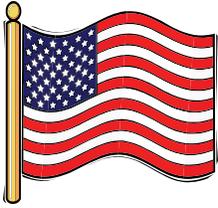


# KINGDOM SPIRIT



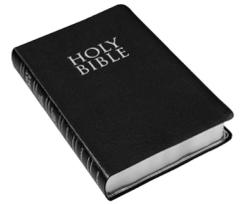
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**“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”**

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1202

## THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

Chapter 7 of the book of Isaiah has Isaiah prophesying the coming invasion of Israel and Syria by the king of Assyria. Isaiah continues in chapter 8 with this prophesy. It is very important that we know and understand this invasion and captivity that Isaiah is prophesying as God is laying the foundation for the coming of His Son Jesus Christ. This captivity is a necessary part of God's plan that He might have lawful reason to not only redeem Israel through the blood of His Son, but that through this redemption, He might also provide redemption for all mankind from the effects of the sin of Adam. I get the impression quite often that people seem to think that God suddenly got an idea that He needed to send Jesus Christ to be crucified on the cross to save the relatively few, who would accept Him, from going to hell. This is far from the truth. God planned everything that has happened before He created the world and all that is in it. He also established His rules as to how He wanted the world to work and then He has followed those rules Himself to the letter. This captivity that we are looking at is according to His law (Deut. 28:15-68) that then gave Jesus Christ the authority, by law as kinsman redeemer (Lev. 25:47-48), to redeem Israel from this captivity. Paul tells us in Rom. 11:11-12, **“I say then, Have they (Israel) stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through they fall salvation is come unto the**

**Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. <sup>12</sup>Now if the fall of them (Israel) be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles (nations); how much more their fullness?**

So as we continue our study into chapter 8, keep this in mind as we see the prophet not only prophesying the captivity of Israel, but the coming of the Messiah (their kinsman redeemer) and the promise of release and regathering from this captivity. (Read Isa. 8:1-4)

Isaiah and his wife had a baby son and God instructed Isaiah to name him Maher-shalhashbaz which means “Speed the spoil, hasten the booty.” Isaiah was instructed to take a roll (which was probably a clay tablet rather than a scroll) and write, or engrave this name as a message to Israel. Isaiah took two men to be witnesses as he wrote this. This referred to how soon this Assyrian invasion would occur. This was backed up with a prophecy concerning the new born baby. Before that baby would be able to say “my father” or “my mother” the captivity would have come to pass, i.e. within 3 years.

(Read Isa. 8:5-8) In verse 6, God told Isaiah, **“Forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoice in Rezin and Remaliah's son,”** he is referring to what is spoken of in the New Testament as the pool of Siloam. This pool was within the gates of Jerusalem and located on the southern side of Mt. Moriah and was fed by a spring on the east side of the mount through an underground aqueduct that I understand King Solomon had dug. He is likening the current form of government that God

had given them to this spring and pool as opposed to the rushing waters of the Euphrates that he is likening to the King of Assyria and his armies. He says that the flood (Assyria) would reach even to the neck. Jerusalem was considered the head, so He is saying that the Assyrian army would reach even to the city of Jerusalem. Being in Jerusalem, Isaiah is aware that only because “God is with us” (Immanuel), Jerusalem would be spared.

(Read Isa. 8:9-10) Remember that Rezin, king of Syria and Pekah, king of Israel, are confederating with each other to come against Judah to try to destroy the king line and place their own man as king of Judah. God is saying to these kings through Isaiah, form your confederacy and gird yourselves against Judah, but you will be broken in pieces.

(Read Isa. 8:11-12) Isaiah says God has warned him not to call a confederacy, or a conspiracy, what the people are calling a confederacy and to not fear what they are fearing. Rather He says, **“Sanctify the LORD of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread.”** (vs, 13)

(Read Isa. 8:14-18) If the people will do as Isaiah says, God will be a sanctuary, but the house of Israel and the house of Judah have already gone too far. God will be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to both houses and a gin and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. This is both a prophecy for the near term and for the long term as we find in the New Testament Christ portrayed as a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to Judah in particular. Because many are going to refuse to obey the law, many shall stumble and fall and be broken, snared and taken Isaiah says.

