Analysis of Hebrews

Chapter 11

(Throughout this chapter: E = Example; P = Principle)

11:16 P. 9: God acknowledges and honors faith’s confession (compare Ex. 3:15).

11:17–19 E. 6: Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac, his only son, although his inheritance could only come through Isaac’s line (Gen. 21:12; 22:1–19). He expected God to resurrect him (compare Gen. 22:5—“We will come back”).

Gen. 22:1–14 prefigures Golgotha:

Abraham typifies God the Father;
Isaac typifies Jesus the Son;
the fire typifies the Holy Spirit (compare 9:14);
the wood typifies the cross;
the young men, left behind, typify carnal strength and understanding (compare 1 Cor. 1:25).
God’s provision came through the substituted ram, picturing Jesus as the substitute for Abraham’s seed.

Result: Blessing on Abraham; limitless multiplication and blessing of the son he offered (Gen. 22:16–18).

11:20 E. 7: Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning their future (Gen. 27:1–40).

Result: Their future irrevocably determined (Gen. 27:33, 37).

P. 10: Faith can make decrees with divine authority (compare Job 22:28; Mark 11:22–23).

Result: Their future *irrevocably determined.*
Reiteration of P. 10.

11:22 E. 9: *Joseph* on his deathbed *looked forward* to *Israel’s deliverance* from Egypt, and gave orders for them to *take his bones* with them (Gen. 50:24–26).

Result: He shared in *Israel’s deliverance* and *inheritance* (Ex. 13:19; Josh. 24:32).
Reiteration of P. 6 and P. 8.

11:23 E. 10: The infant *Moses hidden by his parents*—they saw something special in him (Ex. 2:1–2).

Result: *Israel’s deliverer* was preserved.

P. 11: *Faith* delivers from *fear of ungodly rulers.*

11:24–26 E. 11: *Moses renounced* his position as *heir to Pharaoh’s throne:* instead he *identified himself* with *God’s people* in their *affliction* (Ex. 2:10–15). “The reproach of the Christ (Messiah)” i.e., *identification* with the people through whom Messiah was to come. Probably a *similar choice* confronts us today.

Result: *Moses passed his first test* to become Israel’s *deliverer.*
Reiteration of P. 5.


Result: *Moses passed his second test.*
Reiteration of P. 11.

P. 12: *Seeing the invisible* is the key to *endurance* (compare 2 Cor. 4:17–18).

P. 13: God is often *testing us* when we do not realize it.


Result: *Israel spared the judgment* that came on Egypt.
Reiteration of P. 7 and P. 9: the *blood sprinkled* on the *outside* corresponds to our *confession of faith* in the *blood of Jesus*.

11:29 E. 14: *Israel* (under Moses) crossed the *Red Sea,* but the *Egyptians* were drowned.

Result: *Final separation* from Egypt—a type of water baptism (compare 1 Cor. 10:1–2).

P. 14: That which is *begun in faith* must be *completed in faith* (compare 10:38–39).

11:30 E. 15: *Israel* (under Joshua) caused *Jericho’s walls to fall* (Josh. 6:15–21).

Result: *Total victory* for Israel without a single casualty.
Reiteration of P. 7 and P. 9: Israel’s *shout* was their *confession.*
E. 16: Rahab—with her household—was saved from Jericho’s destruction (Josh. 2:1–21; 6:22–25).

Result: The ultimate of grace received through faith (compare Eph. 2:8): a harlot in a city doomed to destruction became ancestress of David and of Christ (Matt. 1:5–6, 16).

Reiteration of P. 7 and P. 9: Rahab’s scarlet thread was her confession.


11:32 Further examples of faith: Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, the prophets.

11:33–38 Various achievements of their faith:
1. Conquered kingdoms (Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, David).
2. Administered justice (the Judges, David).
3. Obtained promises (Gideon, David).
4. Shut the mouths of lions (Daniel).
5. Quenched the power of fire (Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego).
6. Escaped the sword (Elijah, Daniel).
7. Dead children restored to life (Elijah, Elisha).
8. Endured torture, mockery, scourging, chains, imprisonment, stoning, being sawn in two, massacre, exile, destitution, ill-treatment, the life of refugees. (Find your own examples.)

P.16: Faith is manifested in many different ways, corresponding to the ways that God allots faith (compare Rom. 12:3).

11:39–40 All those listed above obtained God’s commendation by their faith, but not the final consummation. Perfection could come only through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

“Only together with us”—God deliberately makes His servants dependent on each other.

Note the emphasis throughout this chapter on inheritance and perfection.

Analysis Of Hebrews
Chapter 12

12:1 Ninth “Let us” passage: run with endurance.

12:1–14 Sixth passage of practical application: press on, endure discipline, be strong, pursue peace and holiness.

12:1 “Therefore”—in the light of all the examples of faith cited in Ch. 11.

“A cloud surrounding us”: i.e. above us and all around us.
“Witnesses”:
1. Those who attest the victories of faith.
2. Spectators at a race.
   (Example of boy cricketer)

Two things to lay aside:
1. Unnecessary burdens (think of examples).
2. Entangling sins (compare 1 Cor. 9:24–27; Phil. 3:13–14).

