

Faith & Hope - Hebrews Chapters 11 & 12

Exploring what these chapters teach us about faith and hope

Hebrews 11 & 12

Context - *Hebrews 10: 11-39*

Hebrews 11

Definitions

By Faith...We Obtain A Good Testimony

By Faith...We Understand Creation

By Faith - The Examples of 'Heroes of Faith & Hope'

The Outcome of a Life of Faith & Hope

Hebrews 12

The Race of Faith & Hope

Race Training

Our Hope In View:

Where Have We Come To?

Receiving The Promised Hope:

The Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken!

Faith, Hope & Love

'And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.'

1 Corinthians 13: 13 (NKJV)

Greek Words and Meanings (from Strongs Concordance):

- Abide - Greek (*menō*) meaning stay, continue, remain
- Faith - Greek (*pistis*) meaning persuasion, credence conviction, assurance
- Hope - Greek (*elpis*) meaning expectation, anticipation, confidence
- Love - Greek (*agapē*) meaning love which is selfless, sacrificial and unconditional
 - **We think of 1 Cor. 13 as THE chapter on Love (and so it is) - and that love ('agape' love) is something that lasts forever (and so it does)**
 - **But Faith and Hope also 'abide' - they too stay the course of life**

Context - Hebrews 10

- **Yeshua's All Sufficient Sacrifice**
 - The writer has just expounded how **Christ's death is the better and all sufficient sacrifice for sin**, as compared to the sacrifices under the law
 - **Yeshua's death is the fulfilment of the promised 'New Covenant'** - prophesied by Jeremiah

*'But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.'* **Jeremiah 31: 33-34**

- **The New Covenant is described (vs.16-17)**
 - God's law in our hearts and minds because of the Holy Spirit within
 - He is our God and we are His people
 - We will all 'know the Lord'
 - Sins forgiven and forgotten
- **He then says 'Therefore' (v.19) - i.e.: In view of all that...this.....**
- **The New And Living Way**
 - **This 'New Covenant' access to oneness with the Father, through Christ's blood, is described as 'a New and Living Way' (vs.20-21)**
 - **The writer* then urges his readers with various exhortations (vs.22-25) to:**
 - Draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith
 - Hold fast the confession of our hope (x KJV: faith x) without wavering
 - Consider one another in order to stir up love and good works
 - Not forsake 'the assembling of ourselves together'
 - Continue in 'exhorting one another'
 - **All this, 'so much the more as you see the Day approaching'**
- **Warning Against Apostasy (vs. 26-31)**
 - **The writer then warns against sinning wilfully** - in the context, this is a warning not to turn away from Christ and back to the Law
 - It is, nonetheless, a solemn warning to us against wilful sin
 - **He reminds them "The Lord will judge His people"** (quoting *Deut. 32: 35-36*)
'Vengeance is Mine, and recompense; their foot shall slip in due time; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things to come hasten upon them.'
"For the Lord will judge His people and have compassion on His servants, when He sees that their power is gone, and there is no one remaining, bond or free."
Deuteronomy 32: 35-36
 - **He remarks that 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God'**
- **Encouragement to Endurance (vs.32-36 and 39)**
 - The writer **reminds them of sufferings they have already endured** for their Lord
 - **He urges his readers not to cast away their confidence** (of eternal reward) and to **go on with endurance**
 - **By faithful endurance they will receive the promise - that is, the promise of an eternal inheritance** (see *Hebrews 4: 1 and 9: 15*)
- **The Just Shall Live By Faith (vs.37-38)**
 - **The Writer quotes Habakkuk 2: 3-4 (in vs.37-38)**
'For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.
"Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith."
Habakkuk 2: 3-4
 - **Note how the writer, in quoting this verse, sets it in a messianic context...saying 'He who is coming will come and will not tarry'**
 - **The key lesson for both OT saints and NT saints is then stated..."The Just Shall Live By Faith"**
 - Those who 'draw back' - the Lord will take no pleasure in them
 - The writer says 'but we are not those who draw back to perdition (hell) - but we are of those who believe...to the saving of the soul (eternal life)'
- **And So...to Hebrews chapters 11 and 12 - here the writer speaks about what it is to live by Faith, and of the Hope to which we aspire**

- * **The Writer of Hebrews**
 - **Hebrews is, in my opinion, written by Paul; I say this because:**
 - **1. He quotes Habakkuk 3: 4; this is possibly Paul's favourite verse** since it is a key verse in his letter to the Romans (*Romans 1: 17*) and in his letter to the Galatians (*Galatians 3: 11*)
 - **2. There are many other verses and themes which resonate with Paul's epistles;** for instance, re themes within Hebrews 11 & 12:
 - The Hope of Glory - *Romans 5: 2, Galatians 5: 5, Colossians 1: 26-27 and 1 Thessalonians 2: 19*
 - Creation of the World - *Colossians 1: 16*
 - Laying aside Sin - *Romans 8: 13 and Colossians 3: 5*
 - Running the Race - *1 Corinthians 9: 24-26, Galatians 2: 2, 5:7 and Philippians 2: 16*
 - The Author & Finisher of our Faith - *Romans 8: 29-39 and Colossians 2: 9-10*
 - Pursuing Peace - *Romans 12: 17-19*
 - Law and Faith - *Galatians 3: 10-12*
 - Heeding God's word and call - *2 Corinthians 6: 2*
 - The close link of Faith and Hope (and love) - *1 Corinthians 13: 13*
 - **3. The style of writing, the phraseology used, and the deep extent of knowledge of the Tanakh and the law, indicate this is a letter of Paul's**
 - **4. The name of the writer is, unusually, not stated - there are good reasons why Paul would omit his name**
 - Firstly, he was the apostle to the gentiles
 - Secondly, wherever he went on his missionary journeys he was rejected by the Jews...yet his heart was very much for their salvation (*Romans 9: 1-5*).
- **Faith & Hope - in Hebrews chapters 11 and 12**
 - **It is not that chapter 11 is about faith and chapter 12 about hope - but they are woven together throughout the two chapters.**
 - **So we shall go through the two chapters, to pick out the spiritual life application principles of faith and hope**

Hebrews Chapter 11

Definitions

(v.1)

- **A Faith: The OED defines faith as:**
 1. **Complete trust or confidence in someone or something** (e.g.: *'this restores one's faith in politicians'*)
 2. **Strong belief in the doctrines of a religion, based on spiritual conviction rather than proof** (e.g.: *'bereaved people who have shown supreme faith'*)
 - 2.1 A particular religion (e.g.: *'the Christian faith'*)
 - 2.2 A strongly held belief (e.g.: *'men with strong political faiths'*)

- **Hope: The OED defines hope as:**
 1. **A feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen** (e.g.: 'he looked through her belongings in the hope of coming across some information', or 'I had high hopes of making the Olympic team')
 - 1.1 A person or thing that may help or save someone (e.g.: 'their only hope is surgery')
 - 1.2 Grounds for believing that something good may happen (e.g.: 'he does see some hope for the future')
 2. **A feeling of trust** [archaically] (e.g.: 'our private friendship, upon hope and affiance whereof, I presume to be your petitioner')
 - **Spiritual Definitions**
 - **In Christian terms, faith and hope have far deeper and more profound meanings;** especially as expounded in Hebrews chapters 11 & 12,
 - **And these definitions have deep relevance to living life as God's children**
 - **The writer begins with his definitions of Faith and Hope in verse 1**
 - **Earlier we saw the Greek words used for faith and hope, and their meanings:**
 - Faith (Greek: *pistis*) meaning 'persuasion', 'credence', 'conviction' or 'assurance'
 - Hope (Greek: *elpis*) meaning 'expectation', 'anticipation' or 'confidence'
 - The word used in *Hebrews 11: 1* is (Greek: *elpizō*) meaning expected
 - **So what definitions does the writer of Hebrews have...**
 - **Faith - A Solid Conviction or Assurance**
 - **Hope - A Sure Certainty**
 - **Faith has to do with Hope – it looks forward (v.1)**
 - **Faith and Hope go together**
 - **The Solid Conviction and Assurance (our Faith) is always looking forward to the fulfilment of God's promise - to our Hope...which is a Sure Certainty**
 - **Faith**
 - **Now... 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for'**
 - Note the link of faith and hope
 - **'Substance' (Greek: *hupostasis*) - meaning 'express image' (*Hebrews 1: 3*) or 'confidence' (*Hebrews 3: 14*)**
 - **Faith is therefore a Solid Conviction, an Assurance**
 - **Such assurance is, in itself, a gift from God (*Ephesians 2: 8*)**
- 'For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,'* ***Ephesians 2: 8***
- **'Of things hoped for' - faith looks forward to our hope**
 - Looks forward to what? - Explained in the remainder of Chapters 11 & 12
 - **It is the 'evidence of things not seen'**
 - **'Evidence' (Greek: *elegchos*) meaning 'proof', 'reproof' or 'conviction'**
 - Faith is therefore like 'evidence in court', it is testimony to the truth
 - **'Of things not seen' - Faith relates not to the visible and physical, but to the unseen and spiritual**
 - **What is seen/physical is temporary...it will pass away**
 - **What is unseen/spiritual is eternal...it will never pass away**
 - For instance - you can't 'see' 'Christ in you, the hope of glory', but by Faith you 'know' it as a solid conviction and assurance (*Colossians 1: 26-27*)

