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Hebrews 12

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



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Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

Hebrews 12.

INTRODUCTION: this letter is written to Hebrews who had been enlightened, endured sufferings, been publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, stood alongside others who were persecuted, had compassion on those in prison and joyfully accepted others plundering their property (probably the Romans) knowing they had an eternal possession (Heb. 10:31-36). It appears they had a faith in Christ, but were still bound by the Levitical priesthood and the Jewish religious system and because of this the author brilliantly uses Moses Tabernacle, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place and Old Testament Scriptures to prove Jesus is the only High Priest anyone needs and that it is by faith in Christ and God's grace not religious works that God's people are counted righteous.

The blessing of this letter is not limited to the Hebrews since everyone who is seeking God or who is a brother or sister of Christ will be overwhelmed awed as they read this well-crafted and awe-inspiring letter as it beautifully progresses through the chapters proving Jesus is the Christ.

Topics.

- We are surrounded by a great a cloud of witnesses.
- Let us lay aside every sin which clings so closely.
- Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith.
- Esau found no chance to repent, even though he sought it with tears.
- You have come to Mount Zion the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem.
- The assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven.
- The spirits of the righteous made perfect.
- Jesus, the mediator of a New Covenant.
- The blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.
- I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.

The previous chapter: in the previous chapter the author gave a brilliant and exhaustive definition of faith. He spoke of the faith of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses. He talked of the faith of those who crossed the Red Sea and of those who saw the walls of Jericho fall and of the faith of Rahab and of the Old Testament fathers. He talked of God rewarding those who seek him, of those who died in faith not having received the promise and of a greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt.

NOTE: for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

We are surrounded by a Great a Cloud of Witnesses.

- **Hebrews 12:1:** Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.

The word therefore, means, in view of what has been said which means that this chapter should be read in connection with the previous chapter. The great cloud of witnesses refers to the men and women of faith mentioned in the previous chapter who were all commended as having pleased God because of their faith.

The great cloud of witnesses: there is no-doubt an allusion is here to the ancient games. A great multitude of spectators usually occupied the circular seats in the amphitheatre, from which they could easily behold the combatants. In like manner, the author here represents Christians as encompassed with the multitude of other honoured men and women of faith who by faith patiently endured the conflict and got the victors crown of approval. This does not infer that the author literally means to say that all these ancient men and women of faith are actually looking at the conduct of Christians, and watching their conflicts. It is a figurative illustration, such as was common and simply means that we ought to act as if they were in sight and cheering us on.

Let us lay aside every weight: the allusion here is most likely to runners in the Olympic races who were careful not to burden themselves with anything that would hinder them running. Romans wore very heavy garments of armour, thus the allusion to weight. They were very careful not to overburden themselves with clothing and would therefore remove anything that would hinder them from winning the race. Clearly the idea for Christians is to remove everything that would obstruct their progress in the Christian life to win the eternal crown of glory.

Let us lay aside every sin which clings so closely: the sin which clings to us so closely can refer to many things (i.e., the love of the world in our hearts, the affections for its wealth and pleasures or whatever it is we are most likely to give in to). But when we take into account the author in this letter is writing to Hebrews who still place a high value on the Levitical priesthood and its religious services and the fact that this entire letter is written to prove to the readers that Jesus Christ has replaced the Old Covenant system of religious service and the entire Levitical priesthood, the most likely sin he has in mind that clings so closely to the Hebrews he is writing to, is the sin of trusting in religious works for righteous that leads to eternal life instead of trusting in Christ and God's grace. This sin of trusting in religious works is not limited to the Hebrews only since it is most likely one of the most subtle and dangerous sins for Christian brothers and sister today, since it involves doing good things. The religious works in themselves are not sinful, (i.e., attending church, Bible meetings, teaching at Sunday school, singing in a church choir, being a pastor and proclaiming the Gospel) these are all good things, but if a person trusts in them for their righteousness, they become grossly evil before God. This is because the instant we trust in our own self-effort and works (no-matter how good) is the instant we nullify what Christ achieved for us on the cross and we make his death count for nothing.

This shines a spotlight upon the truth that the particular sin that clings so closely to the Hebrews was the sin of unbelief, which manifested itself in their trusting in Moses laws of purification, the Levitical high priest and its system of ceremonial rites, religious customs and traditions. The author of this letter has spent the last ten chapters brilliantly using Old Testament Scriptures and the tabernacle of Moses to prove to this Hebrew audience that righteous that leads to eternal life is by faith in Christ alone and by God's grace and that Christ is the only High Priest anyone needs today. In the previous chapters the author magnificently showed how those believing in God could not move out of the Holy Place (the place of religious service) of the tabernacle of God into the Most Holy Place (the place of God's presence) until the Holy Place was pulled down. From the time of Christ's death and his resurrection for anyone to enter into the Most Holy Place of God they have to move out of the Holy Place (the place of religious service). There is only one way this can be done and only one way anyone can enter into the Most Holy Place of God and that is by forsaking our trust in religious works and trusting wholly by faith in Christ and in God's grace to be counted righteous and worthy of eternal life.

Until we do this we will always remain in the Holy Place and never go beyond the torn veil and into the Most Holy Place of God since it is only when we are fully clothed with Christ's priestly garments of righteousness that God accepts us into the very throne room of His glorious and majestic presence.

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us: the word rendered patience implies perseverance; we are to run the race without giving up being encouraged by the example of the multitudes who have run the same race before us. The stadium in which the Christian race is run is this world; the prize is the heavenly glory; which is being held by Christ ready to be given to all who cross the finishing line.

Every race track has its markers, the Christian path is marked out with the following things for everyone who enters the race:

- By the word of God and the life of Christ.
- By the many examples of God's faithful servants.
- By the love, grace and mercy of God and the call to love thy neighbour.

