

## Hebrews Lesson 12

Hebrews Chapter 12

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Memory verses for this week: *Psa 116:15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.*

**Introduction:** In Chapter 11, we studied about faith over the past 3 weeks. We started out studying about the definition of faith, and read about dozens of the saints who stood strong in the Lord by faith. Verse 6 of the chapter taught us that it is impossible to please God without faith. We continue on this topic in the beginning of Chapter 12 as we look at the ultimate example.

### I. Jesus – The Ultimate Example of Faith and Patience

*Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,*

*Heb 12:2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

This reference to ‘so great a cloud of witnesses’ refers back to the list of the many men and women of faith we just studied in chapter 11. We also have other Christians that live about us who are a witness to the saving power of the Lord Jesus Christ. A dedicated, consecrated life lived for the Lord has a great testimony to the lost in the world, and to us who know Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Paul tells us to lay aside every weight and the sin that pulls us down, and to run the race set before us.

Effective runners don’t come to a track meet weighted down in combat boots. And you and I need to examine our hearts and if there is sin in our life, we need to get rid of it. Sin has a price, and it burdens us and pulls us away from the Lord. Is there a sin in your life that hinders you? Most likely, if we will all be honest, there are areas in every one of our lives that could be improved upon. Turning away from the sin and seeking God’s forgiveness is the beginning of running the race to win. None of use can run the race set before us effectively if we are loaded down with burdens and sins.

Maybe you hold something against a fellow Christian or a family member, and you need to get that cleared up. Only you know what holds you back. But until our heart is pure before the Lord, we will never be effective in the race of life.

Jesus is the one we are to look to as our example... he truly is the author and finisher of our faith. At the end of Christ's life, he experienced great joy as he returned to heaven to be with the Father. He went to the cross, despised the shame, and paid the price that our sins earned. And today, He sits at the right hand of the Father as our Great High Priest.

John Gill said this about looking to Jesus:

**Ver. 2.** *Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, Not with bodily eyes, for at present he is not to be looked upon in this manner, but with the eye of the understanding, or with the eye of faith; for faith is a seeing of the Son; it is a spiritual sight of Christ, which is at first but glimmering, afterwards it increases, and is of a soul humbling nature; it is marvelous and surprising; it transforms into the image of Christ, and fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory: a believer should be always looking to Christ, and off of every object, as the word here used signifies.*

Verse 1 speaks of "The cloud of witnesses." Who are they?

a. The angels see and know what the saved do.

*Heb. 1:14, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?"*

b. "Witnesses" comes from the Greek word "martur" from which we get the English word "martyr." Elsewhere it is used of God, of Christ and of those who witness for Christ by their death. Here it speaks of those named in chapter 11, and means one or both of the following:

- (1) Their record of faith is a witness to us.
- (2) They are witnessing or watching us in our service for the Lord.

c. We need to remember that there are many people living all about us who are witnessing the good or the evil in our lives. 1.

d. Preparation For What Is Before Us.

1. The race is before us it tells us in verse 1.
2. The MAN which is Christ Jesus is before us.

He won the race, the crown, and the place.

3. The crown is before us.

*I Cor. 3:13, "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."*

*II Cor. 5:10, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."*

4. Also, the joy is before us.

5. The instructions on how to win the race are before us. We simply need to follow the rules, prepare on our bended knees, and run in the will of God.

*Heb 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

We all need to slow down and consider the one who endured this great contradiction of sinners against himself. We should consider Christ only.

*I Sam. 12:24, "Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you."*

*Gal. 6:9, "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not."*

Consider His striving against sin as it mentions there in verse 4.

*Rev. 5:9, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation."*

## **II. Chastisement and God's People**

*Heb 12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.*

*Heb 12:5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:*

*Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.*

How hard do we try to withstand sin? Verse 4 says we have not resisted unto blood striving against sin. That is so true. We all need God's grace to resist sin. We discuss chastisement in the next several verses beginning with verse 5. Who is to receive chastisement?

