

Hebrews 12 - 13

A Better Kingdom

Continuity

- We have innumerable examples of faithful people
 - They give us hope and encouragement to hold fast
 - But they were imperfect in their faith
 - They did not receive what was promised
 - They were not to be made perfect apart from us
- Something better was to come:
 - Abraham was looking for a city with foundations
 - Those people desired a better, heavenly country
 - God has prepared for them a city
 - God has provided something better for us, so that we and they should be made perfect

The Perfect Faith

- Perhaps we should view 12:1-3 as the culmination of the examples of ch. 11
 - The other examples were all fallible
 - They surround us as we run our race
 - But we ought to look to Jesus
 - He was perfect, he perfects our faith (and hope)

Discipline

- The audience has frequently been encouraged to endure suffering
 - Frequently accompanied by examples of faithfulness in spite of hardship
- But now the author gives a reason for suffering
 - It starts this time with the example of Jesus himself
 - This harkens back to the discussion of Jesus' suffering in chs. 2 and 5
 - There, Jesus learned obedience through the things he suffered
 - God is treating us as sons (children)
 - What is the significance of sonship in the introduction in ch. 1?
 - The goal of the suffering we endure is to perfect us, just as it was with Jesus
 - Except we require infinitely more refining

Outcomes of Discipline

- Some behaviors are encouraged right after this discussion. Why are they necessary here?
 - Strive for peace with everyone
 - This includes people who are part of your suffering and persecution
 - This is what Jesus did:
 - He made peace between Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 4)
 - He made peace between us and God (Rom. 5)
 - Let no root of bitterness spring up
 - A common reaction to evil is to become bitter
 - If we look to Jesus, we will see his example not to become bitter

Esau

- Why is Esau mentioned here?
 - He is the exemplar of what they might become
 - He stood to gain the inheritance
 - But he threw it away rashly
 - There was nothing he could do after

A Better Kingdom

- What is described in 12:18-21?
 - The first covenant at Sinai
- What is the new and better kingdom?
 - Mount Zion
 - City of the living God
 - Heavenly Jerusalem
 - Festal angels
 - Assembly of the firstborn
 - God and Jesus
- It is the kingdom that Jesus brought (Matt. 12)
- It is a place to which they have already come (vs. 22)

A Better Kingdom

- How are the kingdoms compared?
 - Gloom, darkness, fire, fear
 - City of the living God, angels in festal gathering, firstborn enrolled in heaven, spirits of the perfected righteous
 - A party!!
 - Those who did not receive promises have now been perfected!

A Better Word

- We meet with Abel again
- What is the author referencing in vs. 24?
 - First, his reference to Abel still speaking in 11:4
 - Which goes back to the story in Gen. 4
 - Abel's blood cries out
- For what did Abel's blood cry?
 - Vengeance and retribution
- For what does Jesus' blood cry?
 - Mercy, pardon, forgiveness

A Final Warning

- The final bit of argumentation ends where it started:
 - With God speaking
- The warning is similar, but magnified to 2:1
 - It was bad then if you ignored God speaking
 - It'll be even worse now
- Not only is a better kingdom here, but the old will be done away with

Going Outside the Camp

- The author mentions purification offerings being burned outside the camp
 - cf. Lev. 4:11
- This is likened to Jesus suffering outside the gate
 - Making the comparison of Jesus as a purification/sin offering
- The author encourages us to go outside the camp
 - This is the opposite of what you would want to do under that system
 - Outside the camp is away from the presence of God
 - But now we want to go to where the sacrifice (Jesus) is
- The author redefines what sacrifices we are to offer
 - Sacrifice of praise
 - Do good and share what you have