

- Q How would you describe the significance of this new city to an unbeliever? Verses 22-24
- Q Who is “him” in verses 24-26?
- Q What’s the problem, perhaps, of the translation of verse 24? Definite vs. indefinite articles.
- Q Just how do we worship with “reverence and awe?”
- Q And, the “consuming fire,” just what is that all about?

FINAL THOUGHTS—LOOKING FOR THE CITY TO COME: HEBREWS 13

Hebrews 13:1-14. *Confidence outside the tabernacle.*

Keep on loving each other, and don’t forget strangers. After all, some have entertained angels without knowing it (e.g., Abraham). Remember those in prison, just as if you were there too; remember those who are mistreated just as if you were being mistreated. You are, if you love as the Christ instructed.

Marriage and its bed are to be honored and kept pure—make no mistake about it, the Lord God will indict the adulterer and the sexually immoral. Keep your lives free—from the love of bitcoin, cash and credit cards. Be content with what the Lord God has given you. God Himself said it quite well:

Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.

Ergo, we say confidently...

The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can people do to me?

Remember your pastors, teachers and other leaders who spoke God’s word to you. Consider their way of life, imitate their faith. Remember—Jesus the Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Dust your shoes off from all the strange teaching. It’s good for our *raison d’être* to be energized by the gift of God, as opposed to ceremonial foods—which are just spiritual junk food. As for us—we have an altar from which even those who serve have no right to eat. The high priest takes the blood of animals into the Holy of Holies as a sin offering, but the bodies of those animals are burned outside the camp.

Similarly, Jesus the Christ suffered outside the city gate to make people holy by His own blood. So then, let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore. For here... we do not have an enduring city, but look to the city that is to come.

- Q Why do we have difficulty loving each other “as brothers?”
- Q Why this warning about adultery? Why do we have such a problem with it?
- Q What is the strangest teaching people within religion we’ve gotten “carried away with?” In Christianity? In evangelical circles? Strangest thing not taught that should have been taught?
- Q Advice on how to keep our eyes on “the city that is to come?”

HEBREWS 13:1-14

Keep on loving each other as brothers. ²Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. ³Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

⁴Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. ⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."^[Deut 31:6]

⁶So we say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can man do to me?"^[Psalm 118:6,7]

⁷Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

⁹Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by ceremonial foods, which are of no value to those who eat them. ¹⁰We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.

¹¹The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. ¹²And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. ¹³Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. ¹⁴For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

Hebrews 13:14-25. *Sacrifices are to be sought*. So then, let us continually offer to Father God through Jesus the Christ praise sacrifices. May the fruit of our lips bless His authority. Let us also not forget that doing good and sharing with others are also sacrifices that put a smile on the Lord God.

Leaders should be obeyed; submission to their authority is key; after all, they stand at post to protect you; and, they will be held accountable. Obey them so their work will be a joy—not a burden. Burdening them is no value to you.

As for us? Pray. We're confident we have a clear conscience and we're confident we desire to live honorably in every way. Hey, I really urge you to pray that "I may be restored to you, soon."

As for you? May the Lord God of reconciliatory peace, through the blood of the eternal covenant who also resurrected the dead Lord Jesus—our great Shepherd equip you with all tools good, for all acts to fulfill His purposes, and may the Lord work in us what is pleasing **to Him**. Through Christ Jesus, may He be glorified for ever, and ever. Truly, let it be.

Now, listen. I urge you to listen and study my words of exhortation—after all, this letter is not all that long. By the way, Timothy our brother in Christ has been freed. If he arrives soon, I'll come with him to see you.

Say hello to your leaders and all God's people; those from Italy send you their thoughts and hello's as well. May the Gift be with you all.

- Q Which of these exhortations would you have the most difficulty following if this letter had been written to you? What part, if any, of these final exhortations don't apply to you?
- Q Why and how is doing good and providing a service to others a "sacrifice which pleases God?" Why is the Lord God "pleased?"
- Q So, were shepherds really looked down upon in those days? v20
- Q Do you consider Hebrews a "short letter?"

HEBREWS 13:14-25

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. ¹⁶And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

¹⁷Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

¹⁸Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. ¹⁹I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

²⁰May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, ²¹equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

²²Brothers, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written you only a short letter.

²³I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.

²⁴Greet all your leaders and all God's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings.

²⁵Grace be with you all.

THE NINE? COMMANDMENTS OF THE DECALOGUE

LEARNING NOT TO IGNORE THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

The Sabbath has always disturbed believers. We've demoted, altered, abrogated, and challenged its place in the heart of the Lord God. Even before the Lord God codified His attributes in "the Law," yes from the very *beginning* (Genesis 2:3), the Almighty set aside a day of rest. He made it holy, setting it aside and designing it, like all His commands, to help people be and stay closer to God. But...

- ⌘ Modern believers have **demoted** God's commandment to an anachronism of Judaism.
- ⌘ Reformation believers **altered** the fourth commandment by stipulating believers observe the Sabbath on the first day of the week, regardless of the witness of Scripture.
- ⌘ Pharisee believers **abrogated** the Sabbath; i.e., obedience became an artform of religious chest-beating, rather than a means of spiritual refreshment, a day made **for** humans (Mark 2:27).
- ⌘ Pre-Law believers **challenged** its observation (Exodus 16:23ff); to say nothing of those who had the fully articulated Law (cf., Nehemiah 13:15ff; John 9:13ff).

The Sabbath is important to the Lord God. Consequences for violation were, and are, dramatic. When the Sabbath was not observed under the Law of Moses, death could result (Numbers 15:32ff). Today, the consequences of failing to observe Sabbath are even more obvious—and deadly—stress has been clearly linked to heart disease, asthma, obesity, diabetes, headaches, depression, GI problems, and Alzheimer's (see <http://tinyurl.com/3zd9x7p>)



My Jesus observed the Sabbath; thus, it is clearly part of our Christian heritage (c.f., Hebrews 4:9). Why did the Lord God create the Sabbath principle? God loves us; He deserves to be glorified while we're here on earth and beyond. It's difficult to do so when dead, coughing, fat, depressed, and/or with dementia.

And for those of you like me from Missouri, nothing shows you more about how central the Lord God is to your life when you stop everything and think on Him. It's hard. We're all so wrapped up in doing, doing, doing. And then we're done, or are we? Sabbath teaches us to see there's more to living than doing. And, ironically, our doing becomes more abundant. A glimpse of what's to come?

God is smart. He doesn't desire our obedience to fulfill some fascist, narcissistic personality. All of God's commands are designed to bring us closer to Him; i.e., to be blessed by Him. When we are closer to Him, He can be glorified, and we get to bask in that glory. Observe Sabbath—Jesus did.

D. Thomas Felt