

Hebrews, Part 9

The book of Hebrews could be roughly divided into three sections:

1. JESUS IS A BETTER PERSON
2. JESUS HAS A BETTER PRIESTHOOD
3. JESUS' KINGDOM OPERATES ON A BETTER PRINCIPLE

The principle that God's kingdom operates on is FAITH. The author states that the Jewish religion is "SEEN" and our relationship with Jesus is "UNSEEN" – but it is still BETTER because faith is a higher principle!

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Chapter 11 is "Faith's Hall of Fame" – people who lived by faith!

Hebrews 12:1-2 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, 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.

"WITNESSES" – not witnesses OF us, but witnesses TO us

"WEIGHT" – a good athlete doesn't choose between the good and the BAD, but between the good and the BEST (weights are not sins)

"THE SIN" – a specific sin, most likely UNBELIEF

LOOK AT JESUS! He endured suffering because of a future hope!

Hebrews 12:3-8 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. 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: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

Verses 5-6 quote Proverbs 3:11-12 ...

Proverbs 3:11-12 My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

The words "son, children, sons" in chapter 12 refer to ADULT children – the chastening (discipline) we go through is proof that we are maturing! Remember that a father disciplines only his OWN children, so the fact that our faith goes through trials should encourage, not discourage us.

There are three reactions to God's discipline ...

- Despising it (v.5) – a WRONG response
- Fainting in it (v.5) – a WRONG response
- Submitting to it (v. 9) – a RIGHT response!

Hebrews 12:9-13 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? 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. 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. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

YOU BE STRONG FOR OTHERS WHO ARE FOLLOWING YOU!

Hebrews 12:14-17 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 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; Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. 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.

Follow PEACE WITH MEN, and HOLINESS BEFORE GOD. Why are they mentioned together? Because sometimes living holy before God will cause conflict with men! But ultimately, without holiness WE will not see God, and OTHERS will not see God ("NO MAN shall see the Lord").

Romans 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.

Bitterness is a ROOT – it grows into MANY other spiritual problems and ends up defiling MANY other people!

Don't get bitter in your trials, or you might end up like ESAU – he traded his spiritual birthright for something trivial and temporary, and by the time he regretted his actions he couldn't get his birthright back!

Hebrews 12:16 (MES) Watch out for the Esau syndrome: trading away God's lifelong gift in order to satisfy a short-term appetite.

AND YOU HAVE AN INHERITANCE MUCH BETTER THAN ESAU'S!

Hebrews 12:18-24 For ye 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: (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: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.) 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, 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, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

Our covenant is not from Mount Sinai, but from Mount Zion – it is not earthly, but heavenly. The manifestation of God's power in the OT was terrifying for the people – they respected God out of FEAR. But how much more should we respect God out of LOVE in the NT?

Galatians 4:26 But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.

GOD IS OUR FATHER AND THE CHURCH IS OUR MOTHER – AND YOU CAN'T BE BORN WITHOUT BOTH!

This new covenant is made possible by the BLOOD of Jesus Christ – and, like Abel's blood crying from the ground, His blood still speaks!

As long as the blood is "IN" we can't hear it speak, but when they pierced Jesus body on the cross, the blood flowed "OUT" and started speaking!

THE BLOOD STILL SPEAKS! I HEAR THE BLOOD! If the blood hadn't gotten between you and judgment ... you and your enemies ... you and your sickness ... you and your trials ... you wouldn't even be here today!

Hebrews 12:25-29 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: 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 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. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire.

If God punished OT disobedience, He will also punish NT disobedience! His voice shook Mount Sinai then, but it shakes EVERYTHING now!

God wants to remove the temporal things in our lives that can be shaken and replace them with eternal things that cannot be shaken!

The implication for these believers is: **Faith that CAN be shaken and still stand firm is faith that already HAS been shaken and survived.**

Don't give up when trials come – our Kingdom cannot be moved!

OUR GOD IS A CONSUMING FIRE! He won't give up until He burns everything out of our lives that is not of Him.

In chapter 11, Paul gives us EXAMPLES of people who lived by faith
In chapter 12, Paul gives us ENCOURAGEMENT to live in faith
In chapter 13, Paul gives us EVIDENCE of what living in faith looks like

EVIDENCE #1 – LOVE FOR OTHERS

Hebrews 13:1-6 Let brotherly love continue. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

Love will give us right relationships to fellow Christians, to those that are in trials, to our spouses and families, and even to MATERIAL THINGS.

"CONVERSATION" = "lifestyle"

"COVETOUSNESS" = "an intense desire that is not based on a need"

EVIDENCE #2 – SUBMISSION TO OTHERS

Hebrews 13:7-17 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

“RULE” = “governmental authority” (in a spiritual sense)

Jesus Christ is the same always, so don't let a change in spiritual leadership ever change your loyalty to Bible doctrine!

Jesus suffered OUTSIDE the city of Jerusalem for us, and these believers were OUTSIDE the accepted religion of Judaism – THERE IS ALWAYS A “REPROACH FACTOR” IN LIVING FOR GOD.

Galatians 5:11 And I, brethren, if I yet preach circumcision, why do I yet suffer persecution? then is the offence of the cross ceased.

Hebrews 13:18-25 Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Paul concludes by saying, “I'm praying that you grow up!”