Chastisement is not for the lost man or woman, but is for the saved Christian. God's children are the only ones who are to receive chastening. Satan's children do not have to worry about being chastened. They are doing their father's will. But a payment date will be coming one day if they don't turn from

their sins and accept Christ as Lord and Savior. Verse 5 tells us to not despise chastening when it comes. Chastening from God does not mean God has removed his love from us. Chastening comes because God really loves us.

*Rev 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

*Prov 3:11 My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction:*

*Prov 3:12 For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.*

*Job 5:17 Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty:*

*Psa 94:12 Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law;*

*Psa 94:13 That thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, until the pit be digged for the wicked.*

*Psa 94:14 For the LORD will not cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance.*

*Psa 94:15 But judgment shall return unto righteousness: and all the upright in heart shall follow it.*

Albert Barnes in Barnes Notes on the New Testament said this about verse 6:

**For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth**—This is also a quotation from Proverbs 3. It means that it is a universal rule that God sends trials on those whom he truly loves. It does not, of course, mean that he sends chastisement which is not deserved; or that he sends it “for the mere purpose” of inflicting pain. That cannot be. But it means that by his chastisements he shows that he has a paternal care for us. He does not treat us with neglect and unconcern, as a father often does his illegitimate child. The very fact that he corrects us shows that he has toward us a father’s feelings, and exercises toward us a paternal care. If he did not, he would let us go on without any attention, and leave us to pursue a course of sin that would involve us in ruin. To restrain and govern a child; to correct him when he errs, shows that there is a parental solicitude for him, and that he is not an outcast. And as there is in the life of every child of God something that deserves

correction, it happens that it is universally true that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.”

Brother Bynum in his notes gave several examples of people who were chastised that God loved.

### Examples of God's Chastening Hand.

1. Abraham almost lost Sarah when he denied that she was his wife. Gen. 20. He brought sorrow into his life and to the whole Jewish nation when he fathered Ishmael by Hagar. Gen. 16
2. David brought chastisement upon himself and others, when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. You can read about that in II Sam. 11.
3. It is sad that Christians continue to think they can sin against God and not be chastised.

*Heb 12:7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?*

*Heb 12:8 But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.*

*Heb 12:9 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?*

*Heb 12:10 For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.*

*Heb 12:11 Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.*

We should never despise chastening because it is one of the ways God uses to mature us spiritually. Look back at all the good times in your life. Now think about all the bad times. In which time did you learn the most spiritually? Of course it was when you went through the bad times. We have to look to the Lord in the tough times. So chastisement is good and proves to us that we really are a saved son of God.

Chastisement causes us to be drawn closer to God. I remember as a child being corrected by my dad, and it hurt. But looking back, I now know he did it for my own good. If you are living in sin and are not being chastised, you'd sure better check your salvation. According to the bible, it says that God chastises those whom he loves.

## J. Vernon McGee had a good comment about verse 9.

Believe me, I listened to my dad. I hadn't heard about the new psychology in which you don't pay any attention to your parents, and your parents aren't supposed to discipline you. My dad disciplined, and I listened to him. The writer says that if we listen to our earthly parents, "shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" Whether or not you listen to your earthly father, you had better listen to your heavenly Father.

The writer to the Hebrews goes on to make a suggestion. He says, "Be in subjection to the father of spirits, and live." Does he mean live it up? I think he means to live a Christian life in all its fullness—that's the positive side. But I think there is also a negative aspect, which is that the heavenly Father disciplines in very severe ways sometimes, and there is a sin unto death. The sin unto death is a sin that a child of God can commit, and sometimes the heavenly Father will take a disobedient child out of this world because he is disgracing Him. The writer is saying that you had better listen to your heavenly Father because He is disciplining you in love, but if you persist in going on in sin, He may take you home. i

### The Purpose of Chastening. v. 9-11

1. That we might reverence God and be under subjection to Him.
2. God chastises those he loves so that we might be partakers of His holiness.
3. He does this so that the peaceable fruit of righteousness might be yielded through us.
4. We should consider and ponder the many Scriptures on chastisement.

