

## Hebrews

### Chapter 12:1-13

<sup>1</sup> **Therefore**, since we also have **such a great cloud** of witnesses **surrounding** us, let's **rid** ourselves of every **obstacle** and the sin which so easily **entangles** us, and **let's run** with **endurance the race** that is **set before us**,

Pink (referencing chapter 11) > By faith Noah built an ark, Abraham separated from his idolatrous neighbors and gained a rich inheritance, Moses forsook Egypt and became leader of Israel's hosts. By faith the Red Sea was crossed, Jericho captured, Goliath slain, the mouths of lions were closed, the violence of fire was quenched. A spiritual faith, then, is not a passive thing, but an active, energetic, vigorous, and fruitful one.

**Therefore** > The Greek word used is not the one that is so familiar to us (*oun*). This one is *toigaroun* and is only found twice in the New Testament. HELPS relays > from *toí*, "indeed"; *gár*, "for"; and *oún*, "therefore" – properly, *for-indeed-therefore*, i.e. "for that very reason therefore." *Toigaroun*) is an emphatic way to introduce "what must follow" – in light of what precedes. That is, extending the same *idea* which precedes (as the *basis*).

Precept Austin > *Toigaroun* is a very strong Greek expression which could be translated something like "Mark you, for this reason, therefore let's run the race."

**Such a great** > HELPS > from *tosos*, "so much" and the demonstrative pronoun, *hoútos*, "this, that") – properly, *so much in this (that) case*.

**Cloud** > Robertson > Old word (Latin *nubes*), here only in the N.T., for vast mass of clouds. *Νεφέλη* is a single cloud. The metaphor refers to the great amphitheatre with the arena for the runners and the tiers upon tiers of seats rising up like a cloud.

**Surrounding** > Strong's > from *peri*, "about, concerning, around" and *keimai*, "to be laid, lie") > to lie around

Robertson > Literally, "having lying around us"

**Rid** > Strong's > lay aside

Precept Austin > *lay aside* > (*apotithemi* from *apo* = away from + *tithemi* = put) means to put or take something away from its normal location and put it out of the way.

**Obstacle** > Strong's > Probably from the same as *agkale*; a mass (as bending or bulging by its load), i.e. Burden (hindrance) -- weight.

Barnes > The word is often used in the classic writers in the sense of swelling, tumor, pride ... According to this, the meaning would be, that as a runner would be careful not to encumber himself with a garment which would be apt to wind around his legs in running, and hinder him, so it should be with the Christian, who especially ought to lay aside everything which resembles this; that is, all sin, which must impede his course.

Thomas > "Someone is recorded to have asked whether a certain thing would do a person harm, and the reply was given, 'No harm, if you do not wish to win.'"

Pink > The Greek word for "weights" is "tumor or swelling," ... While sitting at our ease we are hardly conscious of the weight of our clothes, the articles held in our hands, or the cumbersome objects we may have in our pockets.

**Entangles** > Precept Austin > (*euperistatos* from *eú* = *easily, readily, deftly, cleverly* + *periistemi* = *to surround, to place itself around* - *peri* = *around* + *statos* = *standing*) means literally that which is easily standing around (a competitor) thwarting (a racer) in every direction

**Endurance** > Precept Austin > (*hupomone* from *hupó* = *under* + *méno* = *abide*) means literally "to abide under" and has to do primarily with difficult circumstances whereas longsuffering (*makrothumia*) has to do more with difficult people. The root idea of *hupomone* is that of remaining under some discipline, subjecting one's self to something which demands the acquiescence of the will to something against which one naturally would rebel ... *Hupomone* does not describe a grim resignation or a passive "grin bear" attitude but a triumphant facing of difficult circumstances knowing that even out of evil God guarantees good. And so *hupomone* is not a passive acceptance but strong fortitude in the face of opposition or difficulty.

Utley > This chapter may be a rabbinical play on the word "endure" which means "voluntary, aggressive, patient endurance." This is the theme of the book and especially these last few chapters

**Race** > Guthrie > the word for race used here (*agōna*) is a word which denotes 'conflict'. It is used several times by Paul. In Philippians 1:30 it refers to his suffering; in Colossians 2:1 to his strivings on behalf of the Colossians; in 1 Thessalonians 2:2 to the opposition he encountered in the preaching of the gospel and in 1 Timothy 6:12 and 2 Timothy 4:7 to the fight of faith. It will be seen, therefore, that the race involved here was a stern test of endurance.

