

III. *The perfect and final faith of the Christian dispensation.*
12:1-29.

A. *Jesus, the Author and Perfector of our faith.* 12:1-3.

Text

12:1-3

1 Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus the Author and Perfector of our faith, Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. 3 For consider Him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against Himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls.

Paraphrase

1 Wherefore, even we, like the combatants in the Grecian games, having so great an assembly of witnesses placed around us, laying aside every weight of worldly hopes and fears, and cares, and friendships, which encumber us in running, and the sin of apostasy which is so easily committed, let us run with perseverance the race appointed us;

2 Looking off from the ancients to Jesus, the Leader and Rewarder of the faithful, Who, for the joy of bringing many sons into glory which was set before Him, endured the lingering agonies of the cross, despising the shame of suffering as a malefactor, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. See Chap. 8:1.

3 Wherefore, attentively consider the dignity of Jesus your Leader, Who, before He was thus rewarded, patiently endured such calumny, opposition, and persecution from sinners against Himself, that ye may not be weary, being dispirited in your minds through the continuance of the persecution.

Comment

Therefore let us also, seeing

This is done with our spiritual sight. We have just gone through God's memory album to behold the monuments to the saints of God.

we are compassed about

Whatever way we are turned in trials or tribulations, there before us are people who had to suffer like experiences or more. As Israel was under a cloud on the way to Canaan, so are we surrounded by the breath of all time.

with so great a cloud of witnesses

“Cloud” is a classical metaphor used for a multitude.

- a. Homer speaks of “a cloud of footmen,
a cloud of birds, and
a cloud of horsemen.”
- b. Tivy speaks of “a cloud of footmen.”
“Witnesses” refers to those of Chapter Eleven.
 - a. It does not mean that this crowd is watching us.
 1. Our feeble efforts surely would cause them too much anxiety.
 2. A witness is used as a bit of evidence for us, but not necessarily a present observer of us.
 - b. We are surrounded by these great examples of faith. In the midst of such a company how can we shrink back?
Some feel that a grandstand of present people is meant, but I think the word “great” refers back to Chapter Eleven.

lay aside every weight and sin

The figure here is that of a race, which requires light equipment.

- a. The “weight” would be burdens which delay or impede our progress.
- b. An Olympic competitor strips himself of everything but essential equipment in order to run his best.
- c. The weight carrier will be soon passed by the one who knows enough to lay aside weight and sin.
We hear people say, “What is the harm or sin in doing this or that?”
 - a. Is it a weight, a sin, or a wing?
 - b. “Does it help or hinder?” is a good question.

which doth so easily beset us

Some sins are besetting sins.

- a. A Negro man once called this “upsetting” sin.
- b. Sin so easily sets in our lives.
Newell believes unbelief is referred to here, but this is not

proved. Newell: Sin is as natural to the flesh as it is for animals to draw breath, and the moment you take your eye off Christ you have the certainty of the sin besetting you.

The sin will be different with individuals. Each one must lay aside his own peculiar weakness and sins, and run the race.

let us run with patience

“Patience” is also translated “stedfastness.” Look at the examples of it.

- a. Moses chose ill treatment with God’s people rather than sin.
- b. David proved true in great danger as Saul sought his life.
- c. Paul says, I Cor. 9:24-26: “I therefore so run as not uncertainly.” Phil. 3:12-14; Acts 20:24; II Tim. 4:7-8.

First we had the preparation for the race; now the running.

- a. A race has three stages: preparation, patience and prize.
- b. The figure is a race that requires endurance, for it pictures the Christian’s life.

Sin will slow us down in the Christian race.

that is set before us

The course is set for us; we have to run under every condition that befalls us.

- a. The runner does not prepare the course; he runs.
- b. The runner prepares only himself, not the course.

We are not to complain about our race, but rejoice in the privilege to run because of the cloud of witnesses, the reward and the company who run with us.

looking unto Jesus

This is the Goal.

- a. Keep your eye on Jesus as you run.
- b. Many an athlete has lost a race by losing sight of the goal. He is our Pacemaker. This gives us our strength, our second wind.
- a. With eyes on Christ we see the perfect Example and Energy for the Way.
- b. Thayer suggests “looking unto” in the Greek means “to fix the eyes on something.”

the Author

“The leader” is a second translation.

- a. Thayer: One who takes the lead.

- b. In a great cloud of faithful people Christ is the Leader. . .
Here is the great Chief Witness.

Perfector of our faith

Christ is not only the beginning of our race but the Finisher likewise. This word, "perfector," also rendered "finisher" occurs nowhere else in the New Testament.

- a. It means a completer, perfector, or finisher.
b. It carries the idea of one who brings any plan to its full and perfect consummation.

Who for the joy that was set before Him

Joy in spite of suffering.

- a. Isaiah 53 pictures Him as a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, yet He was joyful to bring salvation to the world.
b. Phil. 3 pictures Christ's glad willingness to show the love of God to the world.

A bitter, cruel experience was endured by Him so that He might bring joy into the world.

McKnight says it was not a joy which He was in possession of, but one to be received.

endured the cross

Jesus' race required some endurance likewise. His race course was set for Him and He faced it.

Angels could have rescued Him. Matt. 26:53.

His disciples tried to change His course. Luke 9:51.

despising shame

He endured the awfulness of the cross, and the shame of sin. He did not rejoice in it, but despised it. This verse lends credence to a later phrase interpreted, "endured such contradiction."

- a. Joy was in it, but shame was there, too.
b. It is impossible for us to understand how Christ was joyful in the saving of those who were His enemies.
c. While we were sinners Christ died for us.

and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

He ran His course and this was His privilege, to be seated at the side of God. If we run our course, some day we will have the privilege to be where He is. John 14:1-4.

for consider Him

You have considered the sacrifice of the heroes of the faithful to obtain an inheritance. That is good. Now consider Jesus who endured for you.

- a. How can we turn away from Him in despair?
- b. How can we turn again unto sin?

Let us study Christ, His attitude in every trial, for He had all the trials.

that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners

"Gainsaying" is also translated "contradiction." The word in Greek is *antilogia*, "opposition."

Observe His opposition.

- a. John 1:11: Came to His own, but they did not receive Him.
- b. Chief priest, scribes. John 12:42-46.
- c. Roman law put Him to death.
To consider Him is to endure. The interpretation, "endured such contradiction," is sometimes allowed to show that Christ had contradictions, such as "joy" and "despising shame."
- a. "Of sinners" indicates that men contradicted and opposed Him.
- b. He was opposed every way He turned.

against Himself

What did they say against Him?

- a. Beelzebub was His power. Matt. 10:25; Matt. 12:24.
- b. He is Joseph's Son. Luke 4:22.
- c. He is a deceiver. Matt. 27:63.

All this may be forgiven. Matt. 12:32.

Some authorities allow it to be read "themselves" rather than "himself."

that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls

Many are the exhortations to steadfastness:

- a. Rom. 8:17: "If so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him."
- b. Gal. 6:9: "Be not weary in well doing."
- c. Rev. 2:3: "Thou — hast not grown weary."
- d. II Thess. 3:13: "Be not weary."

In times of distress just keep looking to the Lord, remembering His afflictions.

