

# Book of Hebrews Part 50: 12:1-5; Run the Race; The Lord's Chastening (4/18/2020)

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://www.cornerfringe.com/media/r6s8jts/book-of-hebrews-part-50>

**\*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is not verbatim. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document is printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliterate, English word. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.**

Before we break into this, I want to preface Hebrews 12 with the following: the writer is about to deliver something of great importance. Out of everything he has said in this book, this is one of the most vital principles you need to take away. I say this because what I am about to point out is a life and death type of situation. The information is stuff you need to be equipped with; you need to be prepared because what he is going to write is what you are going to come up against. I'm excited about that because I get excited when you see believers getting equipped with the power of the Living God, with the Word of God, so they can have the strength to go and battle the evil one. That is an awesome thing to me!

Let's break into Hebrews 12:1—**Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses...** In other words, all those men and women the writer talks about, those champions of the faith who persevered, conquered, worked righteousness, suffered, sacrificed, shut the mouths of lions, and died for the faith, are all this great cloud of witnesses spoken of in this verse.

Think about that for a second. When you think about the term, witness, what do you think about? You probably think of the courtroom trials where the courts bring forward witnesses. And ultimately, why would they do this? They do it to get the truth out on the table. They want the truth to be known, so they call eyewitnesses, and those witnesses serve as evidence.

Now, this is critical. All these men and women in Hebrews 11 serve as evidence to the truth and evidence to the faith.

As a side note I want to show you something interesting about this term witnesses. In Greek this is μαρτύρων. The phonetic spelling is (mar'-toos). It may sound familiar because if we take this back, etymologically speaking, to the early 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> century, you start to see this term being used in the context of martyrdom. In fact, it is from that word we get the term, martyr. The early church utilized this term, which explicitly means witness or even eyewitness. That is the literal definition of this term. But we find it started to be utilized synonymously with this idea of the apostles dying for their faith. So hence today we have the term, martyr.

Now the writer goes on in Hebrews 12:1—**...let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us....** (Emphasis added).

I'm going to show you the Greek regarding the term, ensnares us. It is εὐπερίστατον or phonetically, (euperistaton). It appears where the writer says, easily ensnares, he is kind of doing a play on words. The Greek word εὐπερίστατον actually means easily surrounded or easily encircled. So here you have the writer first saying we have this great cloud of witnesses who are surrounding us. Then he goes on and says, lay aside every weight that ensnares or so easily surrounds us. So there is definitely a play on words.

But far more important than that is what he's commanding or instructing us to do, which is to lay aside the sin, specifically of which he says, easily ensnares us. Now why would sin easily ensnare us? The answer is very simple: because we are in the flesh. The natural inclination of your flesh is to rebel against God. The natural inclination for your flesh is to gravitate toward sin. It's inherent, if you will, in our DNA. So we have to lay that aside for these clouds of witnesses; for all these men and women that trusted in the Living God. They're the template, the people, of whom we need to step up and emulate.

Now continuing he says this in Hebrews 12:1—...and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us....

Think about that statement, let us run with endurance the race. Here the writer is taking us into a tangible, physical example in society to bring greater and deeper meaning to a spiritual reality. So he picks something that is ingrained in society at that time. If you've forgotten, Rome, and the Greeks before them, loved their games. Hence the coliseums and such. And I'll go as far as to say: isn't it interesting we don't need to go back to a historical context to really appreciate what the writer is saying? That is because this country is riddled with stadiums, Roman "coliseum like" sports stadiums. They are everywhere. We have professional level, collegiate level, high school level, and more. We have all these stadiums. They are everywhere.

Related to this, I just read a headline that was interesting. Considering everything we're going through regarding Covid lockdowns, which has shut down sports, people are really struggling with this so much that it is reported over 20% of people said they would put down the bottle, they would totally abstain from alcohol, to get their sports back. If that doesn't give you an inclination of the love of the coliseum, I don't know what will.

