

# Hebrews 11-12

Last time we went through the middle portion of Hebrews chapter 11, where Paul has been talking about faith. He's been showing them the faith of their forefathers, to give them examples of how *they* should be living by faith. Because they need to have the same kind of faith that their fathers had. They are left the same promises that their fathers were given, and so they need to follow God in the same way. They need to believe them, hope in them, and live like they are true. And that is faith.

And so he talked about Abraham, and Moses, and Joshua. And then in closing he's going to summarize the things that the other OT saints did, through faith.

## Verse 33

**Hebrews 11:32** And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

33 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

And we went through the first part of that list last time, talking about how they subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, and obtained promises.

### STOPPED THE MOUTHS OF LIONS

And he says also that through faith, they stopped the mouths of lions.

And the first example of that that comes to mind, is Daniel. Daniel, through his faith, received persecution, and was cast into the lions' den. But God sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions. And so Daniel lived.

But Daniel isn't the only one who shut the mouths of lions. Samson also, whom he has mentioned, slew a lion when it roared against him.

And if you'll recall, David did the same thing. When a lion came to take a sheep out of the flock, he slew it.

And the Hebrews also would like to stop the mouths of lions. They are suffering persecution just like Daniel was, and are being thrown to lions. They are being persecuted for their faith.

But they need to not fear, because when they are persecuted for their faith, they through faith will obtain promises, and even stop the mouths of lions. They may not all be delivered from the lion as these men were. But they know, by their example, that those that walk by faith are accepted of God. And so that is their part, to walk by faith, and leave the rest up to God. And it is only through faith that one can be delivered from the mouth of the lions.

And in fact Paul himself was indeed delivered from the mouth of the lion:

**2 Timothy 4:17** Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

**1 Corinthians 15:32** If after the manner of men *I have fought with beasts* at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.

So Paul had experiences where he was caught and thrown to the lions or wild beasts, and God delivered him. Through faith he stopped the mouths of lions.

And one day all of the Hebrews will indeed stop the mouths of lions. When they enter into the inheritance all wild beasts will be subdued under their feet:

**Isaiah 11:6** The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.  
7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

And so from that time the lion's mouth shall be forever stopped.

And this stopping of the lion's mouths can also be looked at figuratively. Not all of them are going to be thrown to the lions, but those that persecute that are as lions anyway. Because the lion is a figure for Judah, for the Jewish people:

**Genesis 49:9** Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up?

And so from the time that Jacob blessed his son Judah, he was compared to a lion. And that is what Christ called the Jews that persecuted him. This might sound familiar:

**Psalms 22:21** Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.

And so Christ referred to his trial as being cast into the lion's mouth, being delivered over to the people of the Jews to do what they would with him. And that is the same kind of thing that the Hebrews are now experiencing. They are being persecuted by the Jews, who want to kill them. But they need to walk by faith, if perhaps God will stop the lion's mouth. And indeed God did stop the lion's mouth. In 70 AD its mouth was shut, to never again persecute its Christian brethren. But instead to one day devour the heathen.

## Verse 34

**Hebrews 11:33** Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,  
34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

### QUENCHED THE VIOLENCE OF FIRE

So through faith they also quenched the violence of fire. And coming right after that reference to stopping the mouths of the lions, Paul must have been thinking of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, Daniel's companions who also suffered persecution. They were thrown into a furnace for their faith, and God did not suffer them to be burnt up. They walked back out alive.

And so one day the furnace of God's fury is going to be unleashed. And if you want to quench the violence of fire, if you want to be able to come before the throne of God without being burnt up, then the way to do that is through faith. Doing what God said, knowing that he is able to quench the violence of fire.

The fire intended for the wicked cannot touch those that walk by faith. Christ himself has borne it, overcome hell, and arose victorious. Their persecutors may kill them, but they need not fear those who can only destroy the body, because there is no fire that can destroy their souls.

### ESCAPED THE EDGE OF THE SWORD

So through faith they quenched the violence of fire, and escaped the edge of the sword. So once again, they were persecuted. They had enemies that tried to slay them with the sword. But when they walked by faith, sometimes God provided a way of escape. Sometimes he gave them grace, without which they would have perished. And their only way to get that, is through faith.

### OUT OF WEAKNESS WERE MADE STRONG

They escaped the edge of the sword, and out of weakness were made strong. So God gave them strength, just as he gave Sarah strength to conceive seed. God sometimes delivered them by giving them strength, the strength to escape, or the strength to overcome their enemies.

God made Gideon strong when he was afraid to go out to battle:

**Judges 7:9** And it came to pass the same night, that the LORD said unto him, Arise, get thee down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand.

10 But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host:

11 And thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hands be **strengthened** to go down unto the host. Then went he down with Phurah his servant unto the outside of the armed men that were in the host.

