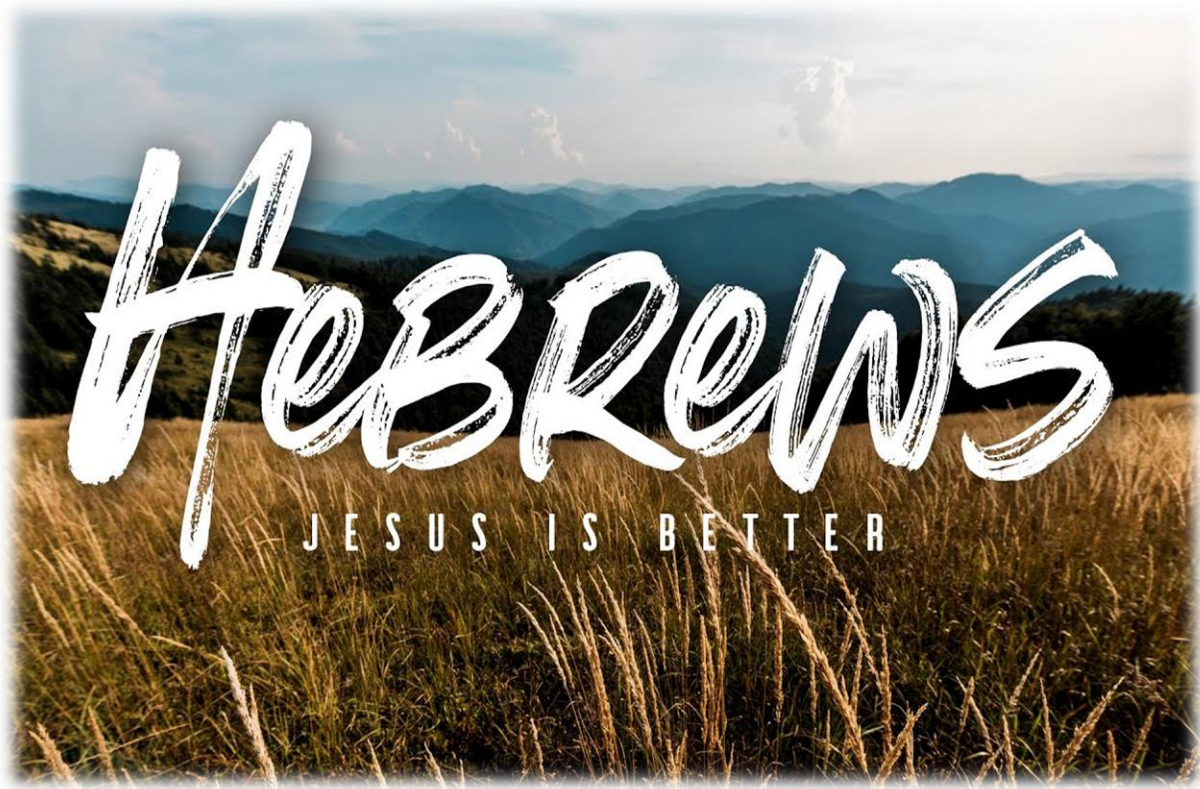




Chapter Ten Part 2

10:23 Again the exhortation to hold fast our own profession or commitment of faith. The better manuscripts here have “hope” in keeping with previous exhortations. God is the one that promised, and God is faithful, reliable, and trustworthy. No one who commits himself to God in hope will ever be disappointed or betrayed.

Hebrews 10:23 (23) Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful;

The second of the challenges is to hold fast the confession of our hope. The phrase “hold fast” is a Greek word that the writer used earlier in Hebrews. **Hebrews 3:6** but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end. The idea is a continuous action (let us continually make confession of our hope without wavering.) He says that this holding on should be “unwavering.” The word literally means “not bending.” The charge is to be faithful until death. He even tells us why, and the reasoning is because

He who promised is faithful. We do not have to worry about whether God will be true to His promises.

10:24 Christ's people must also consider or pay attention to one another, to provoke or stir up to love and good works. The word here translated stimulate gives the English word "paroxysm," and appears in the New Testament scriptures only here and in **Acts 15:39** And there occurred such a sharp disagreement (paroxysm) that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. The mutual consideration enjoined is the duty of every Christian and is a clear, though frequently neglected, obligation.