HELPS FROM HEBREWS

Study Questions

2414. Describe the nature of the 12th chapter.
2415. After the heroes of the faith are exalted in Chapter Eleven, what Person is exalted here?
2416. What conclusion is drawn to open the chapter?
2417. How does the Christian see?
2418. What are we to see in this chapter and in this verse?
2419. What is meant by, "compassed about"?
2420. Could we suffer anything not suffered already by someone in God's album?
2421. Enlarge on the idea of the "cloud."
2422. Has God used clouds in history?
2423. Discuss the word "witness."
What is the word in the original?
Does it mean that they are in the spirit world all about us watching us?
Could it refer to people around us who watch us?
Does the word "great" help to clarify who they are?
Would the patriarchs be pleased to watch us?
Could we use the word "example" in place of witness?
2424. What is the Christian to do with weight and sin?
2425. What is the difference between weight and sin?
2426. Do people become encumbered with good things that destroy their effectiveness, such as lodges, clubs, sports, etc.?
2427. Can good actually be evil in some instances?
2428. Define the idea of "beset us."
2429. Do we have our own "besetting sins"?
2430. Do athletes have problems that are peculiar to them in training that we might apply here?
2431. What figure of athletics is used here?
2432. What is implied by "running"?
2433. What is an alternate translation of "patience"?
2434. Is the race a common figure in the Word of God?
2435. Will sin give us wings or weight?
2436. Are there stages of a race that can be lessons for us in the Christian life?
2437. What does "set before us" imply?
2438. Do runners prescribe the characteristics of the track?
2439. What does the runner prepare?
2440. Have we had great company in the race of life?

HELPS FROM HEBREWS

2441. How important is sight in a race?
2442. What is the Christian to look to?
2443. What is our danger if our eye is not on Christ?
2444. What are the figures used of Christ in this verse?
2445. What does author mean by Perfecter? Does he mean perfection?
2446. Can we say that He is the Alpha and Omega of the race?
2447. Who is the Chief Witness?
2448. How can He serve us in these capacities?
2449. Did Jesus enjoy the race?
2450. Compare Phil. 2:5-11 with this idea.
2451. In life did He have joy or sorrow?
2452. When is there joy involved in a race?
2453. Aren't the greatest joys being chosen to race, and the victory?
2454. Was the endurance of the cross joy?
2455. Wherein did He have joy?
2456. Was His course set for him?
2457. Did anyone try to get Him to look aside? Why?
2458. Does His endurance challenge you?
2459. How could he be "joyful," yet "enduring" and "despising"?
2460. What is meant by the expression, "despising shame"?
2461. Are these phrases examples of a great work that we may not like to do, but the joy of victory that makes up for it?
2462. What was at the end of the course for Christ?
2463. In the roll of faithful, who does the author want us to give special consideration to?
2464. Can we turn away from Him when we consider His love, sacrifice, concern and reward?
2465. What is the difference between the endurance of Christ and that of the heroes of the faith?
2466. What phase of Christ's life is to be considered?
2467. Can we ever face any trials that Jesus didn't face?
2468. What do you understand "gainsaying" to mean?
2469. From what source did His opposition come?
2470. Were there other sources of opposition to His purpose by persons who thought that they were helpful?
2471. What groups of men opposed Him who should have been followers?
2472. What did they say of Him?
2473. A consideration of Jesus should do what for us?

2474. Name some other verses that speak of weariness.

2475. Is there any promise of reward to those who wax weary?

B. *Perils threatening the life of faith.* 12:4-17.

1. *Failure to respond to chastening.* 12:4-13.

Text

4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin:
5 and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons,

My son, regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord,
Nor faint when thou art reprov'd of Him;

6 For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth,
And scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.

7 It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are you bastards, and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness. 12 Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees; 13 and make straight paths for your feet, that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed.

Paraphrase

4 Your sufferings are far short of those which Christ endured. For not yet hath the blood of any of you been shed in combating against your wicked persecutors.

5 Besides, have ye forgotten the exhortation in which God reasoneth with you as His children? My son, do not think lightly of the Lord's chastisement, as they do who regard affliction as things accidental; neither, through too quick a feeling of the chastisement, nor by considering it as a token of God's anger, fall into despair when thou art rebuked of Him.

6 Instead of being tokens of God's anger, afflictions are proofs of His love: For whom the Lord loveth He chastiseth, and

sharply corrects for his faults every son whom He adopteth.

7 If then ye endure affliction, know that God behaveth towards you as His children, giving you such correction as must be of great advantage to you. For what legitimate son is there whom his father never punishes for his faults?

8 But if ye live without that chastisement whereof all the sons of God are partakers, certainly ye are treated as bastards whose education is no object of their father's care, and not as the genuine sons of God.

9 Further, we have had fathers of our bodies, who chastised us for our faults, and yet we loved and obeyed them: shall we not much rather, from affection and gratitude, be in subjection to the Father of our spirits, when He corrects us for our faults, to fit us for living with Him for ever?

10 This submission is due to the Father of our spirits, because He corrects us with more prudence and affection than our earthly fathers. For they verily, during the few days of our childhood, chastised us according to their own will governed by passion, but He always for our advantage, that we might partake of His holiness; it being necessary to our living with Him eternally, that we be holy.

11 Now no chastisement, indeed, whether from God or man, at the time it is inflicted, is the cause of joy, but of sorrow to be chastised: Nevertheless, afterwards, it gives as a reward the peaceful fruits of righteousness to them who are properly disciplined by it.

12 Wherefore, bring into the posture of action your arms which hang down, and your weakened knees; that is, vigorously exert your whole faculties in the conflict with affliction:

13 And by removing every temptation, make smooth paths for your feet, that if ye are infirm in any part, that which is lame may not be wholly dislocated by your falling, but rather strengthened by proper exercise.

Comment

Ye have not yet resisted unto blood

This means they have not fought the limit.

a. Paul could say that he had.

1. Acts 16:33: The jailor washed Paul's stripes.

2. II Cor. 6:5.

3. II Cor. 11:23.

4. II Cor. 11:24.

b. Jesus could say that He had.

1. Isaiah 53: "With His stripes we are healed."

2. The cross meant shedding blood for Him, although He did not resist the cross, but sin.

3. Christ's resistance was against those who would have changed His course.

How simple are our hardships today in comparison to theirs.

unto blood

An ancient figure of speech concerning boxers may be alluded to here.

a. Leather thongs containing pieces of metal were fastened to arms, etc.

b. Fighters were often very bloody after a battle.

Many modern preachers are afraid of blood.

a. They are afraid to preach against sin because it might make them unpopular.

b. Some are afraid of loss of salary or loss of position.

Churches do not want "bloody" preachers.

a. They want him to be loved and respected by all the denominational brethren.

b. It is time to "resist unto blood."

striving against sin

We are to hate evil, Ps. 97:10. Sin, says Vincent, is personified here. Fighting evil brought blood upon Jesus. Striving against sin brought blood to Stephen and James, but not to those who would read Hebrews.

and ye have forgotten the exhortation which reasoneth with you as with sons

The word for "sons" is "adult sons," not infants.

a. Infants cannot reason.

b. Paternal reasoning is here called "exhortation."

It is a joy to see infants grow up and enter into the parental councils.

a. Too much of our trouble in churches is a result of spiritual infancy rather than mature thinking on the part of Christians.

b. God desires to reason with us as sons old enough to be reasonable.

Some question whether this statement is an affirmation or a question.

- a. The American Standard Version expresses affirmation.
- b. Verse 12 rather suggests that some had forgotten, so this may be understood as an affirmation.

My son

A quote from Proverbs 3:11-12. It is a free quotation but an accurate one.

- a. It is to show a tender relationship that God has for us even though we are chastened.
- b. If God calls us a son, we ought to bear anything that comes our way.

regard not lightly the chastening of the Lord

Love and responsibility prompt chastening.

- a. Rev. 3:19: "As many as I love I reprove and chasten."
 1. We do not ordinarily discipline other people's children.
 2. We are most concerned with those we love most.
- b. Eph. 6:4 teaches responsibility.

Chastening has wonderful value for us.

 - a. A "thorn" kept Paul humble. II Cor. 12:7-10.
 - b. Trials work patience. James 1:2-4; Rom. 5:3.
 - c. Enduring of temptation brings a crown of life. James 1:12.
 - d. It yields peaceable fruit. Heb. 12:11.
 - e. It brings eternal glory. II Cor. 4:17.

nor faint when thou art reproved of Him

We are not to cower like an abused dog. Reproof is for improvement.