So here you have the writer bringing this to the table, and he wants to deliver to the reader what it looks like, in this life, to walk in the faith like all these men and women described in Hebrews 11 walked.

Now to help bring this statement to a little deeper understanding for you, I want to take you to Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, but first I want to give you a little backdrop on Corinth. The isthmian games were central to their society. Every other year the isthmian games would take place and they would participate in wrestling, boxing, racing, and they would even have musical competitions. So as Paul is talking to the Corinthians, this would have resonated with them because it would have been something that's tangible. The only thing Paul does differently in the letter to the Corinthians, then he does in Hebrews, is he goes a lot deeper; he articulates this more; therefore, you feel more of the weight.

Now it's not necessarily the situation that the writer of Hebrews failed to describe this better especially if you're of the opinion that it comes from the mind of Paul through the hand of Luke. Again, I say the writer of Hebrews knows his audience well, and there are certain things he can say and he doesn't need to go into further description. That, however, is not the case here as Paul is dealing with the

Corinthians. Corinth is a Gentile community that is growing and progressing. It would be necessary and beneficial for Paul to take a little more time to explain things and where he is coming from so the message hits home, because this is a heavy teaching.

So let's take a peek at this in 1 Corinthians 9:24—**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.**

Now you can't help but think about the words Yeshua spoke in Luke 13 when He talks about entering in by the narrow gate because many will seek to enter, and guess what? They're not going to be able to get in. They're all running the race, but only a couple are going to get in. But Paul takes this to the next level and basically says, everyone runs in the race, but you all need to run as if there is only one winner.

Now, anytime I teach on this passage, I always like to use the analogy of a pastor going before his congregation and telling them, "Listen. I know there are maybe five or six hundred people in here, but here's the deal: you guys are going to want to walk as worthy as possible because I've been told only one of you is going to make it into the Kingdom of God. It is going to be the man or the woman who is most honorable."

If a pastor was to take the pulpit and say that, what kind of effect would that have on the congregation? You would hope most of this congregation is leaving that building fasting, praying, weeping, and crying out to God. They are going home and getting the magazines out of the house. They are getting the movies out of the house; they will stop watching the shows which are pure filth. They stop listening to music that is garbage. They would totally clean up their act because only one is going to make it into the Kingdom of God, and they want to be that person; therefore, they're going to do everything in their power to make it happen.

This is what Paul is conveying here. He is all over the Corinthians. He is laying something so heavy upon them and telling them: this is how you have to run the race because narrow is the gate.

A story from my growing up years just dawned on me because we're in this context of athletics. I have to share this with you. When I was growing up, my dad was a bit of a sports fanatic. Even from a young age of six-years old or so, he had already started grooming me in baseball and soccer. I ate, slept, and breathed sports. I was naturally athletic, and it was interesting by the time prior to high school I didn't have to try really hard to be one of the best players on the team. It just came naturally.

However, when I got into high school, I got a rude awakening! They started telling me I couldn't eat my regular diet consisting of Doritos, soda pop, candy, and then throw a couple cinnamon rolls in there for good measure. That was basically my diet. But when I got to high school and extremely competitive sports, they told me I needed to watch what I eat. I needed to eat fruits and vegetables, and I'm like, "What is going on here? What are they talking about?" I thought it was absurd; I thought it was absolutely silly.

Then I started training; and I'm telling you they tore every muscle in my body. They ran us to the point of exhaustion. Kids were throwing up; we were pushed to the brink we had never been pushed before both mentally and physically. We were learning the physics of the games and learning more about the intellectual aspect, the strategy, of the games. It was unbelievable! I didn't know the body could be pushed that hard.

In a sense, this is exactly what Paul is conveying. Think about all of the professional athletes who constantly torment their body because they want to be better and faster than their competition. They are determined, and committed for the cause, for the love of the game, and for the win. That's what they want. They're out to win. This is a competition.

