

Sunday February 24<sup>th</sup> 2013  
The Letter to the Hebrews  
Part Seventy Six

1). Heb 12:25 *See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven, 26 whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven." 27 Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. 29 For our God is a consuming fire.*

a). As we have seen in previous weeks, these are the verses that take us on from the 5<sup>th</sup> and final part of the warning in the Book of Hebrews concerning the despising of our birthright, to the end of Chapter 12.

b). In these verses we have received the command not to 'refuse Him who speaks from heaven' with the consequence for not doing so given through the example of the Children of Israel, who did not escape, 'who refused Him who spoke on earth'.

c). In these verses we have also seen the prophetic promise that God has given to 'shake not only the earth, but also heaven' – providing us with the absolute certainty of the complete overthrow of Gentile world power along with the overthrow of Satan and his fallen angels, thereby clearing the path so to speak for the Lord Jesus Christ and a new order of rulers to take the scepter as God has always intended - Ge 1:27 *So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. 28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion.....*

*Ge 3:15 And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."*

d). The scope of these verses then is Millennial, the picture painted is with bold strokes and has carried us on the wings of the 5<sup>th</sup> warning to a glorious crescendo tempered with the reminder that 'our God is a consuming fire'.

e). And having reached such a high point it would be easy to dismiss that which comes after it as anticlimactic and maybe even as insignificant by comparison, but to have such a viewpoint would place us on dangerous ground.

f). No doubt your Bible will have a Chapter heading that says something along the lines of, 'Concluding Moral Directions', which to be honest makes the whole of the final Chapter in this Book sound like an afterthought, something just tacked on at the end.

g). But this is not the case at all – at the very least we will realize that the admonitions given to us in this Chapter must be seen in conjunction with successfully running our race of the faith and are therefore inextricably connected to the salvation of the soul.

h). In fact I think we can go so far as to say that what is presented in these verses will be manifest in the lives of those who have heard, understood and taken to heart all that we have learnt throughout this astonishing Book and will be the measure of the process of our going on to maturity –  
Heb 6:1 ¶ *Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, 2 of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. 3 And this we will do if God permits..*

i). And so let us keep our hearts and our minds open to hear Him who speaks from heaven through the verses that follow.

2). Heb 13:1 ¶ *Let brotherly love continue. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels. 3 Remember the prisoners as if chained with them--those who are mistreated--since you yourselves are in the body also.*

a). These 3 verses are interrelated and begin with the admonition, 'Let brotherly love continue'.

b). Now the love spoken of here is not 'agape' love, that which is the nature and character of God, that is worked out in us as we progress to maturity; it is rather 'phileo' love, that form of love that has to do with human affection and fondness.

c). To continue in brotherly love of itself talks of something that is presently happening that needs to continue happening and if we are told to continue in it then there is every possibility that we may not do so.

d). And this thought would take us back to something we have seen in Chapter 10 – Heb 10:23 *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without*

*wavering, for He who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.*

e). In these verses we will see the same progression that we see from Chapter 12 to Chapter 13 – we have the faithfulness of God with respect to our hope followed by the relationship we are to have with one another.

f). In Chapter 10 we are to ‘consider one another’, ‘not forsake the assembling of ourselves together’, ‘exhort one another’ – and then in Chapter 13 this is simply put as ‘Let brotherly love continue’.

g). You see if we do not have this affection and fondness for each other then we will not ‘consider’ one another. And this word ‘consider’ we will remember speaks of continuous attentive care, which, within this context, is attentive care with regards to one another’s spiritual welfare, and without continuing in brotherly love we will have a tendency to forsake the assembling of ourselves together and will not deem it necessary to exhort one another and so much more as we see the Day approaching.

h). This is the very reason we encouraged ourselves to pray for one another by name every day – it is impossible to invest our time and energy in people’s lives in this way and not find ourselves having fondness and affection for them.

i). We will also recall that these verses from Chapter 10 come right before the warning concerning the willful sin - The deliberate choice to unbelief.

j). Now here is the thing – not having or not choosing to continue in ‘brotherly love’ is a manifestation of unbelief and would show the predominance of our flesh in this area.

k). If we have already begun to drift away, not giving the more earnest heed to the things we have heard then we will easily find ourselves not wanting to be around those who are not drifting – we will rationalize and justify our lack of fondness and affection and gathering together and right here is the slippery slope to perdition.

