possessing) of psyches (life, earthly life, soul). The Pauline Author uses this word "peripoiēsin" specifically because he is addressing Jews. The word "possession" has great meaning for them.

Perhaps the most memorable moment in Jewish history of "shrinking back" was when the Israelites refused to enter the Promised Land, the land where God's rest was promised, which they would possess. Yet the Israelites were afraid of spy reports of the fearsome people in the land and shrank back. This led to God sentencing the Israelites to wander for 40 years in the wilderness (Hebrews 3:16-19). Here, the Pauline Author is saying we believers are not those who shrink back unto destruction (ruin, waste) of our lives, but of those who press onto the possessing of our lives for all eternity.

The Pauline Author encourages his readers in verse 39 that we don't have to be cowardly in our faith, we don't have to be those who shrink back. We can endure, we can live by faith. That is who we are as believers, what we are called to be. We have the power of the Spirit to rely upon. Throughout this whole chapter, and book, the Pauline Author condemns things like abandonment, cowardice, neglecting, drifting, forsaking. In contrast, he wants his readers to have confidence, hope, endurance, steadfastness, and boldness. These attributes are available to all believers, but they come by living a life of faith.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>35</sup> Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. <sup>36</sup> For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.**

**<sup>37</sup> For yet in a very little while,  
He who is coming will come, and will not delay.**

**<sup>38</sup> But My righteous one shall live by faith;  
And if he shrinks back, My soul has no pleasure in him.**

**<sup>39</sup> But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.**