- **Faith in Scripture**

- **Paul has a lot to say, in his letters, about Faith**

- The gospel reveals that the righteousness of God is received by faith not by law (Romans 1:16-17, 3: 21-26, 4: 13-16, 9: 30-33; Galatians 2: 16, 3: 10-11; Philippians 3: 9)
- Faith is counted/reckoned as righteousness (Romans 4: 5, 4: 9)
- Through faith we are justified (Romans 5:1; Galatians 3: 24)
- Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10: 8, 10: 17; Galatians 3: 2)
- Those of faith are Abrahams seed (Galatians 3: 8, 3: 29)
- Christ dwells in our hearts by faith (Ephesians 3: 17)
- Faith is a gift of God (1 Cor. 12: 9; Ephesians 2: 8)
- Faith is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)
- Faith is a spiritual shield and breastplate (Eph. 6: 16; 1 Thess. 5: 8)
- We have to be steadfast in our faith (Col. 1: 23, 2: 5-7; 2 Tim. 1: 13)
- False teaching is the enemy of faith (1 Tim. 1: 4 & 19, 4: 1 & 6, 6: 20-21; 2 Tim. 2: 18, 3: 8; Titus 1: 3)

- **Hope**

- **Not a vague wish or a desire!**

- **Not a lottery ticket!**
- **Not wishful thinking!**
- **Not even an expectation - sometimes we are disappointed**

- **For the believer, Hope is a Sure Certainty of what is to be**

- **What do we 'hope for'?**
 - **Answer...our clothing in Christ's righteousness, and our future eternally in the presence of God**
- **Faith is 'Evidence' (faithful witness of solid proof) about that which is not obvious to sight or understanding - that is our Hope**
- **The Holy Spirit within us is the 'deposit' of 'promise'**

*'In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, **you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*** **Ephesians 1: 13-14**

- **We are sealed with the 'Holy Spirit of promise' - the promise of eternal life and of life in the presence of God in glory**
- **He is the guarantee (deposit) of our inheritance - our eternal life**
- **Until the fulfilment of the promise - Yeshua coming for His bride**

- **For the believer, Hope is 'Christ in you, the hope of glory'**

*'The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.***

Colossians 1: 26-27

- **The mystery - hidden (in the OT) - now revealed to His saints**
- **It is the New Covenant - Christ in us, by the Holy Spirit**
- **The 'Holy Spirit of promise' - the promise of eternal life and of life in the presence of God in Glory**

- **Christian Hope is Inspiration for Today based on the Certainty of Tomorrow**
 - **Such Hope gives strength for life, day by day, and enables us to endure trial and suffering**
- **Hope in Scripture**
 - **Paul has a lot to say, in his letters, about Hope:**
 - He writes to the Romans that we rejoice in the hope of glory (*Romans 5: 2*) and through trial and perseverance we grow in our spiritual character and in hope which does not disappoint (*Romans 5: 3-5*), and of the 'golden chain of redemption and hope' and its consequences (*Romans 8: 29-39*)
 - To the Corinthians, Paul wrote that three things are constant in our walk with the Lord - faith, hope and love (*1 Corinthians 13: 13*)
 - To the Galatians, he writes that we eagerly await the hope of righteousness which is by faith (*Galatians 5: 5*)
 - To the Ephesians, he speaks about the 'hope of His calling' (*Ephesians 1: 18 and 4: 4*)
 - To the Colossians, he says that that 'Christ in us' is 'the hope of glory' (*Colossians 1: 27*)
 - To the Thessalonians he speaks of the hope of being in the presence of the Lord at His coming (*1 Thessalonians 2: 19*)
 - **The Psalms speak prophetically of the Messiah having hope...of resurrection from the dead (Psalm 16: 8-11).**
 - Note: the KJV erroneously translates 'Sheol' as 'Hell' instead of 'Hades' in v.10

By Faith...We Obtain A Good Testimony

(v.2)

- **The Purpose of Faith & Hope**
 - **Here is the purpose of Faith (solid conviction and assurance) and Hope (sure certainty) - that we obtain a good testimony!**
 - **This is what the example of the Elders teaches us**
 - **The Faith that Looks Forward, with Hope, gives Meaning and Purpose to Life - it is what informs us, influences us and inspires us**
 - The Westminster Shorter Catechism states that 'Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever'
 - *"He who lays up treasures on earth spends his life backing away from his treasures. To him, death is loss. He who lays up treasures in heaven looks forward to eternity; he's moving daily toward his treasures. To him, death is gain."* – Randy Alcorn, *Eternal Perspective Ministries*
- **A Good Testimony - Testifying to the Truth**
 - **About the Father, our Loving Creator God**
 - **About the Son, our Saviour and Redeemer, the only way to the Father**
 - **About the Holy Spirit within, our teacher and guide**
 - **About our Future Hope**
 - Eternally in the presence of God
 - Clothed in the righteousness of His Son

- **A Good Testimony will mean a 'Well Done' from the Father**

'His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'

Matthew 25: 23

- **Note 'faithful' - not just committed or trustworthy, but 'full of Faith' - full of solid conviction and assurance**
- **The Elders, by their lives of Faith and Hope, obtained a good testimony - and God says to them 'well done!'**
 - **God is not ashamed to be called their God (v.16)**
 - The writer then gives many examples of 'Heroes of Faith (and Hope)' who obtained a good testimony - in verses 8-12 and 17-38.

By Faith... We 'Understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God'

(v.3)

Before going on to speak about the 'Heroes of Faith', the writer looks back - to the very beginning of the universe

- **It is by Faith (solid conviction and assurance) that we understand creation**
- **We understand this world is 'framed by the word of God'**
 - **The very beginning of all creation is with God** *Genesis 1: 1*
 - **The world was created by the word of God - He spoke it into being**
 - 'And God said...' *Genesis 1: 3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26*
 - **The world was created by the Word of God (Yeshua)**

'For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.'

Colossians 1: 16

- **The 'Physical' speaks of the 'Spiritual'**
 - **The creation witnesses to the Creator**
 - **The 'seen' (physical and temporary) was created by the 'unseen' (spiritual and eternal) - the created order speaks of the true (spiritual) reality**
 - **By Faith we know the truth - God created the Universe in 6 days**
 - Evolution is only a 'theory' - a theory for which there is no evidence - it is unproven...in fact the evidence disproves the evolution theory
- **We can only grasp this by Faith (solid conviction and assurance)**
 - **Such understanding and faith are a gift from God**
 - We read and believe His word
 - He reveals it (and Himself) to us
 - **With the eyes of Faith, opened by God's grace, we can see the evidence of God as creator everywhere**

'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge.

There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.'