l). *Ro 12:10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;*

m). *1Th 4:9 ¶ But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another;*

n). If we are progressing to maturity, if we are receiving with meekness the implanted word and if that word is working the metamorphosis in us and we are being transformed into the image of Christ then brotherly love is a

natural and vital outcome of this process. This is the very thing we have seen in – 2Pe 1:3 *as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 ¶ But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. 10 Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble;*

o). I hope we might begin to realize the significance of the manifestation of brotherly love in the process to the saving of the soul.

p). Choosing who we may like or dislike is a prerogative exclusively of our old nature and has no part in the new man.

q). The word ‘brother’ in the Greek language is a word that literally means ‘from the same womb’ – and what does the scripture have to say about those engaged in the race of the faith? - Ga 4:26 *but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all.*

r). Ps 87:5 *And of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her; And the Most High Himself shall establish her." 6 The LORD will record, When He registers the peoples: "This one was born there." Selah*

Heb 12:22 *But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven,*

s). Our spiritual parentage is absolutely certain – we are born of the Spirit, brought forth from above, from the New Jerusalem ‘which is the mother of us all’, where our names are registered – we have but one Father and we are called to be His firstborn sons – a closer family connection between us would be impossible to find.

t). And if our Father has chosen to deal with you as a firstborn son then how can I not have brotherly love for you? If I reject you, I deny God’s work in you, and if I deny the work I must also deny the One who does the work – This is a serious business.

u). Remember what John records with regards to this - 1Jo 2:9 *He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. 10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. 11 But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

1Jo 3:14 ¶ *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.*

1Jo 4:20 *If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? 21 And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also.*

v). And so, one final thought with regards to this – the words ‘brotherly love’ at the beginning of Hebrews Chapter 13 are a translation of the Greek word ‘philadelphia’ and I wonder if we might make a connection here with the Church in Philadelphia that we find in the Revelation – literally then the Church in Brotherly Love – this being the only Church present at Christ’s Judgment Seat that receives no condemnation, but only promise –

Re 3:7 ¶ *"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write, 'These things says He who is holy, He who is true, "He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts, and shuts and no one opens": 8 "I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. 9 "Indeed I will make those of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews and are not, but lie--indeed I will make them come and worship before your feet, and to know that I have loved you. 10 "Because you have kept My command to persevere, I also will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth. 11 "Behold, I am coming quickly! Hold fast what you have, that no one may take your crown. 12 "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more. And I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name. 13 "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."*

w). Perhaps now we can begin to understand why He who speaks from heaven says, ‘Let brotherly love continue’ and why we who hear His voice must embrace this in all seriousness.

3). Heb 13:2 *Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels.*

a). As we move into the second verse of Chapter 13 we must see the direct connection with letting brotherly love continue from the first verse.

b). The word 'strangers' in this verse is not referring to random people off the street, but within the historical context of our letter would refer to those of like faith who fleeing persecution would find themselves in need of food and shelter – these then would be those of 'the same womb', but strangers in the sense of not being part of the existing community of faith in that location.

c). Now it is unlikely that we will find anyone coming through our doors seeking refuge from persecution, but by extension we can most certainly see 'strangers' as being those who are in pursuit of the Kingdom, just like us, whom we have never met before.

d). Just a few weeks back we had Mark and Bob from Birmingham visit with us, they would fall into this category of 'strangers' – likewise with the conference – those who attended who we have never met before would also fit into this category.

e). And the command is 'do not forget to entertain strangers' – so why would we be forgetful in this area? Well simply, if we are not continuing in brotherly love with respect to each other we will have no desire to be hospitable to someone outside of the fellowship. But if we do have brotherly love for one another this must readily transfer into a desire to be hospitable to any brother or sister, those from 'the same womb', who visit with us.

f). And so, apart from the conference when numbers can be an issue, no one who is actively involved in the race of faith as we are should ever come to visit Cornerstone and stay in a hotel, unless that's what they want to do, nor should there ever be a lack of invitations to take care of them. If fact they should be hard pressed to make a decision as to who to go with.

g). And let's remember here that this is not a matter of what may be convenient, but a matter of faith. Do we believe that which God has said about this or not? Remembering - Heb 6:10 *For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*

h). And then of course there is the intriguing part of this verse - *for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels* – And what should we say about this other than to quote that which scripture says - Heb 1:14 *Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?*

- i). Who would want to miss out on such a possibility?
- j). Please don't take any of this lightly.