Hebrews 10:24 (24) and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds,

The third challenge is to stimulate one another towards love and good deeds. If Christians would practice this challenge, it would make it easier to practice the second challenge to hold fast to hope. The idea is

not just that people might consider which ways they may encourage others, but for the emphasis is “consider one another.” The emphasis is on considering the specific need of each individual with the goal of bringing about love and good deeds. The command to “consider one another” is a call away from selfishness.

We are to put forth a strong action to challenge others to greater things. First, they are called to provoke to love. This speaks of a greater love for Jesus. Second, they are called to provoke towards good deeds. No individual is an island, no matter what Simon and Garfunkel says. We each need the encouragement from other to do greater good deeds. This highlights the importance of accountability from one another as well as challenging each other in the Lord.

10:25 Such holy provocation cannot occur with the forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, although some had done just that. It happens rather by exhorting each other in assemblies call for that purpose, as well in the normal course of daily life.

It has been suggested that these readers were still meeting in Jewish synagogues, but remaining for Christian devotions on the Lord's Day. Some were neglecting this additional assembling, for which they are chided. Others have suggested that some were absenting themselves from the regular assemblies of the saints through pride or party-spirit and were holding private meetings instead.

It is best to take the passage in its context and simply say that those who have access to God's presence and who have a High Priest in heaven are to draw near to God, hold fast their own hope, and encourage Christian loving and living in one another. They will not do this by calling an end to Christian assemblies, through fear of persecution or simple indifference, but rather by meeting together for exhortation.

Such encouragement is to intensify as the day is seen approaching. Throughout the Old Testament literature "the day" means an occasion when God visits a people to punish sin and deliver the righteous. The New

Testament writers also speak of much a final day of punishment and salvation. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, many early Christians did not know to separate the end of the Jewish state and religion from the close of the present age and end of the world (Matthew 24:3, Acts 1:6-8). Jesus had taught, however, that the two would not come together (Matthew 24:33, 36; Mark 13:29, 32).

The author to the Hebrews may write before or after the climatic days of the closing 60's. Whatever the date, he speaks of the final day of the Lord, the strands of the plot being all brought together of all human history at the consummation of the age. His readers had not learned to separate that "day" into the separate events of resurrection, judgment, and so forth, but thought of the entire event of the phrase from the Old Testament.

As one commentator puts it, this is, "the day of days, the final, the decisive day of time, the commencing day of eternity, breaking through and breaking up for the church of the

redeemed the night of the present.” It is a poor argument that believers could not see this day approaching. James could urge patience in affliction “for the coming of the Lord draws near.” Paul could speak of saints “knowing the time” that “the day is at hand.” Peter could write of impending judgment and “the end of all things” as “at hand.” The word in all three passages is the word translated “approaching” here. Furthermore, all three contexts contain ethical instruction regarding proper conduct and mutual concern among Christian believers in view of the impending end.

Hebrews 10:25 (25) not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

Although some translators make it seem like this is a fourth separate challenge, it is actually still connected with the previous challenge. Apparently, some of the wavering believers had started becoming absent from the weekly assembly. It is indicated that when we are absent, we miss giving and

receiving this encouragement. Often times we come to the services to look at what we can get and not what we can give others or even God. Here the emphasis is not on what we get from the assembly, but on what we give to others. This verse might tell us that we need to assemble but our previous verse tells us why we are to assemble, to spur one another on to love and good deeds. It is evident that some degree of forsaking the Lord's Day assembly had become a habit of some in the church. There are several reasons why members of the particular church were forsaking the assembly.

1. Fear of persecution
2. A feeling of not needing to go – I do not need to go to church to worship God
3. Wrong priorities
4. Disobedience

Forsaking the assembling of ourselves together is a wrong and it hurts the body of Christ. Again, we see that a part of our practice while in attendance should be to encourage others. He suggests that the level of encouragement should be more intense as the "day draws near." Some have

suggested that the day which is drawing near is speaking of the Lord's Day or Sunday, the first day of the week. Some have suggested that the day which is drawing near is speaking of the Second Coming of Jesus.