So he was scared to go to battle against them, but God told him to sneak down with his servant, and he would hear something that would strengthen him to the battle. And he did, and he defeated all of their armies.

He out of weakness was made strong, waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

And there are other examples of that in the OT as well.

And that is exactly what we've said will happen to the Hebrews. After the end of the tribulation, those that have stayed in the faith, out of weakness will be made strong, will wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens.

And there is prophecy of that in Isaiah:

**Isaiah 40:27** Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?

28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.

29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth **strength**.  
30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:  
31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their **strength**; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

So after the tribulation, those that have walked in faith and waited upon the LORD, God will renew their strength. He will give them strength so that they can come to him from all the corners of the earth to the promised land in Zion.

Through faith they will out of weakness be made strong, wax valiant in fight, and turn to flight the armies of the aliens.

## Verse 35

**Hebrews 11:35** Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

So through faith, women received their dead raised to life again.  
Elijah and Elisha each did that. Raised a child from the dead at the request of its mother.

And if the Hebrews want to one day receive their dead raised to life again, the only way to do that is through faith.

In the tribulation there will be many young men, of the 144000, perish. But if their mothers remain faithful, they will one day receive them raised to life again.

“Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”

So some of them were tortured, to try to get them to leave their faith, in the OT. But they didn't accept deliverance, because they knew that through their faith they would receive a better resurrection. So they wouldn't let it go. They held fast.

And that is the same thing that Paul has been calling the Hebrews to do in their persecution. To keep living by faith, knowing that they'll receive a better resurrection. A resurrection unto eternal life, rather than eternal damnation.

And that is the same thing that they'll need to do in the tribulation. There will be terrible trouble coming upon the Hebrews, persecution and torture, but they'll need to hold fast to the faith, so that when women receive their dead raised to life again once it is over, their mothers will receive them to a better resurrection.

## Verse 36

**Hebrews 11:36** And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

And so the OT saints were tortured, they were beaten, they were mocked, and they were cast into prison.

And that is the same kind of treatment that the Christian Hebrews have been receiving. But like the OT saints they need to overcome through faith.

## Verse 37

**Hebrews 11:37** They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

And they weren't just horribly mistreated. They were also killed and slain with the sword. And those that did survive were often bereft of everything, and had to wander about in their affliction.

## Verse 38

**Hebrews 11:38** (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

And the world wasn't worthy of them. They were the heirs of promise, wandering in deserts and mountains, dwelling in dens and caves, because they desired a better country, and to dwell in a better city, whose builder and maker was God.

And though that they not only were worthy heirs of the world, but far more than that. That would be a gross understatement. Paul says rather that the world itself was not worthy of them. Through faith they became so worthy as heirs, that this world itself was no longer a good enough inheritance for them. They became worthy of far more. And so God indeed has prepared for them a city. This world wasn't worthy of the heirs, so they will inherit a more glorious one to come.

## Verse 39

**Hebrews 11:39** And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

So through faith, they obtained a good report. As he said at the start of the chapter, faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, for by it the elders obtained a good report.

They obtained a good report, but they did not receive the promise. It was through faith. It was only the substance of an unseen thing. And it is still unseen. They still haven't receive the promise, because the things that are seen were shown not to be worthy of them.

## Verse 40

**Hebrews 11:40** God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

And so God has provided a better inheritance, that is not yet seen. One that the Hebrews can receive along with their fathers, if they continue to walk in their faith. The promise has still not been received, because God is going to give them something better, and they will all receive it at once. And so their fathers could not receive it without them, just as Joshua and Caleb couldn't

receive it without the children. God has provided some better thing for us, that they, without us, should not be made perfect.

No one will be made perfect as an heir, until all are shown to be heirs. No one will receive the inheritance, no one will be fully manifested as an heir, until all are manifested as heirs. Both they, and their fathers.

## Chapter 12 Verse 1

**Hebrews 12:1** Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us 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,

### CLOUD OF WITNESSES

So they are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses. The other heirs of the promise, their fathers, who are watching until the day when all can enter into the inheritance, because all Israel is ready.

In the wilderness it was the cloud and fire that followed them, and was a witness of their sin, and brought them to the promised land. And it was from the cloud that sentence was given against them that they should not enter into the land, because he was witness that they did not believe him.

So just like their fathers in the wilderness, the Hebrews are now surrounded by a great cloud of witness, a cloud of witnesses. Whose stories in the OT witness to them, and show them that God is faithful. And who are also watching to see whether they are going to be worthy to enter into the promised land. Like Abel, they need to obtain witness that they are righteous, so that they can receive the inheritance.

And as Paul said before, if at the mouth of two or three witnesses they might be damned under the law, now seeing that they are compassed about with so great a cloud, how shall they escape if they neglect so great salvation?

