

Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews XXXVII Eight Means of Correction

(Chapter 12)
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Let's just review just a couple of things in Hebrews 12; v 1 tells us about all the witnesses of the Old Testament and everything. One of the problems and difficulties that of much of professing Christianity has today is that they reject the Old Testament. They, in effect, are rejecting the laws and commandments of God, and they don't learn the lessons that are there for us.

Therefore, since many of them preach just the gospel of love, peace and joy—like this one man down in Houston, TX. He doesn't preach any correction to his congregation at all, and he's got a massive congregation. They've got a brand new church, which will seat 16,000 every Sunday. Everything is good, fine, lovely, sweet, positive, and all they do is quote a few Scriptures and tell some nice stories. They are not confronting the facts that everyone is going to be confronted with in their lives.

With that kind of preaching they avoid the Old Testament; they don't understand what it's all about. They don't read the lessons that are there when the actual things of life come upon them, which comes upon every one of us. We all have our difficulties and problems and our own personal sins. We all have our difficulties and problems in the world confronting the world and working in the world and living in the world.

Heb. 12:1 is quite an exhortation. Because we have all of these witnesses, Paul is saying to *quit feeling sorry for yourself*—in a nice way.

Hebrews 12:1 "...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily entraps us..." When we come to God He will lift the problem, lift the difficulty from us, and He will forgive our sins.

Let's see what we need to emphasize in the way of weight, and let's see what we need to do with that weight. We need to take it to Christ always. There are many weights, many difficulties, many problems. Today we're confronted with them over and over again—not only in our personal lives, but in the lives of everyone else who confronts us.

Here's something always to remember, Matthew 11:25: "At that time Jesus answered and said, 'I praise You, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent, and have revealed them to

babes.'"

So, the Truth of life is never given to the 'intelligent.' This is the wise and the 'intelligent of the world. In the Church 'you see your calling, not many wise' (1-Cor. 1) so there are some; 'not many mighty' so there may be one or two; 'not many noble' and we don't know of anyone yet of nobility that have been called. God has called the 'weak, the foolish,' the broken down, that which the world does not want. But He expects us—once He calls us—to do certain things so that He will help us. God is not going to come in with a magic eraser and erase all of your problems. Yes, He will do that with your sins when you repent, that is true, but then you have to learn new behavior according to the way of Christ: a new way of thinking and a new way of living. That is called *change and conversion*, which takes place over a period of time. We will see that Paul is addressing himself to the brethren in Heb. 12.

Verse 26: "Yes, Father, for it was well pleasing in Your sight *to do this...*" The rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the sophisticated *think* that God owes it to them because of what they are. God doesn't deal with them.

Verse 27: "All things were delivered to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son personally chooses to reveal *Him*."

This all ties in with what Jesus said, 'No one comes to the Father except through Me. I'm the Way, the Truth and the Life.' No one comes to the Son unless the Father 'draws him.' This is what is so important. This is what has happened in our lives. Paul in Heb. 12 wants us to keep the focus on this so that we don't lose it when we're overwhelmed with personal problems and living in the world and all those things that happen. It's easy to allow that to happen.

Verse 28: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are *overly* burdened..."—with problems, sins, difficulties—in the world, in your life, your family—mentally, spiritually, physically.

"...and **I will give you rest**. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me..." (vs 28-29). That's why we need to study the teachings of Christ.

I joke about it now, but when I did *A Harmony of the Gospels* the church was in great

turmoil, and I did it for a sanity project. That was true! I did, because I figured if I focused my mind on Christ and do that, then I'm not going to get caught up in all this political nonsense, heresy, false doctrine and things like this. It's the same thing. If you have *A Harmony* don't leave it up on the shelf. That contains in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John the Word of God and some explanations of it so that you know some things about the life of Christ and the Gospel and so forth. How can you take His yoke upon you and learn from Him:

- unless you know what Jesus has taught?
- unless you know how He lived His life? U
- unless you know how He's commanded us to live?

Everything else in the New Testament is based upon the sound words of Jesus Christ.

That's what Paul told Timothy. He said that if they don't 'adhere to the sound words of Jesus Christ, withdraw yourselves from them.' That's why it's important. That's the only way you're going to learn from Christ. Come to Him! That's what He says, 'Come to Me.'

"...for I am meek and lowly in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light" (vs 29-30).

Even though you go through the trials and difficulties that you do. You put those burdens on Christ. That's what it's all about, and that's what he's talking about here in Heb. 12:1. So, "...lay **aside every weight...**"

How do you do that? *Put it on Christ!* Lots of times people take weights upon themselves mentally, emotionally and spiritually that are not theirs to take, because they belong to someone else and they live in worry, fear and trepidation about how the other person is doing, rather than praying and putting it in God's hands. They burden themselves down with things they ought to put on Christ. You can't live other people's lives. All of that kind of worry is one of those weights that people carry around, which Christ says, 'give to Me.' Cannot Christ change minds, problems, situations? *Yes!* Even the Psalm says that He can make your enemies be at peace with you. That's why Christ is saying this here.

Hebrews 12:1: "...let us run the race set before us with endurance." This is a race that we have to run, and we don't know what lies over the horizon. We don't know what lies around the bend in the road. We have to keep running, enduring, and you have to be spiritually trained to do this. Just like in a physical race, if you don't train yourself, you're

not going to get up and run any kind of race at all.