**Let's run ... the race** > Pink > The "race" is that life of faith and obedience, that pursuit of personal holiness, to which the Christian is called by God. Turning from sin and the world in penitence and trust to Christ is not the finishing-post, but only the starting-point.

Hughes > The scene is a great coliseum. The occasion is a footrace, a distance event. The contestants include the author and the members of his flock and, by mutual faith, us. The cloud of witnesses that fills the stadium are the great spiritual athletes of the past, Hall of Faith members - every one a Gold Medal winner. They are not live witnesses of the event, but "witnesses" by the fact that their past lives bear witness to monumental, persevering faith that, like Abel's faith, "still speaks, even though he is dead"

**Set before us** > (Interesting words being used here. "Surrounding" (above) was *perikeimai* > *to lie around* ... "Set" (here) is *prokeimai* > *to be set before*. The question remains > What was the race WE, personally, were given to run?

Precept Austin > (*prokeimai* from *pros* = *in front of* + *keimai* = *lie outstretched*) means to be set before one and figuratively means to be present to the mind as an example or reward. The idea is that the race lies before us in full view.

<sup>2</sup> **looking only at** Jesus, the **originator** and **perfecter** of the faith, 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.

**Looking only at** > Strong's > to look away from all else at

HELPS > (from *apó*, "away from" and *horáō*, "see") – properly, "looking away from all else, to fix one's gaze upon"

**Originator** > (Strong's) *archegos* > founder, leader

HELPS > from *arxé*, "the first" and *ágō*, "to lead") – properly, the first in a long procession; a *file-leader* who *pioneers the way* for many others to follow.

Utley > This first term (*archēgos*) is used in Heb. 2:10 of Jesus as the author of salvation; in Acts 3:15 of Jesus as the Prince (author) of life; in Acts 5:31 of Jesus as the Prince (leader) and Savior.

**Perfector** > HELPS > *teleiōtēs* (a masculine noun) – properly, a consummator, bringing a process to its finish (used only in Heb 12:2)

**Set before** > This is the same word we saw in verse 1 when we were told to run the race **set before** us. He "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."

**Endure** > This is the same word we saw in verse 1 when we were told to run **with endurance** the race **set before** us. He "for the joy **set before** Him **endured** the cross, cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."

**Despising** > Helps > properly, view *down*, i.e. with a negative (hostile) outlook; to despise, thinking *down* on (thinking *little* of); esteem lightly, seeing as insignificant or detestable; to treat with contempt or disregard

<sup>3</sup> **For consider Him** who has **endured** such **hostility** by sinners against Himself, so that you will not **grow weary** and **lose heart**. <sup>4</sup> You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your **striving** against sin;

**For** > I keep missing this! "For" is a word used in an argument ... a reasoning. Precept Austin relays > *For (gar)* introduces the reason for the exhortation to look unto Jesus and to keep looking to Him. Look unto him, for a comparison with Him will show you how much more He had to endure than you have had to endure. This principle is just as valid today as it was in the first century.

**Consider Him** > Guthrie > A word occurring only here in the New Testament and absent from the Septuagint is used in the opening exhortation in this verse: it is translated *consider Him* (analogisasthe). In the papyri this word is used in the mathematical sense of 'reckon up' and clearly implies a careful assessment.

HELPS > (from *aná*, "up, completing a process" intensifying *logízomai*, "reckon, reason") – properly, reason *up* to a *conclusion* by moving through the needed thought-process (analysis); to "add things *up*," *reckoning* from "premise to conclusion"

Utley > It literally means "add it up" and is used to emphasize the careful analysis of something. The ancients added numbers upwards and drew a line at the top for the total.

**Endured** > The same word we saw in verse 1 > Precept Austin > The root idea of *hupomone* is that of remaining under some discipline, subjecting one's self to something which demands the acquiescence of the will to something against which one naturally would rebel

**Hostility** > Precept Austin > (*antilogia* from *antilego* = *contradict* ... in turn from *anti* = *against* + *lego* = *speak*) literally a word spoken against or speaking against and so talking back, face to face, in opposition against (a dispute involving opposite opinions).

