

DRAW NEAR, HOLD FAST, CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER

A Bible Nerd's Guide to Hebrews 10:19-25

Hebrews 10:19-25 brings together some of the book's largest themes: Jesus' priesthood, cleansing from sin, access to God, perseverance, and the shared responsibilities of Christian community. Its commands grow from a theological announcement: through Jesus, believers have been welcomed into God's presence.

Understanding that announcement requires reading these verses within Hebrews' argument and within the scriptural world of sanctuary, sacrifice, and covenant.

Read **Hebrews 10:19-25** alongside this guide. Greek terms are explained as they appear; no knowledge of Greek is required or assumed.

1. Locating the passage: a community being urged to persevere

Hebrews does not identify its author. Its traditional title also leaves important historical questions unanswered, including the precise location and ethnic composition of its audience. We should distinguish what the text tells us from reconstructions of its setting.

The author calls the work a *word of exhortation* in Hebrews 13:22. The same expression appears in Acts 13:15 for an address delivered in a synagogue. Hebrews reads like an extended homily, combining scriptural interpretation with urgent pastoral appeals, and ending with the greetings and personal notices associated with a letter.

Several details reveal the congregation's circumstances:

- **Hebrews 2:3:** They received the message through people who had heard the Lord.
- **Hebrews 5:12:** They had been believers long enough for greater maturity to be expected.
- **Hebrews 6:10:** They had demonstrated love through service to other believers.
- **Hebrews 10:32-34:** They had experienced public humiliation, suffering, solidarity with prisoners, and the loss of possessions.
- **Hebrews 10:35-36:** They needed continuing confidence and endurance.

The concern about gathering in 10:25 belongs within this setting. Withdrawing from the community could mean distancing oneself from a costly public identification with Jesus.

Shared life therefore has more than a social function. It helps believers maintain their allegiance to Christ when doing so becomes difficult.

2. The paragraph's grammar: two gifts and three invitations

The paragraph begins with ἔχοντες (*echontes*), "having." This participle introduces two things believers possess:

1. Confidence to enter God's sanctuary through Jesus' blood, verse 19.
2. A great priest over God's household, verse 21.

The second item continues the construction begun in verse 19. English translations often repeat "since we have" to make that relationship clear.

Three main verbs follow:

Vers e	Greek verb	Invitation	Associated virtue
22	προσερχώμεθα -proserchōmetha	Let us approach	Faith
23	κατέχωμεν -katechōmen	Let us hold firmly	Hope
24	κατανοῶμεν -katanoōmen	Let us consider carefully	Love

These are **hortatory subjunctives**: first-person plural forms that urge a shared course of action. The author includes himself in the response he seeks.

The progression through **faith, hope, and love** is also significant. Compare the same triad in 1 Corinthians 13:13. Its appearance reflects a recognizable pattern of early Christian teaching, although it does not establish Pauline authorship. (But hints at it?)

Verse 25 then uses participles describing the community's conduct: avoiding abandonment of its gathering and practicing encouragement. Grammatically, gathering belongs within the larger instruction to give attention to one another.

The paragraph's structure keeps divine provision and human response together. The invitations rest on what believers already have through Jesus.

3. Why "therefore" matters: the argument leading into verse 19

The opening "therefore" points back to the explanation of Jesus' priesthood and sacrifice, especially Hebrews 7:1-10:18.

Immediately before this passage, the author emphasizes that:

- Jesus' offering accomplishes what the repeated sacrifices could not bring to completion.
- Jesus occupies the place of authority at God's right hand.
- The promised new covenant includes inward transformation and the forgiveness of sins.

The discussion draws on **Psalm 110**, **Psalm 40**, and **Jeremiah 31**.

A useful distinction concerns the repetition of sacrifices. Madison Pierce explains that "the Levitical offerings were not insufficient because they were repeated; they were repeated

because they were insufficient.” (Madison N. Pierce, “Commentary on Hebrews 10:11-14 [15-18] 19–25,” *Working Preacher*, November 14, 2021)

The point is the effectiveness of Christ’s offering. Repetition itself is not inherently unspiritual; Hebrews will shortly commend continuing patterns of gathering and encouragement.

