

引言 INTRODUCTION

Duties go together with our rights. That is the first lesson I learned from my social studies class in school. We enjoy many benefits in the society. But we are also obligated to pay tax, and even perform jury duties and serve in the military when called upon. Being a citizen of God's Kingdom is similar to being a citizen of any country. God gives His children many blessings in this life and for eternity. He entrusts us with certain responsibilities. We must obey Him and follow His instructions. Jesus established a new covenant with His believers. All who receive Him have an eternal relationship with God. Jesus paid a great price to save us. We must also be ready to pay a price to follow Him. That is a major theme in the book of Hebrews. The author encourages his readers to rely on God and persevere until they see the Lord. Besides encouragement, he also gives them some warnings. Today we will study the last of the five warnings in the book. The author urges his readers not to ignore the grace they received from God. The blessings they would lose were too valuable for them to deny Jesus. We should not disregard God's grace either. Very often, we take certain things like good health for granted. The past two weeks was a humbling experience for me. We should always give thanks to God for everything. God saves us and He watches over us every moment. If we cherish our relationship with God in this life, we will long for His eternal blessings. In this passage, the author presents his arguments in a negative way. We need to turn those points 180 degrees in order to get the positive lessons. Let us consider three words based on this passage.

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 珍惜 Appreciate

The first word is appreciate. We must appreciate the status we have in God. Let us begin by reading [verse 14-17](#). The author uses the notion of holiness to connect with the preceding context. God disciplines us so that we can share in His holiness. Sin does not only affect our personal relationship with God. It will also stumble a faith community. In verse 15, the author describe sin like a bitter root. Picture it like weeds that will choke up your garden. Sin can be contagious. Moses sent twelve spies to survey Canaan after the Israelites left Egypt. Ten of them were afraid of the enemies while forgetting God's promise. They persuaded everyone to go back to Egypt. As a result, God judged His people. They spend the next forty years wandering in the wilderness until that generation passed away. Whether it is in the society or in a church, we must evaluate people's opinions in light of the facts and God's truth. Are they being objective and Biblical? Will it draw people closer to or away from God? The author uses Esau as an example of someone who had a selfish-intent. He did not appreciate the privilege God gave to him. Esau was the older twin brother of Jacob. Esau was a typical red-neck who loved hunting. His dad Isaac was a carnivore, and so he showed favor to Esau. Whereas, Rebekah the mom loved the stay-home boy Jacob more. One day Esau came home exhausted after a hunting trip. He noticed that little brother was making some stew. Esau was starving, and so he asked Jacob for some soup. Jacob took advantage of his brother's weakness. He replied: "Sure! But you have to exchange your birthright for my stew." Esau replied without thinking: "I'm about to die of

hunger. What good is that birthright to me?” A pastor once said we should be careful not to make hasty decisions when we are hungry, angry or lonely. Satan knows how to manipulate our feelings and tempt us. In the Bible times, the firstborn son would carry on the family’s name and would get a double share of the father’s inheritance. Esau had no idea that he made a huge mistake until it was too late. When Isaac became old, he wanted to bless Esau. Rebekah then conspired with Jacob to steal Isaac’s blessing. Isaac unknowingly blessed Jacob instead of Esau. Isaac said in his blessing that Jacob’s descendants would lord over his brother’s. We see in the Bible that some blessings from senior figures carry certain prophetic meanings. Examples are like Abraham’s, Moses’ and even Jacob’s future blessings. Esau despised his privilege as the firstborn son. God’s blessing would be given to Jacob instead. In fact, God later changed Jacob’s name to Israel. Jacob became a key ancestor for the future nation. Esau’s mistake led to far-reaching and irreversible consequences. Isaac could not change his mind and he did not have any other blessing to give to Esau even when Esau begged with tears. The lesson for the story is in verse 15: **“See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God.”** The author urges his readers not to ignore God’s blessings like Esau did! They must appreciate the status they had in Jesus. The pioneers of faith in chapter 11 willingly gave up everything for their faith. Moses despised the privilege as a prince in Egypt. Jesus endured the pain and shame of the cross with joy. We should choose God’s blessings rather than the world’s treasures. We will suffer loss for our faith. Your friends may ridicule you for believing in an invisible God. The world will label us as narrow-minded and intolerant. The society admires success, fame and fortune but pays little attention to how people achieve them. Do not deny the Lord because of some temporary benefits such as your face, people’s acceptance or financial gain. God will protect us if we stand firm in Him.