Make no mistake, you are in a competition. There's a reason Paul is bringing this up: because you are up against your flesh. You better be stronger; you better be faster; you better be more determined. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak, right? And Paul talks about this also: the spirit wars against the flesh and the flesh against the spirit; they're at war with one another. You have got to be prepared!

Think about the demonic spirits. Satan roams about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Do you understand the competition you're up against? You have to give everything. You're going to have to hurt. You're going to have to sacrifice the flesh; you're going to have to crucify the flesh so the Spirit of God can reign in you if you want a chance of getting into the Kingdom of God. It is this serious; it really is!

Continuing in 1 Corinthians 9:25—**And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things.**

Paul is still in the mode of the sports arena and professional athletes, and he says those who compete for this are temperate. When you look at that in the Greek, it means self-control.

Going back again, I told you when I entered high school they started telling me I had to eat food that was good for me. That was the reality. Think about the wrestlers and what they do to their body to drop weight. There are wrestlers who are passing out just to make weight so they can compete. They're willing to do anything they can to their flesh. Isn't it an amazing thing when you see what they do. But continuing in 1 Corinthians 9:25, listen to what Paul says—**...Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown.**

Think about that statement for a second. Paul recognizes they're doing it for nothing. Back in the old days of Rome and Greece, you would get a little bit of glory and this little wreath of pine; you might get some money and a bit of glory, and you paid homage to the god Poseidon, at least in the Isthmus games. That is what you received.

However, Paul says this is all vanity; it's meaningless. It is all going to burn up. Paul is saying you need to tear every muscle as you equip yourself, as you strengthen yourself, as you go in competition against your flesh in order to absolutely destroy it because eternal life is at stake. It is for the imperishable crown; the stakes couldn't be higher. You are literally competing for your own life, and yet you look at some Christians today and the way they're walking out their faith. You would think they're competing for a candy bar. It is that sad. I don't mean to be funny, but it's kind of ridiculous. Our race is a matter of life and death.

Moving on to 1 Corinthians 9:26—**Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air.** (Emphasis added). In other words, what Paul is telling you is when he runs, there is no fear. He has nothing but faith. Do you know why he has no uncertainty, no doubt, or fear? It is because Paul knows there is a judgment coming. He's not confused on that matter. He knows sinners are going to be destroyed from the earth. He knows Yeshua is coming back, and the righteous receive a reward. That's what he knows. There is zero uncertainty.

It's interesting to me regarding the development of science today in the study of human anatomy, specifically the study of the brain, we have come a long way. In doing so, we have discovered some amazing things on a scientific level with the brain. One of those things has to do with the effects uncertainty have on us; that it has on people who are in business. They are recognizing why specific people are more successful than others, and they want to look for common denominators to determine the key principles that led to success. What they're finding is the most successful people are the people who don't struggle with uncertainty.

This is amazing! You have to think about this in light of what we're dealing with in regard to what Paul is saying here. I want to share with you an article from Dr. Travis Bradberry who talks about this in an article. The headline reads as follows: "11 Ways Emotionally Intelligent People Overcome Uncertainty." It says in the article: *Our brains give us fits when facing uncertainty because they're wired to react to it with fear.*

Think about that statement! Basically, what it is saying is if you give over to uncertainty you're going to be controlled by fear. We are wired this way. Uncertainty equals fear, and fear is the death of everyone.

Listen to what he says as he continues: *Uncertainty makes your brain yield control to the limbic system.* The limbic system is simply the part of the brain which creates emotion. So when you take on uncertainty, it immediately defaults to the limbic system of the brain which creates fear and anxiety, and that's where it stays.

He continues: *The less information the subject had to go on, the more irrational and erratic their decisions became.* Think about that. So if there's uncertainty in your life, you will not make good decisions along the way. And now they're actually proving this in science. This is a spiritual concept that we can show you from the Bible, and this is what Paul is trying to tell you. He is telling us we cannot run with uncertainty because it'll cost you everything; you'll never finish the race.