I saw a very interesting race, it was over in Japan. A 95-year-old man set the world's record for the 100-meter dash. He ran it in 22.5 seconds at age 95, which is just a little over two and half times more than the fastest man in the world. I thought of that when I was reading this verse, look at that! I wonder how much this man at age 95 was training to run that one race? I wonder how often that he practiced it?

Just like with us. Look at every Sabbath as part of that race, which gives us the strength through the coming week. That's why we need the Sabbath every week. That's part of our training. That's part of our enduring. There are two kinds of endurance:

- in the long haul
- to bear up under a problem or difficulty

Like Christ did going through the crucifixion!

That's why Paul said, v 2: "Having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith..." He was looking toward the end result of what it would do in bringing many sons and daughters into the Kingdom of God.

When you're in trouble, v 3: "...meditate deeply on Him Who endured such great hostility of sinners against Himself..." Remember, He was perfect; He did no sin. Sometimes we end up in problems partly because of our own sins; partly because of other people around us.

Paul saying to keep our mind on Christ: "...so that you do not become weary and faint in your minds" (v 3). What is the first thing that happens in any athletic contest?

1. if you're not trained
2. if you don't have the mental mindset
3. if you become weary physically
4. if you start giving up mentally

What happens? *You drop out and you lose!*

Watch especially basketball, and in analyzing why the two top teams went at it the way that they did, and why the one team finally won at the end was because in the face of ultimate problems they set their minds to do what they had to do to the end. That's what endurance is all about. We'll see some of the other diversions that other people go through.

Verse 4: "You have not yet resisted to the point of *losing* blood in your struggle against sin." Then we come to correction. We'll review about the forms of correction as we go through.

Verse 5: "...My son, do not despise *the* chastening of *the* Lord..." God uses many different

things for chastening and discipline. If you endure it and get through to the other side—because it’s not pleasant going through it—then you will understand it. Then you will have 100%, 20/20 hindsight vision.

But the reason that it’s difficult in understanding it while you’re going through it is because God wants you *to walk by faith, look to Christ and trust in Him*. That’s how to handle the problem regardless of what it is. When a problem first comes up you get all worried and start getting all anxious and start getting all ‘twacked’ out about it, maybe even mad, bitter or hostile about it, you have not put the focus on Christ. You have forgotten that God corrects you, and God *does* correct us.

What’s the matter with the world today is that kids are not corrected. I tell you, any parent that doesn’t correct their kids; any parent that allows their kids to yell, cry, scream, have temper tantrums in the store and at home, or come up and hit them is derelict in their duty to God. God has placed mother and father there to correct and teach the children. If you want to know about childrearing, go read the book of Proverbs. That will tell you all about it. Take care of your children.

I remember one time over here in a store years ago, Delores turned her back for just a minute and Stephen stood up in the stroller—he must have been two or three—and he fell over and hit his head on the cement. It really was bad, terrible for him. Whenever I see some kid in the store that’s standing up in one of those carts and mom isn’t there looking, or mom can’t do anything with him.... I remember once the mother couldn’t get him to sit down. She was worried, I walked up and I looked at him and said (very sternly) ‘Sit down!’ He looked at me with big eyes and I said again, ‘Sit down! Your mother wants you to sit down. Now, sit down!’ He sat down, she strapped him in, and she said, ‘Thank you.’

Always remember this: Whatever correction comes is because *it’s for your benefit to help get rid of sin, to help draw you close to God* and so forth. Here’s a very important thing concerning correction, come to 1-Cor. 11. Here’s where correction begins, and it’s the easiest and most important way to do it. It’s talking about the Passover and what we need to do.

1-Corinthians 11:31: “Now if we would examine ourselves, we would not be judged.” Judgment is the ultimate end of correction. If we examine ourselves we have this promise.

Verse 32: “But when we are judged... [by God in severe correction] ...we are chastened by the Lord, so that we will not be condemned with the

world.” Regardless of what the correction is, there’s a purpose in it, so that we don’t be condemned with the world.

Hebrews 12:9: “Furthermore, we have had our fleshly fathers who chastened *us*, and we respected *them*; should we not all the more *willingly* be subject to the Father of spirits, and live *forever*?”

We’re going to see an example of that with Esau a little later. Esau could have avoided the whole problem.

Verse 10: “For in the first case, they... [our fathers] ...chastened *us* for a few days in whatever way seemed good to them... [they did make some mistakes in it] ...but in the second case, He *chastens us* for *our own* benefit... [Christ does not make mistakes] (here’s the reason; the goal): ...**that we may be partakers of His Holiness.**”

Every time that Paul talks about correction; every time Paul talks about things that are wrong, he also points us to what the purpose of what we need to do and the goal of where we’re going and where we’re headed. Think about that; meditate on that, **“...that we may be partakers of His Holiness.”**

Then he brings us to reality again, v 11: “Now truly, no chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous... [and it is] ...nevertheless, afterwards it yields *the* peaceable fruits of righteousness to those who have been exercised by it.”

He’s preparing for the story of Esau in what he’s talking about here. So, whatever the correction is, however it comes, *yield to God! Learn from it!* If it’s something where there’s anger, hostility or conflict and you don’t understand it, pray about it and ask for wisdom and strength to be able to handle it and do it. If you try and go out and do it your own way, guess what’s going to happen? *It’s not going to work too well and you might mess it up and make it even worse!* I’ve done that and you’ve done that.