All athletes' physically exercise to improve their muscles and their chance of winning the prize, the training for the race of life is not physical, but spiritual, it is exercising our spiritual muscles in the fruits of the Spirit, the race must be run with love, grace, mercy, kindness etc. The conquering muscles to take hold of and that will carry all through to the victory when facing the difficulties and hardships of life are faith, grace, patience and perseverance these are the spiritual muscles that will carry us all through to the royal crown of eternal glory.

HEBREWS 12:2

Jesus the Founder and Perfector of Our Faith.

- **Hebrews 12:2:** looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus is the founder of our faith: the rock, the cornerstone, the foundation upon which everything else is built.

Jesus is the beginning of our faith: without Christ there is no Gospel of grace and everything else is meaningless, vain and just empty words.

Jesus is the perfecter of our faith: all who come to Christ by faith he clothes us in his crown and royal robes of righteousness and it is because of our faith in him that we will be raised and made perfect in eternal glory.

Jesus is the finisher of our faith: there is no other Saviour or way to God and to eternal life, nor will there ever be.

Jesus is the judge of our faith: it is Christ who will judge whether our works that we have done in his name are of works of gold, silver and precious stones or wood, hay and straw (1 Cor. 3:11-14).

Jesus is the rewarder of our faith: it is Christ who will determine if we are to be rewarded or suffer loss. Here we are told that the reason Jesus was willing to surrender his life to the hands of his persecutors and allow them to judge him as a common criminal sentenced to suffer brutal torture and a cruel and bloody death was because of the joy that was set before him, this shows us two things:

1. Jesus had faith that his heavenly Father would raise him from the grave to eternal glory.

2. This faith gave Jesus the fortitude and willingness to spend his life revealing God's love and grace toward sinners because he knew that it was his heavenly Father desire that all would be saved (John 3:16).

The joy set before Christ refers to the following two things:

1. The honour and glory Jesus would have when resurrected and seated at the right hand of his heavenly Father.
2. The family of brothers and sisters he would inherit because of his death and resurrection. Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lays down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). All who trust in Jesus death and resurrection are his friends. This is the joy Jesus was willing to lay his life down for (i.e., so that despite the sinful dysfunctions and aberrations that dwell within our fallen corrupted body you and I and every other seeker of God could not only be Christ's eternal friends, but his eternal brothers and sisters in the family of his heavenly Father).

The author is encouraging all who because of their faith are facing persecutions or struggling with the difficulties and hardships of life to consider the life of Jesus and set their focus on the same joy that he set his heart upon. The spiritual muscle that will carry us through present troubles is the ability to focus on the joy of the eternal reward as Christ our exalted brother did.

HEBREWS 12:3-4

Consider Jesus who endured the Hostility of Sinners against Himself.

- **Hebrews 12:3-4:** Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. ⁴In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.

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Paul realises that some who belong to Christ may become tired or wearied of trying to live a lifestyle that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ, others may become doubtful in their faith due to other influences affecting them and is therefore encouraging them to think of Christ and what he endured. He tells them that in their struggle against sin they have not yet resisted to the point of shedding their blood as Jesus did.

This can refer to the following two events:

1. **The cross of Calvary:** if Jesus had given into sin and temptation, if he had overlooked the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, they would not have enticed the Romans to crucify him. Jesus resistance against sin and temptation and his stand for what is just and right before God and for others were the things that led to his bloody, brutal and cruel death on the cross.
2. **The Garden of Gethsemane:** Luke tells us that Jesus while praying in the Garden of Gethsemane knowing the torture and brutal death, he was about to face prayed with such great agony that his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground (Luke 22:44) (KJV). The author here is encouraging his Hebrew readers and by extension all of us not to give up our faith no matter how difficult the struggle to overcome sin might be, but rather consider Jesus who suffered the agony of the cross and the sin of multitudes even to the death.

Consider Jesus suffering: we are being told to consider Jesus suffering (v3), but what does the author mean, what is it about Jesus suffering that we are to consider? There are two things that come to light in pondering this verse the first is obvious, the second is not quite so clear.

1. Knowing and being aware that in suffering for our faith we are suffering with Christ, and as he was rewarded with an eternal crown of glory so too will he reward all those who suffer for his name.
2. Consider, Jesus suffered the sins of multitudes while ministering on earth so that through his life and his death he could save sinners to eternal life, therefore if Christ's grace can cope with the sins of multitudes he can certainly cope with the sin you are struggling with, so don't throw away your faith simply because you cannot overcome it.

NOTE: the sin in focus is sin people struggle with, it is not talking about living a lifestyle of sin and being indifferent to it, rather the focus is sin brothers and sisters in Christ desire to overcome, but are having difficulty in doing so. Rather than forsake Christ because of sin, understand that no brother or sister in Christ is without sin this is the reason Christ suffered and died, if it was possible for us to attain to that glorious state of sinlessness and be free of any spot or blemish of sin then Christ died for no reason. John in his letter to those who have fellowship with the Father and the Son wrote:

- If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus God's Son cleanses us from all sin, but if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, but if we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and his word is not in us (1 John 1:7-10)

**THE LIGHT, GOD, IN THIS CONTEXT IS OF COURSE, IS
HOLINESS, GOD'S PURE HOLINESS IS PURE LIGHT**

The Holiness of God; not only embraces all the fruits of the Spirit; love, joy, peace, mercy, grace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, forgiveness and justice in absolute perfection, but also has an absolute lack of malice and anything that is contrary to Love. Walking in the light means walking in the same kind of light that God dwells in which is holiness though the measure of light which we have is clearly not the same in degree that God dwells in, it is nevertheless of the same kind since the true character of a brother and sister in Christ should reflect God's character of holiness and his likeness (howbeit not perfectly). The presence of God brings the consciousness of sin in our fallen and corrupted nature and outward sins in our life. The blood of Christ is the divine provision for cleansing both, thus to walk in the light is to live by faith in fellowship with the Father and the Son. Whereas sin interrupts our fellowship, confession restores it and immediate confession keeps the fellowship unbroken.