2. 靠近 Approach

The second word we will ponder on is approach. One privilege all believers enjoy is to approach God in-person. Jesus’ death has opened the door for us to come to the Father. The author compares the restriction in the old covenant with the reception in the new covenant. Let us read **verse 18-21**. The background is recorded in Exodus 19. God gave the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. God asked Moses to set a boundary at the foot of the mountain. Any animal or human went past the line must be executed. God only allowed Moses and Aaron to go up the mountain and meet Him. There were thunder and lightning, dark cloud, smoke and fire, and sound of a trumpet when God descended. The earth was shaking too. It was so terrifying that the Israelites did not want to listen to God. They asked Moses to be their representative. The author of Hebrews says that actually Moses was afraid too. Everyone would rather keep a distance like going to a zoo to see lions, bears and other wild animals. It is dangerous to get too close. The whole setting underscores God’s holiness. Sinful people cannot approach a sinless God. Mount Sinai symbolizes a place for God’s judgment. Those restriction and punishment have been removed by Jesus. The author goes on to describe a second mountain in **verse 22-24**. Mount Zion refers to the location where Jerusalem is built. Specifically, it points to the temple mount. But the name Zion in the Old Testament prophecies often represent God’s people. That is the implication here. It is not about a physical mountain, but the place where God’s children will gather. It is the “city of the living God” and “the heavenly Jerusalem.” There is a multitude of angels. Then verse 23 says there will also be an assembly of the firstborn. The word “firstborn” here is plural in Greek. Therefore, it refers to a group of people. It is not about their birth order but their right to possess inheritance. They are enrolled in heaven. That reminds us of the book of life in

Revelation. God keeps the names of all the believers throughout history. In other words, those firstborns are people that will eventually be in heaven. If you are a Christian, then you will be among them too. Of course, God will also be there. Verse 24 highlights that Jesus is "the mediator of a new covenant." He shed His blood to establish a new covenant with us. His blood "speaks a better word than the blood of Abel." In Genesis 4, Cain killed his brother Abel out of jealousy. Abel's blood cried out for justice. But Jesus' blood covers all injustice for those who seek salvation in Him. In sum, there will be a huge congregation of angels and believers in God's presence on Mount Zion. The scenes at the two mountains are contrasting. No one was allowed to climb up Mount Sinai without God's permission. The presence of God stirred up great fear. However, God welcomes His children to gather on Mount Zion. They meet together with God in great joy. The readers of this letter should long for this future assembly with perseverance. God had reserved some seats for them. There would be an end to religious persecution. There will be a reunion with fellow believers in heaven. There will be an unending fellowship and worship in God's presence. Do you look forward to that gathering too? If so, we also need to persevere in our faith. The hardship you face may be different from what those first generation Christians experienced. But just like them, we receive the same salvation grace from Jesus. He is the same source of strength we can rely on in times of need. He gives us the same hope we can count on when there seems to be no hope. There should be no fear as we approach God today. Jesus has forgiven our sins. But do we approach God with joy? Do you get up on Sunday morning and come to church with joy? It is not about whether the songs and message fit your taste. Joy comes from your heart. It is an expression of love for God and thankfulness to Him.