10:26 Warning follows exhortation. To sin willfully is not to commit a single sinful act of weakness or ignorance, but, as the Greek verb form indicates, to continue in a constant practice of sin. Nor is sin here just any kind of sin, but specifically the sin of disbelief which shows itself in forsaking Christ altogether. While such apostasy may occur gradually, we need to see the warnings that are given, it ultimately comes about through an act of the will which rejects Christ and His offering for sin. One might observe that even the Old Testament sacrifices made provision only for sins committed in ignorance or weakness, not for presumptuous or willful sins, **Numbers 15:22-31**.

What is envisioned here is a rejection of the New Covenant, after it has been received with faith and joy. Here is a will to sin in spite

of a full knowledge of the truth, knowledge being a thorough knowledge both in mind and by personal relationship.

Apostasy from Christ is dreadfully severe because there is no more sacrifice for sins. His offering, once for all, is man's last chance and only hope. The person who rejects that, especially the man who has known it personally and then rejected it, is hopelessly lost, for he has set his will against the only basis of forgiveness and the only sacrifice God will accept. Regular assembling of the saints for mutual exhortation is so important because it helps prevent the damnation that comes through loss of faith.

Hebrews 10:26 (26) For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,

Remember the challenges that were mentioned above. Draw near to God. Hold unwaveringly to our hope. Spur one another on to love and good deeds. This poses the alternative to following those things. The

thing being condemned is the willful, deliberate, or persistent unrepented sin. The word “willfully” is the first word in the Greek sentence for the purpose of emphasis. Furthermore, it is not just a one-time willful sin it is a continuous willful sin which is why the word “sinning” is used. There is a distinction in scripture in sin and continuing in a practice of sin. This is not speaking of the sins of ignorance or even struggles one may have with sin. It is not just sin that endangers the covenant relationship. It is a willful and habitual sin. The concern was a deliberate and willful decision to reject Christianity after having accepted it and go back to the law. The Hebrew writer is making it clear that if they go back to the law, they could not just come back. The issue at hand though is more about complete apostasy from the faith as evidenced by what is described in **Hebrews 10:29**.

To “receive the knowledge of the truth” is the same thing as becoming a Christian. The audience in danger of committing this type of sin is saved people. This warning is for those who come to know the truth and accept it,

but then consider rejecting it. To have this type of willful and deliberate rejection of Jesus is one example of how a person moves themselves outside of the covering of the sacrifice of Jesus. If they continue to reject Christ, there is no forgiveness available. This lets us know one way a person can lose their salvation is in spiritual suicide. While the blood of Jesus covers all our sins and is a once and for all sacrifice, to reject the saving effect of His sacrifice moves one outside of it. For a Jewish Christian to go back to the law and abandon Christ would ensure that there was no sacrifice that could appropriately deal with their sin. It is also very clear that this does not have to be a permanent thing. It is “so long as one willfully continues sinning.” Meaning if they stop this type of willful, deliberate sin that the sacrifice of Jesus can cover their sin.

10:27 The deserter may look forward only to the judgment in fiery indignation, which is all the more fearful because it is certain. This judgment is designed for God's adversaries, enemies, or opponents. One places himself

in that category when he forsakes Christ and rejects His sacrifice.

Hebrews 10:27 (27) but a terrifying expectation of judgment and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.

This is the danger that awaits the person who was a Christian who turns away from Jesus. The image is of what awaits in place of one having a sacrifice for sins. The word “terrifying” is the Greek word that means dreadful or terrible. The same word is used later in this chapter. **Hebrews 10:31** It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

The word “expectation” is the Greek word which means waiting for something to happen. With Jesus as our sacrifice of sins we do not have to fear judgment because we are assured of no condemnation. **Romans 8:1** Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

However, without a sacrifice covering our

sins it is a fearful expectation of judgment. He further describes what we can expect outside of Christ. He says that outside of Christ there is a “raging fire.” Later, God will be described as a “consuming fire.” The way those will be treated who rejected Jesus after coming to know Him is likened to how He would treat an enemy.

10:28 Under the law of Moses the man who forsook God's covenant and worshiped idols was stoned to death without mercy upon conviction through the testimony of two or three witnesses.

Hebrews 10:28 (28) Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.