All who walk near to God, as a reflection of his light and his holiness, are fully aware that even on their best days of duties and service they are mixed with sin. God by providing his own beloved Son as a sufficient and effectual sacrifice for sin needed in all ages has shown that he is not only fully aware of the sinfulness of the world, but also by requiring believers to continually confess their sins and to apply by faith the blood of Christ to them has shown that he is also fully aware of the sinfulness of those in Christ. Every brother and sister in the family of Christ should always be humble and willing to acknowledge honestly even the worst of their sin before God and confess them in their full extent relying wholly on God's mercy, God's grace and God's truth fully assured that by their faith in Christ they are counted righteous and by God's grace given a free pardon, full forgiveness and free deliverance from sin because of the sacrificial blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**THERE IS NO STAIN MADE BY SIN SO DEEP THAT THE BLOOD OF
CHRIST CANNOT ENTIRELY CLEANSE IT FROM
THE MIND AND THE HEART**

God has made provision for cleansing the mind and heart of every brother and sister in Christ from sin so that by faith they can share in his light and his holiness. No system of religion intended for mankind could be adapted to our human fallen condition that did not contain this provision since not even the world's most skilful surgeon can with his scalpel cut sin out of our nature; since it is engrained into every cell of our body and infects not only our outward actions, but our thoughts, motives and passions. If Christ blood did not cleanse from all sin past, present and future not one of us could fellowship with God or enter with boldness into his presence. The blood of Christ does not stop cleansing us at salvation, but continues to cleanse us, (i.e., it continues to keep clean what it has made clean) and will continue to cleanse us until Christ returns, nevertheless it should always be remembered that it requires the same faith to preserve our righteous standing before God as the faith needed to enter the Kingdom of God. The faith required to enter Christ's family is not a different faith to the faith needed to remain in the Lord's Kingdom. The faith we entered Christ's household with is the same faith that will carry us through to his return. Faith in Christ not only justifies and cleanses the sinner, but continues to justify and cleanse those who are redeemed in the same way and by the same means. Here is the glory wonder and beauty of Christ he is not a partial Saviour, but saves and cleanses from all sin to the uttermost, if he did not, we would all be rejected from entering into his eternal Kingdom at the judgment seat of Christ.

There is a pollution on human nature, which is original, natural, universal, and internal, and is such that nothing can remove but the blood of Christ; not ceremonial rites, sacrifices, moral duties, evangelical performances or the practise of religious ordinances, none of these have any power to cleanse from sin or purge the conscience and cleanse the mind and the heart. Christ's blood has been always cleansing from sin even before it was actually shed even to the faithful of the Old Testament, since Scripture states that Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8) which means the blood of Christ shed at Calvary not only cleanses those who trust in him since his resurrection, but also flows back cleansing all the faithful from the foundations of the world. This is because God in his eternal mind purposed and planned Christ's death before the foundation of the world began and therefore it has the same effective cleansing power both back in time and forward in time as when first shed, and will have to the return of Christ. One of the most glorious moments in any relationship for those who have been offended is when the person who has offended them humbles themselves and admits they were wrong and say sorry. This natural principal that applies to all human relationships is also the same principal by which a person enters the Kingdom of God, and by which they continue to remain in fellowship with God the only difference is that it is to God we humble ourselves and admit our wrongs and say sorry to.

HEBREWS 12:5-6

The Lord Disciplines the One He Loves.

- **Hebrews 12:5-6:** And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? "My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. ⁶For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives" (cited from Proverbs 3:11-12)

Job a man who suffered under the hand of God said:

- Behold, blessed is the one whom God reproves; therefore despise not the discipline of the Almighty (Job 5:17)

And we are told that:

- Job was a man who was blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil (Job 1:1).

The LORD Himself said:

- There is none like Job on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil (Job 1:8)

And again, the LORD said of Job:

- He still holds fast his integrity even though I am inflicting him without reason (Job 2:3).

This verses clearly show that suffering, troubles and hardships are not necessarily a sign that God does not deeply love the one who is troubled, if that were the case Job was most hated by God and we know that this statement is far from the truth, in fact quite the opposite God was thrilled with the integrity of Jobs faith. Moses told the people of Israel:

- Know in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the LORD your God disciplines you (Deut. 8:5).

In the Psalms it is written:

- Blessed are those who the LORD disciplines and in His faithfulness afflicts and teaches them His law so that they will not be put to shame when they learn God's righteous rules (Psalm 94:12) (Psalm 119:6-7, 75).

Peter wrote:

- Rejoice that by God's power you are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time even though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 1:5-7).

Jesus himself said:

- Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent (Rev. 3:19).

The book of Proverbs states, "Whoever spares the rod hates their child whereas those who loves them are diligent to discipline them while there is still hope of them being prevented from going the ways of death, so for this reason do not withhold discipline from a child, since no discipline given in love ever killed a child (Prov. 13:24) (Prov. 19:18) (Prov. 23:13).

NOTE: though the verses talk about the rod of discipline it does not matter what form the discipline takes as long as it causes the child some regret (i.e., a small child today would most likely rather have a smack than be told they are not allowed to watch their favourite T.V. show and I am pretty confident if a young boy or girl was given the choice of a smack or have their mobile phone taken off them for a period of time the smack would win out on every occasion).

HEBREWS 12:7-8

God is Treating you as Sons.

