

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

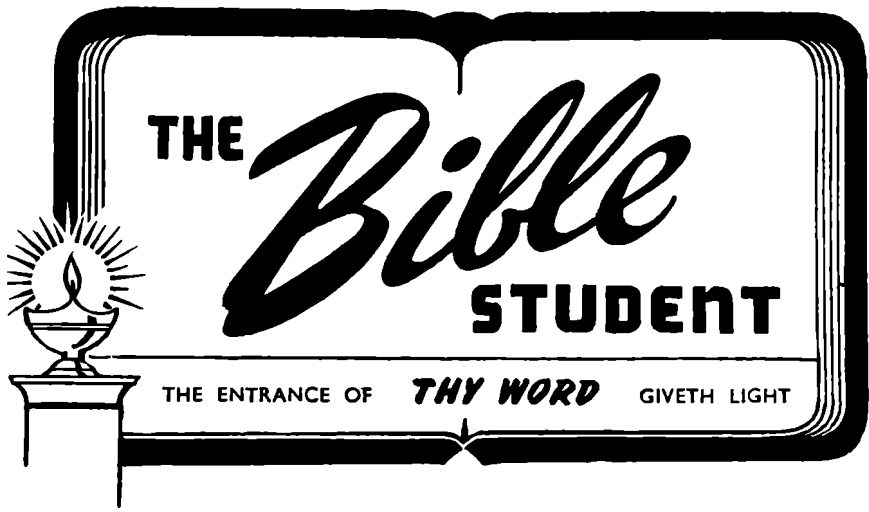
<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Bible Student* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bible-student_01.php



New Series
Vol. XXV. No. 1

JANUARY
1954

C O N T E N T S

PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL	1
'THE HEIGHTS OF THE HILLS'... ..	9
EXPOSITORY STUDY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL	14
THE NECESSITY OF THE CROSS	20
BIBLICAL HEBREW WORDS ...	26
SEVEN OLD TESTAMENT FEASTS	30
WHO WAS TIMOTHY? ...	35
NOTES ON HEBREWS ...	40
N. T. WORD STUDIES ...	46

Editor: A. McDONALD REDWOOD

of his release, proposed going with him to the Jewish Christians (whoever they may have been) to whom this Epistle was written—'with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.'

Tradition makes Timothy 'Bishop' of Ephesus after this, and relates his martyrdom, the Ephesian mob attacking him on account of his protest against a festival in honour of Diana, and killing him with clubs.

NOTES ON HEBREWS

W. E. VINE, M.A. (London)

Chapter 12 (Continued)

Verse 10. For they verily for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness—The human chastening is pointed out as brief and fallible. The divine chastening is not only infallible but has our highest good as its object. To be like God, holy as He is holy, is our greatest possible profit. Ch. Lev. 11:44; 19:2; 20:7, 26. The verb rendered 'be partakers' is in the aorist tense, marking the definiteness and decisiveness of the experience.

Verse 11. All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous—Or more literally, 'not of joy but of grief', i.e., a matter of joy, etc., as if joy, or grief, was its characteristic feature. 'For the present' means while it continues.

yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness. The word *apodidōmi*, rendered 'yielding', means to give back; that is, it produces a return for that which has been ministered in discipline. 'Peaceable' here means that which bestows happiness or welfare; so peaceable fruit is fruit which produces happiness. The fruit consists of righteousness (an explanatory genitive); righteousness, is being and doing right, that is, in a right relation toward God and man. For *gumnazō*, to exercise, see 5:14.

Verse 12. Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the palsied knees—This introduces three commands, concerning hands, knees and feet respectively, the first two being designed to counteract any natural feeling of depression or despondency, which prevents our fulfilment of the Lord's gracious will, through failure to realize the purpose of the chastisement.

The verb *anorthōō*, rendered 'lift up', means to set upright; it is used of restoring ruins (Acts 15:16), and of the Lord's act of making straight the woman who had a spirit of infirmity (Luke 13:13). Here it has the general sense of setting right. The verb *pariēmi*, rendered hang down, means to be relaxed and so to be exhausted. These exhortations warn us against yielding to the desires of the flesh, and against friendship with the world.

