

## Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews XXXVIII Lessons of Esau & Jacob and The Inheritance of the Firstborn

(Chapter 12)  
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The book of Hebrews was written for a time just like we are living in today; a time when there was enough peace and safety that you could still worship God in Spirit and in Truth. It was a time just before the disaster and the destruction of Jerusalem. That's similar for what it is for us today. We're living in time just before the demise of the nations of Israel. It also brings about something that's very, very important and necessary for people who have been in the Church a long time.

When we've been in the Church a long time and we've known about God's Word for a long time and we have a great deal of knowledge of God's way, what happens? *We do not exercise ourselves spiritually in the way that we need to.* We become weak, just like someone who's running a race; unless they are trained and keep in training, and keep themselves up they're not going to be able to cross the finish line. This is what Paul has brought out here in everything that he has written in Heb. 12 especially. He's coming down to the final conclusion of what he is bringing out.

Hebrews 12:12: "Therefore, lift up the hands that are hanging down..." In other words, be strengthened spiritually, just like a runner has to when he's tired and exhausted, his arms are hanging down.

"...and *revive* the weakened knees... [don't let the troubles and difficulties get you down] ...and make straight paths for your feet... [you have to make straight the way you are going with the Word of God] ...lest that which *is* lame be turned aside; but let it rather be healed" (vs 12-13).

Likewise with whatever the problems and difficulties that you are going through, or whatever stresses in your life, or whatever trial you are going through, because we will! Trust God, the trials that we are going through today, though they may impact us emotionally, though we may feel that they are very difficult upon us, it is nothing compared to what lies ahead. We need to understand that. So, while we have the time, "**...let it rather be healed.**"

Verse 14: "Pursue peace with everyone... [peace with God and everyone within the Church]

...and Holiness, without which no one will see the Lord." That's the whole point! We are going to see God! We are going to be with God! He's going to bring out some things here to show it.

Verse 15: "Looking diligently... [it's something that has to be done continuously] ...lest anyone **fall from the grace** of God..."

The way you fall from the grace of God is outlined all the way through the book of Hebrews, because that was the thing that God inspired Paul to see and understand what was happening then. If you could say that there is any one book for all the Churches of God in the end-time to really study and to really know and really understand, it is the book of Hebrews. It's talking about our condition today that is a prelude to the disasters which are coming on the world, just like it was then before the destruction of Jerusalem.

"...lest any **root of bitterness** springing up trouble *you*..." (v 15). That's what happens when things don't work out the way that you *think* they should work out, and the way that you *think* God should answer your prayers, then you can be very troubled and bitter. Notice how it is:

- you *fall from grace*
- then a *root of bitterness*

"...springing up trouble *you*..."

In a recent publication there are some people that are very disillusioned with one of the Churches of God and they are now suing that Church of God for \$93,000 as re-imbusement for tithes and offerings that they have sent. Just like in the world when the government mis-spends money, what happens? *People get bitter! They get mad! They get angry!* Well, in sending the money into this particular Church of God, if they felt that way about it, why should they send it in?

That's why not only should the tithes be given, but there should also be given a report on how they are spent. That's what we do. Are these people, because they feel that money was given under false pretenses, now going to be angry when they lose their case and the judge denies that money? You

can't prove how your money was spent at all. Are they then going to get bitter? I know a lot of people who got bitter over different things—what happened?

“...and through this many be defiled” (v 15). Then many people are affected. You can't have that. Then what happens? *Once it gets to that point and bitterness brings forth its fruit, then there is apostasy!*

Verse 16: “Lest *there* be any fornicator or godless person, as Esau... [Esau is quite a lesson!] ...who for one meal sold his birthright.” There are many different things that are involved here that are instructive to us.

Verse 17: “Because you also know that afterwards, when he wished to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; *and* he found no room for repentance, although he sought it... [the blessing; not repentance] ...earnestly with tears.”

Let's go back to the book of Genesis and examine concerning Esau and Jacob. Let's see how that, in many cases, some of the choices that we make could change the outcome if we would make a different choice. Let's see what happened to Esau. Let's get a little background and history:

Genesis 25:19: “And these *were* the generations of Isaac, Abraham's son. Abraham begat Isaac. And Isaac was forty years old when he took Rebekah to wife, the daughter of Bethuel the Syrian of Padan Aram, the sister of Laban the Syrian” (vs 19-20)—not really of the Syrian race as we would call it today, but he lived in the area of Syria.

Verse 21: “And Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife because she *was* barren. And the LORD heard him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the sons struggled together within her. And she said, ‘If *it is* well, why *am* I this way?’... [Why is this such a difficult pregnancy?] ...And she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her, ‘Two nations *are* in your womb, and two kinds of people shall be separated from your belly. And the one people shall be stronger than the other people, the older shall serve the younger’” (vs 21-23).