- **Hebrews 12:7-8:** It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Again, the author is encouraging those who struggle with sin; he is here likening the household of God to a natural family. Every caring parent loves their children, yet no child behaves as perfectly as their parents might wish they would, but despite this reality the parents love is always set upon their children for their long term good and not for their harm.

Illegitimate children and not sons: the words, "If you are left without discipline, then you are illegitimate children and not sons" (v8) shows that the primary purpose of a parent is not to be their child's best friend, but to be the loving parent who cares for their child's long term future and

because of this love and care are willing to discipline their child in what is right to protect them from future harm. Of course, the friendship between a parent and a child is a beautiful thing, but it is destructive to the child's well-being if such a friendship comes as a result of forsaking discipline (given in love).

NOTICE: the key word is love when talking about discipline, no discipline should ever be given in anger, wrath or malice, all forms of discipline are acts of love to mature a child in self-control and the right way to go and protect them from future harm and should always be administered in a spirit of love and in love explained to them why they are being disciplined and how they should have behaved.

HEBREWS 12:9-11

Respect and Discipline.

- **Hebrews 12:9-11:** Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? ¹⁰For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. ¹¹For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

No-one enjoys discipline if they did it wouldn't be discipline, but it will develop respect for those who discipline us when we know it is for our own well-being. No child who has ever grown up with self-control and with the wisdom of knowing the right path to follow has ever hated their parents for the discipline they administered in love to guide them to not only grow into a mature person that others will respect and admire, but also train them to make right decisions for success. Likewise, no one in the family of God will have any regrets when Christ places the eternal crown of glory upon their heads and hears him say, "Well done my faithful servant enter into my Kingdom." All the suffering and sorrow, the hardships and troubles will vanish as quickly as does the labour pains of a mother who holds her new born baby in her arms.

The Father of spirits: this is an absolutely beautiful title for the God we worship, "The Father of Spirits" (v9) since it clearly shows that the Christian faith and the Christians relationship to Christ and his heavenly Father and the Christian experience is a spiritual one.

Human discipline and God's discipline: over the years some religious teachers have taught their followers that if a brother or sister in Christ is suffering from ill health, hardship or troubles it is a result of some form of hidden sin in their lives. They feel that the only reason a parent disciplines their children is because they have rebelled and disobeyed their authority in some manner or deliberately done something wrong, based on this principal they reason that God would only discipline those sons and daughters that have some outward or hidden sin in their heart. This all sounds logical, but its flawed for this reason we all sin, not one of us can stand before God and claim we are without sin, if anyone of us could Christ died for no reason. Added to this God said of Job a man who suffered more than most ever do:

- There is none like Job on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil and even though I inflict him without reason he still holds fast his integrity (Job 1:8) (Job 2:3).

This clearly shows that suffering, troubles and hardships are not a sign that there is some form of gross hidden sin in the heart since we all sin and fall far short of God's Holiness we all need training in righteousness. Parents discipline their children for what seems best to them, whereas God disciplines his children for their good so that they may have a share in His holiness.

Discipline yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness: the reason, "Discipline yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness" (v11) is because being trained in the righteousness of God is about being trained in the fruits of the Spirit (i.e., kindness, love, patience, compassion, empathy, mercy, forgiveness etc.), and deliverance from the fruits of the flesh (i.e., selfishness, pride, ego, greed, jealousy, selfish ambition and such like things).

Discipline, suffering and sorrow: the author of Hebrews as Job, David and the Old Testament faithful did, viewed everything that came into their lives good or bad as from God and which God will use for our eternal glory. The primary focus of authors mind in these verses is the eternal glory that will be revealed in the children of God at the resurrection when Christ returns. He knows that no matter what happens to those in Christ, whether it be sickness, war or even death they will live eternally and in this sense every brother and sister of Christ is indestructible, nothing can destroy them eternally, even when they die and their body rots away in the grave God is going to majestically raise them to a better homeland, a heavenly country and to the eternal city God is building without hands. Nothing in heaven or earth can eternally destroy those in Christ they are immortal even though they may have to sleep in Christ for a little while before they are resurrected. For further information on sleeping in Christ see the title:

- Sleeping in Christ and Sleeping in the Grave.
- In Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

HEBREWS 12:12-14

Without Holiness no-one will see the Lord.

- **Hebrews 12:12-14:** Therefore lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees,¹³ and make straight paths for your feet, so that what is lame may not be put out of joint but rather be healed. ¹⁴Strive for peace (follow peace in the KJV) with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

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Lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees: means stand up against sin.

Make straight paths for your feet: means walk in the fruits of the Spirit (love, kindness, compassion, mercy, grace and forgiveness and such like things).

What is lame: refers to the sinful areas in our life.

Joints may not be put out: refers to our lives being un-hinged by discipline.

Rather be healed: means overcome sinful areas within our live.

The author of Hebrews: is saying to his Hebrew audience and by extension to all who belong to Christ that they should stand against those areas of temptation that tend to lead away from the right path and toward sin and rather do all that is in their power to live a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Strive for peace: the words, "Strive for peace" (v14) not only refer to war, but to arguments, quarrels, contentions and division, the author here is saying rather than enter into these strive for peace (i.e., show tolerance, mercy, grace, forgiveness and such like things, do whatever is in our power to maintain peace in all situations of life).

HEBREWS 12:15-17

See to it that No-One Fails to Obtain the Grace of God.

- **Hebrews 12:15-17:** See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; ¹⁶that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. ¹⁷For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears.

Bitterness: means, caustic acid, especially poison it carries the idea of sharpness, piercing, biting, cutting and sarcastic.

Sexual immorality: refers to people who live a lifestyle of unlawful sex, orgies, adulteries (acts of sexual deceitfulness, infidelities, disloyalties and betrayals), incest (sexual activity between people who are closely related, such as a parent and child or a brother and sister), paedophilia (the crime of sex with a child) and using the opposite sex to fulfil one's own selfish lust or having multiple sex partners and such like things.