He is going to explain exactly what the above person is guilty of. He will begin to describe the seriousness of what they have done by teaching what the Old Testament equivalent is. He will point out that it was a serious thing to reject the law of Moses, how much more serious is it to ignore the provision of the new covenant. The one found guilty of forsaking

God in the Old Testament was put to death under the law once guilt had been established. We see death was prescribed with the testimony of two or three Witnesses for murder. **Numbers 35:30** If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. We see death was prescribed with the testimony of two or three Witnesses for idolatry. **Deuteronomy 17:6** On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. Here he is just stating the fact that an abandonment of the old covenant was punishable by death.

10:29 If apostasy under the inferior covenant was hastily and rigidly punished, how much pain or punishment must be proper for the man who rejects the new covenant instituted by the blood of the Son of God? The question is left open for consideration by each reader, what do you say?

Rejection of Christ and His offering involves

a turning from the most holy elements of divine religion, and that in the cruelest manner. It is to renounce and tread underfoot the Son of God. It is to regard the blood of the covenant which makes man holy as itself common and unholy. It is to despise the very Spirit of grace.

The word insult is translated as a word that the ancient Greeks used for the most presumptuous, arrogant haughtiness, and was regarded as the worst possible sin. The idea is seen in various forms of the word translated to “entreat spitefully,” or “use despitefully,” or “reproach,” or “shamefully entreat.” Just as it is cruelly ironic for the covenant blood which makes holy to be regarded as itself unholy, so it is for the Spirit who's ministry brings divine grace to be rejected with arrogance and insolence!

Hebrews 10:29 (29) How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

The punishment of the new covenant violator is more severe than just physical death. The idea is that Jesus is greater than Moses and the new covenant is greater than the old and therefore a violation of the new is punishable by more. Three crimes are mentioned for such disobedience.

Trampled the Son of God underfoot. The word used for trample is the word in the Greek which means, harsh or to show a level of contempt. It speaks of Him being treated as dirt or with all insulting disrespect. Jesus used the same phrase to describe salt that loses its saltiness. **Matthew 5:13** You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. The point being made is that those who apostatize from the faith are treating Jesus and his teaching with the lowest form of contempt.

Regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant. This is in reference to Christ's sacrifice. It speaks of viewing Jesus' death

as common, unholy, or unclean. It speaks of treating Jesus' death as not being sacred or providing anything special. To treat it as unclean or common is to treat it as though it was no different from the death of any other man. There was something different in that his death was saving. It was not that there was something special in the literal blood of Jesus. It is His death that was sacred because it was a sacrificial death. His death sanctifies. Sanctified means making it able to enter the presence of God or made holy. Here the thing being condemned is a deliberate rejection of the blessings of the new covenant.

Insulted the Spirit of grace. The idea of insulted implies hostility, outrage, or a lack of concern. The one who apostatized has caused the Spirit of grace to be outraged. **Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase?** His point is that since the lesser violation, the rejection of the old covenant was punishable by death, can you imagine the punishment for treating the blood of Jesus the Son of God with blatant disregard?

One is worthy of the worst when they desert the best.

10:30 We can appreciate the severity of punishment awaiting such a one, for we know God who has claimed vengeance as His own prerogative and has promised to recompense. These words are probably taken from the song of Moses out of Deuteronomy 32:35, and they are quoted by Paul in urging Christians not to avenge themselves in Romans 12:19.

Another quotation from the song of Moses shows the severity of divine punishment: the Lord will judge His people as in Deuteronomy 32:36. This phrase may be interpreted two ways. In the old testament passage of Psalm 135:14. God judges His people by rescuing them and punishing their enemies. The author of Hebrews may be saying that God will vindicate those who are faithful to Christ in spite of adversity and temptation by punishing those who once knew Him but turned away. Or he may use the term in a general sense to mean that God will condemn the apostates and so “judge”

them.

Hebrews 10:30 (30) For we know Him who said, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY." And again, "THE LORD WILL JUDGE HIS PEOPLE."

The author quotes from Deuteronomy to prove his point about God dealing with sin. He affirms that God said those words. His point is that God takes responsibility to judge and punish those who abandon Him. God was just with Israel and His judgments upon them. They had greater privileges, greater responsibility, and greater judgment. Why did God not judge the other nations the way He did Israel? Why did He punish Israel so harshly for their idolatry and allowed others to prosper despite their idolatry? Because greater privileges, greater responsibility, and greater judgment! **Amos 3:2** "You only have I chosen among all the families of the earth; Therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." Why was Uzzah killed for touching the ark when just previously the Philistines did it all the time? Because greater privileges, greater responsibility, and

greater judgment. The same is true of us today!