3. 勸告 Appeal

We must appreciate the salvation grace we receive and we should approach God with joy. Thirdly, the author makes a final appeal to his reader and us to persevere. Let us read [verse 25-29](#). God's warning comes from both the earth and heaven. God made an earthly covenant with the Israelites on Mount Sinai. He gave them the Law through Moses. It dictates how God's people should conduct their life. There are blessings if they obey God, but also penalties if they rebel against Him. We know how people treated God's Word even while they were still in the wilderness. Thus, God disciplined them over and over again. That earthly covenant made at Sinai was breached. Jesus came from heaven and made a new covenant with His followers. This new covenant also carries words of warning like the previous covenant. Those who reject Jesus' salvation grace will be condemned eternally. We said before that those who are once saved by Jesus will be saved forever. Therefore, the readers of this letter would still go to heaven even if they turned away from the faith they once held. However, they would lose the future reward God prepares for His faithful believers. Therefore, they must persevere until they see the Lord. God's judgment will eventually come when Jesus returns. The second coming of Jesus gives hope to Christians under persecution because heaven will be their eternal resting place. Moreover, Jesus will exercise a righteous judgment on His return. The author quotes a message from prophet Haggai. At that time, the Israelites returned from the Babylonian exile and rebuilt the temple. They overcame some obstacles and accomplished the project. But some older people were sad because they remembered the original and more magnificent temple built in Solomon's time. Haggai reminded them that the glory of the temple did not come from its appearance, but from God's presence. That message was first fulfilled when Jesus came. God's Son arrived at God's house. However, the Jews despised Him and killed Him. At AD 70, the temple was destroyed. A

complete and final fulfillment of Haggai's prophecy will happen when Jesus returns with glory. At that time, God will shake His creation. It will be a global catastrophe much bigger than the shaking of Mount Sinai. Everything physical in nature will be destroyed. The only thing remaining, as verse 28 indicates, will be God's unshakable Kingdom. That will include angels and all of God's people. Therefore, the readers should not focus on the things that will eventually be shaken away, but things that are unshakable. They should fix their eyes on the invisible God and His eternal rewards. The same appeal is for us. Do not put our hope on what is visible and temporary, but on things that are invisible and eternal. Here is a simple test: what will you hold onto every time you hear a tornado warning? What are the things you do not want to lose when everything else is blown away? Usually when I hear the siren, I will grab my computer because it contains a lot of important files, and a box of crucial documents. Those are items that are hard to replace but handy to carry. What about you? Perhaps some old photos, keepsakes or your keys. Some parents will huddle with their young children. We now rely on forecast to prepare for any severe weather condition. We also have insurance policy to cover a loss. A storm may hit or miss. But Jesus will surely return. Are you ready to meet Him? All your material possessions will be shaken away. Therefore, we should not try to build our heaven on the earth. Rather, we should live our earthly life while preparing for heaven. We should do everything with a heavenly perspective. We should love God and His people instead of the world. We should Give glory to God in all we do. We should seize opportunities to share the gospel with family and friends.

結論 CONCLUSION

If we cherish our relationship with God in this life, we will long for His future blessings. Every day is a day closer to eternity. Sometimes, we get a lot of things done. On other days, we feel like running in a circle. Effective or not, our life journey is the sum total of the effort we put on every single day. All we have to do is be faithful to God's calling today. He will lead us to where we should be. I gain all that wisdom from a spider. I had a shocking discovery one day when I was driving. There was a small spider on my steering-wheel! I had a few choices: squashed it with my fingers but that would make a mess or stopped the car somewhere and got rid of the bug. Seeing that the spider would cause me no harm, I continued until I reached my destination. My new passenger swayed left and right depending on where I turned. Of course, it did not know why its little world was spinning. At the end, it traveled a few miles to a new location with me. Very often, we feel that we are being dragged to another place that is outside of our plan. But just like the spider that grabbed onto the steering-wheel, we must hold onto God's promises. Before we know it, God will bring us to where He wants us to be. In case you are curious about the fate of the spider: yes, I smashed it after I stopped my car.