Dr. Travis Bradberry goes on: *You must engage your rational brain to keep yourself on track.* You have to keep your wits about you, and this is the exact essence what Paul is talking about. For us to be spiritually strong, for us to be spiritually sound, we cannot give in to the craziness of uncertainty.

Paul continues in 1 Corinthians 9:26-27—**Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. <sup>27</sup>But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.** (Emphasis added)

Obviously, Paul is going to practice what he preaches. He's not going to go out and be the hypocrite. He is not going to go out with the plank in his eye. He wants to make sure he is preaching with integrity. He wants to be a doer of the word not a hearer only, and so he preaches with integrity.

One thing I want to point out here is this word, discipline. When you go to the Greek on this, it is a lot more intense than simply discipline where discipline is almost a euphemism for this term ὑπωπιάζω (hypōpiázō). The word literally means to torment in the sense of striking one in the face.

So think about it in those terms. Paul is willing to torment his body just as a professional athlete is willing to push themselves past the point of exhaustion, to ignore the pain, muscle aches, cramps, and injuries. There are professional athletes playing with horrible injuries because of the love of the game; they are literally blocking the pain out of their mind for the sake of the goal.

We have a lot we could learn from that. Again, they're doing it for what? For money. For a little bit of glory. However, all of it is going to perish; none of it is going to mean anything. But we are to be doing it for an imperishable crown. The words of Paul speak to me in a powerful way, and this is what the writer of Hebrews is conveying. It's at this level; a level of heaviness.

Now Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:4-5—**No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. <sup>5</sup>And also if anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.** (Emphasis added).

So here's another dimension to this whole professional athleticism issue or illustration. These people can't run the race unless they do so according to the rules which means, when we're running this race of life, we must do so according to the commandments of the Living God, according to His Torah, or we're going to be disqualified. This is the reality.

When you look at all the professional sports players, they have to play by the rules. If they don't, they're immediately penalized. Whether it's football, basketball, hockey, or whatever sport, all of these sports have rules, and you have to compete within the guidelines of their rules. The faith is no different. This is actually an excellent illustration of who we are supposed to be in the spiritual realm.

Now getting back to Hebrews 12:1-2—**Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, <sup>2</sup> looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith...** (Emphasis added).

When we say the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the Aleph and the Tav, and He is all in all, we kind of get the sense the writer is going back to chapter one where he said those ridiculous mind-blowing statements of Yeshua such as: He holds all things together by the word of His power, and the angels worship Him. These are all things that can only be said of God, and yet they are said of Yeshua.

He has come back to that mindset of putting all the glory, all the focus, where it must be; and that is on the Lord. We must do this because He is the author and finisher of our faith. He is not just the author and you're the finisher as though you're going to see this out. It is not as though He started you, and now we're good so you are going to take the training wheels off and will do it on your own. I'll tell you this right now, if you're not in relationship with the Lord, and Yeshua is not living in your heart so the Holy Spirit is pouring out of you, you're done because you can't do it.

I will just say for most of us as we got into Torah and tried doing it according to our own power and will, quickly found out, "Oh, I need Jesus; I need Yeshua. I need His strength to do this; I need His forgiveness when I don't do this." His beautiful grace is always there. The beautiful instruction and beautiful challenge He gives us through His teachings are just the most unbelievable and incredible teachings you'll ever come across. He is the greatest Rabbi you'll ever know, and He needs to be the focus.

Going on in Hebrews 12:2—**...who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross....** Yeshua could see past the pain. To understand this, you have to go back to the Garden of Gethsemane to see what Yeshua was feeling as He expressed to the Father, “If it is possible, take this cup from me; yet not My will but Your will be done.” He says this time, after time, after time. He keeps going back asking, “If it's possible, take it from me.” He was in agony over what He knew He had to go endure. It was horrifying, and He felt every bit of it.