A key to Christian fellowship: the words, "See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God" (v15) are absolutely fabulous and one of the keys to Christian life since with these words the author is saying, "Make sure grace is granted to everyone." Don't become bitter, meaning unpleasant, nasty, vicious or hostile against those who offend or hurt us, but rather show grace meaning kindness and mercy. Here we discover that peace and holiness are impossible to attain to without grace and that the enemy of peace is bitterness, this is because bitterness will not allow a person to have peace with those they are bitter against, but the glory of grace is that bitterness has no power where grace flows, it cannot flourish in a person full of grace. To harbour bitterness not only severs a relationship forever, but will also rob the one harbouring it in their heart from joy and from the fullness of Christ's Spirit dwelling within and infect and taint that which flows out from their own spirit.

**SINCE CHRIST LAID DOWN HIS LIFE FOR OUR OFFENSES,
WE HAVE NO EXCUSE TO HARBOUR
BITTERNESS IN OUR HEARTS**

Esau found no chance to repent: the words, "Esau, sold his birthright for a meal and when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears (v16-17) refers to Jacobs deception when his father Isaac was dying. Esau was the firstborn of Isaac and therefore was entitled to the blessing of the firstborn son, but prior to Isaac death Esau sold his birthright to his brother Jacob for a single meal. When Isaac was on his death bed Jacob disguised himself as Esau and Isaac thinking Jacob was his firstborn gave him the blessing due to the firstborn. Then when Esau came to visit his father on his death bed expecting to get the blessing of the firstborn it was too late; Isaac had given it to Jacob. As soon as Isaac told Esau he had given the blessing to Jacob, Esau cried out with an exceedingly great and bitter cry and said to his father:

- Bless me, even me also, O my father! (Gen. 27:34).

But he said:

- Your brother came deceitfully, and he has taken away your blessing (Gen. 27:35).

So, no matter how much Esau repented and cried with tears it was too late, he could not be given the blessing of the firstborn (the full story is found in Genesis 27:34-38).

Jacob's blessing: (the blessing of the firstborn) was that God would give him an abundance of rain, his land would prosper, people will serve him, nations will bow down to him and he will be lord over Esau and they will bow down to him. Those who cursed Jacob will be cursed, but those who bless him will be blessed (Gen 27:28-29).

Esau's blessing: was that he would live in desert places and live by war. He would serve his brother Jacob, but when he grows restless Esau will break his brothers' yoke from his neck (Gen. 27:39-40). Here is the wonder of these blessings Jacob (renamed Israel) gave birth to the twelve tribes of Israel who became the nation of Israel. Esau (Jacob's brother) is the father of the Palestinian people and their affiliated Arab nations. Israel is dominating Esau at the moment, but the blessing says eventually the tension and hatred between the two brothers will be broken. This I believe will happen when Christ returns as, King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 19:11-16) to rule and reign from God's Holy City Jerusalem (on Mount Zion God's Holy Mountain) to establish God's Kingdom on earth during his millennial reign. In the first resurrection (Rev. 20:4-5) the dead in Christ and the faithful, who are alive, will be gathered together to rule and reign as kings and priests with the Lord over those nations who are left outside the Holy City of God. Christ the King united with his people will not only bring peace to the Middle East, but establish God's Kingdom of steadfast love, faithfulness, righteousness, joy and peace throughout the world and the glory of God will cover the earth. Jesus will do justice to the poor and oppressed, he will be a faithful and compassionate King forever. He will not allow anyone to strike terror in the earth or use lies and deception to enlarge their own wealth and power. The land will abundantly produce and even the deserts will flourish. The animals will not feed on each other and even the lamb will be able to lie down with the wolf and everyone will eat of their own hands because all that they plant will produce. All nations the LORD has made will come and worship before the Lord Jesus Christ. They will glorify God's Name, proclaiming the LORD is great and does wondrous things and that He alone is God. The book of Revelation states:

- Jesus Christ, the faithful witness who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father is coming in glory and every eye shall see him, and they also who pierced him and all kindreds of the earth (Revelation 1:5-7).

And in Revelation chapter five we are told that:

- Christ was slain, and by his blood he redeemed a people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation and made them a kingdom and priests to God and they shall reign on the earth (Revelation 5:9-10).

At the end of this glorious Kingdom age God descends to earth on a Great White Throne the sea, death and hades (the grave) give up the dead. They stand before God and are judged according to what is written in certain heavenly books according to what they have done. Death and those counted unworthy are cast into the Lake of Fire a symbol of eternal destruction (i.e., total extinction) (also called the, Second Death) (Rev 20:11-15). Christ hands the Kingdom over to his heavenly Father and God is ALL in ALL and ETERNITY begins in all its fullness and majestic royal glory. For further information see titles:

- Kingdom of God (ON WEBSITE MENU).
- The Second or Great White Throne Judgment.

In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

HEBREWS 12:18-21

You have not come to a Blazing Fire that cannot Be Touched.

- **Hebrews 12:18-21:** For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest ¹⁹and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. ²⁰For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." ²¹Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."

The author here is referring to when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai (also called Mount Horeb). The following verses are those the author is referring to:

A blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest: Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly (Exodus 19:18) when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off (Exod. 20:18) but later came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, while the mountain burned with fire to the heart of heaven, wrapped in darkness, cloud, and gloom (Deut. 4:11).

The sound of a trumpet: no hand shall touch the mountain, he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain (Exod. 19:13) on the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled (Exod. 19:16) as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up (Exod. 19:19-20). A voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them: the people said to Moses:

- You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin. (Exodus 20:19-20).

If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned:

- Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death no hand shall touch the mountain he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live. (Exodus 19:12-13).