We know that King Ahaz did not take Isaiah’s advice but sent to Tiglathpileser, king of Assyria and asked him to come fight against Syria and Israel for him and sent silver and gold from the temple and the treasury to buy his help. Tiglathpileser apparently took his gold and silver and came up against Syria and took them captive but did not come against Israel at that time. (II Kings 16:7-9) Isaiah says that he will remain steadfast in serving the LORD along with the children God

has given him. Again, verse 18 is prophetic as well, as the author of Hebrews quotes this same verse indicating that this is what Christ said.

We still see today that when there are problems that people can’t seem to solve, they go to mediums or fortune tellers. Isaiah says that it was the same then, but he says that God forbids this and asks, why shouldn’t the people turn to Him and His law instead. It is far better to seek information from the living than from the dead. Because the people go to these mediums, the day will come when they will seek God, but He won’t be there for them. They will look to the earth and find nothing but trouble, darkness and dimness of anguish.

(Read Isa. 9:1) Some translations consider this verse to be verse 23 of chapter 8 as it obviously is in the context of verse 22. In that context, I Kings 15:20 records an event in the time of King Asa of Judah, who hired the king of Syria to come against a portion of Israel. Then later, in the time of Ahaziah, king of Judah, that God caused Hazael, king of Syria to come against all of the land of Israel east of the Jordan River. These events could be what is referred to in this verse. However, in the margin of my Bible it says that the phrase **“did more grievously afflict her”** could also be translated **“he shall glorify the way”** and it is translated in this sense in other translations such as the NASB.

Either way, the prophet sees a great change coming. (Read Isa. 9:2-5) Using this land that had been devastated by war as a backdrop for his prophecy, Isaiah says that the people of this land has seen a great light. Matt. 4:12-17 tells us: **“<sup>12</sup>Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;**

**<sup>13</sup>And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:**

**<sup>14</sup>That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,**

**<sup>15</sup>The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;**

**<sup>16</sup>The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and**

**shadow of death light is sprung up.**

**<sup>17</sup>From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."**

In verse 3 of Isa. 9, the King James translation says "**and not increased the joy.**" Most translations leave out the word "not." A note in the Companion Bible indicates that this may have been a result of wrongly dividing one word into two words by an early transcriber on some of the transcripts.

Verses 3-5 tell us the ultimate result of this light both at the time of Christ's first coming and His second coming. Verse 5 is a little confusing in the King James. The marginal rendering gives us a better understanding. Paraphrasing, using the marginal references, the verse would read: "**For every boot of the warrior from the noisy battle and garments rolled in blood: shall be used for burning.**" i.e. Isaiah is prophesying of a time of ultimate peace when there will be no more war.

(Read Isa. 9:6-7) In the record we have in Luke 1:32-33 of the angel Gabriel coming to the virgin Mary to announce to her that she was going to have a son, he told her that His name was to be Jesus and then he said: "**<sup>32</sup>He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:**

**<sup>33</sup>And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."**

Obviously neither this prophecy or the prophecy of Isaiah have come to full fruition in that Christ has not assumed the throne of David yet. In II Sam. 7:16, God told David "**And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established for ever.**" David's kingdom was the kingdom of Israel. A casual reading of Scripture might lead one to believe that because of men's failures, this promise failed. However, this was an unconditional promise to David. It did not depend on what man did. So I submit that a careful study of Scripture and succeeding history will reveal that this kingdom and throne is very much alive awaiting the seating of the King of Kings. If

we remember that the purpose of God's selection of Israel to be His kingdom during the exodus from Egypt at Mt. Sinai, in keeping with His unconditional promises to Abraham, the complete fulfillment of these prophecies should be at the center of our expectations.

(Read Isa. 9:8-12) Isaiah brings us back to the problem at hand of Israel wanting to unseat the king of Judah and replace him with their own selection. The word "into" in verse 8 should read "against" according to the marginal reference and several other translations. Keep in mind that very often the kingdom of Israel is called Ephraim. Isaiah is chiding Israel for their pride and arrogance. Considerable damage has already been done to the kingdom, but in their pride they are saying we will rebuild it better than ever. However, God says that He will send their enemies until all of the land has been consumed. Verse 12 ends by saying, "**For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.**" I take this to mean that God's anger with Israel is not turned away, but He is still merciful to forgive if they will yet turn back to Him.

