

תַּנְחִיחַ לִּי מֵחֶמֶד
The Book of

דֵּס תֵּל גִּנְצִספֶּדֶא רֶחֶחֶצֶסנֶצ

Hebrews

מֵאֲנִישׁ מִנְּמ דֵּא מִנְּ ת אֶקְלֵא

צִמְאֵל לֵל נִתְאַתְצֶרַח דֶּרֶתֶסֶנֶ סֶק

אֵחַ פֶּקְלֵא תֵּסֶנֶ סֶרְבֵּאֵל

רֶדֶ תֵּא סֶדֶ תֶּאֶקְסֶנֶצ דֶּמֶמֶצ

תֶּאֶתְפֶּלֶשׁ נִ תֶּרְדֶּנְהֶרְפֶּר נִ רֶלֶד

תֶּאֶגֶשׁ רֶלֶד מֶלְלֶצ סֶס תֶּלֶשׁ



Outline of Hebrews

“Jesus is Better”

- I. Jesus Is Better Than the OT Prophets (1:1-4)
- II. Jesus Is Better Than the Angels (1:5-2:18)
- III. Jesus Is Better Than Moses (3:1-4:13)
- IV. Jesus' Priesthood Is Better Than the Levitical Priesthood (4:14-10:18)
- V. Concluding Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-12:29)**
- VI. Epilogue: Final Exhortations (13:1-25)

Outline of Hebrews

V. Concluding Exhortations and Warnings (10:19-12:29)

- A. Exhortation to Draw Near, Hold Fast, and Encourage One Another (10:19-25)
- B. Warning: No Hope of Forgiveness for Those Who Turn from Christ (10:26-31)
- C. Call to Persevere in Faith (10:32-12:3)
 - 1. Don't Abandon Confidence but Persevere in Faith (10:32-39)
 - 2. The "Hall of Faith" – Description and Examples of Persevering Faith (11:1-12:3)
- D. Exhortations to Readers to Endure (12:4-29)

Don't Abandon Confidence but Endure in Faith (10:32–39)

³² But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, ³³ sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. ³⁶ For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. ³⁷ For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.” ³⁹ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

³² *But recall the former days when, after you were **enlightened**, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings...*

- Like the warning that we covered several weeks ago in Heb 6:4-8, the warning that we looked at last week (Heb 10:26-31) is now followed by words of **reassurance** and **encouragement**.
- Our author does not wish to **discourage** his readers, but to **embolden** them so that they will emerge victorious from the current test of their faith.
- He does this by first **reminding** them of how they withstood a severe test in the **earlier** days of their Christian lives, not long after they were “**enlightened**.”
- The word translated “**enlightened**” here is the same Greek word used in Hebrews 6:4 to describe the illumination and understanding that men experience when they first embraced the gospel.

³² *But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you **endured** a **hard struggle** with sufferings...*

- In those days they “*endured*” while suffering.
- If they endured **then**, the author reasons, they can endure **now** – **if** they will renew the devotion that carried them through the “*hard struggle*” of their **earlier** sufferings.
- The Greek word translated “*hard struggle*” was used of athletic events where there were difficult contests involved. The term could also be translated “challenge”.
- In other words, the readers are faced with a new struggle or challenge. If they stayed true earlier, presumably they can do so again.

³³ ...sometimes being **publicly exposed to reproach and affliction**, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ 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.

- Specifically, the believers had endured at least **four** forms of ill treatment.
- **First**, they had faced **public ridicule** and persecution. The verb rendered “**publicly exposed**” originally meant “to bring up on the stage,” but as the language developed it took on the figurative meaning of “to make a public spectacle of.”
- They had been made an object of public ridicule both by “**reproach and affliction**” – that is, both by **verbal** and **physical** abuse.

³³ ...sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes **being partners with those so treated.** ³⁴ 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.