**Job 5:17-18**, *"Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: For he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole."*

**Job 34:31**, *"Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more."*

**Psa. 94:12**, *"Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O LORD, and teachest him out of thy law."*

**I Cor. 11:32**, *"But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world."*

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iJ. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.

*James 1:12, "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."*

### III. Endurance for the Child of God

*Heb 12:12 Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;*

*Heb 12:13 And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

God tells the mature Christian to help the weak Christian.

*Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

*Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.*

**Title:** Adam Clarke's Commentary on the New Testament

**12. Wherefore lift up the hands**—The apostle refers to Isaiah 35:3. The words are an address to persons almost worn out with sickness and fatigue, whose hands hang down, whose knees shake, and who are totally discouraged. These are exhorted to exert themselves, and take courage, with the assurance that they shall infallibly conquer if they persevere.

When we fail to live a separated life for God, many times it hinders us and our testimony is damaged. We are not effective and it hurts us in trying to reach the lost.

*Heb 12:14 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

God's desire for us to seek after peace with all men. I have learned that when we live peaceably, we avoid much trouble in this life. And we can eliminate a lot of controversy and hard feelings by using soft answers.

*Prov 15:1 A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.*

*Prov 15:2 The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.*

*Prov 15:3 The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.*

*Prov 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.*

*Heb 12:15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;*

It is important to realize who is hurt when we are troubled and have a root of bitterness in us... we are the ones hurt.

J. Vernon McGee said this about verse 15.

“Looking diligently” has in it the thought of *direction*. And what is that direction? “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith ...” (Heb. 12:2).

“Lest any man fail of the grace of God.” The word here for “fail” is not apostasy—this is not speaking of the danger of apostatizing. It means simply to fall back. In other words, a believer must keep his eyes on the Lord Jesus, not on men. If he doesn’t keep his eyes on Him, he is apt to get to the place where he does not avail himself of the grace of God.

Now God has a tremendous reservoir of grace, and He wants to lavish it upon His children. He is prepared to do that, and He is able to do that. Christ paid the penalty for our sins, and God is rich in mercy, rich in grace, and He wants to expend it upon us. The problem is that many of us do not avail ourselves of His grace. But you see, we are talking here about reality—something that you can go to God for and lay hold of it. That is the glory of it all, and that is the message of this epistle. Have you gone to Him today, my Christian friend? Have you talked to Him—yes, reverently, but really talked to Him like He is your Father? Tell Him about yourself. Tell Him you need grace. We all need grace and it is available, but we’ve got to apply for it. We need to ask Him for it. Do not fail of the grace of God.

“Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.” One critical, ugly saint in a church can stir up more trouble than you can possibly imagine, just like one rotten apple in a barrel spoils all the others. We need to ask God for grace to endure whatever we are going through, and not become bitter toward any one or toward any circumstances. ii

In these first 3 verses of our lesson today, we are encouraged to walk worthy of our calling as a Christian. Brother Bynum pointed out 5 things about these verses.

1. Verse 12 encourages us to walk uprightly.
2. We are to make a straight path, with the weak in view it tells us in verse 13.

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iiJ. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible commentary [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1981 by J. Vernon McGee.



3. Verse 14 points out that truth should be spread by peaceful means, rather than through strife and agitation.
4. It goes on to tell us that our holiness is in Christ, or better is Christ, but we should make His holiness visible in our lives.
5. Finally in verse 15, we are encouraged as Christians to be self searching. Those who fail in Christian service will hinder the unsaved. Our walk in life may be the image the world views God. 1.

*Heb 12:16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.*

*Heb 12:17 For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.*

Esau was in line for the birthright. But because of being a person in control, he sold away his birthright to obtain food and lost the birthright. He lost the wonderful blessings by his own choice. It appears that Esau had gone so far that he could not find a place of repentance. If a person can not repent, then very bad results follow. A person who willfully sins after receiving the truth is in danger of God's judgment upon his life. When the Holy Spirit moves on our heart, we need to respond right then. There may come a day when God will no longer call.