- a. II Tim. 3:16 "Every scripture is profitable — for correction."
- b. Rom. 5:3: "We also rejoice in our tribulations."
- c. II Cor. 4:17: "For our light affliction which is for the moment, worketh for us more and more exceedingly an eternal weight of glory."

Is all affliction of God?

 - a. It does not come directly. James 1:12-13 says God tempts no one.
 - b. Paul's "thorn" was spoken of as a messenger of Satan. II Cor. 12:7-10.
 - c. God allows the devil to tempt us and try us, as he did Job.

for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth

Does He not chasteneth the ungodly too?

- a. There is a difference in punishment, for theirs will be eternal.
- b. The sun shines on the just and the unjust, so the wicked receive chastening.

How does He chasten the loved ones?

- a. Peter answers, trial. I Pet. 1:6; I Pet. 4:6.
- b. Paul found a thorn in the flesh. II Cor. 12:7-10.
- c. Through enduring temptation, says James. James 1:12.
- d. Through suffering, says Peter. I Pet. 5:10.

God can turn it to good if we love Him. Rom. 8:28.

God will not allow us to be tempted above what we are able to endure. I Cor. 10:13.

Let us not be like Cain who said it was greater than he could bear. Gen. 4:13.

and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth

No child of God should expect to enter heaven without passing through the furnace of affliction.

Paul said, "With much tribulation," we enter the kingdom of God. Acts 14:22.

God's afflictions are paternal in nature only when we submit to Him.

- a. For the ungodly, it is fate or chance.
- b. For the Christian, it is a lesson to be learned from God.

it is for chastening that ye endure

Also translated "endure unto chastening," "if ye endure chastening." Alford says, "It is not for punishment, not for any evil purpose; you are under the attention and affection of the Father."

God dealeth with you as with sons for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not?

He reasons from the common practice of men, that it is not right that God's children should be exempt. Proper discipline leads to proper conduct.

but if ye are without chastening whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons

This rather makes one tremble, who has such an easy time in life compared to those in Chapter Eleven.

- a. Which of us has suffered?
- b. How easy we Christian people live in these United States!
- c. We begin to wonder whether we might be illegitimate offspring.

Feel encouraged by chastening, for it is evidence of your true sonship.

furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits and live?

We gave them reverence if we were trained properly.

- a. Parents who allow their children to abuse them do the child an injustice.
- b. No reverence exists if the child pouts and grouches. Observe how insistent God is on respect of children for parents.
Eph. 6:1-2: "Obey your parents in the Lord."
- a. It is a commandment, "which is the first commandment with promise."
- b. Failure brought severe judgment. 6:3.
- c. Compare the law of Moses. Deut. 21:20.

The Father of spirits deserves reverence, and upon it we will deserve to live.

- a. "Father of spirits" is also translated "Father of our Spirit."
- b. The spirit comes from God and goes back to Him at death. See Ecc. 12:7.
- c. Parental obedience was essential to life under the old covenant, and Heavenly Father reverence is essential to life now.

for they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them

Here temporary parental chastening is contrasted with loving discipline of God. At best, it is earthly chastening for a brief span of our life.

but He for our profit

Chastening does good. It is for our profit, not God's. Observe the many exhortations to endure chastening. Rom. 5:3; Rom. 12:12; II Cor. 7:4; I Pet. 4:13; I Pet. 4:19.

that we may be partakers of His holiness

God expects holiness, and this is the way He gets it.

- a. I Pet. 3:13-17: "Be ye holy."
- b. Rev. 22:11: "He that is holy, let him be made holy still."
True Christians are holy.
- a. I Pet. 2:9: "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood."
- b. Heb. 12:23: "Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect."
- c. Heb. 3:1: "Wherefore, holy brethren."

all chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous

At the time it is severe, but it brings a person to be obedient. We are like children. We shun the rod even when we need it, and know we deserve it.

yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit

A person who is selfish is spoiled, cantankerous, and far from being peaceable.

Let us not be hard-hearted, but enter into the discipline with surrender and joy. This is the proper spirit for us to have.

unto them that have been exercised thereby

They were to be "trained" by it, is the Greek meaning.

Examples of it working in men's lives:

- a. Paul — thorn in the flesh.
- b. David — II Sam. 12:1-23; II Sam. 16:9-14.
- c. Job — 42:7-8.

We should enter into chastening with surrender and joy.

even the fruit of righteousness

Gal. 5:22. The fruit of the spirit is meant here.

If we are disciplined right by our attitude, we will produce right.

wherefore, lift up the hands that hang down and the palsied knees

A quotation from Isaiah 35:3.

- a. Here is the figure of weary travelers.
- b. Perhaps one is worn with sickness, fatigue.
- c. Weakness is pictured.

In the light of the good things concerning chastening, weak knees and powerless hands should be made strong.

- a. The happiest people are sometimes invalids.
- b. The most miserable are sometimes millionaires with money, health and prestige.
Extend hands of glad service, and walk joyfully in spite of all hardships.

and make straight paths for your feet

This sounds like John the Baptist, Matt. 3:3.

It sounds like Isaiah, 40:3.

Take the straight way, not the rough, crooked way. The person who has prepared himself to endure evils goes on in a straight way.

that they which are lame

The journey "out of the way" is so much more difficult for those who are strong. Elijah put up this proposition. I Kings 18:21. We can picture a group traveling on foot; some are weak and lame.

- a. The strong and courageous ought to make a smooth, straight journey for the sake of the weak.
- b. Many a church is defeated by some half-hearted elder who says, "I don't think we can do it."

be not turned out of the way

This may also be translated, "put out of joint," or "lest halting should grow worse."

Becoming feeble for awhile may result in a complete loss.

- a. We do not go bad all at once, but by degrees.
- b. When led into a diverse path, many remain entangled.

but rather be healed

What is the healing?

- a. Renewed faith. Appreciation for chastening has healing power in it.
- b. It is faith such as the old patriarchs had that gives strength. Why be feeble, wayward, and downcast when healing may be had?

Study Questions

2476. Who has resisted unto blood?
2477. How many of us suffer for Christ?
2478. Have we fought a bloody battle?

HELPS FROM HEBREWS

2479. Did Paul resist unto blood? How many times?
2480. Was it prophesied that Jesus would?
2481. "Unto blood" may refer to what ancient custom?
2482. What may the blood refer to? Is it literal or figurative?
2483. Are preachers afraid of blood today?
2484. Describe the bloody gladiators.
2485. Do churches want a "bloody" preacher or one popular with the denominations?
2486. What will make the striving preacher "bloody"?
2487. Where will we find sin personified as our opponent?
2488. Is all sin to be found in the world?
2489. Is the word "sons" inclusive of children in its idea?
2490. Can infants reason with the logic of this book?
2491. Is there some special exhortation forgotten by them? Where is it found?
2492. Who is doing the exhortation which is a reasoning one?
2493. If God calls us sons, what ought we to do?
2494. What degree of attention should we give to chastening?
2495. Does the Lord chasten us? Cf. Rev. 3:19.
2496. Who does a father chasten, his or the neighbors' children?
2497. What two things felt by a father in his heart cause him to be willing to chasten?
2498. Is there value in being chastened?
What did Paul hear from God?
What do trials work?
What will endurance bring, according to James 1:12?
What does it yield? Heb. 12:11.
What is its eternal reward? Cf. II Cor. 4:17.
2499. Should we cower before God like an abused animal?
2500. What is reproof for if not for improvement?
2501. Is the preacher to reprove?
2502. Is all affliction of God? Cf. James 1:12-13.
2503. Was Paul's thorn from God? Cf. II Cor. 12:7-10.
2504. Who afflicted Job?
2505. What is the difference between the chastening of the wicked and righteous?
2506. If God doesn't send it, how can it be said that He chastens us?
2507. Who in the early history of man complained of his chastening?
2508. Whom does God chasten?