What does “perfected” mean in 10:14?

The preceding claim that Christ has perfected his people can sound as though believers have become incapable of sin. Within Hebrews, however, perfection concerns reaching the intended goal. Priestly qualification and access to God are important parts of that discussion.

Some interpreters emphasize consecration for sacred service. Christopher Holmes observes that “this consecration provides worshippers with access to the divine presence.” (Christopher T. Holmes, “Commentary on Hebrews 10:11–14 [15–18] 19–25,” *Working Preacher*, November 17, 2024)

Others give greater emphasis to the completion of God’s saving purpose, including its future fulfillment. These dimensions deserve consideration together. The immediate argument concerns the effectiveness of Jesus’ work in bringing people into relationship with God.

4. Verses 19-21: confidence, sanctuary, and the living way

Confidence: *parrēsia*

The word **παρρησία** (*parrēsia*) can describe openness, boldness, or freedom of speech. Here it describes confident access to God.

The basis of that confidence is explicitly Jesus’ blood. It is a welcome secured through his sacrificial work.

This connects with Hebrews 4:14-16, where Jesus’ priesthood likewise grounds confident approach to God. Indeed, the repeated language in 4:14-16 and 10:19-25 helps frame the intervening explanation of Christ’s priesthood.

It also connects with 10:35, where the same noun appears in the warning against throwing away their confidence. The gift of access is meant to sustain their continuing trust.

The holy places

The Greek expression **τὰ ἅγια** (*ta hagia*) is sanctuary language. Its grammatical plural does not require the reader to imagine several separate heavenly destinations.

Hebrews has already explained that Christ enters God’s own presence on behalf of his people:

- **Hebrews 6:19-20:** Jesus enters behind the curtain as their forerunner.
- **Hebrews 9:11-12:** He enters the holy places through his own blood.

- **Hebrews 9:24:** He appears in God's presence on their behalf.

The major scriptural background is **Leviticus 16**, where the high priest's entrance into the innermost sanctuary is carefully regulated and associated with sacrificial blood.

Israel's Scriptures already testify to prayer, forgiveness, and relationship with God. Hebrews' particular claim concerns the definitive priestly access Jesus establishes through his offering.

A new and living way

Two words deserve attention.

πρόσφατος (*prosphatos*) means new or fresh in this context. Its older uses include something recently killed, but a word's earlier history does not determine its meaning in every later setting.

Thayer places Hebrews 10:20 under the broader sense "recently or very lately made, new." (Joseph Henry Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, entry "πρόσφατος")

This is a useful example of a basic principle in word study: **etymology and contextual meaning are different questions**. The word does not require the translation "freshly slaughtered way."

The verb **ἐγκαινίζω** (*enkainizō*) concerns inauguration or dedication. It also appears in Hebrews 9:18 concerning the inauguration of the first covenant. In 10:20, Jesus establishes the way by which his people approach God. (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, entry "ἐγκαινίζω")

The way is also living. Read this alongside Hebrews 7:16 and 7:25: Jesus possesses indestructible life and continues to intercede for those who approach God through him. Access rests on a living priest.

The curtain and Jesus' flesh

The connection between the curtain and Christ's flesh is compressed and difficult.

The passage associates entering through the sanctuary curtain with access made possible through Jesus' embodied life and sacrifice. Hebrews 10:5 and 10:10 have already emphasized his body and its offering.

The NET notes interpret the wording as a movement from spatial language, passing through a curtain, to instrumental language, gaining access through Christ's flesh. They also connect it with the torn temple curtain in the Gospel accounts. That is an interpretive connection; Hebrews 10:20 itself does not narrate the tearing of the curtain. (*NET Bible*, study note on Hebrews 10:20)

The clearest claim should govern the more difficult imagery: **Jesus' embodied self-offering has opened access to God.**

God's house

The word **οἶκος** (*oikos*) can refer to a house or a household.

Hebrews 3:6 explicitly identifies believers as God's house, with Christ as Son over it. Read against that earlier statement, 10:21 includes the people who belong to God under Christ's priestly care.

Sanctuary imagery and household belonging reinforce one another. The community approaches God through the priest who presides over God's people.