*Now, when it talks about this great cloud of witnesses, the OT saints, we already mentioned last time how two of those witnesses will come down to earth during the tribulation, to spy out and see who has faith and who does not.*

*And it talks about them in Revelation 11:*

**Revelation 11:3** *And I will give power unto my two **witnesses**, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth.*

*So it calls them the two witnesses here. And they are called witnesses because they will witness to the earth of the righteousness of God and of his judgment to come.*

*And at the same time they are spies who will witness before God who was of faith.*

*4 These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.*

*5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.*

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

7 And when they shall have finished their testimony, the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them.

8 And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

And so there it calls Jerusalem "Egypt", as we saw Paul doing last time. Jerusalem, and Israel, are spiritually called Egypt.

9 And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

10 And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

11 And after three days and an half the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, Come up hither. And they ascended up to heaven in a **cloud**; and their enemies beheld them.

And so these two witnesses will ascend up into a cloud. So that will be a cloud of witnesses. And they will join Christ and the other witnesses from the OT, and from the NT, to follow him back down to earth in the clouds of heaven. And so there will be a cloud of witnesses, that will have compassed them about in heaven for 7 years, but will then come to bring the walls crashing down.

13 And the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

14 The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.

And then Christ will come quickly. He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. They will be affrighted, and give glory to God, but it will be too late. No time to begin walking by faith now. The wicked will be destroyed.

And it speaks of this same thing in Isaiah chapter 18:

**Isaiah 18:1** Woe to the land shadowing with wings, which is beyond the rivers of Ethiopia:

2 That sendeth ambassadors by the sea, even in vessels of bulrushes upon the waters, saying, Go, ye swift messengers, to a nation scattered and peeled, to a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden down, whose land the rivers have spoiled!

So he cries woe to those that despise Israel.

We just read about the second and third woe in Revelation.

3 All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye.

So a sign is going to be shown on the mountains, and a trumpet blown.

*And each of those woes is introduced there in Revelation with the blowing of a trumpet. And the nations better hear, or else they'll be in trouble.*

*4 For so the LORD said unto me, I will take my rest, and I will **consider** in my dwelling place like a clear heat upon herbs, and like a **cloud** of dew in the heat of harvest.*

*So he is speaking of the time when the LORD will take his rest. And at that time he will be as a cloud, and will consider. So he's going to be looking at them in preparation for the harvest. Like a cloud of witnesses to see whether they are bearing fruit.*

*5 For afore the harvest, when the bud is perfect, and the sour grape is ripening in the flower, he shall both cut off the sprigs with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches.*

*And those that are budding and bringing forth, but are bringing forth a sour grape from a root of bitterness, he's not going to harvest them. He's not going to let their fruit ripen fully. He's going to come to cut them off.*

*6 They shall be left together unto the fowls of the mountains, and to the beasts of the earth: and the fowls shall summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth shall winter upon them.*

*7 In that time shall the present be brought unto the LORD of hosts of a people scattered and peeled, and from a people terrible from their beginning hitherto; a nation meted out and trodden under foot, whose land the rivers have spoiled, to the place of the name of the LORD of hosts, the mount Zion.*

*And so those that despised Zion will be destroyed, but Israel will return to enter with God into his rest.*

*They will have received witness from the cloud, and they will come to enter into the inheritance. And so it is fitting that after talking about the cloud of witnesses here, the next thing that Paul talks about is traveling from one place to the next. He talks about running.*

## RUN THE RACE

Let us 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.

So he compares their walk of life to running in a race. And he's done this often in his other epistles. In fact Paul is the only NT author that uses the term running figuratively this way. Yet another indication that Paul is the author of the book of Hebrews. Here is what he said, for example, in 1 Corinthians 9:

**1 Corinthians 9:24** Know ye not that they which **run** in a **race** **run** all, but one receiveth the prize? So **run**, that ye may obtain.

25 And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

26 I therefore so **run**, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

27 But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.



So Paul talked about how he himself, in his life and ministry, strived to keep under his body, to bring it into subjection to God's will, so that in the end he could receive the prize. And he admonished them to do the same, to run as if there is only going to be one winner in the race, and you want to be it.

And Paul gives the Hebrews the same admonition. To lay aside every weight, every sin that would hinder them from running the race that God has set before them. To bring themselves into conformity with God's will, and run the race by faith.