Verse 13. and make straight paths for your feet, that that which is lame be not turned out of the way, but rather be healed.—This third command, as the due response to chastening, has not to do merely with our own physical weakness, as in the two preceding, but with the effect on others. We are to see to it that our feet walk in a straight path, and thus set an example to fellow-believers, so that any who are walking feebly may not be turned out of the way through straying after us, but on the contrary that their lameness may be healed through the benefit of following in the straight paths which we make for our own feet. Ch. Isa. 35:3-6.

Verse 14. Follow after peace with all men—The word *diōkō*, rendered 'follow after', means to pursue earnestly, not merely moving in a certain direction, but earnestly pursuing the object mentioned. It is similarly used in Rom. 12:18; 14:19; 1 Cor. 14:1; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Tim. 6:11; 1 Pet. 3:11. We are to refrain from whatever might interfere with peace, and to do our utmost to maintain it, but never at the expense of holiness.

and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord—Peace and sanctification are associated. Peace is not that which comes from the Spirit of God unless it is accompanied by sanctification, that is, by the realization of what it is to be entirely set apart to God. The way of peace is a high way; it is called 'the way of holiness'. Outside that way no one shall see the Lord (Isa. 35:8). See Matt. 5:8; Rev. 22:4. No one is a true believer unless he is sanctified. That he becomes at his new birth. He then belongs to those who in 3:1 are called 'holy brethren'. From that time he is called upon to pursue his sanctification; it is an abiding principle in his life. He is to 'perfect holiness in the fear of God' (2 Cor. 7:1), by cleansing himself from all defilement of the flesh and spirit; not that holiness is a process to which we obtain by degrees until we are perfect, but that we are at all times to pursue it, to see that we fulfil it. That is perfecting it.

For the standard see 1 John 3:3, which reveals the manner of life of those who will see the Lord and be like Him.

Verse 15. looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God—Grace is the motive for walking in a straight path and for pursuing peace with others and sanctification in one's life. In 3:12 *blepō*, to look, is used; here *episkopeō*, to exercise oversight, the indication being that the spiritual care is to be mutual (not official). For *hustereō*, to fall short, see 4:1; the verb *ekpiptō*, to fall away, is used in Gal. 5:4, in connection with grace.

lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled—The metaphor is that of a poisonous plant, and the expression is from Deut. 29:18, where it describes those who turn from the worship of God to that of idols. Here it is applied to any person of an unholy life, with its deleterious influences. The verb *enochleō*, literally, to crowd upon, means to give trouble to, and is used elsewhere in Luke 6:18 and Acts 5:16. 'The many' signifies practically the whole company of believers. 'A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump' (1 Cor. 5:6). A teacher of evil doctrine or evil practice is sure to have followers, and if watchfulness is not exercised the evil spreads. Evil in any assembly affects the whole gathering.

Verse 16. lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one mess of meat sold his own birthright—The word *pornos*, fornicator, is not to be limited to the idea of spiritual fornication, it includes the actual sin and all such sensual and lustful practices. Esau's profanity consisted not merely in his satisfying his immediate desires and abandoning his birthright, but in treating the holy privileges of the patriarchal family, the priesthood, and the title to the land, and the ancestorship of the Messiah, as of no value compared with the satisfaction of a natural hunger of the moment ('one mess of meat'). The warning is against renouncing our privileges and duty and 'the recompense of the inheritance' in order to enjoy an indulgence of the flesh or the pleasures of the world. That is profanity as here described.

Verse 17. For ye know that even when he afterward desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected (for he found no place of repentance), though he sought it diligently with tears—The repentance which Esau did not find was not a change of his own mind, for

that he did not seek, but a change in Isaac's mind, by which the effect of his misdeed would not operate. The 'it' which he sought with tears was the 'blessing'. The R.V. rightly brackets 'for he found no place of repentance', as parenthetical. The believer who acts as Esau did will deeply regret having done so, when he finds that there is no alteration in the determination of the Lord in the matter of the eternal loss of reward, and the fulfilment of the solemn words of Col. 3:25.

Verses 18, 19. For ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that no word more should be spoken unto them—This provides an urgent reason for the instruction given in the whole of the preceding passage, and especially the warning as to the watchfulness mentioned in verse 15. This was especially necessary under the new order of things in contrast to that under the Law. The negative statements in verses 18 to 20 lend more emphasis thereby to the positive assertions in verses 22 to 24.