5. Verse 22: approaching with cleansed hearts and washed bodies

Approaching God

The verb **προσέρχομαι** (*proserchomai*) means to approach or come near. In Hebrews, it repeatedly concerns approaching God in worship:

- Hebrews 4:16.
- Hebrews 7:25.
- Hebrews 10:1, 22.
- Hebrews 11:6.

The invitation concerns the exercise of access Jesus has made possible. Prayer and worship are grounded in his priestly work.

A sincere heart and full assurance of faith

The "true" or sincere heart concerns a genuine approach to God. The accompanying assurance belongs to faith: confidence in the God who has acted through Jesus.

This does not make emotional intensity the measure of acceptable worship. The paragraph consistently directs attention to Christ's work and God's faithfulness.

The significance of the participles

Two perfect passive participles describe the approaching worshipers:

- **ῥεραντισμένοι** (*rherantismenoi*): having been sprinkled.
- **λελουσμένοι** (*lalousmenoi*): having been washed.

These forms portray them as people standing in the condition produced by cleansing. The invitation to approach follows that cleansing.

The perfect forms are significant, but they should not be made to settle every theological question about perseverance by themselves. The wider argument continues to call for faithful response.

Sprinkling and washing: several scriptural connections

The language brings together several related images:

Background	Contribution to Hebrews 10:22
Exodus 24:6-8	Blood is sprinkled in the establishment of the covenant.
Exodus 29:4; Leviticus 8:6	Priests are washed as part of their consecration.
Leviticus 8:30	Blood and anointing oil are sprinkled on priests and their garments.
Ezekiel 36:25-27	God promises cleansing water, a new heart, and his Spirit.

The connection with Ezekiel is especially strong. In the Greek Old Testament, Ezekiel 36:25 uses ὕδωρ καθαρὸν (*hydōr katharon*), “clean water.” Hebrews uses the same adjective-and-noun combination in a different grammatical case, ὕδατι καθαρῷ (*hydati katharō*)

Ezekiel also brings together sprinkling, cleansing, and transformation of the heart. Hebrews’ language therefore belongs within a scriptural promise of restored relationship and renewed obedience.

Is this a reference to baptism?

The reference to washed bodies plausibly recalls Christian baptism. That reading fits the bodily language and the association between cleansing and entry into the Christian community.

It remains an allusion rather than an explicit naming of baptism. The baptismal reading also belongs within the broader scriptural imagery of priestly washing and covenant renewal.

These connections can work together: baptism participates in a biblical language of cleansing that predates the church.

The conscience

The noun συνείδησις (*syneidēsis*) concerns the conscience. Hebrews repeatedly discusses its cleansing or perfection:

- Hebrews 9:9.
- Hebrews 9:14.
- Hebrews 10:2.
- Hebrews 10:22.

This is more substantial than a temporary feeling of relief. Hebrews 9:14 connects cleansing with being able to serve the living God. Forgiveness restores worshipers to relationship and service.

6. Verse 23: holding firmly to confessed hope

Holding firmly: *katechō*

The verb **κατέχω (*katechō*)** concerns retaining or holding firmly. Hebrews uses related language in 3:6 and 3:14.

The invitation calls for continuing commitment to the hope the community professes.

The adjective **ἀκλινής (*aklinēs*)** describes what is unwavering or unbending. It characterizes the firmness with which their confession is to be maintained.

Confession: *homologia*

Ὁμολογία (*homologia*) concerns confession or acknowledgment. Hebrews 3:1 and 4:14 connect the community's confession with Jesus and his priesthood.

In a setting where identification with Jesus can bring social costs, confession has a public dimension. It involves maintaining allegiance to him and the future he promises.

The foundation is God's faithfulness

The explanation introduced by "for" gives the reason for holding firmly: the one who made the promise is faithful.

Notice the relationship between:

- The believers' **faith** in verse 22.
- God's **faithfulness** in verse 23.

Faith responds to a trustworthy God.

Two other passages deepen this connection.

Hebrews 6:13-20 joins God's promise and oath with the image of hope as an anchor reaching behind the curtain, where Jesus has entered.