HELPS FROM HEBREWS

2509. What is the difference in attitude of the chastened wicked ones, and righteous people?
2510. What does God do to those whom He loves?
2511. Does He chasten the evil ones too?
2512. What is the difference?
2513. Can God use evil for good purposes? Cf. Rom. 8:28.
2514. Should we expect to gain heaven without some chastening?
2515. Give a different translation of verse 7.
2516. Are we to endure chastening, or is it for chastening that we endure?
2517. In what relationship does God deal with us in verse 7?
2518. If earthly fathers need to discipline children, should we expect it from our divine Father?
2519. What is evidence of our true sonship?
2520. If you have had it easy, what questions might you ask?
2521. Who is meant by, "We"?
2522. What is meant, "father of our flesh"?
2523. Who is the Father of our spirits?
2524. Does God teach respect for earthly parents?
2525. How much emphasis does He give?
2526. What was a parent to do to a child that would not respond?
2527. Could much juvenile delinquency be ended if we practiced the teachings of the Old Testament?
2528. Is there a plan that is better?
2529. What conclusion is drawn after his discussion of reverence to earthly parents?
2530. What is his point in the time discussed?
2531. Who thinks discipline is good, the child or the parent?
2532. Can we act more mature than children?
2533. Is there to be something gained from chastening?
2534. What is to be developed in us by chastening?
2535. For what ought the Christian to suffer? Cf. I Pet. 4:13, 19.
2536. What is holiness?
2537. Were the Hebrews holy? Cf. 3:1.
2538. How can holiness be obtained by chastening?
2539. Do people shun the rod, according to verse 11?
2540. Is there danger in seeking discipline?
2541. How do people take chastening at the moment?
2542. Tell how heathens bring pain upon themselves?
2543. Did heathens chasten themselves at Mount Carmel?
2544. What does good discipline yield?

2545. Are spoiled people peaceable?
2546. Why is good spoken of as "fruit" while evil is spoken of as "works"?
2547. What is meant by "exercised thereby"?
2548. What does "hands that hang down" refer to?
2549. Where is the original expression found?
2550. What is the figure?
2551. Is this an exhortation to do good to others or an exhortation to self?
2552. Why do hands hang down? Is this not the place for them?
2553. Tell of Moses' tired hands.
2554. Define "palsied knees."
2555. Tell of others who used the same language as v. 13.
2556. What does "straight" mean?
2557. Can you turn aside to evil and still walk straight?
2558. Is this the same word as Matthew 3:3?
2559. Tell who the word "lame" refers to.
2560. What kind of a picture is to be represented by these figures?
2561. Is there any responsibility beyond self taught in this verse?
2562. What is the alternate translation of "turned out of the way"?
2563. What is the danger of feebleness and lameness?
2564. What is the method of healing?
2565. Does chastening help?
2566. Is there any need for being lame when we have healing available?
2567. Would you classify the members of your congregational fellowship as lame or strong?

2. *Falling short of the grace of God.* 12:14-17

Text

12:14-17

14 Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled; 16 lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birth-right. 17 For ye know that even when he afterward desired to

inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for a change of mind in his father, though he sought it diligently with tears.

Paraphrase

14 Earnestly cultivate peace with all men, with the Gentiles as well as with the Jews, and even with your enemies: But at the same time maintain holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord;

15 Carefully observing your own behaviour, and that of your brethren, lest any one, through gross sins continued in, come short of the reward God has graciously promised to the faithful, lest some apostate rising trouble you, and, by his errors and bad example, many of you be corrupted;

16 Also, lest there be among you any fornicator — any one addicted to his appetites; or any profane person, who, despising spiritual blessings, renounces them for the sake of present pleasures, as Esau did, who for one meat gave away his birth-rights.

17 And his folly ye know from the scripture by this, that although afterwards he wished to inherit the blessing, he was reprobated by his father, who durst not retract words which he felt himself moved by inspiration to utter; for he found no place of repentance in his father, though he earnestly sought the blessing with tears. Instead of repenting, his father confirmed the blessing to Jacob, Gen. 27:33.

Comment

Follow after peace with all men

Christ set the example.

- a. He taught turning the other cheek. Matt. 5:39.
- b. He refused to let Peter defend him. Matt. 26:52.
- c. He came as a lamb to the slaughter. Isaiah 53.

The word "follow" is a strong word.

- a. In Greek it is "to pursue, as in a chase or battle."
- b. It is something to work at, for a warring world will do all it can to keep us from peace.

We are exhorted to strive for peace.

- a. Rom. 12:18: "As much as in you lieth be at peace."
- b. Col. 3:15: "Let the peace of God rule."
- c. I Thess. 5:13: "Be at peace."

- d. Rom. 14:19: "Follow after the things which make for peace."
It is a qualification for elders and deacons.
- a. I Tim. 3:3: "No brawler."

and the sanctification

This is the experience of all. It does not encourage camp meetings, emotionalism, where "second blessings" are sought.

- a. All in Christ are sanctified. I Cor. 1:2.
- b. In Hebrews, "sanctified" means "separated unto God."
1. It does not refer to feelings, but to Christ's blood.
10:10: "We have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all."
2. When we become Christians we are then sanctified.
Sanctification is obtained by yielding once for all to God. It is not a second filling. The word "sanctification" is also translated "holiness."

without which no man shall see the Lord

There then is no salvation for any except by the blood. The moral man had better come under the blood if he would see God.

The denominationalist had better be sure of Christ's own Ways, for it is the Way of sanctification. This sanctified being of ours has many responsibilities, and these must be pursued if we would see the Lord.

looking carefully

Four kinds of troubles should be looked for.

- a. Those who fall short.
- b. Bitterness springing up.
- c. Fornication.
- d. Profane person.
This is not gossip-hunting, but a carefulness on the part of those who watch in behalf of souls.

lest there be any man that falleth

Observe the repeated warnings that show the possibility: II Cor. 6:1; Luke, 8:18; Heb. 3:12, 4:1, 6:6, 10:31. Sometimes the least likely ones fall, so it requires a careful watch.

short of the grace of God

One so great as Paul was afraid of this happening to himself, for he says, I Cor. 9:26: "So fight I."

Compare I Tim. 4:1; Gal. 5:4; Rev. 2:5.

If we fall short of God's grace, then we have missed everything. This the Christian can do.

lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you

Most every church has a few devilish members who set the tone for bitterness and strife. Calvin feels this alludes to Deut. 29:18.

- a. Moses warned the people to beware lest any root of germination should bear gall and wormwood among them.
- b. If we allow a wicked person to grow in the church, it will corrupt and defile many.

and thereby the many be defiled

A few trouble-makers can bring reproach upon all. One bad apple soon causes the bushel of apples to be rotten. Israel allowed a few people to turn to idolatry, and soon ten tribes were carried away with it.

lest there be any fornicator

This is an awful sin, for it undermines the home.

- a. I Cor. 5:9-13 says to put him out of the fellowship.
- b. Heb. 13:4 says God will judge him.
- c. Compare also I Cor. 6:9.

This was a warning made by the Jerusalem counsel in Acts 15.

or profane person

The Greek word is *bebelas*. It doesn't necessarily mean to blaspheme or do violence, evil.

- a. It refers literally to a threshold that anyone and everyone may trample over.
- b. It refers to something in which there is no special consciousness. Compare I Tim. 1:9; 4:7; 6:20; II Tim. 2:16.

A "profane" man is one who has not thought of God.

as Esau who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright

Sin can destroy one's birthright. Esau found it out.