Why did He endure? The writer tells us: because of the—**joy that was set before Him**. In other words, what the writer says is because Yeshua knew the victory He was going to have over sin and death He was able to go through the most horrific trial that has ever existed on planet Earth. He was an innocent man who did nothing wrong. He fought His entire life. He fought off sin and fought off temptation. He did all that, yet He is the one who had a crown of thorns literally smashed into his skull, was spit on, mocked, ridiculed, and crucified, and yet He was able to go through that because He had vision. He knew at the end it was all going to work out.

If we don't have that vision, we are not going to make it through the tribulation. I am talking about having the same vision as Yeshua with our eyes fixed upon Him and having that joy set before us knowing we're going to have victory. Having the vision will settle your spirit; there will be peace in your heart when the world is falling apart, like it is beginning to. It is not even there yet; it's only beginning right now. You're going to have peace and joy. You're going to be able to sing praises to the Lord and be thankful. You're going to be able to say things which will make the world marvel, and that's a beautiful thing,

Continuing on in Hebrews 12:2—**...despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God**. So, this further proves my point that the writer of Hebrews has all these elements of chapter one in mind when he's talking about despising the shame. What does that mean? It means Yeshua hated sin. He chose the good and rejected evil. As the Isaiah prophecy talks about, Yeshua hated sin.

Looking again at the writer's statement—**...has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God**. Where does this statement come from? This is the very thing the writer quoted in chapter one, which was from Psalm 45:6-7—**Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. <sup>7</sup> You love righteousness and hate wickedness....** (Emphasis added).

Now when it says your throne O God, it's talking about Yeshua. It is Yeshua's throne. So, this verse says Yeshua loves righteousness and hates lawlessness. He hates wickedness. This is a good thing for us to remember the next time the enemy tries to throw temptations your way, or you want to lose your cool, or you want to retain bitterness, or you're being drawn to idolatry or addiction, whatever your addiction is. You might want to consider Yeshua hates it. You are embracing something He despises.

Think back to James 4:4—**Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?** Every time we get lured and sucked into those things, and go out and sin, we are literally making ourselves an enemy of Yeshua. God have mercy on our souls that we see this clearly. When we take our eyes off Yeshua, and we put them on our addiction or temptation, we're as good as dead. We are going to be a lamb led to its slaughter because we're entering into an arena of making ourselves an enemy of God. That should be frightening enough to keep us out of this kind of behavior.

So, keeping our eyes on Yeshua—<sup>2</sup>looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, **despising the shame**, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. <sup>3</sup>For consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners against Himself, lest you become weary and discouraged in your souls. (Hebrews 12:2-3, Emphasis added).

Isn't that interesting? The writer recognizes all the persecution we're going to go through, everything life can throw at us can really mess with us. It can mess with our world so much so that he recognizes we could give in to discouragement. You see, discouragement is a real threat. That is why he brings up "lest you become discouraged". Keep your eyes on Yeshua; remember what He went through, what He endured, otherwise discouragement is going to get the better part of you.

Now listen to the point the writer is going to make in Hebrews 12:4—**You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin**. You haven't resisted to this point yet. In other words, I'm going to give you a modern-day translation: quit your crying; quit your whining and complaining. You are not dead. It is unbelievable how easy we complain and how such little things can make us complain. We are all guilty of this; me included. It is an embarrassment to the faith. What it shows is our eyes are not on Yeshua if we are complaining. If we get into complaining, our eyes are not on Him, and we have zero perspective of what He went through and the price He paid for us. He was innocent; He didn't deserve to die. We deserve to die. We've done wrong, and yet somehow, we find it so easy to complain. If this is happening, we have a relational problem. There is a disconnect between us and the Lord. It is a huge red flag!

You may not even verbalize it; maybe you're a little more sophisticated and complain only in your heart. Remember, God sees it. We must be thankful; we should be able to be thankful in all things and be able to find joy in Him because of what He did. There is always cause for joy because of what He accomplished.

