

## Warnings from the Book of Hebrews – Part 7

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 12:1-3, 12-29

We are studying teachings and warnings, gleaned from the Book of Hebrews, that compel people to examine their faith and their walk with God. Let's continue to examine some dangerous things people do and the gospel-driven call to correct or protect that situation. Previously, we noted:

- Hebrews 2:1,3 – People let things “*slip / drift away.*”
- Hebrews 3:6,14 – People do not “*hold fast / firmly to our confidence*” in Christ.
- Hebrews 3:8-13 – People harden their hearts.
- Hebrews 4:1-2 – People gain unprofitable knowledge of God's word.
- Hebrews 5:8 – 6:12 – People become lethargic and fruitless.
- Hebrews 10:26-39 – People trifle with the precious blood of Christ.

Now, we will consider ...

### **Hebrews 12:1-3 – People get their eyes off of Jesus Christ and become weary of the race that is set before them.**

They refuse His heavenly counsel and correction (**Hebrews 12:5, 24-25**). They become ungrateful, ungrateful, and irreverent (**Hebrews 12:28**). We need to keep our eyes on Christ. See Hebrews 2:9-10, 17-18; 4:14-16; 13:8-16; John 6:40; 10:27-28; Galatians 2:20; 6:9; Ephesians 3:14-19; Colossians 1:16-19; 2:6-10; Philippians 1:20-21; 2:5; 3:10,14; 4:13. The entire twelfth chapter of the book of Hebrews is needed to explore this thought.

### **Hebrews 12:1-13 – We need to run our race, continually looking unto Jesus.**

We are a spectacle before others who witness our Christian testimony (Christian and non-Christian alike). The words, “... *we also...*” (Hebrews 12:1 – KJV,NKJV,NASB) point us back to chapter eleven where a list of the saints was given, showing us how they demonstrated their faith before others (See previous lesson, Part 4, Hebrews 4:1-2 – People gain unprofitable knowledge of God's word – Supplemental page). The Christian life is sometimes described as running a race. See I Corinthians 9:24-27; Philippians 2:14-16; II Timothy 2:5; 4:7. We are not competing with other believers. We are competing against the world, the flesh, and the Devil. If we don't do the preparations, take the precautions, and follow the rules of the race, as an athlete, we will fail, even quit our race.

### **See Christ our example.**

- Hebrews 12:2-4 – We need to keep looking unto Jesus so that we do not become weary and quit our race (Hebrews 10:23). Jesus had the joy of the Lord for His strength. He despised but endured the mistreatment of sinful, unbelieving people. He fought sin so that He could save us from it. This led to the sacrificing of His life. See Hebrews 10:5-10 (Hebrews 10:7 cp. Psalm 40:6-8 – note “*delight*” cp. Hebrews 12:2 – “*joy*”); Matthew 16:21-27; 26:36-54; II Corinthians 8:9; Galatians 1:3-5; Ephesians 5:1-2; I John 3:16; Revelation 1:5-6.

- Hebrews 12:15 – We also need to look diligently / carefully so that others do not fail / fall short of the grace of God by becoming bitter and defiled. See Hebrews 10:24; Luke 22:31-32; Galatians 6:1-2; I Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:1-4, 17 cp. Romans 16:17-18.

### See Christ our coach.

- Hebrews 12:5-11 – Christ speaks to us at many levels (brethren, followers / disciples, servants, friends, sheep, etc.) but note that Christ can speak to us as a father to his children. See Hebrews 2:11-13 (cp. Isaiah 8:18); Isaiah 9:6 (“The everlasting Father”); John 21:5 (KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV – not NIV). So, in Hebrews 12:5-11 (quoting Proverbs 3:11-12), we can see Christ address us as children / sons, encouraging us to respond to His correction with humility, faith, love, and submission. See Revelation 3:19-20 (cp. Isaiah 9:6 – “Wonderful, Counselor”).
- Hebrews 12:12-14 – Christ seeks a positive response to His coaching / counseling / correcting. We should “*Seek the Lord and His strength; Seek His face evermore / continually.*” (Psalm 105:4 cp. John 1:14-17). See Hebrews 12:2-3; Ephesians 5:14-17; 6:10-18; Philippians 4:13; II Timothy 2:1; II Peter 1:1-11; 3:17-18 cp. Matthew 7:7-11; Luke 11:9-13.

The reference to “*holiness*” is not referring to our position with God through Christ’s merit (II Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:8-9; Romans 3:20-26). It is referring to our practical sanctification which every believer should be experiencing (I Peter 1:13-23; Ephesians 2:8-10; Romans 6:1-14; 8:1-15; Revelation 3:1-6, 19-21).

