

COMMENTARY

Hebrews chapter 12:

- vs. 1 - 13 Paul, in reference to the great people of faith in the old testament times, says that with such people around we should live lives that would be worthy of them, to follow in their footsteps. He speaks of our life as a race and tells us to keep looking ahead to our goal, that is Christ.
- vs. 6 Then and only then will we be assured not to turn away unto something else. (Prov. 3:11,12) We are to remember all that our Lord suffered. If He endured so much then surely we can endure much more.
- vs. 13 Paul speaks that our trials can be used by God. It can be used to discipline us. Paul is quick to add that God disciplines fairly and in a loving manner. All of His discipline is designed for our benefit. He admits that at the time that we are enduring that it can get rough but encourages us to look beyond that and see that what is important is that it will produce worthwhile benefits. In verse 12 and 13 Paul continues on in this thought and encourages us to remain strong and endure and in so doing to make the way easier for the ones around us.
- vs. 14 - 29 We are told in these verses not to reject God's love and new covenant but to accept them and to live lives worthy of such holiness to show that we have accepted the call to be God's people.
- Esau (Genesis 25:19 - 34 in particular here) is singled out as one who was to inherit but gave up the right of his own accord. Later, [when it was too late] he wanted it back and the blessings that went with it but he could not have it.
- Israel (Exodus 19:16 - 20:19) was allowed to hear the very voice of God and to see His coming down on Mount Sinai in smoke. Rather than listening, they told Moses not to have God talk to them anymore because they were scared. They gave up that privilege of hearing God's voice.
- Paul tells us that we also have come into God's presence. We are not to make the same mistake as Esau and Israel. We are to hear God's voice and accept His covenant. The day will come when He will destroy the heavens and the earth and then it will be too late. The promise of our inheritance will remain secure and we shall live forever. Paul then tells us that this is the reason that we should worship God in reverence and awe. It is out of respect for His power.

COMMENTARY

Hebrews Chapter 13:

vs. 1 - 25 In speaking about accepting God's covenant and obeying God's voice, Paul then concludes with ways that we can live holy lives in Jesus Christ. He has proved to them that the new covenant is superior and that Jesus is more than worthy to be their Lord for He is superior to anything that the old covenant had to offer.

vs. 5
(Deut. 31:6)
vs. 6
(Ps. 118:6,7)

In the first 3 verses, Paul speaks concerning our relationship to our fellow man. We are to love, be hospitable and try to sympathize with those in all situations.

Our own lives are to be pure in the sight of God. We are told to avoid sexual immorality and the love of money. How well God knows man. These 2 areas of self-discipline seem to continue to be the downfall of so many and a temptation to the rest. The reason that we should be content is that we will always have God. If we have Him, what else do we need?

We are told to remember our spiritual leaders who taught about our unchangeable Lord. We are to look at their life and to see the contentment that they found. This being the case, we are not to go off after some new teaching or doctrine of man.

Under the old covenant system the animals carcasses were carried to the outside of the camp and there they were burned. Jesus also, our perfect sacrifice, was crucified outside of the city gates. This shows that it was a disgrace for Him to die in that manner. We also, are to bear the disgrace that He bore. Those who made fun of Him will make fun of us. Those who reject Him will reject us. We have to be willing to accept that.

Instead, we are to praise God and to do good to others. This is what is pleasing in the sight of God. Those that we are to do good to, include those who lead us. If we will submit to them and obey them, we obey God and their job is less difficult and burdensome. This applies especially to our spiritual leaders.

God is able to do great things through us if we allow Him to work. He can help us to overcome sin and to do what is right only if we let Him. We are to let Him have complete control over our lives and Paul has assumed that the Hebrew Christians have done just that.

In Paul's concluding remarks he tells them about Timothy [a travelling companion of his] and about the church in Italy greeting them [giving evidence that the letter was written from Rome].

study guide

Hebrews 12:

1. What should we do since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses?
2. Who should we fix our eyes on? (Be thorough in your answer)
3. What should we not do when the Lord disciplines us?
4. Who does the Lord discipline?
5. Why does God discipline us?
6. What does discipline eventually produce?
7. What does everyone need, who want to see the Lord?
8. what have we as Christians come to?
9. How should we worship God and why?

BONUS:

1. Who are the cloud of witnesses that Paul refers to, and how does their presence make you feel?
2. What do you think Paul is saying when he talks about running and setting our eyes on Jesus?
3. What did you learn about the Lord's discipline? Does this help you? Explain.
4. How do people refuse God today? Do Christians refuse God? How?
5. What do all the things in the list of what we have come to, mean to you?

STUDY GUIDE

Hebrews 13:

1. Who should we love and how should we love them?
2. What have some people done by entertaining strangers?
3. How should we remember those in prison and those who are mistreated?
4. What does Paul say about marriage?
5. What are we to keep our lives free from?
6. Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever?
7. What should we not be carried away with?
8. What should we offer continually to God through Jesus?
9. With what type of sacrifices is God pleased according to vs. 16?
10. Why should we obey our leaders? How will this help them?

BONUS:

1. How can we love each other as brothers?
2. What does it mean to you, that Jesus remains the same?
3. What do you think Paul meant when he talked of us bearing the disgrace that Jesus bore? How can we do that today?
4. Explain how we can be told to do good things and yet are also told that God needs to equip us and work in us.