- a. Milligan says the tradition of the Jews is that Esau was also a fornicator.
- b. His profanity is seen in Gen. 25:34 where we read, "despised his birthright."
Sin is a selling out to the devil.

for ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing he was rejected

A moment of pleasure may cause us to think that we shall never be disappointed, but we will be.

- a. In a time of soberness a person comes to desire all that he has lost.
- b. The prodigal son, when he came to himself, remembered his home and blessings.
Esau finally sought his birthright, but then it was too late.

for he found no place for a change of mind in his father

The father could not be wishy-washy because of the weakness of others. Why should a father undo all that was done for a careless son who had no respect for sacredness in a moment of hunger? Does this mean that man can repent to no avail, that God will never change?

- a. This section is a warning with Esau as an example, and that is as far as it should be pressed.
- b. We have no way of knowing whether Esau made a genuine repentance, so the illustration cannot be pressed.

though he sought it diligently with tears.

Stupid, ungodly persons, burning with lusts, plunge themselves into sins which bring tears, but often tears are too late. Tears are shed many times, not in repentance for sin, but in sorrow for what is lost.

Study Questions

2568. What is the significance of the word "follow"?
2569. Are we exhorted to follow a person in this verse?
2570. Is the world conducive to peace?
2571. Tell how Christ followed after peace.
2572. Can the Christian always be at peace?
2573. Was Jesus always at peace?

HELPS FROM HEBREWS

2574. What other verses of the Bible have a similar exhortation as v. 14? Cf. Rom. 12:18; 14:19.
2575. Is this virtue important in the life of an elder? Cf. I Tim. 3:3.
2576. What does "sanctification" mean in the Bible?
2577. What does it mean to the denominationalist?
2578. Is it a matter of feeling or a matter of fact?
2579. Are we sanctified after we are Christians by growth?
2580. Can spiritual growth enable us to be more sanctified?
2581. What does Hebrews 10:10 say sanctifies?
2582. Is sanctification a second blessing, or a state of the Christian?
2583. How important is sanctification to eternal life?
2584. Can "the good moral man" expect salvation without sanctification?
2585. If blood sanctifies, can we expect salvation without it?
2586. What is meant by "looking carefully"? v. 15.
2587. What four things are we to look for?
2588. Does this encourage looking, like a gossip-hunter does?
2589. Is this an exhortation to an individual person or to the elders of the flock?
2590. Does this verse indicate that a person may fall?
2591. Why should we look carefully?
2592. Compare other verses on the subject of falling.
2593. According to this verse, can we fall from grace?
2594. Was Paul ever afraid it might happen to him? Cf. I Tim. 1:9; 4:7; 6:20; II Tim. 2:16.
2595. What is "the grace of God"?
2596. Does verse sixteen or verse seventeen tell us what would destroy God's grace toward us?
2597. What is the figure of speech used in verse 15?
2598. Could this be an allusion to Deut. 29:18?
2599. Is a bitter person dangerous to the flock?
2600. What could be back of bitterness? Could it be disappointment, jealousy?
2601. How extensive may the influence of the "root of bitterness" be?
2602. How extensively could the root do damage?
2603. Give illustrations in Israel's history.
2604. How are we to treat the fornicator in the church, according to I Cor. 5:9-13?

2605. What will God do with him? Cf. Heb. 13:4.
2606. What is meant by a "profane person"? Is it one who swears?
2607. What person is illustrative of profanity? How? Cf. Gen. 25:34.
2608. What is the significance of the expression, "profane person" in application to us?
2609. Compare I Tim. 1:9; 4:7; 6:20; II Tim. 2:16.
2610. How could Esau be an example of a profane person?
2611. Whom would we sell out in order to be profane?
2612. Is a person who curses unthoughtful of God?
2613. How permanent was Esau's profanity?
2614. Is there danger in bad mistakes as seen in the life of Esau?
2615. Can a moment of pleasure ruin our life?
2616. Name persons of the Bible whose life was ruined or blighted by selling out to the devil.
2617. Is repentance ever too late?
2618. Was Esau's father hard-hearted?
2619. Can God be "wishy-washy" because people are?
2620. Is law good when it does not have good enforcement?
2621. Does this verse mean that God cannot always be touched by our repentance?
2622. How true was Esau's repentance?
2623. Are tears always a sign of repentance?

C. *The nature of the old covenant in contrast with that of the new.* 12:18-24.

1. The terror of the old. 12:18-21.

Text

12:18-21

18 For ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet, and the Voice of words; which Voice they that heard entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them; 20 for they could not endure that which was enjoined, If even a beast touch a mountain, it shall be stoned; 21 and so fearful was the appearance, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:

Paraphrase

18 Now, that ye may understand the value of your birthrights as Abraham's seed, (Gal. 3:18), which I am exhorting you not to throw away, know, that ye shall not, like your fathers, come to a tangible mountain which burned with fire, to show that God is a consuming fire to the impenitent; and to blackness, and to darkness, which was an emblem of the obscurity of the Mosiac dispensation, and to tempest,

19 And to the noise of a trumpet, like that by which the angels called the Israelites together to hear the law, and which, by waxing louder and louder, terrified the Israelites exceedingly; and to the sound of words uttered by God Himself, the hearers of which, strongly impressed with the holiness and power of their Lawgiver and Judge, earnestly entreated to hear not a word more, (Exod. 20:18, 19).

20 Although, before they were affrighted by the voice of God, they could not bear that which was strictly commanded, Even if a beast touch the mountain while the symbol of the Divine Presence rests on it, it shall be stoned or shot through with an arrow. It seems they expected, by drawing near, to see God without being terrified.

21 And so terrible was that manifestation of the Divine Presence which appeared, that Moses cried to God, I am exceedingly afraid and quake.

Comment

For ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched

We have no sacred mount or place, as did the Jews. John 4:21. Adventist, you can't come to Mount Sinai and expect salvation. The mountain was not to be touched, although being a mount it might be touched. Ex. 19:12-13.

and that burned with fire

This was the way God taught them reverence. Cf. Deut. 4:11 and Deut. 5:4-5. This was magnificent, but not to be compared with our mount.

and unto blackness and darkness

We have the revelation of light. The "blackness" probably refers to a dark or thick cloud. Cf. Ex. 19:16.

and tempest

We have the one who stills the tempest. "Tempest" is not mentioned in Exodus or Deuteronomy, but it includes evidently the thunders and lightnings.

and the sound of a trumpet

Does this mean there is no musical instrument in the church or heaven?

- a. No, he is including the trumpet as part of the frightening experience. See Ex. 19:16; 20:18.
- b. Observe the use of musical instruments.
 1. Joel 2 was quoted on Pentecost.
 2. Joel 2:1: "Blow the trumpet."
 3. Joel 2:15: "Blow the trumpet."
- a) We may assume a musical instrument was used on the birthday of the church.
- b) Ps. 49:4, "will open my — on the harp," suggests the use of instruments in relationship to the Gospel.

and the Voice of words

The whole group heard the voice. Deut. 5:22. Heb. 12:26 says this Voice shook the earth.

which Voice they heard and entreated that no word more should be spoken unto them

The giving of the law excited terror; the Gospel brings peace. In Ex. 20:19 the people requested that Moses speak to them in place of the Voice.

for they could not endure that which was enjoined

Ex. 19 speaks of the serious bounds put on the people. The frightening trumpet, voice, quaking, and all was more than they could stand without a mediator.

if even a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned

This was enjoined in Ex. 19:12-13. Absolute reverence was demanded, even to the animals being required to be away.

and so fearful was the appearance that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake

Is this statement of Moses found here only?

- a. Some suggest that Paul received it from Jewish tradition.

- b. Some say the author inferred it.
- c. Some suppose Ex. 19:16-17 is referred to where Moses stood with all the people.
In Ex. 19:19 we read, "Moses spoke."
 - a. What he spoke is not recorded.
 - b. If Paul were inspired, he could have written what Moses said that day.
 - c. Jesus promised the disciples guidance into all truth. See John 16:13.