Hebrews 11:11 again describes God as the faithful promiser in the account involving Sarah.

The language of hope in Hebrews is therefore tied to God's character, his promises, and Christ's presence before him. It is more specific than a general expectation that circumstances will improve.

7. Verse 24: careful attention and constructive provocation

Consider one another

The Greek begins:

κατανοῶμεν ἀλλήλους (*katanoōmen allēlous*)

A close rendering is: *Let us give careful attention to one another.*

The direct object of the verb is the people themselves.

This is worth noticing because English translations often express the sentence as considering *how* to stimulate others. That communicates a reasonable understanding of the intended action, but the Greek places actual people directly within the community's attention.

The same verb appears in **Hebrews 3:1**, where believers are urged to consider Jesus. Within the book, careful attention is directed both toward their high priest and toward one another.

David deSilva captures the practical force of the latter instruction: "This kind of seeing is the birthplace of caring." (David A. deSilva, *Hebrews*, Session 9, "Hebrews 10:19-39: Persevere unto Salvation," lecture transcript, 2024, p. 4)

DeSilva particularly emphasizes noticing another person in a way that moves the observer to loving action. Other interpretations emphasize motivating the person being considered. The Greek makes the attention explicit; the resulting love and good works can develop throughout the community.

Provocation: *paroxysmos*

The noun **παροξυσμός** (*paroxysmos*) concerns incitement or provocation.

Its other New Testament occurrence is **Acts 15:39**, where it describes the sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas. This illustrates the word's potential intensity.

In Hebrews, however, its force is directed toward love and good works. Context determines the moral character of the provocation. The word itself does not authorize harshness or deliberate irritation as a method of spiritual formation. (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, entry "παροξυσμός"; [lexicon entry](#).)

Love becomes action

The pairing of love with good works prevents love from remaining an abstract sentiment.

Hebrews supplies concrete examples elsewhere:

- **6:10**: Service to fellow believers.

- **10:33-34:** Solidarity with those who suffer.
- **13:1-3:** Hospitality and remembrance of prisoners and the mistreated.
- **13:16:** Doing good and sharing resources.

The attention commanded in 10:24 is meant to result in conduct that benefits others and sustains their faithfulness.

8. Verse 25: gathering, encouragement, and mutual responsibility

Abandoning: *egkataleipō*

The verb **ἐγκαταλείπω** (*egkataleipō*) can mean to abandon or desert. The mention of a habit points to an established pattern among some members.

The concern is serious withdrawal from shared Christian life. The verse should be interpreted within that concern when considering unavoidable absences caused by illness, disability, caregiving, or other circumstances.

An interesting intra-book connection appears in **Hebrews 13:5**. The same verb occurs in God's promise never to forsake his people. God's continuing faithfulness and the community's responsibility to remain with one another belong within the same letter.

Gathering: *episynagōgē*

The noun **ἐπισυναγωγή** (*episynagōgē*) describes a gathering or assembly.

Its other New Testament occurrence is **2 Thessalonians 2:1**, where it concerns the gathering of believers to Christ. That usage makes a useful comparison with the approaching Day at the end of Hebrews 10:25.

The shared vocabulary does not establish that Hebrews is quoting 2 Thessalonians. It does show that the language of gathering can serve both present communal life and future hope. (Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, entry "ἐπισυναγωγή"; [lexicon entry](#).)

Encouraging: *parakaleō*

The verb **παράκαλέω** (*parakaleō*) can involve encouragement, exhortation, appeal, or comfort. The appropriate nuance depends on the situation.

Hebrews 3:13 uses it for daily encouragement that guards against the hardening effects of sin. This helps explain the urgency in 10:25: believers need the truthful, sustaining presence of others.

The related noun appears in **13:22**, where the author calls Hebrews a word of exhortation. The document itself practices the ministry it commends.

Madison Pierce summarizes the communal orientation succinctly: “Gather together for the sake of others.” (Pierce, “Commentary on Hebrews 10:11-14 [15-18] 19-25,” *Working Preacher*, November 14, 2021)

Gathering provides a setting where worship, attention, and encouragement can become shared practices. The text assumes real participation and gives it a purpose.

