

ISRAEL'S NEED | V. 4

- There was such an urgent need for Israel to receive Jesus as her Messiah that the writer was encouraging them to go all the way to bloodshed.
- The words of v. 4 compare the **striving against sin** of the Hebrew nation to that of Jesus, whose blood was shed.
 - **Striving:** The word ἀνταγωνίζομαι [antagonizomai] is the word from which we get *antagonism*. It's root, *agon* is the source of *agony*.
 - The word *agonizomai* is "to fight" and *antagonizomai* is "to fight against," giving a focus to the battle and always having an opponent or force against which the striving is focused.
 - A comparison of the two words can be seen in Luke 13:24 and Hebrews 12:4.
- Don't make this verse hyperbole. It is not exaggerated speech to get Christians to "try really hard." Rather, it is the entire point of 10:24-12:3. The author wants the saved Hebrew people to "draw near" to the Temple and proclaim the Messiah as King of Israel, even at the risk of losing their lives, because the time is drawing near in which such a message will not be possible, because Israel will be destroyed and scattered.

THE ILLUSTRATION OF CHASTENING | VV. 5-11

- A comparison is made between the **if ye endure** of v. 7 and the **if ye be without** of v. 8.
 - One is a child, the other is a **bastard**, i.e.: unwanted / illegitimate.
 - The point of encouragement for the Hebrew people is that God does not chasten the nations who are not part of His plan.
- Verses 9-11 give an additional insight into the comparison. In vv. 9-10 the comparison is the **fathers of the flesh who chastened us after their own pleasure** and it is not **joyous, but grievous** and yet **yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness**.
 - V. 10 – Fathers chastened us **after their good pleasure**: Literally, and more accurate for modern English, "according to what seemed good to them."
 - **For our profit** - The word συμφέρω [sumphero] is the root *phero* (to carry) and *sum* [together...from which we get the English mathematics word *sum* and the prefix *sym* as in *symphony*). So, *sumphero* is "bringing all the things together" and is, by interpretation, "profit." See John 18:14 for the translation of the word as **expedient**. Therefore, the author uses this word to say that discipline is part of what is brought together for the Hebrew nation so that they **might be partakers of his holiness**.

THE CHALLENGE TO ENTER THE BATTLE | VV. 12-13

- Israel is being "spurred on" to good works.
- Verse 12: Some translate the **hands which hang down** as weak or feeble, but this is interpretation. It is literally the "hanging down hands," and emphasizes "giving up" more than physical weakness.
 - The word παρήμι [pareami] is *para* (alongside) and *heimi* (to leave behind).
 - The implication is "you've put your hands in the "leave behind" pile because you've given up.
 - A form of the word is used in Luke 11:42, translated **neglect**.

- Verse 12: **feeble knees** - The word παραλύω [paraluo] is from *para* (alongside) and *luo* (to loosen).
 - We get "paralytic" from this word.
 - In the KJV is often translated **sick with a palsy**.
- Verse 13: There is a pattern of words in vv. 12-13 not visible in English.
 - In v. 12, **lift up** is ἀνορθώω [anorthoo] (from *ana*, an intensifier meaning *among*, and *orthos*, meaning *straight*).
 - In v. 13, the Hebrews are told to make their paths ὀρθός [orthos], **straight**.
 - Thus, the two verses instruct the Hebrews to make their limp hands and loose knees and their crooked paths **straight** for the task at hand, which is to proclaim the Kingdom to a nation on the brink.

A DISPENSATIONAL INSTRUCTION | V. 14

- This verse is tremendously problematic to those who do not rightly divide the word of truth. It gives instruction to pursue (better than **follow**) **holiness**, and that without this **no man shall see the Lord**.
- Taken at face value, it is a work's based salvation.
 - While some will twist the interpretation to say, "holiness is given to us by Grace," there then becomes the problem of pursuing, which is "by works" not a matter of faith.
 - Do we have to *pursue grace so that we can receive the gift of holiness?* Or do we *pursue holiness so that we can receive grace?* Either is problematic.
- When looked at in light of the future and physical *Kingdom of God*, which is the subject matter of the book, then these words are not only accurate, but expected. Even Paul teaches that, "no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God" (Eph. 5:5).
- Even noted dispensational teachers have had problems with this passage.
 - F.W. Grant says, "Without it none shall see Him, and therefore they must look diligently to see that no one among them really lacked the grace of God."
 - Notice how he changes the passage from saying, "pursue holiness" to pursue the grace of God."
 - The passage does not instruct anyone to pursue the grace of God, unless God's grace and God's holiness are the same thing (which is an idea that one would just have to make up in order to suit their theological presuppositions).¹
 - HA Ironside states that, "This expression is capable of being utterly misconstrued, and has tormented many an earnest soul who was seeking to do the very thing that the verse rightly read commands..."
 - Ironside then goes on to create a scenario not in context with these verses, one which some call "spurious faith," a man-made creation not taught in the Bible.

¹ Grant, F. W. *The Numerical Bible; Being a Revised Translation of the Holy Scriptures with Expository Notes: Arranged, Divided, and Briefly Characterized according to the Principles of Their Numerical Structure: Hebrews to Revelation (Study Text)*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1902. Print.

- Ironside's problematic closing statement is, "We are ever to seek to become more and more like Him, the Holy One. Apart from this, no man, whatever his profession, shall see the Lord." Once again, this creates a works-required faith.²

² Ironside, H. A. *Studies in the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1932. Print.