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## Difficulties for Jewish Believers



Keep in mind that the idea of a new covenant (see the commentary on [Jeremiah](#), to see link click [Eo - I Will Make a New Covenant with the People of Isra'el](#)) was not easy for the Jews to accept. Even after accepting **Yeshua** as **Messiah**, it was hard for them to make a clean break from everything they had known for their whole lives. The Gentiles didn't have that problem since they had not taken on the yoke of the Torah or been a part of the Levitical system. They had long before lost any real knowledge of the true **God**, and therefore, were worshiping idols - some primitive and some sophisticated - but idols nonetheless: **For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator - who is forever praised. Amen (Romans 1:21-25).** But since **Abraham's** covenant with **ADONAI** (see the commentary on [Genesis Ee - God's Covenant with Abram](#)), the Jews believed they had a special relationship with **God** (which they did) and didn't need anyone or anything else. The Dispensation of Grace was **a mystery** until **Christ** came (**Ephesians 5:32**).

It was not easy for Jews to, in effect, turn their backs on their heritage, especially when they knew the Torah was **God** given. Even after receiving **Messiah** as **Lord**

and **Savior** it was still difficult. The audience of the book of **Hebrews** was essentially a Messianic congregation. How much Levitical ceremony should they keep? How much should they let go? This had been a part of their lives since early childhood. The Temple was still standing and the Levitical priests were still ministering in it. Thus, part of the purpose of **Hebrews** was to confront those born-again Jews (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ [By - Jesus Teaches Nicodemus](#)**) with the fact that they should let go of all the Levitical trappings. All.

**Hebrews** was written to a people under siege. Many of those Jewish believers were beginning to say to themselves, "This is too hard. We received the Good News about **Yeshua** and believed it. But it's tough to break with our own people and traditions that we've practiced our whole lives and face all the persecution we've received." When you consider what they were going through at the time, it's easy to appreciate the difficulties and temptations they faced.

The high priest Ananias was especially hard and unrelenting. He had Messianic Jews automatically expelled from the Temple and considered them *cherem*, or devoted to destruction. They had access to the Temple their whole lives. Now they could have no part in the Levitical system, they could not communicate with the priests or attend the festivals. They were considered unclean. They could have nothing to do with their own people. They were cut off from their own society. Because of their faith in **Yeshua Messiah** their world had been turned upside down. Though in the eyes of **ADONAI** they were the only true Jews (**Romans 2:28-29**), they were considered worse than Gentiles by their fellow Jews.

Throughout **Hebrews** these immature believers are encouraged to keep their confidence in **Christ**, the mediator of a better covenant and their new **Great High Priest**. They are reminded that they were losing nothing for which they were not getting something infinitely better. They had been deprived of an earthly Temple, but they were going to get a heavenly one. They had been denied an earthly priesthood, but they now had a heavenly **Priest**. They had been deprived of the Levitical sacrifices, but now they had a final one.<sup>7</sup>