Verse 12: “Therefore, lift up the hands that are hanging down, and *revive* the weakened knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which *is* lame be turned aside; but let it rather be healed” (vs 12-13).

Again, likening it to a race. Whenever athletes are tired, what do you see them do? *Their hands are hanging down*, and in the case of basketball the commentators always draw this to your attention toward the end of the game: When players are really tired, they put their hands on their hips and they lean over and breathe deeply, same way with football.

The coaches know that and they look out there and see that. What do they do? *They send in a substitute that is fresh and strong, that the weary person has to guard.* Or in football has to run against and defend against the pass or defend against the run, and you've got a fresh one coming in there BAM! hitting the one who's tired and weak and giving up. What happens? *They lose!*

This is the same thing. This is what he's talking about here. That's why the endurance. All of this comes from Heb. 12:1-12 on endurance. Now, let's look at correction.

Eight Means of Correction:

1. **Internal self-correction**—that's why God has given you a conscience
2. **By the Word of God**—that's why you study and read

The other day I was reading in Ezekiel and seeing the things that are there, and I tell you, if you don't read Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel and see how God deals with peoples and nations, you're not going to fear God, you're not going to love God, you're not going to understand that God is calling us to Holiness as we are to be *partakers of His Holiness* and that God is also a *jealous God!* Why is He jealous? Not in the sense of human carnality and evil jealousy. He's jealous because He's a loving God. He's not going to give His glory to other gods, to other means, to other methods.

That's what Paul talking about. ***Let the Word of God correct you!*** That's why you read some of the things there in the Prophets, what God does to individuals and nations. Heed that! Let that be a lesson to you.

3. **Led by the Holy Spirit**

You have the Spirit of God, God's Spirit is in you, God's Spirit will prompt you to change and avoid. It will prompt you to repent and turn from the direction you're going in. Those are the easiest. Those first three are the easiest.

4. **Situations and circumstances**

God uses those to correct us. Many times in situations and circumstances, what do these reveal? *Our attitude and what we really think!* For, 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks!' If the situations and circumstances bring up carnality, hatred, bitterness, sin, anxiety, what is God doing? *Revealing it to you, so that you can repent of it!* That's why.

5. **Other people**

Can be a friend, brother, minister. When it gets to other people that's a little different. What happens when that comes up? *You get uncomfortable and squeamish and you really don't like to talk about it!* That's why God says in Matt. 18, you first go to the person alone—that means face-to-face. It doesn't mean a phone call. If anyone says, 'I did a Matt. 18 and I called...' That's not a Matt. 18. It doesn't say, 'by the way in the 20th century pick up the phone and called the offended brother. **NO!** It says **'go to him alone.'**

When that happens, listen, be anxious, and probably the correction is true that is coming. If there is some sort of misunderstanding, that's when to iron it out. If you've done something that isn't right, admit it. ***Repent and change!*** What do you have to lose? ***Nothing, except sin!*** If you're worried about losing face, forget it, that's carnal.

Now, on the other hand, the one that brings the correction: make sure you understand what you're doing, so when you get there you're not bringing a lot of false things that are just worked up in your own mind. There are two responsibilities there. Sometimes you can perceive things that you think that someone is doing, which is really not accurately reflecting what they are thinking inside. No one can! Not even wives or husbands read the minds of their husband or wife. Many times they can make a good guess, but that doesn't mean 100% accuracy.

All of these things are part of correction. Again, go to the book of Proverbs; the best place to start in correcting. It goes right/wrong; good/evil; righteousness/sin in very succinct, easy to understand proverbs. For example: 'The hand of the diligent makes rich, **but** the sloth has nothing.' All you have to do is observe life. That's true in life everywhere. The sloth who is sitting down at the entrance of where the diligent go to work and is begging for food and he says, 'Oh, you rich people, you just have everything and you give nothing to us' and all this sort of thing. And the rich man looks down and says, 'Man, what are you doing sitting there' and so forth. Well, the rich man is not to despise the poor; if he can help the poor improve themselves, then that's what the rich man ought to do. This is how socialism comes in.

6. **God's four 'sore punishments'**—what you don't want!

When God brings His four sore punishments it's because all of the above has not worked. God has no other alternative. Ezek. 14 summarizes the whole thing. It's talking about idolatry.

Ezekiel 14:12 "The Word of the LORD

came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, when a land sins against Me by trespassing grievously...’” (vs 12-13). It shows that God is long-suffering; allows things to go on and on in hopes that they will repent.

“...and I stretch out My hand on it, and break the staff of its bread, and send famine on it, and will cut off man and beast from it” (v 13). When it gets to the point that God is going to do this, and we can look at this at the end when Christ returns.

Verse 14: “‘And *though* these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they should deliver *only* their own lives by their righteousness,’ says the Lord GOD.”

He repeats it again and lists out His four sore judgments. He says it three times! When God says it three times, do you think He means it? *Yes, indeed!* Take the Sabbath for example. How many times has God said ‘remember the Sabbath, keep the Sabbath, don’t break the Sabbath’—over and over again. Then people come along and lie and say that God ‘did away with the Sabbath.’ God’s going to have a surprise for them.