**Grow weary** > HELPS > properly, become weary (this was a common meaning for this term from 900 bc on, J. Thayer); weary to the point of sickness; "spent," ready to *collapse*

**Lose heart** > HELPS > from *ek*, "out from and to" and *lýō*, "loose, let go") – properly, let completely out as to (*entirely*) *succumb*, i.e. with the *outcome* of losing inner strength; hence, to become weary (exhausted), to the point of *fainting*.

Utley > These are athletic terms for runners panting and collapsing after a hard run race. Our author is encouraging these Jewish believers to continue.

**Striving** > (look at this word!) > Strong's > *antagónizomai* > to struggle against

<sup>5</sup> *and you have **forgotten** the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "My son, do not **regard lightly** the **discipline** of the Lord, nor **faint** when you are **punished** by Him; <sup>6</sup> **For whom the Lord loves He disciplines**, and He punishes every son whom He **accepts**."*

**Forgotten** > Strong's > to forget utterly

HELPS > (from *ek*, "out from and to" and *lanthánō*, "forget") – properly, *completely* forget, removed *out* from memory (consideration) and to the sin of willful neglect, i.e. with the *outcome* of being *wholly (totally)* absent from one's mind.

Wuest translates this phrase as, *And you have completely forgotten*

**Proverbs 3:11-12 (LXX)** > <sup>11</sup> *My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: <sup>12</sup> for whom the Lord loves, he rebukes, and scourges every son whom he receives.*

**Regard lightly ... faint** > Pink > In our text the Christian is warned against two entirely different dangers: despise not (*regard lightly*), despair not (*faint*). These are two extremes against which it is ever necessary to keep a sharp look-out.

Pink > The Greek word for 'despise' is nowhere used in the Scripture, but in this place. It signifies to 'set lightly by,' to have little esteem of, not to value anything according to its worth and use. The Hebrew word means 'to reprobate, to reject, to despise.'

Utley tells us the Greek grammar usually means to stop an act already in progress.

Wuest > *Stop making light of the Lord's discipline, correction, and guidance. Stop fainting when you are being effectually rebuked by Him.*

Pink > There is a dreadful amount of complaining among Christians today, due to failure to nip this evil weed in the bud. Grumbling at the weather, being cross when things are lost or mislaid, murmuring because someone has failed to show us the respect which we consider ourselves entitled unto. God's hand in these things-for nothing happens by chance under His government: everything has a meaning and message if our hearts are open to receive it-is lost sight of. That is to "despise" His rod when it is laid but gently upon us, and this it is which necessitates heavier blows. Form the habit of heeding His taps, and you will be less likely to receive His raps.

**Discipline** > Strong's > *paideia* > the rearing of a child, training, discipline

**Punished** > Strong's > to expose, convict, reprove

**For whom the Lord loves He disciplines** > Pink > The Christian's chastisements flow from God's love. Not from His anger or hardness, nor from arbitrary dealings, but from God's heart do our afflictions proceed. It is love which regulates all the ways of God in dealing with His own. It was love which elected them. The heart is not warmed when our election is traced back merely to God's sovereign will, but our affections are stirred when we read "in love having predestinated us" (Ephesians 1:4, Ephesians 1:5). It was love which redeemed us. We do not reach the center of the atonement when we see nothing more in the Cross than a vindication of the law and a satisfaction of justice: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). It is love which regenerates or effectually calls us: "with loving kindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3). The new birth is not only a marvel of Divine wisdom and a miracle of Divine power, but it is also and superlatively a product of God's affection.

**Accepts** > Precept Austin > means literally to receive or accept near or beside and then to accept deliberately, willingly, favorably and readily.

<sup>7</sup> ***It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline?*** <sup>8</sup> ***But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.***

**It is for discipline that you endure** > This is the proper interpretation of this phrase. The emphasis is on the discipline ... not the endurance.

**Deals** > Precept Austin > (*prosphero* from *prós* = to, toward + *phéro* = bring) refers primarily to an offering, whether of gifts, prayers, or sacrifices. It conveys the idea of carrying or bringing something into the presence of someone usually implying a transfer of something to that person ... In this verse in Hebrews *prosphero* is in the passive voice and conveys the meaning of "to behave toward, to deal with."