Psalms 19: 1-3

- There is beauty, there is perfection., there is intelligent design
- Even in the heavens there is told the story of God's plan of redemption
- Yet we also see decay...evidence of the fall
- **Man is 'without excuse' because the evidence of our Creator God is everywhere** - yet rebellion has led to foolish darkened hearts and futile thinking - therefore God will judge mankind in His wrath

(Romans 1: 18-23)

*'For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For **since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made**, even His eternal power and Godhead, **so that they are without excuse**, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.'* **Romans 1: 18-23**

By Faith - The Example of the Elders

(vs.4-12 and 17-38)

The writer then continues by giving examples of those who 'obtained a good testimony'

- **The Heroes of Faith...and Hope**

They are often called the 'Heroes of Faith', but as we read the accounts it is clear that each of these 'Heroes' had a Faith that looked forward...they are 'Heroes of Faith and Hope'

- **No 'Adam & Eve'!**

- *John MacArthur in his commentary says 'Adam and Eve are passed over in this portion regarding creation because they had seen God, fellowshiped with Him, and talked with Him - their children were the first to exercise faith in the unseen God.'*

- **Abel – 'by faith' (v.4):**

- Offered a 'more excellent sacrifice' one which looked forward (in hope) to the ultimate one perfect sacrifice of Yeshua at Calvary
 - It was by his faith, not his sacrifice, that Abel obtained righteousness - the righteousness which comes by faith (solid conviction and assurance)
 - But his 'gift' (sacrifice) speaks to us today of the sacrifice which requires the shedding of blood for the forgiveness of sin - by it, his testimony lives on though Abel is dead

- **Enoch – 'by faith' (vs.5-6):**

- **Did not see death (the first 'rapture'), taken into eternal life**
 - **Because of his testimony (of faith) - he 'pleased God' - he 'walked with God' (Genesis 5; 24) - and thus he received his hope (eternal life)**
 - Faith is the only way to please God (v.6) - without faith it is impossible to 'walk with God' as Enoch did
 - Through Faith we believe in God and seek Him, and are assured that He rewards those who do seek Him - He Himself is our reward...eternity in His presence

- **Noah – 'by faith' (v.7):**

- **Gained prophetic understanding...heeded God's warnings** which everyone else ignored
 - **He had godly fear - he preached about righteousness** (as we are told in *2 Peter 2: 5*) and he too 'walked with God' (*Genesis 6: 9*)
 - **Took action...built an ark - a prophetic act which saved him and his family**
 - **He was an heir (an inheritor) of righteousness (his hope), by faith**

- **Abraham – 'by faith' (vs.8-10):**
 - **Obedied God – left his home city, not knowing where he was going, but trusting God's promised inheritance (Genesis 12: 1-3 and 22: 15-18) - a promise of which Jacob and Isaac...and we too, are heirs**

*'Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and **in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.**"'*

Genesis 12: 1-3

*'Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. **In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed,** because you have obeyed My voice."*

Genesis 22: 15-18

- **He looked for ('waited' NKJV) the city with foundations...whose builder and maker is God (the eternal heavenly city)**
- **Consider Genesis 22: 4 - what did Abraham see 'afar off'?**

*'Then on the third day Abraham lifted his eyes and **saw the place afar off.**'*

Genesis 22: 4

- **He saw Mt Moriah the place God appointed for Isaac's sacrifice**
- **But he saw much more! - With the eyes of Faith he saw that Hope by which his, and our, righteousness would be secured**
- **He saw 'afar off', on that very Mount Moriah about 2,000 years later, the Lamb of God (God's only Son) would be sacrificed**
- **Hence Abraham could say, prophetically, that 'God would provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering' (Genesis 22: 8)**
- **Abraham's faith looked forward - to the 'hope of glory' that is in Yeshua**

- **Sarah – 'by faith' (vs.11-12):**

- **Received strength to conceive and give birth - she believed that God is faithful, and what He has promised He will do - her faith looked forward**
- **Through their faith Abraham (at 99) and Sarah enabled Gods promise to be realised (Genesis 15: 4-5 and 22: 15-17)**

*'And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "**This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.**" Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."*

Genesis 15: 4-5

*'Then the Angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time out of heaven, and said: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son - blessing I will bless you, and multiplying **I will multiply your descendants** as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.*

Genesis 22: 15-17

- **Spiritually, we too are heirs of this promise (Galatians 3: 29)**
- **Forward looking Faith - receives God's promises and believes them - seeing what is far off (with assurance) - and embraces them**

- **Abraham – 'by faith' (vs.17-19):**
 - **Believed God when tested**
 - **Abraham was told to sacrifice his only son as a burnt offering - in apparent contradiction of God's promises to him**
 - God had promised (*Genesis 17: 18-21; 21: 12*) that through Isaac would Abraham become a great nation (*Genesis 12: 1-3*) and father of many descendants
 - **It is only in *Hebrews 11: 19* (it is not in *Genesis 22*) that we learn of the forward looking Faith that motivated Abraham's obedience**
 - **His Faith (solid conviction and assurance) was that God would raise his son Isaac from the dead**
 - **Abraham's Hope (sure certainty) was that God's promise would be fulfilled**
 - **Abraham's forward looking Faith was Prophetic - of events 2000 years later...when God's only Son would indeed die and be raised from the dead - He (Yeshua) is our Hope of life eternal**

- **Paul speaks of the Faith of Abraham - that the promise of God (Abraham's Hope) to him (and to us...his seed) was through righteousness of faith (not law)**

*'For the promise that he would be the heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law, but **through the righteousness of faith.**' **Romans 4: 13***

 - **And then Paul says the promise is to all his seed:**

*'Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, **so that the promise might be sure to all the seed**, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all '* **Romans 4:16**
 - **Paul then adds:**

*'He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being **fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.** And therefore "it was accounted to him for righteousness."**'*** **Romans 4: 20-22**

 - **Note how Abraham's Faith (fully convinced) looked forward in Hope (sure certainty) that God would perform His promise**
 - **Abraham's faith was accounted to him 'as righteousness' - Paul is quoting *Genesis 15: 6***
 - **Paul tells us that we are Abraham's seed - and heirs of righteousness**

'And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.' **Galatians 3: 29**

 - Heirs (our hope) according to the promise (inherited by faith)
 - Heirs inherit...eternal life, forever with the Lord

- **Isaac – 'by faith' (v.20):**
 - **Blessed Jacob & Esau - his faith in blessing them was prophetic of what the Lord would do through them and their descendants...even to this day**

- **Jacob – 'by faith' (v.21):**
 - **Blessed the sons of Joseph, adopting them as his own on equal terms with Joseph's siblings - hence they are numbered in the tribes of Israel**
 - **Jacob's faith looked forward to the nation of Israel**

- **Joseph – 'by faith (v.22):**
 - On his deathbed (*Genesis 50: 24-26*), **Joseph's forward looking faith saw the fulfilment of the promise of the land of Canaan to Jacob's descendants**, as promised by God to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (*Genesis 13: 14-15, 17; 15: 18-20; 26: 24; 35: 11-12*)

- **Moses Parents – 'by faith (v.23):**
 - Hid Moses and were not afraid - **their forward looking Faith enabled God to fulfil His promise that Israel would dwell in the land of Canaan**

- **Moses – 'by faith' (vs. 24-28):**
 - **Chose suffering with God's people**, obeying God's calling on his life to lead the children of Israel out of captivity
 - **The writer speaks of Moses' identification with God's chosen people as suffering reproach for Christ's sake - that is, Moses Faith looked forward to the day when Yeshua would suffer for the redemption of God's chosen people (and for us)**
 - Feared God and not Pharaoh
 - Kept the Passover - **Moses faith looked forward to the hope of the fulfilment of the Passover on that day when Yeshua would be hung on a cross at the same time as Passover lambs were being slaughtered**

- **Israelites – 'by faith' (v.29)**
 - **Passed through the Red Sea** - despite their initial fear, at Moses encouragement to 'stand still and see the salvation of the Lord', they left Egypt through the Red Sea 'as by dry land' (*Exodus 14: 11-31*)
 - **Going forward in faith they testified to the saving power of God** - and afterwards it was a salvation which brought fear to their enemies, and is remembered still today by Israel in the Passover 'Haggadah'

- **Jericho – 'by faith' (vs.30-31):**
 - The walls fell down, having been encircled seven days - **by going forward in faithful obedience to God's battle-plan** (an unlikely military campaign plan), **Israel had the first major victory in conquering the land that God was giving to them as an everlasting possession** - see *2 Corinthians 10: 4*

'For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds,'
2 Corinthians 10: 4

 - **Rahab was saved**, the writer tells us, by faith...because she received and hid the Israelite spies and deceived the king of Jericho (her life of harlotry was a successful ploy in hiding the men) - **Rahab's actions demonstrated faith (solid conviction) that the Lord had indeed delivered Jericho into the hands of Israel - and through her faith she was saved**
 - **Rahab** (a Canaanite) later became the mother of **Boaz**, who married **Ruth** (a gentile) and they are **predecessors of Yeshua** (*Matthew 1: 1-16*)

- **Many others – 'by faith' (vs.32-38)**
 - By their forward looking faith, they are listed amongst the 'Heroes of Faith' - all were overcomers and had a hope of the fulfilment of God's promises
 - Barak
 - Samson
 - Jephthah
 - David
 - Samuel

- **By their lives, their Faith gave Testimony to their Hope in God**
 - Subduing kingdoms
 - Working righteousness
 - Obtaining promises
 - Stopping the mouths of lions
 - Quenching the violence of fire
 - Escaping the sword (* see below)
 - In weakness became strong
 - Became valiant in battle
 - Turned armies of aliens (foreigners) to flight
 - Women received their dead raised to life
 - Endured torture and eschewing deliverance
 - Enduring trials of mocking and scourging
 - Were stoned
 - Were sawn in two
 - Were tempted
 - Were slain with the sword (interesting because of * above)
 - Wandered in sheepskins and goatskins
 - Were destitute, afflicted and tormented
 - The world not being worthy of them (note well!)
 - Wandered in deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves

- **Testimonies of Faith triumphing in the midst of trial and suffering**
 - **This list above is not one of victorious 'Word of Faith / Kingdom Now' type living - if anything it is the opposite!**
 - **It is the testimony of Faith (solid conviction and assurance) triumphing in the midst of great trial and suffering - where Hope (sure certainty) of the future glory ('a better resurrection' - v.35) gives a Good Testimony to the Lord - Paul explains this in his letter to the Romans:**

*Therefore, **having been justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we **have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.** And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that **tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope.** Now **hope does not disappoint**, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.'* **Romans 5: 1-5**
 - **Note the links:**
 - **Faith gives us access to God's grace, in which we stand**
 - **Faith causes us to rejoice - in the hope of glory**

- Even in the midst of trial and suffering...because...
- Tribulation produces Perseverance
- Perseverance produces Character
- Character produces Hope
- AND...HOPE DOES NOT DISAPPOINT!
- The Examples of the lives of the Elders shows these things...and their example encourages us
- The 'Heroes' are not simply 'Heroes of Faith', but 'Heroes of Faith and Hope' - because Faith has to do with Hope – it looks forward (v.1)

The Outcome of a Life of Faith and Hope

(vs.13-16 and 39-40)

- Obtaining a Good Testimony (vs.2 and 39)
 - All these 'Heroes of Faith and Hope', obtained a good testimony
 - Their lives of Faith testified to others about God
 - His faithfulness, His love, His saving power and His holiness and character
 - Their Faith (solid conviction and assurance) looked forward - to the Hope (sure certainty) of a future when He will be their God and they shall be His people

(Ezekiel 37: 27; Revelation 21: 3)

'My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'

Ezekiel 37: 27

*'And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the **tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.**'*

Revelation 21: 3

- Yet, they did not Receive the Promise (v.13)
 - The Promises of God were for fulfilment at a later time:
 - The promise of a city whose builder and maker is God
 - The promise of a land of peace, flowing with milk and honey
 - The promise of the Messiah
 - The promise of salvation through Messiah's sacrifice
 - The promise of life with God in the eternal heavenly kingdom
 - That does not Invalidate their Faith, nor Deny the Truth of their Hope
 - Their Faith has obtained them A Good Testimony
 - Their Hope remains a Sure Certainty
 - They are 'Heroes of Faith and Hope'
- The Elders are examples of the Life of Faith and Hope to us
 - A cloud of witnesses as it says in *Hebrews 12: 1*
- Faith and Hope that Inspires
 - Their faith should inspire us to live lives of Faith And Hope - and thus to obtain A Good Testimony
 - These 'Heroes of Faith' died in Faith, and did not receive the promises - but that does not invalidate their Hope...it remains a sure certainty (vs.13-16)

- They 'saw them afar off' - they saw the spiritual reality as clearly as they saw the physical things
- They were 'assured of them' - their faith gave them assurance of the future 'hope of glory'
- They embraced them (the promises of God) as yet unfulfilled - yet sure of their fulfilment in God's time
- Their lives demonstrated that they were 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth'- their destination was heaven
- **Their Faith and Hope should inspire us - to live in Hope of our Future, the future glory that is ours in and through Christ Jesus**
 - The lives of these 'Heroes of Faith' declared that they sought a homeland... they were in fact also 'Heroes of Hope' - seeking more than just the promised land...seeking the 'city whose maker and builder is God'
 - They were all sojourners - temporary residents of their land - on a journey to a heavenly country
 - Passport example!
- **Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God (v.16)**
 - Because of the Faith & Hope of the elders lives - God is not ashamed of them...indeed He is very pleased with them
 - So too for us - lives lived in Faith and Hope will please God - and Yeshua will acknowledge before the Father

*'He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but **I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.**'*
Revelation 3: 5

- **A City Prepared (v.16)**
 - **Because of their Faith and Hope - God has prepared a City for Them...and Us**
 - The city is the Hope of their (the 'Heroes') lives of Faith
 - The city - of which we are citizens (now) and to which we are going - should be the Hope (sure certainty) of our lives of Faith (solid conviction)
 - **It is the fulfilment of God's plan for both Jew and Gentile - as prophesied by Ezekiel and as seen by John** *Ezekiel 37: 27; Revelation 21: 3*
 - **Promised by Yeshua to His disciples**

*'In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. **And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.**'*

John 14: 2-3

- **As John saw in Revelation**

*'Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. **Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem,** coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.'*

Revelation 21: 1-2

- **This is Our Future - our Hope (sure certainty) too!**
 - **We, like the 'Heroes' before us should Hope clearly in our vision, for such a Hope will enable us to live a life of Faith and to obtain a good testimony**

- **Something Better For Us (v.40)**

The faith of OT saints looked forward to the promised salvation, whereas the faith of those after Christ looks forward to the fulfilment of the promise of eternal life

- **God is providing some better thing for us – that is, for all of us**
 - The elders - the Heroes of Faith and Hope; and
 - Jewish and Gentile messianic believers in Yeshua
 - **Something better**
 - **A Better Righteousness** - being made right with God - justified
 - **Better than the righteousness which comes by observance of the law**
 - **It is righteousness by Faith - and the hope of eternal life with God**
 - **Common Characteristics - both groups (OT and NT saints) are:**
 - **Characterised by genuine faith**
 - **Saved by Christ's atoning work on the cross**
 - **Looking forward to the Hope that is 'in Christ' - the future of an eternity in the presence of God**
- **The Mystery Hidden for Ages**
 - **Righteousness by Faith and the Hope of Eternal Life are the mystery hidden in the OT, revealed in the NT - Christ in us the 'hope of glory' (Colossians 1: 26-27)**
*'The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory.***
Colossians 1: 26-27
 - **It is the fulfilment of what God promised in the New Covenant**
*But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts;** and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."*
Jeremiah 31: 33-34
 - I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts
 - I will be their God, and they shall be My people
 - They all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them
 - I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more
- **Our Challenge**
Our Challenge is to live the Life of Faith - looking for our Glorious Hope - and thereby obtain, like the Elders of old, a Good Testimony
 - **Living life Today as Sojourners - citizens of heaven...on earth for a little while**
 - **Living with the Sights, Sounds and Taste of our Hope (the eternal life with the Father and Son in the New Jerusalem) in our eyes and ears, and on our tongue**
 - **Living the Life of Faith - always Looking Up and Looking Forward to our Hope**
 - **By Faith (solid conviction and assurance) we can look forward in Hope (sure certainty)**
 - **Faith is a gift from God - what He gives, He grows and He strengthens**
 - We grow in grace and faith
 - **Hope is Inspiration for Today based on the Certainty of Tomorrow**
 - **Hope gives strength for life, day by day, and enables us to endure trial and suffering**
 - **Love underpins all of this**
 - God's love for us and His love in our hearts flowing out to others
 - **Faith, Hope and Love - these abide, they stay the course of life**

Hebrews Chapter 12

The Race of Faith & Hope

(vs. 1-2)

'Therefore' (v.1) - because of what the writer has said in Chapter 11

The writer begins by likening the life of Faith and Hope to a Race

- Since we are 'surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses':
 - Surrounded - encircled, all around; by their example in God's word
 - Cloud - they have died but their example lives on
 - Witnesses - they testify to the value of living by faith and hope
 - The picture is that of the Elders as a crowd watching us race, cheering us on
- Let us 'Lay aside every weight'
 - For the Hebrews this included laying aside the Levitical system
 - For us it means laying aside legalism and 'earned righteousness' and living in the freedom of God's grace and mercy
 - Such things are heavy weights which make running the race exhausting
 - We are to run the race free of 'spiritual encumbrances' - we live in the freedom of a Living Relationship - not under a Legalistic Rule
- Let us also lay aside 'Every sin which so easily ensnares us'
 - Lay aside - we have to put them down, not carry them with us
 - Paul tells us to 'put to death the deeds of the body'; that is, the 'works of the flesh' (Romans 8: 13; Colossians 3: 5) - they bring death and God's wrath

'For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live.'

Romans 8: 13

'Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry'

Colossians 3: 5

- Sin ensnares - it is like trying to run a race with your legs tied together
- To Set Us Free - we have the Three R's - Recognition of Sin, Repentance and Receiving Forgiveness - these are the keys to laying aside these snares

See 1 John 1: 5-10

- Which of these is likely win the race?