Verse 21: “For thus says the Lord GOD, ‘How much more when I send My four evil judgments against Jerusalem... [and now it’s going to come upon the whole world] ...the sword... [war] ...and the famine, and the destroying beast, and the pestilence, to cut off man and beast from it.’” If you think that’s just the God of the Old Testament, you’ve got another thought coming.

Let’s see that it follows in exactly the same sequence You don’t want that kind of correction to come upon you. If it does and you find yourself in that situation, what do you do? *Repent!* That’s what it’s all about! Remember that Jesus said that He’s the ‘Beginning, the Ending, the First and the Last.’

Revelation 6:3: “And when He opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, ‘Come and see.’ And another horse went out *that was red*; and *power* was given to the one sitting on it to take peace from the earth... [which is *war*] ...and *to cause* them to kill one another; and a great sword was given to him” (vs 3-4).

Look at the next one: famine! Sword, famine, pestilence and wild beasts. Isn’t that what it said back there in Ezek. 14? *Yes!* We have sequence right here.

Verse 6: “And I heard a voice *in the midst* of the four living creatures say, ‘A measure of wheat for a silver coin, and three measures of barley for a silver coin...’ *Rationing!* Because as soon as war happens, supply lines are cut off. How quick is famine going to set in before it takes place here? *Instantly!* There’s going to be famine within two

weeks. If you’ve got it all stocked up in your home, you can have a riot out in front of your home, they’re going to come in and kill you and take everything and feed their bodies. Once it gets to that point, you don’t want that kind of correction. This is what the United States and the world doesn’t understand! *It is coming*, because they turn their backs on God!

Verse 8: “And I looked, and behold, *there was a pale horse*; and the name of the one sitting on it *was Death*, and the grave followed him; and authority was given to them over *one-fourth* of the earth, to kill with *the sword* and with famine and with death, and by the beasts of the earth.” There it is, God is ‘the same yesterday, today and forever.’ What He said back in Ezek. 14 is absolutely true today.

If you survive all of that:

7. Captivity

How many times do we find that in the Old Testament, and yes, in the New Testament they’re going into captivity because of sin! If in captivity, God says if you seek Him and repent, you’ll find Him. *Every one of the steps of correction is to bring you to repentance*, to put you in right standing with God when He forgives you. Ultimately, if that doesn’t work, what comes next?

8. Death

If you die in the faith, *fine*. If you die in hostility and rebellion against God, *beware!* That’s the whole lesson of the Bible and summarized here in Heb. 12. Take the better course of correction.

Look at what Jeremiah said. Jeremiah had to deliver some of the strongest messages and the most condemning of human nature and the way that people behave, because during his ministry Judah, and parts of Israel that were still left there, were so given over to Baalism and paganism and sexual licentiousness and official abominable sins like Manasseh that he had to write some pretty tough stuff! You read what he wrote and it takes your breath away!

If you think that’s bad, read Ezekiel! You’ll almost need a resuscitator to finish reading that one if you think that Jeremiah takes your breath away. Here’s what he said, and Jeremiah had to deliver the toughest form of correction. *Death! Correction for sin!* He pleaded with them! God pleaded with them though Jeremiah. There was even a revival during Jeremiah’s ministry with Josiah. He set the Jews back on course. God said, ‘Ok, because your heart was tender and because you repented and you brought the people back and you re-instituted the

right worship and got rid of idols and Baal and the priests of Baal, the captivity will not happen in your lifetime. But after you die it's going to come.'

Jeremiah witnessed that and gave the lamentations after Josiah was killed in the battle when he was distinctly told *'don't go to battle!* He disguised himself and thought he could get away with it. But that message of 'don't go to battle' was from God and he was shot with an arrow and died. That's when Jeremiah gave the lamentation. You need to know that concerning the ministry of Jeremiah.

Here's what he said concerning himself; this is the first step in repentance. Jeremiah is taking the easy way because he had to preach and warn the hard way. *Over and over again!*

Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself; *it is* not in man who walks to direct his steps.... [in the right way and in the way of God] ...O LORD, correct me, but with judgment... [implying mercy] ...not in Your anger, lest You bring me to nothing" (vs 23-24). This is something that we can take and apply to ourselves. *Correct me in that way!*

Verse 25: "Pour out Your fury on the nations who do not know You, and on the families who do not call on Your name; for they have eaten up Jacob and have devoured him, and have destroyed him, and have made his dwelling desolate."

Here he was in the middle of his ministry of condemnation for the people of Israel. What did he do? *He prayed for them!* Isn't that something? Isn't that absolutely amazing? He didn't get up there and say, 'Well, I'm sent from God and I'm giving a warning message and all you people are going to die, and I'm going to be saved! BAM!' *NO!* There's no repentance in that! Those are some lessons for us to learn.

Let's add a little bit more to Heb. 12:12 by going to Isa. 35. I think that when you go through that and just take a survey of the references in your Bible and you're going to see how much the New Testament is built upon the Old Testament. Yet, people just want to throw it away. Here's where Paul quotes from Heb. 12:12:

Isaiah 35:3: "Make the weak hands strong and make the feeble knees sure." That means to make them strong.

