

THE LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

39 And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, 40 since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Chapter 12

Jesus,
“author and
finisher” of
faith

Note: the following paragraph is one sentence!

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, 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.

3 Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. 4 In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 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.
6 For the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and chastises every son whom he receives.”

7 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? 8 If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. 9 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? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time

Lesson 14

Great Cloud of Witnesses—The Saints in glory, the Church Triumphant, those who set an example for us to follow and pray for our success and protection, and long for the day of consummation with us. See the Collect for All Saints, BCP p. 256 and the Proper Preface, BCP p. 79

Verse 2 Note: This is a passage which, similar to John 3:16, is best known in the King James translation: “*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*”

Sons by adoption through faith, one of the great motivations for perseverance.

Proverbs 3:11-12

The importance of Discipline:

For the Christian, discipline is never punitive, it is restorative, intended to put an end to sin and to result in renewed commitment for righteousness and holiness.

Famous saying, “Spare the rod and spoil the child” comes from Proverbs 13:24:

*Whoever spares the rod hates his son,
but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.*

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as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. 11 For 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.

12 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. **14 Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.** 15 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; 16 that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. 17 For 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.

Holiness = active, perfect submission to God. (the Garden of Gethsemane is Jesus’ perfect example of holiness.)

Esau, brother of Jacob, in Genesis 25:19-28. Rejection of his heritage was the ultimate betrayal, from which he could not recover.

Compare this reference with the exhortation to remember that “you are sons.” The inheritance of God is extraordinarily important in biblical theology and Christian thought.

This long section (chapters 11 and 12) presses home the importance of our faith in our salvation, and that faith is substantive, not merely intellectual or spiritual. As James wrote, “Faith without works is dead.” So Hebrews teaches us that a substantive, objective, observable faith rooted in the hope of God’s promises is necessary for Christian salvation.