*And that talk of running is prophetic of how Israel will travel to come to their inheritance.*

*At the end of Isaiah 40 is a prophecy about that. That's a pretty famous passage, but I don't think that most people understand its prophetic implications.*

*And we don't have time right now to go through all of Isaiah 40, to get the full background on it, but it is a passage prophetic of Christ's first and second comings.*

**Isaiah 40:27** *Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God?*

*This is very similar to what Paul was talking to them about here. He was telling them not to grow weary because of their persecution. To instead reverence God for his chastening of them, because he is doing it for a reason, that they ugh the partakers of his holiness.*

*28 Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding.*

*29 He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.*

*And so as Paul told them here, don't be weary and faint in your minds. Come boldly before the throne of grace, to receive the strength to help in time of need.*

*30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:*

*31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

*And so God will renew the strength of the Hebrews, the strength of his people. If they walk by faith, and wait upon the LORD, when Christ returns they will not be weary. They will be given divine strength to walk to Israel, and not faint. They will even run with rejoicing unto Zion, and will not be weary.*

## Verse 2

**Hebrews 12:2** Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

And for an example, for a motivator, they can look unto Jesus. Jesus, who is both the author and finisher of their faith.

He's the author of their faith, because it is in him, and his word, the word of the Son, that they are believing.

And he is the finisher of their faith, because it is he that has been perfected as the heir, whose grace can perfect them, and who will one day create the new inheritance. So he is the one who has perfected the faith, and the one who will culminate it. He is both the author and finisher of their faith.

“Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

He knew that “at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore.” And so he endured the cross.

Despising the shame of the cross, the curse that it is, as being of no consequence in regard to the joy. Esteeming the reproach greater riches, because he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

## Verse 3

**Hebrews 12:3** For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

So they should look to him and consider him. Consider how much he endured at the hands of wicked men. And how, because the inheritance is so great, he deemed it all worth it.

He knows how great the inheritance is. He came forth from God, from the brightness of his glory. One day he’s going to get to create that inheritance. So he knows how glorious it is, he knows what it is worth. And he thought that it was more than worth it.

So when they are tempted to be wearied and faint in their minds, to question whether all of the suffering is really worth it, they but need consider Christ to know that indeed it is.

## Verse 4

**Hebrews 12:4** Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

In their walk of faith, they’ve not yet had to shed blood to stay in the race. They haven’t yet had to shed their blood to resist the wicked. They haven’t yet had the sinners do to them what they did to Christ. If they had, Paul wouldn’t be talking to them now.

So they haven’t yet resisted unto blood striving against sin.

And by sin here, what is he talking about again? He’s talking about transgressing the word.

Leaving the faith. And by striving against that he means being willing to die rather than deny Christ. Being willing to die rather than to transgress the faith. Being willing to die rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

That if sinners want to come along and try to make them do something contrary to the faith, contrary to the word of God, then the sinners are just going to have to kill them.

He said, “You haven’t had to do that yet. Christ did, but you haven’t had to do that yet.”

## Verse 5

**Hebrews 12:5** And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

Paul is essentially calling them wimps and sissies here. He’s saying that they are a bunch of crybabies, who are complaining about the persecution that is coming on them. And Paul says,

“If you’re alive to complain, you ain’t got nothing to complain about.” You haven’t yet had your limbs cut off, you haven’t yet been tortured, you haven’t yet shed blood, you haven’t been killed for your faith. How could that possibly discourage you? How could this light affliction possibly weary you, how could it possibly cause you to waver? Christ was willing to bleed and die to obtain the inheritance. Don’t you think it is worth it? Don’t you know that is where faith leads? You have to strive against sin, against the things that are seen. And they will sometimes kill you. But we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but those things which are not seen are eternal.

And so there is an exhortation for them in scripture, in regard to this. Which just like the first principles of the oracles of God, they seem to have forgotten. But in Proverbs there is an exhortation for the heirs of the kingdom, which speaks unto them as dear children of God. An exhortation which Solomon wrote to his son, the heir of the eternal throne, saying, “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.”

## Verse 6

**Hebrews 12:6** For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

So they shouldn’t be wearied and faint in their minds. They’ve been exhorted in scripture not to faint when rebuked and chastened of the Lord. Because yes, even the heirs of the promise, even the heir of the throne, must be chastened as a little child, or he shall in no wise enter therein.

God chastens his children because he loves them, and scourges every son whom he receives.

## Verse 7

**Hebrews 12:7** If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

And so this chastening is actually a token of God’s love, and of the fact that they are his children, his heirs. If they are receiving chastening, that means that God is treating them as his sons. And that is good, that is what they want to be.

And what son is it that doesn’t receive chastisement? They should be expecting this. This is what a son should be expecting from a father. What kind of son is it that a loving father doesn’t chasten, that he doesn’t rebuke?

Paul answers his own question:

## Verse 8

**Hebrews 12:8** But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

This is the kind of son that a father doesn’t chasten: a bastard. One that isn’t a true child, that isn’t an heir, that won’t receive of the inheritance.

So if they weren't being chastened and purified of their faults, then that would surely indicate that God didn't count them as sons, that they weren't heirs, but bastards.