(Read Isa. 9:13-17) It is the leadership, the elders and false prophets, all of the leaders that God blames for the non-obedience of the people. This is a very great responsibility that was taken by those of that time and by those of our time as well. The authority, or power, is usually what is sought by those who put themselves up as leaders rather than the responsibility. Few, if any, realize that they are going to have to answer to God for how they did their job.

(Read Isa. 9:18-21) The end result of this wickedness is brother will be turned against brother, neighbor against neighbor. In the situation that existed in Isaiah's time he is saying that the different tribes are against each other yet together, they are trying to come against Judah.

(Read Isa. 10:1-4) God continues by declaring woe on those that enact unrighteous laws and that tell those who are victims of their unrighteous decrees that they are just suffering from misfortune when they are the ones who have brought it about. Sounds kind of familiar today. But the result is they deprive the needy of justice,

## THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

rob the poor of their rights, and steal from the widows and the fatherless. This sounds so much like what we are facing today that it is hard to imagine that we are talking of a totally different time. Isaiah asks what these people will do when this predicted invasion from Assyria comes. Where will they go for help? What good will the glory of being one of the leaders do them?

To understand what Isaiah says next, we need to have a reasonable understanding of the sovereignty of God. We need to see the whole picture. I recommend a study of Roman's 9 to help with this understanding. Also we need to understand Isa. 45:7, **"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things."** God is not evil, He does not do evil things, but He did create evil and He uses it in His plan. In Isa. 10, God says that He is going to use Assyria to destroy Israel and put her in captivity and then He is going to destroy Assyria for doing it.

(Read Isa. 10:5-19) While God says that He is the one sending Assyria against Israel, the king of Assyria and his princes are going to consider that they have done all that they do by their own power and wisdom. But God asks in vs. 15, **"Shall the ax boast itself against him that heweth therewith?"** They are going to be a tool in the hand of God, but they are going to take credit for it themselves. For this reason God says He **"will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria and the glory of his high looks."** This isn't just a near term prophecy as we see by vs. 16-19, but will also have bearing at the end of the age.

Then comes the promise that God makes several times concerning Israel. (Read Isa. 10:20-23) This will not be the end of Israel. There will be a remnant that will return to God. Again, we have to remember the promises to Abraham.

(Read Isa. 10:24-34) Isaiah now turns his attention to Zion, or Jerusalem. He tells them not to be afraid of the Assyrians even though, as we have seen already, they will come to the very gates of the city. But God promises to cut them off in a grand fashion. We will see how He does this as we continue our study. JRL

(Read Heb. 11:23). The word "proper" indicates he was exceptional in his appearance. The Companion Bible has a note on this verse that says, "Moses' parents must have had some revelation from God, on which their faith could act." The Book of Jasher may hold the answer. Moses' father was Amram, a son of Kohath, a son of Levi. His mother was Jochebed, a daughter of Levi, so she would have been Amram's aunt. When the Pharaoh issues his order that all the male Hebrew babies were to be thrown into the river, Amram had apparently separated from his wife so that they would have no more children. However, Miriam, Moses' sister, though probably only about 3 years old gave a prophecy. Jasher 68:1-3 tells us "And it was at that time the spirit of God was upon Miriam, the daughter of Amram, the sister of Aaron, and she went forth and prophesied about the house, saying, behold a son will be born unto us from my father and mother this time, and he will save Israel from the hands of Egypt. And when Amram heard the words of his daughter, he went and took his wife back to the house, after he had driven her away at the time when Pharaoh ordered every male child of the house of Jacob to be thrown into the water. So Amram took Jochebed his wife, three years after he had driven her away, and he came to her and she conceived." This prophecy, though from a 3 year old child, could well have been what Moses' parents had faith would happen and could have been what the author of Heb. based verse 23 on.

(Read Heb. 11:24-26) (Read Ex. 2:11-22) This doesn't tell us very much about what made Moses turn from the nobility of the house of the Pharaoh and seek out the children of Israel. He may have been aware of the prophecy of his sister Miriam. But whatever happened, the author of Hebrews tells us that he apparently knew enough about God and His ways that he esteemed the reproach of Christ to be greater riches than all of the treasures of Egypt, since he understood what the reward would eventually be. We're told in Scrip-

ture that Moses, like Abraham looked forward to that day.