This was by *God's decree!* So, there are certain things, by God's decree and by God's creation, that He alone is going to determine. He said that there are ‘two nations and He said the elder shall serve the younger.’ God already pre-determined what was going to happen.

Verse 24: “And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, twins *were* in her

womb!... [they didn't have electronic scanning back then] ...And the first came out red, like a hairy garment all over. And they called his name Esau” (vs 24-25).

This also tells us that God, at any time, can raise up a race of people that may in fact look different from mother and father. Maybe that will help us answer the question: How did the races come about? *God caused them!*

Verse 26: “And after that his brother came out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel. And his name was called Jacob. And Isaac *was* sixty years old when she bore them. And the boys grew. And Esau was a skilled hunter, a man of the field. And Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents... [more like a merchant] ...And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of *his* venison. But Rebekah loved Jacob” (vs 26-28).

Here you have father and mother problems. You've got the difficulty of showing partiality one to the other. Then you also have the competition between the boys and the approval of mother or the approval of father. All of this is mixed in there. Nevertheless, through it all, God is going to bring out what *He* desires.

Verse 29: “And Jacob boiled soup. And Esau came from the field, and he was faint. And Esau said to Jacob, ‘I beg you, let me eat of the red, this red *soup*, for I am faint.’ Therefore, his name was called Edom... [because of red pottage] ...And Jacob said, ‘Sell me your birthright today’” (vs 29-31).

Jacob did not have to do that, because mother and father should have told them that God had decreed that the older would serve the younger. If they would have understood that things could have been different, but you have carnality involved. So, Jacob says, “...**Sell me your birthright today.**”

Verse 32: “And Esau said, ‘Behold, I *am* at the point of dying...’” This was not just coming in out of the field and he was hungry. He may have been out there hunting for days and days and come back and at the point of death.

“...and what *profit shall* this birthright be to me?” (v 32). Esau didn't have any faith to say, ‘No, I'm not going to sell it, and if you don't give me some pottage to eat, then God will provide some food for me some other way.’ He didn't exercise any faith at all.

Verse 33: “And Jacob said, ‘Swear to me this day.’ And he swore to him, and he sold his

birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and soup of lentils. And he ate and drank, and rose up and went his way. Thus did Esau despise *his birthright*" (vs 33-34).

This is a New Testament lesson for us. What is your birthright at the resurrection? *To be born again into the Kingdom of God!* Esau had an inheritance. The birthright goes to the firstborn, provided that the firstborn does not violate that birthright. Remember the case of Reuben. Reuben was the firstborn of Leah, and Joseph was the firstborn of Rachel. Why did Reuben lose his birthright? *He went up on his father's bed and committed adultery with one of the handmaids!* He violated the inheritance of the firstborn. The next firstborn was Joseph, the firstborn of the second wife. The birthright went to Joseph.

Likewise, we have a similar thing here. Esau despised his birthright. If Esau would not have sold his birthright, and if Esau would have said, 'No, I'm not going to do that, do you not think that both of them would have received what God intended them to receive? *Of course!* Jacob could have said, 'You're my brother, sure I'll feed you.' He would have known that the blessing was coming to him. Why would he have to go out and exercise his will? This is a good example that *you don't help the prophecies of God with your own schemes!*

One man believing that the place of safety was in Petra tried to negotiate to buy Petra from the king of Jordan, to help the prophecies of God along. Well, it didn't work out; same way here. Now what do we have?

Genesis 26:1: "And there was a famine in the land (besides the *former* famine that had been in the days of Abraham). And Isaac went to Abimelech, king of the Philistines, to Gerar. And the LORD appeared to him and said, 'Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land, which I shall tell you of. Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath, which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws**'" (vs 1-5).

That is a prophecy expanding clear out to the whole fulfillment of the plan of God. All the way! That's projected all the way forward to Rev.

21-22. Yet, he didn't know it! Then he dwelt there and so forth. He got into lying, like his father.

Gen. 27—here we find some more chicanery going on. Here we find that Rebecca wanted to help Jacob get the blessing. The blessing was going to go to Jacob anyway. But, what happened to Esau because he sold his birthright? Esau probably would not have had such a horrible thing happen to him had he said, 'It is God's will, it belongs to you, I acquiesce. I'm not going to fight God.' Just think how the history of the world could have been changed.