引言 INTRODUCTION

權利與義務息息相關。這是在學校的社會科學課上學到的第一件事。我們在社會上享有許多福利。但我們也有義務納稅，甚至在有需要時當陪審員和服兵役。成為神國的公民與成為任何國家的公民相似。神在今生和永恆賜給祂的兒女許多祝福。祂也賦予我們某些責任。我們必須順服神，聽從祂的指示。耶穌與祂的信徒訂立了新約。所有接受祂的人都與神建立永恆的關係。耶穌為拯救我們付出了重大的代價，我們也必須準備好為跟隨祂而付出代價。這是希伯來書的一個主要主題。作者鼓勵他的讀者要依靠神，堅持不移，直到他們見主的面。除了鼓勵，他也給了他們一些警告。今天我們將學習這卷書中五個警告中的最後一個。作者敦促他的讀者不要忽視他們從神得到的恩典。如果他們否認耶穌，他們便會失去寶貴的祝福。我們也不應該忽視神的恩典。很多時候，我們把一些事情，比如健康看為理所當然。過去兩週的經歷使我謙卑下來。我們應該常常感謝神所賜的一切。神拯救了我們，祂時刻都在看顧我們。如果我們珍惜今生與神的關係，我們就會盼望祂永恆的祝福。在這段經文中，作者以否定的方式提出了他的論點。我們需要將這些觀點扭轉 180 度才能得到積極的教訓。讓我們根據這段經文思考三個用詞。

解釋 EXPLANATION

1. 珍惜 Appreciate

第一個用詞是珍惜。我們必須珍惜神給予我們的地位。我們先來讀第 14-17 節。作者用聖潔這個概念與前面的經文聯繫起來。神管教我們，是要使我們分享祂的聖潔。罪不僅影響我們與神的個人關係，它也會絆倒整個信仰群體。在第 15 節中，作者將罪形容為毒根。我們可以把它想像為雜草。不受控制的雜草會破壞整個花園。罪甚至可以傳染給別人。以色列人離開埃及後，摩西派了十二個探子去窺察迦南地。其中有十個探子因為害怕敵人而忘記了神的應許。他們想要說服其他人回埃及去。結果，神審判祂的子民。在接下來的四十年裡，他們在曠野漂流，直到那一代人去世。任何人的意見，無論是在社會上，還是在教會裡，我們都要根據事實和神的真理來作判斷。它們是客觀的和符合聖經的嗎？它們會使人更接近還是遠離神？作者用以掃作為例子，他是個自我中心的人。他不珍惜神給他的特權。以掃是雅各的雙胞胎哥哥。以掃是一個典型的紅脖子，喜歡打獵。他的父親以撒是肉食動物，因此他偏愛以掃。然而，媽媽

利百加卻更喜歡宅男的兒子雅各。一天，以掃打獵後筋疲力盡地回家。他注意到弟弟正在燒菜。以掃快餓死了，就向雅各要湯喝。雅各利用了他哥哥的弱點。他回答說：「沒問題！但你必須用你的長子名分來交換我的食物。」以掃不假思索地回答說：「我快餓死了。管他什麼長子名分？」一位牧師曾經說過，當我們飢餓、憤怒或孤單時，要小心不要做出倉促的決定。撒旦知道如何操縱我們的情感來試探我們。在聖經時代，長子會繼承家族的名字，並得到父親雙倍的遺產。以掃不知道他犯了一個嚴重的錯誤，直到為時已晚。當以撒年紀老邁時，他想要祝福以掃。利百加與雅各便串通，想要偷取以撒的祝福。以撒在不知不覺中祝福了雅各而不是以掃。以撒在祝福中說到雅各的後裔會管治他兄弟的後裔。我們在聖經中看到，一些長輩的祝福帶有一定的預言含義。例如亞伯拉罕、摩西，甚至雅各後來給兒子的祝福。以掃輕看他作為長子的特權。因此，神的祝福臨到雅各。事實上，神後來將雅各的名字改為以色列。雅各成為未來國家的重要祖先。以掃的錯誤導致了深遠和不可逆轉的後果。以撒無法改變主意，他也沒有其他的祝福可以給以掃，縱使以掃流淚懇求。這個故事的教訓是在第 15 節：**又要謹慎，恐怕有人失了神的恩...**。作者勸勉他的讀者不要像以掃那樣忽視神的祝福！他們必須珍惜他們在耶穌裡的地位。第 11 章中信心的先鋒甘願為信仰犧牲一切。摩西放棄作為埃及王子的特權。耶穌喜樂地忍受了十字架的痛苦和羞辱。我們應該選擇神的祝福而不是世界的財富。我們也會因為信仰而遭受損失。你的朋友可能會嘲笑你相信一個看不見的神。這個世界會說我們的心胸狹窄，不寬容別的思想。社會鼓吹成功、名和利，卻不理會人們如何達到那些目標。不要因為一些暫時的好處，例如你的面子、人的接納或經濟利益而否認主。如果我們在神裡面站穩，祂會保護我們。