I want to take you to Psalm 118:18 because what the writer of Hebrews is saying here—**You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin**—is something he takes right out of the Psalms. This is what Psalm 118:18 says—**The LORD has chastened me severely, but He has not given me over to death**. (Emphasis added). The reason I want to show you this is because of what this Psalm says—**The LORD has chastened me severely**. It tells you where the writer is going with his thought. And where he goes is found in Hebrews 12:5—**And you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to sons....** In other words, you've lost your focus. Another way of saying it is you have lost your mind; you have forgotten the exhortation. What does it mean when you say: you have forgotten the exhortation? It means you have forgotten the word of God. You have forgotten what it says.

I love Psalm 119:9-11—**How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.** <sup>10</sup>**With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!** (Then he says this) <sup>11</sup>**Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.**

That is amazing and powerful. When the word is in our heart, and you've pushed out all the treasures and the love of the world, guess what happens? **I will not sin against Him**. The writer of Hebrews is quoting Proverbs 3, and he is saying, "You have not remembered the word of the Living God; you have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as sons." Here is the exact quote from Proverbs 3 as



found in Hebrews 12:5—**My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him.**

So, we discover the writer is not simply talking about some random tribulation here. He is taking this a step further kind of on the heels of Psalm 118:18 where he is talking about the Lord coming after you. He is coming after you. Don't despise the chastening of the Lord.

I'm going to tell you this: when you get chastened by the Lord, it is going to be the most hellish, the most intense, moments of your life. When he gets involved in your world, you will know pain, and you will know suffering. You will know agony like you've never known it before.

You might say, "Daniel, what you are describing doesn't sound anything like Yeshua; it doesn't sound anything like the God I served." However, it is very much Him, and you need to take to heart this little phrase found in Hebrews 12:5—**...nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him.**

Why does the writer say, "Don't be discouraged"? Maybe because there is a threat of discouragement that when the Lord comes to you and chastens you and scares the daylights out of you. He is directing you not to turn your back and start cursing Him or blame Him. Don't get angry with God and don't despise the chastening because if you do that, you're as good as dead.

Now that being said and considering the importance of this topic and how vital it is for your personal survival; I want to dig into this a little bit. The Bible has a lot to say about this, and I want to unpack this because this is what I was telling you at the beginning of today's message. One of the most vital principles you can walk away with from the Book of Hebrews, and from the Bible, is right here: understanding the chastening of the Lord. Understanding it and not despising it or being discouraged by it but remembering the exhortation that speaks to us.

I'm going to give some perspective here on this, and I want to begin to do this by taking you to the Book of Leviticus where it gets into the blessings and curses. What it is talking about is the chastening of the Lord. We get a picture of what this looks like in these verses, so we're going to go to Leviticus 26:14-16—**'But if you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, <sup>15</sup>and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgements, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, <sup>16</sup>I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you....** (Emphasis added).

Think about that. Who is going to intercede when God brings terror upon you? Nobody! Because it is God.

Continuing in Leviticus 26:16—**...wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.** So, when I say you're going to know pain, suffering, sorrow, and fear like you have never know it before when the Lord gets in your world, this is the chastening of the Lord. And guess what? This is just the beginning because as Leviticus 26:16 implies, "If you didn't turn back from this after this warning, and you continue to do this and that, I'm going to respond by doing this and that to you," and it gets more and more intense.

Let me give you an example by going to Leviticus 26:18—**And after all this, if you do not obey Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins.** And it keeps repetitiously doing this. It keeps saying this

over and over because there's no turning back. If you want to keep sinning, I (God) will come back, and I will punish you seven times more.

Now He's going to go on to say that He is going to break the pride of their power and shut up their heavens. The agriculture is going to be barren; wild beasts are going to end up killing their children, and then He states He's going to bring the sword and pestilence. And of course, famine will follow. He is going to do all of this to His children.

Then in Leviticus 26:27-28, He says this—**And after all this, if you do not obey Me, but walk contrary to Me,<sup>28</sup> then I also will walk contrary to you in fury;....** The last thing I want to see is the fury or the anger of the Lord.