- **Second**, even when they **themselves** had **not** been the objects of such abuse, they had felt the pain of standing side by side with those who **were** being abused.
- **Third**, this solidarity extended from the public square to the prison cell, as the readers in their earlier Christian lives “**had compassion**” on those “**in prison**”.
- The word “**compassion**” here carries the idea of being “affected by the same suffering, the same impressions, the same emotions as another” person.
- By rendering aid to those in dire straights they were putting their compassion into action.

³³ ...sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ 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.

- **Finally**, these believers “**joyfully accepted the plundering**” of their property.
- A fascinating window is opened into the lives of the readers, one which we wish was opened further.
- After their conversion they had accepted the “**plundering**” of their “**property**” with joy.
- We don’t know what precipitated the seizing of their belongings, but what is remarkable is **not** that their property was plundered but their **response** to it. They were filled with **joy**!

³³ ...sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ 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.

- In having this joy at the plundering of their property they fulfilled Jesus' command to rejoice when persecuted (Mat 5:12).
- Their delight in God and Jesus Christ could hardly be more evident.
- But, there was a **reason** for their delight.
- These believers rejoiced because they knew a **greater** joy awaited them.

³³ ... sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ 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.

- They knew there was something **better** than the possessions **on earth** that they were losing.
- They looked forward to receiving their **heavenly** inheritance, for they knew that the new creation that is coming at the end of the ages – the heavenly city (11:10, 13-16; 12:22; 13:14), is a far “**better**” city.
- The word “**better**” which has played such a major role in Hebrews, surfaces again.
- Here we see our **heavenly** “**possession**” is “**better**” than our **earthly** one.

³³ ... sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. ³⁴ 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**.

- Furthermore, they knew the joy that awaited them was “**an abiding one**” – it was **permanent**.
- The same word will be used again in Heb 13:14 where the author declares, “**For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come.**”
- The author wants his readers to remember their **initial** spiritual fervor and joy and to embrace it again in their **present** circumstance.
- They have put too much hope in the city of **man**, and have **forgotten** about the city of **God**.

³⁵ *Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.*

- Following this reminder of their former boldness in the face of severe persecution, the author exhorts his hearers to **stay** that course: “*do not throw away your confidence.*”
- The word “*confidence*” can mean “openness or boldness”; often, as here, it has overtones of something done in **public**.
- The author, therefore, is encouraging the believers not to retreat from a pattern of public identification with the body of Christ (cf. Heb 10:25), reminding them that such identification will be rewarded richly.

³⁶ *For you have need of **endurance**, so that when you have done the **will of God** you may receive what is promised.*

- Our final reward will **not** be obtained without “*endurance*”.
- We **must** persevere to the end to be saved.
- Endurance manifests itself in faithfully doing the “*will of God.*”
- God’s will is something we must do over the entirety of our lives.
- It isn’t just restricted to those times when we’re “in the mood” to do what God commands.

³⁶ *For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may **receive what is promised.***

- If we continue to endure we will receive “*what is promised.*”
- The “promise” here is eschatological (something that comes at the end of the ages), as is often the case in Hebrews.
- We must not harden our hearts and miss out on God’s promised rest (cf. Heb 4:1)
- The promise for believers is an “*eternal inheritance*” (Heb 9:15).
- The promises given to the Patriarchs were ultimately eschatological as well.
- They did not receive them during their lifetime (Heb 11:9, 13, 17), so it is clear the “promise” here is **ultimately** the **heavenly** country or city (Heb 11:10, 13-16; 12:22; 13:14)

³⁷ For, “Yet **a little while**, and the coming one will come and **will not delay**; ³⁸ but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”

- Here the author gives a citation from the OT.
- **Most** of this OT quotation is from Habakkuk 2:3-4, but “*a little while*” comes from Isaiah 26:20-21, intensifying the promise that the Coming One “*will not delay*” his arrival.
- Both prophetic texts advise sufferers to patiently wait for the coming of their God to **deliver** them and **judge** their enemies.
- The context of the words drawn from Habakkuk expresses the tension between **eager expectancy** and **patient endurance** demanded by the mysterious timing of God’s promise keeping: “*The vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end. . . . If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay*” (Hab 2:3).

