



# PRACTICAL APPLICATION IN LIGHT OF THE EXAMPLES,

12.1-29

# RUN WITH ENDURANCE, FIXING YOUR EYES ON JESUS, THE PIONEER AND PERFECTER OF FAITH, 12.1-3

having<sup>1</sup> a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us  
laying aside<sup>2</sup> every weight and the easily entangling  
sin

let us run with endurance the race set before us

fixing<sup>3</sup> our eyes on the of faith Pioneer and Perfector,  
Jesus

who for the joy set before him endured the cross,  
despising the shame  
and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God

# CLOUD OF WITNESSES

- are they witnesses in the sense of spectators, i.e., witnesses *of us*? (the athletic metaphor does suggest this)
- more likely, in the context following Hebrews 11 (“therefore”), they are witnesses *to us* of the possibilities and reward of a life of faith, offering us encouragement to endure

# LAYING ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT (ENCUMBRANCE, HINDRANCE)

- in the Greek athletic contests, runners would run (virtually) naked; athletes often maintained a lower body weight to reduce their burden
- **that is**, the easily-entangling sin
  - the singular indicates sin in general, not so much a 'besetting' sin
  - any sin that would hamper our perseverance

# LAYING ASIDE EVERY WEIGHT (ENCUMBRANCE, HINDRANCE)

- there is a variant reading that differs in one letter (*euperispatos* instead of *euperistatos*)
  - this would be “the easily distracting sin,” which fits the context and leads naturally into the clause that introduces verse 2
  - whatever the reading, AH regards sin as a major impediment in the Christian’s spiritual race

# EXHORTATION: LET US RUN THROUGH ENDURANCE THE SET-BEFORE-US RACE

- “endurance” appears three times in the first three verses; it is the theme through v. 17
- The “race” is not a sprint, but a lengthy race that requires endurance
- the race has been “set before us” by God



# EXHORTATION: LET US RUN THROUGH ENDURANCE THE SET-BEFORE-US RACE

- fixing our eyes upon the “of faith pioneer and perfecter, Jesus”
- the witnesses of chapter 11 provide encouragement in abundance
- Jesus is the par excellence faithful witness
- both the pioneer and the perfecter, the beginning and the end, of the (or, our) faith

# EXHORTATION: LET US RUN THROUGH ENDURANCE THE SET-BEFORE-US RACE

- who for the joy set before him **endured** the cross, despising the shame
- who has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (1.3; 8.1)



# IMPERATIVE: **CONSIDER** THE ONE HAVING ENDURED SUCH HOSTILITY

- *Analogizomai* (another NT hapax)
- it indicates not only careful thought about, but also esteeming something and a sense of comparing it to something
- consider *Jesus*, not the sufferings he endured

# IMPERATIVE: CONSIDER THE ONE HAVING ENDURED SUCH HOSTILITY

- hostility by sinners against himself
- result (so that): you will not grow weary and lose heart
- this is another concise restatement of what AH has been stressing throughout his homily

# RECOGNIZE TRIALS AS DISCIPLINE FROM OUR HEAVENLY FATHER, 12.4-13

## Our Tribulation as God's Discipline, 12.4-6

- though the readers had endured severe persecution for their faith (6.10; 10.32ff), they had not had to seal their testimony with their blood
- the athletic metaphor changes from running to boxing (another event of the Greek pentathlon)

# Our Tribulation as God's Discipline, 12.4-11

- “yet”: they might be called upon to be martyrs in the future
- AH continues to indicate that the recipients of his sermon were in a period of rest or ease that has caused spiritual slackening; so . . .
- AH focuses not on persecution, but **striving against sin**

# Our Tribulation as God's Discipline, 12.4-6

- they have forgotten Scripture's exhortation (this could be a question, "Have you forgotten . . ."; ESV, NET, NIV)
- discipline connotes education and training in Greek tradition; in Hebrew use, it connotes more a discipline by punishment
- hardship in the Christian life is our heavenly Father's training and disciplining us

# Our Tribulation as God's Discipline, 12.4-6

- this discipline is necessary, it is that for which we endure
- to be a son is to be disciplined



# Our Tribulation as God's Discipline

*An a fortiori, on-the-one-hand, litotic, rhetorical question rationale (7-11)*

- on the one hand we respected our earthly fathers who disciplined us
- on the other hand, shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits?