- The Man in a Diving Suit, or
- Usain Bolt



- **Run...with Endurance**

- **Paul uses the analogy of 'running the race' in his several of his letters**

See 1 Cor. 9: 24-26; Galatians 2: 2, 5:7; Philippians 2: 14-16

*'Do you not know that **those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize?** Run in such a way that you may obtain it. And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. **Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty.** Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.'*

1 Corinthians 9: 24-26

*'And I went up by revelation, and communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to those who were of reputation, lest **by any means I might run, or had run, in vain.**'*

Galatians 2: 2

*'**You ran well.** Who hindered you from obeying the truth?'*

Galatians 5: 7

*Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so **that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain** or laboured in vain.'*

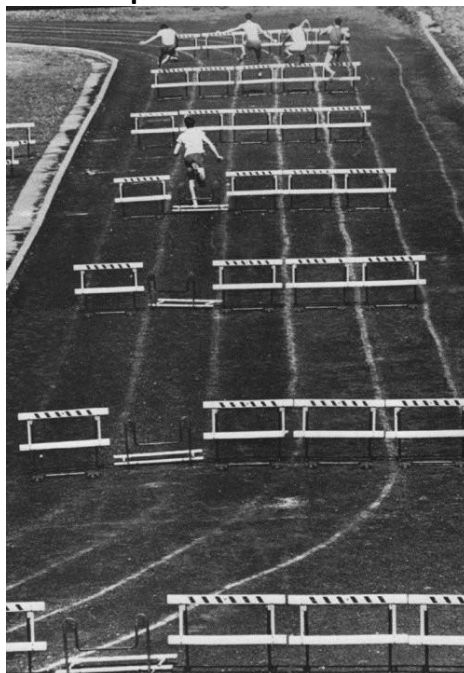
Philippians 2: 14-16

- **Endurance - the Greek word (*hupomonē*) means patience or cheerful endurance**
- **Patience is necessary - it is a long race**
 - Sometimes we need to be patient with ourselves
- **Endurance is necessary**
 - **Keep going...never give up!**
 - **Winston Churchill's motto**

"Never give in. Never give in. Never, never, never, never — in nothing, great or small, large or petty — never give in, except to convictions of honour and good sense."

Speech to Harrow School, 1941

- **The Race Of Faith & Hope - Sometimes it's like a Hurdles Race**



- Don't worry about those 'ahead of you in the race'
- Don't worry how many hurdles you fall over - get up and keep going
- Run the Race set before you
- Keep your eyes on the finishing line - the Hope of Glory and an Eternity in the Presence of the Lord

- Looking to Jesus

- Faith looks forward...to Hope (*Hebrews 11: 1*)
 - We must run looking forwards, not backwards - eyes on Yeshua
- Looking to Yeshua - it's like keeping your focus on the Finishing Line
 - He has Gone Before Us
 - He has Run the Race
 - He has Won the Victory for Us
 - He is the Guarantor of Our Hope
 - He Ever Lives to Make Intercession for Us (*Hebrews 7: 25*)

'Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.' **Hebrews 7: 25**

- So How Can We Fail???

- Yeshua is the Author of our Faith

- The Greek word (*archēgos*) means chief leader or captain (*Hebrews 2:10*)

'For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.' **Hebrews 2: 10**

- Yeshua is the Pioneer, the Originator, the Source (cause) of our faith, and the Pre-eminent Example of our faith
- He has led the way into Heaven as Our Forerunner

'This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.'

Hebrews 6: 19-20

- Yeshua is the Finisher of our Faith

- The Greek word (*teleiōtēs*) means Completer or Perfecter
- Yeshua ran the race to its completion - and won for us the way to oneness with the Father and to eternal life
- This also refers to the Completion which comes when we become a believer in Yeshua - we are Complete in Him (*Colossians 2: 9-10*)

'For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.' **Colossians 2: 9-10**

- Yeshua Won the Victory for us in the Race of Faith and Hope

- For the Joy set before Him (v.2) - that's Hope (sure certainty)
- He Ran with Endurance - He endured the cross
- He Despised the Shame - He was not discouraged or put off in His race
- He Won the Victory - He is seated at the right hand of the Father
- He is the guarantor of our Hope
- Paul speaks of this Hope in *Romans 8: 29-30* - the 'golden chain of hope' - note; there is no break in this chain - - and in subsequent verses (*Romans 8: 31-39*) he speaks of the reality and consequences of this hope in our day to day living:

'For whom He **foreknew**, He also **predestined** to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also **called**; whom He called, these He also **justified**; and whom He justified, these He also **glorified**.'

'What then shall we say to these things? If **God is for us, who can be against us?** He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? **It is God who justifies.** Who is he who condemns? It is **Christ who died**, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who **also makes intercession for us.** **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?** As it is written: "For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Yet in all these things **we are more than conquerors through Him** who loved us. For I am persuaded that **neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God** which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

Romans 8: 29-39

- God is for us (v.31)
 - He gave His only Son for us (v.32)
 - He will 'justify us' not 'charge us' (v.33)
 - Christ intercedes for us (v.34) (as in *Hebrews 7: 25*)
 - Nothing in this world shall separate from God's love (vs.35-36)
 - We are more than conquerors through Him (v.37)
 - Nothing in the spiritual world shall separate us from God's love (vs.38-39)
- **This is Christian Hope - a sure certainty**
 - **Christian Hope is Inspiration for Today based on the Certainty of Tomorrow - such Hope gives strength for life, day by day, and enables us to endure trial and suffering**

Race Training

(vs. 3-17)

The writer then speaks about qualities we will need to run the race of faith and hope (vs.3-17)

- **Endure Through Opposition (vs.3-4)**
 - **Yeshua is Our Example - He endured much hostility**
 - **Persecutions will come - so look to Yeshua as your example**

'Yes, and **all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.**'

2 Timothy 3: 12

- **Endurance - to push through weariness and discouragement**
 - **The spiritual pressure on believers can make them weary...of the world, or of the continual fight against wickedness**
 - **This can lead to discouragement - so we need to endure - in faith (solid conviction and assurance) and in hope (sure certainty) of our future**
 - **Jeremiah was wearied by the wicked prospering - but God told him to keep going and not give up** *Jeremiah 12 - see v.5*

"If you have run with the footmen, and they have wearied you, then how can you contend with horses? And if in the land of peace, in which you trusted, they wearied you, then how will you do in the floodplain of the Jordan?"

Jeremiah 12: 5

- In striving against sin - the sin in the world (and indeed the sin within) - the writer reminds them that they have not been pushed to the limit of martyrdom, giving their lives - as did many of the 'Heroes', and as did Yeshua
- Don't be Afraid of God's Discipline (vs.5-11)
 - Trials and sufferings in the Christian's life are allowed by God (and may be sent by Him)
 - The Greek word (*paideia*) translated 'chastening' means tutorage, education or training
 - He uses trials and sufferings to Educate, Train and Correct all disciples
 - Sometimes discipline is because of the iniquity (rebellion) in our own hearts
 - Sometimes discipline is to correct our mistakes (lack of spiritual wisdom)
 - Sometimes discipline is to train us for the days ahead
 - The Holy Spirit & God's word are our Trainers - He trains and disciplines like athletes to be ready for the race
 - God disciplines (trains, educates and corrects) us through the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit within us and through His word (the Bible)
 - The Holy Spirit our Teacher

*'But **the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as **the same anointing teaches you** concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him.'***

1 John 2: 27

- The Bible our Teacher

*'All **Scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and **is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction** in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.'*

2 Timothy 3: 16-17

- Our Discipline is 'As Sons' - He is our loving Father (vs.7-9)

- Do not despise God's discipline - the writer quotes **Proverbs 3: 11-12**

*'My son, **do not despise the chastening of the Lord, nor detest His correction; for whom the Lord loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights.'***

Proverbs 3: 11-12

- We experience God's discipline because we are His children - which should encourage us!
 - All true children of God will know His discipline
 - John MacArthur: "*Because all people are imperfect and need discipline and training, all true children of God are chastened at one time or another, in one way or another.*"
- The Father's discipline tells us that He loves us *Proverbs 3: 11-12*
 - Respect the Father - we owe a duty of respect to both our human and heavenly Father - even when being disciplined
 - We must trust in the love that both our earthly fathers and our heavenly Father have for us - that they discipline us in love
 - John MacArthur: "*Imperfect human fathers discipline imperfectly; but God is perfect and, therefore, His discipline is perfect and always for the spiritual good of His children.*"
- It's all about relationship...not religion!