Study Questions

- 2624. What mountain is referred to in verse 18?
- 2625. Does the Christian have a sacred mountain?
- 2626. What did Jesus say about worship at a mountain? Cf. John 4:21.
- 2627. Why did the mount of Moses burn with fire? Cf. Deut. 4:11; 5:4-5.
- 2628. What was the name of the mountain?
- 2629. Could the mountain be touched — was there any danger? Cf. Ex. 19:12-13.
- 2630. What is meant by "blackness and darkness"?
- 2631. How does darkness compare with our "mountain"?
- 2632. What is meant by the word "tempest"?
- 2633. Is there any tempest described? What could it refer to?
- 2634. Was there a musical instrument at Mount Sinai?
- 2635. Does this imply that a musical instrument is not to be included in the church?
- 2636. Why is it mentioned? See Ex. 19:16; 20:18.
- 2637. What is the trumpet referred to in verse 19?
- 2638. Tell of the various uses of the trumpet in the Bible.
- 2639. What is referred to in the Voice of words? Cf. 12:26 and Deut. 5:22.
- 2640. What was Israel's reaction to the words heard first from the mount?
- 2641. Why did the Hebrews request the Voice to be silenced?
- 2642. Will men ever feel that way again?
- 2643. Does the Gospel strike terror to some?
- 2644. How did the scene at Sinai impress the Hebrews?
- 2645. What factors were frightening?
- 2646. Why were animals forbidden to be near the mountain?

2647. Should we be careless about the Lord's house today?
 2648. Why was the mountain "out of bounds" for man and beast?
 2649. Where did Moses make the statement found in v. 21?
 2650. What explanations are made?
 2651. Could Moses have spoken with others recorded in Ex. 19:16-17?
 2652. In the giving of the law, what was Moses' first reaction?
 2653. What did Moses speak in Ex. 19:19?
 2654. How did the author of Hebrews get this information?
 2655. Could John 16:13 be an answer?

2. *The mercy of the new.* 12:22-24.

Text

12:22-24

22 but ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the Firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 and to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel.

Paraphrase

22 But ye shall come to a place which I call Mount Zion, because there God will appear to you, not in the terribleness of His Greatness as on Sinai, but in the beauties of His goodness; and instead of being brought to any earthly city to worship, ye shall be brought to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and in your worship shall associate with ten thousands of angels;

23 To the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, brought from the different parts of the universe to worship God. These are enrolled in heaven as citizens. And, instead of standing afar off, as your fathers did at Sinai, ye shall come near to God the supreme Ruler of the whole universe, and to the spirits of just men made perfect by their union with their glorified bodies, and their introduction into heaven,

24 And to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to His blood, which is the true blood of sprinkling typified by the

Levitical sprinklings, and which, by crying for mercy to penitents, speaketh better things than the blood of Abel, which cried for vengeance on his murderer.

Comment

But ye are come into Mount Zion

"Ye are come unto Mount Zion" is in contrast to Mount Sinai.

- a. They had a mount that they had to avoid.
- b. We have a mount that we can approach.
- c. McKnight: "But ye shall come," making it future.
"Mount Zion."
- a. Mount Zion stands for grace, and not a literal mountain.
- b. Mount Zion is a part of the hill of Jerusalem, and being the seat of both the royal and sacerdotal authority it was properly called the "holy hill of Zion." Ps. 2:6.
- c. No Gentile ever came before Mount Zion, except as he came as a Jewish proselyte or to plunder or to destroy.

and unto the city of the living God the heavenly Jerusalem

Zion is spoken of as being the habitation of God. Ps. 132:13. This is the celestial city that Abraham looked for. Heb. 11:10. This city is described in Rev. 21 and 22. I understand it to be the Jerusalem above as Paul taught in Gal. 4:26.

We are come unto it, but our bodies not yet redeemed. We have not seen the new city except by faith.

and to innumerable hosts of angels

The throne of God seems to have great numbers of angels present. See Rev. 5:11; the number was thousands of thousands. It is to such a place of praise that we shall some day come; not to praise the angels, but the object of the angels' praise.

to the general assembly

Milligan says: "Here it denotes the joyful and multitudinous assembly of angels around the throne of God, who there forever celebrate His praises." See Rev. 5:11; 7:11-12.

- a. This makes it a festive assembly of angels.
- b. This rules out that our assembly on earth is meant.
If all thus far is future, then let us assume that the general

assembly will someday be held, when Christ gathers His faithful from the ends of the earth.

church of the Firstborn

We, of course, have come to the church already, being members of it; but is this what he meant?

- a. McKnight says this refers only to those pious Israelites of all ages who by faith deserve to be called God's firstborn.
- b. Milligan says it refers to the church on earth.
 1. He quotes James 1:18 to show we are first fruits.
 2. All its members are honored with this title, he says.
- c. Calvin says it refers to the patriarchs and renowned saints of the earthly church.
- d. Newell says Irsael is the firstborn of earth, but the church is the first fruits of heaven.

I prefer to allow the church to mean the "called out" that will someday be called into the great assembly. This is church future, not church present.

Christ wears the title "Firstborn," Rom. 8:29, and the church is His.

who are enrolled in heaven

God does the writing, for we can't climb or fly to the book to do the writing. It is a source of joy to have the privilege of having our name there. Luke 10:20 and Phil. 4:3.

Some prefer to have their names in social registers, so-called churches, lodges, etc., than on the church of the firstborn.

and to God the Judge of all

Who does judge? This is a big subject.

- a. God will judge the sinners.
 1. Heb. 13:4: God will judge adulterers.
 2. Rom. 2:16: God will judge the secrets of men.
- b. The saints will likewise do some judging.
 1. I Cor. 6:2: will judge the world.
 2. I Cor. 6:3: will judge the angels.
 3. Compare Rev. 20:4.

The problem of judgment is God's. It will be just how He planned it.

- a. We have come to Him already, and He no longer is our Judge but our Saviour.
- b. In a sense He is our Judge, so let this inspire fear on our part to do His will.

and to the spirit of just men made perfect

This refers to our heavenly position. Are there any "spirits made perfect" there now?

- a. What God does with a spirit after death is His business, and I am confident that it is fair and just. But I do not know.
- b. I agree with I John 3:2: "It is not yet manifested."
 1. John says, "What we shall be."
 2. I add my own ignorance, "When it shall be."

and to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant

What covenant is this?

- a. Newell says this is not the better covenant of Chapter Eight, but the new covenant with Israel which lies in the future with Israel.
- b. Here Newell is in error.
 1. The characteristics of the covenant are the same; they must be the same.
 2. Jesus only spoke of one covenant, on the night of His betrayal, and He calls it a new covenant. Luke 22:19-20.
 3. In 13:20 the covenant is spoken of as an eternal covenant, and surely he means the same covenant as in Chapter Eight.
 4. In 8:7 he speaks of the old being replaced by the second, but does not mention a third covenant.

The covenant is the one by which the blood of Jesus will save all men, and to Whom He acts as Mediator.

and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel

Abel's sacrifice speaks, according to 11:4.

- a. Abel's sacrifice by faith spoke, saying that it pays to be obedient. In a sense, it is a warning.
- b. Abel's sacrifice is not meant here, but his blood.

What does Abel's blood speak?

 - a. Gen. 4:10-11 says, "Brother's blood crieth."
 - b. The blood of Abel called for judgment.

What does this blood speak that is greater?

 - a. Newell says it speaks of judgment past forever and of eternal peace.
 - b. The popular idea is that the blood of Abel speaks a call for mercy.
 - c. Milligan: "Abel's blood speaks well, but Christ's speaks better."

