

*When the preacher of Hebrews in chapter 11 connects our faith story to that of Abel, to Abraham and the patriarchs, to Moses and the people of Israel in the wilderness, to various judges and kings, to the persecuted and mistreated, and in ch12 quotes this text from Isaiah and applies it to the church, He is teaching us to reimagine the restoration of Israel from the one expected to the one that God was doing in and through Jesus Christ!*

We must imagine the world as He would have it be and live in it that way. We are the people chosen to be a royal priesthood and holy nation.

*We must strengthen our weak hands that are unable to do His will and our weak knees that have not walked in His ways and run our leg of the relay race of faith with everything in us.*

#### LIVE THE STORY

*The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- In Hebrews 12:1, how does the “preacher” want us to imagine our relationship to the faithful listed in chapter 11?
- What kinds of things might weigh you down or hinder you in your walk of faith? This need not necessarily be sin, but hindrances.
- What are those sins which easily ensnare you? Some options are greed, selfishness, ambition, lust, drunkenness, anger, rage, rivalry.
- How does Jesus’ faith compare with that of those listed in Heb. 11?
- In what way does Heb. 12:5-11 call us to reimagine our suffering? What story is this calling us to make our own?
- Why is it significant that the “preacher” of *Hebrews* quotes from Isaiah 35:3 in addressing this audience of believers in Jesus?
- Why is it important for believers to know the story of our participation *in the restoration of the kingdom* of which the prophets spoke?
- What people are we supposed to consider ourselves a part of? How should that impact how we live our lives?

## Imagining the Kingdom: *What story are you living in?*

Jerry Cisar — May 21, 2023

Text: Hebrew 12:1-17

### Introduction

#### I. Consider the Pioneer and Perfector of Faith (12:1-3)

- A. We have entered a leg of a long race. We are part of a story.
  - i. Our individual race is part of a bigger race.
  - ii. Hebrews 11 is not the “heroes of faith” or faith’s “hall-of-fame.” These people ran the relay race before us.
  - iii. At times this race is agony (*agōna*).
    - a) An athletic competition, a race.
    - b) A struggle against opposition; a fight.
- B. We must throw off those things which cause us to stumble so we can persevere.
  - i. Every hindrance
  - ii. The sin that easily entangles.
- C. We must embrace the story of Jesus the pioneer and perfector of faith.

- i. What does it mean to say that Jesus is the Pioneer and Perfector of Faith?
  - a) The Pioneer (11:3)
    - Heb. 1:2
  - b) The Perfector
    - Everyone else's faith is a great model and worthy of emulation.
    - Jesus is the model of *perfect faith*.
  - c) After the whole story of our ancestors who walked by faith is given, Jesus is now set in the story as the one who demonstrated perfect faith for us to follow!
    - *We must embrace the story of Jesus as our story!*
- ii. We are part of the story of all those who came before. The primary story of which we are a part is the Son of God... the Israel of God... Jesus.

## II. Consider Your Adoption into the Family (12:4-11)

- A. These believers are told to reinterpret their sufferings.
  - i. These verses come immediately after speaking about Jesus who is called the Son over a dozen times in this letter.
  - ii. Verses 5-6 use the singular, "son," before moving to sons, or children, plural in the verses that follow.
    - a) Heb. 2:10
    - b) Without using the word, this is about adoption in Christ.
- iii. Not only did Jesus the Son endure hardship as discipline, so too the people of Israel, throughout their history, endured hardship. We enter that story. We were adopted into this family, as sons and daughters, through Jesus.

- B. The goal is to share in God's holiness. To be like Him.

## III. Consider Your Life as Part of the Family (12:12-17)

- A. Combining the verse from Isaiah with the one from Proverbs expands our imagination of the kingdom.
  - i. Isaiah 35:3 (1-6)
  - ii. This is about the restoration of the kingdom of Israel under their King, messiah.
  - iii. "You are the restoration of the kingdom of Israel!"
  - iv. If that is who you are, then you are the son to whom Proverbs speaks.
- B. To understand how this application (14-17) comes from the verses cited (12-13), it helps to think about why Israel went into exile to begin with.
  - i. In simplest terms, they ceased to live as God's holy people.
    - a) Isaiah 5:7-8
    - b) Isaiah 5:23-24
    - c) Isaiah 33:14-16
  - ii. The promise of Israel's restoration included having roots that went down deep but produced great fruit above.