Then you know what happened. Rebecca said, 'Look, Esau is gone, I will help you get the blessing. It apparently was time for the blessing to come. Since Isaac loved Esau so much, 'what we're going to do is we're going to get you some goat's skin and make you hairy on the back of your neck, and I will fix up the venison from the goat to taste just like the stew that Esau cooks for Isaac and you go in, since he is almost blind, and you go ahead and present yourself as Esau.' So he did! Jacob said, 'Well, you feel like Esau—as he felt the back of his neck—but you sound like Jacob. Are you my son Esau?' *Yes! I am!* Jacob had to pay for that when he went to get his wife—remember? Laban lied to him. God's justice is all the way through here on this.

What happened when Esau did not get the blessing? You can't give the blessing twice—it's only once! Inheritance is only transferred once! That's the whole point. You cannot despise the Word of God. You cannot try and work things out your way and expect to get the blessing. God foreordained that it would go to Isaac. That's just the way that it was. Isaac doing what he did, did not change from what God had planned. Esau doing what he did, did not change what God had planned. BUT, in the receiving of the blessing from God, it didn't come the way that Jacob expected. *No!* God had to correct him for his sins first, *which He did!* Now then, we have Esau and if he would have said, 'I know that it goes to my brother, then he would not have received this blessing which is nigh unto a curse!

Genesis 27:34: "And when Esau heard the words of his father, he cried with a great and exceedingly bitter cry, and said to his father, 'Bless me, even me also, O my father!' And he said, 'Your brother came with deceit, and has taken away your blessing.' And *Esau* said, 'Is he not rightly called Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times—he took away my birthright, and behold, now he has taken away my blessing.' And he said, 'Have you

not reserved a blessing for me?” (vs 34-36).

Right at that point there could have been a change. He wanted the blessing; instead of repenting for giving it away for such a cheap price. The reason it was for a ‘bowl of pottage’ is to show the absolute insanity of giving up eternal life for a slight physical satisfaction. That’s quite a lesson.

Then the blessing came, v 37: “And Isaac answered and said to Esau, ‘Behold, I have made him your lord, and all his brethren I have given him for servants. And with grain and wine I have sustained him. And what shall I do now to you, my son?’ And Esau said to his father, ‘Have you but one blessing, my father? Bless me, even me also, my father.’ And Esau lifted up his voice and wept. And Isaac his father answered and said to him, ‘Behold, your dwelling shall be far from the fatness of the earth and far from the dew of heaven from above. And you shall live by your sword and shall serve your brother. But it shall come to pass that when you shall have the dominion, you shall break his yoke from off your neck’” (vs 37-40).

So, Esau is going to have a great hand in bringing down Israel. It’s no marvel the problem we are involved in, in the Middle East and so forth. That’s all a part of this. Esau is going to break that yoke. That’s what the hatred and the vengeance is all about. Still to this day, we have the blessing and they don’t! God is going to use them to correct us. That’s what’s going to happen in the end.

Verse 41: “And Esau hated Jacob...” Isn’t that what we have today? Isn’t the hatred from the descendants of Esau and Ishmael—not so much Ishmael, but mostly Esau—hatred? Blind, unreasoned cruelty! God is going to use him to correct us because we have despised the blessing that God has given to us. There’s quite a lesson here!

Here’s the lesson for us, Heb. 12:16, and let’s read into this a little bit more and I want you to put this in the context of the soon destruction of Jerusalem. I want you to put this in the context of, at the time the destruction of Jerusalem, that many of the Edomites—or Esauites—were circumcised practitioners of Judaism and known as Jews. I want you to look at the true inheritors of the spiritual promise, who were then beginning to get mixed up in a movement with the Esauites Jews to fight the Romans. That’s what the whole thing is about here. This is also a very direct warning that don’t go join Esau to try and work things out physically and leave God and give up on God and God’s way for a physical cause.

Hebrews 12:16: “Lest *there* be any fornicator or godless person, as Esau...” You can read in the book of *Josephus* what happened. The Esauites turned them over to the Romans. When it came time to defend the city against the Romans when Titus came with his army at the last, all of the Esauites withdrew. Instead of defending the city, they withdrew. The Romans came and conquered. They betrayed the true Jews. Just like people do today, they still want the blessing of God without doing it God’s way. They want to have eternal life but not trust in Christ. They want to receive the blessings of God but not the way that God says.

What happened? *He was rejected!* Found no room for repentance, because he’d already done it. It was over and done, v 17: “...although he sought it earnestly with tears.”

This is instructive, because when Israel was out there in the wilderness, and when it was time for them to enter into the ‘promised land’ you know what happened. They sent in the spies and they came back and all of them said it’s ‘impossible for there are giants and their cities are walled up.’ But Joshua and Caleb said, ‘No! No! God will fight for us.’ Here’s what happens: God said, ‘All right, you’re not going in.’