- d. If the following verses are considered, we might say this blood speaks a greater warning — “refuse not.” v. 25.
 No one questions that the blood is that of Christ.
- a. Christ’s blood speaks better because it avails pardon for sin.
 b. His blood cries out, “The atonement is made.”

Study Questions

2656. Contrast the Christian’s mountain with Moses’ mountain.
 2657. Is our mountain figurative or literal?
 2658. What is the name of our mountain?
 2659. What was the location of Mount Zion?
 2660. What did it represent?
 2661. What else does the Christian have a right to approach?
 2662. Compare other verses that speak of Zion. Cf. Ps. 132:13; Heb. 11:10; Rev. 21, 22; Gal. 4:26.
 2663. Is this verse to be interpreted as past tense, present, or future?
 2664. How do we see the city? Like Abraham? Heb. 11:10.
 2665. When does the heavenly Jerusalem take place, according to Revelation?
 2666. If this is present, how may we explain that we are in the midst of angels?
 2667. How numerous are God’s angels? Rev. 5:11.
 2668. Does it say “into Mount Zion” or “unto”?
 2669. How many are 12 legions of angels?
 2670. Is this general assembly that of angels or men?
 2671. Is it an earthly assembly?
 2672. What is the description of the church here?
 2673. What is meant by “Firstborn”?
 2674. Is this the church on earth?
 2675. If all of the other expressions refer to future experiences, can we assume that the church on earth is referred to here?
 2676. Does Christ wear the title “Firstborn”? Rom. 8:29.
 2677. Who all will be in His church?
 2678. Who enrolls men in heaven?
 2679. Compare Luke 10:20 and Phil. 4:3.
 2680. If God writes our name, what can we do to cause God to write it there?
 2681. Do men seem to prefer other registers?
 2682. If God is Judge, do we come to Him?

2683. Will the Christian come to Him?
2684. Do we come to Him to be judged? Do we come to Him as Judge or Savior?
2685. Will Christians do any judging?
2686. Compare I Cor. 6:2, 3; Rev. 20:4.
2687. What is meant by "spirits"?
2688. Could this refer to our heavenly position or to our state now as Christians?
2689. If we have already come to Mount Zion, the new Jerusalem, how may we explain, "and to the spirits of just men made perfect," in verse 23 when we know none are perfect?
2690. If none are perfect on earth now, can we interpret this whole message as present action?
2691. Is this covenant the one of which we are a part?
2692. How many new covenants are there? Is there one for Jews and one for Gentiles?
2693. Is the one in Chapter Eight the same here and in 13:20?
2694. How many covenants did Jesus teach? Cf. Luke 22:19-20.
2695. What is the purpose of the covenant? To save from sin or to get Jews back to Jerusalem?
2696. What did Abel's blood sacrifice speak?
2697. What adjectives are used to describe the covenant?
2698. What is meant by, "we are come to the blood of sprinkling"?
2699. Whose blood is sprinkled?
2700. Why is the word "sprinkled" used?
2701. Could it be figurative that Christ is our Passover?
2702. Is Abel's blood, or Abel's sacrifice, referred to here?
2703. If his sacrifice is meant, what does it speak?
2704. From where did Abel's blood speak?
2705. Could it be that Abel speaks, and not his blood or sacrifice?
2706. Which could do a better job of speaking, Abel's blood or Abel's sacrifice?

D. *Warning.* 12:25-29.

Text

12:25-29

25 See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not when they refused Him that warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from Him that

warneth from heaven: 26 Whose Voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. 27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. 28 Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: 29 for our God is a consuming fire.

Paraphrase

25 Take care that ye disobey not God Who is now speaking to you from heaven by His Son. For, if the Israelites did not escape punishment who disobeyed God delivering an oracle on earth, by Moses, commanding them to go into Canaan, much more we shall not escape punishment, who turn away from God speaking to us the Gospel from heaven by His Son.

26 God's voice at the giving of the law shook the earth, in token that idolatry was to be shaken in Canaan by the law of Moses. But now concerning His speaking by His Son He hath promised, saying, Yet once I shall not shake the earth only — the heathen idolatry and the powers which support it— but also the heaven; the Mosaic worship and Jewish state.

27 Now this speech, Yet once, signifieth the removing of the things shaken; the abolition of the former religions, and the destruction of the powers which uphold them, as of things which were made with hands — things of an inferior and imperfect nature; that the things not to be shaken, the Gospel church and worship, may remain to the end of the world.

28 Wherefore we, the disciples of God's Son, having in the Gospel dispensation received the kingdom foretold by Daniel to be given to the saints, and which is never to be shaken, let us hold fast that gift, that excellent dispensation of religion by which we can worship God acceptably, if we do it with reverence and religious fear.

29 For, even under the gospel, our God is as much a consuming Fire to infidels and apostates, as under the law.

*Comment**See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh*

Who speaks?

- a. Evidently God, but there is an allusion to the shaking at Sinai.
- b. Christ spoke not threats that He carried out as this verse suggests. Of course Christ is the Word of God, but only in this sense can this verse apply to Him.

for if they escaped not when they refused Him that warned them on earth

What occasion is referred to?

- a. Noah surely is a possibility.
- b. Moses' warning is a better one, since it fits the context better. Does this imply that now there is a warning direct from God without the messenger, man?
- a. No. Neglect for so great a salvation demands heavier judgment. Heb. 2:3.
- b. No speaker of greater dignity speaks, but a greater message is delivered.

much more shall not we escape

We should not expect to go free, just because Christ taught that God is a Father. We sin against a greater demonstration of love, and we should expect a greater demonstration of wrath if we trample upon Christ.

who turn away from Him that warneth from heaven

Observe that "warneth" is in italics. Actually it reads "that is from heaven."

- a. This clarifies the point perhaps. He is simply locating the Voice.
- b. Of course Moses' message was from heaven, but it was more directly from a mountain that shook and trembled. This atoning message is from heaven, and it must not be rejected. Mark 16:16.

Whose Voice then shook the earth

This refers to Mount Sinai, described in Ex. 19:18. The Psalmist described it, Ps. 114:4: "the mountains skipped like rams."

but now He hath promised, saying,

Hagai 2:6 is the quotation though not literal, says Calvin. Milligan says it was spoken primarily to the building of the second temple by Zerubbabel and is therefore chronologically connected with the coming of the Messiah.

yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only but also the heavens

Though God shook the earth when He published the law, yet now He speaks more gloriously, for He shakes both earth and heaven. Has this been fulfilled?

- a. Calvin: "The voice of the gospel not only thunders through the earth, but also penetrates above the heavens."
- b. The earth quaked at Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, so this could have been fulfilled.

"The heavens," says McKnight, refers to the Jewish state and worship.

- a. He says here it pictures an alteration which was to be made in the political and religious state of the world.
- b. If "heavens" is literal, no explanation can be given unless it refers to the event of darkness that accompanied the shaking of the earth at the cross.

There is a possibility that this refers to the end of time.

and this word, Yet once more

Newell says this is the divine interpretation of the above verse, and three things are seen:

- a. Heaven and earth are to be done away.
- b. The reason is that their end is accomplished.
- c. Things unshaken will remain.

McKnight feels that Hag. 2 proves that earthly kingdoms, the Levitical system, etc., are meant.

- a. He feels that "yet once" means that the gospel will remain to the end of the world, as the only form of religion acceptable to God.
- b. This means then that shaking will continue until God's will prevails. Milligan agrees to this and refers to II Pet. 1:11 and I Cor. 15:24-25.

The words of the prophet are these, "Yet a little while."

signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken

The destruction of Jerusalem almost destroyed Judaism, but God is still shaking it, for Jews will not give up their faith. The kingdoms of the world are yet to surrender to Jesus, but they will. Rev. 11:15.

If earth means idolatry, and heaven the Jewish economy, as McKnight suggests, much shaking needs to be done.