(Read Heb. 11:27, 28) (Read Ex. 3:2-6) Because Moses encountered the invisible God in person, manifested in the burning bush, he was not afraid of the king of Egypt that he could see. This gave Moses the faith to face the Pharaoh without fear as God told him to do the ten times before the Pharaoh gave permission for the Israelites to leave Egypt. But, consider the faith Moses had to command the Israelites to prepare the Passover meal and to get ready to leave Egypt. A failure on his part would have surely meant death to him, not necessarily from the Egyptians, but from the Israelites as well. To trust that God would kill all of the first born of the land, but spare the firstborn of Israel would have taken a great deal of faith.

(Read Heb. 11:29) (Read Ex. 14:10-31) It appears that not until the Israelites saw the dividing of the sea did they have the faith to cross the sea that had been dried up before them. A thought that I had is that the Egyptians also had the faith to go into the sea but their faith was to no avail as they were destroyed. It is kind of easy to have faith when one sees a miracle happen right in front of them. However, as we talked before, the faith of the Israelites was not an enduring faith.

(Read Heb. 11:30) (Read Joshua 6:1-5, 20, 21) It would appear to me that Joshua was the one having the real faith, though the people would have had to have some faith just to follow Joshua's orders. But this should have strengthened their faith greatly.

(Read Heb. 11:31) (Read Joshua 2:1-24; 6:23, 24) Her faith was based on what the people of Jericho had heard concerning the children of Israel as they traveled toward the land of Canaan. But it was a strong enough faith that she put her life on the line to help the spies that had come to her. She had recognized that there had to be a powerful God that had caused all of the things that had happened to the Israelites as they left Egypt, and was willing to put her faith in that God and realized that He was able to save her and her family even though she recognized the fact that

the destruction of the city of Jericho and its inhabitants was a sure thing.

She and her family became naturalized citizens of Israel and Matt. 1:5 tells us that possibly she later married Salmon and was the mother of Boaz who was David's great grandfather.

There is some argument as to whether Rahab was a harlot or an innkeeper. The Scripture refers to her as a harlot, but Josephus sees her as an innkeeper. Innkeepers were apparently of low reputation, for they often were part brothel as well as inns. If she was an innkeeper, this would probably explain why the two spies went there in the first place. But she could have been both. However, I think we would agree that God is not concerned about one's past once they have repented by faith.

(Read Heb. 11:32-38) The author feels like if he listed all of the men and women that we have read about in the Scripture, he simply would not have time to do so. Very quickly, we might review the four judges that he lists. (Read Judges 7) It is interesting to me that Gideon's faith grew. He did not have the faith to conquer the Midianites to start with. Chapter 6 gives us the story of the sign of the fleece which tells us that it took a little convincing by God to get Gideon willing to go to battle, but when his faith was strong enough, we see the results of what God did through Gideon's faith.

(Read Judges 4:4-24) Since Jabin, king of Canaan was ruling over the Israelites, I think we can presume that he had a much larger army than the army that Barak raised up to fight against Sisera, the captain of Jabin's army. This possibility plus the fact that the Israelites were being ruled over by this king would have put the odds definitely on the side of the king. So for Barak to agree to lead an army that he had to make up against Sisera is something that would require faith. Note however, that he did not want the judge, Deborah, to whom God had spoken, to be very far from him, so he agreed on the condition that she would go with them to the battle.

Most of us are familiar with the stories of Samson and his various victories. One thing that we might find different about Samson is that by

our current day standards, we probably would not consider Samson to be a Christian based on some of the things he did. Yet, he recognized that his great strength was a gift of God. The full story of Samson is in Judges 13-16.