I tell you what, if your foot goes out on you, or your knee goes out on you, or your hip goes out on you, you're in bad shape. Think about it spiritually. What if you handicap yourself by living

in sin? What if you handicap yourself by doing stupid things? It's just like spraining an ankle, knocking out a knee or getting a hip out of joint.

Verse 4: "Say to those of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, fear not...'" Look to God! Again, doesn't this tie in. See how Paul is writing: *fixing your mind on Christ!* This is where he's getting it from.

"...behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, with the full recompense of God. He will come and save you." Then it shows the getting into the preaching of the Gospel.

Let's see the encouragement that God wants us to have. How are you in the face of disaster? Ready, willing and quick to give up? Get angry and mad and throw everything over? Now you know why God had to do what He had to do with His Church: *to see who was faithful; to see who really believed God!* Not only in the Church, but also in our individual lives. When you have a difficulty or a disaster come upon you, a real hard and tough circumstance; let God intervene to help you. Always have what people in the world say, *a positive attitude;* but, I would like to say a *Godly attitude of trust* rather than a 'positive' attitude like the world says, because that's 'bootstrapism.'

Joshua 1:5: "No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life..." Realize this: no man can take salvation from you, regardless of the circumstances.

"...As I was with Moses, *so* I will be with you. I will not fail you nor forsake you" (v 5). We're going to see that in Heb. 13 where God says, 'Christ says He will not ever leave you. Christ won't! But why are people willing to leave Christ? *Makes you wonder!*

Verse 6: "Be strong and of good courage, for you shall divide for an inheritance to this people the land, which I swore to their fathers to give it to them. Only be strong and very courageous..." (vs 6-7).

Here's where strength and courage comes from. If you love God—Who is absolute; and you keep His commandments and statutes and laws—which are absolute; and you trust in faith and God and absolute Truth, you cannot have any stronger confidence than that. *No, you cannot!* That's what He's talking about here.

Here's what we need to do as He told Joshua, v 7: "...so that you may observe to do according to all the Law, which My servant Moses commanded you. Do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, so that you may prosper wherever you go. This Book of the Law shall not depart out of

your mouth, but you shall meditate therein day and night...” (vs 7-8).

Doesn't that sound an awful lot like Heb. 12? *Meditate deeply on Him!* For us, we can take not only what Moses wrote, but we can add to it what Christ said and what the apostles wrote.

Verse 8: "...so that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it, for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage. Do not be afraid, neither be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you in all places where you go" (vs 8-9).

If you know that and you believe that and you act upon that, then whatever the circumstances are, you will be able to handle in a much better and greater and more fantastic way through the power and Spirit of God. Not because of you, but because of God! Not because of any greatness that we might have, but because of the greatness of God!

Isaiah 42:1 is talking about Christ: "Behold My Servant, Whom I uphold; My Elect, *in Whom* My soul delights..." Isn't that what happened when Christ was baptized? A voice came out of heaven and said, 'This is My beloved Son in Whom I have great delight.' When Christ was transfigured on the Mt. of Transfiguration with Peter, James and John, isn't that what the voice said? *Behold, this is My Son the Beloved, in Whom I have delight!*

"...I have put My Spirit upon Him; He shall bring forth justice to the Gentiles. He shall not cry out, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street" (vs 1-2). In other words, He's not going to be out there in a 'gang rally' following a movement kind of thing.

Verse 3: "A bruised reed He shall not break, and a smoking wick He shall not quench... [He's not going to come in and do what people think] ...in Truth He shall bring forth justice. **He shall not fail nor be discouraged...**" (vs 3-4).

That's why Paul says, 'Get your mind on Christ lest you think you have great troubles.' That's why every year for the Passover we go through the events and things leading up to the crucifixion so that we understand what He did. Did Christ finish it? *Yes, He did!* What were the last words He said? *It is finished!* Too many people get discouraged because they look at the problems, look at the difficulties that come along. Look at the correction rather than look for the reason for the correction; rather than looking to Christ and so forth.

"He shall...not be discouraged..." What happened? *The whole world was against Him!* Was

it not? *Yes!*

"...until He has set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for His Law" (v 4). That's quite something.

Hebrews 12:13: "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which *is* lame be turned aside; but let it rather be healed." *In other words, look upon the problems and difficulties that come to heal you spiritually.*

Prov. 4—the reason I'm going here is to show how much that the New Testament is based upon the things that are in the Old Testament. That's why Christ said, concerning the Law and the Prophets, 'do not think that I've come to abolish the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to abolish the Law or the Prophets, but to fulfill.' What we are actually reading here is that in the New Testament how He is fulfilling what is in the Old Testament by adding to it. Not fulfilled to eliminate, but to fill to the full by adding to it.

Proverbs 4:23: "Above all **guard the door of your mind** with diligence... [this is all part of what we're talking about here] ...for out of it *are* the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and devious lips put far from you" (vs 23-24).

In other words, overcome your human nature. Isn't that what it's talking about? You can read in there where Paul says, 'Lie not one to another. Be careful of the things that come out of your mouth.' Christ said you'll have to 'give account for every idle word.' That's why you need forgiveness and the grace of God so that account is eliminated.

Verse 25: "Let your eyes look right on, and let your eyelids look straight before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and all your ways *will be* established. Do not turn to the right hand nor to the left; remove your foot from evil" (vs 25-27). That's where Paul is quoting from; isn't that amazing?