## Verse 9

**Hebrews 12:9** Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

And this is indeed what they expect of their earthly fathers, the fathers of their flesh. They expected them to correct them, and they gave them reverence.

Shall they not much rather be in subjection unto their heavenly Father, the Father of spirits, and live?

## Verse 10

**Hebrews 12:10** For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

Because his chastening is superior to that received of their fathers. Their fathers chastened them for a few days, while they were young, after their own pleasure. Mainly just so that they wouldn't have to deal with a rowdy kid.

But God is not chastening them just because he doesn't want to have a bad son. He's not going to have any bad children, that's for sure. But he's chastening them so that they can indeed be his worthy children, and might partake of his holiness. He's chastening them for their own sake, so that they might receive a much greater inheritance than they have received from their fathers.

And so that is a superior chastening, with better effects. If they accepted the one, they ought to accept the other also, and give God reverence.

## Verse 11

**Hebrews 12:11** Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

And Paul is frank with them. He acknowledges that regardless, the chastening is still going to be grievous. It isn't going to bring them joy, it is still going to grieve them, despite the fact that it is useful and needful.

So no, the chastening won't make them happy. But nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

It isn't going to be pleasant, but if they accept it as chastening from God, as correction for their faults, and are exercised thereby, it will yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness. In the end the result of their trials, if they heed them, if they are exercised by them, is that they will be more righteous. That is why a father chastens his children, and that is why God chastens them, that they might be partakers of his holiness. So that is the fruit that that chastening will bear, it will make them more righteous, more holy, if they are exercised by it. And that fruit, Paul says, is a peaceable fruit. It is a trail that they are going through now, but in the end it will yield peaceable

fruit. It will make them more righteous, so that they might be partakers of God's holiness, and thus of his rest.

And so though their trials aren't going to be fun, although they will grieve them, they need to focus on the fruit that they will bear in the end, and exercise themselves rather unto godliness by those trials.

## Verse 12

**Hebrews 12:12** Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

So in their trial, they need to consider the fruit that it will bear, and exercise themselves by it. And they need to look at those around them, that have grown weary and faint in their minds, and exhort them daily. They need to lift up the hands which hang down, and the knees that have grown feeble. Those that have grown weary and need to be encouraged to continue to walk by faith.

They need to do much the same thing that Paul has been doing for them here in this epistle. They need to assemble together and give one another this kind of exhortation. To encourage one another to continue on unto perfection. To look to Jesus, to walk by faith, and to be ready for his return. To not grow weary and quit, to not draw back. But to come boldly before the throne of grace, to find grace to help in time of need.

*Now, when Paul says "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees," he's also referencing Isaiah. That comes from Isaiah chapter 35. And to fully appreciate the context from which Paul has chosen that, we really need to go back and look at Isaiah chapter 34 as well.*

**Isaiah 34:1** *Come near, ye nations, to hear; and hearken, ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.*

*2 For the indignation of the LORD is upon all nations, and his fury upon all their armies: he hath utterly destroyed them, he hath delivered them to the slaughter.*

*3 Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcases, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood.*

*4 And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree.*

*5 For my sword shall be bathed in heaven: behold, it shall come down upon Idumea, and upon the people of my curse, to judgment.*

*Now, Idumea is Edom. The land of the descendants of Esau.*

*So because Esau despised his birthright, his land is going to be destroyed. It calls them the people of God's curse. They didn't get the blessing, they were rejected, and got cursing instead.*

*6 The sword of the LORD is filled with blood, it is made fat with fatness, and with the blood of lambs and goats, with the fat of the kidneys of rams: for the LORD hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea.*

*7 And the unicorns shall come down with them, and the bullocks with the bulls; and their land shall be soaked with blood, and their dust made fat with fatness.*

*8 For it is the day of the LORD'S vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion.*

*9 And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.*

*10 It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.*

*So the land of Esau is going to be an uninhabitable wilderness forever, his portion of the inheritance will be destroyed, since he despised it.*

*So woe unto them that despise their inheritance, and defile themselves for a piece of bread!*

*11 But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.*

*12 They shall call the nobles thereof to the kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing.*

*13 And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be an habitation of dragons, and a court for owls.*

*14 The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.*

*15 There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.*

*16 Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them.*

*And here is a fascinating prophecy. At that time, when God has come to judge the earth, when the inheritance is being meted out, after the tribulation, there will be a book called the book of the LORD. And people will seek out these passages in the book of the LORD, and read, to see that these prophecies have been fulfilled.*

*So during the millennium there will still be a book of the LORD, the Bible.*

*And that may not seem like such an amazing thing today, but that is actually a prophecy that is being fulfilled right before our very eyes. You see, at the time that Isaiah was receiving this prophecy, there was no book of the LORD. All of the different scriptures were not bound together into a single volume. But here was a prophecy that they would be, bound together into the book of the LORD, the word of God, and that that would take place before the millennium. And so that is exactly what has happened. And during the millennium people will go to the book of the LORD, people will open up the Bible, and seek out this prophecy about the curse that would come upon the inheritance of Esau. And they would see how each of these wild birds would indeed be nesting in that barren land.*

