



**THE  
LETTER  
TO THE  
HEBREWS  
AND TO US**

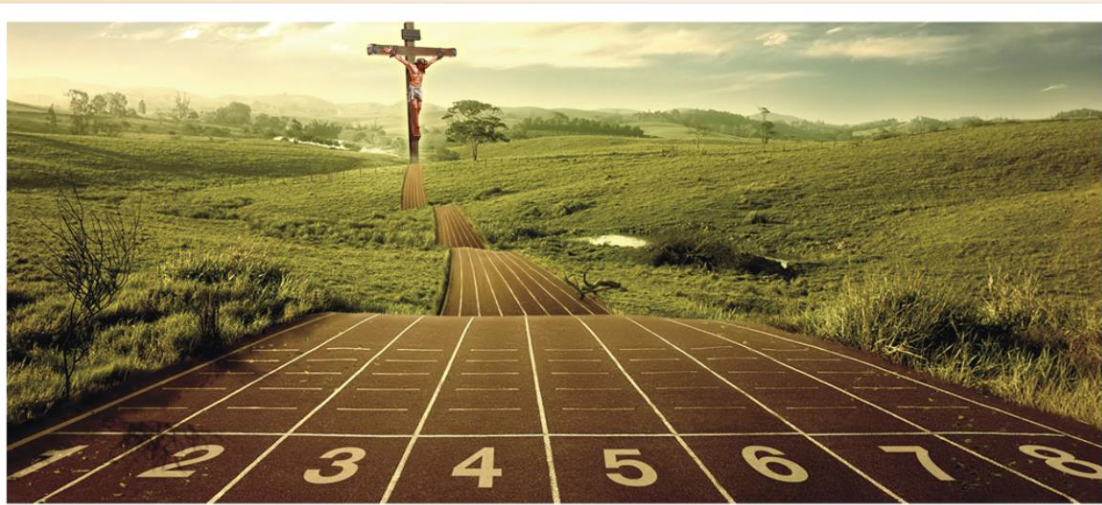
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



Lesson 1 for January 1, 2022

The book of Hebrews contains profound calls to follow Jesus and to live according to the known doctrine.

The author was aware of the struggles of the believers. He wrote about the enthusiasm when we accept the truth, the difficulties when serving Jesus, the temptations to abandon the way, and perseverance until the end.

This book is full of theological lessons, but it also contains practical advice for us.



-  Knowing the truth
-  Suffering for Christ
-  The challenges of faith
-  The work of the believers
-  Facing the future

# THE BOOK OF HEBREWS

**"God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets..."**

**(Hebrews 1:1)**

The book of Hebrews doesn't begin by mentioning the author and the recipient like letters usually do (although it ends similarly to a letter in Hebrews 13:22-25).

Hebrews is a sermon instead:

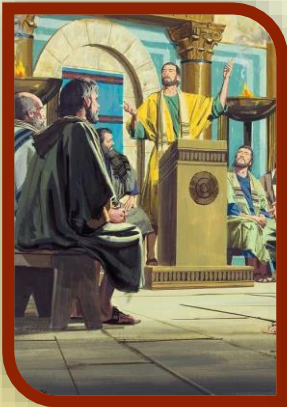
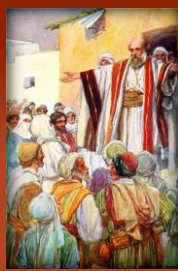
- 1** The author characterizes his work as a "word of exhortation" (Heb. 13:22; cf. Acts 13:15), and he uses the first-person plural pronoun (we/us/our)
- 2** There are several references to "speaking" and "hearing" (Heb. 2:5; 5:11; 6:9; 8:1; 11:32)
- 3** There is an alternation between exposition and exhortation
- 4** The themes are introduced like in an oral form of discourse

This also explains why the style of this book is different to the rest of Paul's letters.



# KNOWING THE TRUTH

“How shall we escape if we ignore so great a salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.” (Hebrews 2:3 NIV)



The Hebrews who were hearing Paul's speech had believed in Jesus. However, they had not met Jesus, but had heard people preaching about Him. That preaching came with miracles and the intervention of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 2:3-4).

They believed that their sins had been forgiven (Heb. 6:1), they received the Holy Spirit (Heb. 6:4), and the Kingdom of God was established in their lives (Heb. 12:28).

They were not newly converted “faith children,” but mature Christians (Heb. 5:12).



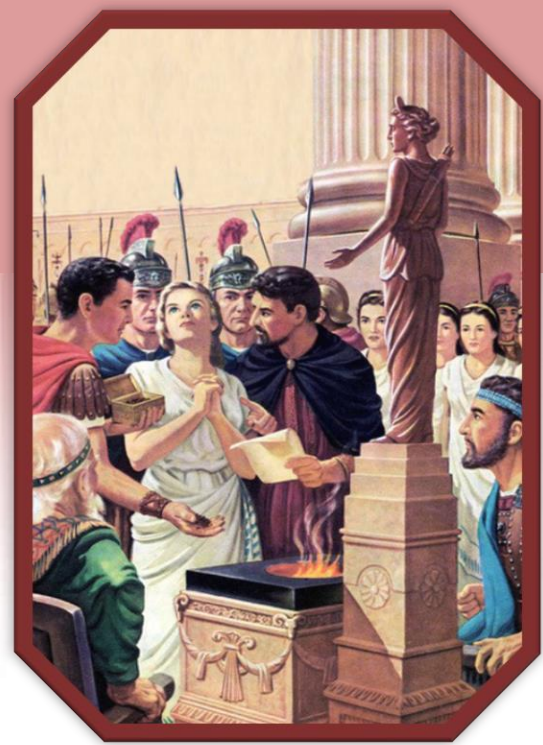
# SUFFERING FOR CHRIST

**“But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings.”**  
(Hebrews 10:32)



**The Hebrews faced strong opposition after being converted. “All who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.”**  
(2Tim. 3:12)