Our race is a marathon, not a dash; the primary requirement is endurance/perseverance (compare Rom. 5:3–4; 2 Peter 1:6).

12:2 We must look away (from ourselves) to Jesus (compare 11:27).

He provides:
1. Example: the cross is the way to the throne (compare Eph. 2:4–6; 2 Tim. 2:11–12).
2. Inspiration: He is as competent to perfect our faith as He was to initiate it (compare Rev. 22:13).

12:3–4 In the struggle against sin we can accept only one outcome: total victory—no matter what the cost (compare Rom. 12:21).

12:5–6 Scripture teaches that God disciplines all those whom He receives as sons (Prov. 3:11–12). This provides motivation for endurance in times of pressure (compare Rom. 15:4).

Two wrong responses:
1. Regard lightly.
2. Faint/lose heart.

12:7–8 We must interpret hardship as God’s discipline—and respond accordingly. If we refuse discipline, we are asking to be treated as illegitimate children.

12:9–10 If we respected our human fathers, in spite of their limitations, we should much more respect our heavenly Father. To submit to Him is the key to life.

The purpose of God’s discipline: that we may share His holiness. God is a sharer, but Satan is a tyrant (compare Rom. 5:17).

12:11 The right response: to be trained by hardship. In this way, temporary suffering produces permanent righteousness.

12:12–13 Double application:
1. Strengthen hands and knees—expressed in resolute actions and ways.
2. Make straight paths—provide healing for the injured. The path we take affects others besides ourselves.

12:14 Two objectives that God demands: Peace and Holiness (compare Matt. 5:8). Any brand of “salvation” that stops short of practical holiness is unacceptable.


12:15 To “come short of God’s grace” is to claim to belong to God’s people without
meeting the conditions (Deut. 29:18–21) (compare 2 Tim. 3:5). Such a “poisonous root” can defile many others (compare Ecc. 9:18).

12:16 Two examples of such a person:
1. The immoral
2. The godless/profane

The Old Testament picture of the godless is Esau (Gen. 25:27–34): he attached no importance to the inheritance promised to Abraham and Isaac. God hates this attitude (compare Mal. 1:2–3). Since Jacob had purchased the birthright, he was legally entitled to the blessing that went with it. By contemporary standards, Esau would be the “good guy” and Jacob the “bad guy.”

12:17 “Repentance”: literally, “change of mind.” Esau had made a decision which he had no power to reverse. He sought the blessing, not the change of mind. His tears were no substitute (Gen. 27:30–40).

12:18–24 Seventh comparison: between Mount Sinai and Mount Zion.

12:18–21 Mount Sinai represents the covenant of the Law, based on carnal sacrifices and regulations (compare 9:9–10). It had seven physically perceptible characteristics (Ex. 19:16–25):
1. Tangible
2. Blazing fire
3. Darkness
4. Gloom
5. Whirlwind
6. Trumpet blast
7. Audible words that terrified all who heard (including Moses). The Law did not bring the people near to God, but rather kept them at a distance.

12:22–24 Mount Zion represents all that is made available through the New Covenant in Christ. It has seven spiritually discernible features:
1. God’s city (the heavenly Jerusalem) (compare Gal. 4:26).
4. God the Judge of all.
5. The spirits of the Old Testament saints (compare 11:40).
6. Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant.
7. The sprinkled blood of Jesus (9:23–26, compare Gen. 4:10).

12:25 Rejection of the first covenant, ordained on earth, was punished by death (Deut. 17:2–7; Heb. 10:28). How much more rejection of the second covenant, ordained in heaven!

12:26–27 The giving of the first covenant was accompanied by a shaking of the earth (Ex. 19:18). God’s prophetic word looks forward to a climax in which both earth and heaven will be shaken (Hag. 2:6, compare Ps. 102:26; Is. 51:6; Matt. 24:29; 2 Pet. 3:7, 10–13). We need to learn that the visible and material is impermanent; the invisible and spiritual is permanent (compare 2 Cor. 4:17–18). The universe is primarily spiritual, only secondarily material (compare Gen. 1:1; Ps. 33:6; John 4:24).
Tenth “Let us” passage: Show gratitude/have grace.

Jesus grants us a place in His kingdom which is unshakable (compare Luke 22:29–30). This kingdom is spiritual, but not amorphous, just as God Himself has a specific form (John 5:37). This kingdom is based on righteousness, accompanied by peace and joy, supplied by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). True righteousness is found only where God reigns. This is the central theme of the Gospel (compare Mark 1:14–15; Matt. 4:23; 6:10, 33; 24:14).

Our appropriate response: Be thankful/show gratitude.

Two requirements of serving in this kingdom: reverence and awe/fear.

The fire of God’s being will consume all hypocrisy and carnality (compare Is. 33:14; Matt. 3:11–12).

Analysis Of Hebrews
Chapter 13

Seventh passage of practical application: Love, holiness, submissiveness, prayer.


Hospitality is a vital “charismatic” ministry (compare 1 Pet. 4:8–10).

Example of Abraham (Gen. ch. 18).