10:31 In either event, the point is the same: it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God! It is fearful because He is God and all powerful; it is more fearful because He is the living God and eternal in wrath. It is well that we should realize that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is not soft, shallow, or flabby. It is a matter of blood and fire, a solemn, and at times almost a fierce thing.

Hebrews 10:31 (31) It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

It is a fearful or terrifying thing to fall into the hands of a living God. Since God is holy, just, and powerful it must be beyond a frightening thing to stand condemned by Him for the type of rejection mentioned above. He is a living God. What a contrast to the idols made of wood and stone which have no life and are not to be dreaded. To fall into the hands highlights being helpless in the face of judgment.

10:32 Fear of punishment is a powerful incentive; so is the precious memory of earthly faithfulness. Call those former days to your mind, he urges. After becoming Christians, or being enlightened, they had endured much for their faith. Great fight here Translate a word for an athletic contest, the figure will reappear in chapter 12:1-2. Afflictions are literally “pressures” on the Christian. This pressure results from tension created by the opposing poles of old nature and new, God and Satan, of the present age in the coming age.

Hebrews 10:32 (32) But remember the former days, when, after being enlightened, you endured a great conflict of sufferings,

This seems to imply that these people have been Christians for some time. It does not just mean “remember” it means “keep remembering.” He is calling on them to remember a time in their past when they were walking faithfully as Christians. When he speaks of being enlightened it refers to the time of their baptism when they became Christians. **Hebrews 6:4** For in the case of

those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit. He is pointing to the time when they were converted. It seems that shortly after their conversion, they faced a time of great opposition and persecution. The thing they endured is referred to as “great conflict of sufferings.”

The Greek word that is used in the translation of the word conflict is where we get our English word athletics. It can mean the struggle that takes place during an athletic contest. The Christian life is very fair in comparison to a contest. We are in a real fight against Satan, the forces of evil, the enemies of the cross, the world, etc. Here the one that we are being opposed by are persecutors. The emphasis is not on the nature of the conflict that they faced, but on the fact that they endured in spite of the conflict.

10:33 On the one hand, our author's first readers had been personally made a gazing stock or public spectacle. This word means

to be brought shamefully before public view, as in a theater, and reminds us of the later martyrdom of Christians by wild animals in public displays. These saints had not faced lions or leopards but the spiritual beasts of reproaches and afflictions from their associates.

On the other hand, they had become companions, or partners, or sharers with other Christians so mistreated for Christ's sake. This here signifies a way of life characterized by affliction. This is not a one-time occurrence. Under such perpetual and constant attack, the man of faith shows the genuineness of his commitment. This will be the subject of a strong exhortation in the next chapter.

Hebrews 10:33 (33) partly by being made a public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations, and partly by becoming sharers with those who were so treated.

Here are some of the specific persecutions that the church would have to endure. They were made a public spectacle. The apostle

Paul said that the apostles were made a “public spectacle to the world.” **1 Corinthians 4:9** For, I think, God has exhibited us apostles last of all, as men condemned to death; because we have become a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. Some have pointed to a very specific application of this “being made a public spectacle” as referring to Christians in the Circus Maximus in Rome. It is likely it just speaks of a general persecution that they faced daily. In his “Annals”, Roman historian Tacitus describes some of the public persecution that Christians endured. He says their death was made a matter of sport: they were covered in wild beasts skins and torn to pieces by dogs; or were set on fire in order to serve as torches when daylight failed. (Annals XV 44)

Clement, the friend, and co-worker of the apostle Paul (Philippians 4:3) describes in his writings how Christian women were forced to re-enact mythological scenes. Including the story of Dirce. Dirce was a queen of Thebes in the mid 150BC range. She was constantly and intentionally cruel to

her niece. The king ordered that she was to be killed by being tied to the horns of a bull and trampled on and torn limb from limb.