Deuteronomy 1:26: “Yet, you would not go up...” God is saying, ‘I’m going to give you the inheritance, go in.’

“...but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD your God. And you murmured in your tents and said, ‘Because the LORD hates us...’” (vs 26-27).

How many people have said that keeping God’s commandments is a hateful thing? How many then end up hating God? Here is a root of bitterness among them; look what happened.

“...He has brought us forth out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us. Where *shall* we go? Our brethren have broken our hearts, saying, “We have seen there a people greater and taller than we *are*. The cities are great and walled up to heaven, also the sons of the giants *are there*.” Then I said to you, ‘Do not dread them nor be afraid of them. The LORD your God Who goes before you shall fight for you, according to all that He did for you in Egypt before your eyes’” (vs 26-30).

Great lesson! Whatever problem you have, **let God fight it for you.** Don’t stand by and do nothing, but you let God open the doors and close

the doors and fight for you.

Verse 31: “And in the wilderness where you have seen how the LORD your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came into this place.’ Yet, in this thing you did not believe the LORD your God, Who went in the way before you to search you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night, to show you by what way you should go, and in a cloud by day. And the LORD heard the voice of your words, and was angry and swore, saying, ‘Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land which I swore to give to your fathers’” (vs 31-35).

That was when all of those over 20-years-old would die in the wilderness and they wandered for 40 years.

Verse 36: “Except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him I will give the land that he has trodden upon, and to his sons because he has fully followed the LORD.” Key lesson! To avoid all these things we’re talking about, *wholly—completely*, follow the Lord.

Verse 37: “Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, ‘You also shall not go in there. Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Make him strong, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. And your little ones, who you said would be a prey, and your children who in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in there. And I will give it to them, and they shall possess it. But you turn and take your journey *back* into the wilderness in the direction of the Red Sea.’ And you answered and said to me, ‘We have sinned against the LORD; we will go up and fight...’” (vs 37-41).

The whole lesson here is this: ***There comes a point when a change of mind is too late!*** That’s the whole point here. What did they do?

“...according to all that the LORD our God commanded us.’ And when each one of you had buckled on his weapons of war, you were ready to go up into the hill. But the LORD said to me, ‘Say to them, “Do not go up, nor fight, for I *am* not among you, you will be beaten by your enemies’”” (vs 41-42).

A good cause! ‘We’re going to go in and do it!’

Verse 43: “So, I spoke to you. And you would not hear...” That’s happened with many people in the Church. How many people have you spoken to that have just given up on everything.

What are they doing? *They’re rejecting the inheritance! They’re refusing to walk in the way of God!*

Verse 43: “...but rebelled against the commandment of the LORD, and went presumptuously up into the hill. And the Amorites who lived in that mountain came out against you and chased you, even as bees do, and destroyed you in Seir, to Hormah. And you returned and wept before the LORD. But the LORD would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear to you” (vs 43-45). That’s the same thing that happened with Esau. You have two cases:

1. one giving up the birthright by selling it
2. the other refusing to do what God said to get it

Then trying to have a change of heart after God already made up His mind. The key is this: IF anyone out there still has the Spirit of God within them, now is the time to stir up that Spirit of God before it comes to the point that it is no longer there. That’s what Paul is writing about and trying to stir them up to realize that their inheritance is greater and more fantastic than anything that you could even imagine. Now then, He begins to draw a comparison so that they would understand what He’s talking about.

So, in both cases—even though they cried, moaned and groaned—Esau and the children of Israel, because they didn’t do what God wanted them to do *when* He wanted them to do it, they didn’t receive it. Let that be a great lesson for us. We can tie that in with many other things. Look at the parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents, the parable of the different things that Jesus taught about receiving the Kingdom of God.

Everything has been leading up to this to show how great what God is going to do for us compared to the things that we have seen in the Old Testament.

Hebrews 12:18: “For you have not come to *the* mount that could be touched and that burned with fire, nor to gloominess, and fearful darkness, and *the* whirlwind.”

Paul is talking about when the children of Israel came before God to meet God at the base of Mt. Sinai and the giving of the Ten Commandments, and the powerful expression of God’s Word then—which was an awesome thing.

Verse 19: “And to *the* sound of *the* trumpet,

and to *the* voice of *the* words, which those who heard, *begged* that *the* word not be spoken *directly* to them.”

This is what people say: ‘I wish God would talk to me.’ When God talked to them, they didn’t want to hear it. Just like today. ‘Oh, if I knew the will of God!’ *You do, but you reject it!* God was kind, He put it on paper; preserved His Word so you can read it. As a physical human being you don’t want to come into the presence of God in His full glory, because it is a death event! God is righteous! That’s why He spoke the Ten Commandments from the top of Mt. Sinai.