The story of Jephthah is found in Judges 11 and 12. (Read Judges 11:1-11) Jephthah then tried by diplomacy to settle the aggression that the Ammonites were threatening. When this didn't work, he went through the area occupied by Manasseh gathering an army and confronted the Ammonites. (Read Judges 11:29-40) Chapter 12 tells us that he also ended up fighting and defeating the Ephraimites as well because they attacked him because he did not call them to fight against the Ammonites and let them share in the glory of his defeat of them. I think we can see the faith he would have had to have after being rejected by his own family and then being asked to be their defender and judge. (Since human sacrifice was not acceptable to God, I think we can assume that Jephthah did not offer his daughter as a burnt sacrifice but rather dedicated her to the Lord by a perpetual virginity. I believe the law of vows would have allowed Jephthah to make this change. (see Lev. 27)

We are all familiar with the story of Samuel and of David. Both were men of God and exhibited great faith in several different ways. Likewise with all of the prophets. Most of the prophets that we have record of, their life was on the line because of their prophesying, yet they were faithful to continue to prophesy. Verses 33-38 of Heb. 11 gives us a quick review of what all that we have read concerning the things that the prophets did through faith. Something that I feel is missed sometimes is the latter part of verse 35, **“and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection.”** It was understood by these prophets and others that there was more than one resurrection, that one was better than the other in that those in this first resurrection would receive the greater reward, and thus they had the faith to withstand their torture. This brings to mind Rev. 20:4 where a description of those in that first resurrection is given, **“and I saw the souls of them**

**that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast; neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hand...”** This doesn't mean that only those that have been beheaded for the witness of Jesus will be in the first resurrection, but those who have that kind of faith. Remember, **“So faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”** (Rom. 10:17) The more we know of God, the greater will be our faith. But as these saints demonstrated, enduring to the end is the proof of our faith.

(Read Heb. 11:39-40) While we have said that had the Israelites entered into the land of Canaan when God told them to, they would have received the inheritance, this was God's will, but not His plan. The land of Canaan was not the ultimate promised inheritance. Israel obtained a partial inheritance of the land under Joshua and even more under David and Solomon, but this inheritance was only a type and shadow of the real thing. Remember verse 10, **“For he (Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”** The prophets prophesied of the New Jerusalem. Abraham looked for it; David looked for it. Whether they understood what we can understand today of this city, this God's kingdom on the earth, we cannot say, but they knew there would be something that God had promised beyond this mortal life and they looked forward to it.

We're told that these Old Testament saints did not receive that which was promised, even though their faith was great. The better promise had to await the ratification of the New Covenant at the Cross. We can understand now that these Old Testament saints could not receive that which was promised apart from the New Testament saints. It is to be a corporate fulfillment in that no one will be given the “better” inheritance of the glorified perfected body until all who have attained to the first resurrection receive it together.

(Read Heb. 12:1) The word “wherefore” ties us to chapter 11 with all of the examples of great saints whose faith endured to the end. Being

a Christian is likened to being in a race. As we have said before, the book of Hebrews is not talking about salvation, or justification. If we had to give a name to the subject that the author is talking about, it would be sanctification or one's Pentecostal experience. It is attaining to the first resurrection, the glorification of our bodies. All Christians are in the race by virtue of their Passover experience, or their justification by faith. Not all will be a winner; not all will finish the race; but all will be racers. A racer does not wear heavy boots, or a back pack, or heavy clothing when he races. All of these things would be in impediment to his racing. Likewise, a Christian racer has to lay aside those things which impedes his or her racing, whatever encumbers him or her, one's sin that so easily entangles us. We are going to get winded as we run; we are going to get tired and discouraged. It takes patience to endure to the end of the race. The author is telling us to run and to run with patience that we might overcome whatever obstacles that we might encounter.

(Read Heb. 12:2) Jesus is the original racer. He has completed the race and has crossed the finish line, the throne of God. That is our goal, our finish line as well. Because Jesus saw the joy that was set before Him, i.e. the glorification of His body and His sitting at the right hand of the Father, He endured the cross, despising the shame. He proved that the race is not an easy race, but rather one that requires endurance and patience.

I've noticed in some of the local bike races that everyone who starts the race is given a tee shirt that identifies them as a racer. They have this tee shirt whether they finish the race or not. Everyone who starts the race as a Christian is given citizenship in the kingdom whether they finish the race or not. But only those who finish the race sit down at the right hand of the Father in the body of Christ.