- **Discipline is Training (vs.10-12)**
 - **Training - the Greek word (*gumnazō*) translated 'trained' (v.11) means to exercise - from the root word we get our word gymnasium**
 - **Holiness is the goal - it is being fit to run the race of faith and hope**
 - **Our Discipline is like Exercise which will produce Holiness - making us fit to run the race**
 - **We have to be Committed to run the race - just as athletes are committed to their goal - and so we train and exercise, even though it may be tough and demanding**

*'But reject profane and old wives' fables, and **exercise yourself toward godliness.** For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come.'* **1 Timothy 4: 7-8**

- **Chastening is not joyful at the time, and may be painful - but it is beneficial**
 - John MacArthur: "*Bodily exercise is limited both in extent and duration; it affects only the physical body during this earthly life. But spiritual exercise is profitable for all things...in time and eternity.*"
- **The Fruit is Righteousness - the work of sanctification (v.12)**
 - **This fruit is 'peaceable' - in the midst of the pressures and stresses of the race...we will know inner peace which will carry us through**
 - **The Greek word (*eirēnikos*) translated peaceable implies that chastening is salutary; that is, it promotes health and is beneficial**
- **The Discipline of Training makes you Fit to Run the Race**
 - **Discipline It is for our benefit - we are being trained (refined) so that we can run the race of Faith and Hope**
 - **'Beginners' Training Program for a Marathon**

TABLE 12.16 Beginner Training Program for a Marathon

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Weeks 1-7						
Rest	3 miles	4 miles	Rest	3 miles 2-3 hill sprints	Rest	5 miles
Weeks 8-11						
Rest	6 miles	4 miles	5 miles	4 miles 5-6 hill sprints	Rest	12 miles
Weeks 12-15						
Rest	6 miles	7 miles	5 miles	4 × 1 mile @ 10K pace	Rest	20 miles
Week 16						
Rest	4 miles	Rest	3 miles	Rest	Easy run or rest	Race

- **The Commitment and Dedication required to run a Marathon is an example of the commitment and dedication required to run the Race of Faith and Hope - which is also a long race**
- **Training is necessary...and vital**

- **Renewal of your Spiritual Vitality (vs.12-17)**

The writer urges believers to **keep spiritually fit** - just like athletes train for physical fitness to be ready for the race

- **Strengthen yourselves (vs.12-13)**

- **Strengthen your weak hands and make firm your feeble knees**
 - The writer here is alluding to *Isaiah 35: 3* which is a verse from a passage which speaks about hope - the future glory of Zion

'Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. *Isaiah 35:3*

- **Make straight paths for your feet** *Proverbs 4: 25-27*

'Let your eyes look straight ahead, and your eyelids look right before you. Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established.' *Proverbs 4: 25-27*

- Walk by the Spirit, not by sight
- **By strengthening yourself - any weaknesses can be healed, rather than remaining as weaknesses, or getting much worse**
- **How do we strengthen ourselves (personally and corporately):**
 - Prayer & Fasting)
 - Praise & Worship) It's all about Relationship
 - Study of God's word)

- **Pursue Peace - with all people (v.14)**

- **We do not need to be continually picking fights with ungodliness...if we do, we will never have a moments rest...there is so much ungodliness**
- **Rest is an important part of training**
- **We are simply to be witnesses - let the Lord tell you when to speak...and when to be silent**
- **Pursue peace with all people - in so far as it depends on you**

'Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.' ***Romans 12: 17-19***

- **Pursue Holiness - necessary to see God (v.14)**

- **We are to Pursue Holiness - although it is only through the righteousness of Yeshua, which is imputed to us, that we will be able to stand before God...we are nevertheless to pursue holiness**
- **It is the pure in heart who will see God - Yeshua tells us:**

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. *Matthew 5: 8*

- **Peter reminds us that we are to be holy because God is holy (we are to be like Him) - quoting *Leviticus 11: 44-45***

"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy." ***1 Peter 1: 15-16***

- **Don't forget - the Purpose of the Race of Faith and Hope is that we obtain a 'Good Testimony'**
 - Like the Heroes of Faith & Hope...our lives are to testify to the world about the Lord God
- **So Holiness is vital in our testimony**

John MacArthur: *"Unbelievers will not be drawn to accept Christ if believers' lives do not demonstrate the qualities God desires, including peace and holiness."*

- **Don't Fall Short...of God's grace (v.15)**
 - **Watch carefully - watch your own heart**
 - We are urged not to settle for anything less than the peace of God and the holiness of God - it will train us and equip us to run the race
 - **Watch out too for your Brothers and Sisters in the Race**
 - **Encourage them...so that together we finish the race**
 - **For the Hebrews - the writer was urging them not to fall short of grace by clinging to righteousness by works - it is all about relationship not religion**
 - We all know *Romans 3: 23*, but *verse 24* tells us that it is by God's grace that we attain to eternal life

*'For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being **justified freely by His grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,' **Romans 3: 23-24***

- **No Root of Bitterness - root out bitterness! (v.15)**
 - **Bitterness can be in our own hearts...through hurts or jealousies**
 - **Love is the antidote**

*"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you **have love for one another.**"*

John 13: 35

- **A Root of Bitterness with a fellowship can also spring from Apostasy or False Teaching** - corrupting influences which turn hearts away from the Lord, and from the truth, to serve other gods

*'So that there may not be among you man or woman or family or tribe, **whose heart turns away today from the Lord our God**, to go and serve the gods of these nations, and **that there may not be among you a root bearing bitterness or wormwood;**'*

Deuteronomy 29: 18

- **The Prosperity Gospel and Word of Faith teaching are such 'roots of bitterness' in the church today**
- **So also is Replacement Theology**

- **No Fornication or Profanity - Staying True to the Lord and His word (vs.16-17)**
 - **Fornication generally refers to sexual immorality , but here it is linked with profanity**
 - **Profanity means far more than speaking blasphemously; in scripture it generally refers to idolatry (worship of false gods) and sacrilege (taking what is holy and using it for unholy purposes)**
 - **The writer here is urging us to Stay True to God - to His truth and His word - this will equip us to run the race of faith and hope**
 - We must not get diverted from the truth - into false teaching or false practices; we could end up worshipping other gods, or worship in profane ways (offering false fire)
 - **The writer quotes the example of Esau as being a profane person**
 - He lost his birthright and his inheritance
 - **Apostasy and Sexual Sin and Profanity are linked - in many scriptures (e.g. *1 Corinthians 6: 9-11*) - as well as (sadly) in practice in the church**

These Disciplines and practices we help us Stay Spiritually Fit - so that we may run the Race of Faith and Hope

The writer now speaks about our Hope - Our Destination (vs.18-24)

- **Our Objective not Our Odyssey is the focus**
 - **Objective - Our Destination - Our Hope**
 - **Odyssey - our journey to our destination**
 - **Eyes on the Finishing Line - Faith looks Forward**
 - **It is interesting that the writer speaks not about 'Where are We Going?' but about 'Where have We Come To?'**
 - **This tells us that our Hope is a Sure Certainty**
 - ...We should know we are already in receipt of our Hope
 - ...We are, in a sense, already at our destination

- **Not to a Fearsome Mountain (vs.18-21)**
 - **The writer is referring here to the Israelites at Mount Sinai and the Covenant of Law - see Exodus 19: 10-25; Exodus 20: 18-21; and Deuteronomy 4: 11-14**

 - **A Terrifying Place**
 - **A Mountain that may be Touched - a physical place**
 - **A Fearsome Mountain - burning with fire, covered in smoke and blackness and darkness, and tempestuous (the mountain quaked)**
 - **A Mountain of Awesome Sound - the sound of a trumpet and the voice of God... which made those who heard it tremble with fear**

*'Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and **when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off**. Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." **Exodus 20: 18-19***

 - **Look but Don't Touch - Only Moses and the Priests who had consecrated themselves could go up the mountain - the ordinary Israelites could not go on the mountain...they could not touch it, nor could any beast**
 - **Because of God's Holiness - access had to be restricted**

*'You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, "**Take heed to yourselves that you do not go up to the mountain or touch its base**. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot with an arrow; whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain." **Exodus 19: 12-13***

 - **Righteousness by Law**
 - **The righteousness that was by the Covenant of Law was an awesome and fearsome thing - and only Moses and the consecrated priests could enter on the mountain or into the Holy of Holies**
 - **The Holiness of God meant that He could not be approached by just anyone at anytime - only through ritual and consecration.**
 - **Even then God's face was hidden from them and His presence veiled**
 - **There is a Conflict between Living by the Law and Living by Faith**
 - **The Law promotes knowledge of sin, but cannot save**