**The public hostility against the Christians was a response to their distinctive religious commitments. Their exemplary behavior made other people feel guilty.**



**Some Christians had been incarcerated and beaten, and others had lost their possessions (Heb. 10:33-34). Therefore, Paul was encouraging them to be faithful, and to imitate Moses who chose “to suffer affliction with the people of God [...]” (Heb. 11:25)**

# THE CHALLENGES OF FAITH

**"not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching."**

**(Hebrews 10:25)**

The persecution had an impact on the Hebrews. Paul's advice highlights some of their issues:

- **Temptations (2:18)**
- **Unbelief (3:12)**
- **Weakness (4:15)**
- **Stop gathering (10:25)**
- **Discourage (12:3, 12)**
- **Various sins (13:4-5)**
- **Doctrine errors (13:9)**



**Like Elijah, a great victory of faith led to later weakening and lack of trust (1K. 19:1-4).**

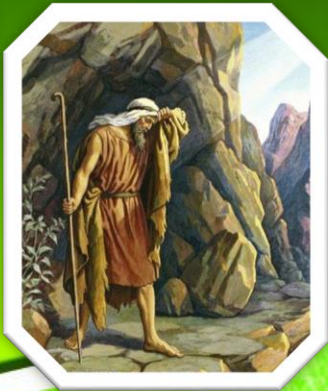
# THE WORK OF THE BELIEVERS

*"Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away." (Hebrews 2:1)*

What can we do to help the disheartened believers and those who have started to give up?

God treated Elijah affectionately in his discouragement (1K. 19:5-8). He gently reproached his attitude (1K. 19:9) and gave him something to do (1K. 19:15-18).

Paul also treated his audience affectionately (Heb. 6:1-3). He gently reproached their attitude (Heb. 2:1) and gave them something to do.



**Keep loving (Heb. 13:1)**



**Be hospitable (Heb. 13:2)**



**Help the prisoners and the abused (Heb. 13:3)**



**Imitate their pastors (Heb. 13:7)**

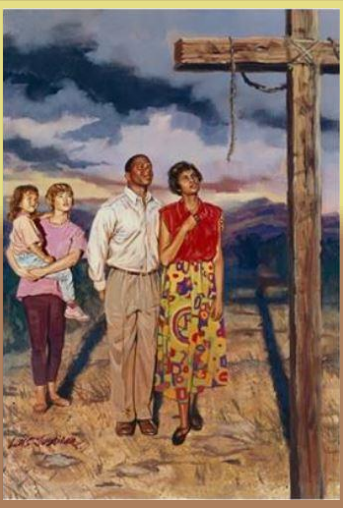
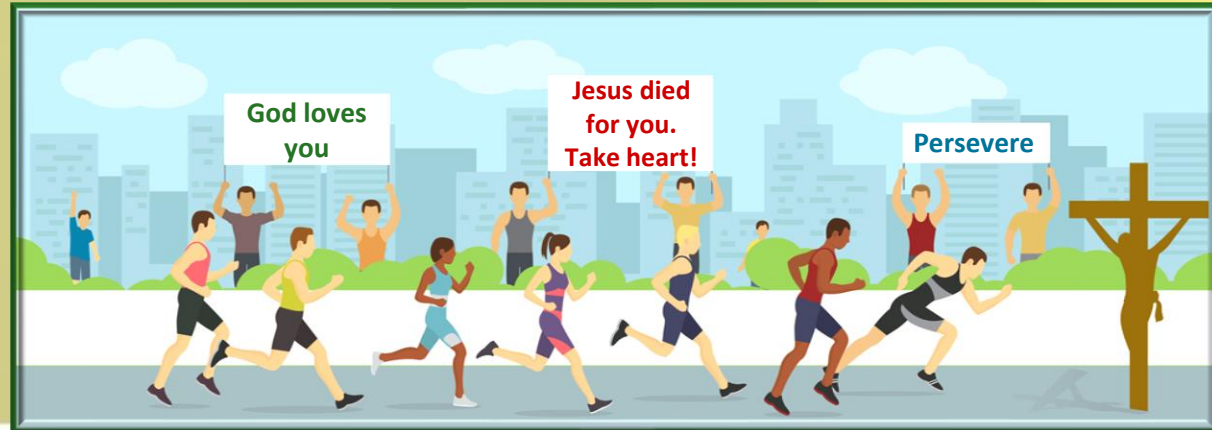
# FACING THE FUTURE

“[...] let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus [...]” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Like the Hebrews, we’re living in the “last days,” (Heb. 1:2) and we’re waiting for the fulfillment of the promises (Heb. 10:37). Therefore, we can also embrace Paul’s advice.

Hebrews recalls the issues the people of God had to face before entering Canaan, and their unbelief (Heb. 3:7-11).

We are encouraged to avoid that unbelief (Heb. 3:12-13), to cling to our faith (Heb. 10:38-39), to fix our eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:2), to live a life of holiness, and to fully trust God (Heb. 13:4-6).





**“We are still amidst the shadows and turmoil of earthly activities. Let us consider most earnestly the blessed hereafter. Let our faith pierce through every cloud of darkness and behold Him who died for the sins of the world [...] Let us be encouraged by the thought that the Lord is soon to come. Let this hope gladden our hearts. ‘Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.’ Hebrews 10:37. Blessed are those servants who, when their Lord comes, shall be found watching.”**

**E. G. W. (Testimonies for the Church, book 9, cp. 37, p. 286)**