Moses said:

- I tremble with fear I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure that the LORD bore against you, so that he was ready to destroy you. But the LORD listened to me that time also. (Deut. 9:19).

Moses feared that the LORD would destroy Israel because of all evil they did in the sight of the LORD to provoke him to anger by making the golden calf and worshipping it (Deut. 9:18-21). Here at Mount Sinai the LORD gave Israel all the words of his Covenant at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, and the LORD added no more to this Covenant and wrote them on two Tablets of Stone and gave them to Moses (Deut. 5:22). Since every Hebrew from childhood would have been fully conversant with this story the author of Hebrews is using the story to contrasting the fear and terror of the Old Covenant of law being given to the nation of Israel to the glory of the New Covenant of grace in the following verses.

HEBREWS 12:22-24

You have come to Mount Zion the City of God, the Heavenly Jerusalem.

- **Hebrews 12:22-24:** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, ²³and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

Now, in contrast to the ancient Hebrews standing in fear and trembling when they received the Old Covenant at the foot of Mount Sinai while watching it burn with fire and hearing the loud thunder and seeing the lightning flashes appearing out of the thick darkness, cloud and gloom. The author tells them under the New Covenant they are not coming to a mountain of fear and trembling, but to Mount Zion.

Mount Zion: is the mountain the city of Jerusalem sits on, following are only a few of the Scriptures that speak of God's Holy mountain; Mount Zion:

- Beautiful in elevation, is the joy of all the earth, *Mount Zion*, in the far north, the city of the great King (Psalm 48:2).
- Those who trust in the LORD are like *Mount Zion*, which cannot be moved, but abides forever (Psalm 125:1).
- The LORD will create over the whole site of *Mount Zion* and over her inhabitants a canopy of his glory (Isaiah 4:5).
- The LORD of hosts, who dwells on *Mount Zion* (Isaiah 8:18).
- Mount Zion, the place of the name of the LORD of hosts (Isaiah 18:7).
- The LORD of hosts reigns on *Mount Zion* and in Jerusalem (Isaiah 24:23).

**THERE IS NO OTHER MOUNTAIN ON EARTH AS MOUNT ZION
THAT GOD HAS GIVEN THIS GLORY TO, OR SPOKEN OF
IN SUCH AN EXALTED MANNER**

The city of the living God: (v22) of course refers to Jerusalem, the name Jerusalem means peace, it is by far the most important site on this earth it is called the Royal City, the City of the LORD, the Faithful City, the Holy Mountain and the City of the Great King. Jerusalem was the capital of the only Kingdom God has (thus far) established among men. The temple was erected in Jerusalem, it was the city of the prophets, the kings of David's line and in Jerusalem the death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ occurred and at Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended in Jerusalem giving birth to the Christian church. The Lord Jesus Christ will return to Jerusalem and the inhabitants of the city will mourn over the one who they pierced. A New Jerusalem will be established on earth and Christ will rule over all nations as King of kings and Lord of lords and bring peace to the entire planet. He will end all forms of war and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into the New City.

**THERE IS NO OTHER CITY AS JERUSALEM ON EARTH, THAT GOD
HAS GIVEN THIS GLORY TO OR SPOKEN OF
IN SUCH AN EXALTED MANNER.**

The heavenly Jerusalem: the heavenly Jerusalem is symbolic of the message of salvation by grace as opposed to the earthly Jerusalem that was symbolic of the law. The earthly Jerusalem symbolises attaining to righteous by self-effort in strictly adhering to religious works of the law (i.e., ceremonial rites, religious customs and tradition) in contrast to the heavenly Jerusalem which symbolises righteousness by faith in Christ and by God's grace.

The innumerable angels in festal gathering: festal means, celebrating, triumphant, cheerful joyful happy and merry, clearly there is a literal heaven in which God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ dwell in the light and holiness of God amongst the multitudes of heavenly angels who are not only rejoicing in victory before the throne of God, but also

-serving God and carrying out His work to bring about the eternal plan for mankind that He purposed in His divine and eternal mind before the foundation of the world.

NOTICE: the dominant Spirit in heaven is happiness all who inherit eternal life will inherit eternal happiness is there any other religion on earth that promises such eternal glory? (I think not).

The assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven: The Scripture state:

- Jesus is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent (Col. 1:18).

The firstborn here refers to the first born to eternal life, it means Jesus was the first to be resurrected to eternal life and in this sense, he is the first to be born to eternal life. Others were resurrected from the dead, but they rose with a mortal body whereas Christ rose immortal, indestructible and eternal. This is why the family of Christ are referred to as the assembly of the firstborn.

NOTICE: the church is pictured as an eternal awe-inspiring body with Christ as its head.

The glorious words, "He is the beginning the firstborn from the dead" (Col 1:18) shows us that God views death as a birth and a new beginning. Unfortunately some religious teachers use this verse to support the mistaken theory that certain faithful Old Testament fathers were raised to heaven when they died, but that would contradict what Paul is saying here, (i.e., Jesus was the first to be resurrected from the dead), meaning he was the first to be resurrected to heaven, if the Old Testament fathers had been raised to heaven Paul would not be able to make this statement. For further information regarding this, see the title:

- Heaven.
- Death (what happens when we die).
- Both titles are in, Death (ON WEBSITE MENU).

God planned and purposed that Jesus would be first to be raised from the dead to eternal life and everlasting glory so that he would be the pre-eminent head of the church (Col 1:18), meaning he would be the most high-ranking authority in God's Kingdom and stand out in majestic and royal glory amongst all others in all things regarding eternal salvation, dominion and rule.