Verses 20, 21. For they could not endure that which was enjoined, if even a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned; and so fearful was the appearance that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake—These circumstances of the giving of the Law manifest, firstly, the majesty, holiness and glory of God; secondly, His condemnation of sin; thirdly, the uncleanness of man by nature and all that he possesses; and therefore, fourthly, the inaccessibility of God by means of the Law. 'For the Law worketh wrath' (Rom. 4:15). Even Moses, the Divinely-appointed leader of the people could not approach without the utmost fear and trembling.

Verse 22. but ye are come unto mount Zion—This introduces a series of reasons why Hebrew believers should not draw back to Judaism. The verb rendered 'ye are come' is in the perfect tense, and expresses what has already taken place in the experience of believers. Mount Zion is the spiritual mountain which, like its earthly type, is the dwelling place of God, the place of His rest in Christ. This spiritual significance is confirmed by what follows.

and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem—The city and mount Zion are inseparable; both are the place of

government, the centre of worship and service. Jerusalem's 'foundation is in the holy mountain' (Ps. 87:1). The city and 'holy mountain' are associated in Ps. 48:1. It is 'the city which hath the foundations, whose Architect and Maker is God' (see ch. 11:10). See also Rev. 3:12.

and to innumerable hosts of angels—With this the phrase at the beginning of verse 23 is almost certainly to be connected, and the rendering should be 'to innumerable hosts of angels, a general assembly'. The word for assembly is *panēguris* (not *ekklēsia*), and this was primarily a gathering for a festive occasion. Such a gathering of innumerable hosts of angels is set in contrast to that at Sinai. Angelic hosts were in attendance at the giving of the Law, but their presence only added terror to the scene. The death, resurrection and ascension of Christ have effected a change. Angels are now 'ministering spirits' (1:14). They are constantly being sent forth from the general assembly where they are gathered.

Verse 23. to the general assembly—As just mentioned, the wording of the original indicates that the word signifying *a* (there is no 'the') general assembly is descriptive of the hosts of angels. This speaks of the universal gathering of holy angels, a gathering together not by way of dispensing a fiery law, but of holding joyous festival.

and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven—Here only in the N.T. the word 'firstborn' is in the plural; elsewhere it is used of Christ (see on 1:6). Israel as a nation was spoken of by the Lord in Ex. 4:22 as His firstborn, indicating the relationship with Himself into which He had brought them by His covenant with Abraham. So the Church is brought into spiritual relationship with Christ. Again, the names of the people of Israel are to be enrolled in a coming day (see Ps. 87:6). So the names of the members of the Church are already enrolled in the Book of Life (Luke 10:20; Phil. 4:3; Rev. 3:5; cp. Rev. 13:8; 17:8; 20:15; 21:27; 22:19). This is indicative not only of security but of dearness to God.

and to God the Judge of all—The order in the original is 'to the Judge the God of all', or more literally, 'to a Judge, God of all'. This suggests that the One who is the Judge of His people is at the same time their God. That has been mentioned in the same order in 10:30, 'the Lord shall judge His people' and 11:16,

'He is not ashamed of them, to be called their God'. As this is a present truth, believers are not to live in dread, but are to walk in the fear of the Lord.

and to the spirits of just men made perfect—This especially refers to those mentioned in the eleventh chapter, those who in former ages had become 'just' before God through their faith, and are perfected now in their spirit state. Until Christ ascended they were in Sheol, not in darkness, but not then in the immediate presence of the Lord in glory as they now are, and by reason of which they are 'made perfect', perfect, that is, in their present state, but yet to be raised from the dead and glorified. To that company believers belong.

Verse 24. and to Jesus the Mediator of a new covenant—The One through whom all the blessings of the New Covenant are made good to us. See on 9:15.

and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better than that of Abel.—The blood is the ground upon which the New Covenant is enacted and consummated. For the blood of sprinkling see 9:13, 19. Here it is mentioned as that which is available for application to the conscience defiled by the sense of sin. Cp. 1 Pet. 1:2; there the *use* is especially in view, here the *purpose*. The blood of Christ was shed on earth as Abel's had been, but instead of crying out for vengeance it cries with the voice of mercy, for pardon even for the murderers.

[NOTE: The remaining verses of this chapter will appear in next issue; also the opening Analysis of chapter 13.—Ed.]