That's why I say that Proverbs is good for everyone to read and study. If your Bible study has gotten a little stale, just take the book of Proverbs and study through it. Maybe organize all of the different verses according to some of the topics. I think you'll find it very profound.

Once you've been healed; once you've overcome the difficulties and problems:

Hebrews 12:14: "Pursue peace with everyone, and Holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." This is in pursuing the peace. This is giving a strong sense of urgency. When you have the problems and difficulties pursue the peace, because the end result is going to be sanctification and

Holiness. Understand that sanctification is the process of conversion, or *the end result of conversion is Holiness*.

Isn't this something how we're going back and forth between the Old and the New Testaments, and what are we doing? *We are seeing that it is one complete work!*

1-Peter 1:14: "As obedient children, do not conform yourselves to the former lusts, *as you did in your ignorance....* [Like Paul said, 'The soul that sins usually besets us.'] ...But according as He Who has called you *is Holy*, you yourselves also be Holy in all *your conduct*" (vs 14-15).

What does that mean? *Keeping the commandments of God as led by the Holy Spirit of God, and keeping the commandments of God in the Spirit, not only the letter, but the Spirit.* That's how you're Holy in your conduct.

Verse 16: "For it is written, 'You be Holy because I am Holy.'" So, the whole purpose, the end result, is Holiness. In other words the end result is so that you can be in the Kingdom of God as a son or daughter of God. That's what it's all about. That's what he's saying there, that's why it's so important.

Pursuing peace is the opposite of being the enemy of God. What does it say of those who are peacemakers? *They shall see God!* That's what it's talking about here. What is the opposite of this? *The carnal mind is enmity against God—it's hostile to God—not subject to the laws of God, neither indeed can be!* This is just the opposite of it.

Every introduction of all the Epistles of Paul, when referring to God, say 'Grace and peace from God the Father.' We have been called to have a peaceful relationship with God, not a hostile and fighting relationship. The Holiness and sanctification is all a part of it. We have to realize that all comes from Christ.

Let's see again how the book of Hebrews all ties together in a tremendous and fantastic way from the very beginning to the end. Let's see how when God inspires it—because it's the mind of God—and the way that this is laid out is one of the most highly developed and sophisticated epistles because it's really a sermon, as I explained in the commentary, that Paul must of have given over and over again. It's very evident that he had Luke doing the writing of it under Paul's instructions. That's why it's on such a high level. It's one of the highest levels of Greek—actually the highest level of Greek—in the New Testament. Also, the most highly structured in the way that it's been put together. You can take Heb. 1:1-3 and this lays out the whole format for the whole book. Isn't that amazing?

Hebrews 1:1: "God Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets... [Paul is including them; are we not going back and reading those?] ...has spoken to us in these last days **by His Son.**" What does Paul say in Heb. 12? *Having your mind fixed on Christ Who's the Beginner and Finisher of our faith!*

Verse 2: "Whom He has appointed heir of all things... [pointing to the ultimate goal] ...by Whom also He made the ages... [so you know Who's dealing in your life] ...Who, being *the brightness of His glory and the exact image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His own power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high*" (vs 1-3).

Those three verses tell you everything that the rest of the book of Hebrews is going to cover. That's quite an amazing thing when you think about it. Then you can take that and overlay that chapter-by-chapter all the way through the book of Hebrews. Christ has done it for us. Holiness and sanctification comes as gifts from God. Doesn't that also show that Christ was Creator of the earth? *Of course it does!*

But you go back and you analyze those three verses, not only does it lay the groundwork for the book of Hebrews, but it also sets the tone that you can go back to the beginning, creation, Christ and everything that God has done through Moses, the Law and the Prophets, the Psalms and everything coming up to it.

Understand this: Anyone who says that the Scriptures are just the work of men and not inspired of God doesn't have a clue as to what they are talking about. They're just enemies of God and hostile and contrary to God, and they are the ones who are the experts in scholarship and tearing down the Word of God. How can you study the Word of God and get anything out of it if you don't believe God, you don't believe in God and you don't believe that He inspired the Word of God?

Hebrews 12:15: "**Looking diligently...**" Showing we have to be on top of it all the time. That's why, brethren, we have the Sabbath every week. For what?

- encouragement
- exhortation
- instruction
- building of faith
- building of love

—all of these things come. Stop and think what it would be like if you didn't keep the Sabbath for one month. At the end of the month how carnal would

you really descend in your behavior and thoughts? Well, sure you would! It's something you have to do. This is talking about our own actions that we need to be diligent.

"...lest anyone fall from the grace of God..." (v 15). This becomes important! How do you fall from the grace of God?

- by unbelief
- by carelessness
- by willful rejection of the grace of God

Have we seen people who have done that? Have we talked to those whom you walk away and wonder: Can they ever repent? There comes a point—that's what he's talking about here—that if you are not:

- growing
- overcoming
- diligently doing the things that you should do
- let the correction that God gives have it's work
 - ✓ change
 - ✓ repent
 - ✓ grow
 - ✓ overcome

There is the opposite progress where you will come by your own actions. You will fall from the grace of God. So, there are three things here:

- 1) fall from the grace of God—by your own actions

Repentance will always bring you back to the grace of God

- 2) bitterness

"...lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you..." (v 15). What does that do?

- 3) Defiles many

"...and through this many be defiled" (v 15).