Who are enrolled in heaven: the words, "To the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven" (v23) shows that the names of all those who belong to Jesus are recorded in heaven, meaning they are kept in the eternal mind of God. Some people find it difficult to comprehend God raising the dead, but think of it this way, we have super computers today that have in their memories literally trillions of bits of information and at the touch of a key any one of those bits is resurrected to us on a brightly coloured screen, then with another touch of the key it all vanishes into the super memory and is gone, until we resurrect it again. Knowing that God has given his creation the mind to be able to build such amazing computers should make it very easy to understand how God keeps us all in His divine and eternal memory waiting for the right time to touch the supernatural keyboard of heaven and raise us once again to life. Added to this very few Christians have any trouble believing God created the universe that we live in so raising the dead in comparison is not such a difficult task for such an awesome, powerful and majestic God (Heb. 11:3).

God, the judge of all: amongst believers there has been a certain amount of confusion between whether God is the judge or the Lord Jesus Christ is the judge, the following verses will help us solve this confusion.

- Jesus said, “*I judge*, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me (John 5:30).
- Jesus is the one appointed by God *to judge* of the living and the dead (Acts 10:42).
- God has fixed a day on which *he will judge* the world in righteousness *by a man* whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead (Acts 17:31).
- Do you think you will escape the *judgment of God*? (Rom. 2:3).
- How could *God judge* the world? (Rom. 3:6).
- *God* and *Christ Jesus*, who is to *judge* the living and the dead (2 Tim. 4:1).
- The *Lord*, the righteous *judge*, will award all who have loved his appearing (2 Tim. 4:8).
- *God*, the *judge* of all (Heb. 12:23).
- *O Sovereign Lord*, holy and true, how long before you will *judge* those who dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:10).

From these verses we learn two things:

1. God is the supreme judge, but he has given the authority and power to judge to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Jesus will judge according to God’s will; therefore, it is pointless to argue between who is the judge since the will of God and the will of Christ at judgment is exactly the same.

Added to this John in his majestic vision on the Isle of Patmos, wrote:

- I saw those who had remained faithful came to life and seated on thrones and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years, but the ‘rest of the dead’ did not come to life until the thousand years were ended. This is the *first resurrection*, blessed are the one who shares in the *first resurrection*! Over such the *second death* has no power, but they will be priests of God and of Christ, and they will reign with him for a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6).

The second death of course refers to that awe-inspiring and breathtaking day when:

- God Himself descends on a great white throne and the sea the grave and death give up the dead and they appear before God’s throne. Books are opened and they are judged according to what is written in the books, according to what they had done. Then Death and the grave were thrown into the lake of fire (a symbol of eternal death i.e., total extinction). This is the *second death* (i.e., the final death) (Rev. 20:11-15).

For further information on the Second Death see the title:

- Resurrection (Second or White Throne Judgement).
- In, Resurrection (ON WEBSITE MENU).

The spirits of the righteous made perfect (v23) carry the following two ideas:

1. Those who belong to the family of Christ are made perfect by faith and God’s grace whoever is in Christ are counted righteous not because of their own righteousness (which is forever lacking), but because of Christ righteousness. This is the glory of the Christian faith God crowns and clothes whoever is in Christ with the royal and priestly robes of Christ’s righteousness.
2. Every brother and sister in Christ will be made righteous and perfect when their natural body is raised a spiritual body in glory and in power (1 Cor.15:41-44) and when we are all changed in the twinkling of an eye at the last trumpet and raised incorruptible, and our corruptible

body puts on incorruption, and our mortal body puts on immortality and death is swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:50-54) then the spirits of the righteous will be made eternally perfect (v23).

Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant: the word mediator means go-between, intermediary, arbitrator and intercessor. Throughout this letter the author has been brilliantly using the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place of Moses Tabernacle and old Testament Scripture to prove to Hebrews who still placed value on the Jewish priesthood that, Jesus has replaced the Old Testament high priest and made redundant the Levitical priesthood and is now the only High Priest and mediator they need. Prior to this chapter the author has highlighted the following facts:

- No will is in force as long as the one who made it is alive, only at death can any will become effective.
- The first covenant was established by death and the blood of bulls and goats.
- The new covenant could not be established until the death of the one who made it.
- Christ death established the new covenant in his own blood.
- Mediating with God through the high priest and the Levitical religious system has been made obsolete by Christ's death.
- Jesus is the only mediator anyone needs to intercede for them today.
- When mediating on behalf of Israel the high priest would once every year enter the Most Holy Place made with hands and this not with his own blood, but the blood of bulls and goats to make atonement for their sins of the nation. In contrast Christ entered once for all into the Most Holy Place, not made with hands, but heaven itself appearing in the very presence of God on our behalf and not by means of the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance and he alone is God's exalted High Priest of the New Covenant and the perfect and eternal mediator between us and God (the authors account of this is found in Heb. 9:11-26).

Anyone who is trusting in a human priest today, no matter how great or how religious they maybe or how successful their religious empire they are not only being robbed of the glory of being in fellowship with Christ and union with God, but are denying everything Jesus died for.

NOTE: this is not to say that we should not listen to ministers and religious teachers of all sorts, but once we exalt them in our hearts and minds as our spiritual priest we are not only denying the Lord Jesus Christ, but insulting God who gave His only beloved Son that we could be free of mortal imperfect human high priests.

The Blood that speaks a better Word than the Blood of Abel: the blood in the following verse, "You have come to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (v24) is referred to as the sprinkled blood, because it is language the Hebrews understood since their high priest would take the blood of the sacrificial bull or goat and sprinkle it on the object or person to be cleansed, thus the word sprinkled shows that the blood the author has in focus is sacrificial blood offered for cleansing and especially for cleansing sins.

Here is the love, the grace and glory of Christ's Spirit: all Hebrews would know the story of Abel and Cain, here the author tells them that they have come to, "The sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel" (v24).

