

Hebrew Perspective

It is easy to read the book of Hebrews and come away with a cursory view that the target audience of the prophet was to a contingency of Jews who had heard and obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The writer of the Hebrew letter encouraged the brethren, who were suffering because of their obedience to the gospel, saying, “But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were enlightened, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; partly, being made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, becoming partakers with them that were so used. For ye both had compassion on them that were in bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your possessions, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better possession and an abiding one. Cast not away therefore your boldness, which hath great recompense of reward” (Heb. 10:32-35).

Here's your question for the day: What exactly would the trials and persecutions of these early Hebrew Christian entail? (Consider the following)

Jewish Views of Jewish Believers in Jesus

“They have left their father’s home and their mother’s bosom, to join the enemy and the cruel scoffer. They are strangers now; they have another God, another people, other laws, other worship, other language, other manners, other pursuits. And yet they can never be strangers; they are ours – flesh of our flesh, bone of our bone. They are dead; mourned as such, put away as such. And yet they are living. You speak of the dead, you think of them, you love them, you picture them as in glory, as perfect, and you hope soon to rejoin them. But though you have bewailed the apostate as dead, you may not think of them, nor love them, nor hope to join them, nor associate their memory with God and with good. The apostate is dead, in the sense of all that is repugnant in death” (Rosenbaum, 21, *Edersheim*).

For the most unrelenting persecution follows the Jews on whom the faintest suspicion of apostasy rests. His character, his conduct, and his motives are impunged; the vilest dishonesty, the most base degradation of what is highest and holy are freely charged against him. A man may live worse than a careless, an immoral life, and they will condone it; he may doubt almost every distinctive doctrine of Judaism, even its fundamental principles, and they will only shrug their shoulders. But conversion to Christianity, in the sense of belief, is deemed absolutely impossible, and is unpardonable (Rosenbaum, 32, *Edersheim*).

The supposed apostate was to be crushed, hunted down like vermin, and destroyed, and that by persons who themselves cared not a whit for Judaism, only that they were born in its communion, and would not allow anyone to forsake it” (*Edersheim*).