Newell insists that "heavens" are included here, for sin began in heaven, and it too must be shaken.

as of things that have been made

Some suggest that this means things made with hands of man. McKnight and Milligan agree. Some suggest the creation.

that those things which are not shaken may remain

The kingdom of heaven was set up during the time when kingdoms and thrones were being shaken.

- a. It will endure when the heavens shall have passed away as a scroll. Cf. I Cor. 15:24 and II Pet. 1:11.
- b. This kingdom will not give way as did the old law. Dan. 2:44. Man has done everything that he can to shake the church, but it cannot be done.
 1. He tried persecution, burning Bibles, creating division, false doctrines, modernism, and worldliness and yet the church grows.
 2. The church will remain, for the gospel is to shake this world.

wherefore receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken

How wonderful it is to be a part of something eternal, victorious and with a destiny. Things created are subject to decay, to destruction, but not the church; for not even the gates of Hades can prevail against it.

let us have grace

Grace has been given to us, in that salvation has been provided. Calvin says this expression is strained. It reads as an exhortation. It should read, "we have grace."

I prefer to let it be an exhortation.

- a. We will have more grace as we offer up service.
- b. The Christian is to work at grace, not just rejoice in it. *Pulpit Commentary* says it means, "Let us show thankfulness."

whereby we may offer service well pleasing to God

“Well pleasing” is familiar. We read that without faith we cannot please God. 11:6.

“Service” is the watchword for those in the kingdom.

- a. We were won to win, told to tell, saved to serve.
- b. James makes it plain that faith without works is dead.

with reverence and awe

Reverence is also translated, “godly fear.” We are to serve with promptness and delight, yet it must be united with humility and due reverence. If “let us have grace” means to give thanks, then with thankfulness, reverence, and fear we serve.

“Awe” is also translated “dread.”

for our God is a consuming fire

This verse is from Deut.4:24. Here the Israelites were warned of forgetting the covenant. The Lord’s nature is not changed; He is a consuming fire as He declared at Sinai. If we scorn this present dispensation of grace, the day of judgment will be to us a day of terror.

Study Questions

2707. Who is speaking in the reference of verse 25?
2708. Does this verse refer to one specific person’s warning, or several warnings of men through one God?
2709. Name some warnings that went unheeded.
2710. Does this verse refer to one of them?
2711. Does this verse teach that God gave a warning that did not come through man as other warnings did?
2712. Why should we have less chance of escaping?
2713. Do we sin against a greater speaker?
2714. Do we sin against a greater demonstration of love?
2715. Is the word “warn” in the original?
2716. How does it actually read?
2717. Was Moses’ message from heaven or from a mountain?
2718. Who warns from heaven and what warning is meant?
2719. Does the verse refer to Moses’ warning in comparison to Christ’s warning?
2720. Is the place the point of emphasis, or the person?

HELPS FROM HEBREWS

2721. Does verse 26 help to answer whether it is Christ or God referred to in verse 25?
2722. Whose voice shook the earth?
2723. How does Ps. 114:4 describe it?
2724. Where is the saying referred to here?
2725. What is the difference in the second shaking?
2726. Could it have been fulfilled when Christ was on the cross?
2727. How was heaven shaken at Christ's crucifixion?
2728. What does heavens refer to — that God will shake?
2729. Could this refer to the end of time? Why?
2730. Are "shaking" and "trembling" synonymous in ideas?
2731. Could it be a shaking of political and religious conditions?
2732. If the shaking is being done by the Gospel, what has been shaken?
2733. What is meant by "heavens"?
2734. Explain what is meant by "yet once more".
2735. What did God permit that was greatly responsible for breaking up organized Judaism?
2736. Could verse 27 be an interpretation of verse 26?
2737. How long will God shake heaven and earth?
2738. What bearing does I Peter 1:11 and I Cor. 15:24-25 have?
2739. What is signified?
2740. Will the kingdoms of the world ever be annihilated?
2741. What made things are referred to here?
2742. Are they of God's making or man's?
2743. Has the church been shaken?
2744. Can it be shaken down?
2745. What has man done to the church?
2746. What remains in the earth that cannot be shaken?
2747. Is there room for pessimism in verse 28?
2748. Does this suggest that evil will win and that the church will be impotent?
2749. What is meant by "let us have grace"?
2750. Is this an exhortation?
2751. Is there any way for grace to be increased?
2752. How can we offer service to God?
2753. What is a prerequisite to pleasing God?
2754. Will God always be pleased with things done in Christ's name?
2755. Is there any spur to labor when you realize God's grace and victory are to be had?

HELPS FROM HEBREWS

2756. What should be our attitude as we serve God?
2757. Define "reverence."
2758. Define "awe."
2759. Were the Pharisees of Jesus' day failing here?
2760. What is our attitude in service to please God?
2761. Where is the expression "consuming fire" found in the Old Testament?
2762. How did the author prove that we should be in awe?
2763. Will it be demonstrated again?
2764. If we are not in awe, how will we appear some day?

True Or False Over Chapter Twelve

- ____ 1. The Christian life is compared with running a race.
____ 2. The Author and Finisher of our faith is Christ.
____ 3. The Lord chastens those whom He loves.
____ 4. Esau bought his brother's birthright.
____ 5. A term applied to the church is "the general assembly."
____ 6. Our God is said to be a "consuming fire."
____ 7. The "besetting sin" here referred to was unbelief.
____ 8. The Christian is told to lay aside every weight and fleshly sin.
____ 9. If a beast should touch the mountain where Moses was receiving the Commandments, it should turn to stone.
____ 10. The law was given at Sinai, but the Gospel was to go forth from there, too.
____ 11. Esau was a profane person.
____ 12. At no time on the journey was Moses fearful.
____ 13. The kingdom of which we belong is spoken of as one which cannot be shaken.
____ 14. It was the joy set before Christ that enabled Him to go to the cross.
____ 15. Harsh chastening that seems hard to bear will result in peaceable fruit in our lives.
____ 16. God is so longsuffering that He will forgive people for overlooking warnings from heaven.
____ 17. The earth and heaven will be shaken, but it is not true of the kingdom of heaven.
____ 18. God chastens us, and in it He is dealing as a Father with a son.
____ 19. A teaching in this chapter is that man can fall short of the grace of God.

HELPS FROM HEBREWS

- 20. Jesus said that His way was straight, but here we are told to make straight paths for our feet.
- 21. A few angels comprise witnesses to our Christian life.
- 22. God may be called Father, for He is the Father of spirits.
- 23. Sanctification is essential to see the Lord.
- 24. The blood of Jesus is a blood of sprinkling that speaks better than that of Abel.
- 25. Weariness is generally thought of as fleshly, but we are exhorted to not grow weary, fainting in our souls.

SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWELVE

This chapter brings to a grand climax the final appeal to approach God with a true heart in a fully assured faith which began in 10:19. It was continued through Chapter Eleven, which shows God's approval on men whose faith was expressed in obedience, caused them to endure trials and enabled them to win victories.

Chapter Twelve opens with the well-known figure of the athletic games by which the relation of the Christian to the heroes of the faith is explained. It proceeds with an explanation of the purpose of chastisement, and appeals to the Christian to pursue peace and purity, without which no man shall see the Lord.

The climax of the appeal to approach God is given in the contrast between Israel's fearful experience at Sinai and the Christian's joyous relationship to God under the new covenant which began at Mount Zion.

The chapter closes with a final warning to those who have received the kingdom that cannot be shaken; to heed and serve Him, "for our God is a consuming fire."

IV. *Final exhortation regarding duties pertaining to the Truth.*
13:1-25.

A. *Social duties.* 13:1-7.

Text

13:1-7

1 Let love of the brethren continue. 2 Forget not to show love unto strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. 3 Remembering them that are in bonds, as bound with them; them that are ill-treated, as being yourselves also in