Verse 20: “(For they could not endure what was being commanded: ‘And if even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned, or shot through with an arrow’; and so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, ‘I am greatly afraid and trembling’)” (vs 20-21). Just like today: You can get people’s attention with great power. But will that great power change the heart?

Let’s get a little bit of what happened; let’s see the reaction and a recap of it. That’s why the book of Deuteronomy is such a good book to read; there are a lot of spiritual lessons in it. Let’s understand that they heard God give the Ten Commandments. They didn’t want to hear the voice of God any longer. It’s the same thing that we have today in a little bit different perspective. Everyone wants God to help them and be on their side.

But do they want to be on God’s side, under God’s terms? *NO!* You see the same thing today when you approach so-called Christians and talk about the commandments of God, and talk about the Sabbath of God and the Holy Days of God. Those are part of the things that God wants us to hold onto. This is the comparison that is being drawn. God spoke the words to them, wrote it on two tables of stone—twice—one table that God made and wrote with His finger, that Moses destroyed because of the sins of the children of Israel. They couldn’t even wait 40 days for Moses to come off the mount. Then another table of stone that Moses hewed and carried up and God wrote on. God spoke those words! They didn’t want to hear the words, because it cut across their carnal nature and their lust and the things that they wanted to do. God spoke it; they didn’t want to hear.

I think that this will be most instructive. You’re going to learn a lot of lessons, especially if you have become sort of ho-hum in your spiritual life toward God. We’re going to see what Paul is

talking about here; what we need to keep our minds on to inspire us and to keep us zealous and diligent in going forward in the race of eternal life that God wants us to run. We’ll see that. He’s using the example of the Israelites hearing the Word of God.

Deuteronomy 5:28: “And the LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me. And the LORD said to me, ‘I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken to you. They have well *said* all that they have spoken.’” In other words, they were sincere in what they said. They were also correct in what they said from two points of view:

1. they couldn’t stand to hear the voice of God
2. they wanted to have another man between them and God—that was Moses

Here’s the key, which is the key to the New Testament, the New Covenant:

Verse 29: “**Oh, that there were such a heart in them...**” That’s why the New Covenant, with *repentance, baptism and circumcision of the heart!* People, unless they are converted and have their heart and mind changed are always going to be hostile against God. That’s why when we’re converted and changed and have the Spirit of God, that the worst and the most horrible thing we can do is reject the promises of God, reject the inheritance of God and reject the Holy Spirit of God! That’s what Paul is talking about in Hebrews. That’s why these examples from Deuteronomy.

Verse 29: “Oh that there were such a heart in them that they would fear Me and **keep all My commandments always**, so that it might be well with them and with their children forever!” Carnal nature is so deceitful, and Satan is out there to do it, too:

- God, we want Your blessings, *but we want to do it our way*
- God, we want Your blessings, **BUT:**
  - ✓ don’t tell us to not have other gods
  - ✓ don’t tell us we can’t make images—we love our little images
  - ✓ don’t tell us how we are to preach
  - ✓ don’t tell us to keep Your Ten Commandments
  - ✓ don’t tell us to keep Your Sabbath and Your Holy Days
- be nice to us
- be good to us
- give us Your blessings

**BUT, we’re not going to obey You!** That’s the whole

lesson here; they didn't do it.

Deuteronomy 6:3—this is important; this is a spiritual lesson: “Hear therefore, O Israel, and be diligent to *observe* it, so that it may be well with you, and that you may greatly multiply, as the LORD God of our fathers has promised you, in the land that flows with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel. Our one God is *the* LORD, *the* LORD. And **you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might**” (vs 3-5).

That's what God wants! The whole lesson of the whole Bible—Old Covenant/New Covenant; Old Testament/New Testament—is to **love God first!** With all your heart, mind, soul and being. If you do that, then God is going to do something for you. He's going to write His laws and commandments within your heart and within your mind. In the New Testament He is going to do something profound.

Verse 6: “And these words which I command you this day shall be in your heart.” That's where God wants them, but they can only be there spiritually, written, inscribed be part of our very being.

Now, let's come back to Hebrews 12 and we'll see a difference here. Who was the mediator between the children of Israel and God? *Moses!* Now we have something entirely different and this is what the whole book of Hebrews is about. Now we have the opportunity to come *directly to God*—that's the whole point! We are looking forward to the resurrection, which is the beginning of our inheritance. You inherit nothing until the resurrection, so if you don't get to the resurrection you're not going to inherit anything.