*Psa 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

*Psa 103:9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.*

*Rom 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.*

*Rom 8:14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.*

*Heb 10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,*

*Heb 10:27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

*Gal 6:8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*

#### IV. Mount Sinai and the Heavenly Jerusalem

*Heb 12:18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,*

*Heb 12:19 And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:*

*Heb 12:20 (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:*

*Heb 12:21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)*

Israel was wandering in the desert near Mt. Sinai when the law was given. The chosen nation of God stood in the presence of God without having Christ to intervene for them. Thank God that Jesus stands as our mediator today between us and God.

1. We that are saved know that the gospel is the truth that delivers us from the penalty of sin. However, the sinner finds fear and death from God's Holy Law.

2. Why in the world would they prefer this to grace.

*Ex. 19:12, "And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death."*

*Deut. 9:19, "For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure, wherewith the LORD was wroth against you to destroy you. But the LORD hearkened unto me at that time also." 1.*

**We that know Christ know the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.**

*Rom 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

*Rom 1:17 For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.*

*Heb 12:22 But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,*

*Heb 12:23 To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,*

*Heb 12:24 And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

Thank God that we in the New Testament times do not stand at Mt. Sinai without one to take up and defend us. We have come unto the Holy Jerusalem.

Notice what all is gathered at the heavenly Jerusalem:

- 1) An innumerable company of angels.
- 2) The church of the first born. (The New Testament church which is the Bride of Christ.)
- 3) God -- The Judge of all.
- 4) The Spirits of just men made perfect. (Old Testament Saints... these are not in the church which make up the bride)
- 5) Jesus – The Mediator of the covenant.

Angels and Old Testament saints are not in the church which means they are not in the bride of Jesus Christ.

Here are some verses relational to coming to Mount Sion.

*Psa. 78:68-70, "Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established for ever. He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds."*

*Psa. 125:1, "They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the LORD is round about his people from henceforth even for ever."*

*Psa. 48:2, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King."*

*Psa. 132:13, "For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation."*

*Isa 28:16, "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste."*

## V. Warnings and Instructions

*Heb 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:*

This is a somber verse to remind us that we had better listen to God when he speaks to us. And how does He speak today? Through the written Word, the Bible, and the guiding of the Holy Spirit. If Israel did not escape when they disobeyed the law, neither will we if we forsake the New Testament law.

God one day will shake this old earth by His Word.

1. It is dangerous to refuse God and His Word.

*Prov. 1:24-26, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh."*

2. God is going to shake heaven and earth in the future.

*Hag. 2:6-7, "For thus saith the LORD of hosts; Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the LORD of hosts."*

*Zech. 14:4-5, "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee."*

*Rev. 6:12-13, "And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind." 1.*

*Heb 12:26 Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.*

*Heb 12:27 And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.*

*Heb 12:28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*

*Heb 12:29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

God shook the earth once and He will shake it again in the future at the close of this age. We may have an earth that is unstable, but we have a kingdom in Christ that is solid and can not be moved. When Jesus is your foundation, you are truly on the rock that can not be shaken. The nation of Israel received a material kingdom which was moved because of their sins. But with Jesus, we are not going to be shaken.

*1 Cor 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*

*1 Cor 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

### **God Preserves By His Mighty Power.**

1. His kingdom and things ordained by God shall remain.

*Matt. 24:35, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."*

2. We are reminded in verse 29 that our God is a consuming fire. None will stand against Christ when He comes in judgment after the 7 years of tribulation.

*II Thess. 1:8, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

*Psa 50:3 Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence: a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him.*

*Psa 50:4 He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.*

*Psa 50:5 Gather my saints together unto me; those that have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.*

*Psa 50:6 And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Selah.*

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*Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.*

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**Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.**

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1. Some of basic outline and some notes from Tabernacle Baptist Church by permission of Danny Taylor.  
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