4). Heb 13:3 *Remember the prisoners as if chained with them--those who are mistreated--since you yourselves are in the body also.*

a). And again as we look at this verse we must be mindful of who it is this verse is talking about.

b). 'The prisoners' here who are chained and mistreated are those who are being persecuted for their faith, for having faith to the saving of the soul. Those then who are just like the recipients of this letter, those from 'the same womb', but not necessarily from the same location.

c). The recipients of this letter are told to remember, to be mindful of, those who are enduring this persecution, because they also are in a body of flesh and bone and blood and have the potential to suffer the same mistreatment.

d). In fact they are admonished in this way because of their previous experience - Heb 10:32 *But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: 33 partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; 34 for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. 35 Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward.*

e). We cannot help but see here that the compassion they had towards others and their ability to endure their own suffering came out of being 'illuminated', out of knowing they had 'a better and an enduring possession in heaven' and were confident of it - they had their focus in the right place.

f). But as we also see this 'confidence' could be 'cast away'. Without it brotherly love would fall by the wayside and as a result of this there would be a lack of concern for those in the household of faith who were suffering mistreatment.

g). And I would suggest that the very fact that the recipients of this letter are told to 'remember the prisoners' is proof positive that some had already begun to forget.

h). Now as for ourselves, there is no one that we know of who is in pursuit of the Kingdom who has been imprisoned for that belief. But there are those in prison who have subsequently come to see and understand the

coming Kingdom of Christ and we should be mindful of what they have to endure because of their faith in that setting.

i). And then again, only last week I had shared with you the experience of our brother and sister as they were forced to leave the church they had been in and indeed the experience of all those who now gather together in that place to be taught the word of truth. On these we must have compassion; we must bring them to mind in order to stand with them, pray for them and encourage them, not put them out of mind because they are out of sight. Brotherly love, if it continues would not allow us to abandon them to suffer alone.

j). Like the original recipients of this letter let's remember that we have suffered this same mistreatment in the past and all the while we remain in this body we will have opportunity to suffer it again, and again - Mt 5:11 *"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake.12 "Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven*

5). Heb 13:4 *Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*

a). To go from brotherly love in the first 3 verses to marriage in the 4<sup>th</sup> seems to me to be a perfectly logical place to go as we look to the manifestation of going from faith to faith in our lives.

b). The marriage relationship is the vehicle by which God demonstrates to us the Divinely perfect arrangement for rulership within the coming Kingdom.

c). We see it in foundation in Genesis - Ge 1:28 *Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion*

d). It is the means by which God describes His relationship with Israel – Jer 31:32 *"not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD.*

e). And the means by which Christ's co-heirs will rule with Him – Re 19:7 *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready."*

f). And it is that pictured through the marriage feast in John's Gospel – Joh 2:1 ¶ *On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there.*

g). And that portended by the marriage supper in the Revelation –

Re 19:9 *Then he said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb!'"*

h). And we have long known that our marriages are to picture the relationship between Christ and His Church and are also first and foremost in our daily walk of faithful obedience.

i). God does not take marriage lightly and nor should we – therefore marriage is honorable among all.

j). Now grammatically it appears that a more correct way to present this verse would be ‘Let marriage be honorable among all’ – and could be translated ‘Let your marriage be honorable in all things’ – and this really would make much more sense within the context.

k). It is an easy thing to ascent to the plain statement ‘Marriage is honorable among all’ – but when we introduce the word ‘let’ and introduce our own marriage then we must inevitably move away from the passive to the active and it has been the active that has dictated our chapter thus far – ‘Let’, ‘Do not forget’, ‘Remember’.

l). And the word translated ‘honorable’ literally means, ‘held as of a great price’, ‘especially esteemed’.

m). The verse also tells us that ‘the [marriage] bed is undefiled’ and this is set in contrast to fornicators and adulterers.

n). The ‘marriage’ bed is a euphemism for sex within marriage and the word translated ‘undefiled’ is written in the intensified form making it not just a neutral attribute but a positive purity.

o). But sex outside of marriage, that which would then dishonor the marriage relationship ‘among all’, can only result in God’s Judgment – this then again becomes a Judgment Seat issue - *1Th 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality; 4 that each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honor, 5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who do not know God; 6 that no one should take advantage of and defraud his brother in this matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also forewarned you and testified. 7 For God did not call us to uncleanness, but in holiness. 8 Therefore he who rejects this does not reject man, but God, who has also given us His Holy Spirit.*

6). We will pick this up again next time if the Lord is willing.