Hebrews 12:22: “But you have come to Mount **Sion**... [that's in heaven above] ...and to *the* city of *the* living God... [not some mountain out in the middle of the desert] ...heavenly Jerusalem... [that's where we're going to live. Jesus is preparing a place for us in heavenly Jerusalem] ...and to an innumerable company of angels; *to the* joyous festival gathering...” (vs 22-23)—the first resurrection, which this also helps cement that it's going to be on Pentecost.

Why? *That's when God gave the Law from Mt. Sinai and they were all assembled below the mountain!* On Pentecost, at the resurrection, we are not assembled below a mountain, but we go up to God on the Sea of Glass. That's what Paul is talking about here.

Verse 23: “*To the* joyous festival gathering; and to *the Church of the Firstborn*...” See how that ties in with the inheritance, the inheritance of the firstborn? *Yes, indeed!*

“...registered *in the Book of Life* in heaven...” (v 23). That's where your name is; that's what's important. A lot of people say today that it's important that you're enrolled on the voting list so that you can vote. *NO!* Where your name is written in heaven, that's the important thing!

“...in heaven; and to God, *the* Judge of all; and to *the* spirits of the just who have been perfected; and to Jesus, *the* Mediator of *the* New Covenant; and to sprinkling of *the* blood of *ratification*, proclaiming superior things than *that of* Abel” (vs 23-24).

This is an awesome thing! Go back and read part of the giving of the Ten Commandments and so forth and what it was that was there and what an awesome event that was. But this is greater! This is more fantastic! This is the real thing! This is the receiving of the inheritance.

That's why Paul says, v 2: “Having *our minds* fixed on Jesus, the Beginner and Finisher of *our* faith; Who for the joy that lay ahead of Him... [which is what we're looking to] ...endured *the* cross, *although* He despised *the* shame, and has sat down at *the* right hand of the throne of God.”

What's the lesson for us? *Keep our mind on the heavenly Jerusalem! Keep our mind on Jesus Christ and God the Father!* Don't be bogged down in physical things on this earth. That doesn't mean to avoid the physical things; that doesn't mean that you don't take care of yourself, etc. It doesn't mean that at all. It means that you are involved in preparing for the Kingdom of God so that you can rule and reign with Christ, so that every evil and wrong that you know of in the world, you can have a part in changing then, which will be a permanent change! That's what's important.

Let's see what it is that we are coming to; let's see what it is that John—and only John—was allowed to see. Paul wrote of it, he understood it, but he didn't see it! *John saw it!* Amazing! Here's what it's like, and we're going to see some things concerning the throne of God and who's there and who's not there. every good Catholic should read this; every good Protestant should read this.

Revelation 4:1: “After these things I looked, and behold, a door opened in heaven; and the first voice that I heard *was* as if a trumpet were speaking

with me, saying, ‘Come up here, and I will show you *the* things that must take place after these things.’”

I wonder what John thought when he was given these visions by Christ. I wonder what he thought when he wrote this after he literally saw these things. Paul said that in his visions he didn’t know whether he was in the third heaven or not, whether he was actually there or whether it was just in vision. Here John has a clear picture of it, and he’s told to write it for us. Why? *So that it can complete what we’re reading in Heb. 12!*

Verse 2: “And immediately I was in *the* Spirit; and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *One* was sitting on the throne. And He Who was sitting was in appearance like a jasper stone and a sardius stone; and a rainbow *was* around the throne, like an emerald in its appearance” (vs 2-3). Great, awesome and fantastic beauty! He couldn’t describe it in any other way.

Verse 4: “And around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones; and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments; and they had on their heads golden crowns” (vs 2-4).

A lot of people want to know who are the 24 elders. Well, the best we can determine is this: They are special, created beings that assist God in managing the universe. God built the universe to share. He didn’t build it just for Himself. He has a heavenly kingdom that He wants us to enter into to share eternal life with us. That’s why it’s important that we keep our mind focused on this. That’s why it’s important that we understand what God has called us to.

Verse 5: “And proceeding from the throne were lightnings... [this sounds a little bit like Mt. Sinai] ...and thunders and voices; and seven lamps of fire, which are the seven spirits of God, *were* burning before the throne. And before the throne *was* a sea of glass, like crystal. And around the throne and over the throne *were* four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind” (vs 5-6).

I can’t imagine this myself, but this is something! Here is the first really complete picture of God’s throne and what it’s like that has been given to man. John—the one whom Jesus loved—was given that privilege. He wrote it down for us. All we can say is that we can read what it is here, but for us to completely understand what it looks like is very difficult. I have to admit that!