We must identify with those who are imprisoned and persecuted—esp. our fellow believers (particularly today under Marxist and Moslem governments) (compare Matt. 25:36, 43; Heb. 10:32–34). As long as we are “in the body,” we may find ourselves in the same situation.

We must uphold the holiness of marriage. “Fornication”: immorality that does not involve the violation of the marriage covenant. “Adultery”: immorality that includes the violation of the marriage covenant.

All sexual immorality inevitably incurs God’s judgment.

Our attitude to money must be right—free from covetousness. The promise of God’s abiding presence guarantees the supply of all our needs (Josh. 1:5; Ps. 118:6, compare Ps. 23:1).

Our attitude to our God-given leaders must be right: Remember (includes respect, prayer, financial support); imitate, their lives should point us to Jesus.

The foundation of the whole Christian life is the unchanging Christ (compare 1 Cor. 3:11). Its requirements are equally unchanging. Therefore, we must be on our guard against strange “new” teachings (compare Eph. 4:14–15)—esp.
those that emphasize such things as dietary laws, rather than grace received through faith (compare John 1:17; Eph. 2:8; 1 Tim. 4:1–3).

13:10 The altar represents the source of all true grace; the tabernacle represents the physical externals. Under the Levitical law, there was a separation between the Kohathites, who ministered at the altar, and the Gershonites and Merarites, who were responsible for the furnishings and structure of the tabernacle (Num. ch. 4).

13:11 There is a similar separation between the blood of the sin-offerings, which was taken by the High Priest into the Holy of Holies, and their bodies, which were burned outside the camp (Lev. 16:11–17, 27–28). We must distinguish between that which belongs to the Holy of Holies and that which belongs outside the camp.

13:12 The fact that Jesus became our sin-offering was attested by His being led outside the city to be crucified. Likewise, the fact that He was made a curse for us was attested by His being hanged on a tree (compare Deut. 21:22–23; Gal. 3:13–14).

On the other hand, His blood, sprinkled in the heavenly sanctuary, gives us access to God (compare 9:23–26; 10:19–22).

13:13 Eleventh “Let us” passage: Go out to Him. As followers of Jesus, we must expect to share the reproach attached to His cross (compare Luke 9:23; Gal. 5:11).

13:14 As children of Abraham, we are aliens in this present world, looking for the same city he looked for (compare 11:9–10).


13:15–16 Three sacrifices that please God:

1. Praise: We praise God because He is worthy, even when we do not feel like it. This is fruit of our lips created by God, when He heals and restores us (Is. 57:18–19).
2. Doing good—even when we are weary (compare Gal. 6:9–10).

13:17 Two further requirements in relating to leaders: Obedience (action) and submission (attitude) (compare 13:7).

Taken together, 13:7 and 13:17 reveal five marks of the kind of spiritual leaders to whom we should submit:

1. They speak God’s Word to us.
2. They set an example of faith which is to be imitated.
3. Their lives point us to the unchanging Christ.
4. They keep watch for our souls.
5. They are accountable to God for us.

It is in our own best interest to submit to such leaders, but Scripture does not require us to submit to religious leaders who lack these qualities.
Prayer for the servants of the Gospel is both a duty and a privilege of members of Christ’s Body—particularly in times of special need (compare Eph. 6:18–19; Col. 4:2–4; 1 Thess. 5:25).

Note the main aspects of Christian living emphasized:

1. 13:1 Love.
2. 13:2 Hospitality.
3. 13:3 Identifying with prisoners and persecuted.
4. 13:4 Sanctity of marriage, sexual purity.
5. 13:5 Right attitude to money, freedom from covetousness.
6. 13:5–6 Confidence in the Lord’s all-sufficiency.
7. 13:7 Right attitude to God-given leaders: remember, imitate.
8. 13:9 Avoid strange new teachings that nullify God’s grace.
9. 13:10–11 Make the flesh the servant of the spirit, not vice versa.
10. 13:12–13 Expect to share the reproach of the cross.
11. 13:14 Live as aliens in this world, looking for a city not yet manifested.
12. 13:15–16 Offer the three sacrifices of praise, sharing, doing good.
13. 13:17 Right attitude to leaders: Obey, submit.

Closing prayer/benediction:
The God of peace offers us the peace of God (compare Rom. 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:7). God Himself is the only source of true peace.

By raising Jesus from the dead, God demonstrated:

1. His power and faithfulness.
2. The efficacy of the blood of Jesus.

Christ crucified is the door of the sheepfold; Christ resurrected is the Shepherd of those who have entered by this door (compare John 10:7, 11).

God is able to equip us completely, but on four conditions:

1. To do His will.
2. To do what is pleasing to Him.
3. Through Jesus Christ.
4. For His glory.

“For ever and ever”: unto the ages of the ages.

New Testament apostles pleaded more often than they commanded. By their standards, Hebrews was a “brief” letter!

Personal news and greetings. New Testament letters were never mere abstract theology, but always related to the real lives of real people (compare Rom. 16:1–16, 21–23).

The final salutation sums up the letter’s theme: Grace—not mere law or religion.