

Hebrews

Chapter 12:1-11

November 12, 1995

- **Hebrews Outline:**

- Chapter 1 Christ is greater than the prophets and the angels.
- Chapter 2 Christ's message is greater than the angel's.
- Chapter 3 Christ is greater than Moses.
- Chapter 4 Christ is greater than Joshua and His rest is superior.
- Chapter 5 Christ's High Priesthood is greater than the Aaronic Priesthood.
- Chapter 6 God's faithfulness to Abraham and his seed is confirmed by an oath.
- Chapter 7 Christ is a Priest in the order of Melchizedek and Christ is greater than Abraham.
- Chapter 8 Christ is Mediator of a new covenant.
- Chapter 9 Christ offered a better sacrifice at a better sanctuary.
- Chapter 10 Christ's sacrifice was offered only once and then He sat down.
- Chapter 11 The just have always lived by faith.
- Chapter 12 God disciplines His sons who are citizens of the New Jerusalem

- **Introduction & Review**

Having given an extensive list of faithful saints as an example, the author implores the readers to demonstrate the same behavior. As we consider the authors admonishments, it is important that we first understand the particular temptations that were facing these people and then understand the instruction given. Only then do we make application to our particular situation always keeping in mind that no scripture was written *to* us but all scripture was written *for* us.

- **Exposition**

Hebrews 12:1-11

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, 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 has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

- This great cloud of witnesses is most assuredly those saints whom he has just used as examples. The author is trying to get the readers to compare their situations with those of the saints who have gone before and who were most certainly held dear by the readers.
- Notice that there are two things mentioned that get in our way; things that weigh us down and sin that entangles. Not everything that slows us down is sin-but sin always entangles. Sin never makes you run better. We may have things which distract us from those things which are really important and yet they aren't necessarily sin. These things should be evaluated as to whether it is a good and fruitful use of our time and resources.
- The Christian life is a race of endurance -not a sprint. The thing that matters is the perseverance to the end not primarily how well we started. Consider the Galatians who began by grace who then attempted to maintain and advance what they had gained by means of the flesh. As we run this race, we become stronger and stronger because God is faithful to sanctify us and bring us into greater conformity to the image of Christ.
- It is foolish to watch your feet while you are running. It would also be foolish to continue to watch where you came from and to watch those who are running the race as well. The primary focus of your attention would be the finish line. For the Christian, this is Christ.

- Our faith came from Christ. Our faith comes from Christ. Our faith grows by the grace of Christ. Our faith will persevere by Christ. He is the author, finisher or perfecter of our faith.
- Clearly Christ did not want to die on the cross. But because of the joy set before Him, He endured the cross. It was a genuine trial for Jesus which God would have avoided if it were possible to bring about the salvation of the ELection any other way. Christ's prayer in the garden was answered-there was no other way. The pattern in the kingdom of God is humility then exaltation. If we humble ourselves God exalts us in Christ. This is the pattern to demonstrate through trials. God is sovereign and in control of all things. Your humility is a byproduct of your belief in this truth.

3 For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. 4 You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin. 5 And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons: "My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every son whom He receives."

- We know that the recipients of this letter had been persecuted and had had their property stolen. It is very important to remember that when your enemies despise you, something is not *wrong*-something is *right*. If you don't have people who are being hostile toward you for your faith, then you probably aren't living much of a Christian life. Remember the words of our Lord where he said, "Be weary when no men despise your name."
- The author wanted to let them know that the trials they were experiencing is a sign that God loved them. If they endure this chastening they would know that they were sons. But if they abandon the grounds of their faith, they have nothing to gain but hardship from the trial.
- American Christians don't understand the level of persecution that the Saints who went before us endured. I believe that future generations, when they reflect on 20th century America, will remember this decade as the time when Christianity was trivialized. With the great number of Christians we have in our country and the lack of any substantive persecution, one would think that we would have a proliferation of deep writers and thinkers. Actually, as a nation our churches are filled with shallow Christians who would rather think of God as their awesome cosmic buddy or rabbit's foot rather than the creator of the universe. Simply put, one would expect more from a nation like ours.

7 If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom a father does not chasten? 8 But if you are without chastening, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate and not sons. 9 Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? 10 For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. 11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (NKJV)

- Sometimes it is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that there are times that you love your children and then there are times where you have to discipline them. This is not the correct understanding of these passages. We declare our love for our children by providing the discipline. If we withhold it, we declare that they are not our children. You love your children before the discipline, during the discipline and after the discipline.
- The benefit of discipline is almost never perceived by the person being disciplined! Later, when you reflect, you can see the bountiful crop of fruit which comes about from a Godly discipline although it was difficult to see before.