“...four living creatures, full of eyes before and behind... [I can’t imagine that.] ...and the first

living creature *was* like a lion, and the second living creature *was* like a bull, and the third living creature had the face of a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle” (vs 6-7). Awesome spirit beings that God has created for His glory and His honor.

Verse 8: “And each of *the* four living creatures had six wings respectively; *and* around and within *they were* full of eyes; and day and night they cease not saying, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and Who is, and Who *is* to come.’”

What I want us to understand, brethren, look at the great and fantastic inheritance that God has laid out for us. Think about that! Pray about that! Then look at your problems, your difficulties, your aches and pains, your sufferings, and count it all but nothing! That’s what they are! That’s why—if you keep your mind fixed on Jesus and come to Him as our High Priest and Mediator, pour out your heart to Him, put everything in God’s hands—God is going to take care of it. His inheritance for us is special, *the firstborn!* We don’t want to do anything to disqualify that. As we have seen, the Church of the Firstborn and Christ is the Firstborn among *many* brethren. He is coming! This is an awesome sight!

For all good Catholics, notice: Mary is not there! Peter is not there! Paul is not there! *No one is in heaven!*

John 3—we’ll see why John edited this in, and he probably edited this in his final editing—when he was canonizing the New Testament—and he wanted to make it absolutely clear to everyone. Did John have a vision of the throne of God and God, and Jesus Christ? *Yes!*

After Jesus told Nicodemus that you have *been born again*, John 3:6: “That which has been born of the flesh is flesh; and that which has been born of the Spirit is spirit.” It’s really very simple, because the false doctrine of being *born again* when you accept Jesus is nothing but a pagan substitute when you really understand it for the Truth of born again.

Verse 7: “Do not be amazed that I said to you, ‘It is necessary for you to be born again.’ The wind blows where it wills, and you hear its sound, but you do not know *the place* from which it comes and *the place* to which it goes; so *also* is everyone who has been born of the Spirit.” (vs 7-8).

If you run across a so-called, self-proclaimed born again ‘Christian’ say, ‘Fine, walk through the wall, go where you will, disappear so I

can't see you, and then I will believe that you are born again, because this is what you're able to do in relationship to physical things.' *Not so!*

Verse 9: "Nicodemus answered and said to Him, 'How can these things be?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'You are a teacher of Israel, and you do not know these things? Truly, truly I say to you, We... [God the Father through Him speaking, Christ] ...speak that which We know, and We testify of that which We have seen; but you do not receive Our testimony. If I have told you earthly things, and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? **(And no one has ascended into heaven...)**" (vs 9-13)

John wrote this in; this is an editorial insertion at this place to clarify what it means to be born again and to show that no one but Jesus is in heaven. When John saw the vision of the throne of God, none of the saints were there, only Jesus was. This is quite a doctrine against the Catholic doctrine of the bodily assumption of Mary into heaven, which is a blatant lie to lock people into slavery of that ungodly system.

**"(And no one has ascended into heaven except He Who came down from heaven, even the Son of man, Who is in heaven.)"** (v 13). John saw Jesus there. *Confirmed statement!* If it were true that all souls go to heaven when people die, then John, in this vision, would have said, 'I saw the souls of all the saints there. I saw Mary, blessed be Mary, worship Mary. After all, I authorize you to do this, because Jesus placed Mary in My charge before He died.' *Interesting!*

Let's look at some other things and all of the angels and so forth. When you come and pray before God, realize that this is *how and to Whom and the place where* your prayers are going—and they are heard! We may have to keep at it in prayer, because Jesus said, 'Ask and you shall receive.' That means keep on asking. When God gives you an answer to your prayer—and it may not be the answer that you want—do not think that God has not answered your prayer, He's just answered it in the way that He decided to do so. That's why in all of our prayers, what do we say? *Your will be done as in heaven, so on earth!* We have come to God on His throne and His being.

You don't need an inside track to God; ***you have one!*** Use it! Don't close it off and throw it away and reject it. That's the whole message.

Revelation 4:9: "And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanksgiving to

Him Who sits on the throne, Who lives into the ages of eternity, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him Who sits on the throne; and they worship Him Who lives into the ages of eternity, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'Worthy are You, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power because You did create all things, and for Your will they were created and exist'" (vs 9-11).

