

Help for when the going gets tough the letter to the Hebrews

When was it written? between AD 55 - AD 70

After letter to Romans and before the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem in AD 70

The Address -- to Messianic Jews (possibly in Rome)

The Situation – persecution against Christians was intensifying under Nero AD 54-68

It was a very dangerous time for believers.

Dangerous times for believers - **An escape route ?**



For Jews – return to the synagogue (still a safe place) -
BUT they were required to deny Jesus is the Messiah

For Gentiles – deny Jesus is Lord vs. Caesar

This Letter was written to encourage believers to hold on to Jesus and to give warnings of the consequences of falling away.

How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?

Hebrews 2:3

Modern parallels for the end times ?

Northern Nigeria – Boko Haram

North Korean state

China – the state 'church' and party apparatus

Great Britain - hate speech, education,
workplace restrictions, outdoor preachers



The persecution of Christians in parts of the world is at near "genocide" levels, according to a report ordered by Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt.

The review, led by the Bishop of Truro the Right Reverend Philip Mounstephen, estimated that one in three people suffer from religious persecution.

Christians were the most persecuted religious group, it found.

Mr Hunt said he felt that "political correctness" had played a part in the issue not being confronted.

BBC 3rd May 2019

How it was THEN - and now in some parts

But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Hebrews 10:32-39



**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 is promised. For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one 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.” But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls. Hebrews 10:32-39



THINGS TO DO!

Things to do and things to avoid



THINGS TO DO!

Hebrews 2:1

Therefore we must
pay much closer attention
to what we have heard,
lest we drift away from it.





Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we **hold fast our confidence** and our boasting in our hope. Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, **do not harden your hearts** as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Hebrews 3:6-9



About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become **dull of hearing**. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. **But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.** Hebrews 5:11-14





No coming back from apostasy ?

For it is **impossible**, in the case of those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, and have shared in the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, **to restore them** again to repentance, since they are crucifying once again the Son of God to their own harm and holding him up to contempt.

Hebrews 6:4



THINGS TO DO!

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a Great Priest over the house of God, **let us draw near with a true heart** in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:19-29



THINGS TO DO!

Let us **hold fast** the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to **stir up one another** to love and good works, **not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. Hebrews 10:23-25



For if we **go on sinning deliberately** after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a fearful expectation of judgment, and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

Hebrews 10:26-29



Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? Hebrews 10:26-29



Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also **lay aside every weight**, and sin which clings so closely, and let us **run with endurance** the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. **Consider him** who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. Hebrews 12:1-3



In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

“My son, **do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord**, nor be weary when reproved by him. For **the Lord disciplines the one he loves**, and chastises every son whom he receives.”

Hebrews 12:4-6



Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees, and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13



Strive for peace with everyone, and for the **holiness** without which no one will see the Lord. Hebrews 12:14



See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that **no “root of bitterness”** springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; Hebrews 12:15-17



See to it that **no one is sexually immoral or unholy** like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. Hebrews 12:15-17



THINGS TO DO!

Hebrews 13:1-8

Let **brotherly love** continue.

Do not neglect to **show hospitality** to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body.

Let **marriage be held in honour** among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Heb 13:1-8

Keep your life **free from love of money**, and **be content** with what you have, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” So we can confidently say, “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear; what can man do to me?”

Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and **imitate their faith**.

(the Supreme Leader) Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.



Do **not be led away by diverse and strange teachings**, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them. Hebrews 13:9



**What are the present day challenges
and temptations to draw back from ?**

**Are they really so different to those faced by our
brothers and sisters at the beginning ?**

Will there be future trials for Christians ?





Cultivate your relationship with Jesus

Pray and Worship Him

Know His word

Depend on the Holy Spirit's help

Fellowship with other believers

Psalm 1

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers.



Psalm 1

The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.



If we endure, we will also reign with Him.
If we disown Him, He will also disown us.

2 Timothy chapter 2, verse 12.