



Knowing what the Hebrews knew

Old Testament background for Hebrews 12:1-29



Discipline: a painful blessing



Read Deuteronomy 8:2-5. *The idea of God disciplining His children is developed in Hebrews 12:5-11.*

Read Proverbs 3:1-12. *Verses 11-12 are quoted in Hebrews 12:5b-6.*

Read Proverbs 13:24. *The discipline of an earthly father is referred to in Hebrews 12:9-10.*

Familiar language



Read Isaiah 34-35 for a prophetic description of the LORD judging Israel's enemies and then gloriously transforming Israel's circumstances. *The language of Isaiah 35:3 is used in Hebrews 12:12.*

Read Proverbs 4:20-27 for a father-son lesson. *The language of verse 26 is used in Hebrews 12:13.*

Read Deuteronomy 29:16-18 for a warning to the Israelites before they entered the promised land. *The language of Deuteronomy 29:18 is used in Hebrews 12:15.*

Read Deuteronomy 4:23-24 for a warning against unfaithfulness to the LORD. *The language of verse 24 is used in Hebrews 12:29. Also note the similarity to the language of Hebrews 10:27.*

The firstborn blessing

In ancient Israel, the firstborn son in a family inherited twice as much as any other sons (Deuteronomy 21:15-17). The concept of "firstborn" came to mean not just "born first" but someone who receives special blessing and privilege (eg the LORD refers to Israel as His firstborn son in Exodus 4:21-23).



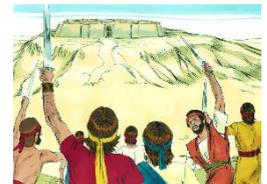
Read Genesis 25:19-34, 27:1-40 for the story of how Esau traded in his firstborn status. *Esau's story is referred to in Hebrews 12:16-17. God's people are described as "firstborn" in Hebrews 12:23.*

Two mountains and two messages



← The LORD gave the Law to the people of Israel at Mt Sinai near the start of their desert wanderings.

Jerusalem – and later the royal palace and the LORD's temple – was built on a hill called Mt Zion. →



Read Exodus 19:1-20:21 and Deuteronomy 9:19 for descriptions of some key events at Mt Sinai.

Read 2 Samuel 5:6-7 and Isaiah 24:21-24 for historical and future accounts of Mt Zion.

These two mountains are contrasted in Hebrews 12:18-24. Deut 9:19a is quoted in Hebrews 12:21.



Read Genesis 4:10 for the message conveyed by Abel's blood. *This message is contrasted with the message of Jesus' blood in Hebrews 12:24.*

The ultimate shake-up



Read the book of Haggai (only 38 verses in total!). *2:6 is quoted in Hebrews 12:26 as part of a contrast between the shaking at Mt Sinai and the future shaking that God promises.*



Engaging with the message

Questions & answers for Hebrews 12:1-29



Hot spots

- 1) What's alive for you in this passage? (Things that stand out, "aha" moments, questions you have, etc)



Digging into the passage

- 2) In this passage, what are the main ways that the author encourages the Hebrews to endure in their faith?

- 3) According to this passage, what is good about God's discipline?



Connecting life and faith

- 4) What are some practical ways in which we can "keep our eyes on Jesus" (12:2)?

- 5) Think about a time when you experienced God's discipline.
 - a. Briefly describe what happened.

 - b. How did that experience affect your faith?

- 6) Consider the list of instructions and warnings in 12:14-17. Which of those messages do you most need to hear and act on today?

- 7) What does it actually mean to worship God "with holy fear and awe" (12:28)?