Think about this: For all of those of you who get discouraged and down, all of those of you who have a problem and difficulty that you're working on and need to overcome—whatever there is—remember this:

- God has called you
- God has given you His Spirit
- God is creating in you His Holy and righteous and perfect character
  - ✓ so that you can attain to the resurrection
  - ✓ so that you can be created for
    - His pleasure
    - His will
    - His goodness
    - His love
    - His plan into the ages of eternity

This is what Paul is writing for: to let them know that all the physical things on the earth are like a 'bowl of pottage.' *They're nothing!* The reality that God is going to give you is what God wants you to have. That's what He's going to do. That's what He's going to give. So, if you face every problem, every difficulty, everything that comes along with this perspective; and as you're praying ask God to help you understand and grant you His Spirit, then you can face the problems and difficulties because you have them in the right perspective.

Then you can endure whatever you have to go through because you know that it will be worth it. That's what's important. That's what Paul is saying here. Just like God always does, He inspires us first, then corrects us. Then inspires us again so that when we look at the greatness of what God is giving, that we will not cast it away. That's what He wants us to really understand and get.

Then it shows Christ Who is going to open the seals and so forth. When He took the book, Revelation 5:7: "And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him Who sits on the throne."

What did Jesus say? *'Only the Father knows the day and the time, the hour!* So, here He gets it from the Father.

Verse 8: “And when He took the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having harps and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.”

There you are, God has other people intervening, helping. Your prayers go to God, God the Father will answer them, He has these other spirit beings who are there to help, to guide, to direct and everything; to carry out! You ask the prayer and Who answers it? *God does!* How does He do it? *Through these other spirit beings!* He'll do it! And Christ in you! This is something! This is amazing!

Verse 9: “And they sang a new song... [the song of the saints] ...saying, ‘Worthy are You to take the book, and to open its seals because You were slain, and did redeem us to God by Your own blood, out of every tribe and language and people and nation, and did make us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth’” (vs 9-10). Again, the whole purpose of why we're called.

If you're inspired by this, I want you to take this inspiration and the Word of God and I want you to understand how important that it is that you view all of the things in your life from that perspective. That will help you put it in the right frame. Our calling is so great!

If you have the *Messiah*, go to the very last one from which this is taken—*Worthy is the Lamb*, turn it on and let it blast loud. Ask God to help you have this picture that is written here in Rev. 5, and listen to that music. God made and inspired music to uplift us, to give us the feeling, emotion and the impact. I am convinced that God inspired Handel to write the *Messiah*. You read of how he wrote it. He wrote that thing in 30-33 days. He was so fixated on writing it that he had an aide feed him different Scriptures through a hole and give it to him. He would sit down and write the music to go with it, the orchestration and the words, the singing and the solos and put this all together. We have it preserved today so we can have it on a little disc and put it into a little machine and to have that inspiration come out to us.

Verse 11: “And I saw and I heard *the* voices of many angels around the throne, and *the* voices of the living creatures and the elders, and thousands of thousands... [those are the angels] ...saying with a loud voice, ‘Worthy is the Lamb Who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing’” (vs 11-12)—***which He is going to share with us!*** Think on that!

Our calling to eternal life is so fantastic and it is so great and so awesome that there is *nothing* in this world that can compare. There is *nothing* for which we would give up on God!

Verse 13: “And every creature that is in heaven, and on the earth...” Remember, it says in Rom. 8 that the ‘whole creation is groaning till now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.’ Yes, here it is right here!

“...and under the earth, and those that are on the sea, and all the things in them, I heard saying, ‘To Him Who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, *be* blessing, and honor, and glory, and sovereignty into the ages of eternity.’ And the four living creatures said, ‘Amen.’...” (vs 13-14).

What a song that would be to hear all those angels singing and the power and the magnitude of it. John saw this and wrote it so that we, with God's Spirit, can share in it and understand it and see the hope of our calling and see the very reason why we're here.

“...And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped *Him Who* lives into the ages of eternity” (vs 14).

You know it's the ages of eternity that God wants to share with us, that God has a place for us, and that is why God has called us. This is what God's people need to know so that they can be inspired to love and serve God and not get all cranked down in causes or carnal things or false doctrines, power and authority. But ***that they can truly love God with all their heart, mind, soul and being.*** That's where everything is.

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

Scriptural References:

- 1) Hebrews 12:12-17
- 2) Genesis 25:19-34
- 3) Genesis 26:1-5
- 4) Genesis 27:34-41
- 5) Hebrews 12:16-17
- 6) Deuteronomy 1:26-45
- 7) Hebrews 12:18-21
- 8) Deuteronomy 5:28-29
- 9) Deuteronomy 6:3-6
- 10) Hebrews 12:22-24, 2
- 11) Revelation 4:1-8
- 12) John 3:6-13
- 13) Revelation 4:9-11
- 14) Revelation 5:7-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Revelation 21; 22
- Romans 8

Also referenced: Book: *Josephus*

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