The persecution was promised. The persecution was severe at times. It would seem that these specific readers, although they had faced pointed persecution, had not yet faced martyrdom. **Hebrews 12:4 You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin;** Other Christians by this time certainly had faced martyrdom.

Nero's persecution was probably around this writing. 64AD marked the fire of Rome which Nero probably started and blamed it on the Christians. He hated the Christians; he accused them of cannibalism (Lord's Supper). He was lewd, involved in incest, homosexuality, and murder, even his own mother. Nero performed the worst atrocities upon his victims, he did not just kill Christians, he wanted to make them suffer first. Nero enjoyed dipping the Christians in wax, and impaling them on poles around his palace, he would then light them on fire, and

yell: “Now you truly are the light of the world.” Nero also performed many other kinds of torture: often killing them in the Circus Maximus in front of the large crowds of spectators where he did some of his most gruesome murders. Here he would wrap Christians up in animal skins and throw them to the lions, or dogs who would then tear these men and women apart in front of thousands of entertained spectators. At other times he would crucify them, and after the crowd would get bored, he would set the Christians on fire.

Great persecution is taking place at this time. 70% of all those that have ever died for their faith have died in this first century. He says that part of the being made a public spectacle was through the fact that they faced “reproaches.” This speaks of insulting words that were heaped on them because of their faith. He also mentions “tribulations” which would just refer to general difficulties that they encountered. He then mentions that some suffered voluntarily through association. Some in the church did not face direct persecution themselves, but they

suffered by sharing with those who did face persecution. The word “sharers” is a word in the Greek which simply means fellowship. In the next verse he will describe what that willful sharing entailed.

10:34 the Hebrew Christians had shown compassion or sympathy toward those who were in prison for their faith. They had experienced with joy the spoiling, or snatching away of their own goods, or substance. They knew that they had better possessions in heaven, possessions that were enduring, and for those they could endure the plunder of earthly goods.

Hebrews 10:34 (34) For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property, knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one.

Here we will see what type of things the willing sharers in suffering did. First, we see that they showed sympathy to prisoners. This makes clear that some people were incarcerated for their faith. It is likely that this

speaks of church leaders and preachers who refused to not speak about Jesus. **Acts 4:19-20** (19) But Peter and John answered and said to them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to give heed to you rather than to God, you be the judge; (20) for we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." They probably remembered Jesus' instructions about the care for those in prison for their faith. **Matthew 25:36** naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me. The ancient system did not provide food or clothing for prisoners. The prisoners relied upon other people to bring it to them or they would starve. It also put them at risk for identifying with these prisoners. The word "sympathize" is the word in the Greek that literally means to feel the same emotion and burden. The other time this word is used is referring to Jesus sympathizing with our weaknesses. **Hebrews 4:15** For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. This is the idea of putting compassion into action.

Second, he says they accepted the seizure of their property. It is likely that this is a result that comes by the association with the persecuted. Some have speculated that the persecution that he calls them to look back at was their expulsion from Rome by Emperor Claudius. Not only did they accept the seizure of their own property, but they did so joyfully. **Matthew 5:12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.** The reason they could accept the confiscation of their property was because their hope was not in this world, but in heaven. The better possessions they look forward to is connected to heaven. **Matthew 6:20 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.** Jesus taught that those who left earthly things would be given heavenly rewards. **Matthew 19:29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name's sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life.** This emphasizes the point well

that their hope was in heaven and not in earthly things. The better possession is also described as a lasting one. It is one that cannot be confiscated by man.

10:35 They had been faithful before; they can now remain true to Christ. Do not cast away your confidence, he urges. It has great wages or recompense of reward.

Hebrews 10:35 (35) Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward.

This last section of Hebrews is calling them to rid themselves of thoughts of quitting Christ and urging them to remain faithful. Having reminded them of the inspiring stories of their steadfastness in faith in the midst of persecution he calls them to remain faithful. He urges them that they have already suffered for Christ and to hold on because they would be rewarded. The point being made is that they had become Christians and as a result they had faced opposition. They had endured some difficult times, but to quit now would be to make what

they endured worth nothing. They are called earlier on several occasions to “hold fast.” To “throw away” would be the opposite of to “hold fast.” this implies The Reckless abandoning of something very valuable. The idea and wording behind this is the same as a soldier who may have thrown down their sword and shield in battle and turned their backs and ran for home. They have returned safely, but they would have been a disgrace to their society for such behavior. They would have been excluded from public assemblies in the town. They have already been told about their “confidence.” They had confidence to enter the most holy place.