2. 靠近 Approach

我們要思考的第二個用詞是靠近。所有信徒都享有同樣的特權，可以親自靠近神。耶穌的死為我們打開了通往天父的大門。作者在這裡比較舊約的限制和新約的接納。讓我們讀 **18-21 節**。這段經文的背景是記載在出埃及記 19 章。神在西奈山將律法賜給摩西。神要摩西在山腳下劃定界限。任何越過界線的動物或人都必須被處決。神只允許摩西和亞倫上山朝見祂。神降臨時出現閃電、黑雲、火和號角聲。連地也在震動。情形太可怕了，以致以色列人不想聽見神的話。他們請摩西做他們的代表。希伯來書的作者說實際上連摩西自己也害怕。每個人都寧願保持距離，就像去動物園看獅子、熊和其他猛獸一樣。靠得太近會很危險。整個氣氛強調了神的聖潔。有罪的人無法接近無罪的神。西奈山象徵著神審判的地方。那些限制和懲罰已被耶穌除去。作者在 **第 22-24 節** 繼續描述第二座山。錫安山是指建造耶路撒冷城的地方。具體來說，它指向聖殿山。但舊約預言中錫安這個名字常常代表神的子民。那就是這裡的含義。這不是指

一座石頭的山，而是指神的兒女聚集的地方。它是「永生神的城邑」和「天上的耶路撒冷」。有許多天使在那裡。然後第 23 節說那裡也是長子聚集的地方。這裡「長子」這個字在希臘文中是複數的。因此，它指的是一群人。這與他們的出生順序無關，所強調的是他們擁有繼承財產的權利。他們的名字被記錄在天上。這讓我們想到啟示錄中的生命冊。神保留了歷史上所有信徒的名單。換句話說，那些長子是最終會進天堂的人。如果你是基督徒，那麼你也會是其中一員。當然，神也會在那裡。第 24 節強調耶穌是「新約的中保」。祂流血與我們建立新約。祂的血所說的「比亞伯的血所說的更美」。在創世記第 4 章，該隱出於嫉妒殺死了他的兄弟亞伯。亞伯的血在呼求神的公義。但耶穌的寶血掩蓋了那些尋求救贖的人一切的不義。總而言之，在錫安山上將有一大群天使和信徒與神同在。兩座山的情境對比鮮明。沒有神的許可，任何人不得攀登西奈山。神的降臨引起極大的恐懼。然而，神歡迎祂的兒女聚集在錫安山上。他們以喜樂與神相見。這封信的讀者應該堅定不移地盼望將來的聚會。神為他們預留了一些座位。信仰迫害將會結束。他們將會與其他信徒在天堂團聚。在神面前會有無盡的相聚和敬拜。你也期待這樣的聚會嗎？如果是的話，我們也必須堅持我們的信心。你所面臨的困難可能與那些第一世紀基督徒所經歷的不同。但就像他們一樣，我們從耶穌那裡得到同樣的救贖恩典。耶穌是我們在需要時可以依靠的力量源泉。在絕望中祂給予我們盼望。當我們今天靠近神之時，不應該有任何恐懼。耶穌已經赦免了我們的罪。但是我們是否帶著喜樂靠近神呢？你在星期天早上是否帶著喜樂起床和來到教會？這與詩歌和信息是否符合你的口味無關。喜樂是來自你的內心，表達你對神的愛和感謝。