Continuing Leviticus 26:28—**...and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins.** Do you want to know how crazy the chastisement of the Lord gets? Look at this next verse in Leviticus 26:29—**You shall eat the flesh of your sons, and you shall eat the flesh of your daughters.**

Think about that for a second. I don't know what you may have had in mind when you think about the discipline of the Lord, but here's the deal: the Lord is not politically correct. He doesn't have these nice, little timeouts; He will get into your world and flip it upside down, and you will know pain, suffering, and fear like never before.

Now you might say, "Daniel, with all due respect, my God is a God of grace and a God of love. What you have presented doesn't describe Him." Here's the response to that: all this stuff which we're talking about and trying to wrap your mind around, that is love! It is love. He doesn't spare the rod because guess what? He knows if you don't turn back, He will lose you forever. Think about that! He will lose you forever. He is doing everything humanly possible to terrify you, to make you feel excruciating pain and terror, so that you drop to your knees and repent. He's a loving Father, and after giving His Son for our punishment, you better believe He's going to come into your world and flip it upside down because He doesn't want to lose you. The price that was paid, Yeshua giving His life, was too high. You can't put a price on that, and so it is love when He does these things.

Last week we read the account of the Book of Maccabees and talked about the seven sons. I know most of you don't want to revisit that, but I just want to go back briefly to the seventh son. His response to Antiochus when Antiochus is offering him fame, fortune, and all that stuff, was—**But you, who have contrived all sorts of evil against the Hebrews, will certainly not escape the hands of God.<sup>32</sup> For we are suffering because of our own sins.** (II Maccabees 7:31-32, Emphasis added).

So, look at the hell that was rained down upon Israel; we have talked about it in the past two messages. And I didn't even talk about the mothers. As punishment because they had circumcised their children, Antiochus had their children killed. He commanded the soldiers to string their dead children over the mother's necks. This is one of the most sickening and horrible situations you have ever heard of in your life. Yet this young man, speaking through the spirit of wisdom and truth of the Holy Spirit, recognizes all of this has come on the Hebrews because of their sins.

Are you starting to understand the chastening of the Lord and how terrifying it is? Maybe you will look at sin different; maybe you will look at those temptations a little bit differently the next time. Maybe

you'll shut the computer off and stop watching porn because I'm telling you this is coming. Your world is going to be flipped upside down, and that's the best-case scenario. We will talk a little bit more about that next week.

Proverbs 15:10—**Harsh discipline is for him who forsakes the way, and he who hates correction will die.**

Now here's the thing, your response to God's correction is going to be a life-and-death moment for you. As I mentioned before, are you going to respond by getting angry, complaining, and blaming God for your problems and not receiving the correction? If you take that path, the only thing you must expect is total death. Don't expect to be blessed because it's not going to happen. Scripture is true; scripture will hold the line.

Now I want to take this a step further by going to Deuteronomy. This is all about the chastening of the Lord. Deuteronomy 28:20 & 27—**The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me.** That does not sound pleasant to me. <sup>27</sup>**The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed.** (Emphasis added).

He will start putting stuff on you and there will be no help. There is no topical salve, or drug that is going to help. There is nothing that is going to help you. When you turn your back on God, this is the chastening of the Lord.

When you understand the chastening of the Lord, you will look at the Lord in a completely different manner. Have you ever wondered why the devil wants to rip the Torah away from the church; why it is so important to him to tell believers to throw away the law? Because you get the fear of the Living God to not sin from the law. The devil doesn't want that because by the fear of the Lord one departs from evil, and all Satan has to do is just get rid of the fear component. If the fear component is gone, your fleshly inclination is to go to evil. The fear of God is the barrier that prohibits you from crossing that line.

When you start cherry-picking all the beautiful grace passages, which we need because there's no hope without God's mercy, loving kindness, and grace, and you just want to go to your happy place without allowing the totality of God's Word to speak into your life, you're going to be a dead man or a dead woman. This stuff must resonate more now than ever before because of where we're at right now in this country.