In Genesis it is recorded that the LORD asked Cain:

- What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to me from the ground, you are cursed you will be a fugitive and a wanderer on the earth and Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear" (Gen. 4:10-26).

The blood of Abel cried out from the grave for justice, revenge and punishment. In contrast Jesus said of those crucifying him and casting lots for his garments, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). The blood of Jesus in sharp contrast to the blood of Abel cries to his heavenly Father for forgiveness and mercy for all sinners.

GOD SHOWS HIS LOVE FOR US IN THAT WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US (ROMANS 5:8)

Here is comfort for even the greatest of sinners; no-matter how loud the condemning voice of the mind speaks or how gross the sin, whoever approaches God in humble repentance and accepts Christ as their Saviour will be forgiven, why? Because the cleansing power of Christ's blood cries for mercy and forgiveness. Sceptics reading this will no-doubt will say, "Yes, but what about those who are not genuine?" Clearly people can fool us, but no-one can fool God, since His eternal eyes cut straight past our flesh and penetrate into the deepest and most hidden areas of our hearts, God sees the motives, intents and thoughts of our inner most being and He will respond to these accordingly.

HEBREWS 12:25

We will not Escape if we Reject Him who Warns from Heaven.

- **Hebrews 12:25:** See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

The one who is speaking refers to the Lord Jesus Christ, the one who warned Israel on earth was Moses. The author is warning his Hebrew audience as Moses warned Israel saying:

- If they are not careful to obey the LORD their God and do all his commandments then the LORD will bring to ruin all that they have done.

Immediately prior to this Moses told them:

- If they faithfully do all he commands them the LORD their God will set them high above all the nations of the earth, keep them and their families in good health and prosper all they put their hand to (Deuteronomy chapter 28).

Clearly they did not obey, in fact they entered into gross wickedness, turned from God to serve idols and worship pagan gods so God used Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon as his servant to bring to ruin the city of Jerusalem, destroy the temple and carry the inhabitants of the city into captivity for seventy years. Israel by refusing to heed the words of Moses were taken captive for seventy-years, those who refuse to heed the words of Christ who warns from heaven will not just suffer seventy-years captivity they will be judged to eternal death.

HEBREWS 12:26-27

I will Shake Not Only the Earth but also the Heavens.

- **Hebrews 12:26-27:** At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."²⁷ This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.

The words, "At that time his voice shook the earth" (v26) refer to the LORD speaking and giving Moses the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai and all the people of Israel standing in awesome fear because the whole mountain was wrapped in thick smoke and fire and trembled greatly because the LORD had descended on it (Exodus 19:18). The author is now saying God will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens once more, the following are two most common teachings to what this means:

1. Some believe God will literally shake up the earth by earthquakes, floods, droughts, tsunamis, volcanos and the many other natural disasters and the heavens by extremely violent winds and storms, thunder and lightning and meteors falling from the heavens destroying vast parts of the earth. Today they would no-doubt add the devastating effect the green effect will have upon earth and meteors falling from the heavens knocking out the world's satellite system of communication since both, of these have the potential to bring the world to ruin.
2. Others say that the shaking of the heavens is symbolic language that means God will bring to ruin those in positions of authority and power (i.e., kings, presidents, and leaders of nations and governments will topple) especially false religious teachers who have global positions of influence power and authority over a world-wide following.

It is very easy for us to harmonise these two different groups since if what the first group believes comes to pass (and it surely will) what the second group believes will naturally follow and regardless of what order these events happen the Bible in many other prophetic verses of Scripture proclaim both will come to pass.

The removal of things that are shaken: to understand the phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made (v27) it must be remembered that the aim of the author in this letter is to prove to the Hebrews that the Old Covenant has passed away. When we understand this it, is clear that the words "The removal of things that are shaken" refer, to the Levitical priesthood, the high priest, the ceremonial rites, sacrifices, customs and traditions that are being shaken, in reality not only shaken but made obsolete, but God always allows a time of grace until a person's mind is enlightened to the truth.

The things that cannot be shaken: (v27) in contrast to the things that can be shaken refer to the following truths:

- Jesus is the only mediator before God and mankind.
- No-one is saved to eternal life except through faith in Christ and God's grace.
- All who trust in Jesus for their righteousness and not in religious works or self-effort will be saved to eternal life.
- Christ's Kingdom, his family and the eternal inheritance of everlasting glory will be established.
- The return of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords to establish God's Kingdom of eternal righteousness, justice, joy and peace on earth is certain.

HEBREWS 12:28-29

A Kingdom that Cannot be Shaken.

- **Hebrews 12:28-29:** Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe ²⁹for our God is a consuming fire.

Here the author is contrasting the Old Covenant which the faithful of God followed for over four-thousand years, but now discover that what they valued is shaken, destroyed and brought to ruin, everything they held dear to their hearts, their lives and the identity of their nation now counts for nothing. This is why the author is telling us to be grateful for the faith we have, it will never change not only is there is no-other Gospel to come, but there will never be another High Priest for all eternity other than the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE: anyone who has been born into and raised in a false religion or spent most of their life in a religion of works and traditions who have discovered the glory of God's grace in the Gospel will understand how these Hebrews feel and the tremendous difficulty they have in forsaking what they have been indoctrinated in and valued since childhood.

Acceptable worship, to God: many today think that acceptable worship to God is standing in a congregation with raised hands singing songs of praises to his name and his glory, there is no-doubt God delights in this type of worship, but only if those who are standing there in that moment have a desire in their hearts to live their life to honour God and the Lord Jesus Christ on every other day of the week. True worship is desiring and endeavouring to live a life that honours God and the Lord Jesus Christ, it is doing good to others, showing kindness, grace, mercy and forgiveness not only to those who are our brothers and sisters in the Lord, but also to those who are outside God's Kingdom, these are the things that God accepts as acceptable and true worship.

As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.