Hebrews 10:19 Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, They had confidence to approach the throne of grace. **Hebrews 4:16** Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Them turning their backs would have been throwing away that privilege and confidence. He is teaching that not only would quitting cost them a heavenly reward, but our current confidence in Christ

has a present reward that they would be giving up as well.

10:36 Patience means endurance, and is a key note in the author's song of encouragement. What God has promised He will surely give, but only after faithfully enduring according to the will of God.

Hebrews 10:36 (36) For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God, you may receive what was promised.

He was calling them to go back and gather that same spirit of endurance which kept them through persecution. The statement “when you have done the will of God” points to a completed act. In this case the will of God is endurance and faithfulness until the very end.

10:37-38 “For yet in a very little while,” he urges them taking words from Isaiah 26:20. The Greek here literally says “a little, how very, very little.” By comparison with the ages of eternity, how very, very well this

describes the short Christian conflict on earth! For the same point from the perspective of the saints already martyred.

Revelation 6:9-11 (9) When the Lamb broke the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God, and because of the testimony which they had maintained; (10) and they cried out with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (11) And there was given to each of them a white robe; and they were told that they should rest for a little while longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren who were to be killed even as they had been, would be completed also. "He that comes" here refers to Christ the High Priest. The author takes the phrase from the Greek version of **Habakkuk 2:3** For the vision is yet for the appointed time; It hastens toward the goal and it will not fail. Though it tarries, wait for it; For it will certainly come, it will not delay. Christ was "He that comes" when He came into the world as Messiah. He is "He that comes" now to the Christian who awaits

His return. Assurance is given that He will come and will not tarry.

Two categories of men are named. The “just” or “righteous” will live through their faith, again words from Habakkuk. Faith here stresses the element of endurance, with almost the sense of “hope” in other New Testament epistles. The second category consists of those who draw back in disbelief and in them God finds no pleasure.

Hebrews 10:37-38 (37) FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING 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.

These verses come from two different Old Testament texts. The first part of verse 37 seems to come from Isaiah 26:20 and the rest of the quotation is a reference to Habakkuk 2:2-4 the first verse speaks of his coming being very near. In its original context it speaks of the first coming of the

Messiah. Here the warning points to the Second Coming. He is charging them to hold on just a little while longer because it will be worth it. In contrast, it would be a real shame for them to turn back at this stage when their reward is so close. Verse 38 is the key shift into the topic of chapter 11. Living by faith equates faithfulness. The way God determines a person is righteous is that they live by faith or walk faithfully. The key concept here is that “faith” and “shrinking back” are opposites. This aspect of a saving, and obedient faith is all through the next chapter. He calls them not to shrink back. The contrast is that God delights in the faithful, but not in the back slider. To incur God's displeasure is to incur His wrath.

10:39 The exhortation closes with a word of optimism. “We” includes the author and his first readers. We are not of that class who draw back, and end in perdition, or destruction, but of those who believe and keep on believing to the resultant saving of the soul. The next chapter will demonstrate the character and behavior of saving faith through examples of saints long dead. Here

the readers are urged to be among the faithful.

Some will be rejected, cursed, and burned, but “we are persuaded of better things of you!” Let each believer be fully informed regarding the destiny of deserters and apostates. Let him tremble before the wrath of a righteous God. But let him then be encouraged, and consoled, and strengthened, lest he becomes discouraged and fall to another of Satan's devices. This is the true style of exhortation, and Hebrews is above all a “word of exhortation.”

Hebrews 10:39 (39) But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.

The message here ends with a note of optimism, and the persuasiveness is powerful. He is making clear that he knows and trusts that they are not the shrinking back type. The idea of shrinking back has the idea of a person who never completes anything they started. The idea is that we make a lifetime commitment and we do not

quit. He has stated that there are two options, shrinking back or persevering. Shrinking back brings about destruction. The word destruction is used to speak of “perishing” in Hell. Perseverance brings about preservation of the soul. Man's salvation is conditioned upon faithfulness and we will see that it is that obedient faith that makes us pleasing to God.