In Jeremiah 30:12-14, we find some more instructions—**For thus says the LORD: 'Your affliction is incurable,** (nobody's going to be able to help you when God gets into your world; when He comes and chastens you) **Your wound is severe. <sup>13</sup> There is no one to plead your cause, That you may be bound up; You have no healing medicines** (if this doesn't terrify you, I don't know what will). <sup>14</sup>**All your lovers have forgotten you; They do not seek you; For I have wounded you with the wound of an enemy, With the chastisement of a cruel one, For the multitude of your iniquities, Because your sins have increased.**

So again, if you want to sin against God, this is your future. This does not look pleasant to me. I don't want to be a part of this.

Continuing in Jeremiah 30:15—**Why do you cry about your affliction?** (Think about that. Are you crying and complaining?) **Your sorrow is incurable. Because of the multitude of your iniquities, because your sins have increased, I have done these things to you.**

Again, this puts things into context for me. I'm not interested in idolatry, covetousness, immorality, and any of these things. None of these things taste good to me. When this word gets into your heart, that's when you tremble and cry, "Oh God, be merciful to me a sinner." There's a repentant change of heart which will rip that filth, idols, and deception right out. The word of God is so powerful; there's so much life in it if we hide it in our heart, believe it, and walk it.

Micah gives you another example of the chastening of the Lord. It is everywhere in Scripture; you can't get away from it. Micah 6:12-13—**For her rich men are full of violence, Her inhabitants have spoken lies, and their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.** <sup>13</sup> **"Therefore I will also make you sick by striking you, by making you desolate because of your sins.**

Repeatedly you find the warning. If you want to turn your back on God, this is what is coming. This is the expectation.

Do you remember what we read in Hebrews 10:31? **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.** Only after we go through passages like this could that passage have any real meaning. What do you mean it's a fearful thing? God sent His son because He loved the world, and He has forgiven all their sins. And that's wonderful. So then why would the writer of Hebrews come out and say, "It's a fearful thing to fall in the hands of the living God"? For that answer, we go back to Hebrews 10:26—**For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins.** This is your future! This is scary. This is terrifying, and it's supposed to be. It keeps us pure and on the straight and narrow.

1 Kings 8:46 is where we find this small part of Solomon's dedication of the Temple. **When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin),** (And that's important to note. There's not a righteous man on earth who does only good and does not sin as stated in Ecclesiastes 7. And here Solomon is praying to the Lord, and this is one of the things he confesses; none of us are perfect. We're going to have this issue, so Solomon deals with it in the prayer of dedication of the temple.) **and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near;....** (Emphasis added).

The reason I brought this up is I want you to see when you sin something is going to happen: you are going to open a door for the adversary to come in. Believe me, you open doors that are nightmarish to shut. That is scary! You do not want to give your adversary power over you because guess what? He doesn't like to let go. And as I mentioned in the last couple weeks, it doesn't mean that the devil is going to come to a point where he says, "I really feel sorry for you. I guess I'm going to stop inflicting you and stop keeping you in bondage. I am going to stop dragging you back to your addictions." That will never happen! He is going to drive you to your addictions until you are dead. That is what his plan is.

Whatever doors you have opened in your life, you better shut them right now especially considering everything that's going on right now. It is getting real in this world, and it's time we have some real faith. It is time we have real hope in Yeshua and start walking like it, so our speech is lining up with our walk. So we no longer blaspheme the Holy Name of Yeshua which makes the world look at us and all

they see is hypocrites. All they see is you're doing the same things they are; you love the same things they do. You love all the worldly things that they have to offer. The only difference is you call on the name of Jesus and confess Him.

That should not be the case. We should stick out; we should be the light of the world, and the world should naturally hate us because Yeshua is living within us.

We're going to stop here, but I'm excited about next week to carry on in this passage because this principle is vital for life, and this is the stuff we need to cling to.