³⁷ For, “Yet a little while, and the coming one will come and will not delay; ³⁸ but **my righteous one shall live by faith**, and if he **shrinks back**, my soul has no pleasure in him.”

- The Hebrew of Habakkuk 2:4 is difficult. The Septuagint translation seems to capture its sense by contrasting the individual who displeases God because he “*shrinks back*” with “*my righteous one*” who “*shall live by faith*.”
- Our author reverses the descriptions as they appear in the OT text, introducing the faithful righteous one before the apostate who “*shrinks back*” in cowardice and thereby displeasing God.

³⁹ *But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.*

- The author of Hebrews applies these conflated Old Testament texts to his hearers' situation.
- The concept of “waiting” for an impending time of reward and punishment fits the tension of the reader's present circumstances.
- The readers struggle (as do we) to remain faithful in a time prior to the Lord's coming.

³⁹ *But **we** are not of those who **shrink back** and are destroyed, but of **those who have faith and preserve their souls**.*

- The decision before them is clear: They can choose the route of faith and be rewarded by the Lord at his coming, or they can “*shrink back*” and face the Lord’s displeasure and destruction.
- The author ends this section with a confident assertion that he and his community (“*we*”) belong to those who have chosen the former path, for they walk the way of faith as “*those who have faith and preserve their souls*,” more literally, “*those who have faith resulting in the preservation [or salvation] of their soul*”

Summary of Hebrews 10:32-39

- The author reminds his readers that falling away from the living God doesn't fit with the amazing changes that marked their lives in the past (10:32)
 - They faced reproach themselves and identified with those being mistreated (10:33)
 - They showed compassion to prisoners and even responded in joy to the plunder of their possessions since they were looking to their final reward (10:34)
- After enduring so much in the past, they must not abandon their boldness now and lose their eternal reward (10:35)
- For they must endure to the end to receive the promise of final inheritance (10:36)

Summary of Hebrews 10:32-39

- The readers are assured the day of promise will arrive – Jesus **will** come again (10:37)
- Those who are righteous will trust him until the end, but those who turn back will not receive God's favor (10:38)
- The author ends with a word of assurance: The readers, he is confident, do not belong to the sort of people who fall away and face destruction, but will exercise faith and enjoy eternal life (10:39).

Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- The author contrasts the readers' *present* behavior in which they seem to be wavering in their Christian commitment with the behavior they exhibited in their *earlier* Christian lives – calling them back that zeal that they once had.
- This contrast is reminiscent of a contrast that the glorified Christ makes regarding the church at Ephesus:
 - *I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake, and you have not grown weary. ⁴ But I have this against you, that **you have abandoned the love you had at first.** ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; **repent, and do the works you did at first.** If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent. (Rev 2:3-5)*
- Question for those here who are “seasoned saints”: Do you find that, in some ways, you do not have the zeal that you had when you were a new Christian? If so, why is that?

*Class Discussion Time

- The readers are commended for having once rejoiced in the opportunity to suffer for Christ (through the confiscation of their property).
- Jesus commends such behavior (Mat 5:12) and we see it exemplified by the apostles:
 - After being beaten the apostles rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name of Christ (Act 5:41)
 - Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns after being beaten and put in stocks (Acts 16:25)
- And yet, there were times the apostles would avoid suffering or persecution when given an opportunity to do so:
 - When the Jews plotted to kill Saul (Paul), the disciples helped him escape (Acts 8:25)
 - Paul once avoided a beating by reminding his persecutors that he was a Roman citizen.
- There seems to be a balance taught in scripture between rejoicing in the opportunity to suffer for Christ and avoiding suffering (or death) when possible. How do we determine that balance?

***Class Discussion Time**

- Our text today talks about the importance of persevering in our Christian walk – even in those times when we have grown weary and are discouraged.
- We all struggle with growing weary from time to time. We all get worn out doing things that we know we need to keep on doing – and yet we must persevere.
- What kind of things have you found it encouraging to say to yourself in such times?