Vincent > The afflictive dealing of God with the recipients is an evidence that they are sons of God.

**Illegitimate children** > Zuck > In speaking of those who are not disciplined and are thus illegitimate children, he was probably thinking of Christians whose disloyalty to the faith resulted in their loss of inheritance (i.e., reward) which is acquired by the many sons and daughters. (In the Roman world, an "illegitimate child" had no inheritance rights.)

**Discipline** > Strong's > *paideia* > the rearing of a child, training, discipline

Precept Austin > Coach Tom Landry of the Dallas Cowboys is reputed to have said,  
 "The job of a coach is to make men do what they don't want to do,  
 in order to be what they've always wanted to be!"

<sup>9</sup> **Furthermore**, we had **earthly** fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much more be subject to the Father of **spirits**, and live? <sup>10</sup> For they disciplined us for a short time as **seemed best** to them, but He (disciplines us) **for our good**, so that we may **share** His holiness.

**Furthermore** > Strong's > then, next, therefore (an adverb denoting sequence)

Vincent > Everywhere else in N.T. this particle marks a succession of time or incident. Here it introduces a new phase of the subject under discussion.

**Earthly ... spirits** > Look at this wonderful play on words. *Earthly* is *sarx* > *fleshly*. *Spirits* is exactly as stated > *wind, spirit*.

**Seemed best** > (KJV > *for their pleasure*) > Strong's > to have an opinion, to seem

Wuest translates it as, *upon the basis of that which seemed good to them*

**For our good** > Strong's > to bring together, to be profitable

**Share** > HELPS > (from *metá*, "change after being with," and *lambánō*, "aggressively take or receive") – properly, to lay hold of with initiative which prompts "a change afterward,

<sup>11</sup> *For the moment, all discipline seems not to be **pleasant**, but **painful**; yet to those who have been **trained** by it, afterward **it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness**.*

**Pleasant** > Strong's > joy, delight

Precept Austin > C. S. Lewis got a bit closer to the Biblical meaning when he called joy an "unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction." That statement is a bit obtuse but Lewis then goes on to add that joy "must be sharply distinguished both from happiness and from pleasure".

**Painful** > Strong's > pain of body or mind, grief, sorrow

**Yields** > Precept Austin > (*apodidomi* from *apó* = from + *didomi* = give) means to pay or give back. It refers to fulfilling an obligation or expectation.

**it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness** > Pink > In Scripture, afflictions are compared to fire that purges away the dross (1 Peter 1:7), to the fan which drives away the chaff (Matthew 3:12), to a pruning-hook which cuts off superfluous branches and makes more fruitful the others that remain (John 15:2),

to physic that purges away poisonous matter (Isaiah 27:9), to plowing and harrowing the ground that it may be prepared to receive good seed (Jeremiah 4:3).

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, **strengthen** the hands that are **weak** and the knees that are **feeble**,<sup>13</sup> and make **straight paths** for your feet, so that (the limb) which is **impaired** may not be **dislocated**, but rather be healed.

**Strengthen** > (Look at the Greek word and then its definition) > Strong's > *anorthoó* > to set upright, set straight again (from *ana* > a preposition denotes upwards, up, as a prefix denotes up, again, back + *orthos* > straight, upright).

**Weak** > Strong's > to pass by or over, to relax

**Feeble** > Strong's > to loose from the side

**Straight** > Strong's > *orthos* > straight, upright.

Remember how this chapter started > *let's rid ourselves of every obstacle*. Barnes > The meaning is, that they were to remove all obstacles out of the way, so that they need not stumble and fail.

**Straight paths** >

*Straight* is found above.

*Paths* > Strong's > the track of a wheel, a track, path

**Impaired** > Strong's > lame, halt, maimed

**Dislocated** > Strong's > to turn away

Ellingworth > The Greek word *ektrepo*, translated *dislocated* (v. 13) has the technical medical sense of a foot turning and becoming dislocated

Wuest translated 12-13 as follows > *Wherefore, the hands which are relaxed and the knees which have become paralyzed, reinvigorate. And be making smooth paths for your feet, in order that that which is limping may not be wrenched out of joint, but rather that it be healed.*