3. 勸告 Appeal

我們必須珍惜我們所領受的救贖恩典，我們應該充滿喜樂地靠近神。第三，作者最後勸告他的讀者和我們要堅持下去。讓我們讀 25-29 節。神的警告來自地上和天上。神在西奈山與以色列人立了一個地上的約。祂通過摩西將律法賜給他們。律法規定了神的子民應該如何生活。如果他們順服神，就會得到祝福，但如果他們背逆神，就會受到懲罰。我們知道他們從在曠野的時候已經不聽神的話。因此，神一次又一次地管教他們。在西奈山立的地上的盟約被破壞了。耶穌從天而降，與祂的跟隨者立下新約。這個新約也像之前的約一樣帶有警告的條文。那些拒絕耶穌救恩的人將被永遠定罪。我們之前說過一次得救的人將會永遠得救。因此，這封信的讀者即使背棄了曾經持有的信仰，仍然會去天堂。然而，他們將失去神為祂的忠心信徒預備的永恆獎賞。因此，他們必須堅持到見主面的時候。當耶穌再來時，神的審判便會臨到。耶穌的再來是受迫害的基督徒的盼望，因為天堂將是他們永遠安息的地方。此外，耶穌會在祂再來時施行公義的審判。作者引用了先知哈該的信息。那時，以色列人從巴比倫被

擄之地歸來，重建了聖殿。他們克服了一些障礙，完成了這個目標。但有些長輩很難過，因為他們想起了所羅門時期建造的原來、更宏偉的聖殿。哈該提醒他們，聖殿的榮耀不是來自它的外表，而是來自神的同在。當耶穌來的時候，這個預言第一次應驗了。神的兒子來到了神的家。然而，猶太人厭棄耶穌並殺了祂。在公元 70 年，聖殿也被完全毀滅了。當耶穌帶著榮耀再來時，哈該的預言將會完全實現。那時，神會震動祂的創造物。這將是一場比震動西奈山更大的全球性災難。自然界中的一切物質都將被摧毀。正如第 28 節所指出的，唯一剩下的將是神不能被震動的國。這將包括天使和所有神的子民。所以，讀者不應該把注意力集中在最終會被震動的東西上，而應該關注那些不能被震動的東西。他們應該定睛在看不見的神和祂永恆的獎賞之上。我們也應該聽從這個勸告。不要把希望寄託在看得見和暫時的東西上，而要寄託在看不見和永恆的東西上。我給大家一個簡單的測試：每次當你聽到龍捲風的警報時，你會收拾什麼東西？當其他一切都被吹走時，你最不希望失去的是什麼？通常當我聽到警報時，我會拿著我的電腦，因為裡面有很多重要的檔案，還有一箱重要的文件。那些是難以補償但又是攜帶方便的物品。那你呢？也許是一些舊照片、紀念品或你的鑰匙。有些父母會緊抱著孩子。我們現在依靠天氣預告來做好準備。我們也有保險計劃來彌補損失。暴風雨可能會來但又不一定會出現。但是耶穌一定會回來。你準備好迎接祂了嗎？你所有的財物都將被震動。因此，我們不應該夢想在地上建立我們的天堂。我們乃是應該在每天生活中為天堂做好準備。我們應該以屬天的眼光做每一件事。我們應該愛神和祂的子民，而不是愛世界。我們應該藉著所做的事情榮耀神。我們應該抓緊機會向家人和朋友傳福音。

結論 CONCLUSION

如果我們珍惜今生與神的關係，我們就會盼望祂永恆的祝福。每一天都是離永恆更近的一天。有時候，我們會完成很多事情。在其他日子裡，我們或許感覺在繞圈子。不論如何，我們的人生旅程是每一天努力的總和。我們每一天所要做的就是忠於神的呼召。祂會帶領我們到我們應該去的地方。我是從一隻蜘蛛身上得到以上的智慧的。有一天，我在開車時驚訝地發現方向盤上有一隻小蜘蛛！我有幾個選擇：用我的手指掐死牠，但這會弄得一團糟，或者把車停在某個地方把牠趕走。但是看來蜘蛛不會對我造成傷害，於是我繼續開車，直到到達目的地。我的新乘客便順著我轉的方向左右搖擺。當然，牠並不知道自己的世界為什麼在旋轉。最後，牠陪我走了幾英里到一個新的地方。很多時候，我們覺得自己被拖到了意料之外的地方。但就像抓住方向盤的蜘蛛一樣，我們必須持守神的應許。在我們不知不覺中，神會將我們帶到祂要我們去的地方。如果你對蜘蛛的下場感到好奇：是的，我停車之後便把牠壓扁了。