*'Therefore **by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.** **Romans 3: 20***

- **No one - even under the Old Covenant - was justified by keeping the law** (they could not keep it anyway)...even then they were justified **by faith** (just like Abraham) **not by works**

'What then shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." **Romans 4: 1-3**

*'But that **no one is justified by the law** in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."* **Galatians 3: 11-12**

- **The Law was impotent to save**

'For the law made nothing perfect' **Hebrews 7: 19a**

- **But - It Is Different for Us**

- **Grace has superseded Law**

*'But now **the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed**, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even **the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe**. For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being **justified freely by His grace** through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and **the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**'* **Romans 3: 21-27**

- **We are justified through the blood of Yeshua**
- **We are not justified by law keeping**
- **The New Covenant is far better than the Old Covenant**

- **A Better Hope - We know the Father, because of the Son, and we have the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Godhead) living within us**

*'For on the one hand there is an annulling of the former commandment because of its weakness and unprofitableness, for the law made nothing perfect; on the other hand, there is the bringing in of **a better hope, through which we draw near to God.**'* **Hebrews 7: 18-19**

- **Fire at Mt Sinai - This is NOT Your Destination!**



- You Have Come To Mount Zion, City of the Living God (vs.22-24)

The writer here pictures the Hope of both the 'Heroes of Faith & Hope' from chapter 11 and the Hope of the believers of the Church age - that is the eternal heavenly city and life evermore in God's presence

- The City of the Living God

- Two cities are referenced here:

- 1. Mount Zion, the Lord's desired dwelling place, from where He will rule and reign in the Millennium...but this is not the primary reference

*'For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: "This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. **Psalm 132: 13-14***

- 2. The New Jerusalem (also called Zion in scripture), the eternal city - a time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth - where the Lord will dwell forever with His people... this is the primary reference

'Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea. Then I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God."

Revelation 21: 1-3

- To a Vast Company of Angels - a 'thousand thousands

*'A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him. A thousand thousands ministered to Him; ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him. The court was seated, and the books were opened. **Daniel 7: 10***

- This is a spiritual, not a physical place, to which we have come - we will be part of an innumerable company in God's presence, including angels

- To the Church of the Firstborn

- As John saw in Revelation 5: 11 - an innumerable number of Saints - 'ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands'

*'Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,' **Revelation 5: 11***

- 'The elders' are representative of the Church - defined by the song they sing in Revelation 5: 9-10

*'And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth." **Revelation 5: 9-10***

- The Church of the Firstborn

- Yeshua - He is the Firstborn

'And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence.'

Colossians 1: 18

- The Church is His bride, whom He has bought and made perfect

'Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.

Ephesians 5: 25-27

- **To the Spirits of Just Men made Perfect**
 - Referring to the OT saints in distinction from the 'church of the firstborn' (who are the NT believers) - the 'Heroes of Faith and Hope' who are - like us - made perfect by Yeshua's shed blood
 - The reference to 'just men' alludes to *Habakkuk 3: 4* '**The Just shall Live by Faith**'
 - It was the Faith (solid conviction and assurance) in the lives of these OT saints which was accredited to them as righteousness
- **To God, the Judge of All**
 - **God is the Judge of All - Sinners and Saints**

*'He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that He may judge His people: "Gather My saints together to Me, those who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." Let the heavens declare His righteousness, for **God Himself is Judge.**'*

Psalm 50: 4-6

- The same God as at Mt Sinai, but here dwelling in the midst of His people
- No one could please God on Sinai's terms (keeping all of the Law)
 - The Law justified no one - see *Galatians 3: 11-12* referenced earlier
- Mt Zion, however, is accessible to all who come to God, by faith, through His Son, Jesus Christ - clothed in His righteousness
 - We are justified freely by grace through faith

'For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father.' **Ephesians 2: 18**

- **To Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant**
 - Mediator - a go between or intermediary...someone who seeks to plead for one or who seeks to reconcile two parties
 - Moses was a mediator between the Israelites and God at Mt Sinai
 - Yeshua is our mediator with the Father through His shed blood
 - Only the blood of Yeshua is sufficient to cleanse from sin and able give new life, life eternal - making us acceptable to God the Father

*But Christ came as **High Priest of the good things to come**, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this reason **He is the Mediator of the new covenant**, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, **that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance.***

Hebrews 9: 11-15

- Only under the New Covenant, as prophesied by Jeremiah. is it possible that 'God's law will be in our minds and hearts', and that 'they shall know me, from the greatest to the least' (*Jeremiah 31: 33-34*)

*"But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: **I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for **they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them**, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more." **Jeremiah 31: 31-34***

- Abel's sacrifice was pleasing to God because it was offered in faith and obedience - but it had no atoning power

- The comment about 'better things' (v.24) is a reference back to the closing comment in Chapter 11 - of 'God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us'
 - The 'better thing' is atonement through Yeshua's blood
 - Yeshua's blood alone is sufficient to cleanse from sin (*1 John 1: 7*); His blood and sacrifice brought redemption (*Hebrews 9: 12*), forgiveness (*Hebrews 9: 26*) and complete salvation (*Hebrews 10: 10 and 14*)
- **Contrast of Mount Zion and Mount Sinai**
 - **Mt. Sinai**, where God gave the Mosaic Law, was dark and foreboding and terrifying
 - Mt Sinai burned with fire
 - The law was unable to save or atone
 - Righteousness by law keeping (works) was impossible for man
 - Only Moses and the Consecrated Priests could enter onto Mt Sinai or into the Holiest Place
 - God's presence was veiled
 - **Mt. Zion** (the earthly one in Jerusalem under Yeshua's rule and reign and the heavenly Mt. Zion [the New Jerusalem]) is inviting and gracious
 - Mt Zion is filled with light
 - Yeshua's blood saves and atones
 - Righteousness is attained by Grace through Faith, and unlimited in its ability to save
 - Mt Zion is open to everyone who repents and believes - grace has made the way...the curtain of the temple is torn in two
 - We shall see God face to face - clothed in Christ's righteousness
 - There are Common Characteristics of OT and NT saints - both groups are:
 - Characterised by genuine faith
 - Saved by Christ's atoning work on the cross
 - Both look for the Hope that is 'in Christ' - the future of an eternity in the presence of God
- **The New Jerusalem - Our Hope - Eternity in The New Jerusalem!**



- The writer says that 'we have come to Mount Zion'
He speaks as if we are already there!
 - The 'Heroes of Faith and Hope saw the promise (eternal life with God) 'afar off'
 - We are to Run the Race of Faith and Hope with this Hope (sure certainty) clearly in view and in our experience:
 - We run the race as sojourners - spiritual people with a heavenly home
 - We run the race with one foot in the heavenly city already - sure of this Hope...'Christ in us, the hope of glory'

Receiving The Promised Hope - The Kingdom that Cannot be Shaken (vs. 25-29)

This is the crescendo of Hebrews Chapters 11 and 12

The writer now moves on to speak directly about our Hope - of the Heavenly Kingdom; of which we are already partakers; which we will receive fully in God's due time (vs.25-29)

- A Solemn Warning - 'See that you do not refuse Him who speaks!' (v.25)
 - God speaks throughout history - in the OT He spoke on earth, by His leaders (like Moses), by His Prophets and by His angels; but now He speaks from heaven, by His word and by His Holy Spirit in our hearts
 - The Greek word (*paraiteomai*), translated 'refuse', means to deprecate, decline or shun - the same word is used in v.19 of the Israelites 'begging' not to hear God's word any more
 - When God speaks to men He justly expects from them the most strict attention and regard - we must not refuse Him:
 - We must not refuse His word of salvation

*'For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, **now is the day of salvation.**'*

2 Corinthians 6: 2

- We must not refuse His word of correction or chastening (vs.7-11)
- We must not refuse His word of instruction or guidance

*'Also, I set watchmen over you, saying, 'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!' But they said, 'We will not listen.' Therefore hear, you nations, and know, O congregation, **what is among them. Hear, O earth! Behold, I will certainly bring calamity on this people - the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not heeded My words nor My law, but rejected it.**'*

Jeremiah 6:17-19

- There is a Cost for Refusing to Hear or Obey God's word
 - It was 11 days journey from Mt. Horeb (Sinai) to Kadesh Barnea (entrance to the promised land) but it took the children of Israel 40 years

*'It is eleven days' journey from Horeb by way of Mount Seir to Kadesh Barnea. Now it came to pass **in the fortieth year, in the eleventh month, on the first day of the month, that Moses spoke to the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had given him as commandments to them,**'*

Deuteronomy 1: 2-3

*"Then I said to you, 'Do not be terrified, or afraid of them. The Lord your God, who goes before you, He will fight for you, according to all He did for you in Egypt before your eyes, and in the wilderness where you saw how the Lord your God carried you, as a man carries his son, in all the way that you went until you came to this place.' **Yet, for all that, you did not believe the Lord your God,**'*

Deuteronomy 1: 29-32

“And the Lord heard the sound of your words, and was angry, and took an oath, saying, ‘Surely not one of these men of this evil generation shall see that good land of which I swore to give to your fathers, except Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him and his children I am giving the land on which he walked, because he wholly followed the Lord.’ The Lord was also angry with me for your sakes, saying, ‘Even you shall not go in there. Joshua the son of Nun, who stands before you, he shall go in there. Encourage him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it. Moreover your little ones and your children, who you say will be victims, who today have no knowledge of good and evil, they shall go in there; to them I will give it, and they shall possess it. But as for you, turn and take your journey into the wilderness by the Way of the Red Sea.’”