*17 And he hath cast the lot for them, and his hand hath divided it unto them by line: they shall possess it for ever, from generation to generation shall they dwell therein.*

*And so Esau will not receive his inheritance. Instead the fowls will.*

**Isaiah 35:1** *The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.*

*2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.*

*And so all the land around that, the inheritance of Jacob, will blossom and be filled with joy and the glory of the LORD.*

*3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.*

*4 Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you.*

*And so to children of Jacob who will inherit it, he gives encouragement. The same kind of encouragement that Paul has been giving them here. To strengthen the weak, and look forward to the salvation and inheritance that they will receive.*

*5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.*

*6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.*

*And what did he say here? "Lest that which lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."*

*And so that is exactly what will happen. The lame will be healed.*

*When Christ returns in a cloud, healing water will run down from the mountains, and heal all that touch them.*

*7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.*

*8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein.*

*And then they will walk on straight paths for their feet, to come to the land of Zion. Not a winding road, but one that even the wayfaring fool cannot err in.*

*And the unclean shall not pass over it; without holiness no man shall see the LORD.*

*9 No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there:*

*And let them not wander out of the way. For in that way is safety from every ravenous beast.*

*10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*

*And so they will come to the beautiful and joyful mountain of Zion.*

## **Verse 13**

**Hebrews 12:13** And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

So he tells them to stand by those who are growing weary, and help them. And not only do they need to walk beside them and lift them up, but they should seek to walk on the straight paths. Paths that are easy for the weary and lame to follow.

They shouldn't be following a winding path, because those that are weary won't be able to follow it. Those that are lame will see the path zig-zagging all over the place, and they'll think, I can't walk all that distance, I'll cut across here and take a shortcut.

Paul says no. We can't let them do that, we can't let them turn out of the way. Instead we need to make for ourselves straight paths to walk in, so that the weary and lame will have the shortest possible path to follow. Not one that rambles all over the place, making it much longer than necessary.

Make a straight path to follow, and those that are weary walk beside and lift up. And don't let the lame wander out of the way, but let them rather be healed. Let them be cured of whatever it is that is preventing them from walking by faith. Let them lay aside their doubt. Let them come before the throne of grace to receive the strength to help in time of need.

So they all need to be walking on the same straight path, where the strong can lift up the weak and weary. An easy, simple path to follow. They shouldn't be trying to walk along some complex round-about path to God, to the promises. They need to follow a simple, straight path of faith, that leads directly to God, and to the inheritance. Not, "We'll take this bend in the road, but we'll swing back toward the right direction later." But every day to be walking the same direction, on the same straight path. So that when that day comes, they'll be sure to be on it. They'll all be ready, on the the same path, going the same direction, not leaving anybody behind.

## Verse 14

**Hebrews 12:14** Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Two things that they need to follow: peace, and holiness.

There are a lot of people that want to follow peace, and don't want to follow holiness.

And then there are people who want to follow holiness, but don't want to follow peace.

Paul admonishes them to follow both. Both peace, and holiness.

They need to follow peace with all men, as that is a means of avoiding unnecessary conflict and trouble.

But at the same time, they must also follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

The peace is something that they need to try to show toward other men, even though they know that it takes two to make peace, and all men aren't always going to show peace to them. Peace is a fragile thing, and they can't avoid all conflict, they will suffer persecution. But they should still follow peace.

So the peace is fragile, and all men won't show peace to them. But the holiness is imperative.

Whatever happens, they need to follow holiness, because without that they won't see the Lord.

They need to follow peace in regard to men, but must also follow holiness in regard to God. And there will be times, when in order to walk by faith, and follow holiness, they will be creating conflict in regard to men, and will suffer persecution. There will be many times when there is a conflict between peace and holiness. And when there is they must, they must, follow holiness.

Peace with men is good, and they should follow that, but it won't give them the inheritance. Men won't give them they inheritance. The LORD will. And so the most vital thing, that is a higher priority than peace, is holiness, that they might see God, and receive the promise.

So they should not be causing conflict, they should be following peace, but when conflict arises because of their holiness, the must continue to follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.



## Verse 15

**Hebrews 12:15** Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

And they need to be looking diligently, considering one another, lest any man fail of the grace of God. Lest anybody is about to fall down and quit. Lest any of them just stops coming before God to receive the grace that they need to keep walking by faith.