9. The approaching Day: present access and future fulfillment

The definite expression “**the Day**” points toward the anticipated day of Christ’s appearing and divine judgment.

The surrounding material clarifies that horizon:

- **Hebrews 9:28:** Christ will appear again to those awaiting him.
- **Hebrews 10:27:** The warning describes coming judgment.
- **Hebrews 10:37:** The coming one will arrive.
- **Hebrews 12:22-24:** Believers are described as approaching heavenly Zion and its assembly.

Hebrews can therefore speak of access already enjoyed while still urging perseverance toward a future fulfillment.

Amy Peeler expresses the tension this way: “they are members of God’s household, but they have not yet reached God’s house.” (Amy L. B. Peeler, “Commentary on Hebrews 10:11-14 [15-18] 19-25,” *Working Preacher*, November 18, 2012)

Present access and future completion belong together. Christ’s work provides the basis for confidence; the promised future gives direction to continuing faithfulness.

The approaching Day intensifies encouragement. The author’s practical response to future expectation is increased investment in one another.

Reading the warning that follows

Hebrews 10:26-31 must remain part of the paragraph’s context. Verse 29 describes contempt for the Son, profanation of the covenant blood, and insult to the Spirit of grace.

Christian traditions differ over how these warnings relate to final perseverance. Within the passage, however, their seriousness is clear: repudiating Christ’s gift is a grave matter.

The warning should neither be detached from that context nor used to equate every struggle, question, or missed gathering with the rejection it describes.

10. An intertextual map

Some connections are explicit quotations elsewhere in Hebrews; others are strong verbal echoes or broader canonical parallels. Distinguishing those relationships helps prevent suggestive comparisons from being presented as proven quotations.

Passage	Relationship to Hebrews 10:19-25
Exodus 26:31-33; Leviticus 16	Sanctuary and curtain imagery provide the ritual background for access to God.
Exodus 24:6-8	Covenant-making through sacrificial blood helps illuminate the language of blood and sprinkling.
Psalms 110:1, 4	Explicitly used in Hebrews to explain Christ's enthronement and enduring priesthood.
Psalms 40:6-8	Quoted in Hebrews 10:5-9 as the Son's expression of embodied obedience.
Jeremiah 31:31-34	Quoted in Hebrews 8 and 10 to ground new-covenant forgiveness and inward renewal.
Ezekiel 36:25-27	A strong echo through the combination of sprinkling, clean water, and renewed hearts.
Psalms 95; Hebrews 3:7-4:11	The wilderness generation supplies the warning against hardened unbelief; mutual encouragement supports perseverance.
Hebrews 4:14-16	A close literary parallel involving a great high priest, steadfast confession, and confident approach.
Hebrews 6:13-20	God's promise, hope, priesthood, and entrance behind the curtain are already joined together.
1 Peter 2:5, 9	A broader canonical parallel: Christ's people share a priestly vocation and offer worship to God.

11. Worship that takes the form of shared care

A final connection within Hebrews brings the study into focus.

Hebrews 10:18 states that forgiveness removes the need for another offering for sins. Yet Hebrews 13:15-16 still speaks of sacrifices believers offer: praise, doing good, and sharing.

The distinction matters. Christ's offering establishes their access to God. Their worshipful response includes concrete generosity.

This gives the community's attention to others theological weight. Seeing and serving people belongs within its life before God.

Scot McKnight offers a searching description of such attention: “The success of a church is first determined by how many invisible people become visible to those not like them.” (Scot McKnight, *A Fellowship of Differents: Showing the World God’s Design for Life Together*, Zondervan, 2015, p. 24)

Hebrews 10:24 makes that kind of visibility a shared responsibility. People are to receive sustained attention so that love takes practical form.

Paths for continued study

- Trace the language of approaching God through Hebrews 4:16; 7:19, 25; 10:1, 22; and 11:6. Notice what makes approach possible and what response it involves.
- Read Hebrews 3:12-14 alongside 10:23-25. Examine how encouragement relates to perseverance in both passages.
- Read Hebrews 13:1-3, 15-16 as concrete expressions of the love and good works named in 10:24. Consider how these practices extend the meaning of worship into ordinary shared life.