Verse 16: "Lest *there* be any fornicator..."—spiritual adultery—Rev. 17, drinking of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. That's why God does not want people to go out and bring in other religions and say, 'Oh, this is quaint and good and right and this is what we need to do to God.' *NO!* That's the way of the world!

"...or godless person, as Esau, who for one meal sold his birthright" (v 16).

Let's concentrate on this thing concerning *falling from grace* or *unbelief*. That's what the whole book of Hebrews is all about. Remember, we covered the *unpardonable sin*. What we're going to see is that the book of Hebrews covers the unpardonable sin in three locations: Heb. 6, 10, 12.

There are three powerful warnings! If you fall from grace and then you add to that bitterness, then you come to point that it's talking about here:

Hebrews 6:4: "For *it is impossible...*" The Greek here means *there is no power possible* to make it happen.

"...for those *who were* once enlightened, and who personally obtained the heavenly gift, and became partakers of *the Holy Spirit*" (v 4). See what God has done with you in giving you the understanding of His Word.

"...and who have tasted *the good Word* of God, and *the powers of the world* to come, if they have fallen away... [falling from grace] ...to renew *them* again unto repentance..." (vs 4-6). We're going to see how this ties in with Esau. You don't want that to happen.

Let's look at the thing concerning *bitterness*, because it affects many, many people. I'm going to mention this because a lot of people who listen to our studies have been in the Worldwide Church of God. The one who succeeded and finally took over and destroyed the Church was *bitter*

- against God
- against the doctrines
- against the laws and commandments of God

and led the Church down the garden path of Satan into Protestantism. Did his bitterness defile many? *Yes, indeed!* He hated the Sabbath, the Holy Days, the laws and commandments of God. Total carnality, and actually you can say that he was a *spiritual Esau!* Let's look and see where bitterness starts.

Bitterness and resentment are twins. If you have resentment, you're going to get bitter. Never be resentful about anything, because *anyone's resentment cannot change the situation or person over which you are resentful or bitter*. It's that simple! A lot of people can't understand the sins that Job had; you might go through and really read it and understand it. Reading the book of Job wears you out somewhat. The reason that it is so long, and the reason that it is here, and the reason that it is important—even though it wears you out reading it—*every human philosophical argument about life and God and correction are contained in the book of Job*.

Here Job had his lament, his complaint, Job 10:1: "My soul is weary of my life... [that happens to people] ...I will give full vent to my complaint; I will speak in the bitterness of my soul. I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me; make me know why You contend with me'" (vs 1-2). You go to the end of the book of Job and you will see that he changes

his tune considerably.

Verse 3: “Is *it* good to You that You should oppress, that You should despise the work of Your hands, and shine upon the counsel of the wicked?”

Is that not an accusation against God? *Yes!* What happens when you speak in bitterness? *You say a lot of things that are very hurtful! You say a lot of things that are very condemning!* In doing so, in speaking in bitterness and resentfulness, what happens? *You reveal your own deep inner problems that you need to go to God and repent of and deal with!*

- *anger* is not going to correct bitterness
- *resentfulness* is not going to correct bitterness
- *blaming others* is not going to correct bitterness
- *blaming God* is not going to correct bitterness

Even though I mentioned some things concerning Worldwide [Church of God], people also need to get over Worldwide—it is never coming back! Face the circumstances that are, repent and draw to God. Don’t be accusing God. Here Job is even accusing God. He’s saying, ‘God, You don’t know what it’s like to be human.’

Verse 4: “Have You eyes of flesh? Or do You see as a man sees?...” You’re not looking at things the way that I do. You’re impossible! Isn’t that what happens? *Yeah, God, You live forever!*

Verse 5: “*Are* Your days like the days of man? *Are* Your years like man’s days, that You seek out my iniquity, and search for my sin?” (vs 5-6).

God, You’re just finding fault. Notice the difference in the attitude of this and Jeremiah, who says, ‘Oh, God, correct me in Your mercy. I know that the way of man is not in him.’ Quite a different thing!

Why is this? *Because Job was not converted until the end!* This is the unconverted, bitter mind speaking and viewing God from a human point of view. You have the same thing with the problem of the Jews today, especially those who are orthodox and keep all of these laws. Why do the Jews have so much trouble?

- they have rejected Jesus Christ
- they cling to their traditions
- they blame God and they’re bitter against God

They produce the greatest number of atheists per portion of population of any people in the world, because of this very attitude here.

Verse 7: “Although You know that I am not wicked, yet *there is* none who can deliver out of Your hand.... [You’ve got me unjustly, God] ...Your hands have made me and shaped me, together all around; yet, You destroy me” (vs 7-8). What did God do in the end? *He rewarded him double and gave him double length of life.*

Verse 9: “Remember, I beseech You, that You have formed me as the clay; and will You bring me into the dust again?”

Verse 14: “If I sin... [which, God, I haven’t] ...then You mark me... [go ahead, You do it then, but now] ...and You will not acquit me from my iniquity. **If** I am wicked, woe to me; and **if** I am righteous...” (vs 14-15).

That’s why you have to keep your mind fixed on Christ. Job had his mind fixed on himself. He was judging God entirely from his internal resources and his carnal mind.