Or, lest any root of bitterness spring up and trouble them. Lest they become bitter because of their trial and persecution. He said, Don't let that happen, don't let many of you be defiled by that. Remember that it is God who is chastening you, that you might be partaker of his holiness, that holiness you need in order to be able to see his face. And so show him reverence, and remember that although the trial is grievous, in the end it will bear peaceable fruit.

He told them before that they need to bear fruit. That if they bear thorns and briars they will be nigh unto cursing, and their end will be to be burned. And so they need to not let a root of bitterness spring up. Instead they need to have the fruit of righteousness brought forth by God's grace through their trials. If instead they fail of that grace, and let a root of bitterness grow, they'll be defiled, they won't bear that fruit of righteousness, and won't be partakers of his holiness.

## Verse 16

**Hebrews 12:16** Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

So here is how they might fail of the grace of God. Here is how they might bear the wrong kind of fruit. Here is what thorns and briars would look like.

One thing that would be that would be fornicating, or doing something else profane. Something unholy, something contrary to your sanctification in Christ. That would be unrighteous, unholy, and profane, and it would defile them. And as a result they would never get to partake in God's holiness.

He says that instead they'd be like Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. If they sin, if they profane themselves by doing wickedness instead of bringing forth fruit of righteousness, they'll be selling their birthright. They'll be throwing away their place in the inheritance.

You remember how Esau was hungry, and so sold Jacob his birthright in exchange for a meal of pottage? Esau was the elder brother. He was born first, so he had the birthright, he would receive a double-portion of the inheritance. That wonderful inheritance that God promised to Abraham.

So that was a pretty amazing birthright. But the Bible says that Esau despised his birthright. He sold it for one morsel of meat. For one meal. He treated it like it was nothing, like it was worthless. And at the time it was. They didn't possess the promised land yet. And instead of living by faith and cherishing that hope that one day his descendants would receive a double portion of the inheritance, he threw it away, and gave it to Jacob.

Esau had the greatest inheritance of anyone else on earth. Two-thirds of the promise, because of his birthright. And he gave it away for just a morsel of meat.

And when they fornicate, or profane themselves, when they sin against God, they are doing the same thing. They have this amazing inheritance, this wonderful hope set before them. And when they just blow it for bodily appetites, they are despising their birthright. Like Esau they are passing up the eternal inheritance in favor of something that will only last a very short while, a desire that can never be satisfied, just as Esau had to find another meal the next day. He was no better off than before, and he'd lost his birthright.

And because he despised his birthright, God judged him:

## Verse 17

**Hebrews 12:17** For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

Because he despised the birthright, God rejected him from receiving any of the inheritance. He didn't receive the blessing.

He still wanted some of the inheritance, he was just willing to give up the best part of it for a little pleasure. But because of that God rejected him, and though he begged with tears, he could not make his father repent. He would not receive the inheritance.

And if the Hebrews profane themselves, if they defile themselves, they will not find any place of repentance. If they draw back, if they despise so great salvation, they will be rejected. They won't inherit the blessing. That which beareth thorns and briars is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.

## Verses 18-19

**Hebrews 12:18** For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

So unlike their fathers in the wilderness, they aren't come to mount Sinai to receive judgment poured out. They aren't come to hear words which they will ask not to hear any more.

*Paul tells them that they are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more.*

*Because one day men will cry out to the mountains that might be touched, begging to be hidden from the wrath of God. He will indeed come with blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words. And the wicked will not be able to endure to hear his voice. They will exceedingly fear and quake, and will be as though they had not been.*

## Verse 20

**Hebrews 12:20** (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:

They feared, because it was a mountain of death, that if even a beast touched it was to be killed. They were not holy, and they could not come near to see the living God, and could not stand to hear his voice.

## Verse 21

**Hebrews 12:21** And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

Even Moses, God's chosen deliverer, God's mighty prophet, was filled with exceeding fear, and quaked at the sight.

But that's not the mount that they approach to, a mount of judgment and fear.

## Verse 22

**Hebrews 12:22** But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

But they aren't come to mount Sinai, the mount of judgment, but to mount Zion, the mountain of peace and deliverance.

Not to a barren mount in the wilderness, but to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, filled with an innumerable company of angels.

*But the Hebrews who walk by faith, who hold fast through their tribulation, will come unto mount Zion, unto the city of the living God.*

## Verse 23

**Hebrews 12:23** To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

Not to a congregation of complainers, who would perish in the wilderness, but to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.

To God the judge, and to those that he has judged righteous, the spirits of just men made perfect. Just men who will live, by their faith.

## Verse 24

**Hebrews 12:24** And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

And before them is not a quaking, trembling Moses, but Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, who sits on the right hand of God.

And the blood of that covenant is not the blood of bulls and goats, it is the blood of Christ. And just as Abel's blood cried out to God from the ground, so Paul says that that blood cries out to God from heaven. Speaking better things than that of Abel. Not calling for the disinheritance of those that killed him, but for the pardon of the Hebrews and all who walk by faith.