# An *a fortiori*, on-the-one-hand, litotic, rhetorical question reasoning

- our earthly fathers disciplined us for a short period of our lives as it seemed best to them ('though imperfectly' is implied)
- our heavenly Father disciplines us for our good, resulting in our sharing his holiness, i.e., that complete sanctification that will be consummated with Christ in his glory at his coming (see 2 Cor. 4.17)



An *a fortiori*, on-the-one-hand, litotic,  
rhetorical question reasoning

- to not accept God's discipline is a mark of rebellion against his Fatherhood
- 

# Our Tribulation as God's Discipline

## EXCURSUS ON EISEGESIS ON "FATHER OF SPIRITS"

Some have used this phrase to argue for creationism over traducianism as the origin of the human soul. AH has no dog in this fight.

# Our Tribulation as God's Discipline

## Benefits of discipline

- conceding what we all know from experience, AH acknowledges the sorrow brought through discipline
- it is not joy but pain (sorrow)

# Benefits of discipline

- but, to those who have been trained by it (not merely having experienced it)
- it is for our good
- it “pays back” the peaceful fruit of righteousness



# PROPER RESPONSE TO THE DISCIPLINE OF GOD, 12.12-13

- notice the corporate, other-focused nature of the exhortation
- strengthen the hands that are weak and knees that are feeble
- make straight paths for your feet  
(Proverbs 4.26)

WARNING: BE NOT *DEFILED* BY BITTERNESS AND FALL SHORT OF GOD'S GRACE, 12.14-17

- Pursue peace with all men
- With all, pursue peace

WARNING: BE NOT *DEFILED* BY BITTERNESS AND FALL SHORT OF GOD'S GRACE, 12.14-17

- Seek the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord (enter into his Presence)

# DO NOT FALL SHORT OF GOD'S GRACE

- See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God
- Falling short of the grace will happen if a “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble among them

# DO NOT FALL SHORT OF GOD'S GRACE

Falling short of the grace will happen if there be an immoral or godless person like Esau

- he sought the blessing “even afterwards”
- his real problem was his inability to repent (6.6; 10.26)

# CONTRAST MT. SINAI WITH MT. ZION, 12.18-24

- Yet another example of the difference between the old and the new which AH repeatedly points to throughout his sermon
- Mt. Sinai (unnamed, but clear from context)



# CONTRAST MT. SINAI WITH MT. ZION, 12.18-24

## Mt. Zion

- In contrast to the mount that can be touched (earthly) we **have** come (not, we **will** come) to Mount Zion
- city of the Living God
- heavenly Jerusalem

# Mt. Zion

- The **inhabitants** of the heavenly city
- innumerable angels (cp. Dan. 7.10)
  - general assembly and church of the “firstborns” (pl)
  - The Judge, God of all (4.13; 10.30)

# The inhabitants of the heavenly city

- The spirits of the righteous having been made perfect
- Jesus, mediator of a new covenant
  - that is, to the sprinkled blood
    - that speaks **better** than the blood of Abel
    - his sprinkled blood speaks
- The blood speaking sets up the readers for vv. 25ff

# WARNING: DO NOT *DEFY* THE ONE WHO SPEAKS FROM HEAVEN, 12.25-29

- Those Who Refused to Hear God Did Not Escape, **12.25-27**
  - the speaking of God through the blood of Jesus is not to be refused
  - the one who warned **on** earth and the one who warns **from** heaven are the same

# THOSE WHO REFUSED TO HEAR GOD DID NOT ESCAPE, 12.25-27

- those who experienced the shaking of Mt. Sinai, being warned on earth, went on to beg that no further word be spoken to them and later refused his word and missed his rest (they did not escape)
- how much more (*a fortiori*) those who turn away from the heavenly warning

# THOSE WHO REFUSED TO HEAR GOD DID NOT ESCAPE, 12.25-27

- The earth has been shaken, but the time comes when the earth and the heavens will be shaken
  - AH describes this as limited to the created order
- God's shaking (judgment) is a discriminating judgment



# WARNING: DO NOT *DEFY* THE ONE WHO SPEAKS FROM HEAVEN, 12.25-29

Show Gratitude that You Are Part of the Unshakable Kingdom, **12.28-29**

- the only proper response to being given a part in the unshakable kingdom is to show gratitude