(Read Heb. 12:3) As most of us can attest to, there are many obstacles in this race. Perhaps the greatest is the hostility of sinners, of unbelievers. We see obvious examples such as removing prayer from our schools, not allowing Jesus to be mentioned by our Naval chaplains, trying to re-

move "In God We Trust" from our coins, forced removal of plaques and monuments that are inscribed with the Ten Commandments, etc. But, consider also the TV programs and other things that take us away from or detract us from Bible study, church services, being Christian neighbors. How about enticing advertisements to get us to do things that are actually against God, or the secularization of our schools and churches. If we think about it a little, I think we would be surprised at how many things take place in our lives that are intended, by those who cause them, to take us out of the race, so to speak.

This has always been so in some form or another. The author tells us to consider the hostility that Christ faced against Himself. He was a man such as we are. The author tells us that if we consider the contradiction, or hostility that He faced, we won't be wearied and faint in our minds.

Something to consider is that the very opposition that Christ faced became the tool by which He completed His race, His call. His enemies thought they could stop Him by crucifying Him, but had they known the Scriptures they would have known that this horrendous deed was what He needed to complete His mission. The same can be said of us. No man, except ourselves, can keep us from succeeding. Even if they crucify the flesh, they are only serving God's purpose with us.

(Read Heb. 12:4-6) The author is telling these converted Jews that they haven't seen anything yet, in a sense. They were facing the scorn and the social separation and some physical persecution from the Jews, but the real persecution that came from the Romans had not started yet at the time the book was written. The author says "**Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.**" thus indicating the time when resisting unto blood could yet come.

The author then quotes from Proverbs 3:11, 12. (Read) The Septuagint version is the one quoted by the author. I recently was privy to a conversation between 3 men who had gone to the same high school and had the same principal and they were discussing the manner in which he

exercised punishment by means of a board of education. They were all quite proud that he had disciplined them in the manner and the severity that he did. They all felt honored now that he had dealt with them in the manner he did and held him in great respect for it. That was not their feeling at the time by any means, but it certainly was now. The same thing applies when we are chastened by God. We don't really like it now, but as we look back over our lives, I think that most of us would agree that we appreciate having gone through it in some form or another.

One has to be a parent to feel that real painful love they have for a child when they have to chasten them. Only then can one really appreciate verse 6, **“For whom the LORD loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”**

(Read Heb. 12:7, 8) These verses help us to better understand the adoption as explained in Gal. 4:1-6 (Read). Chastening is part of the maturing process. If we are not chastened, we never mature; we never learn right from wrong; we never learn to take responsibility. This applies in our everyday lives and it applies in our relationship to our Heavenly Father. If we want to be sons we must mature; if we want to be Sons of God, we have to mature spiritually as well as physically. So as verse 8 tells us, if we don't mature, we are bastards, or illegitimate; we never become Sons of God, i.e. we do not attain to the first resurrection. There are many Christians that regard any discipline they receive as persecution from some demonic source. They want the rewards of Sonship without going through the chastening process that would instill the character of Christ in their hearts. As a result they are like immature children who think any discipline to be an infringement upon their liberty as children of God. They are in for a

big disappointment as they won't finish the race this side of the Great White Throne of Judgment.

(Read Heb. 12:9-10) The proper chastening by a parent has the purpose of trying to make the child into the kind of person the parent wants them to be. The chastening by the Lord has a greater purpose, **“That we might be partakers of His holiness.”** There are many fleshly things, some that we consider good and some bad, that we might have to lay aside as a result of chastening. This is very often difficult to do. It is only after we have given up something that we consider very important in our lives, after much struggling to keep from it, that we recognize God as chastening us and realize how much better off we are without it, even though we might have considered it to be very important and necessary to us..

(Read Heb. 12:11) I remember as a child that when I had disobeyed my mother, she would often make me go to the willows on the river bank and select a good willow for a switch and bring it to her to use on me. The switching was never as bad as having to go select the switch and bring it to her. It was far from joyous, but I thank her now for her efforts to teach me to obey and take responsibility for my actions. The same applies to our chastening by God. It pays dividends that we can't even imagine the value of at present. This verse tells us **“it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness.”** Can anyone imagine what it would be like to be totally righteous and those around you being the same?

We'll stop this lesson at this point. The next verse starts with “wherefore” which assumes that we understand what we have just studied, and are ready to apply that information as we take on another thought. JRL