## Verse 25

**Hebrews 12:25** See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

And just as Cain's seed perished from the earth, so those that refused to hear the word spoken from mount Sinai in the wilderness also perished. They refused his word, they did not heed it, they transgressed it, and they did not escape his wrath. They neglected their salvation. And as Paul has said so many times, if they did not escape, how shall we? We, who now have heard a word not only on earth, but he that spoke it speaketh also from heaven itself.

## Verse 26

**Hebrews 12:26** Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

And when God descended on mount Sinai to speak with them, he shook the earth. But now he has told of another time that will come, when heaven also will be shaken:

**Haggai 2:5** According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.

6 For thus saith the LORD of hosts; **Yet once**, it is a little while, and **I will shake the heavens, and the earth**, and the sea, and the dry land;

7 And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts.

So just as he made a covenant with their fathers in Egypt, he will once again confirm a covenant with his people, with a word that will shake the earth. and the heavens, when he fills his house with his glory.

## Verse 27

**Hebrews 12:27** And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

And seeing that is the last time he will shake them with his voice, yet once more, that means that those things that are shaken will ultimately perish and be destroyed at his voice. And only those things which cannot be shaken, the eternal inheritance, will remain.

*And then after that Paul talks about this word that will shake the earth, and how the things not shaken will remain. Do you remember how in chapter one we talked about the treasure hid in the field? The field was the world, and the kingdom of Israel, the kingdom of heaven, was the treasure. And I said that one day Christ, having purchased the field, would dig up the treasure and take it away, and destroy the earth. And that is what he is talking about here, when he says that all things will be shaken and perish, but there will be some things which cannot be shaken, that will remain. And those things that cannot be shaken are the land of Israel, the mount of Zion, and the seat of the kingdom. It speaks of that throne being established forever, it speaks*

*of that city as a tabernacle that shall never be taken down. And yet It is speaking of the land of Israel over there right now, that Christ will reign over for 1000 years, before he destroys the earth. And so if the earth is going to be shaken and destroyed, how is it that that kingdom is established for ever? It is because that is the treasure that cannot be shaken, and will remain. The treasure that Christ will dig up and save, when he destroys the field. And it will come down out of heaven, as a bride adorned for her husband, to continue forever upon the new earth. Unshaken and untouched by the wrath of God poured out upon the wicked. And it will continue for ever and ever.*

## Verse 28

**Hebrews 12:28** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

And so that means that their inheritance, the kingdom that they will receive, is a kingdom that cannot be shaken, that cannot be moved.

So let them not refuse him that speaketh, as some of their fathers did. Seeing that have so great salvation prepared for them, let them not neglect it. But let them walk by faith, and through faith and patience inherit the promises. Let them have grace, that they may serve God acceptably.

They may at times find it hard. They may grow faint. But they need to lift one another up. They need to come boldly before the throne of grace, and receive help in time of need.

So that they can continue to serve God acceptably.

Their brethren, who have rejected the word, want them to serve God through the temple system. Through earthly sacrifices. Through earthly priests. And that is not an acceptable service to God any longer. Any more than God found Cain's sacrifice acceptable.

Many people think that as long as you serve God, it doesn't matter how you do it. The Bible makes it very clear that that isn't so. How you serve God makes all of the difference in the world. It determines whether you are saved or damned, whether you receive the inheritance or burn for ever. You must, you must serve God acceptably. You must believe in Christ, receive his mercy and grace, and walk by faith. You must serve God acceptably, as he directs in his word by his Son, which Paul has expounded for them. With reverence and godly fear:

## Verse 29

**Hebrews 12:29** For our God is a consuming fire.

He is the same God who burnt on the top of mount Sinai. To those who will not hear his word, he will be just as he was to the fathers in the wilderness. He will disinherit and destroy them, and burn them up. Our God is a consuming fire.

A lot of people don't like that. They don't like to think of God that way. But if you don't know God as a consuming fire, then you don't know God. That is the most basic essence of his nature. He is a consuming fire. He is a righteous flame that devours the wicked. He is a furnace of jealousy and fury to pour out on those who reject him. That is how he describes himself repeatedly in scripture.

**Deuteronomy 4:23** Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.

24 For the LORD **thy God is a consuming fire**, even a jealous God.

And so God has always demanded that people serve him acceptably. Serve him with reverence and godly fear, in the manner acceptable to him, in the manner that he requires, and not after their own ways.

He is a consuming fire who destroys those who do not serve him acceptably, and they will not receive the inheritance.

And so the Hebrews having been made partakers of so great salvation, having heard it now so clearly declared unto them, let them have grace, whereby they may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear.

And so that ends chapter 12. And in chapter 13 he's going to give them some final direction on how they can do that, on how they should be serving God.