Deuteronomy 1: 34-40

- The leaders and people of Israel rejected Messiah and He mourned for the judgement this would bring

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!’”

Matthew 23: 37-39

- **How shall We Escape if We Refuse Him? (v.25)**

- **'Much More' - the consequences for apostates is dire indeed - the judgment to be experienced and the expected terror is far in excess of that on Mt. Sinai**

'For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. Anyone who has rejected Moses' law dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.' **Hebrews 10:26-31**

- **Israel, hearing the voice of the Lord at Mt Horeb, although saying they would obey Him - they rebelled against His laws and against His instruction to enter the promised land - this brought terrible judgement...and their rebellion led to 40 wilderness years ...and later to exile from the land of Israel**
- **Today - we hear His voice - we have His word and we have the inner voice of the Holy Spirit - and we must not refuse Him!**
- **Those who refuse His word of Salvation will condemn themselves to everlasting judgement - the Lake of Fire**
- **Believers who refuse His word will have chastening, and will grieve the Holy Spirit within, and may lose reward in the eternal kingdom**

- **The Shaking of all Things is Coming! (v.26)**

- **At Mt. Horeb the mountain shook - and it so terrified the Israelites that they trembled and feared**
- **Now, the Lord has promised that He will shake All Things**
 - **The writer quotes Haggai 2: 6 - 'not only the earth but also the heavens'**
 - **These verses are prophetic of the days in which we are living - many things are being shaken in these days**
 - **They also speak of the shaking (judgement) which will be poured out on the earth and on 'earth-dwellers' in the time of Tribulation**

- **Haggai 2: 7** goes on to say that He will shake the nations, and they will come to 'the desire of all nations'

"For thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory,' says the Lord of hosts."

Haggai 2: 6-7

- This speaks of the Lord's millennial rule when all shall acknowledge Him and come to worship in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles

'And it shall come to pass that everyone who is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. And it shall be that whichever of the families of the earth do not come up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of hosts, on them there will be no rain.' **Zechariah 14: 16-17**

- **Only that which Cannot be Shaken will Remain! (v.27)**

- **Yet Once More - God has been shaking the earth, nations, men and world systems throughout the ages**
- **Shaking - it is clear (from v.27) that this means removal or destruction**
- **Ultimately God will shake all things - the world and its systems will fall - Babylon will fall - read Revelation chapters 17 and 18**
- **The Heavens too will be shaken**

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken." **Matthew 24: 29**

- **Only those things which Cannot be Shaken will Remain**

- **Everything physical will be destroyed - only eternal, unseen, spiritual, things which cannot be shaken will remain**
- **God's word cannot be shaken - Isaiah 40: 8, quoted by Peter**

"But the word of the Lord endures forever."

1 Peter 1: 25a

- **Those who believe and accept God's word will not be shaken - David testifies to this**

'I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel; my heart also instructs me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.' **Psalms 16: 7-8**

- **Our Faith (solid conviction and assurance), our Hope (sure certainty) and our Love (which, in Him, never fails) - all of which are rooted in Yeshua - these things abide...forever - they cannot be shaken**

'And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.'

1 Corinthians 13: 13

- **We started in the first message with this verse (above)**

- **The nations will be shaken...but God's Kingdom cannot be shaken (v.28)**

- **Look Up!** - When all around us seems to be being shaken, old ways and certainties are cast aside, and deeper and darker chaos seems to loom - we must look up...our redemption draws nigh

"Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near." **Luke 21: 28**

- **We must hold firm in our Faith (a solid conviction and assurance) trusting God's word and His salvation, and look forward to our Hope (a sure certainty) of our eternal life in His presence...and do so with such conviction that we can already sense it, see it, hear it and taste it!**

- **Serve God with reverence and fear! (v.28)**
 - **'Therefore' - in view of all the writer has said...**
 - **We Are Receiving - We Already Have - a Kingdom that cannot be shaken**
 - **We have already received (in part) God's new eternal kingdom - though the 'deposit' of the Holy Spirit in us - we already have eternal life**
 - **We are sealed with the 'Holy Spirit of promise' - the promise of eternal life and of life in the presence of God in glory**
 - **He is the guarantee (deposit) of our inheritance - our eternal life**
 - **Until the fulfilment of the promise - Yeshua coming for His bride**

*'In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were **sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance** until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.'* **Ephesians 1: 13-14**

- **So - let us serve our God**
 - **By grace - we receive grace and mercy from God (Hebrews 4: 16)**
- 'Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, **that we may obtain mercy and find grace** to help in time of need.'* **Hebrews 4: 16**
- **Serving God Acceptably - offering holy worship and service - not profanely or in our own way or strength**
 - **With Reverence and Godly Fear:**
 - **Reverence - the Greek word (*aidōs*) means modesty, bashfulness or awe - the contrast is with those who want to worship Him or serve Him presumptuously or in self importance**
 - **Godly Fear - The Greek word (*eulabeia*) means caution, piety or implies dread - the contrast is with those who approach the Lord flippantly, forgetting His utter holiness and power, and that He is The Lord...the Most Holy One...the I AM**

- **Our God is a Consuming Fire! (v.29)**
 - **The writer finishes by reminding us that we should serve God in reverence and godly fear because He is a 'Consuming Fire'**
 - **The writer is quoting *Deuteronomy 4: 24*, which also tells us He is a jealous God**

*'For the Lord your God is **a consuming fire**, a jealous God.'* **Deuteronomy 4: 24**

➤ **In fact His name is Jealous [Exodus 34:14])**

*'For you shall worship no other god, for **the Lord, whose name is Jealous**, is a jealous God,'* **Exodus 34: 4**

- **The earth was cleansed once by the water of the flood, next time it will be by fire - the fire of God's judgement**

*'For this they wilfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of water and in the water, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded with water. But **the heavens and the earth** which are now preserved by the same word, **are reserved for fire until the day of judgment** and perdition of ungodly men.'* **2 Peter 3: 5-7**

- **All the ungodly and rebellious will have their judgement by being cast into the lake of fire, which burns forever - see Revelation 19: 20, 20: 10 and 14-15**

*'Then **the beast was captured, and with him the false prophet** who worked signs in his presence, by which he deceived those who received the mark of the beast and those who worshiped his image. **These two were cast alive into the lake of fire burning with brimstone.**'* **Revelation 19:20**

'The devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet are. And they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.'
Revelation 20: 10

'Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.'
Revelation 20: 14-15

- **God's law given at Sinai prescribed many severe punishments - but the punishment is far worse for those who reject His offer of salvation through His own Son, Jesus Christ**

*"John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but **the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.**"*
Luke 3: 16-17

- **This verse (v.29) is related to verses in Hebrews 10 which set the context for Hebrews 11 & 12**

*'Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people." **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**'*

Hebrews 10: 29-31

- **True Disciples have Nothing To Fear from the God who is a consuming fire - for by His grace and mercy, through the knowledge of His Son, we know Him as our Father - we stand before Him clothed in the righteousness of His Son**
 - **There is No Condemnation for those who are 'In Christ'**

*'There is therefore now **no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**'*
Romans 8: 1

- **A Race Well Run**

- **Disciples who run the race with Faith (solid conviction and assurance) and Hope (sure certainty) will be pleasing to the Father**
- **They will obtain a good testimony**
- **They will hear those words 'well done (maybe...well run) good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord'!**
- **Christian Hope is Inspiration for Today based on the Certainty of Tomorrow**
 - **Such Hope gives strength for life, day by day, and enables us to endure trial and suffering**