“...I will not lift up my head, *being* filled with confusion—therefore look upon my affliction” (v 15). Doesn’t this sound an awful lot like what we’ve covered in Heb. 12? If you let bitterness reign you’re going to be in trouble.

Deuteronomy 29:9—this is exactly what the world’s Christianity has come to; very profound! “Therefore, keep the words of this covenant and do them so that you may prosper in all that you do. You stand today, all of you, before the LORD your God... [we have direct access into the presence of God through prayer] ...your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, all the men of Israel, your little ones, your wives, and your stranger that *is* in your camp, from the cutter of your wood to the drawer of your water” (vs 9-11).

Here’s this great congregation that Moses is giving his final speech to before he walks up onto Mt. Nebo and dies.

Verse 12: “So that you should enter into covenant with the LORD your God and into His oath which the LORD your God makes with you today; that He may establish you today for a people to Himself...” (vs 12-13).

That’s what God is doing with us. He calls us especially to establish us to Him.] ...and *that* He may be your God as He has said to you and as He has sworn to your fathers—to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” (vs 9-13). Again, notice how everything goes back to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Verse 14: “Nor do I make this covenant and this oath with you only, but with *him* who stands

here with us today before the LORD our God, and also with him that is not here with us today” (vs 14-15). In other words, those who shall be born in the future.

Verse 16: “(For you know how we have lived in the land of Egypt and how we came through the nations which you passed. And you have seen their abominations and their idols, wood and stone, silver and gold, which *were* among them), lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turns away today from the LORD our God to go serve the gods of these nations... [the whole purpose of the Passover] ...lest there should be among you a root that bears gall and wormwood” (vs 16-18)—the source of bitterness.

Verse 19: “And it shall come to pass when he hears the words of this curse that he shall bless himself in his heart...” In other words, when he hears the words of what’s going to happen in the correction from God, if he goes out and serves other gods; if he goes out and does as the other nations have done.

“...saying, ‘I shall have peace, though I walk in the stubbornness of my heart,’ to the sweeping away of the watered and the parched” (v 19). Going out and serving idols. Isn’t that what has happened to Christendom today? *Exactly!*

Verse 20: “Then the LORD will not be willing to forgive him, but the anger of the LORD and His jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the LORD shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the LORD shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this Book of the Law” (vs 20-21). God has a controversy with the nations.

Because evil things are not happening in your neighborhood don’t think that everything is well. ***God is going to judge the world and it is coming!*** For example: I gave the sermon on *The Coming Economic Tribulation*. It hasn’t happened right away, but it will happen! And the other things that God has promised to happen *will happen!* Just like when we read in the Prophets and so forth, because what they spoke and said was going to happen didn’t happen immediately, people continued in their sins and continued in the things that they were doing as if it wouldn’t happen.

Likewise in the Church, people continue in their laziness and their slothfulness and the different things that come along, let it pile up and become like Job in bitterness, or go out and give up on God and become an apostate like Esau and say, ‘I will have peace. I will have blessings.’ Because God doesn’t

strike them down immediately in their tracks, people think that it’s okay and good.

No! It’s coming! God’s mercy is just holding off to see if there’s repentance. What is happening, the Church is going to the world for ‘religion.’

I got a call from a man in Idaho who is the director of ministerial teaching for the Church of God Seventh Day. He wants to use some of the material we have to help teach different ministries. I sent him *A Harmony of the Gospels; The Day Jesus the Christ Died*, and some other things, and he said the same thing. He said that the Church of God Seventh Day and the ministers are going to the Protestants to see how to be ‘religious.’ I reflected to him, ‘That’s because of lust, because they want numbers.’

What happens is that when you’re not drawing to God, you’re looking to physical things and carnal numbers and you are counting. God starts with the individual, not with the masses. You need to understand that. There’s going to be no cure for the Church unless it starts with each one of us individually. There is no cure for the ministry unless they apply themselves to the Word of God and believe God and stop being ‘religious’ and stop being stubborn toward God and rejecting His laws and commandments.

I also told him about the Holy Days, and he believes in them and he keeps them. He says, ‘Yes, there are a lot more Church of God Seventh Day people that are beginning to see that.’ He asked if there was anything that I could do and I said, ‘Yes, I will let you know up front that if you have me speak to any of your ministers is concerning the Holy Days.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 12:1
- 2) Matthew 11:25-30
- 4) Hebrews 12:1-5
- 5) 1 Corinthians 11:31-32
- 6) Hebrews 12:9-13
- 7) Ezekiel 14:12-14, 21
- 8) Revelation 6:3-4, 6, 8
- 9) Jeremiah 10:23-25
- 10) Isaiah 35:3-4
- 11) Joshua 1:5-9
- 12) Isaiah 42:1-4
- 13) Hebrews 12:13
- 14) Proverbs 4:23-27

- 15) Hebrews 12:14
- 16) 1 Peter 1:14-16
- 17) Hebrews 1:1-3
- 18) Hebrews 12:15-16
- 19) Hebrews 6:4-6
- 20) Job 10:1-9, 14-15
- 21) Deuteronomy 29:9-21

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1 Corinthians 1
- Matthew 18
- Hebrews 13
- Revelation 17
- Hebrews 10

Also referenced:

Sermon: *The Coming Economic Tribulation*

Books:

- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- *The Day that Jesus the Christ Died* by Fred R. Coulter

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