### Hebrews 12:14-29 – We need to follow peace with all men & holiness – fearing the Lord.

**Hebrews 12:14-15** – Don’t let the race (vs. 1) make us negligent of others & careless with God. See Romans 12:1-21; 14:1 – 15:7; I Corinthians 9:19-22; 10:31-33; Colossians 3:12-17.

**Hebrews 12:15** – Don’t become bitter, troubled, and defiled. See Ephesians 4:20-32.

**Hebrews 12:16-17** – Don’t become like Esau (i.e. carnally-minded – desiring blessings without repenting). See Genesis 25:29-34; 27:1-46 cp. Romans 8:5-13; Matthew 16:24-26; I John 2:15-17.

**Hebrews 12:18-24** – Don’t focus on Mount Sinai (i.e. legalistic, fleshly, fear-based environment). Focus on Mount Zion (i.e. heavenly, spiritual, grace-based, Christ-centered environment). See Hebrews 13:1, 8-15; Galatians 3:21-26; Colossians 3:1-4. (See supplemental page.)

**Hebrews 12:25-27** – Don’t refuse the Lord’s heavenly counsel (See notes for Hebrews 12:5-11 – “Christ our coach”). In Hebrews 12:25, the Greek word for “*refuse*” means “*to reject, to avoid, to ask to be excused.*” See Hebrews 1:1-3; 2:1-4; 10:28-31.

**Hebrews 12:28** – Don’t forget to be graceful / grateful. II Timothy 2:1; Philippians 4:4-9.

**Hebrews 12:28-29** – Don’t forget to serve God reverently. See I Corinthians 6:9-20; II Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1 (Hebrews 12:28-29 is reiterated well in I Peter 1:13-22; Ephesians 5:18-21).

## Supplemental Page for Lesson 7

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**Hebrews 12:18-21 – Mt. Sinai** – This is the place where the law was given. See Exodus 19:12-13,16; 20:18; Deuteronomy 4:11; 5:22; 9:15-19. **Mt. Sinai** is associated with God's **holiness, justice, and wrath against sin** (the consuming fire rather than the refining fire – Hebrews 12:29; Matthew 3:12; Luke 3:17 cp. I Peter 1:3-7; Job 23:10).

**Hebrews 12:22-24 – Mt. Zion** – This is a reference to **Jerusalem**. It is associated with **peace** ("Jeru-Salem" = "City of Peace" – "Salem" = "Shalom"), **redemption**, and **reconciliation**.

- **The heavenly Jerusalem** exists in heaven and will one day come down from God out of heaven to a new earth (Psalm 46:4-5 cp. Revelation 21:1-3, 9-27; 22:1-6).
- **The environment of angels** – ministering spirits (Hebrews 1:14).
- **The general assembly and church of the firstborn which are written in heaven** – Christ first rose from the dead. He is called the firstfruits of them that slept / died. As Christ's church increases, we are born again and belong to the future harvest of those who will be resurrected. We belong to the forever family of God. See Revelation 1:5; I Corinthians 15:20-23; Matthew 16:15-18; Ephesians 2:1-7, 11-22; 3:21; 5:25-27.
- **The spirits of just men made perfect** – Here the word "*Perfect*" is talking about the position we have with God because of the work of Christ on the cross. (Hebrews 10:10,14 cp. I Corinthians 2:6-10). In this life, when we are born again, our spirit is united with The Holy Spirit. This causes us to bear witness one with another (Romans 8:16). Concerning those who are now in the presence of the Lord, we also can bear witness with them (i.e. people mentioned in the Scriptures or in church history) that have spoken or acted in ways that we can relate. In a sense, we catch their spirit. See Hebrews 11:1-40; James 5:10-11. We have "*the heritage / inheritance of those that fear thy name.*" (Psalm 61:5).
- **Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, ... the blood of sprinkling, that speaks better things than that of Abel** – A living relationship with Jesus, who is our faithful high priest, who helps us, who continually lives to make intercession for us (Hebrews 2:16-18; 4:14-16; 7:25; 13:20-21).

### **What about the blood of Abel?**

Some think of his blood sacrifice that he offered, which God accepted at that time, but was only temporary (Genesis 4:1-5). Christ's sacrifice is permanent, fully comprehensive, and eternal (John 1:29; Hebrews 10:1-14).

It is also possible that this verse is talking about the personal blood of Abel, after he was murdered by his brother Cain. God said that Abel's blood was crying unto Him from the ground (Genesis 4:10). The blood of Abel then was speaking condemnation. Christ's blood speaks peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation (Ephesians 1:6-7; Colossians 1:12-14; I Peter 1:18-20; Romans 5:1-11).

### **Extra Comment for...**

**Hebrews 12:28** – Don't forget to be graceful / grateful. II Timothy 2:1; Philippians 4:4-9.

*"A gentle spirit is the evidence of a grateful heart."*